



# Resident Empowerment Toolkit

PRIDE

PURPOSE

OPPORTUNITY

COMMUNITY

SUSTAINABILITY

STABILITY

INCLUSIVITY

SUPPORT

# INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Boston Housing Authority, we are delighted to present the Boston Housing Authority's Resident Empowerment Toolkit, a critical resource developed to support public housing residents transitioning to mixed-finance housing. Over the course of a year, the BHA and its partners developed the content for this toolkit through a series of workshops and meetings with resident leaders of sites currently going through redevelopment. Their shared experiences serve as a reminder of the importance for collective efforts to protect tenants' rights and ensure stable and affordable housing for everyone.

The Resident Empowerment Toolkit is a collaboration of the Boston Housing Authority, City Life/Vida Urbana, Greater Boston Legal Services, and BHA resident leaders.

The Resident Empowerment Toolkit is supported by a grant from the Innovative Stable Housing Initiative, a pilot project funded by Boston Medical Center, Boston Children's Hospital, and Brigham and Women's Hospital as part of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Determination of Need Community Health Initiative.

Kate Bennet  
BHA CEO & Administrator

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the resident leaders who were part of the ISHI pilot project. Their contribution to this toolkit will help many other residents understand and protect their rights during future redevelopment projects:

- Amory Street Tenant Task Force
- The Residents' Association of Lenox Camden
- Orient Heights Tenant Organization

Many thanks to the staff members of BHA, Greater Boston Legal Services, and City Life / Vida Urbana who helped to create this toolkit, provided feedback, knowledge, and important reference documents within the toolkit.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 How to Use This Toolkit
- 03 Making a Change
- 07 Roles, Responsibilities of Tenant Organizations  
BHA, and Owners & BHA Principles
- 13 Understanding the Negotiation Process
- 22 Memorandum of Agreement
- 25 The Grievance Process
- 28 LTO Resources
- 36 Glossary
- 40 Self-Care & Community Mental Health
- 45 Appendix

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The purpose of the Resident Empowerment Toolkit is to help Boston Housing Authority residents understand and protect their housing rights throughout the redevelopment process.

In this toolkit, you will find helpful information ranging from best practices to organize your neighbors to tips on how to negotiate important policies with the developer/management of your site.

Our goal is that the tips, best practices, and templates provided in this document will increase the knowledge of residents meeting with developers and their new management companies, and help residents feel more confident when they are advocating for themselves and their neighbors.



Source: BHA Flickr

# MAKING A CHANGE

# MAKING A CHANGE

When residents are going through redevelopment, here are some tips and questions to ask yourselves:

## Helpful Tips

- Organize behind an issue that is important to the community and will positively affect as many people as possible.
- Stick together as a group and take everyone's voice into account.
- Always try to grow the group- more people, more power, and influence.
- Diversify the group and always try to find leaders.
- Stay true to your ideals but be dynamic in responding to new problems that arise.
- Try to choose an issue with an achievable solution, or have a suggested solution to propose.

## Guiding Questions

- What issue did you choose?
- Why do you, as tenant association leaders, care about the issue?
- Who is the target audience?
- How do you rally tenants to support you?
- How do you rally community leaders to support you?
- What is your popular message? What goes on the flyer?
- What can you do to disrupt things a bit in order to make your point?



# ORGANIZING DURING A PANDEMIC

“An LTO should be strong. We should know exactly what we are doing, have everything together, and be on the same page.” -Orient Heights LTO Member

## Lessons Learned

- Update policies, regulations & bylaws to allow and encourage remote community participation through online platforms (like Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, etc.)
- When holding a virtual meeting make sure to have multiple ways for people to participate. For example, have a call-in number, record the meeting for later viewing, set up a camera and computer for your group to participate jointly.
- Provide interpretation services whenever possible.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Engaging younger tenants can be a difficult task, but below are a few helpful tips for ensuring their inclusion.

## Helpful Tips

- Consider using social media as an additional way to relay information and get resident participation, such as creating a Facebook group or posting on Instagram
- Incentivize youth engagement by awarding younger tenants for their participation or feedback with small \$5 gift cards to places like Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks
- Be direct, straightforward, and concise during presentations
- Show past projects that were done through tenant participation/engagement to make youth feel as though they're contributing to something, as shown through examples.



Source: BHA Flickr  
Boston Housing Authority  
Resident Empowerment Toolkit

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

# ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES: TENANT ORGANIZATIONS

Local Tenant Organizations (LTOs) work to improve the quality of life in their community. The LTO works with neighbors, the management office, and the surrounding communities to help promote positive changes and improvements, provide important resources, and act as a bridge between residents, management, and the larger community. The officers of the LTO are duly elected by the residents of their development and generally serve three-year terms.

Their purpose is to work collaboratively with residents, management, and the surrounding community to bring about changes or improvements in the development.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: BHA REDEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

BHA has articulated basic principles to redevelopment that are crucial to preserving what is best about public housing.

The principles presented to the right guide BHA's redevelopment efforts. In the pages that follow, we lay out detailed examples of procedural rights and operational practices, including in property management, that BHA seeks to preserve and enhance at all current public housing communities undergoing conversion to non-public housing subsidy platforms in association with renovations and, in some cases, transformative redevelopment.

In addition to the General Principles listed to the right, and the Procedural and Operational Standards on the following pages, a glossary of Useful Terms is also provided on the last page.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF BHA REDEVELOPMENT

- ❖ **Further BHA's Mission**
  - Provide stable housing—accessible and truly affordable—to Boston's most vulnerable households
  - Leverage affordable housing as a platform for access to other opportunities for residents
  - Meet BHA's regulatory obligations
  - Shore up agency finances to serve future generations
  - In Public Private Partnerships, hold all parties accountable
- ❖ **One-For-One Replacement**
  - Ensure replacement (or preservation) of units for families, seniors, and nonelderly disabled residents
  - Preserve all deeply affordable units, including in mixed-income redevelopments
- ❖ **Preservation of Tenant Rights and Protections**
  - Rent stays -30% of household income
  - Relocation rights
  - Right to Return and Rehousing
  - Same grievance procedure and other BHA policies
- ❖ **Resident and Community Participation**
  - Resident technical supports
  - Resident organization capacity and financial supports
  - Resident services and programs
- ❖ **High Quality Design for All**
  - Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
  - "Healthy Homes" best practices
  - Accessibility and adaptability
  - Livability: modern amenities, space needs

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: DEVELOPER/OWNERS

Sometimes private non-profit or for-profit developer/owner works in partnership with the BHA and with the city, state, and federal funding sources (including tax credits) to preserve, transform, and expand Boston's public housing communities. Whenever possible, BHA uses its own affiliate to be able to take advantage of alternative funding sources.

The developer/owner hires a manager or managing group that oversees individual sites, but BHA and residents are involved in the management plan/rules that will apply to the deeply affordable units to make sure that key tenant protections are preserved. If relocation will be required, there are guarantees of a right to return to a deeply affordable unit at the site as long as the household remains income-eligible. Residents will be involved in developing the relocation plan and transfer priorities.

Owners and managers will adopt BHA's management policies or substantially similar ones of their own to be approved by BHA.

As new sites are considered, redevelopment is discussed with residents at those sites and with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and is added to the Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan. As details are worked out, BHA will come back to residents and the RAB for more feedback before seeking approvals from federal or state agencies (HUD or DHCD) and the City.

BHA will ensure that there is no loss of deeply affordable units and will try to create new affordable housing where possible. BHA will ensure that existing residents have a right to return to the development to deeply affordable units (where rents are set at 30-32% of income, similar to public housing), as long as the residents remain in good standing (have not gotten evicted for serious lease violations). Units will retain key public housing protections (no eviction except for "good cause", grievance rights, rent set based on income, recognition of and funding for resident organizations, tenant opportunity to review and comment on any changes in rules/policies).

# REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS SNAPSHOT

## **1. Resident Consultation**

a. LTO, Site residents, RAB, Monitoring Committee

## **2. HUD and DHCD**

a. Annual Plan, Environmental Review, Disposition Approval, Subsidy Arrangements

## **3. Procure Developer**

a. Request for Proposals, Designation, Agreement

## **4. Site Investigations**

a. Physical needs, Environment Assessment, Survey

## **5. Participatory Planning**

a. Design and Permitting

b. Construction Plans and Specifications

## **6. Financing**

a. Grants, Loans, Equity

b. Operating budget (subsidies)

## **7. Finalize Key Policy Documents**

a. Relocation Plan

b. Management Plan

c. Services Plan

d. MOU for Tenant Participation

## **8. Relocation**

## **9. Transaction Closing**

a. Transfer ownership of the property

b. Execute transaction documents

## **10. Demolition**

## **11. Construction**

a. Typically 18-24 months

## **12. Re-Occupancy**

a. Income Certification and Lease Signing

## **13. Asset Management**

a. Ongoing BHA Oversight of Property

b. Mixed-Finance Partners quarterly meetings



# NEGOTIATION

# UNDERSTANDING THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

## 01 Review/Update Bylaws

It's necessary to change bylaws to remove references to public housing and refer instead to affordable/replacement housing units. Bylaw revisions are a two-step process—see what the Board would recommend, and then arrange for a community vote. This can be used as an opportunity to address/clean up issues in bylaws generally. If an LTO doesn't exist at the site, wait on the bylaws until a Board is elected.

## 02 Meet With BHA & Developer/Owner/Manager

Get to know the individuals involved and their roles, as well as whom you can go to if things aren't resolved at the day-to-day level. Define what the plan is for redevelopment--i.e., what subsidy programs will be involved, what's the scope of rehab and relocation, how will things change and how will they be the same. Not all redevelopments are the same; each has unique elements/challenges. Set up a regular check-in process and schedule of meetings. Establish concrete goals and timeframes, and share notes after meeting to be sure everyone heard the same thing and has the same understanding about who's going to do what.

Make sure that space is created for all residents to receive information and have their questions answered, as well as

- (a) provide a safe space for residents to speak just with their LTO leaders and give them direction or discuss issues away from the BHA/manager
- (b) space for LTO Board and BHA or manager to work out issues in greater detail before coming back to the community.

Allow for the possibility of BHA only or developer/owner/manager only meetings with LTO where needed, but make sure that there is a way to share that back with all parties later appropriately. Make sure that BHA or developer/owner/manager doesn't overwhelm tenants/leaders or be the sole party controlling the agenda.

Agendas should be jointly developed, and information should be presented in common, understandable language. Don't take on too many topics/issues at one time, and be realistic about what can be accomplished in a meeting and what may require more homework and report back.

## 03 Building Capacity

If there are vacancies, conduct outreach to recruit new members and to train them. Group training on Board skills can be helpful for new and existing leaders. (The Resident Empowerment Coalition can help with this, as well as groups like the Mel King Institute, City Life/Vida Urbana, etc.).

If a new election is needed, follow the procedures set out in your LTOs bylaws to figure out a time frame for that, and if extensions are needed, discuss with both BHA and developer/owner/manager what is realistic and achievable (particularly challenging during COVID-19).

Make sure that residents are getting timely notice of community meetings as well as Board meetings.

Make sure all are welcome (language access, wheelchair/walker access). Foster a positive approach at meetings, welcoming input and ideas, while at the same time making sure things stay on course and discussion aren't monopolized (tricky balance). Get help. Consider asking other LTOs what has worked, or asking for help with the election committee.

## 04 Negotiating MOA & Other Key Documents

To prepare for negotiations with the new owner/management, it is good practice to review the BHA's existing Mixed Finance Tenant Participation Memorandum, Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure, and past practices (for example, access to Laundry Funds, community room operations, etc.).

Decide as a board/community what policies or issues should be addressed and/or revised, for example, negotiating money to support LTO or tenant services beyond what may be in Tenant Participation Funds.

If changes are proposed because of unique aspects of redevelopment, request a clear explanation of those changes and review the proposal as a Board/resident community. Then discuss the proposed changes at an all-resident meeting.

Consider as a community the impact of the proposed changes, if possible reach out to another LTO and ask about best practices at their site, then propose an alternative change if necessary.

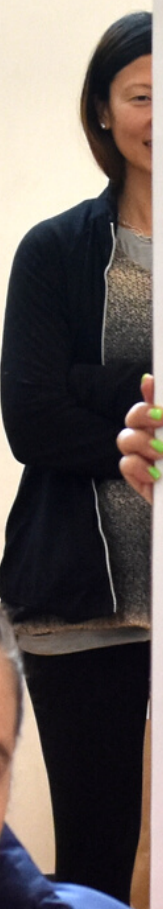
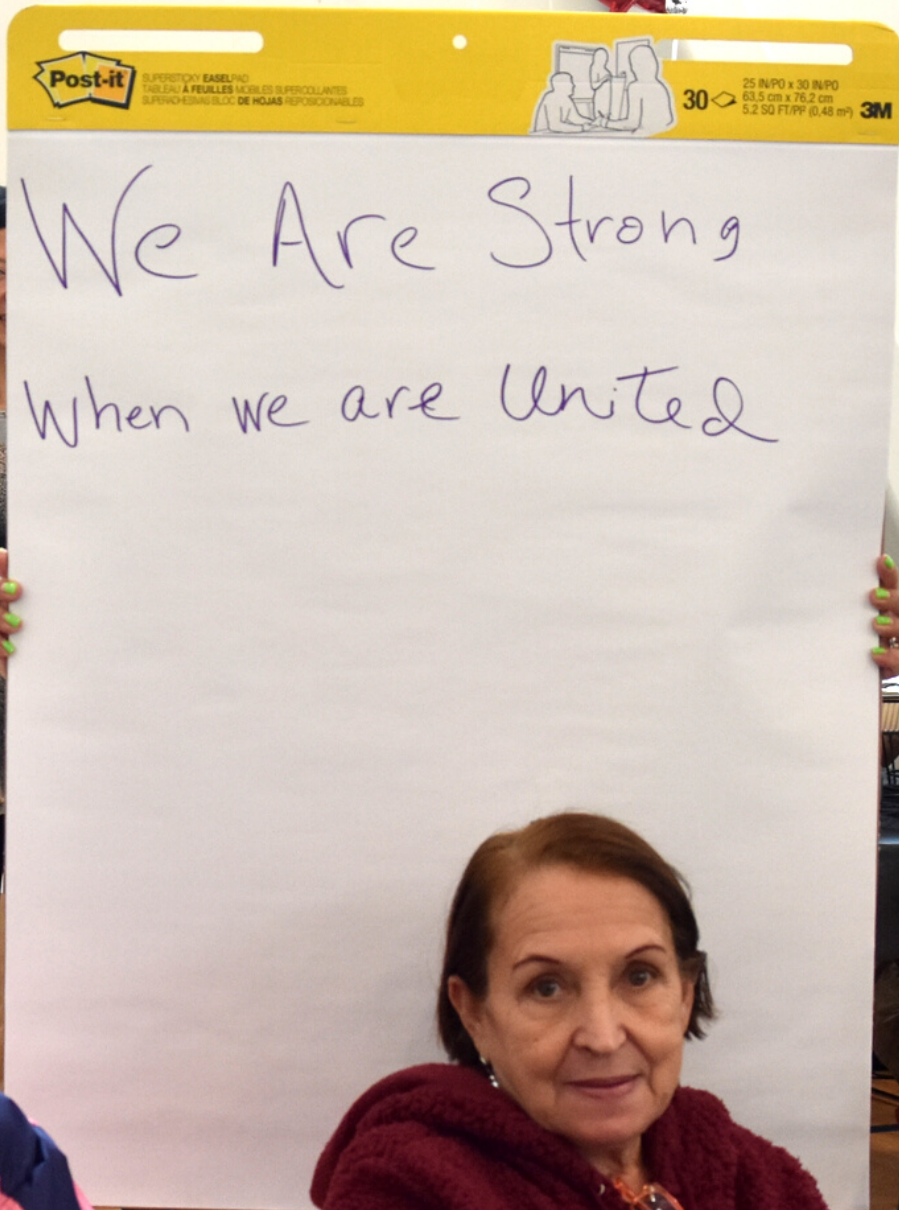
If there will be changes in the lease, house rules, tenant selection, and continued occupancy, etc. Find out what is required and where there is room for negotiation, and ask for assistance from an agency like Greater Boston Legal Services if necessary. Remember you are entitled to advanced notice of proposed changes and should have the opportunity for comment.

# Negotiating MOA & Other Key Documents (cont.)

The LTO can also ask for a community meeting to further discuss any issues. Utilize both legal strategies (“this proposed rule is a problem because of a HUD reg, or it’s not what we’ve come to expect from past BHA practice”) and organizing strategies (getting people together to speak out and take action) when negotiating the MOA and other key documents.

Figure out where your power and influence may be (again, maybe more of an organizing discussion);

Identify out allies who may help to support the LTO (for example, it may be that other BHA residents have similar issues, or this is a common problem across the Mixed Finance portfolio). For example—residents who owe rent may want to resolve this out of court, but management may want court involvement for enforceability. City and homeless prevention agencies may be good allies to figure out alternatives, and there may be other management companies who’ve agreed to minimize court involvement but at the same time help ensure that people get back on track.



Source: BHA Flickr

Boston Housing Authority  
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# NEGOTIATION TIPS

**Below are a few general tips to use when negotiating.**

- Be assertive by being willing to ask for what you want. Practice expressing feelings without anxiety or anger, The difference between being assertive and being aggressive is willingness to respect others' interests in addition to your own.
- Be an effective listener and allow the other person to talk as well. Using open-ended questions that can't be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' can encourage discussion and better understanding.
- Do your homework. Before negotiating, gather as much info as you can. Strong negotiation starts with understanding the needs and options of all sides.
- Show the other side how their needs will be met by looking at the situation from the other's perspective. If you understand how to solve their basic needs or interests, it's easier to come to a solution that satisfies everyone.
- Don't take issues or others' behaviors personally. Focus on solving the problem: finding an agreement that respects everyone's needs.

# NEGOTIATION CHECKLIST

**Consider using the below checklist as a guide to some of the points that may require clarification or negotiation when reviewing the MOA or House Rules. This checklist is only a starting point and reminder of some of the common policies that require negotiation.**

- Pet Policy
- Loitering vs Gathering
- Displaying Signs in Windows
- Use of Community Space
- Parking Policy



# LEASE, HOUSE RULES/ HANDBOOK

Many provisions about owner/resident rights and obligations are covered in the [Lease](#) which must also have resident & BHA feedback. However, some owners supplement the Lease with House Rules. As in public housing, affected residents and LTOs have the right to 30-day review and comment on any proposed changes in the lease, house rules, or related policies (such as parking or pet policies) before they are implemented. The resident organization also has the right to request a meeting to discuss changes at greater length.

[House Rules](#) and related policies must not be overly restrictive. They should be laid out in both an exhibit to the residential lease and in a plain-language resident handbook. While the Resident Handbook may highlight key rules, the emphasis should be on showcasing positive aspects of the community and a joint problem-solving approach that is beneficial to all parties. The Negotiation Checklist is a good starting point for some of the policies that may be worth considering when reviewing House Rules.

# MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

# WHAT IS THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT?

**A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)\* is a document that serves as the primary source for the relationship between tenant/tenant organizations and managers and owners.**

An MOA is an understanding that outlines the process of redevelopment and the changing of the financing of resident participation. It also describes the ability of the LTO to work with the owners during the process of people moving out and into different units because of redevelopment.

The owner is responsible for management knowing and adhering to the agreements. There is a custom agreement for each mixed-finance site, and it is intended to carry over to the developer/owner/manager the same tenant participation obligations that would exist if BHA were still running the site, including that the owner must solicit resident feedback on certain topics and the LTO has the right to a certain number of meetings.

The Memorandum of Agreement also applies even if there is not currently a recognized LTO or if there is a lapse in LTO status, and describes what steps the developer/owner/manager will take to involve residents and to spend tenant participation funds, including encouraging the creation of a new LTO. The MOA typically incorporates the BHA Tenant Participation Policy (TPP). The TPP defines the rights and responsibilities regarding the participation of BHA tenants and their LTOs in the management of BHA developments.

\*Template available in the Appendix

## Key Point

## Where it's Located in Attached

### Length of Agreement

Section 2

- Usually three (3) years
- Can be terminated by any party

### Status of Units

Section 3

- How different units are paid for
- Could be a low-income housing tax credit, Section 8, public housing, or other subsidies

### Financing of Resident Participation Money

Section 8

- \$25/unit per year
  - would be \$6/unit if state-assisted
- At minimum as much as if all units were BHA, and parties can agree on higher levels of support

Rights During and After  
Redevelopment

Rest of MOA

# GRIEVANCES

# GRIEVANCE PROCESS

BHA and its private development partners, along with residents and advocates, have developed a model grievance procedure. The model grievance procedure gives tenants the right to a “private conference” as well as rights to appeal many decisions by management. The model grievance procedure applies to all affordable units in a community, not just public housing.

## Key Point

## Where it's Located in Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure

### Right to a hearing

- In non-eviction cases- anything related to a failure or an error made by the owner/management. (If the issue is with Leased Housing, that would go through the Leased Housing informal process, rather than the grievance procedure.)
- Can be informal-written or orally
- No hearing in certain types of evictions for drug-related or violent criminal activity, but should still be private conference

Section 1 & 2

## Eviction Cases

Section 3

- Management will present a written statement so it can possibly be settled without a hearing
- If a private conference is necessary, management and the resident can discuss “any aspect of the proposed termination”
- If not resolved at the hearing- a summary will be given to the resident and put in their file

When the hearing will be

Section 4

Who will preside over the hearing

Section 5

Appealing the decision

Section 7

# LTO RESOURCES



# MIXED FINANCE TENANT PARTICIPATION FUNDS

If you live in a mixed-finance site, your Tenant Participation Funds (TPF) will be financed through different sources. These funds are intended to be used for building community and supporting the task force.

What is the same when transitioning to a mixed-finance site?

BHA still finances some of your resident participation money, and a report of your finances\* still has to be sent to the Resident Capacity Program to remain in compliance and receive the money that is allotted to your LTO so long as your development is still in the public housing program.

What is different when transitioning to a mixed-finance site?

The owner is also responsible through its partnership with the BHA to fund Tenant Participation. Additional reporting by LTOs to owners on the use of other funds may also be required.

In other words: The required LTO funding is a minimum amount, and is in addition to other funding that owners would typically provide for resident services and community events. Transparency to the whole LTO and the other residents is essential for trust.

On the next page are Key Points to remember regarding TPF funds.

\*TPF Reporting Templates can be found in the Appendix

# MIXED FINANCE TENANT PARTICIPATION FUNDS

## Key Point

## Reminders/Tips

### Making a Budget

- Reflecting community needs and priorities is a priority
- A budget narrative is now required to discuss in writing the use of funds and why

### Monthly Reporting

- Sending in the bank statements, receipts, and other materials on Tenant Participation Funds
- Monthly reporting even if nothing was done is necessary

### Eligible Activities

- HUD provides guidance on allowable spending

# LTO ELECTIONS

Local Tenant Organizations should hold elections every three years. This section provides guidance on navigating the process.

## 01 Review Key Materials

### **Review Key Materials including:**

- your development's by-laws
- the Tenant Participation Policy (TPP, available online here)
- the LTO Election Manual\* from the BHA
- the MOA between your LTO and the new development owner/manager (to see if there are provisions about elections and any waivers or extensions you may have obtained from BHA or from the developer/owner/manager)

If the LTO bylaws have not been revised to address being a Mixed Finance site, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) can assist the LTO with the amendment process.

### **Important questions to keep in mind:**

- How many candidates are required to run? Per the Tenant Participation Policy, at least five, but check your bylaws in case the number of board seats differs.
- How long do you need to accept nominations for? How far in advance do residents need to be informed about where and when the election will be? (usually about 1-2 months)
- How many people, who are not running for any seats, need to serve on your Elections Committee? (the Committee is an impartial, neutral group that helps to run the elections and inform candidates and residents of their rights and responsibilities, and is usually required to run an election)
- Any other requirements of your bylaws, MOU, or TPP.

\*Appendix

## 02 Generate interest

Not everyone knows what an LTO does or how it can help residents. If there are concerns with management or living conditions, having an independent board of elected representatives helps residents bring their concerns to management to work towards common solutions. LTOs can also plan fun events and do many other things to enhance everyone's experience or meet some needs. The Elections Committee/potential vendor (described below) has a large role to play in spreading the word about LTOs, but talking to neighbors beforehand will help you find Committee members or candidates.

## 03 Assemble an Election Committee

An Election Committee is made up of people who are not running for any seats on the LTO but want to help the election run smoothly. They help residents understand the nominations and elections procedures, recruit new people to run, and help ensure fair democratic elections. Election Committee Members choose dates and times of events and elections and inform residents and candidates.

Members are not biased and do not show favoritism to particular candidates or tenants, but help run a fair and balanced process. Committee members should strive for the inclusion of people of all major languages spoken at the site, geographic areas, and subsidy types of the development, races, and genders. Election Committee Members could include Tenants at your development who are not running for any seats, BHA tenants at other developments, any Boston area community member over 18 including non-BHA residents. Tenant Participation Funds and Laundry Funds can be used to cover election costs such as printing, outreach materials outreach, and/or other costs. Keep in mind election costs when creating the annual budget. Election costs vary across sites depending on the size of the development Election Committee Members and LTO candidates are typically unpaid volunteers. Contact the BHA Resident Capacity team to request technical assistance.

## 04 The Election Process

Once the Election Committee is formed, it will create the timeline and work plan for the election. The Election Manual is located in the Appendix on page 31 and includes a Work Plan template (as well as many other helpful forms).

Refer to the Election Manual or your by-laws when creating the timeline. The length of time needed to give notice of nominations, the election information, etc. can be found in the Election Manual or your by-laws.

The Committee begins outreach to spread the word about the election, accept nominations, host candidates' nights, and then run Election Day.

Afterward, the Committee and/or Vendor submit all of your advertisements, meeting notices, and vote counts at the end.

# Representing the Entire Development

## **Inclusion**

An LTO should be made up of people from all geographic regions of the development (if a scattered, multi-building site), all subsidy types, all major language groups, races, genders, and more to achieve as broadly representative group as possible. Translators should be made available for each public or virtual LTO meeting, and written materials offered with a translation as well (BHA can provide written or oral translation services, usually for free with at least 2 weeks' notice).

## **Ground Rules**

It also helps to decide on “Ground Rules” at the first LTO meeting after the election, where everyone agrees to the same set of rules to respect one another and keep meetings focused. Working together to come up with a set of rules and systems that work best for your Board is an important first step after the election, and can help avoid problems down the line. The RCP can provide New Board Orientation to help get the LTO to get started, and help to facilitate those conversations on meetings, conflict resolution, and so on. The interests of the community and LTO are key, and even if Board members have specialized roles or responsibilities (such as President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) no Board member is any more important than the next, and no LTO activity information should be kept private from other members nor the community (except for confidential matters). The entire Board must work together towards the common good, help one another out, and present a united and cohesive Board for the community.



Source: BHA Flickr

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Resident Empowerment Toolkit

# GLOSSARY



# GLOSSARY

Public Housing is what we think of as the housing owned and operated by BHA. It can be federal or state-funded.

Section 8 - is the federal housing voucher program. Households pay a portion of their income as rent, and the subsidy covers the difference between rent and FMR.

HAP - Housing Assistance Payments

Contract - Section 8 agreement between BHA and a private owner.

PBVs - Project-Based Vouchers: Section 8 vouchers that are attached to specific apartment units (rather than assigned to client households as with most vouchers).

Mixed-Finance refers to combining public and private funding to finance the development of new mixed-income housing: typically public housing capital funds, other state and local grant funds, private debt, and equity raised through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

LIHTC - Low Income Housing Tax Credit: Tax incentives to private organizations that invest in affordable housing. Investors bring private equity and valuable oversight.

FMR Fair Market Rent: Typical current rents for a local market based on bedroom size, as published by HUD.

RAD - Rental Assistance Demonstration: HUD program that, since 2012, permits the conversion of ACC units to project-based voucher units. RAD PBVs pay a contract rent based on previous public housing subsidies (not FMR) but with predictable annual increases; RAD allows housing authorities to take on debt to finance construction work.

Section 18 refers to the process for seeking permission from HUD to dispose of (give up control of) or demolish public housing property. When the justification is physical obsolescence, HUD will provide TPV Section 8 vouchers.

TPVs - Tenant Protection Vouchers: Section 8 vouchers that HUD awards for public housing units that are removed from the ACC and not replaced with new ACC or RAD units. Historically BHA has received TPVs when ACC units are not replaced, meaning no net loss of housing resources.

RAD - Section 18 Blending: Since 2018, HUD permits RAD conversions where 75% of existing public housing units become RAD and the other 25% receive TPVs that provide conventional Section 8 subsidy based on FMR.

# GLOSSARY (CONT).

Public-Private Partnerships are partnerships BHA creates when we undertake redevelopment. BHA partners with private funders and often with real estate developers experienced in the design, construction, and management of deeply affordable and mixed-income housing.

Deeply Affordable means housing—like existing public housing—that is affordable to all applicants, even those with extremely low incomes. Rent is determined based on household income. In federal public housing, rent is 30% of income. Section 8 allows a higher fraction (up to 40%); however, in public housing redevelopments, BHA requires that replacement units be at 30% just as the original public housing units were.

Replacement Units are newly constructed or renovated housing units at BHA redevelopment sites that replace (or preserve) the original public housing units. Whether ACC, RAD, or Section 8, rent for replacement units is set at 30% of income, and public housing rights and protections apply.

Mixed-Income refers to housing developments that include both deeply affordable apartments as well as apartments available to households at a range of higher incomes.

In carrying out redevelopment through Public-Private Partnerships, BHA requires policies memorialized in several key contracts and documents:

- Ground Lease that ensures long-term BHA stewardship;
- Regulatory Agreement (or RAD Use Agreement) that ensures the public housing character of the housing;
- Memorandum of Agreement for Tenant Participation, which is signed by the LTO, ensures ongoing funding for LTO activities;
- Grievance Procedure extends the typical public housing grievance policy to all replacement units;
- Management Plan including approved Tenant Lease; Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan; Policies for Reasonable Accommodation, Limited English Proficiency, Civil Rights protection.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are many helpful resources at your fingertips to help Boards reach their full potential. These include written guides and presentations, such as this toolkit.

The Mel King Institute is a fantastic organization that provides training on all sorts of topics from being an effective board member, to financial reporting for LTOs, to community engagement. Reach out to [melkinginstitute@macdc.org](mailto:melkinginstitute@macdc.org) or 617-426-0303 to be connected with useful training and resources for your Board or community.

The BHA Resident Capacity Program (RCP) also has many helpful reference guides and presentations. Additionally, we are always happy to come and meet with the Board to answer questions, address concerns, and more. Reach out to [rec@bostonhousing.org](mailto:rec@bostonhousing.org) or 617-988-4169.

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) provides free legal assistance to low-income residents and BHA Local Tenant Organizations. Reach out to GBLS by calling 617-371-1234 or call toll-free 800-323-2700. For more information visit their website: [www.gbls.org](http://www.gbls.org).

City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU) is a grassroots community organization, located in Boston, that helps people stay in their homes. CL/VU provides education to tenants about their housing rights and available resources. Reach CL/VU by calling 617-934-5006 or visiting their website for more information.  
[www.clvu.org](http://www.clvu.org)



Source: BHA Flickr  
Boston Housing Authority  
Resident Empowerment Toolkit

# SELF CARE & COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

# SELF CARE & COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

In any organization, people can go through stress and addressing family, economic, health, and other needs while at the same time being good community representatives can be a challenge. In addition, many of the residents that may need assistance from the LTO may have additional health needs that must be addressed. Self-care and sensitivity to these needs is an important part of tenant empowerment.

Mental Illness is common and treatable. While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. Being a board member comes with challenges that make maintaining your wellbeing important. Covid-19 has also had major negative impacts on many people's wellbeing and it is especially important as many of our communities reopen to try and rehabilitate. Living a healthy lifestyle, knowing when to reach out to trusted people, and having practical tools to deal with daily problems are ways to improve your life regardless of your mental health.

# Managing Your Mental Health and Healing

Radical Acceptance- Fully accepting that your reality may contain things that are completely out of your control. Not giving up or accepting the negative aspect of your life but not letting it control your life.

Adapting after Trauma and Stress- Trauma of any kind can be hard on your mental health but working on becoming more resilient can help you feel more at ease.

Dealing with Anger and Frustration- Taking some extra steps to decrease your overall tension can prevent your feelings (and the reactions that they cause) from spiraling out of control.

Getting out of Thinking Traps- Negative events take up space and energy and responding to those before they spiral out of control is important.

Processing Big Changes- Change is inevitable and formulating tools to counteract the change is integral to mental health in times of major change.

Taking Time for Yourself- Sometimes it can be difficult to even take basic care of ourselves - but there are small things that can be done to make self-care and taking time for ourselves a little bit easier.

There are activities and many other tips located in the mental health toolkit in the Appendix (pg 32) regarding these categories.

## There are many things individuals or groups can do to take action around mental health.

- Share information directly with your community- ask if you can talk about the flyer where you are on a regular basis or use the toolkit flyer to influence the community positively
- Promote going to screening and seeing a professional
- Social Media presence:
  - a. Social Media Fundraiser on your favorite site
  - b. Posting links to resources including the screening link- [www.MHAscreening.org](http://www.MHAscreening.org)
- Share your own story if you feel comfortable
- Reach out individually to people you know- always a good strategy to reach out to your community privately
- Get your employer involved
- Organize a run or walk fundraiser for mental health advocacy or research
- Host a Screening at your development with permission
- Plan an Advocacy Event

## Contacts

Boston Emergency Services Team (B.E.S.T)

800-981-4357

Crisis intervention/support, info, referrals for ongoing treatment, in-person psychiatric evaluation

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255 / <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Available 24/7, talk or chat online



# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX

Use your phone camera to scan the QR codes.  
Scanning the code will open up the link webpage.

Bylaw Template: <https://tinyurl.com/bhabylawtemplate>



MOA Template: <https://tinyurl.com/bhamoa>



LTO Meeting Template: <https://tinyurl.com/ltomeeting>



Outreach Material Templates: <https://tinyurl.com/ltooutreach>



Election Manual Templates: <https://tinyurl.com/bhaelectionmanual>



TPF Reporting Materials: <https://tinyurl.com/bhaltofinances> / <https://tinyurl.com/tpfsample>



Zoom Instructions: <https://tinyurl.com/zoomforbeginners>



Mental Health Toolkit: <https://tinyurl.com/mhamentalhealth>



BHA Redevelopment Principles: <https://tinyurl.com/bharedevprinciples>



