



Power in Numbers

Working together to make housing happen

MHP Local Boards Training
March 25, 2026



Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)

Our mission is to encourage the production and preservation of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income families and individuals, and to foster diverse and sustainable communities through planning and community development.

Every person in Massachusetts should have a safe, healthy, and affordable place to call home. We achieve this by advocating for opportunity, expanding access to housing, and developing the field.



Massachusetts Housing Leadership Academy

Our **free, six-month fellowship** empowers local officials to engage their constituents in creating thriving communities with homes for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

- Build a deeper understanding of our housing challenges and the options available to cities and towns for addressing them
- Get expert guidance on community engagement and building local support for housing policy reform
- Join a community of housing leaders



Municipal Engagement Initiative

Local support can make or break new housing development. Yet many communities in Massachusetts lack a strong pro-housing advocacy group.

Founded in 2018, **MEI works with residents on the ground** to change the conversation and support existing local efforts in favor of more affordable housing.

Each city or town has its unique challenges, so we focus on bringing together big tent coalitions to support affordable housing production.



Why do we need pro-housing coalitions?

Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis

Researchers observed and reviewed thousands of hours of public meetings and examined who was making comments on housing projects.

When compared against all registered voters, **commenters were disproportionately white, male, older, and homeowners**, and they showed up overwhelmingly to **oppose** new housing developments.

These comments have successfully stopped the creation of thousands of homes for Massachusetts residents.

Municipal Engagement Initiative

Since 2018, CHAPA has worked with residents in **45 different communities** across the state. In that time, our coalitions have achieved a broad range of victories, including:

- Advocating for new **affordable housing development opportunities**
- Establishing **Affordable Housing Trusts**
- Expanding **Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaws**
- Passing **multi-family zoning**
- Passing the **Community Preservation Act**
- Passing **Housing Production Plans**
- Electing **pro-housing officials**, and more!

Big Tent Coalition Building Model

Municipal Staff
Elected Officials
Housing Advocates
Developers
Local Businesses
Civic Groups
Service Providers

Houses of Worship
Environmental Groups
Transit Advocates
Renters
Homeowners
Cultural Groups
Racial Justice Advocates

... And anyone who believes that all people
deserve safe, affordable, accessible housing!

MEI Success Stories

Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition

- Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport, Salisbury, and West Newbury
- Application was initiated by someone who was a former Affordable Housing Trust Board member
- 30 housing articles published in the Newburyport News with stories that discussed Fair Housing, housing vouchers, local development projects, as well as personal stories from residents



MEI Success Stories

Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition

- Formed working groups for Legislation and Projects
- Co-hosted the North Shore Pro-Housing Summer Social in Ipswich with Abundant Housing MA with keynote speaker Lt. Gov Kim Driscoll
- Advocated for the redevelopment of the vacant Brown School, which will become 29 new homes, all deeply affordable



MEI Success Stories

Revere Housing Coalition

- Focused on community support during COVID pandemic
- Included planners, City Councilors, and the Mayor in meetings
- Established an Affordable Housing Trust,
- Members of the coalition now serve on the Affordable Housing Trust Board, the Revere Housing Authority's Board of Trustees, the Housing Production Plan Advisory Committee, and Community Land Trust steering committee.



EDITORIALS

Guest Op-Ed: Revere Housing Coalition Statement on the Inclusionary Zoning

by [Journal Staff](#) • June 1, 2022 • [0 Comments](#)

By Lor Holmes

Keys to Success

- Maintaining ongoing collaboration with municipal staff, elected officials, and community organizations
- Group Structure including Steering Committee, Working Groups, and general membership
- Regular monthly meetings, educational forums, and social events
- Continuous outreach through events, print and social media, and 1-on-1 conversations
- Taking a regional approach in smaller communities
- Engaging residents of all ages and backgrounds, especially tenants, parents with young children, and local business owners
- Proactive communication - don't wait until the opposition gets their message out there first

Coming Up!

Municipal Engagement Initiative

- Accepting 4 new communities
- Applications open **April 6** and close **May 4**

Housing Leadership Academy

- Accepting 35 applicants for next semester
- Applications open **March 30** and close **April 27**

Webinars

- Building Local Support for Housing, **April 14 (6:30 - 8pm)**
- Storytelling for Change, **May 12 (6:30 - 8pm)**



Thank you!

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