



METROWEST HOUSING MATTERS



WELCOME TO *METROWEST HOUSING MATTERS*, THE METROWEST HOUSING COALITION'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ABOUT US

>>> THE METROWEST HOUSING COALITION

The MetroWest Housing Coalition (MWHC) is a diverse group of stakeholders who work together to support access to affordable housing in the region. We collaborate to share resources, engage in advocacy opportunities, and address systemic barriers to housing stability. The MWHC is convened by the MetroWest Care Connection.

CHECK OUT THE LATEST ON HOUSING IN MW <<<

We're excited to share the **eighth edition** of our quarterly newsletter! Inside, you'll find updates on housing initiatives, valuable community resources, and upcoming events in MetroWest. Stay informed and connected by subscribing to our newsletter!

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OUR
NEWSLETTER:**

[HTTPS://SHORTURL.AT/62V45](https://shorturl.at/62v45)





>>> MWHC & MIRA MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVE PRISCILA SOUSA

In June, the MetroWest Housing Coalition met with State Representative Priscila Sousa at our new office on Grant Street in Framingham. Our members shared their personal experiences with housing insecurity while contextualizing the larger trends impacting Framingham and beyond. From rent stabilization to HomeBASE and RAFT, we discussed the vital housing programs being debated at the State House. The Coalition demonstrated that these are not just budget line items, or areas of political debate, they are key homelessness prevention programs that keep our community safely housed in times of crisis.

With our partners at the MIRA, we discussed the connection between immigrants' rights and the housing crisis, highlighting the harmful practices some landlords have adopted with their most vulnerable tenants; whether it be a rent hike, infestation or safety issues. Reflecting the diversity of our coalition and the MetroWest community, these conversations were held in Spanish, Portuguese and English, ensuring everyone could tell their story and be part of the discussion.

We are grateful to Representative Sousa for listening to our members experiences and pledging her co-sponsorship to H.1469 (An Act promoting housing stability for families by strengthening the HomeBASE program). We look forward to learning more about four housing-related bills that Representative Sousa will be introducing in the next legislative session. As we prepare for another season of advocacy, the Housing Coalition will continue meeting with legislators and local leaders to ensure working people, immigrants, and people of color are key partners in forging solutions to the housing crisis.



From left to right: Charlie Christ, Vicky Loor, Sonys Paula, Mariana Dutra, Genicle Santana, Marcia Sharpe, Rep. Priscila Sousa, Gil Calderin, Marianne Winnet, Emanuelle Zeni



➤➤➤ MWHC CONCLUDES SPANISH HOUSING WORKSHOP SERIES IN MARLBOROUGH

With the support of our partners from SMOC, MetroWest Mediation, and MetroWest Legal Services, the MetroWest Housing Coalition offered four housing workshops in Marlborough. This workshop series provided residents with crucial information and skills related to housing search, housing mediation, and tenants' rights. In reflecting on these workshops, we wanted to highlight some key lessons and takeaways:

- Hosting the workshops exclusively in Spanish allowed community members to ask questions directly to facilitators in real-time and converse about shared experiences in the language they are most comfortable w.
- Holding the workshops at a time best for community members was key to participation; our first session, which was sparsely attended, began at 5:00pm. After feedback, we offered subsequent workshops at 6:30, which resulted in increased attendance.
- Location also proved important. The Public Library was a space where attendees felt comfortable, and we received comments that many participants belonged to a church directly adjacent to the building. Libraries are also spaces where parents feel comfortable bringing their children.
- To further encourage family participation, we provided food, beverages, and activities for the children. We also received feedback that incentives—in the form of Visa and Lyft gift cards—were extremely helpful, especially to parents who work multiple jobs to make ends meet.
- Lastly, we learned that word of mouth was an invaluable method of advertisement for workshops in the immigrant community. Our partners at Marlborough Public Schools shared information (dates, times, topics) with the families they serve, and families who attended the first workshops told other families, ensuring that each session was better attended than the last. Having trusted sources of information was essential to reach a community that has fears around accessing services or support safely.



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- Partner at Marlborough Public
Schools



➤➤➤ LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS: WHERE DO MWHC LEG. PRIORITIES STAND?

An Act Enabling Towns and Cities to Enact Rent Stabilization and Protect Tenants (S.1447 / H.2328)	Reported to Clerk's office for study
Act Improving Emergency Assistance (H.216 / S.136)	Reported to Clerk's office for study
ACT Providing Upstream Homelessness Prevention (RAFT) (H.1488 / S.961)	Reported favorably and referred to Senate Ways and Means Committee
Act Strengthening HomeBASE (H.1469 / S.2829)	Reported favorably ^
Act Promoting Access to Counsel (H.1952 / S.968)	Reported to Clerk's office for study
Act Protecting Elderly, Disabled, & low-to-middle Income Tenants (H.2020 / S.1152)	Reported to Clerk's office for study

➤➤➤ PROTECT ACT SIGNED: TEN YEARS OF ORGANIZING PAYS OFF!

On August 5th, Governor Healey signed the PROTECT Act into law — a major victory more than ten years in the making. This milestone reflects persistent advocacy led by MIRA and a broad, statewide coalition committed to protecting immigrant communities.

Though there are many components of the PROTECT ACT, it's main focus is on strengthening critical safeguards for immigrants in Massachusetts. For example, the law prohibits new or expanded 287(g) agreements between local law enforcement and ICE, expands protections for detained immigrants, limits state law enforcement information-sharing with ICE, prohibits civil immigration arrests in state courthouses, and includes several additional measures designed to reduce harm and increase due process. For a full breakdown, we encourage you to read [MIRA's comprehensive overview](#).

The MetroWest Housing Coalition is proud to have stood alongside our partners in this campaign. We remain committed to fighting for a state, and a nation, where our immigrant neighbors can move freely, feel safe in their communities, and have access to stable, affordable housing. **Solidariedade para sempre!**

➤➤➤ A LOCAL EXAMPLE OF COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY - CITY OF FRAMINGHAM ENDS FLOCK CONTRACT

Local advocacy doesn't just shape housing policy — it influences decisions across a community. Framingham residents showed this recently when they organized around the city's contract with Flock Safety, a private company that installs automated license-plate readers.

The city ended its contract in June, and the effort offers a clear takeaway for our housing work: showing up makes an impact. Residents asked direct questions, shared information, and stayed involved — the same practices that strengthen housing advocacy across MetroWest.

For those interested in how local organizing connects to broader national efforts, the [ACLU's get the flock out toolkit](#) provides helpful context.



WHERE DOES THE RENT STABILIZATION CAMPAIGN STAND?

The fight for rent stabilization this legislative session has had two prongs:

1. A bill moving through the state legislature that would lift the ban on rent stabilization and allow municipalities to opt-in if they choose
2. A ballot question intended to give voters a direct say in whether or not rent stabilization should be enacted statewide

Both of these components were major focuses of the Coalition's advocacy, and both encountered obstacles as the session came to a close.

The Ballot Question: Disqualified on a Technicality

On June 23rd, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court disqualified the rent stabilization ballot initiative. The decision centered on a standard exemption for religious properties — a provision commonly found in rent stabilization laws nationwide. After heavy lobbying from landlord and property-interest groups, the Court ruled that this exemption constituted "preferential treatment," violating Article 48 of the state constitution.

In short, this was a procedural disqualification, not a judgment on the legality, validity, or public support for rent stabilization. But procedurally, it meant the ballot question could not move forward.

The Bill: Stalled Without Ballot Leverage

Although the bill advanced through Ways and Means, it was ultimately "sent to study" as the legislative session ended. Without the pressure and leverage of a live ballot question, some lawmakers felt less urgency to take a stand against the corporate landlord lobby, which invested significant resources to oppose rent stabilization.

Where We Go From Here

Despite these setbacks, the rent stabilization campaign demonstrated extraordinary public support, with 124,000 signatures gathered across the state. As we prepare for the next legislative session, we must turn to our communities and build strength from within. Many are justifiably angry about a defeat by technicality, but it will only truly be a defeat if we give in. We must engage our neighbors and build power from the ground up as we continue to fight for affordable, accessible housing for all. Lastly, we must recognize the truly spectacular efforts of the last year and hold our heads high. Thousands of you advocated from your town halls to the state house, meeting with lawmakers, submitting testimony, knocking on doors, and making phone calls. This a level of commitment the opposition will never be able to buy. Next time we will be back, stronger than ever, and it will take more than a technicality to stop us.



MetroWest Housing Coalition

COMMUNITY MEETING ON THE HOUSING CRISIS

Housing is one of the biggest challenges facing folks across MetroWest. Rising costs, limited options, and growing economic uncertainty are affecting more of us every day. We're at a moment when community voices and ideas are essential to shaping our solutions.

Join the MetroWest Housing Coalition for a community conversation about regional housing challenges and how we can work together toward change. You'll hear from housing justice organizations across the state, connect with neighbors, and find ways to get involved in strengthening our region's housing future.

Open to all MetroWest community members

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITY GROUPS INCLUDE:

Homes for All Mass | Mass Coalition for the Homeless | MetroWest Care Connection (MWCC) & MetroWest Housing Coalition (MWHC) | The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) | Families for Justice as Healing | League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

Please [RSVP here](#)



- Food and beverages provided.
- All participants will have a chance to win a raffle prize!
- Register to vote!



EVENT DETAILS:

SEPTEMBER 19TH 1:00–3:00PM

AT GEMS@THE ARTS (160 HOLLIS ST. FRAMINGHAM MA)

FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT CHARLIE CHRIST AT 774-405-9186 OR CCHRIST@BHPMW.INFO

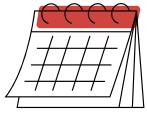


"In 2020, I became homeless. After a long career working in occupational therapy, my own health declined as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the country. Despite having approved medical leave, I was let go by my employer. Before becoming unemployed, I was already struggling to find an apartment that I could afford.

Homelessness was a double-edged sword because in one way it brought me closer to my family and back to Framingham, the community I grew up in—a community I was priced out of nearly twenty years earlier. However, homelessness also stripped me of my independence, confidence, and inundated me with feelings of shame. My health deteriorated and time itself lost all structure. With my family's help I was able to move into an affordable housing unit and begin to heal on all levels, mental and physical. As I walked local trails and neighborhood courtyards, I knew something was missing. It took a while for the light to turn on, but I knew I wanted to get more involved in my community. I started to initiate a tenant association bridging the gap between FHA and tenants, and we now have a full tenant association board, communication with FHA, and growing representation from tenants.

The support I received while homeless was a blessing that brought me closer to family and community, sparking my desire to be part of organizations that make housing affordable and accessible. That is why I have found my work in the MetroWest Housing Coalition so meaningful. I have been able to heal, share my story, and fight at the state and local level for important policies like rent stabilization and expansions to Emergency Assistance (EA) and RAFT. Although this is an uphill battle, I look forward to making housing for all a reality."

Marianne Winnett, Resident Coalition Member



MARK THE CALENDAR

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JOIN US FOR THE NEXT DOWNTOWN FRAMINGHAM RESOURCE FAIR

SEPTEMBER 29 FROM 10:30AM-1:30PM
DOWNTOWN FRAMINGHAM COMMON

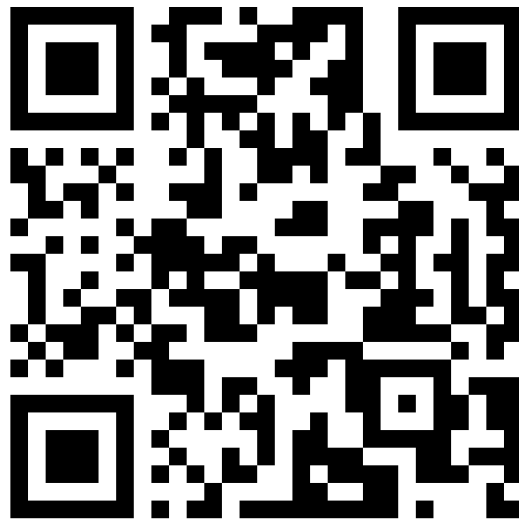
**THE NEXT MWHC MEEETING WILL BE ON OCTOBER 21
FROM 10:00 TO 11:30AM ON ZOOM**

**JOIN US BY SCANNING THE QR
CODE BELOW:**





DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT THE MWHC HOUSING TOOLKIT



WWW.MWCARECONNECTION.INFO

HAVE A SUGGESTION FOR HOW TO IMPROVE THE
HOUSING TOOLKIT? SHARE IT WITH US [HERE](#)



STAYING CONNECTED

VISIT THE MWHC LINKTREE:



[HTTPS://LINKTR.EE/MWHOUSINGCOALITION](https://linktr.ee/MWHousingCoalition)