

**MASSACHUSETTS
IS FOR EVERYONE**



**ABUNDANT
HOUSING
MASSACHUSETTS**

H M A

**MHP Training: Strengthening Local Boards...To
Support Affordable Housing**

AHMA'S Vision

Abundant Housing Massachusetts wants to create...

- ✓ Abundant housing for all
- ✓ A housing market that lets people move when they want, where they want, not when they have to
- ✓ Communities with racially and economically diverse residents
- ✓ Development patterns that facilitate low/no-carbon lifestyles
- ✓ Education on effective organizing tools to address our history of racial segregation



We focus on the supply crisis

Home // Local Coverage

Report: Mass. building 100,000 fewer homes than needed each year

July 15, 2022

By [Simón Rios](#)



Jesse Kanson-Benanav, executive director of the nonprofit Abundant Housing Massachusetts, said zoning laws are a key problem today.

"They affect the vast majority of Massachusetts towns use to make it impossible for anyone who cannot afford large, luxury single families homes from living in their community," Kanson-Benanav said in a press release.



The Problem and Solution

Massachusetts has a severe housing shortage. We aren't building enough homes to keep pace with demand.

We advocate for:

- ✓ More housing near transit and jobs
- ✓ Robust tenant protections to prevent displacement
- ✓ Reform of exclusionary zoning rules
- ✓ Sustainable development practices and communities
- ✓ Robust funding of social and subsidized housing



Our Network

We are growing the pro-housing movement in MA...

- ✓ 400+ individual members across state
- ✓ 15+ affiliated organizations across Eastern MA
- ✓ Allied Partners across the state



Organizing for MBTA Communities

Massachusetts enacted its most ambitious housing law in decades. Now the hard part is enforcing it.

By [Andrew Brinker](#) Globe Staff, Updated December 4, 2022, 4:35 p.m.



The threat of budget cuts is just one piece of a multipronged approach supporters of the law are taking to bring communities on board. Local advocacy groups — including Abundant Housing Massachusetts, bolstered by a \$500,000 grant from the Barr Foundation — are ramping up an organizing campaign they hope will help convince skeptical residents of the law’s importance.



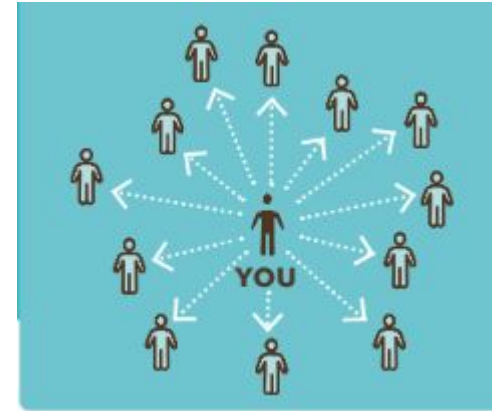
How Advocacy Groups Are Key To Strengthen boards To Support Affordable Housing

- **WE ARE SPEAKING OUT.** Advocates get training and support to speak out at local boards and commissions.
- **WE ARE GETTING ON BOARDS.** We develop new leaders who will take the brave step to get on boards.
- **WE ARE EDUCATING ABOUT HOUSING.** Our groups educate about zoning, housing and land use planning so people can make informed decisions.
- **WE ARE GAINING POWER.** Advocates are running for office. Advocacy groups are endorsing pro housing candidates.



Recruit advocates & leaders

- Research what is happening in your town
- Connect with ally groups
- Tabling at events
- Online sleuthing
- One on ones
- House parties
- Go to public meetings and connect with speakers
- Host a Jane Walk
- Organize a workshop



AND DON'T FORGET TO CREATE A CONTACT LIST!!!



Build Community

- **Hold your first gatherings**
- **Collectively build vision, mission and goals**
- **Name your group**
- **Build a logo**
- **Set up website**
- **Set up social media accounts**



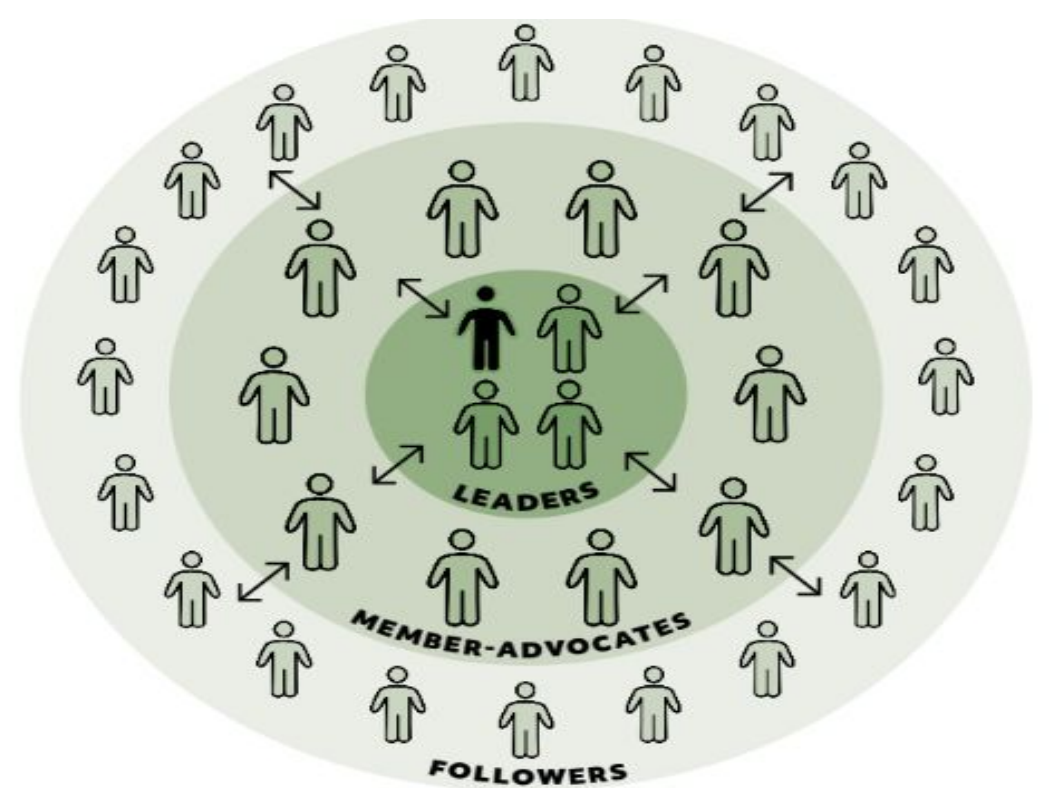
Build structure

- **Create leadership structure**
- **Set a regular meeting schedule**
- **Decide on decision making**
- **To incorporate or not to incorporate...**
- **Build external and internal communications**



Group member structure

A good leader does not “do it all”. A good leader is constantly recruiting new advocates and mentoring new leaders. In that way, if a leader ever needs to step back out of choice or necessity, others are ready to step up to more responsibility in the group.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leaders

- Takes on responsibility for strategic direction, structure and programming of the group
- Serves as a member of leadership team or board, attending and

Member-Advocates

- Takes on finite leadership tasks such as recruiting volunteers and organizing logistics for a tabling event
- May decide to run for town meeting/town or city council, planning board or zoning board.

Followers

- Signs up to receive periodic newsletters
- Votes for group's endorsed candidates in town/city elections



Take action!!

- **Identify goals**
- **Build your coalition**
- **Decide on tactics**
- **Mobilize your base**
- **Celebrate wins and evaluate**



Case Study: BEN 4 Franklin

It started with me and Cobi....



Recruiting new advocates



BEN Launches



BEN Rookie of the Year 2024

- Built a growing base of 90+ pro housing advocates
- Created website and regular newsletter featuring “BEN’s Take” on proposed development projects and policies before planning and zoning boards
- Successfully advocated for the reduction and elimination of parking minimums for Franklin’s proposed 3A district. On August 14, nine town councilors voted unanimously in support of Franklin’s proposed zoning ordinance to comply with the MBTA Communities Law!
- Appointed numerous BEN-affiliated members to the Zoning Board and Master Plan Committee... Max is running for town council



Ready to start a group?

*Read

The full guide on *How To Start A Pro-Housing Group in your community*. The guide will be available for AHMA and Welcoming Neighbors Network members- **please fill out our feedback survey to receive the guide.**

*Reach out:

If you live in Massachusetts, contact AHMA organizers:

- Joyce Mandell, joyce@abundanthousingma.org,
- Julia Davidovitz, julia@abundanthousingma.org and
- Elvira Mora, elvira@abundanthousingma.org

