



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Berkshire housing organizations to share in-depth findings from first-ever Western Massachusetts housing study

Stakeholders invited to discuss the housing crisis in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties

Pittsfield, MA -- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Hearthway, and Upside413 are partnering with Way Finders and their research partner, the UMass Donahue Institute, to share in-depth findings from "Building Homes. Building Futures.", its first-ever housing study to cover Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties at an event on Thursday, October 23 at the Berkshire Community College's Boland Theater.

According to the study, Berkshire County needs nearly 2,000 new housing units to meet current demand. Even with projected declines in population locally, the gap will still be nearly 1,000 units by 2035. Even more may be needed to stem population loss. The report, along with its online interactive data dashboards, provides western Massachusetts communities with information to address this crisis.

Event details:

- Thursday, October 23, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm (doors opening at 5 pm)
- Berkshire Community College, Boland Theater, 1350 West Street, Pittsfield

5:00 pm	Check-in
5:30 pm	Welcome and Introductions by Tom Matusko
5:40 pm	Presentation by Michael McNally, Senior Research Analyst at UMass Donahue Institute
6:20 pm	Q&A period followed by strategy development
7:00 pm	Closing

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About the Donahue Institute

Established in 1971, the [UMass Donahue Institute](#) is a public service, research, and economic development arm of the University of Massachusetts. Its mission is to foster

healthy communities and support economies that alleviate poverty and promote opportunity. In collaboration with partner organizations and clients, it carries out its mission through research, education and training, capacity building, and direct services to strengthen collective impact. They serve clients in the public, non-profit, and private sectors in the commonwealth and throughout the nation and the world. For more information, visit donahue.umass.edu.

About Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Working with a professional planning staff and a citizen commission, [Berkshire Regional Planning Commission](#) (BRPC) seeks to enhance regional resilience and quality of life in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts through a variety of initiatives and projects encompassing land use, transportation, economic development, environmental management, sustainable communities and public health. BRPC has been actively collaborating with 32 rural and urban communities since 1966 to deal with regional challenges, opportunities, and assets.

About Hearthway

[Hearthway](#) (formerly Berkshire Housing Development Corp) is a private nonprofit organization that serves all of Berkshire County, MA. Through collaboration and innovation, Hearthway finds housing solutions for all people across the Berkshires. We at Hearthway believe everyone deserves a safe supportive home and we work every day to make that happen. We develop and manage affordable housing; we administer state and federal programs that assist our neighbors to find and maintain a home; and we support communities to address their housing needs.

About Upside413

[Upside413](#), formerly the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (BCRHA), has been dedicated to supporting Berkshire County residents since 1980. Initially, UpSide413 acted as a local housing authority for the 23 towns in the county without their own, providing essential housing services and technical assistance.

UpSide413 is more than a housing authority; it's a lifeline for the community. It is a court-approved mediation program, a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency, and a key player in foreclosure prevention in the Berkshire region. In collaboration with Hearthway, UpSide413 established the Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC) in 2001, which now serves as the umbrella for all their shared programming and services.

About Way Finders

Way Finders is a nonprofit community development corporation, headquartered in Springfield, MA, working to strengthen housing stability and economic mobility and build thriving neighborhoods throughout western Massachusetts. Way Finders is the largest nonprofit housing developer in the region and has created over 900 units of affordable housing in Hampden and Hampshire counties. Way Finders also offers first-time homebuyer classes, resident leadership training, family homeless shelters, employment support services, and much more. Visit wayfinders.org to learn more.