

**Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Long-Term Services & Supports and Health Equity Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025

Time: 11am to 12pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Members Participating Remotely	
1	Carl Richardson (Co-Chair) –Massachusetts State House
2	Hon. Denise Garlick – Commission Chair
3	Chris White – Road to Responsibility, Inc
4	Oz Mondejar – Mucho Gusto Consulting
5	Leo Sarkissian – The Arc of Massachusetts
Members Not Present	
6	Angela Ortiz – MA Health Council
7	Charlie Carr (Co-Chair) – Disability Policy Consortium
Additional Commissioners Present	
8	Nancy Garr-Colzie – Worcester Disability Commission; Center for Living and Working
9	Victoria Gill – Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Action Items		Person Responsible
1	Invite Leslie Darcy from MassHealth again to provide us with an update	Charlie
2	Invite Collin Killick and Bill Henning to speak about the consequences of Covid regarding health equity for people with disability and lessons learned	Charlie

Agenda

1. Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Minutes
 - Motion to approve minutes
 - Motion approved
2. Affordable Housing Search: User presentation for General Providers Presentation by Tori Decker, Community Manager; Emma Rial, Customer Service & Training Manager; and Abby Werner, Director of Data, Research and Compliance from Housing Navigator Massachusetts
 - Key takeaways:
 - Housing Navigator Massachusetts (HNMI) is a nonprofit organization that builds technology for public good to improve equitable access to

affordable rental housing and increase transparency in the affordable housing market.

- HNMI described itself as the “front door” to affordable housing in Massachusetts, connecting people to housing opportunities through a centralized digital platform.
- The presentation identified key challenges in the affordable housing system, including time, complexity, and outdated application processes, which make affordable housing more difficult to navigate than market-rate housing.
- HNMI works with 100+ property owners and lists 216,000+ affordable units statewide, covering a wide range of income-restricted rental housing types.
- The organization’s primary tool is a free, renter-centered housing search platform, available online and accessible via mobile devices, tablets, and computers.
- Users can filter housing listings by location, bedroom size, affordability type, eligibility criteria, availability, and accessibility features, including mobility, vision, and hearing access.
- The presentation clarified the difference between eligibility and affordability, noting that affordability depends on how rent is set, such as rent based on income versus fixed below-market rent.
- The platform includes both rent-based-on-income units and fixed below-market rent units, and provides information to help users understand how housing vouchers interact with different housing types.
- Housing Navigator includes all major types of income-restricted rental housing in Massachusetts, while excluding medical facilities such as nursing homes and rest homes.
- Housing was framed as a social determinant of health, with overlap between housing programs and long-term services and supports, including rental assistance, supportive housing models, health-related services, and homelessness prevention.
- Accessibility and equity were emphasized through the platform’s design and search features, aimed at reducing barriers for people with disabilities and others navigating multiple systems.
- HNMI highlighted the role of user feedback, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, user testing, and service provider input, in shaping platform development and priorities.
- The organization shared future priorities, including work on common applications, data sharing, platform improvements, consumer education, and ongoing research initiatives.
- The presentation concluded with an invitation for collaboration, encouraging organizations to share the resource and provide feedback to inform outreach and future improvements.

- Discussion:

- Subcommittee members asked how Housing Navigator Massachusetts is funded. It was shared that funding primarily comes through the state and includes partnerships with entities such as the HLC Office of Housing and Bridge Over Troubled Waters.
- A comment was made noting the usefulness of the Housing Navigator website and asking about the status of AHVP and mobile vouchers. In response, it was shared that CHAMP was closed and that there have been many recent changes at HUD.
- A question was raised about how many people are waiting for accessible units. It was stated that this information is not currently available.
- One comment described frequent housing search criteria used when working with individuals who use wheelchairs on affordable and accessible housing policy issues, including two- or three-bedroom units, wheelchair accessibility, rent based on income, not age restricted, and availability through first-come, first-served, lottery, or short waiting lists.
- It was noted that, at the time of the discussion, only two housing developments in the Commonwealth met those criteria, one in Chelsea and one in Wellfleet, and that both required applicants to win a lottery. This was described as fairly typical.
- The need for legislators, state agencies, and advocates to have access to non-anecdotal data over time on the supply of accessible housing available to low-income individuals without vouchers was raised.
- A question was asked about whether Housing Navigator's dashboards could provide data over time, rather than snapshots at single points in time, to better support advocacy and policymaking.
- In response to a question about what contributes to missing data, it was explained that Housing Navigator does not take applications directly and that its search engine redirects users to external application systems.
- A question was asked about which regions of Massachusetts are served, and Worcester was referenced.
- A question was asked about prior use of the Housing Navigator search tool and housing data dashboards.
- It was clarified that transitional programs, nursing homes, and rest homes are not listed on the Housing Navigator website, as medical facilities are excluded.
- It was confirmed that independent living and assisted living housing are included, while nursing homes and rest homes are not.
- Section 811 Project Rental Assistance was discussed, including its partnership with MassHealth.
- MassAccess was identified as the platform where DMH and DDS closed referral units are posted for service providers.
- A question was raised about current advertising and outreach efforts. It was shared that outreach includes expanding social media presence through Facebook groups, Reddit, and Instagram, as well as conferences, convenings of service providers, and public libraries.

- It was suggested that the Commission could be an avenue for outreach, including participation in Commission meetings and events.
- Additional outreach ideas discussed included working with local disability commissions and developing short fact sheets to share with groups, independent living centers, and partner organizations.
- It was noted that fact sheets and toolkits would be helpful.
- Resources shared:
 - Housing Navigator MA tool <https://search.housingnavigatorma.org/>
 - The MassAccess registry <https://www.massaccesshousingregistry.org/>
 - 2024 Affordable and Accessible Report: https://housingnavigatorma.org/data/Data%20Opens%20Doors_Affordable%20Accessible%20Housing_2024.pdf
 - 2025 MASILC Report that featured data updates from Housing Navigator - <https://masilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/A-Crisis-within-A-Crisis-Revisited-10.2025.pdf>
 - The best central resource to get voucher information - <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-the-massachusetts-rental-voucher-program-mrvp>

3. FY26 Goals Discussion

- Invite MassHealth to return for future meetings to provide regular updates on Medicare and Medicaid developments at the federal level.
- Potential request to EOHHS to comparative statistics on the number of people utilizing long-term services and supports over the past three years to better understand trends.

4. Adjournment

2026 Meeting Dates

- January 26, 2026
- February 23, 2026
- April 27, 2026
- May 18, 2026
- August 31, 2026
- November 16, 2026

Meeting Materials:

- [August 2025 minutes](#)
- [Housing Navigator MA Presentation](#)