

Official Program Book



Saturday, September 26, 2026

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

The Westin Copley Place

10 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA

A message from our Executive Director

Welcome to the Inaugural Housing Abundance Symposium!

For years, our Celebration of Abundance has brought together advocates from across Massachusetts to celebrate our progress and the people moving our movement forward. This year, we're building on that tradition with something new.

The Housing Abundance Symposium is a space to learn from one another, sharpen our skills, build stronger connections, and leave better equipped for the work ahead.

Massachusetts needs 222,000 new homes by 2035. Meeting that challenge will take all of us—organizing our neighbors, changing local zoning, advocating on Beacon Hill, telling better stories, and building broader support for more homes in every community.

Today, you'll hear from advocates and experts, participate in hands-on workshops, celebrate the people making a difference through our annual Celebration of Abundance Awards, and join us for a keynote conversation with New York Times columnist Jamelle Bouie.

Most importantly, we hope today reminds you that you're part of a growing statewide movement working toward a Massachusetts with more homes, more choices, and more opportunities for everyone to find a place to call home.

Thank you for being here and welcome!



Best,
Jesse Kanson-Benanav
Executive Director



Program

9 am - 9:30 am: Breakfast and Networking

9:30 am - 10 am: Convening & Welcome

10 am - 10:50 am: Breakout Session 1

10:50 am - 11 am: Break

11 am - 11:50 am: Breakout Session 2

**Noon - 1:10 pm: Lunch is Served
Presentation of Awards**

**1:15 pm - 1:45 pm: Discussion with Jamelle
Bouie led by Jesse Kanson-
Benanav**

1:45 pm - 2 pm: Q&A and Closing Remarks

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

ROAD to Abundance: What the New Federal Housing Law Means for Massachusetts

Room: Essex NW&NC

The bipartisan 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act represents a major shift in federal housing policy, giving states and communities new tools, funding, and incentives to make it easier to build more homes. What does that mean for Massachusetts—and for local housing advocates? This interactive session will explore the law's most important opportunities for housing abundance and what communities can do now to take advantage of them.

You Win Some, You Lose Some: Determining Next Steps in the Wake of Victory or Defeat

Room: St. George B

For many groups and individuals, achieving goals -both big and small- represents the culmination of months or even years of arduous planning and labor. The tunnel vision that results from the relentless pursuit of advocacy efforts sometimes obfuscates the looming question of what comes next. Be it in victory or defeat, this panel discussion brings together affiliates from AHMA's network to discuss what it takes to strategize after celebrating a win and/or picking yourself back up after a setback in order to continue fighting the good fight.

How to Make a Campaign Out of an Ordinance

Room: St. George C

Bridging the gap between the Policy and Organizing realms, this workshop guides participants through the technical and advocacy steps of simultaneously drafting and unpacking a municipal ordinance. Featuring expert speakers and campaign organizers, the session then invites participants to engage with real-world case studies to craft positive and negative campaigns to effect change in their local communities.

I'm Just a Bill (In Massachusetts)

Room: St. George A

Drawing inspiration from Schoolhouse Rock's "I'm Just a Bill", this session will explain the legislative process in Massachusetts and highlight key players, deadlines, and decision points along the way. Whether you're a first-time advocate or a seasoned activist, you'll learn when and how your voice can have the greatest impact, from submitting testimony and meeting with legislators to organizing grassroots support at the moments that matter most.

Amplify Your Advocacy: Telling Better Stories, Reaching More People

Room: St. George D

This interactive workshop will equip housing advocates with practical communications skills they can use immediately in their communities. Participants will learn how to craft compelling messages, adapt their advocacy across different platforms, and identify opportunities to earn local media coverage. Through hands-on exercises, real-world examples, and collaborative discussion, attendees will practice translating complex housing issues into stories that resonate with neighbors, reporters, and decision-makers.

Whether you're a seasoned organizer or a first-time advocate, this session will provide actionable tools to help amplify your voice and expand the reach of your advocacy.

2026 Celebration of Abundance Award Recipients



Legislator of The Year

Senator Brendan Crighton



Partner of the Year

Andrew Mikula

Legalize Starter Homes 2026



Rookie of Year

Youth Affordable Housing Coalition



Rookie of Year

Homes Not Handcuffs Coalition



Rookie of Year

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