



HOUSING CHOICE BEST PRACTICES 2023

Housing Choice Communities are designated in two ways:

1) At least 5% increase or 500 increase in new units over the previous 5 years;

OR

*2) At least a 3% increase or 300 unit increase in new units over the previous 5 years
AND demonstrate 7 of 15 of the following best practices, two of which must be
affordable.*

*For Housing Choice Community grants, applicants receive points including bonus points for
implementation of these best practices. There is no minimum number of best practices
required for the grants, however, points are awarded for demonstration of best practices.*

The following list contains an array of techniques and methods to support housing production and affordable housing for Massachusetts Towns and Cities. There are many, many strategies not on this list, but we are highlighting these as a **baseline** of methods that we recommend to local governments. For more information about the Housing Choice Initiative, see www.mass.gov/housingchoice. In the list below, those strategies particularly related to creating and maintaining affordable housing are in *italics*. These best practices are used to evaluate applicants seeking designation as a Housing Choice Community and also as scoring criteria in the Housing Choice Capital grant program.

What's New in 2023:

In 2023, the Housing Choice Designation will implement changes to best practices. The following are a summary of changes:

- **40R or 40Y Starter Home District:** While regulations are still a work in progress, we want communities to be aware of this program and its statute: www.mass.gov/lists/mass-general-laws-c40y
- **Mixed-Use or Cluster Development:** We are clarifying that only mixed use that includes housing is eligible for this best practice.
- **Local actions that support housing:** We are clarifying examples to include surplus land and uses such as reuse/redevelopment of housing.
- **40B pattern or approval:** We have added a new best practice related to 40B and pattern of approvals to our 2023 best practices.
- **SHI best practices:** We have updated and clarified language for both best practices of 10% SHI threshold and 2.5% SHI increase as it pertains to Housing Appeals Committee (HAC).
- **Locally adopted programs that support housing:** we have removed the "Selected a housing best practice as part of a Community Compact" best practice and replaced it with a more specific and measurable best practice.



HOUSING CHOICE BEST PRACTICES 2023

- **Housing Plan Implementation:** We have replaced the Community Compact best practice with one related to implementation of housing plan strategies other than those already listed in the best practices.
- ** **IMPORTANT:** In 2023, we will continue to use 2010 year round housing units as the denominator because of lack of 2020 year round units from the US Census. The same 2010 denominator that is still being used for SHI.

Housing Choice Designation 2023 Best Practices

Zoning Best Practices

1. **Multi-Family allowed by right:** Have at least one zoning district that allows multifamily by right (in addition to 40R districts) where there is capacity to add units and that allows for family housing that is not age restricted and does not restrict units with more than 2 bedrooms (or have a pattern of approving such developments over the last 5 years).
2. ***Inclusionary Zoning, with density bonus:*** *Have Inclusionary Zoning that provides for reasonable density increases so that housing is not unreasonably precluded.*
3. ***40R or 40Y Starter Home District:*** *Have an approved 40R Smart Growth or 40Y Starter Homes district that remains in compliance with the 40R or 40Y regulations, as applicable. Please note, that if your community repealed its only 40R district, it no longer qualifies for this best practice.*
4. **Mixed-Use or Cluster Development:** Have zoning that allows residential/mixed use or cluster / Open Space Residential development by right that is not part of a 40R district (or have a pattern of approving such developments over the last 5 years).
5. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU):** Have zoning that allows for accessory dwelling units by right (or have a pattern of approving ADUs over the last 5 years).
6. **Multi-Family Parking Requirement:** Reduced parking requirement for Multi-Family units within the last 5 years or require no more than 1 parking space per unit for multifamily units.

Other Best Practices

7. ***Local actions that support housing:*** *Designated local resources for housing such as established an Affordable Housing Trust, donated or surplus land for re-use or redevelopment of housing, or spent substantial Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for community housing over the last 5 years.*
8. **Land Use Board training:** Provide evidence of education and training for a majority of members on a land use board (Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Select Board and/or City Council) from **Citizen Planner Training Collaborative**, Massachusetts Housing Partnership's **Housing Institute**, Community Development Partnership's **Lower Cape Housing Institute**, or Urban Land Institute's (ULI's) **Urban Plan Public Leadership Institute** over the last 5 years.



HOUSING CHOICE BEST PRACTICES 2023

9. **40B pattern or approval:** Have a demonstrated pattern of working with 40B developers to achieve greater affordability by accepting 40B projects without imposing conditions that render the projects uneconomic.
10. **SHI at or above 10%:** Have units currently eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that equal or exceed 10% of total year round housing stock according to the DHCD subsidized housing inventory, where reaching such 10% threshold was not the result of having a local comprehensive permit decision overturned by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC).
11. **SHI increased at least 2.5%:** Have increased your community's SHI by at least 2.5% points in the last 5 years where such increase was not the result of having a local comprehensive permit decision overturned by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC).
12. **Participate in one of the following DHCD Housing Programs:** the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP), have adopted an Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing district, approved District Improvement Financing (DIF) related to housing, have adopted an Urban Renewal Plan that includes a significant Housing element.
13. **Property tax relief / Community Impact Fee:** Have adopted local option property tax relief programs for income eligible seniors either as provided for by statute (MGL c. 59 section 5) or through a home rule petition; OR have adopted a Community Impact Fee for short term rentals (MGL c. 64G, section 3D) where your community has committed in writing to using a portion of such revenues for affordable housing.
14. **Housing Production Plan:** Have a CERTIFIED Housing Production Plan which means that you have an DHCD approved Housing Production Plan and have subsequently seen an increase of 0.5% or 1% in your year round housing units within the required time frame (see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/chapter-40-b-housing-production-plan> for more information)
15. **Housing Plan Implementation:** Demonstrated implementation of at least two strategies identified in a Housing Production Plan, housing component of a Master Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, or other housing related plan or analysis, other than adoption of the best practices specifically listed above.