



Resources for Fair and Affordable Housing in Massachusetts

Provided below is a non-exhaustive listing of housing related resources in Massachusetts including fair housing enforcement and advocacy, affirmative fair marketing, affordable housing opportunities, housing education and counseling, and more!

Fair Housing Enforcement:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

Boston Office: (617) 994-6000

Springfield Office: (413) 739-2145

Worcester Office: (508) 799-8010

<http://www.mass.gov/mcad>

[See also information in Spanish, Portuguese, and Creole]

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination is the state's chief civil rights agency. The Commission works to eliminate discrimination in housing, lending, public accommodation, as well as employment and education, and strives to advance the civil rights of the people of the Commonwealth through law enforcement, outreach and training.

Massachusetts Attorney General's Office

Boston Office: (617) 727-2200; TTY: (617) 727-4765

Springfield Office: (413) 784-1240

New Bedford Office: (508) 990-9700

Worcester Office: (508) 792-7600

<http://www.ago.state.ma.us>

The Attorney General's Office reviews and responds to civil rights complaints alleging deprivations of, or interference with, civil rights and civil liberties. The AGO may bring enforcement action, where appropriate, may mediate disputes, or may refer complainants to other resources.

Boston Fair Housing Commission

(617) 635-4408

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/civilrights/housing.asp>

The Boston Fair Housing Commission works to eliminate discrimination and increase access to housing in Boston through investigation and enforcement, affirmative marketing, housing counseling, and interagency coordination. The BFHC also manages a computerized listing service (Mertolist) of regional housing opportunities in an effort to provide low-income households increased access to housing in 126 cities and towns of metropolitan Boston.

Cambridge Human Rights Commission

(617) 349-4396

<http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~HRC>

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission is a city law enforcement agency that investigates complaints of discrimination that occur in Cambridge. The Commission also aids the City of Cambridge by educating both

businesses and residents, providing community outreach, and cooperating with other city, state and federal agencies.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
(202) 708-1112; TTY (202) 708-1455
Boston Regional Office: (617) 994-8200; TTY (617) 565-5453
<http://www.hud.gov>

HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination. HUD programs include community planning and development, affordable housing development, and federal public housing and rental assistance. HUD also enforces federal fair housing laws, including the federal Fair Housing Act.

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
(202) 514-2000
<http://www.usdoj.gov>

The Civil Rights Division of the DOJ enforces a variety of federal civil rights laws and is responsible for coordinating the civil rights enforcement efforts of federal agencies whose programs are covered by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Fair Housing Advocacy and Other Legal Resources:

Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston
(617) 399-0491
<http://www.bostonfairhousing.org>
(Serves the communities in Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk counties)

The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston (FHCGB) works to eliminate housing discrimination and promote open communities throughout the region. FHCGB offers recourse to people harmed by discrimination and educates and informs housing professionals and residents of their rights and responsibilities. FHCGB provides a host of fair housing services: testing, case advocacy, training, community outreach, policy advocacy, and research.

Massachusetts Fair Housing Center
(413) 539-9796 ext-101 or (800) 675-7309
<http://www.massfairhousing.org>
(Serves the communities in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Berkshire, and Worcester counties)

The Massachusetts Fair Housing Center works to eliminate illegal housing discrimination, conducts advocacy and outreach, and serves tenants, landlords, policymakers, law enforcers, faculty and students.

Disability Law Center of Massachusetts
Boston Office: (617) 723-8455/(800) 872-9992; (617) 227-9464/(800) 381-0577 TTY
Western MA Office: (413) 584-6337; (800) 222-5619; TTY (413) 582-6919
<http://www.dlc-ma.org>

The Disability Law Center (DLC) of Massachusetts provides information, referral, technical assistance and representation regarding legal rights and services for people with disabilities, including access to community services, special education, health care, disability benefits, and rights and conditions in facilities.

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders

(617) 426-1350

<http://www.glad.org>

Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression. GLAD has a legal information line that provides information and referrals for people with discrimination issues who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, a transgender, or living with HIV/AIDS.

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

(617) 357-0700

<http://www.mlri.org>

The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) is a non-profit legal services organization committed to promoting social and economic justice through advocacy, education and legal action. MLRI staff work with many organizations at the local, state and national level on numerous areas of law affecting those who are low-income. As a general matter, MLRI does not provide legal representation to individual clients.

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association, Inc.

(617) 482-1145

<http://www.lawyerscom.org>

The Lawyers' Committee is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan legal organization that provides pro bono legal representation to victims of discrimination based on race or national origin. The Committee also engages in public policy advocacy, community legal education, community economic development, and other legal services that further the cause of civil rights.

Greater Boston Legal Services

(617) 603-2700; TDD: (617) 494-1757

<http://www.gbls.org>

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) provides critical legal assistance to low-income people in the greater Boston area, including assistance with housing, employment, health and disability, welfare, immigration, and elder and family issues.

MassLegalHelp

<http://www.masslegalhelp.org>

Massachusetts legal aid programs created masslegalhelp.org to assist consumers find practical information about their legal rights. The website includes information about tenants' rights in Massachusetts, self-help forms, sample letters, booklets, handbooks, and frequently asked questions

Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service

(866) MASS-LRS

<http://www.massbar.org>

The MBA Lawyer Referral Service is a public service program dedicated to directing callers to the most appropriate resources, whether that is one of the MBA's attorney panel members, the state attorney general's office, a legal service agency or the MBA's own Dial-A-Lawyer program. The Lawyer Referral Service does not provide free legal advice or make pro bono referrals to attorneys.

Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Information and Requirements:

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

(617) 573-1100; TTY (617) 573-1140

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd>

[Search "Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan Guidelines"]

DHCD provides leadership, professional assistance and financial resources to promote safe, decent affordable housing opportunities, economic vitality of communities and sound municipal management. DHCD provides Community planning and development resources for cities and towns, including resources and support to increase the economic self-sufficiency of their residents. DHCD programs also include affordable housing development, state-aided public housing management and construction, and federal and state rental assistance. It is DHCD's objective to ensure that new and ongoing programs and policies affirmatively advance fair housing, promote equity, and maximize choice.

Affordable Housing Opportunity Listings:

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)

(617) 742-0820

<http://www.chapa.org>

[See the "Search for Accessible/Affordable Housing" link for rental listings and the "Looking for Housing" link for homeownership and rental lottery listings]

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) is the non-profit umbrella organization for affordable housing and community development activities throughout Massachusetts. CHAPA's mission is to encourage the production and preservation of housing that is affordable to low-income families and individuals. CHAPA pursues its goals through advocacy, research, community education and training, and coalition building.

Boston Fair Housing Commission: Metrolist

(617) 635-3321

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/civilrights/housing.asp>

The Metrolist (providing rental housing listings in the Metro Boston area) is available at 1 City Hall Square, Room 966 Boston, MA 02201

Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA)

(617) 822-9100

<http://www.mahahome.org/index.html>

[See listings of homeownership opportunities at <http://www.massaffordablehomes.org>]

MAHA provides comprehensive homebuyer and homeowner education and a listing of affordable homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income consumers. MAHA works to break down the barriers facing first time homebuyers and increase private and public investment in affordable housing.

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

(617) 573-1100; TTY (617) 573-1140

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd>

<http://app1.ocd.state.ma.us/HOP/MainMenu.aspx> [Affordable units for sale]

Housing Education, Counseling, and Search Assistance:

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

(617) 573-1100; TTY (617) 573-1140

<http://www.mass.gov/dhcd>

[Search "How to Obtain Housing Assistance"; also see City/Town Resources]

Massachusetts Housing Consumer Education Centers (nine regional offices)
(800) 224-5124
<http://www.masshousinginfo.org>

Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) offer information, referrals, and services concerning a wide range of housing issues. Each of the nine member agencies of the statewide Massachusetts Nonprofit Housing Association acts as the HCEC for its region. These agencies also offer housing assistance, counseling, and other services to low- and moderate-income residents of Massachusetts.

Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP)
(617) 859-0400; (800) 272-0990 (MA only)
<http://www.mbhp.org>

MBHP is the state's largest regional provider of rental housing voucher assistance and serves homeless, elderly, disabled, and low- and moderate-income individuals and families. MBHP's region spans Boston and 29 surrounding communities. MBHP's mission is to ensure that the greater Boston region's low- and moderate-income individuals and families have choice and mobility in finding and retaining decent affordable housing.

Boston Fair Housing Commission
(617) 635-4408
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/civilrights/housing.asp>

Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation
(617) 973-8700; Deaf and Hard of Hearing Users (800) 720-3480; Consumer Hotline (617) 973-8787 or (888) 283-3757 (toll free MA only)
<http://www.mass.gov/ocabr>

[Search "Approved Counseling Agencies" (homebuyer counseling) and "Foreclosure Resources"; for rental information, search e.g., "Tenant Rights and Responsibilities"]

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR) commits to protecting consumers through advocacy and education. The Division of Banks, Division of Insurance, Division of Professional Licensure, Division of Standards, State Racing Commission, and the Department of Telecommunication and Cable all fall under the OCABR.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
(202) 708-1112; TTY (202) 708-1455
<http://www.hud.gov>

[See also <http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8> for listings of privately owned housing with HUD subsidy]

Other Resources:

Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)
(617) 357-6086
<http://www.masscap.org>
[Search "Agencies and Services"]

MASSCAP is a statewide association of 24 Community Action Agencies (CAAs). CAAs provide emergency assistance to people in crisis, offer programs that fight unemployment, inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and lack of educational opportunity, and provide training in advocacy skills. Services also include weatherization assistance and homelessness prevention.

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)—Statewide Interpreter/CART Referral Service

(617) 740-1600; (800) 882-1155; (617) 740-1700 TTY; (800) 530-7570 TTY; Videophone, dial (617) 265-8447 or use the following IP address: 70.22.152.162
<http://www.mass.gov/mcdhh>

The Statewide Interpreter/CART Referral Service provides referral services for sign language, spoken English, oral, tactile and close vision interpreting for Deaf and Deaf - Blind individuals, as well as making referrals to freelance CART providers for CART provision on behalf of hard of hearing and/or late deafened individuals in a wide variety of settings such as medical, legal, mental health, employment, education and recreational situations.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health: Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
(617) 624-5757; (800) 532-9571
<http://www.mass.gov/dph>

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provides a range of both primary and secondary prevention services to the children of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, their families and others with an interest in the prevention of lead poisoning. CLPPP has developed linkages with a wide array of professionals and programs that provide services to children. CLPPP also provides coordinated and comprehensive nursing case management.

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
(617) 348-8500
<http://www.mass.gov/dta>

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) provides services that include food, job, cash, and domestic violence assistance, as well as emergency shelter. DTA administers benefits such as Food Stamp Benefits, Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) and Emergency Assistance (EA).

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs
(617) 727-7750; (800) 882-2003 (MA only); (800) 872-0166 (TTY)
<http://www.mass.gov/elder>

[See also Massachusetts Aging and Disabilities Information Locator at <http://www.madil.org>]

Through the statewide elder network, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (“Elder Affairs”) provides services locally via Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Councils on Aging (COA) and senior centers in communities across the Commonwealth. Services include home care and caregiver support, nutrition programs, protective services, health and wellness services, housing options, SHINE counseling (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders), or counseling services for elders with limited English proficiency.

Massachusetts Office on Disability
(617) 727-7440 or (800) 322-2020 (V/TTY)
<http://www.mass.gov/mod>

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) was created in 1981 as the state advocacy agency that serves people with disabilities of all ages. The Office has three main components that function to fulfill its priorities: the Government Services Program, the Client Services Program, and the Community Services Program. MOD provides technical assistance, trouble-shooting and advice on all disability related issues.

MassRelay
(800) 439-2370
<http://www.massrelay.com>

MassRelay is a 24/7 service enabling hearing people or people who do not use a text telephone (TTY) to communicate over regular telephone lines with people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, late deafened, or speech disabled.

Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council
(508) 620-7452 (Voice/TTY); (866) 662-7452 (MA toll free)
<http://www.masilc.org>

[See listing of Mass Independent Living Centers at <http://www.masilc.org/docs/addresses.html>]

The Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council (MASILC) is a Governor appointed Council, whose members include persons who are knowledgeable about centers for independent living and the services they provide. The Council includes representatives with a range of physical and mental disabilities from the various geographic areas within the state. The goal of the Council is to ensure provision of community-based, consumer-controlled, cross-disability services in compliance with requirements of the Title VII of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and in accordance with Independent Living Philosophy.

Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST
(888) 341-7781 (V/TTY)
<http://www.fairhousingfirst.org>

FIRST is an initiative designed to promote compliance with the Fair Housing Act design and construction requirements. The program offers comprehensive and detailed instruction programs, useful online web resources, and a toll-free information line for technical guidance and support.

University of Massachusetts Translation Center
(413) 545-2203; (877) 77U-MASS
<http://www.umasstranslation.com>

The UMass Translation Center offers an array of translation, interpreting and language consulting services to a variety of clients, including small businesses, multinational corporations, museums, law firms, hospitals, NGOs, filmmakers, advertising firms, educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to university departments, and individuals.