



ENGAGING WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

**ASHLAND'S GUIDE FOR A COMMUNITY OF
INFORMED & ENGAGED CITIZENS**

2016 EDITION

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Keeping residents informed on local matters is vital to health and success of our community as it drives engagement and enhances the lives of our citizens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



- [TOWN ELECTIONS & TOWN BOARDS](#)



- [SCHOOLS & YOUTH SERVICES](#)



- [ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH SERVICES](#)



- [YOUR TOWN – PRESENT & FUTURE](#)



TOWN ELECTIONS & TOWN BOARDS

Did you know that Ashland's local elections are where your votes matter most, yet these elections have the lowest regular voter turnouts? There have been cases where significant issues have been decided by a handful of votes, and in some cases, just one!

Your vote sends a message. Elected officials tend to listen to the majority. The voting process drives elected officials and boards to be accountable to the people whose interests they have been chosen to represent.

GETTING STARTED:

- **Register to vote:** It's easy to check your registration status and/or register to vote at - www.ashlandmass.com/219/Elections-Voting
- **Know your town, state, and national election events:** The first step to participate is to make sure that you know these key dates:

2016 Town Events	
March 1, 2016	Annual Town Election
May 4, 2016	Annual Town Meeting
May 17, 2016	Annual Town Election
Sept. 8, 2016	State Primary Election
Nov. 8, 2016	Presidential Election

- **Get involved :** From time to time, positions become available on committees appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Complete the form posted to <http://www.ashlandmass.com/FormCenter/Talent-Bank-Form-16/Talent-Bank-Form-56> to determine if there is a match between your interests and openings that currently exist.



SCHOOL & YOUTH SERVICES

Our schools play a crucial role in our community, as they educate future generations of involved citizens. It is up to all of us to ensure that we provide our children with top-quality educational experiences in a cost-effective way.

Youth & Family Services provides vital services to support our community members in need.

GETTING STARTED:

- **Volunteer in the schools:** Learn more about volunteer opportunities by building -<http://www.ashlandvolunteers.net/>
- **Join a school site council:** Ask a school principal about an appointment to the school site council. Find out more - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section59C>
- **Run for a seat on School Committee:** Details are posted to - <http://www.ashlandmass.com/303/School-Committee>
- **Volunteer with the AEF and/or Ashland PTO:** The Ashland Education Foundation (AEF) and Ashland PTO are always in need of help. Visit <http://www.ashlandeducation.org/> & <http://ashlandpto.com/> for more information.
- **Donate to Ashland Youth & Family Services:** Ashland Youth & Services operates a food pantry and collects donations for emergency funds for families in need. Visit <http://www.ashlandmass.com/229/Youth-Family-Services> for more information.



ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH SERVICES

Environment & Health Services plays a large part in Ashland residents' day-to-day lives. These services are provided by a few different departments, including:

- *Board of Health – responsible for public health policies, well-being of residents, and environmental concerns.*
- *Council on Aging – promotes the independence and well-being of the community's senior residents.*
- *DPW – responsible for safe drinking water, conveyance of wastewater, pick-up and disposal of rubbish, maintenance of roads for safe travel, and snow removal and other storm-related emergencies.*

GETTING STARTED:

- **Volunteer on a committee:** The [Board of Health](#) and [Council on Aging](#) each have a committee designated specifically for their departments. There are also committees that address specific topics of interest:
 - [Water Policy Committee](#)
 - [MetroWest Water Supply Committee](#)
 - [Regional Emergency Planning Committee](#)
 - [Stormwater Advisory Committee](#)

For a full listing of committees, follow this link:

www.ashlandmass.com/27/Government

- **Volunteer at the Senior Center:** There are many volunteer opportunities to help support our seniors.
- **Visit the website:** Departments use the town website to keep residents up to date with important information.
- **Stay connected:** Subscribe to receive emergency notifications through Blackboard Connect at townofashland.bbcportal.com/Entry.



YOUR TOWN – PRESENT & FUTURE

The Town of Ashland has multiple departments devoted to keeping the community safe and protecting the integrity of the town's infrastructure, both now and in the future.

It takes the collective effort of town employees, committees, and engaged citizens to make it all work.

GETTING STARTED:

- **Understand Fire Safety:** Just as important as knowing what to do in an emergency is knowing how to avoid one. Visit <http://www.ashlandfire.com/> to learn more about smoke detector testing, rules and regulations for approving burning permits, and public outreach programs like Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detector Donations and Aging Weather Preparedness.
- **Explore Police Services:** The Ashland Police Department's website, <http://www.ashlandpd.org/>, contains a wealth of information about their resources and programs designed to protect citizens such as Blackboard Connect Service, crime prevention, firearm safety and licensing, Internet safety, the annual Drug Take-Back Day, and other public safety-related topics.
- **Discover Smart Development:** As Ashland continues to evolve, so do the rules, procedures, and departments responsible for ensuring that development is being done in a responsible manner. Visit <http://www.ashlandmass.com/199/Land-Infrastructure> to learn about groups like the Redevelopment Authority, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Conservation Committee, and how you can get involved in shaping our future.



CLOSING & NEXT STEPS

Communities grow stronger when citizens regularly engage in joint activities that drive a shared goal. It's our town; let's make it the best it can be for all of our residents.

DON'T WAIT...PARTICIPATE.

This Guide was created and brought to you by the LEADERSHIP METROWEST Class of 2016