Massachusetts Municipal Association
Annual Meeting

Inspire Engagement with
a Citizens’ Academy

Town of Lexington
Overview/Goals of Lexington Citizens’ Academy

• Annual Program - Began in 2009
• Response to 20/20 Committee Recommendations:
  – Encourage New Volunteers; Previously Unengaged Residents
  – Community Outreach
  – Town Manager’s Secret Motivation
• 10 Week Program, Two Hours Long, September - December
• Most Municipal Departments and School Department Participates
• Limit to 30 Participants
• Concludes with ‘Graduation’ at Selectmen’s Meeting
Promoting the Citizens’ Academy

- Town Listserv
  - Lexington List/Town Meeting Members List
  - Lexington School System Parent Email List
- Lexington Community Center Digital Display Boards
- Lexington Minuteman Newspaper
- The Boston Globe
- Patch.com
- Flyers at Community Events
- Waitlist from Prior Years ****
- Word of Mouth *(date night)*
- Town Website
- Recreation Brochure
- Community Education Brochure
Program Announcement

The Lexington Citizens’ Academy begins its ninth year in September and runs through early December. The program is designed to expose residents to the various Town departments so they can gain a better understanding of how municipal government works. Through presentations, discussions, and visits to Town departments, participants have the opportunity to hear from various Directors and Managers and learn about the operations of Town programs and services. It is intended as a two-way dialogue between Town staff and residents. Participants discover new opportunities for public involvement and the role they can play in Town government. Topics include Schools, Public Works, Police Services, the Town Budget, Recreation Programming, Library Services, and more. The Academy is an annual project, held once a week in the evenings, and enrolls approximately 30 residents. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rajon Hudson in the Town Manager’s Office at rhudson@lexingtonma.gov or 781-698-4543.
Webpage Buzz

Have you ever wondered…

• What the evidence room at the Police Station looks like?
• What gets carried on a fire truck?
• How the Town sets the Fiscal Year budget?
• When you need a building permit?
• How many languages are spoken by students at the public schools?
• Who builds trails on Conservation lands?
Staff Coordinator

• Assigned to Management Fellow
• Advertising
• Communicating with participants
• Scheduling each session and meeting locations
• Meeting with Department Managers prior to presentations
• Providing materials
• Conducting evaluation
• Evaluation feedback to Department Managers
# 2017 Lexington Citizens’ Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 14, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Overview of the Town</td>
<td>Cary Hall, 1605 Mass Ave, Estabrook Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 21, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Town Financials &amp; Community Center Tour</td>
<td>Lexington Community Center, 39 Marrett Road, Room 242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 28, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Land Use, Health, Community and Economic Development</td>
<td>Town Office Building, 1625 Mass Ave, Parker Room</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 12, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Emergency Services - Fire</td>
<td>Lexington Fire Station, 45 Bedford Street</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 19, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>School Administration Building, 146 Maple Street, Lower Level Conference Room #2</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 26, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Town Meeting &amp; Town Clerk</td>
<td>Cary Hall, 1605 Mass Ave, Battin Hall</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 2, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Cary Memorial Library &amp; Recreation and Community Programs</td>
<td>Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 9, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Public Works &amp; Public Facilities + Tour</td>
<td>Samuel Hadley Public Service Building, 201 Bedford Street, Cafeteria</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 16, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Police &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>Lexington Police Station, 1575 Massachusetts Avenue</td>
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<td>Monday, December 4, 7pm-9pm</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen Meeting - Graduation!</td>
<td>Cary Hall, 1605 Mass Ave, Estabrook Hall</td>
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Benefits of the Citizens’ Academy

- Generated interest in serving on Boards, Committees, Town Meeting
- Increased diversity of Town boards/committees
- A new ‘favorite’ activity of staff
- De-mystifies Town government
- Citizens became vocal supporters
- Word-of-mouth interest
Diversity of Town Government

![Bar chart]

Number of Asian residents on:  
- ... elected bodies: 2013 - 9 (4.3%), 2015 - 15 (7.2%)
- ... elected as well as non-elected bodies: 2013 - 25 (4.8%), 2015 - 34 (7.0%)

Source: List - Town Clerk's office; analysis mostly by surname
**Session Evaluation**

Your response aids in the planning of future programs. Please feel free to attach a separate sheet for more detailed comments. Evaluation results will be reported in the aggregate and remain confidential.

**SESSION EVALUATION**

**Session #1: Introduction & Overview of the Town**  
☐ I did not attend this session

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall rating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of topics covered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depth of coverage of topics</td>
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Do you feel you have a better understanding of Town Government after having attended this session?  
☐ Yes       ☐ No       ☐ Not sure

**Additional comments:**
1. What was your favorite session and why? ________________________________

2. How long have you lived in Lexington? ________________________________

3. How did you hear about the Citizens’ Academy? Please check all that apply.

☐ Notice with tax bill
☐ Colonial Times
☐ Minuteman
☐ Lexington Community Education
☐ Farmer’s Market
☐ TMMA e-mail list
☐ Lexington List
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Other: ______________________

4. Did the Academy meet your expectations?

5. How would you rate your overall experience with the Citizens’ Academy?

☐ 1 (poor) ☐ 2 (fair) ☐ 3 (good) ☐ 4 (very good) ☐ 5 (excellent)

6. How would you rate the number of sessions held?

☐ 1 (too few) ☐ 2 (about right) ☐ 3 (too many)

7. How would you rate the length of the sessions?

☐ 1 (too short) ☐ 2 (about right) ☐ 3 (too long)

8. Before the Academy, how would you rate your level of involvement with the Town?

☐ 1 (not involved) ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very involved)

9. After participating in the Academy, how do you think your level of involvement with the Town will change?

☐ 1 (decrease) ☐ 2 (no change) ☐ 3 (increase) ☐ 4 (don’t know)
Sample of Evaluation Comments

Session 3: Land Use, Health, Community and Economic Development

• This was one of the best organized sessions! Terrific to have so many key people share their expertise, all well directed and controlled (including excellent use of the) by the Assistant Town Manager for Development – she was great!
• Perhaps least exciting presentation, but still very worthy
• Very interesting and provocative
• Great range of topics and helpful to see how all these departments interact
• Should have been broken up into two sessions, lots of excellent info that was kind of rushed through in one session
Graduation !!
Planned for 2018-2019

‘Employee Academy’
Thank You!

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www.lexingtonma.gov/town-manager/citizens-academy

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