



HOUSING CHOICE BEST PRACTICES 2024

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 grants, applicants receive 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 as scoring criteria in the Housing Choice Grant Program.

Housing Choice Designation 2024 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 Please note, that if your community repealed its only 40R district, it no longer qualifies for this best practice.*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.



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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.
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 EOHLIC 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 EOHLIC 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 EOHLIC 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.