



# Harvard Kennedy School Admissions Blog

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## Advocating for Hearing Access: Janice Lintz MC/MPA 2023

Janice Lintz is a consultant and advocate across the hearing access, advocacy, and political spectrum. She serves as the CEO of Hearing Access & Innovations, which is dedicated to helping the world's businesses, cultural and entertainment institutions, government agencies, and mass transit organizations improve their accessibility for people with hearing loss. An avid traveler, Lintz has traveled to 194 countries, territories, and unrecognized nations. She is an incoming HKS student and will complete the MC/MPA Program in the 2022-2023 academic year.



## Rethinking Cities for People with Hearing Loss

In 2021, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation featured an article written by Lintz on the center's blog. The article, written before the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, urges decision-makers to incorporate hearing access into their infrastructure improvement plans.

*We need to ensure that cities upgrade hearing access as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Act, which was approved by the Senate, will provide American cities with \$1 trillion to rebuild airports, ferries, terminals, public transit, and rail, to name a few of the categories under President Biden's "Build Back Better" program. Upgrading hearing access needs to be part of upgrading America. Therefore, we need to mandate that cities incorporate hearing access into their plans. [Read more.](#)*

We asked Lintz what inspired her to advocate for hearing access and what she is looking forward to as an incoming HKS student.

**Q: What inspired you to pursue a career in advocacy and public service?**

A: I've been an advocate my entire life. I see a problem not as an obstacle but as an opportunity for change. According to my mother, I convinced the local nursery school to admit me even though I was too young because I was bored at home. In college, I helped bring

healthier food to the cafeteria. Recently, I worked with Epic Systems to bring greater transparency and accountability to medical billing. It is in my DNA to resolve issues rather than wait for someone else to do it.

However, my daughter, who has hearing loss, inspired my hearing loss advocacy. After her diagnosis, her doctor told me there were “special” schools for her. Instead, she attended a private schools in New York City and two Ivy League universities. I wouldn’t let others lower the bar for my daughter’s life before it got started.

**Q: In your time spent advocating for hearing access, what do you consider your biggest accomplishment(s)?**

A: My most significant success is helping to break the hearing aid oligopoly with the new Proposed Regulations to Establishing Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids, which will change the hearing aid market globally. People with mild to moderate hearing loss will soon be able to purchase hearing aids over-the-counter and no longer need to go to an audiologist or dispenser. In addition, the FDA will test the hearing aids, and prices are expected to decrease as new companies enter the market. My hope is that the FDA will include easy-to-understand descriptions so lay consumers will be able to understand the technical information.

I also love that Build-A-Bear Workshop introduced toy hearing aids to their product line at my suggestion. They were the first mainstream toy company to do so, and now Mattel has followed their lead. As a result, children with hearing loss can have playthings that look like them, and the toy hearing aids will soon join the [Strong National Museum of Play’s](#) collection and exhibition.

**Q: What are you most looking forward to as an incoming HKS student?**

A: There is nothing more exciting to me than being around like-minded global changemakers—the opportunity to learn from other dynamic students, professors, and speakers. I cannot wait to achieve more for people with hearing loss and help others to advance change for the issues that are meaningful to them.

**1 note** Apr 7th, 2022