

# Boston Seniority

Age Strong Commission

City of Boston

Mayor Martin J. Walsh



Winter  
2020  
Issue 7  
Vol. 44

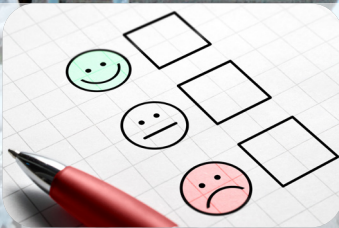
**Free Publication**



**Mayor's Letter**  
p. 4



**Volunteer**  
p. 7



**Mental Health**  
p. 9



# CONTENTS

4  
**MAYOR'S SPOTLIGHT**

5  
**INFOGRAPHIC**

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

6  
**BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Learn about the BPL To Go program.

7  
**VOLUNTEERING**

Get matched to the right volunteer opportunity.

8  
**VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Become an expert.

9  
**MENTAL HEALTH**

Coping with stress due to COVID-19.

10  
**HOUSING**

What to do when facing an eviction.

12  
**THE BUZZ**

Find out what this month's buzz is all about.

Stay Connected  
with the Age Strong  
Commission:



**Main number:** (617) 635-4366



**Website:** [www.boston.gov/age-strong](http://www.boston.gov/age-strong)

# Commissioner's Corner

As we approach the new year, we know that things will feel different this year. We are still connected, even when we cannot physically be together.



We are always looking for ways to ensure you age strong in Boston, during these challenging times and year round. See page 4 to read more from Mayor Walsh about important benefits that can improve your life in the city. I want you all to know that we miss you, and not a day goes by where we aren't thinking about you and planning for ways we can safely be together again.

*-Age Strong Commissioner Emily K. Shea*

## Boston Seniority

Published by the City of Boston's Age Strong Commission

Martin J. Walsh  
*Mayor*

Emily K. Shea  
*Commissioner*

Cassandra Baptista  
*Director of Communications  
Editor and Photographer*

Martha Rios  
*Editor and Photographer*

Andrew Higginbottom  
*Staff Assistant  
Writer and Photographer*

City Hall Plaza-Room 271  
Boston, MA 02201

Boston Seniority is supported in part by The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

*Although all material accepted is expected to conform to professional standards, acceptance does not imply endorsement by the City of Boston.*



Facebook:  
[@AgeStrongBos](#)



Twitter: [@AgeStrongBos](#)

**Do you have a story to share?  
We want to hear from you!**

Email us at  
[Bostonseniority@boston.gov](mailto:Bostonseniority@boston.gov)

# From the Mayor's Desk

## Raising Awareness for City Benefits and Resources



As we approach the new year, I am thinking about you and want you to be set up to save and thrive in Boston. The City of Boston can help you save money throughout the year, and we have recently launched a city-wide campaign that raises awareness of the cost-saving benefits that are available to residents.

I want to make sure that Bostonians know about the benefits and resources that the City offers. If you are 60 and older and need help replacing your heating system, you may qualify for the Senior Saves program. Boston residents can also save 30 percent on their monthly water charges if they are 65 years and older, or fully disabled, and live in a 1-4 family residence. Additionally, the City can help you prevent medical debt, and help you better understand your healthcare options.

I know that there are many residents who do not know about many of our benefits and resources, and I hope we can change that. You may be eligible for many different benefits including tax exemptions that can save you money.

Throughout this year and into next - you will begin to see these #BosCanHelp advertisements in digital and print newspapers, and on social media. No matter what neighborhood you live in or where you come from, the City of Boston is here to help you. This is our City. It should work for all of us. I want to make sure that all of our residents benefit. We want you to learn more about what the City has to offer. If you have used our benefits and resources previously, then tell us how the City helped. For more information about resources you may qualify for, visit [boston.gov/benefits](http://boston.gov/benefits) or call 311.

Sincerely,

*-Mayor Martin J. Walsh*



► Infographic

# Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19



► Currently there is a stay at home advisory between 10pm-5am, unless going to work or running essential errands. Please visit [boston.gov](http://boston.gov) for the most current info.



► Practice physical distancing. Keep your distance from others (at least six feet apart), and avoid crowded places.



► By wearing a face covering, you're protecting yourself and others while helping to slow the spread of COVID-19.



► If you or someone you know thinks they have contracted the virus, call your doctor to determine your next steps. Please do not delay emergency medical care.



► Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.



► Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.



► Avoid shaking hands, as handshakes are a common way to spread the virus and bacteria from one person to another.



► Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## It's Flu Season in Boston

Due to COVID-19, getting your flu shot is more important than ever this year. By getting vaccinated, you protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from becoming sick. You also help reduce the burden on our hospitals and healthcare systems.





## BPL TO GO

*Source: Boston Public Library*



Patrons are now able to pick up physical items at the Boston Public Library with the new BPL To Go program. Using the library website, phone line (617-536-5400), or the BPL To Go iPhone app, patrons will be able to “order” (place a hold on) items such as:

- Books ● DVDs ● CDs

Library card holders — including e-card holders — will be able to safely pick up their items much like picking up takeout from a restaurant, and return items using designated bins. BPL To Go is available at most Boston Public Library locations.

### **How does BPL To Go work?**

At the branches, patrons arrive at the branch but must remain outside. Patrons should call the branch phone number, which will be posted on the door, to let staff know they’ve arrived. Library staff will safely retrieve the ordered items before patrons enter the vestibule to collect their items and drop off any returns.

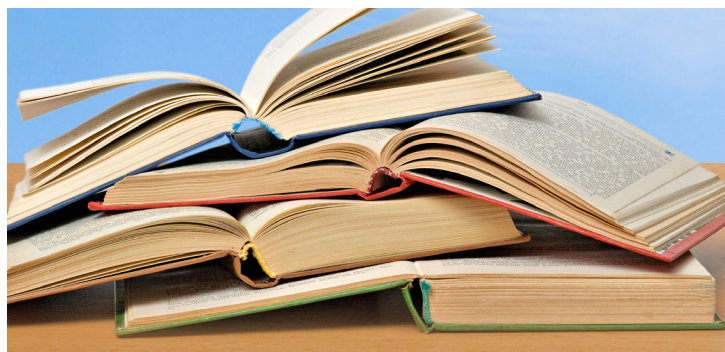
Patrons will be notified when their items are ready for pickup, and items will remain on the holds shelf for 14 days from the date you are notified.

If your hold pickup location is the Central Library, you may go to that location for pickup anytime during these hours: Monday – Thursday 10am – 6pm, Friday & Saturday 10am – 4pm (except holidays). Limited, scheduled public computer sessions are also available.

If your hold pickup location is a branch library, your notification will include a link to schedule a specific pickup time. If you need assistance scheduling your pickup, please call 617-536-5400.

All patrons will be required to wear face coverings and maintain physical distancing at all times.

When they arrive at the service desk, patrons will share their last name and first initial with library staff, or they can scan their library card from a barcode scanner on their side of the desk. Library staff will retrieve the patron’s items and pass them to the patrons safely and with minimal contact.



# Join Americorps Seniors Today!

Let us match you to the right volunteer opportunity



**Recruiting volunteers age 55+ / Must be CORI Cleared**

## **B**ecome a Virtual Workshop Facilitator

**Volunteer to facilitate one of the following topics:**

- Opioid/Drug Education & Prevention
- Money Smart

**Virtual training & ongoing support - Free Samsung Galaxy Tablet**

**Wifi & facilitator toolkit - Reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses**

**Other volunteer opportunities:**

- Make food pantry deliveries to older adults
- Assist teaching ESL
- Provide Companionship or Respite
- Teach older adults how to navigate public transportation
- Prepare simple taxes for older adults
- Remote volunteering available

**Training & ongoing support - Reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses**

**AGE+**



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

**To learn about other rewarding opportunities, contact:**

Monique Carvalho at 617-635-4374

[monique.carvalho@boston.gov](mailto:monique.carvalho@boston.gov)

## ► Staying Connected

# How to Become a Virtual Meeting Pro

*By Andrew Higginbottom,  
Age Strong Staff Assistant*

From free video communication tools like Zoom to smartphone apps like Facetime, there are a lot of ways to see and catch up with family and friends without having to leave your home. Many online communication tools provide a video feature to help you feel more connected to loved ones. These virtual communication tools are now a thing for pretty much everyone, including older adults who are “zooming” for family check-ins, book club meetings, happy hours, fitness classes, weddings and religious ceremonies. In addition to zoom, there are many other video conferencing options, including Skype, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, Facebook Messenger, Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex.

Navigating these virtual platforms can be tricky. If you're unsure about them — and maybe a little intimidated — we're here to help.

- The key to a good video call is the audio. Nothing improves the quality of a video meeting as much as a headset and good audio etiquette. Make sure you have a headset. Bad audio from one or two participants can ruin the virtual meeting.



In addition, you should be in a quiet space with good lighting when you connect to avoid background noise and make others be able to see you.

- Close tabs or applications you don't need during the call; this can significantly improve video performance, especially on older computers.
- Don't sit in front of a bright window with the camera facing you (ideally all light sources are placed behind the camera).
- Arrive early. By arriving early, you can troubleshoot any problems with the meeting tool like testing the video, audio, and background.



# Coping with Stress Due to COVID-19

*Information Provided by the Boston Public Health Commission*

For many of us, COVID-19 has disrupted our routines and made everyday activities challenging. These changes, on top of the general uncertainty around this pandemic, creates feelings of stress, fear and nervousness. These feelings are completely normal, and people typically bounce back. The following information can help you cope with stress and support others during this time.

## **Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include**

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.

## **Things you can do to support yourself**

- Stay up to date about developments related to COVID-19 by using reliable and accurate sources of health-related information, such as the CDC and BPHC.
- Take breaks from watching, reading,

or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting.

- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.
- Focus on positive aspects of your life and things that you can control.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Reduce stress in yourself and others.

Sharing the facts about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. When you share accurate information about COVID-19 you can help make people feel less stressed and allow you to connect with them. If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:

- 911
- Call or text Samaritans Inc. 24/7 at (877) 870-HOPE
- Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.



# What to do When Facing an Eviction

*Source: Department of Neighborhood Development*

Here is information on your options in the face of an eviction.

**What is a Notice to Quit? What do I do if I receive one?** To start an eviction, your landlord must give you a written Notice to Quit telling you they plan to end your tenancy. Landlords usually send this letter — and start the eviction process— for one of three reasons: ● Non-payment ● Lease violation ● No-fault

No matter what type of Notice to Quit you receive, if your notice gives you the right to request a meeting or hearing, **ASK FOR ONE.**

The federal government has put an eviction moratorium in place until December 31, 2020. It prohibits property owners from evicting tenants due to non-payment of rent.

Tenants are required to sign and submit a CDC declaration form to the landlord stating that they qualify for protection under the moratorium. Sign and submit this form as soon as possible, it can be found on [boston.gov/eviction-questions](https://boston.gov/eviction-questions).

Mayor Walsh has signed the Housing Stability Notification Act. The Act requires property owners and constables serving a Notice to Quit and Notice of Lease Non-renewal to also provide tenants with a

Notice of Tenants' Rights and Resources. As a tenant, you may choose to, but do not have to, move by the move out date in the notice to quit. **Only the court can order you to leave your home.**

**Here are some of your rights as a tenant:**

- You can file a complaint if your landlord isn't meeting housing codes. You could speak with them first to try and fix the situation, but you don't have to.
- You only have to pay for utilities that serve your apartment.
- Your landlord is responsible for snow and ice removal in common areas and walkways. They have 24 hours after the end of a storm to clear the area.

## Eviction Help

The Office of Housing Stability's hotline is open, 617-635-4200. You can also email [housingstability@boston.gov](mailto:housingstability@boston.gov). Aside from eviction help, they can answer questions about the Rental Relief Fund.

## Foreclosure Help

The Boston Home Center's call center is open, 617-635-4663. You can also email [HomeCenter@boston.gov](mailto:HomeCenter@boston.gov). Aside from foreclosure help, they can assist with emergency repairs and buying or maintaining a home.



# Resources to Support Family Care Partners

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have had to adjust and change their daily routines, which can be more challenging for a care partner to do. Here are some available resources that can help you.

- ▶ **Boston Elder Info:** Connect to all services available to Boston seniors, 617-292-6211, [bei@bshcinfo.org](mailto:bei@bshcinfo.org)
- ▶ **Alzheimer's Association:** The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 hotline in over 200 languages: 1-800-272-3900. Find a list of virtual programs and support groups at [alzmassnh.org](http://alzmassnh.org).
- ▶ **Massachusetts Adult Day Services Association:** 126 adult day health programs are opened in the state during this time. Contact to discuss more options with you. 617-469-5848, [madsaoffice@rogerson.org](mailto:madsaoffice@rogerson.org)
- ▶ **Family Caregiver Support Program:** Provides 1:1 counseling, personal care attendant scholarships, and action plans. Accessible through Boston Elder Info, 617-292-6211
- ▶ **The Center for Memory Health at Hebrew Senior Life:** Offering virtual care management, virtual family care programs, and a 24/7 support line. 617-363-8600, [cmh@hsl.harvard.edu](mailto:cmh@hsl.harvard.edu)
- ▶ **Help for Alzheimer's Families:** Free respite care grant for free personal care attendant hours. Get more info at, [helpforalzheimersfamilies.com](http://helpforalzheimersfamilies.com)
- ▶ **Honoring Choices Massachusetts:** Focused on the rights of every adult to direct their health care choices and make a plan to receive the best possible care that honors their values & choices, all through their lives. More info at, [honoringchoicesmass.com](http://honoringchoicesmass.com)

## Virtual Memory Cafés

Virtual Memory Cafés are a welcoming place for individuals experiencing memory loss and their care partners. Be a part of our community in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment.

Join a virtual Black/African American Memory Café. Meets on the second Friday of every month from 10am - 12pm

Also, available in Spanish on the second Thursday of every month from 10am - 12pm

### For Zoom information, contact:

Nuria Silva at 617-635-4366 or email [nuria.silva@boston.gov](mailto:nuria.silva@boston.gov)

National Virtual Memory Cafés are available everyday. Go to [memorycafedirectory.com](http://memorycafedirectory.com) for more info.

For dementia support and information, contact: Amy Walsh, Dementia Friendly Boston at 617-635-0947 or email [amy.walsh@boston.gov](mailto:amy.walsh@boston.gov)



# Congratulations!

Mary Beth Kelly, Outreach and Engagement Specialist at the Age Strong Commission, received the 2020 Henry L. Shattuck Public Service Award for her extraordinary service to the City of Boston and the public.



## Step Over Here...

Age Strong was honored with the Golden Shoe Award, along with the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, for "advancing age-friendly walking throughout Massachusetts."

## Exciting News!

The Age Strong Commission received the 2020 n4a Aging Innovations Award for Boston's Senior Civic Academy in the Advocacy category.







**"As we approach the  
new year, I am  
thinking about you ..."**

*-Mayor Walsh*

**AGE+**



City of Boston  
Age Strong Commission  
Mayor Martin J. Walsh