

Housing help and more

Colocations connect you with local resources

Excellent customer service is our priority. To better serve you, MBHP staff travel regularly from our downtown Boston office into the communities we serve. Meeting MBHP in your community means a more convenient appointment for you, and gives you a chance to connect with local community resources. Below are a few examples of how colocations could help you. A complete list of colocations is on the back page of this newsletter.

MBHP at CONNECT, now twice a week

Since 2012, MBHP has partnered with CONNECT in Chelsea to bring our housing assistance services to people in the Chelsea and Revere areas. Recently, we increased our presence. MBHP staff are now available at CONNECT twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.

Meeting with MBHP at CONNECT lets you learn about the variety of resources provided by CONNECT and The Neighborhood Developers. Their resources can help you get a higher-paying job, apply for food or health benefits, further your education, or take control of your finances.



MBHP Outreach Case Manager Matthew Gibson meets with a client at CONNECT.

To make an appointment to meet MBHP at CONNECT, contact Evelyn Rodriguez at 617.889.1375, Ext. 0.

Roxbury Community College and MBHP serving students

Do you attend Roxbury Community College? If so, you do not need to leave campus to have your housing questions answered. You can meet with an MBHP staff member on campus to discuss your housing-related questions and concerns. This is made possible through a partnership with RCC's Single Stop, which offers students a wide array of services including benefits screening, free tax preparation, health insurance assistance, SNAP, and child care assistance.

RCC students looking for more information about RCC Single Stop, or to set up an on-campus appointment with MBHP, can contact Lisa Carter at 617.933.7459 or lcarter@rcc.mass.edu.

And if you're looking to expand your horizons, RCC now offers Lifelong Learning classes for people looking to earn a certification, make a career change, improve their skills, expand their knowledge for professional or personal growth, or simply take a class for fun. Course offerings are non-credit and cater to learners of all ages and backgrounds. More information is at www.rcc.mass.edu/LL, or contact Lise Hagen Snow at 617.933.7410 or LHagen@rcc.mass.edu.



Mission statement

MBHP's mission is to ensure that the region's low- and moderate-income individuals and families have choice and mobility in finding and retaining decent affordable housing; all of our programs and initiatives are designed to encourage housing stability, increase economic self-sufficiency, and enhance the quality of the lives of those we serve. To achieve our mission and to promote efficient service delivery, we work collaboratively with a broad array of service providers and neighborhood-based organizations.

MBHP's Programs

There are three different entry points for accessing our programs and services.

We help **homeless** families and individuals find and retain safe, affordable housing through rental assistance programs, including Section 8 and the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.

We help families **on the brink of homelessness** stay in their homes or find other suitable living arrangements, rather than enter the shelter system. One way we do this is through administering the RAFT financial assistance program.

Once a family or individual is **stably housed** in a safe, affordable home, we help keep it that way. We conduct inspections to ensure apartments meet all health and safety standards and offer education, trainings, and counseling services to tenants and landlords.

For more information on the many programs and services we administer, visit us at www.mbhp.org or call our Housing Consumer Education Center at 617.425.6700.

Meet MBHP: Roy Montoya



Roy Montoya started at MBHP in July 2004. A former jockey, he now spends his days driving around Greater Boston, inspecting apartments to make sure that they are safe for Section 8 participants because everyone should have a safe, decent place to call home.

Hometown. I grew up in Tubac, Arizona, just north of the border to Mexico, where I was born.

I was related to most of the people in our town.

Hobbies. I work on my yard or go somewhere where I can watch horse races. I like to fish, but I haven't had time for it.

Food. I enjoy Mexican food. My favorites are tamales and enchiladas.

Values. Compassion and loyalty.

Motivation. Knowing I can help someone in a positive way.

Accomplishments. Winning more than 800 races during my riding career and now being able to help property owners keep their apartments safe for our clients.

Personal hero. My parents and extended family. Life was not easy for them. They all had to live through adversity in one way or another.

Motto. To continue helping people.

MBHP is accepting RAFT applications

Has an emergency set you back financially? Do you need help catching up? RAFT may be able to help you.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) funds can be used to pay rent or utility arrears, first/last month's rent or security deposits, basic furniture, or other moving costs. Last year we provided \$3.5 million dollars' worth of assistance and helped more than 1,300 families deal with financial crises.

To learn more, call 617.425.6700, email ResouceLine@mbhp.org, or stop by MBHP's office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays to set up an appointment where you can tell us more about your situation. Our staff will come up with the best solutions for you, which may include RAFT funding or other programs you may be eligible for.

There are eligibility requirements for the program, visit www.mbhp.org for more information.

Financial aid resources

It's back to school time, and not just for kids! Are you thinking of continuing your education? College is expensive, but there are resources available to help. Below are links to just a few websites where you can learn more about scholarships, grants, and other resources that can help cover the cost of your education.

Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education, offers information on preparing for college, the different types of aid available, how to apply for aid, how to manage student loans, and advice for avoiding scams. studentaid.ed.gov/sa

StudentScholarships.org shares information about scholarships from nonprofits and private companies, as well as questions and answers about various career fields.

Some organizations offer their own scholarships:

- **Collegescholarships.org** is the website of the College Scholarships Foundation.
- **Scholarshipamerica.org** distributes funding across the country through various programs.

Some websites offer “matching services,” in which users set up a free profile and are matched with possible scholarships:

- cappex.com/scholarships
- fastweb.com/college-scholarships
- goodcall.com
- unigo.com/scholarships

Increasing stability with Secure Jobs

In June 2015, when Brenda received her housing subsidy, she was able to leave shelter and move her and her children into their own home. But with no job, she still did not feel stable. She could not pay her phone bill, and without a phone she could not get her electricity set up. Not being able to speak English made things even more difficult. Fortunately, Brenda received stabilization services from MBHP. Vlaimy, her MBHP case manager, spoke Brenda's language and interpreted for her. She helped get her electricity set up and communicated with her property manager to get maintenance and pest control issues taken care of. Vlaimy also suggested that she look into the Secure Jobs program.

Secure Jobs is a partnership between MBHP and Jewish Vocational Service to help people get job training and placement assistance while they stabilize their housing. Brenda attended an information session and decided to enroll. JVS helped her find and apply for jobs, accompanying her to interviews and helping her cover the travel expenses. With their help, Brenda earned a full-time job.

“I feel very happy because I like the job I'm in,” she says. “I'm paying my bills on time, which is very important to me, and my phone is always on.” She can also buy her children clothes for school and continue buying things for their home. She says she enjoys the sense of independence her new income brings.

Brenda is already spreading the word, telling her friends and family about the Secure Jobs program. If you are interested in learning more about Secure Jobs or a similar program, let your MBHP contact person know, or send an email to info@mbhp.org.

MBHP reaches Secure Jobs goals

MBHP and JVS recently concluded the third year of the Secure Jobs program. Below are some of the numbers from that year.

Participants enrolled	Job placements
Goal: 75	Goal: 54
Actual enrollments: 79	Actual placements: 55

The average wage was **\$11.69/hr.**

69% of the jobs are full-time.

55% are in hospitality.

23% are in retail.

11% are in healthcare.

Upcoming Workshops



Registration is required for the workshops below. Register online at www.mbhp.org, or contact us 617.425.6605 or workshops@mbhp.org.

Note: Workshop dates and times are subject to change. Visit our website or contact us for up-to-date information.

Start Right Workshop

Want to start your relationship with your landlord off on the right foot? Sign up for the Start Right Workshop! This workshop also includes an overview of the eviction process, as well as tips on how to avoid eviction and stay in your home long-term. First Tuesday of each month, 10–11:30 a.m.

Affordable Housing Basics

What different types of subsidized housing are available? Who is eligible for them? What is the application process like? Learn all this and more. Second Tuesday of each month, 10–11:30 a.m.

Housing Strategies Clinic

Looking for tips on how to search for a new apartment? Need information on utility assistance? Have questions about housing discrimination? Develop strategies to achieve your housing goals. Third Wednesday of each month, 10–11:30 a.m.

Get outdoors!

Take a hike

Getting outdoors can be fun and healthy for adults and for children. Massachusetts offers many opportunities to get lost in nature, and you do not need to travel far to find them. Whether it is Pope John Paul Park in Dorchester or Breakheart Reservation in Saugus, chances are there is a park near you where you can take a walk through nature.

New to hiking? Below are some tips to make sure you stay safe.

- Bring water. It's very important to stay hydrated!
- Use a map. You can find trail maps online and at local libraries.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing (no jeans!), close-toed shoes and socks that cover your ankles.
- Do some research on plants like poison ivy so you can be on the lookout.
- Start easy with a short trail on a gentle slope. Be sure to stay on the trail—it's easy to get lost and bad for nature when you go off course.
- Leave your phone at home, or at least in your pocket. Take a minute to look around and enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of nature!

Let's go ride a bike—subsidized Hubway memberships available

The City of Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, and New Balance Hubway have partnered to offer subsidized Hubway memberships for families living on low incomes. Eligible families pay just \$5* each month to access Hubway's network of more than 1,500 bikes from 160 stations in Boston and beyond, and the program includes a free helmet. Visit thehubway.com to access an interactive map of Hubway stations near you.

To find out if you are eligible, contact 617.635.4765, or visit one of the in-person sign up locations:

- Boston City Hall
- Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation
- Geiger Gibson Health center
- Neponset River Health Center
- South Boston Action Center

** Additional costs beyond the \$5 membership are possible. For subsidized members, the first hour of every bicycle trip is free, but there are usage charges after that. Visit thehubway.com for details.*

Shop outdoors at a local farmer's market

From spring until late fall, farmer's markets are a great way to get locally grown nutritional food, like fruits and vegetables, as well as baked goods, jams and jellies, honey, cheeses, eggs, and more. Many farmer's markets accept EBT/SNAP. For more information or to find a farmer's market near you, use the interactive map at www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/map.htm.

Career Spotlight: 10 tips for a great job interview

It can be difficult to get a job, and there are many steps. One of the most stressful is the job interview. How do you make a good first impression in a short time? There are many simple things you can do to sharpen your interviewing skills. Mary Rae, the workshop and recruitment manager at Career Collaborative, shares some of her favorites.



A firm handshake makes a great first impression.

- 1. Learn about the company ahead of time.** Research it online. Find out what the company does and what makes it special. Be prepared in case the interviewer asks, “So...what do you know about this company?”
- 2. Write out your answers ahead of time for common interview questions** like “What is your greatest strength?” “Tell me about a time you felt successful,” and “What is your greatest weakness?” Even if you end up saying something different in the interview, you’ve taken the time to think up acceptable answers before you are feeling the pressure of actually sitting down with an employer.
- 3. Give the employer a firm handshake.** If you’re worried about sweaty hands, rub in some baby powder or corn starch before you head into the interview.
- 4. Look the interviewer in the eye.** It’s okay to look away for a second, but always return to the employer’s eyes. (It’s harder than it sounds! Practice with family and friends.)

- 5. Smile.** You want the employer to know you are a friendly person.
- 6. When you are shaking hands with the employer, say your first and last name loud enough for the employer to hear.** Leave a SPACE between your first and last name instead of making it sound like one long name. If your name is unusual, you may want to say, “My first name is _____, my last name is _____, but you can call me _____.”
- 7. Dress up for the interview no matter what position you are going for.** It shows you want the job!
- 8. Don’t decide the employer doesn’t like you just because he or she isn’t smiling.** Some employers are just very serious during job interviews. Give your interview 100 percent, no matter how the employer reacts. You may find out later that the employer liked you a lot the whole time.

- 9. At the end of the interview, ask the employer for a business card.** Then be sure to send the employer a thank-you note or email.
- 10. Act the role of the job you are interviewing for!** If you want to be a receptionist, be friendly. If you are interviewing for an administrative assistant position, act organized. If you are interviewing for a housekeeper position, try to come across as a person who is honest and hard-working. Make it easy for the employer to imagine you in the job.

If you would like extra help, you can also visit Career Collaborative, a nonprofit near Downtown Crossing (77 Summer Street, 11th floor). This free program helps unemployed and under-employed men and women find full-time work with some of Boston’s leading employers. Information sessions are held every Thursday at 1 p.m. There’s no need to call ahead, but it is helpful to bring a resume. Good luck and happy job hunting!



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Find a colocation near you

Colocations allow you to access MBHP services close to where you live. If you have questions about your housing situation, you can visit us at our Boston office or one of eight colocations throughout our region. Our current colocations schedule is on our website at www.mbhp.org (see Programs > Colocations).

Bunker Hill Community College

250 New Rutherford Ave
Boston (Single Stop, USA)
717.228.3330
(For BHCC students only.)

Codman Square NDC

578 Washington St, Dorchester
617.825.4224, Ext. 148

CONNECT

4 Gerrish Ave, Chelsea
617.889.1375 Ext. 0

Interfaith Social Services

105 Adams Street, Quincy
617.773.6203, Ext. 16

Quincy College

1250 Hancock Street, Quincy
617.405.5967
(For Quincy College students only.)

Roxbury Community College

1234 Columbus Ave, Roxbury
Crossing (Single Stop, USA)
617.933.7459
(For RCC students only.)

Somerville Homeless Coalition

1 Davis Square, Somerville
617.425.6612

WATCH CDC

24 Crescent Street, Waltham, # 201
(781) 891.6689, Ext. 200

MBHP is also pleased to offer Section 8 re-certification appointments at select colocations. Appointments at these locations are by referral only, ask your MBHP Program Representative for more information.

Codman Square

Talbot Bernard Apartments
193 Talbot Ave, Dorchester Center

CONNECT

4 Gerrish Ave, Chelsea

Somerville Homeless Coalition

1 Davis Square, Somerville

Urban Edge

1542 Columbus Ave, Roxbury