



[Lex-Wiki.Org](http://Lex-Wiki.Org) is a local Wikipedia for Lexington, MA. [Lex-wiki.Org](http://Lex-wiki.Org) covers Arts and Entertainment, Local Flora and Fauna, Local History, City Life as well as Town Government and other issues of public interest in Lexington.

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**Submission Date:** 2/20/2017 (due 2/19)

## Biographical Question

1. *What can you tell us about yourself? Please include a brief outline of your relevant experience, whether from private or public life - including public offices held and volunteer service.*

I have been a Lexington resident for over 20 years. Both of my kids went through our public schools. I have been on the board of Lexington Housing Authority since 2012. Currently I am the chairman of the board. I have also been a Town Meeting member since 2012 for Precinct 8.

I currently serve as the president of Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL). I have been involved with CAAL for many years and have been on its executive committee for many years.

Outside Lexington, I have been with Newton Chinese Language School, the largest one in New England area, for many years, having served on its board and its parent council for many years.

## Candidate Platform

2. *What do you believe are the priorities for the Housing Authority in the short and long term?*

I think the Housing Authority should strive to provide a decent and welcoming living environment for low income and seniors, while following the regulations set by the federal and the state governments, and acting in a fiscally responsible way.

In long term, LHA can seek to cooperate with the town government to take on ownership of more affordable units.

## Policy Questions

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3. *How do you propose to increase citizen awareness of, and participation in the Housing Authority decision making process?*

Lexington Housing Authority serves seniors and low-income people. We manage the state and the federal properties for seniors and low-income people. We receive funding mostly from the state and the federal governments. As such, many town residents are not aware of the existence of Lexington Housing Authority, nor its mission. We have our monthly board meeting, which is open to the public, with the agenda published ahead of time, just like any other town committees.

I think we can work more closely with Town's Human Services department to have the information available to people who go to that department. We can also reach out to local ethnicity groups and make information available to those groups, to be distributed to their members.

4. *What can Lexington do to improve existing affordable housing facilities, and to increase the number of units available for affordable housing?*

Lexington can continue to support the renovation of certain housing facilities managed by LHA by granting CPA fund for such projects, like the Town has been doing for many years. Funding like this significantly increases the chance for LHA to secure grant from DHCD or HUD.

LHA mostly manages state and federal properties for senior and low income people. While LHA does have small number of units of its own, LHA does not have a large budget to purchase new units. What have been done in the past is for the Town to transfer the ownership of certain affordable units to be managed by LHA.

Generally speaking (beyond LHA), I think the Town can continue to support the work by LEXHAB and LHA by helping acquire certain houses or units and designate them as affordable units. Zoning policy change is another area where the Town can help increase the affordable units.

5. *What areas besides the Lexington budget are available to fund Housing Authority renovation and construction projects? Are there any sources not yet tapped?*

LHA gets most of its renovation and construction budget from DHCD or HUD. From time to time, LHA applies CPA fund to help such projects, which in turn helps to secure the funding from

DHCD or HUD, as the strong local support is always a plus. Sometimes the available local funding can help LHA to get special grant.

We are constantly looking at various state and/or federal programs that provide funding for agencies like LHA. We have successfully applied and been granted with various kinds of funding.

6. *What is or should the housing authority do to ensure that residents with limited English proficiency are easily able to communicate with housing staff?*

Housing Authority should provide a welcoming and decent living environment for all its tenants. When it comes to communication with tenants with limited English proficiency, the agency should try its best to make it as easy as possible. Often it means to provide translated notices and provide translation service while having an important meeting.

Currently I know the agency provides Chinese translation for notices and it makes translators (via Town’s Human Services department) available for important tenant meetings.

7. *Do you feel that Housing Authority residents are fully integrated in the Lexington community? Is this an issue that the Housing Authority should be addressing?*

Like any immigrant coming to a new country, it takes time and effort to integrate. It takes the efforts from both ends to have a successful integration. Are we there yet? No, just like it is the case for all new comers into Lexington.

The agency should be mindful about the difficulties that new comers face and make an effort to provide a welcoming environment. This includes help provide translation service for important notices and meetings. Local ethnicity groups can play a role here by some the new comers to settle down more quickly.

8. *Over the last year, can you describe one issue which the Housing Authority handled very effectively? And one issue that could have been addressed better?*

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the agency was down a maintenance man for over 6 months. But the agency handled it very well. All work orders continued to be completed on time, the grounds were kept up, and all vacant units were turned over quickly. The staff worked with each other to ensure that what was needed was communicated. They implemented a system to ensure emergency and priority items were taken care of immediately while also scheduling routine maintenance and smaller issues. Maintenance staff also stepped up and did not complain about added work or increased “on call” time.

The Housing Authority receives many applications from homeless individuals and families from across the state who need immediate housing assistance. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to help everyone as we have a limited supply of units and very low turnover rates. Thus, it is a priority of the housing authority to acquire more units (through the partnership with the state government and local town government) to add to our portfolio to address the increased need for affordable housing by individuals from our community and across the state.

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*All candidates are asked to limit the response to each question to at most two or three paragraphs, and to provide the questionnaire responses by end of day Sunday, Feb 19th, 2017. Responses will not be edited, and will run as submitted. They will be posted on [lex-wiki.org](http://lex-wiki.org) in PDF format and announced through other town media. Questionnaire coordinator Andrei Radulescu-Banu ([bitdribble@gmail.com](mailto:bitdribble@gmail.com), 617-216-8509).*

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