



# ADAPTING TO **A NEW ERA** OF INNOVATION

**ARLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**ARLINGTON**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



***"The technology sector continues to thrive here in Arlington, as evidenced by the numerous investments in Arlington-based tech companies over the past year."***

**Telly D. Tucker, CEcD**  
Director, Arlington Economic Development

2021 was a year of endurance and flexibility as our local economy and businesses responded to the uncertainty of the pandemic.

That endurance and flexibility has been the strongest among Arlington’s small businesses. AED’s BizLaunch team has seen unprecedented interest in entrepreneurship and starting new businesses during the past year. Some of these entrepreneurs took a chance after losing a job, others have used the pandemic as motivation to change careers or follow a dream to own their own business. These Arlingtonians are accepting the risk and taking a leap of faith into the challenges of entrepreneurship in fields ranging from consulting to childcare and more. Other small businesses have taken advantage of our ReLaunch program of free business consulting and website creation to embrace e-commerce and social selling, helping them thrive again after pandemic-related upheaval. Considering that small businesses make up more than 90% of the businesses in Arlington, I see this as an incredibly positive sign for our business community.

The technology sector continues to thrive here in Arlington, as evidenced by the numerous investments in Arlington-based tech companies over the past year. We welcomed

companies like Microsoft and ZEBOS to our community and celebrated the continued growth and expansion of companies already in our midst, including Interos and Two Six Technologies. We are continuing to watch the progress of Amazon’s HQ2, where more than 3000 employees are already working and where construction continues at a rapid pace on the Phase One Metropolitan Park. We are also seeing local universities utilize the \$2 billion Tech Talent Investment Program to grow their programs and help seed the future tech workforce here in Arlington.

Adaptability was crucial for Arlington’s tourism and cultural affairs teams, both of which had traditional programs scrapped due to continuing uncertainty in the market. Arlington Convention and Visitors Service (ACVS) pivoted from its usual business travel promotion efforts to offer quiet road trip getaways and outdoor adventure. Arlington Arts’ programming and events catered to a new environment of outdoor and virtual activities that promoted art in our community in a safe manner.

I am so proud of the resilience and forward-thinking shown by our community and department during the past year. I have great confidence that we will continue to bounce back from this tumultuous time.



## BUSINESS INVESTMENT

## FY 2021 STATS/METRICS

“THERE IS A LOT OF ENERGY AROUND TECH AND INNOVATION IN ARLINGTON AND THAT’S EXACTLY WHERE WE WANT TO BE. ARLINGTON HAS THE TRIPLE BENEFIT OF (1) BEING CLOSE TO OUR CUSTOMERS, (2) BEING CLOSE TO WHERE TECHNICAL TALENT IS THRIVING, AND (3) PROVIDING A WALKABLE, URBAN LOCATION.”

— Will Choi, CEO  
Michael Grace, CTO,  
Vertical Apps

**732,665** NEW OR RETAINED SF  
OF OFFICE SPACE

The total of retained and new square feet (SF) as a result of successful opportunities reported by Business Investment Group (BIG) in FY 2021

**227** EXISTING COMPANIES  
SUPPORTED

The number of existing companies supported by BIG through BRE activities in FY 2021

**2,372** JOBS CREATED

The total number of jobs created or retained as a result of successful opportunities reported by BIG in FY 2021

**18**  
DEALS

Total number completed  
in FY 2021



## CONTINUED GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

Despite the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business operations and real estate decisions, AED's proactive business attraction, retention and expansion efforts helped Arlington notch several exciting successes. Like recent years, these successes were led by our growing technology sector, which leveraged the momentum of Amazon HQ2, reaching more than 3,000 local employees and historic investments in the tech talent pipeline. The headliner in FY 2021 was Microsoft's announcement to locate its regional Global Sales and Marketing hub in Rosslyn, while our home-grown companies also thrived as Interos, Two Six Technologies and Vertical Apps announced expansions of its Arlington facilities.

Outside the technology world, Arlington's foundational sectors of federal agencies, professional services and government contracting continued to thrive. The U.S. Department of State elected to renew two significant leases in Rosslyn for the next 20 years, ensuring its status as a neighborhood anchor for decades to come. Additionally, the education sector contributed to our success with the addition of Northeastern University in Rosslyn and Primrose School in Courthouse.

*Arlington was named the #1 Place for Women in Tech by SmartAsset.com (2021).*



## CONTINUING BUSINESS RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Supporting Arlington's existing businesses remains a core component of the Business Investment Group's (BIG) mission. The team maintained a high level of engagement even with the shift to a fully remote work environment. BIG quickly adapted to the virtual format and organized webinars, roundtables and information sessions to maintain connections between Arlington Economic Development and the business community.

In addition to the expanded usage of social media and other digital tools to promote company successes, BIG also continued its business engagement efforts virtually, with the Arlington Premiere event and Business Appreciation Month celebration both moving online.

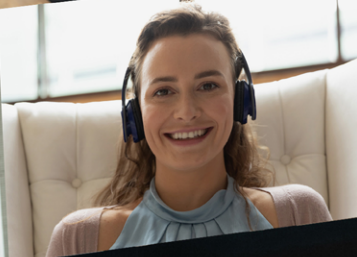
In total, BIG connected with more than 225 companies throughout the year, totaling more than 520 touchpoints.

## ABOUT THE BUSINESS INVESTMENT GROUP

The BIG team works to attract and retain companies in Arlington and support their growth through value-add services, focusing on diversifying Arlington's economy and lowering office vacancies.

### MARIAN MARQUEZ

Director, Business Investment Group  
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REAL ESTATE FIRM  
CBRE RANKED THE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
METRO AREA AS THE  
**#3 TECH TALENT**  
MARKET IN NORTH  
AMERICA IN ITS  
2021 SCORING  
TECH TALENT  
REPORT.

## TECH ECOSYSTEM



*“We are excited to be setting up our U.S. headquarters in Arlington. The region boasts a rich combination of security, engineering and IT skills that we seek, and its proximity to the nation’s capital positions us close to the policy innovation around digital assets and distributed ledger technology in the U.S.”*

– Brendan Blumer, CEO, Bullish

### NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES SUPPORT TECH COMMUNITY

Talent continues to be the most valuable resource in the tech industry, and AED made significant strides in the past year to expand efforts to attract, retain and grow the local tech workforce. The Business Investment Group supported Marymount University’s Tech Set Go Virginia program, which provides economically disadvantaged four-year degree junior and seniors with job readiness skills to enter the local tech industry. BIG also joined the Northern Virginia Technology Council’s (NVTC) Closing the Tech Talent Gap subcommittee to collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions, universities and public and private entities on tech talent development initiatives.

Beyond the focus on talent, AED launched marketing and networking initiatives exclusively for the tech community. In February, the TechConnect profile series began highlighting companies in our startup ecosystem that recently raised funding or marked other significant successes. Additionally, BIG convened a roundtable with Arlington-based technology businesses focusing on relevant industry topics and trends, including the impact of the pandemic on their return-to-work plans.



## UNIVERSITY INVESTMENTS IN TECH PIPELINE

Several of Arlington's higher-educational institutions continue to leverage the historic \$2 billion Tech Talent Investment Program to create Arlington's future tech workforce.

- **The groundbreaking for Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus** is planned for early FY 2022 in neighboring Alexandria on its new Innovation Campus, which will produce thousands of additional computer science and computer engineering graduates. Boeing committed \$50 million to Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus to become the first foundational partner.
- **George Mason University selected a developer** for its new Institute for Digital InnovAtion (IDIA), which will support tech-based research educational programs and provide collaboration and convening spaces to support public programming.
- **Marymount University actively participates** in a \$1 million state-funded cybersecurity and autonomous vehicle-focused research project. Funded by the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI), this project will put students to work on real-world cybersecurity projects.

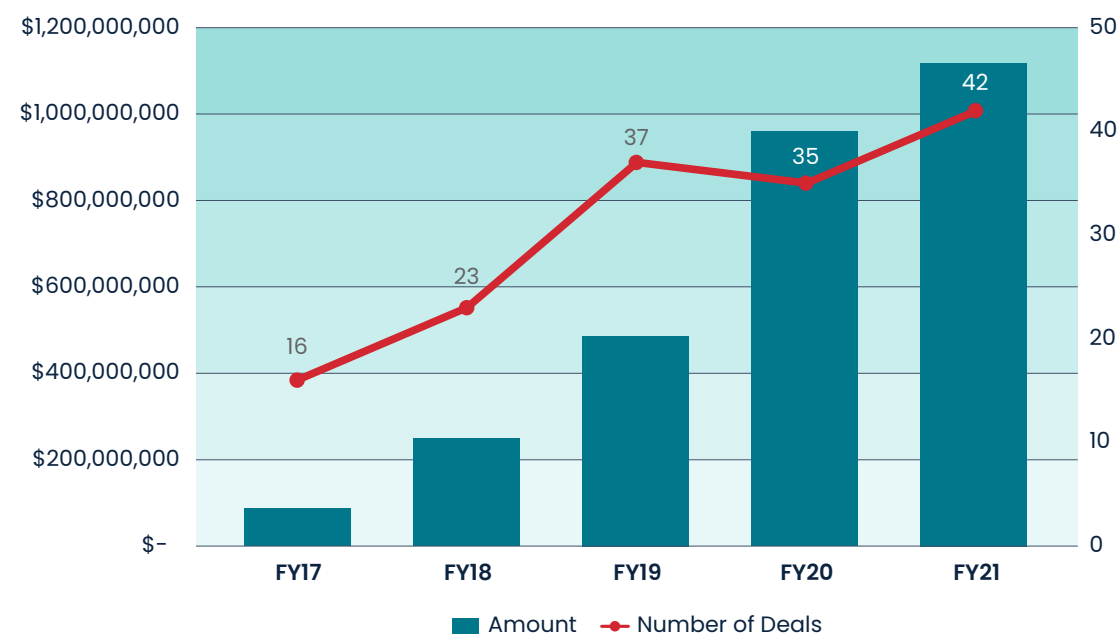
## TECH COMPANIES CONTINUE INVESTMENT ACTIVITY MOMENTUM

In FY 2021, Arlington-based startups and high-growth companies continued to generate significant gains in investment activity across the board, from seed and venture capital to IPOs and mergers and acquisitions. From FY 2020 to FY 2021, Arlington experienced a 20% increase in investment activity deals and a 16.6% increase in the total amount of venture activity. The continued growth of venture activity among Arlington-based companies validates our business community's attractiveness to investors in the region and across the United States.

## FY 2021 INVESTMENT ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

COMPANY	AMOUNT	TYPE OF INVESTMENT
Privia Health	\$448.5M	IPO
Metis Solutions	\$95.7M	M&A
Territory Foods	\$22.0M	Series B
WireWheel	\$20.0M	Series B
Stacklet	\$18.0M	Series A
Airside	\$13.6M	Series B
Fraym	\$7.0M	Series B
GoTab	\$6.0M	Seed
Rize	\$3.8M	Seed

## VENTURE, IPO AND M&A ACTIVITY IN ARLINGTON-BASED BUSINESSES



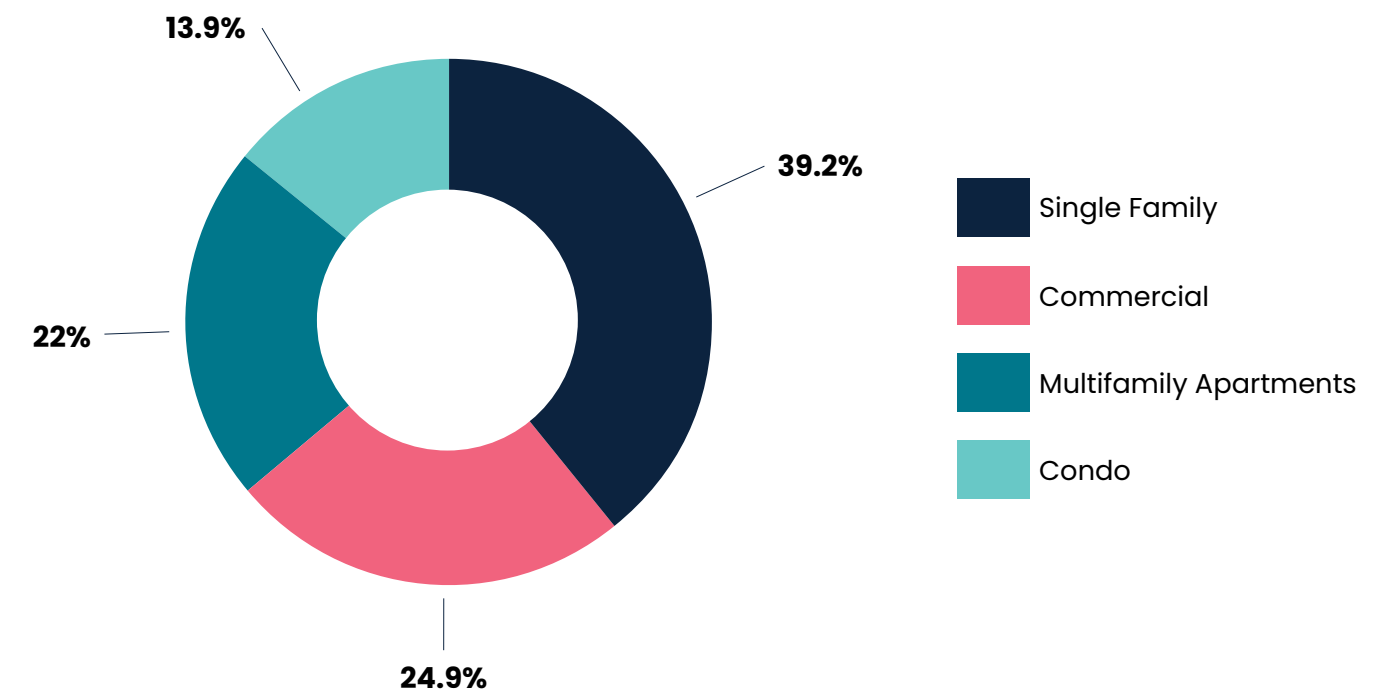


**DOTTED WITH TROPHY  
OFFICE SPACE, QUALITY  
MULTIFAMILY LIVING,  
AWARD-WINNING  
CULTURAL AMENITIES  
AND STANDOUT  
DINING AND SHOPPING,  
ARLINGTON'S  
COMMERCIAL  
CORRIDORS ARE  
THRIVING CENTERS OF  
ACTIVITY.**

## REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Arlington Economic Development works throughout the year to support the strength and stability of Arlington's commercial real estate market. The County's diverse mix of property uses is a defining feature of Arlington's mixed-use, walkable way of life and benefits not only the County's economic resiliency but the well-being of the County as a whole.

**CY 2021 PERCENT OF REAL PROPERTY  
ASSESSED VALUES**



### STRONG MULTIFAMILY APARTMENT SECTOR CONTINUES TO DRIVE NEW CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

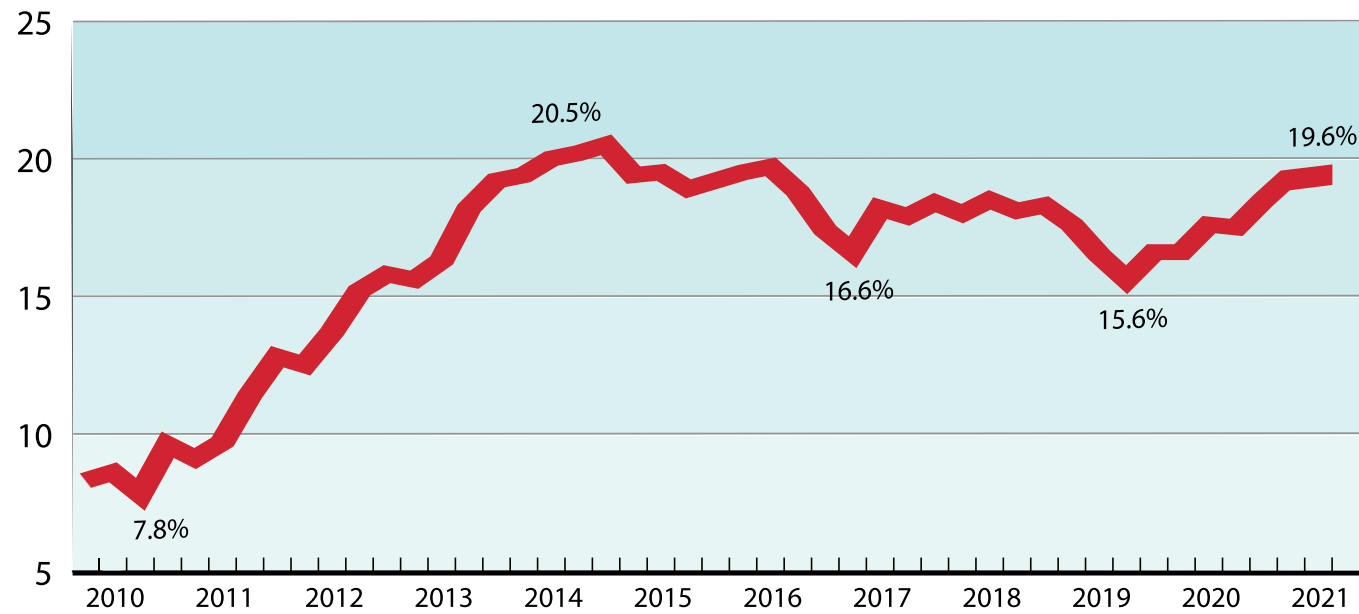
With 1,710 multifamily residential units completed in FY 2021 and another 1,575 units under construction, the multifamily apartment sector continues to drive robust development activity in Arlington. Despite some weakness in the multifamily sector due to short-term supply pressures and a pandemic-driven slowdown in demand, vacancy rates stabilized and rent growth recovered during the first half of CY 2021.



## OFFICE VACANCY FACES FURTHER HEADWINDS

Office vacancy increased to 19.6% through the first half of CY 2021, reflecting significant unrest in the national and regional office markets. Uncertainty about the depth of future tenant demand relative to when and how workers return to the office continues to impact office vacancy. Despite this challenging national and regional context, Arlington remains highly competitive for office tenant demand due to the impact of Amazon HQ2 and Arlington-specific competitive advantages of location, transportation, amenities and access to a highly-trained workforce.

### OFFICE VACANCY 2Q 2010–2Q 2021



Source: CoStar, Q3 2021

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY PROCEEDS WITH CAUTION

Amazon's HQ2 office development and ground floor commercial spaces in mixed-use buildings lead commercial construction activity. Due to uncertainty around office tenant demand and the slope of the recovery in the retail and services sectors, developers are taking a cautious approach to new construction, and many have switched from approved office uses to residential. In response, Arlington is pursuing efforts to create more flexibility around allowable uses in ground floor and upper story commercial spaces and has continued its program to temporarily expand outdoor seating capacity for restaurants. One positive sign for the commercial office construction pipeline was a recent announcement by Skanska USA to begin construction in late 2021 on a 180,000 square foot office building in Virginia Square. It will be located just blocks from George Mason University's planned 500,000 square-foot Institute for Digital Innovation.

## ABOUT THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Real Estate Development Group (REDG) provides technical assistance on commercial office, retail and hotel development opportunities within Arlington and monitors competitive market conditions and structures and manages a variety of public-private partnerships. REDG also provides advice and assistance on enhancing the appearance of commercial properties and serves as a liaison between the development community and Arlington County government agencies.

### MARC MCCAULEY

Director, Real Estate Development Group  
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## SMALL BUSINESS, BIZLAUNCH



“DUE TO THE HELP FROM BIZLAUNCH, WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO KEEP OUR BUSINESS AFLOAT AMID THE PANDEMIC AND THE RESOURCES TO CONTINUE SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS AND THE COMMUNITY. BEING PART OF ARLINGTON FOR THE PAST **20+ YEARS HAS BEEN AMAZING.** IT’S A VIBRANT COMMUNITY THAT CELEBRATES DIVERSITY AND ENCOURAGES SMALL BUSINESSES IN SO MANY WAYS.”

— Amsale Saife, Dama Restaurant

36

WORKSHOPS

2,141 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

267

BIZLAUNCH CONSULTATIONS

552 COVID-19 REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

719 SCORE CONSULTATIONS

### RECORD-BREAKING SERVICE LEVELS

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, BizLaunch continued its mission to support small business owners virtually. With a growing demand for BizLaunch services, efforts to assist Arlington small businesses were maximized, especially in the realm of consultations. Consultation numbers increased from 1,256 in 2020 to 1,538 in 2021. BizLaunch's Covid-19 small business outreach had 552 requests, a record-breaking service level that shows the need for tangible assistance to the small business community.

Even in the face of adversity and a year of continuing challenges, BizLaunch continued to find new, innovative ways to serve, communicate and collaborate with Arlington's business owners. Small businesses continue to display immense resilience, with many bouncing back or continuing to seek new ways to pivot their business models in these uncertain times. With more robust relationships and more consultations, there is nothing the small business community and BizLaunch can't do together.





COVID-19 SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

COVID-19 forced businesses of all industries and levels of mastery to reevaluate their every move. As technology becomes more integrated into daily life, businesses are increasingly expected to have a robust online presence. BizLaunch’s ReLaunch program became a needed solution for hard-to-reach businesses, providing free access to technology resources and consulting services.

Small business owners in Arlington who faced pandemic challenges were invited to apply for one or both of the ReLaunch programs started in late FY 2021. The first of these programs is *ReNew*, which is dedicated to helping business owners create or update their website and implement e-commerce tools. The second, *ReVitalize*, is an all-in-one program that pairs business owners with consultants to evaluate and improve their business practices. ReVitalize consultants help business owners with branding and marketing, financial management, sourcing capital, digital presence and more. The ReLaunch program was made possible through partnerships with Revby and Nub8, who were critical players in *ReVitalize* and *ReNew* respectively. Businesses were encouraged to participate in both programs and were guaranteed individualized service and specialized tools to help their businesses thrive.

With a total of 144 applications to the program and application numbers still growing, ReLaunch has proven to result in happier and more tech-savvy businesses. Mihee Pansiri, owner of legacy business Rincome Thai, participated in *ReNew* to restore and improve her website after it was hacked. Since graduating *ReNew*, Mihee stated, “after joining ReLaunch, I was so grateful... everyone was very kind and very patient... now we have a brand-new website... it looks great, and I can tell my story about my restaurant and add my pictures.” The *ReNew* program gave Mihee a website she was pleased with and created a more user-friendly online experience that customers easily navigate on a more secure platform. Other members of ReLaunch also shared their experiences. In her testimonial, Jennifer Jones, CEO of Cosmopolitan Plated, said that “the team came prepared with digestible suggestions to improve my messaging. Within moments, I felt like someone was wiping

the Vaseline off my eyes. I could see a clear path to how I wanted to move my business forward.” Similarly, Jane Franklin, Artistic Director of Jane Franklin Dance, said that because of ReLaunch, “the website now has a more fluid and dynamic look, plus we have the background tools to adapt as necessary. Thanks to AED, AWS and Nub8 for developing the ReLaunch initiative and for help updating our website.”

In a changing tech environment, ReLaunch programs give business owners a chance to build, learn and grow. By empowering businesses to renew or create their digital footprint, ReLaunch has given them new ways to thrive.

*“The team came prepared with digestible suggestions to improve my messaging. ...I could see a clear path to how I wanted to move my business forward.”*

– Jennifer Jones, CEO of Cosmopolitan Plated

111

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS AS OF APRIL 1, 2021–JUNE 30, 2021

40 TECH SERVICES APPLICATIONS

71 BUSINESS COUNSELING APPLICATIONS

7 out of 26 RENEW WEBSITES COMPLETED

RELAUNCH BY INDUSTRY

Food Service	31
Other Services	16
Retail	15
Professional Services	12
Arts, Entertainmenty and Recreation	7



**“AFTER BEING FORCED TO SHUT DOWN FOR TWO MONTHS WITHOUT INCOME DURING THE PANDEMIC, AED SUPPORT WAS INVALUABLE IN KEEPING THE BUSINESS VIABLE UNTIL WE REOPENED.”**

— James Moore,  
Moore's Barber Shop

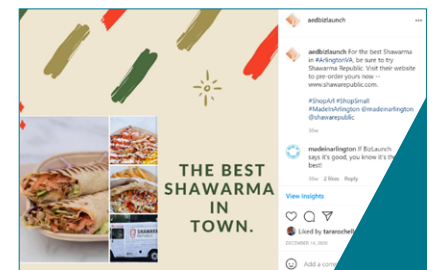
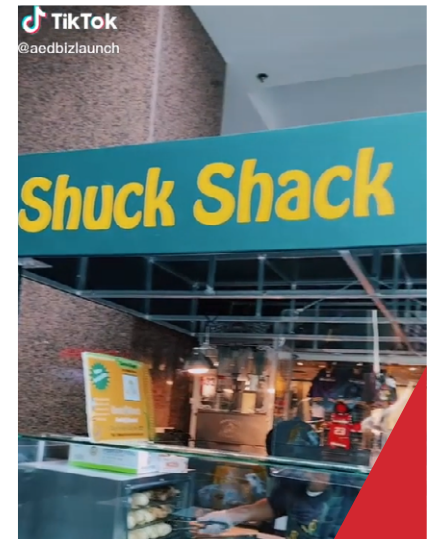
## INTRODUCTION OF MARKETING TOOLKIT FOR HARD-HIT SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

During FY 2021, BizLaunch transformed its marketing efforts to showcase Arlington's small business community. Through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and more, BizLaunch found new and creative ways to promote Arlington's small businesses on social media. Other advertising opportunities in the Marketing Toolkit include access to webinars, free one-on-one consultations and features on ARLnow, a popular, hyper-local news site covering community and business news, politics, weather, traffic and more in Arlington.

During the holiday season and beyond, BizLaunch highlighted many businesses for the #ShopArl campaign on Instagram, including Covet, Agents in Style, Shawarma Republic, Bakeshop and many more. Notably, the campaign's feature on Bakeshop reached 3,200 people. In February, BizLaunch celebrated Black History Month by featuring Black-owned businesses in Arlington, such as Shuck Shack and Dama, on TikTok, using the hashtag #ShowTheLove.

Throughout the year, BizLaunch featured several local businesses in articles published on ARLnow. For example, an article highlighting new business Columbia Pike Laundry reached 4,806 people and garnered 899 unique pageviews when it shared on ARLnow's Facebook page; readers spent an average of two minutes and 59 seconds on the page. On Instagram, the feature had 900+ unique impressions and reached 6,000+ people. The business had a 23% increase in signups and a 20% increase in conversions, their second highest-conversion rate ever. In addition to Columbia Pike Laundry's feature on ARLnow, other small businesses have taken advantage of BizLaunch's other campaigns as well.

At the heart of BizLaunch's efforts is its dedication to Arlington's small business community and finding innovative ways to highlight the many businesses that make our community vibrant and unique.



## ABOUT BIZLAUNCH

BizLaunch is Arlington's small business and entrepreneurial assistance network. It offers a one-stop shop for those looking to start or grow a business in Arlington, from taxes and permitting to financing, business plans and more.

### TARA PALACIOS

Director, BizLaunch

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“TOURISM AND TRAVEL  
IN ARLINGTON  
**ARE SUFFERING.**  
THE DOWNTURN  
IS HAVING A  
SIGNIFICANT  
IMPACT ON HOTELS,  
RESTAURANTS  
AND OTHER SMALL  
BUSINESSES THAT  
RELY UPON VISITORS.”

— JJ Singh, Director of Hospitality and Investments at LNW Hospitality and Vice Chair of Arlington’s Economic Development Commission (EDC)

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM



### HOTEL MARKET PERFORMANCE PARALLELS PANDEMIC

The ongoing impacts of COVID-19 made the period from July 2020 through June 2021 the worst in history for Arlington’s hospitality economy. Occupancy at Arlington hotels averaged just 29% for FY 2021, compared to 74% in FY 2019, the last “normal” pre-pandemic year. Many local hotels temporarily suspended operations due to nonexistent demand, while others closed due to real-estate transactions, hotel-to-residential conversions or major redevelopments. All Arlington properties have experienced substantial drops in revenue since March 2020, with full pandemic recovery not projected until at least 2024.

Corporate, group and government travel — typically Arlington and Washington, D.C.’s strongest markets — virtually evaporated throughout the fiscal year. In contrast, vacationers traveling by car showed the most potential both locally and nationally. Hotel occupancy and revenues began to show gradual improvement early in the year, which became steady progress in April 2021 as many people enthusiastically embraced COVID-19 vaccines. At that time, Arlington Convention and Visitors Service (ACVS) had a rush of interest in meeting planner site visits in preparation for fall and winter meetings. Arlington was promoted to planners at several spring meetings and group trade events as they began to resume virtually or in hybrid formats. However, in early summer concerns over the Delta variant, slowing vaccination rates and increasing COVID-19 cases eroded positive travel sentiment and prompted event cancellations.

Low hotel occupancy and reduced room inventory also resulted in dramatic cuts to Arlington’s tourism promotion budget, which is primarily funded by Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues. In the FY 2022 budget process, the Arlington County Board, supported by the Arlington Chamber and its Hotel General Managers Committee, added \$206,000 to the ACVS budget to preserve foundational investments in destination sales and marketing for recovery.



# FY 2021 STATS

Arlington's hotel occupancy and revenues were severely impacted by reduced business, meeting and leisure travel due to COVID-19. Online customer engagement strengthened in spring 2021, and digital campaigns helped attract East Coast vacationers traveling by car.

**29**  
PERCENT

## HOTEL OCCUPANCY

Compared to pre-pandemic  
FY 2019 Occupancy of 74.0%

**\$32.47**

## HOTEL REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM (REVPAR)

Compared to pre-pandemic  
FY 2019 RevPAR of \$122.00

**216,169**

## STAYARLINGTON WEBSITE SESSIONS

**188,609**

## STAYARLINGTON WEBSITE USERS

**\$294,759**

## APPROX. HOTEL REVENUE GENERATED BY STAYARLINGTON DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS



## PARTNERING FOR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY RECOVERY

Throughout FY 2021, the ACVS team focused on providing all available resources to help Arlington hotels and hospitality businesses recover from the pandemic. Here are just a few examples:

- **ACVS partnered with Threshold 360** to capture free virtual tours of hospitality businesses featured in partner listing on the StayArlington website, uploaded to Google business listing pages, used in group proposals for meetings and events and featured on customized digital maps. More than 40 hotels, meeting venues, neighborhoods, attractions and shopping venues have taken advantage of socially distanced shoots to date.
- **Arlington businesses are offered** the opportunity to share their latest hospitality deals and packages with visitors and meeting planners, as well as with thousands of area residents, on the StayArlington website. The deals are promoted in the monthly StayArlington *Capital Vacations Connection* and *Capital Meetings Connection* e-newsletters, on StayArlington social media channels and more.
- **In Spring 2021, ACVS offered one-time-only** pandemic recovery advertising rates for the 2021–2022 Arlington Visitors Guide, Meeting Planners Guide and Arlington Map. Available exclusively to Arlington businesses, these reduced rates of 80% permitted the guides and map to showcase as many local gems as possible.
- **ACVS initiated brief monthly collaboration calls** to exchange news about events and promotions, and jointly market them wherever possible to leverage the combined creative efforts of Arlington's neighborhood Business Improvement Districts (BID) and Partnerships.
- **ACVS regularly shared with partners** information on County, regional and state and federal resources, including Arlington's COVID-19 Utility Relief Program for customers having difficulty paying water-sewer bills, as well as job fair announcements from the Alexandria and Arlington Regional Workforce Council, grant opportunities and more.





## MARKETING IN A PANDEMIC: REGIONAL ROAD TRIPS AND OUTDOOR FUN

Based on research showing increased willingness of leisure travelers to take regional road trips and to stay in hotels — combined with overarching safety concerns — ACVS ran major marketing campaigns for Summer–Fall 2020 and Spring–Summer 2021.

“The Insider’s Guide to Our Outside” Summer–Fall campaign, which ran from June through September 2020, was anchored by a *Washington Post* article and included 5.2 million ad impressions through the Post and Tripadvisor.com. It invited vacationers from within a 500-mile drive radius to enjoy Arlington’s ideal combination of outdoor fun and urban amenities, focusing on fresh-air experiences like parks, trails, historical sights, rooftop/patio dining and more. Running from March through June 2021, “The Insider’s Guide to Our Outside” and “WanderLove Road Trip” campaigns promoted Arlington through 5.2 million ad banner impressions on Tripadvisor.com and Virginia Tourism Corporation media channels, as well as the StayArlington website and social channels, the Arlington WanderLove video, and Arlington’s Business Improvement Districts and neighborhood partnerships.

In late 2020, ACVS initiated a light-hearted “#MaskUpArlington” photo contest for Arlington visitors and residents. In addition to encouraging mask-wearing throughout the County, the contest provided much-needed marketing photos of people enjoying Arlington’s sights and amenities while wearing masks. Other FY 2021 marketing initiatives helped showcase Arlington’s diversity. Several of these initiatives focused on expanding and elevating content to honor Arlington’s Black history and culture, such as a February 2021 interview series with local African American leaders. ACVS continues to create diversity-focused content for visitors, including new features on African American historical sights, women-owned businesses, accessible travel in Arlington, and a celebration of Arlington’s Asian American and Pacific Islander-owned businesses in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

## PURSUIT OF GRANTS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

In a time of extremely low revenues and associated budget constraints; grants provided key access to additional resources for destination marketing organizations. In July 2020, ACVS won \$10,000 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) WanderLove Recovery Grant Program. One of 90 DMOs in the Commonwealth awarded grant funds for recovery marketing initiatives, ACVS applied them to its road trip campaign showcasing urban outdoor adventures to East Coast road trippers.

In November 2020, ACVS was awarded \$10,000 from the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program, which is designed to help local and regional tourism entities attract visitors by leveraging local marketing dollars through a local match of state grant funds. ACVS used these funds on its Spring–Summer 2021 marketing campaign, which centered on people disconnecting from their daily routines and reconnecting during a getaway to Arlington.

Arlington led the 2020 Northern Virginia application for a federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act grant. Although this application was denied, ACVS remains hopeful that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will result in supplemental funding to support our efforts and Arlington hospitality businesses in 2021.

## ABOUT ARLINGTON CONVENTION AND VISITOR SERVICE

Arlington County’s official destination marketing organization, ACVS promotes Arlington to travelers and meeting professionals through marketing, sales and visitor services while serving local hospitality partners and supporting an exceptional visitor experience.

### EMILY CASSELL

Director, Arlington Convention  
and Visitors Service  
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“I LIVED NEXT DOOR  
TO SEVERAL OF  
THESE PLACES AND  
NEVER KNEW THE  
**INCREDIBLE HISTORY**  
SURROUNDING ME!  
THANK YOU FOR  
OPENING MY EYES  
TO THIS AMERICAN  
HISTORY.”

## Arts and Culture



*“I’m glad I saw this post. I didn’t even know we had a  
Black Heritage Museum (I’m newish to the area).  
This is art and history. Thank you.”*

– Sarah Owen

### PROGRESS IN A PANDEMIC

Pandemic-related closures remained a challenge for the entire arts ecosystem during FY 2021, prompting arts groups to improvise and adapt. Arlington Public Art delivered an impressive string of projects which continue into 2022. Interactive Arlington Art Truck installations were reimagined as successful passive activations, and signature scaled-down in-person events encompassed virtual elements. From live streaming to old-school terrestrial radio simulcasts, Cultural Affairs programs touched the lives of even more community members through the Arts. In addition, staff furthered Arlington’s broader equity goals with the allocation of an additional \$50,000 for the A.W.A.R.E. Grant (Artists Working to Address and Reimagine Equity). These five grants each provide \$10,000 to support artists in marginalized and underserved segments of the community.



# FY 2021 STATS

Arlington Cultural Affairs continued its pandemic recovery with a series of innovative programs that opened doors to new ways of sharing the arts with the community and the creation of new partnerships and collaborations.

**316** PROFESSIONAL FREELANCE ARTISTS CONTRACTED FOR ARLINGTON ARTS PROGRAMS

**95**  
EVENTS

**ARLINGTON ARTS  
EVENTS**

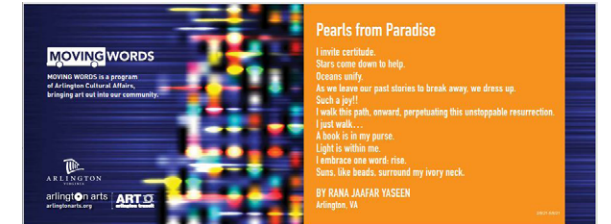
**13,481** ATTENDEES

**445,200** FACEBOOK IMPRESSIONS

## SUCCESSSES

Art and history intersected powerfully in *A Tribute to the Desegregation of Arlington Lunch Counters* by artist Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the historic 1960 sit-ins. This collaboration between the Arlington Art Truck and Arlington Public Art utilized an innovative social media campaign to drive patrons to self-serve kiosks at-or-near the seven original sit-in locations. The project garnered media attention from WTOP, Arlington Magazine and NBCWashington.

Pandemic-related challenges inspired other innovative programmings, such as Lubber Run Live from WETA, featuring live, in-studio radio concerts by regional favorites Jogo Project, Nkula, Caz Gardiner and Justin Jones. Through our longtime partnership with the Rosslyn BID, programming staff curated the Rosslyn Jazz Supper Club concerts, supporting local restaurants with Rene Ibanez y Cubano Groove at Amuse and Irene Jalehti at Sfoglina. Our outdoor projection series *\*Visual Verse\** projected inspiring excerpts of poetry, including the work of U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, onto the facades of Arlington buildings. The program also featured poems by Arlington's new Poet Laureate, the Commonwealth of Virginia Poet Laureate and the D.C. Youth Poet Laureate. Another collaboration with Arlington Public Schools, titled *Collaboration Through Isolation*, projected students' post-COVID-19 aspirations outside their high schools. Regional poets also had their work seen by thousands of commuters on Arlington Transit ARTBuses as part of the annual *Moving Words* program. The *Columbia Pike Blues Festival* weekend featured both live-streamed concerts in partnership with Manoukian Rug Shop and a scaled-down, in-person concert with socially distant capacity, presented in collaboration with the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO).



## PIVOTING TO NEW FORMATS TO DELIVER PROGRAMS

With the prolonged closure of traditional modes of arts delivery, staff leaned heavily on social media activations for both visual and performing arts. Many years of experience with outdoor projections informed *Visual Verse*, which projected the work of the U.S. Poet Laureate and others on buildings and walls across the County. Investment in new video and streaming technology, funded in part by the Wolf Trap Foundation, was used by grantee ensembles such as Jane Franklin Dance, and *A Collaboration Through Isolation*. Arts Enterprise Institute continued a robust series of workshops online collaborating with Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts and three neighboring jurisdictions. We increased our use of Youtube as a streaming platform, with 1,801 video views already in 2021, versus 1,200 in all of 2020. Facebook impressions increased from 168,053 in 2019 to 354,456 in 2020 to 409,952 in 2021. Engagement over the last two years doubled from 15,000 to over 30,000.

Conversely, the Arlington Art Truck met with great success leaning into "old school" delivery modes, such as by mailing pre-printed "Welcome to the Microbiome" cards directly to community members after a robust online campaign, which had garnered requests from as far away as New Mexico. Initially designed as an interactive project, *A Tribute to the Desegregation of Arlington Lunch Counters* adapted to pandemic constraints by placing self-serve kiosks with pre-printed cards in retail businesses at or near the original location of the sit-ins culminating in an exhibition at the Bozeman Government Center.



## A BIG YEAR FOR PUBLIC ART

Now nearly completed, Arlington Public Art led the first major update to the Public Art Master Plan (PAMP) in seventeen years. A sub-element of the Comprehensive Plan in supporting the Public Spaces Master Plan, the PAMP outlines a strategy for how public art will improve the quality of public spaces and the built environment in Arlington for civic placemaking. The PAMP update provides a framework for the County's public art goals and priorities, embraces future opportunities, and recognizes that Arlington and public art have evolved since the plan was first adopted in 2004.

Thousands discovered that they could fully enjoy Arlington's internationally acclaimed public art collection while social distancing. Arlington continues to experience a historic number of new works delivered in FY 2021 at prominent locations throughout the County. These works include:

- **Phantom Formwork** (Thoughtbarn, 2020) Centro Plaza (Columbia Pike and George Mason Drive).
- **Floral Sky** (Michael Kalish, 2020) Market Common (Clarendon Boulevard and Edgewood Street).
- **Sky Column** (Doug Hollis, 2021) at the new Long Bridge Park Aquatic Center.
- **Fire Lines** (David and Eli Hess, 2021) a site specific work for the façade of Rosslyn's new state-of-the-art Fire Station 10 facility as part of a new mixed-use development by Penzance.



## CREATIVE ECONOMY

Creative industries serve as a bridge between the arts and economic development and encourage additional invention and innovation. Arlington's Creative Economy program fosters that connection, offering workshops and events that contribute to small business growth and create unique networking opportunities.

**11** VIRTUAL RETURN ON CREATIVITY EVENTS

**3** VIRTUAL RETURN ON CREATIVITY EVENTS

**12** RETURN ON CREATIVITY PODCASTS

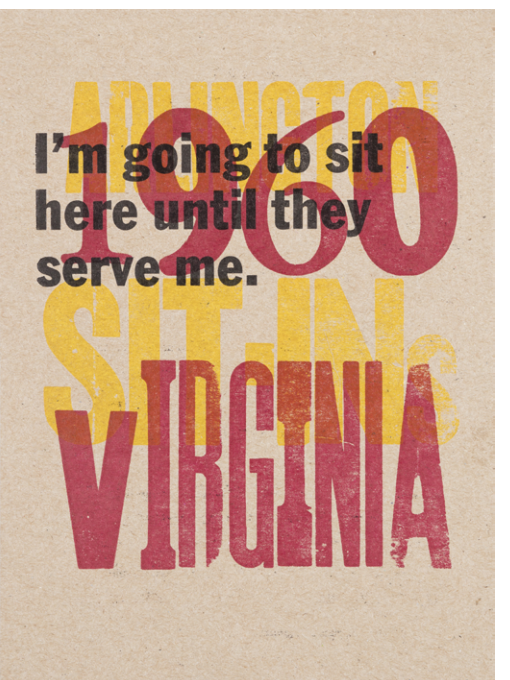
**4** COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS INSTALLATIONS

## ABOUT ARLINGTON CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Arlington Cultural Affairs encourages innovation and excellence within the Arlington arts community and provides programs and services that build community and transform lives by enhancing enjoyment and participation in the arts.

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