



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Maura T. Healey, Governor ◆ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ◆ Jennifer D. Maddox, Undersecretary

PHN 2023-06

To: Local Housing Authorities (LHAs)
From: Ben Stone, Director, Division of Public Housing & Acting Director, Division of Rental Assistance
Re: Mediation Services provided by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC)
Date: May 18, 2023

This PHN provides information regarding free Mediation Services across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for Local Housing Authorities (LHAs), Local Tenant Organizations (LTOs) and Public Housing tenants.

This free resource, provided by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration's (MOPC) [Housing Mediation Program](#) can help find flexible solutions that work for everyone, in many cases avoiding legal costs, rental arrears, and ultimately evictions.

The utilization of any of the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration's (MOPC) Housing Mediation Program services is voluntary, and LHAs are ONLY offering this RESOURCE to staff, tenants and applicants who may then decide whether to engage MOPC services. This is NOT a program or service offered by the LHAs.

Need to Know

1. Who is Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC)?
2. Goal of Collaboration with MOPC
3. Services provided by MOPC and Community Mediation Centers
4. LHAs Participation
5. Next Steps for LHAs

1. Who is MOPC?

Established by Statute in 1990, [MOPC](#) provides free [mediation](#) services and other conflict resolution tools, including a state-sponsored Housing Mediation Program. This program works through a partnership with up to twelve (12) affiliated community mediation centers located across the Commonwealth. MOPC and their centers offer a voluntary, impartial, confidential, free, and timely mediation services to resolve issues between LHAs and their staff, applicants and tenants.

2. Goal of Collaboration with MOPC:

MOPC's free mediation services can often help resolve issues between landlords and tenants, preempting the financial and social costs of legal processes and evictions.

3. Summary of services provided by MOPC and Community Mediation Centers:

Twelve [Community Mediation Centers](#) (CMCs) offer a range of free mediation and conflict resolution services through the Housing Mediation Program, including;

- a. landlord/tenant mediation for issues like non-payment, behavior, noise, parking, property conditions, communication;
- b. tenant to tenant mediation for issues such as neighbor disputes, noise, behavior, parking, communication; and restorative practices such as circle processes for community building and harm resolution, conflict coaching for individuals seeking help with addressing conflicts, and group facilitation aimed at collaborative decision making.

4. LHAs Participation:

DHCD encourages LHA to share information regarding the mediation program with tenants and as well as engage in good-faith mediation efforts with tenants through MOPC–LHAs may support the program by:

- Displaying information materials about mediation at high traffic areas in public housing; community room, bulletin boards, LTO space where applicable; Providing appropriate space for CMC staff for in-person office hours and confidential space for mediations. Neighboring LHAs may consider working together to set up centrally located office hours.

Some LHAs may already refer tenants to local mediation services, but DHCD encourages all LHAs to work with MOPC's free Housing Mediation Program.

5. Next Steps

LHAs could take any of the following steps:

- a. Provide LHA Board information about MOPC Program, MOPC literature on mediation services with explanation that literature will be distributed to tenants;
- b. Distribute MOPC Program literature and information to new tenants at lease up and to tenants during annual rent redeterminations, post information in common areas and include information on the Authority website; Include MOPC literature with lease violation correspondence to tenants;
- c. Meet with LTO(s) to encourage use of these services;
- d. Schedule a community/tenants meeting to explain the services and emphasize impartial, confidential, free mediation services; or

- e. Reserve private space for clinic hours set up at medium and large LHAs with space for confidential conversations.

LHAs, tenants and applicants with any questions about the mediation services can contact Jarling Ho of MOPC at Jarling.Ho@umb.edu

MOPC Presentation, literature, and full contact list below.

[MOPC Presentation](#)

[HMP When to Refer](#)

[Mediation Decision Tree for Outreach](#)

[HMP Contact List 2023-04](#)

[Community Mediation FAQs landlord and tenant disputes](#)

[HMP Flyer for broad use - English](#)

[HMP Flyer for broad use - Spanish](#)

[HMP Flyer for broad use - Chinese](#)

[HMP Flyer for broad use - Portuguese](#)

[DHCD Resource Locator](#)