



## SERVICES TO ASHFIELD IN 2023

### CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND LAND USE

- Submitted a South River Watershed Assessment to the Massachusetts office of the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) under the National Water Quality Initiative program. The assessment identifies potential NRCS conservation practices that would pay for improvements to farm businesses and protect clean water. The plan assessment is now under review by the federal NRCS office. An approved plan should help direct NRCS funds toward South River watershed farmers.
- Identified South River as a priority watershed for the creation of a watershed-based plan and for outreach by the region's nonpoint source pollution agricultural coordinator. Work to begin in early 2024.
- Continued work on a MA Department of Environmental Protection Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant to develop an assessment/scoring system for dirt road storm water runoff, with recommended best management practices. Work included testing the efficacy of the assessment/scoring system, using Ashfield as a pilot community.
- Facilitated a pollinator-habitat conversation/info session that will inform an Ashfield Pollinator Action Plan, to be completed summer 2024 as part of the Franklin County Regional Pollinator Action Plan.
- Helped the town administrator and energy committee with completion of the FY23 MA Green Communities Annual Report.
- Engaged with town officials and residents about building climate resiliency in the South River watershed, as a part of Conway's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant.
- Prepared a memo summarizing known short-term rental numbers in Franklin County, revenues for towns that have opted in to the lodging tax, and existing bylaws across the state related to short-term rentals. Towns can use that info to develop policies and bylaws, if desired. Ashfield opted in to the lodging tax at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting.

### COMMUNITY HEALTH

- Conducted the annual student health survey to assess teen attitudes and behavior among middle and high school students. Staff reported to Mohawk Trail Regional School administrators on results from 101 Mohawk students, representing 81% of the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade classes. Survey data meets federal requirements for the school and is valuable for grant writing and program planning.
- Provided training, materials, and technical assistance for the evidence-based PreVenture substance use prevention and mental health promotion program in the school district.
- Worked with Mohawk Trail Regional School District administration and staff to implement Restorative Practices school climate improvements.
- Provided funding and facilitation support to the Mary Lyon Foundation for the creation of the West County People Supporting People Network, which hosted a resource fair to bring the county's healthcare and human service agencies to the region.
- Supported town officials with information and technical assistance on spending opioid settlement funds.
- Worked with town officials to recruit residents to participate in the MA Community Health Survey, to better understand local needs and encourage state investment in improving health outcomes.
- Provided 8 Ashfield children with summer camp scholarships through a Community Health Improvement Plan Foundation for Community Justice mini-grant to improve youth health.

### SHARED MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- Ashfield contracted with the FRCOG to receive collective bid pricing for highway products and services, including rental equipment; heating and vehicle fuel; elevator maintenance; and fire extinguisher services.
- The FRCOG Cooperative Inspections program issued 117 building permits, 65 electrical permits, 47 plumbing/gas permits, and 9 Certificates of Inspection for Ashfield in 2023.

- The FRCOG Town Accounting program produced biweekly vendor warrants, and provided monthly budget reports to all officials and departments through the end of fiscal year 2023. The Town continues to have access to historical accounting data through the FRCOG's MIP software.
- FRCOG staff organized and facilitated educational meetings for members of town energy committees, including presenting information on various topics and conducting follow-up communication.
- Ashfield is a Public Health Nursing Program member of the Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS), a health district based at the FRCOG. CPHS staff:
  - Acted as administrators for COVID-19 and flu clinics, serving over 385 West County individuals, including many Ashfield residents. An Ashfield clinic served 47 people and provided 55 doses of vaccine.
  - Hosted drop-in nursing hours at the Ashfield Senior Center and First Congregational Church, serving 83 different people in 133 separate contacts.
  - Gave 259 Flu and 257 COVID vaccinations at drop-in nursing hours and home visits countywide. Of these, Ashfield residents received 19 vaccines, including 8 during home visits.
  - Completed state-mandated infectious disease surveillance and reporting for communicable disease cases in district member towns, checking state disease reporting system daily and following up as required, including for 37 Ashfield cases.
  - Offered sharps collection and box exchange in collaboration with Franklin County Solid Waste Management District at all drop-in nursing hours: 69 boxes exchanged.
  - Partnered with Belding Library staff to teach resident participants how to identify and respond to an opioid overdose.
  - Offered tick-bite prevention outreach by collaborating with the board of health to provide prevention materials and 5 “shoe spraying” events in West County. Through a district program and MA Department of Public Health subsidy, Ashfield residents sought 11 low-cost tick tests, a value of \$385. Of the tested ticks, 10% tested positive for the anaplasmosis pathogen.
- Provided guidance to town Board of Health members, and regularly attended meetings.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The following list represents the FRCOG workshops, roundtables and training sessions that Ashfield public officials, staff, and residents attended, and the number in attendance.

### Public Health and Community Awareness

- Age and Dementia-Friendly Community Talk – 1
- Food Safety – 4
- NARCAN Trainer Certification – 3
- Opioid Overdose Response – 3
- Understanding Alzheimer's & Dementia – 2
- USDA Rural Development Grant Info Session – 1

### Emergency Preparedness

- Child Emergency Assessment, Recognition, & Stabilization – 1
- Firefighter Fire Response – 2

### Planning, conservation and Development

- Short Term Residential Rentals – 2

## TRANSPORTATION

- Completed an American Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for all municipally owned buildings and facilities.
- Conducted town-requested traffic count for speed analysis on South Warger Road.
- Interviewed Ashfield Department of Public Works Superintendent as part of a countywide survey of the assets and needs of highway departments.
- Engaged in contract to install Franklin County Bikeway wayfinding signs in spring 2024.
- Evaluated a sample of the municipally maintained gravel roads for stormwater and drainage issues to assist in creation of the Unpaved Road Field Assessment Form.
- Created a map for a grant application to conduct resurfacing of the tennis courts.