



2023 MBTA Campaign

Gaining Recognition



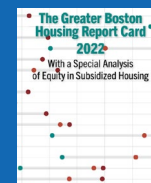
Finalist for the prestigious 2023 Ivory Prize

This recognition from Ivory Innovations validated our ambitious vision and drew national attention to our message: providing people with the information they need is fundamental to solving our housing crisis equitably.



Honoree for “Technology of the Year: Consumer Tech”

Housing Navigator Massachusetts was honored as a *Tech Top 50* from the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council, which called us a “hidden gem of a nonprofit.”



Resource for Research

Illustrating what’s possible when our data is brought into the policy conversation, the annual Greater Boston Housing Report Card featured our data on nine communities to underscore inequity in the distribution of our state’s affordable housing supply.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Time is a resource.” We couldn’t agree more with these words from a case manager who uses Housing Navigator MA as she supports older adults facing homelessness. Our vision for easing the search for affordable housing is driven by this very notion.

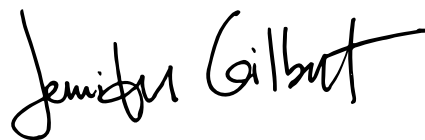
As we near our second anniversary since launch, I am proud of the messages we send every day: If you are struggling to pay the rent, if you need a shorter commute, if it’s time to move closer to children, we see you. If you seek transparency, accessibility, and flexibility when looking for affordable housing, we know it’s not easy. We value your time. We value you. We believe in your resourcefulness.

Time also marks how Housing Navigator MA is living up to its vision. Looking back at last year, I am stunned. Every month, 30,000 people use our site.

That means on average every minute, someone starts a search on Housing Navigator MA.

Our impact report highlights how we continue to increase access and build momentum. Looking to the year ahead, we aim to make the application process less time-consuming and less confusing for both renters and owners.

By making information available—at any time of day or night—Housing Navigator MA offers equitable access to anyone charting their own journey. Thank you for your support to help us deliver on our promise to connect people with places to call home.



Jennifer Gilbert
Founder & Executive Director



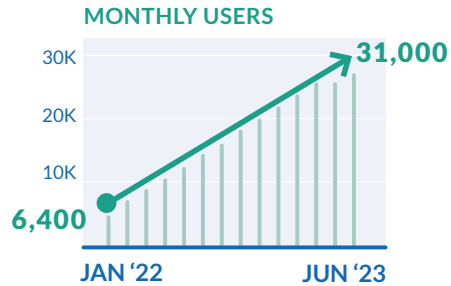
one search
a minute!

Accelerating Growth

Our number of monthly users has increased from **6,400 users** in January 2022 to **31,000 users** in June 2023.

We've quadrupled our users.

As many people now use the site *in a week* as used the site *in a month* in early 2022.

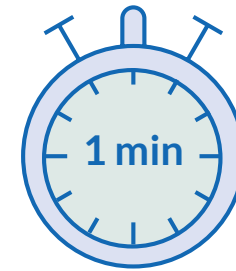


We've added 4,407 accessible units in the last year.

To better serve people with disabilities.



On average, someone starts a search on our site every minute.



Round the clock searches are up.

People use our 24/7 free resource to check out options whenever it suits them. Among our busiest times are early mornings 6-8 am.



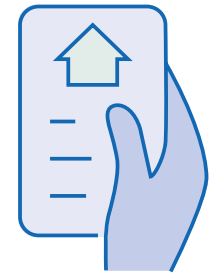
We hosted both in-person and virtual trainings for 1,300+ service providers

From hospital social workers to shelter staff to school personnel to case managers for older adults and people with disabilities.



We now show 3,048 properties statewide.

Up 20% from just a year ago.



Listening

Frustrating. It's the most common word we hear when we ask people to describe the journey to secure stable affordable housing. **Overwhelming** and **confusing** come next. Systemic equity issues heighten the pain, often leaving Black and Latino households unaware of options, particularly in suburban locations.

This year, we responded by devoting time and resources to identify available units outside urban areas and developing outreach strategies to reach and respond to renters.

There is a continuous feedback loop between our users and the Navigator product team, surfacing everything from minor tweaks to larger design changes.

Listen to what our users say about how we bridge the divide in digital and housing equity throughout the Commonwealth

GENERAL FEEDBACK

"Housing Navigator changed the game. I thought, 'If only we had one central tool we could utilize in real time' and it changed my life."

-SEARCH PROVIDER, WESTERN MA

"Es muy buena la aplicación ayuda mucho."

-RENTER

"We have had number of people selected in lotteries they find and apply for from Housing Navigator."

-SEARCH PROVIDER, WESTERN MA

"Because current waitlists are so long, I am constantly referring folx to Housing Navigator for more immediate assistance. I describe it as 'the Google for affordable housing in Massachusetts,' which seems to really help them understand what it is, and why it's such a powerful tool."

-ANNA SIEDZIK

LOTTERY AGENT & SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER,
HARBORLIGHT HOMES BEVERLY, MA

"We have never had one tool we could go to to serve our clients so perfectl."

"Housing Navigator makes our day a lot easier since we can filter our search to certain locations... it's a tool I use almost every day."

-HOUSING SEARCH PROVIDER

FEEDBACK ABOUT THE SHORT WAITLIST FEATURE

"Great idea ... gives us some immediate insight into availability."

-RENTER

"I think it is a very helpful tool. Please continue its use."

-RENTER

"I've had recent success with the first come first serve and Short Waitlist feature! Two clients were able to lease up with their section 8 vouchers within days."

-HOUSING SEARCH SPECIALIST

"The pilot was very successful in the sense that you drove applicants to us that could actually get on the waitlist."

-OWNER PILOT PARTICIPANT



Reaching out

Home is the Foundation Campaign

Part of our mission is to promote the value and life-changing effect of stable, affordable housing. Who better to tell this story than those with lived experience?

Our April 2023 **“Home is the Foundation”** campaign presented five leaders who grew up in subsidized housing—homes listed on Housing Navigator MA today. Each shared their memories of joyful events, lessons learned, and gratitude for the community, stability, and security afforded to them and their families.

MBTA Campaign

We also launched a bi-lingual (English and Spanish) public outreach campaign carrying the message **“We’ll Help You Find Your Way Home.”** Posters on the MBTA Red, Orange and Blue lines and heavily-trafficked bus routes introduced the Navigator. Besides raising awareness, the campaign’s unique QR code delivered 100 new users per week.

HOME IS THE FOUNDATION CAMPAIGN



HOME IS THE FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING

Shirronda Almeida

“I had no idea I lived in affordable housing as a child. As a result of the experience, I value access to green space, a walkable community, and knowing my neighbors.”

Shirronda Almeida
Director, Mel King Institute of Community Building



Shirronda Almeida
Director, Mel King Institute of Community Building



Juana Matias
HUD New England Regional Administrator



HOME IS THE FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING

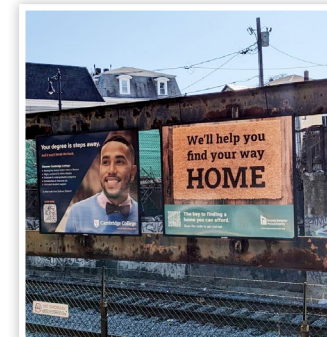
Juana Matias

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the secure housing my family provided me growing up. That stability was instrumental in shaping my world view and in fueling my passion for public service.”

Juana Matias
HUD New England Regional Administrator

“WE’LL HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY HOME” MBTA CAMPAIGN

Key finding: the ads in Spanish generated the most QR code views. As part of a commitment to equity, we’ll keep building on this learning to better reach non-English speaking populations.

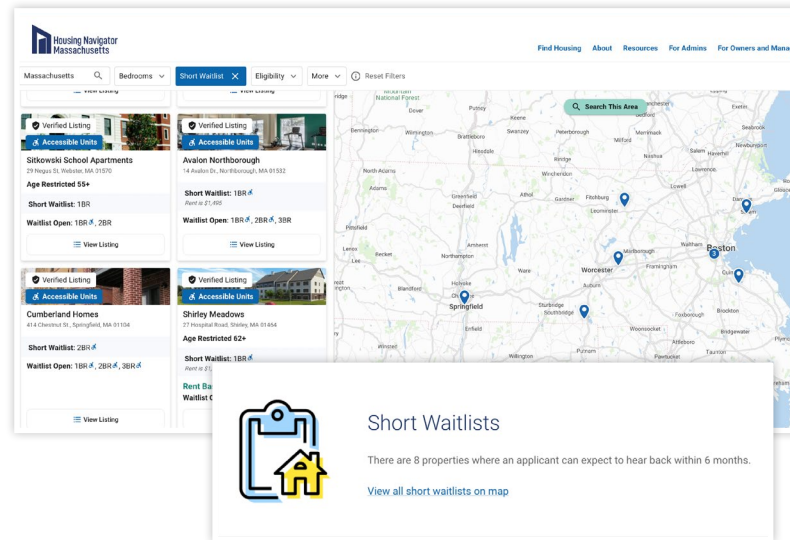


Deepening

As we expand in breadth and depth, we've prioritized work that supports communities disproportionately affected by our housing crisis. We've built the trust to try out new approaches, innovations that more quickly connect people to homes.

In the past year

- **Short Waitlists:** We collaborated in real time to feature units with less than a six-month wait (see image at the right).
- **Updates to our search tool** improved access for people with visual impairment.
- We partnered with the **Boston Center for Independent Living and Disability Policy Consortium** (see image at the right).
- In fall, 2022, we became the **required rentals listing site for the MassAccess Registry**, the Commonwealth's official online search tool for ADA-compliant affordable homes.
- We partnered with a fair housing center to **investigate the discriminatory impact of the lack of transparency** in housing listings.



SHORT WAITLISTS

Renters consistently asked us, “Could you highlight properties with the shortest waits?” This spring, we collaborated with six property owners to test this possibility in real time, featuring properties with a wait of six-months or less. Drawing from this successful pilot, we are building Short Waitlists as a permanent feature.

Results

- Eight percent of our users clicked on these opportunities, totalling 8,000 homeseekers.
- All owners reported an uptick in eligible applications.
- When surveyed, 81% of renters rated the effort a 9 or 10 in terms of satisfaction.



Left to right: Marlee Chong, R Feynman (Disability Policy Consortium), Felix Jordan & Shaya French (BCIL) and Bobby Wang.

WORKING WITH DISABILITY ADVOCATES TO IMPROVE OUR PRODUCTS

Through a partnership with Boston Center for Independent Living and Disability Policy Consortium, we **identified systemic and process barriers to affordable housing for people with disabilities**, highlighting the need to make the application journey easier.

Our Team & Financials

Financials*

OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Grants, contributions, and donations	\$1,116,038
Closing Fees	\$163,200
Donated Services	\$126,358
TOTAL	1,405,596

OPERATING EXPENSES

Personnel & Related Costs	\$564,408
Contract staff & Consultants	\$101,992
Administrative expenses	\$84,788
Software Development & Maintenance	\$221,866
Website & Marketing	\$67,050
Program Development	\$36,788
Donated Services	\$126,358
TOTAL	\$1,203,250

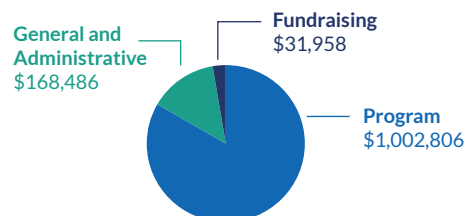
NON-OPERATING REVENUE

Initial Start-Up Contribution	\$1,178,059
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NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Beginning of Year	0
End of Year	1,380,405

OPERATING EXPENSES



Board of Directors

Marty Jones
 Shaw Lupton
 Taisha Sturdivant-Ulysse
 Joe Flatley
 Rachel Heller
 Elisabeth Ortiz Jackson
 Dara Kovel
 Brian Perry
 Angelina Ramirez
 Karin Brandt
 Laureen Borgatti
 Rachel Madden
 Clark Ziegler

Staff

Marlee Chong
Director of Product

Victoria Decker
Community Manager

Jennifer Gilbert
Founder & Executive Director

Elizabeth Haney
Data Project Manager

Angelina Hua
Project Coordinator

April Ognibene
COO

Emma Rial
Navigator Adoption Coordinator

Bobby Wang
Product Manager

Bailey Werner
Summer Data Fellow

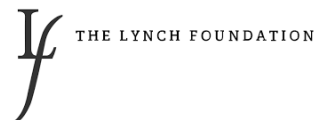


*The Housing Navigator
 Massachusetts Team*

Connect with us

housingnavigatorma.org
hello@housingnavigatorma.org

Key 2022-2023 supporters



*NOTES ON FINANCIALS

- 1) Housing Navigator MA moved out of fiscal sponsorship on January 1, 2022.
- 2) Non-operating revenue reflects funds from our 2020-2021 capital campaign.
- 3) 2023 revenue will reflect \$1,075,000 annually in multi-year public contracts.

Help support the work
 of Housing Navigator

Donate!