



Welcome to the 2025 Housing Choice Designation Application!

This is the eighth year the Commonwealth has offered the Housing Choice Community (HCC) designation as part of the Housing Choice Initiative. The designation term is 5 years. New designees in 2025 will remain designated until 2030. This designation application opens at the beginning of each calendar year. **Currently designated communities whose designation does not expire in 2025 do not need to apply until the year of their designation expiration.** Verify your community's designation period at: [Housing Choice Designation | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/housing-choice-designation). To complete the application, you will need information about the number of year-round housing units over the last 5 years and implementation of certain housing best practices and policies.

Housing Units Information: Provide your community's total year-round housing units from the 2020 Census and the cumulative net increase in year-round housing units from January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2024 (referred to below as "additional" units). You may use either **A)** US Census Building Permit Survey data **or B)** your municipality's building permit data/records as the primary source to document net new housing units in your community. The application must be e-signed and certified by your local Building Official as to the accuracy of the additional unit information.

Best Practices and Policies to promote housing: Provide evidence of which of the listed housing best practices and policies your community has implemented. You may use excerpts of zoning bylaws, copies of planning or zoning documents, and any documentation that proves implementation.

Navigating the Application

This application **can** be saved; you may save your work and return to the form later. If you use the "Save and Resume" feature, please note that uploaded files will not be saved. You will receive a link after saving your application. **Links to saved applications expire after 30 days.** Gather files needed and only upload them when you are ready to hit the "Submit" button. Your community's Chief Executive Officer must e-sign and certify the application.

The maximum file size for all uploads is 25 MB per submission (not per file upload field). If you try to submit a form with files totaling more than 25 MB, you will get an error message and must start over. If your total file size is greater than 25 MB, consider submitting evidence of your zoning code only once, highlighting the relevant sections and noting in best practices narrative sections about where to find the evidence in the submitted document. If you continue to have problems uploading files due to large sizes, please contact mckenzie.bell@mass.gov to request to submit files by email.

Once your application is submitted, a review panel will evaluate your application and determine whether your community meets the designation criteria. If additional materials or evidence are needed, the review panel may request additional information be submitted.

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 18, 2025.

To avoid last-minute problems submitting your application, submit as soon as possible. If you have questions, contact McKenzie Bell, Senior Community Grants Coordinator (mckenzie.bell@mass.gov).

Contact & Community Information

Name of Municipality: *Choose your City or Town from the drop down list*

Name of Application Contact: _____

Email of Application Contact: _____

Phone Number of Application Contact: _____

Municipality Legal Address: _____

Does your community have any ACTIVE housing restrictions or other restrictive bylaws, such as phased growth zoning, a sewer moratorium, or an active housing moratorium?*

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Zoning moratorium for new housing makes your community INELIGIBLE for Housing Choice designation.*

If Yes, provide a copy of the ordinance(s) or bylaw(s) that established the restriction.

**If the restriction limits new housing units to less than 5% growth per year, it's likely your community will be ineligible for the designation.*

Has your community conducted a Self-Evaluation or Transition Plan related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?*

☐ Yes ☐ No

**More information on ADA requirements for local governments can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/housing-choice-designation-application>*

If No, is your community willing to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MA Office on Disability (MOD) and EOHLC, immediately upon receiving the designation, to conduct such study within the next five years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Housing Choice Communities must have conducted this ADA review as required by federal law or agree to conduct such review. A copy of a template MOU and more information about ADA planning can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/housing-choice-designation-application>*

Information about Housing Production

The Housing Choice Designation is based in part on the **production of new year-round housing units** over the last 5 years. There are four eligibility thresholds of new units permitted **over the previous 5 years**:

- 7% increase or 700 new units **and** demonstration of the 2 required policies
- 5% increase or 500 new units **and** demonstration of the 2 required policies **and** implementation of 6 of 21 best practices (2 of which are affordable)
- 3% increase or 300 new units **and** demonstration of the 2 required policies **and** implementation of 10 of 21 best practices (4 of which are affordable)
- 1.5% increase or 150 new units **and** demonstration of the 2 required policies **and** implementation of 14 of 21 best practices (6 of which are affordable)

How to calculate & demonstrate new year-round housing units

1. Look up your community's 2020 year-round housing units per the Census, which is the denominator used in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The designation application webpage has a list of 2020 year-round units for all communities [here](#).

2. Calculate the number of new year-round housing units over the last 5 years (1/1/2020 - 12/31/2024) using the number of **building permits** issued.
 - Data sources:
 - **US Census Building Permit Survey (BPS)** data is available for 2020 to 2023 and can be found on the designation application webpage [here](#). If the imputed data for your community appears accurate, you may submit a copy of the BPS data to demonstrate your community's new units for 2020 to 2023.
 - **Your community's building official** should have records of building permits for new year-round housing units. For calendar year 2024 (and if BPS data appears incorrect for any prior years), submit records from your building official to demonstrate new building permits.
 - What counts as "new units"
 - Count a net increase in year-round housing units as "new units." For example, if a demolished single-family home is replaced with 3 units, the "new units" are counted as +2.
 - Permits for housing units that replace demolished units at a 1-to-1 ratio do not count as new units. For example, demolition of a single-family home and replacement with a single-family home permit is an increase of 0 new units.
 - **NEW IN 2025:** Previously vacant units that have been rehabilitated and brought back online during the previous 5 years can count as a "new unit."
3. Use the total calculated new units permitted in the previous 5 years and/or calculate the percentage of new units (compared to your community's 2020 year-round housing units) to determine under which threshold your community is eligible.

What is the number of your community's 2020 year-round housing units? _____

INSTRUCTIONS: 2020 year-round housing units are available for download at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-the-housing-choice-designation>

What is the number of net new units permitted between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2024? _____

Note: please see the above description of qualifying net new units, including the new addition for rehabilitated previously vacant units.

Calculated percent increase in year-round housing units (net new units/2020 units*100): _____

Note: this field calculates the % increase automatically.

Housing Choice Designation

Based on your community's calculated number or % of new year-round housing units permitted over the last 5 years, select the appropriate designation threshold below. If you do not meet any threshold to qualify to be designated as a Housing Choice Community, visit the Housing Choice webpage and review technical assistance opportunities available from many public, quasi-public, and advocacy organizations. You may also talk to your Regional Planning Agency about what steps your community can take to increase housing production to qualify in the future.

Select the housing production threshold your community is applying under:

- ☐ 7% increase OR 700+ new units
- ☐ 5% increase OR 500+ new units
- ☐ 3% increase OR 300+ new units
- ☐ 1.5% increase OR 150+ new units

Upload building permit data.

You must provide detailed back up for all net new units. Please UPLOAD documentation of the building permits issued over the last 5 years as .pdfs of printouts from US Census Building Permit Survey Data, your building permit software, Excel spreadsheets, or other information about building permits in your community. Remember: even if you use Building Permit Survey data for 2020 through 2023, you must upload your community's building permit information for 2024.

Use the space below to provide information about additional housing units in your community that you believe are not captured by the Building Permit Survey: _____

Here you can let us know about the reasons why the Building Permit Survey does not accurately reflect housing production in your community and/or if you have details on rehabilitated units you're including in your new units calculation (1000-character limit).

Housing Choice Required Policies & Best Practices

All applicants must provide evidence of required implemented policies and housing choice best practices. Please review the list below, and check the box for each policy or best practice and upload documentation to prove which your community has implemented. Communities with 7% or 700 new units do not need to demonstrate housing choice best practices to achieve designation; nonetheless, they must provide answers and documentation to submit a complete application.

Required Implemented Policies: All applicants must demonstrate the two Required Implemented Policies to achieve designation.

Best Practices: Communities applying under the following thresholds must demonstrate implementation of certain housing choice best practices, including a portion of "affordable" best practices.

- 5% or 500 new units threshold: Must demonstrate at least 6 best practices total, 2 of which must be affordable.
- 3% or 300 new units threshold: Must demonstrate at least 10 best practices total, 4 of which must be affordable.
- 1.5% or 150 new units threshold: Must demonstrate at least 14 best practices total, 6 of which must be affordable.

Note: When uploading required documentation, only one file per upload box is allowed. If you have multiple documents to prove implementation of a best practice, combine them into a single file before uploading. **If submitting entire sections of zoning or by-laws, please highlight the relevant sections.**

Required Implemented Policies

Regardless of which production threshold your community is applying, all applicants must demonstrate the following Required Implemented Policies to qualify for designation.

☐ 1. Multi-Family Zoning: Have at least one multi-family zoning district that allows for multi-family housing as of right (in addition to any 40R district/s) that does not restrict development by age of occupant or number of bedrooms.

1.a. Upload documentation of multi-family zoning

1.b. Narrative about multi-family zoning: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 1.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 2. Property Tax Relief/Community Impact Fee: Adopted local option property tax relief programs for income-eligible seniors as provided for by statute (MGL c. 59 section 5) or through a home rule petition; OR

adopted a Community Impact Fee for short term rentals (MGL c. 64G, section 3D) where the community has committed in writing to using a portion of such revenues for affordable housing.

2.a. Upload documentation of property tax relief or community impact fee

2.b. Narrative about property tax relief or community impact fee: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 2.a. (500-character limit).

Housing Choice Best Practices: Affordable Best Practices

See above to determine how many affordable best practices your community must demonstrate implementation of to qualify for designation.

☐ 1. Inclusionary Zoning: Have Inclusionary Zoning with density bonuses that provides for reasonable density increases so that housing is not unreasonably precluded.

1.a. Upload documentation of inclusionary zoning

1.b. Narrative about inclusionary zoning: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 1.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 2. 40R/40Y District: Have an approved 40R Smart Growth or 40Y Starter Home district that remains in compliance with programs. Communities that repeal but do not replace a district do not qualify for this best practice.

2.a. Upload documentation of 40R/40Y district

2.b. Narrative about 40R/40Y district: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 2.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 3. Transit-Oriented Development: Have created new districts, changed zoning, or dedicated local resources to incentivize transit-oriented development in the last 5 years.

3.a. Upload documentation of transit-oriented development

3.b. Narrative about transit-oriented development: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 3.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 4. Housing Rehab Funding: Have designated local resources to owners/developers of vacant and dilapidated properties to rehab and bring properties online in the last 5 years, such as spending local funding, putting forth staff resources, allocating a significant portion of municipal funds (such as but not limited to CPA/CDBG/HOME) to housing rehab projects, or providing technical assistance.

4.a. Upload documentation of housing rehab funding

4.b. Narrative about housing rehab funding: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 4.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 5. Local Rehab Collaboration: Demonstrated at least two of the following in the last 5 years:

- Participated in a Housing Rehab Training Program for municipal rehabilitation staff,
- Promoted home efficiency or rehab programs such as MassSaves, the Neighborhood HUB, Habitat for Humanity, or statewide housing rehabilitation programs, or
- Worked with local organizations and home builders to complete rehabilitation projects.

5.a. Upload documentation of local rehab collaboration

5.b. Narrative about local rehab collaboration: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 5.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 6. 40B Approval: Have a demonstrated pattern of accepting 40B projects without imposing conditions that render projects uneconomic or unfeasible. 40B projects that result from having a local comprehensive permit decision overturned by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) do not count towards this best practice.

6.a. Upload documentation of 40B approval

6.b. Narrative about 40B approval: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 6.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 7. SHI at/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 EOHLC 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).

7.a. Upload documentation of SHI at/above 10%

7.b. Narrative about SHI at/above 10%: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 7.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 8. SHI increase of at least 2.5%: 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).

8.a. Upload documentation of SHI increase of at least 2%

8.b. Narrative about SHI increase of at least 2.5%: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 8.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 9. Local Actions that Support Housing: Demonstrate at least two of the following local resources for housing:

- Established an Affordable Housing Trust,
- Re-used or redeveloped donated or surplus land for housing in the last 5 years, or
- Spent at least 25% of all Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for housing in the last 5 years.

9.a. Upload documentation of local actions that support housing

9.b. Narrative about local actions that support housing: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 9.a. (500-character limit).

Housing Choice Best Practices: Other Best Practices

See above to determine how many best practices your community must demonstrate implementation of (including number of affordable best practices) to qualify for designation.

☐ 10. City/Town-Wide Multi-Family Zoning: Have city or town-wide multi-family zoning that permits at least 2-family homes as of right.

10.a. Upload documentation of city/town-wide multi-family zoning

10.b. Narrative about city/town-wide multi-family zoning: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 10.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 11. Mixed-Use Zoning: Have at least one zoning district that allows residential/mixed-use development as of right that is not part of a 40R district.

11.a. Upload documentation of mixed-use zoning

11.b. Narrative about mixed-use zoning: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 11.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 12. Cluster Development: Have at least one zoning district that allows Cluster or Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) as of right.

12.a. Upload documentation of cluster development

12.b. Narrative about cluster development: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 12.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 13. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): Have local zoning bylaws that are more permissive than MGL c. 40A section 3 and 760 CMR 71.000, such as reduced parking requirements, reduced dimensional standards, or expedited permitting.

13.a. Upload documentation of ADU

13.b. Narrative about ADU: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 13.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 14. Zoning Incentives: Demonstrate at least two policies that incentivize housing production by removing zoning barriers to housing, such as:

- Reduced parking requirements for multi-family units,
- No requirements for more than one parking space per unit for multi-family units,
- Reduced minimum lot sizes and set-back rules, or
- Allow for greater building height and density.

14.a. Upload documentation of zoning incentives

14.b. Narrative about zoning incentives: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 14.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 15. Resilient Buildings: Have development standards or programs that incentivize decarbonization, including energy efficiency for new construction and/or rehabilitation, such as low-impact development (LID) practices, Stretch Code, Opt-in Specialized Stretch Code, renewable energy integration, or participation in the Energy Star program.

15.a. Upload documentation of resilient buildings

15.b. Narrative about resilient buildings: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 15.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 16. Climate Resiliency Planning: Have a climate resiliency plan that includes a vulnerability assessment, adaptation strategies, mitigation actions, governance and coordination strategies, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

16.a. Upload documentation of climate resiliency planning

16.b. Narrative about climate resiliency planning: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 16.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 17. EOHLC Housing Programs: Participation in at least one of the following in the last 5 years:

- Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP),
- Have an Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing (UCH-TIF) district,
- Have an approved District Improvement Financing (DIF) related to housing, or
- Adopted or recently updated an Urban Renewal Plan that includes a significant housing production element.

17.a. Upload documentation of EOHLC housing programs

17.b. Narrative about EOHLC housing programs: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 17.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 18. Housing Production Plan: Have a Housing Production Plan (HPP) certified by EOHLC at the time of designation application and that aligns with goals and priorities defined in the Statewide Housing Plan.

18.a. Upload documentation of housing production plan

18.b. Narrative about housing production plan: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 18.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 19. Housing Plan Implementation: Demonstrated implementation within the last 5 years of at least 25% of identified strategies from a Housing Production Plan, housing component of a Master Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, or other housing-related plan or analysis. Note that the adoption of best practices listed here does not count toward the 25% of implemented strategies.

19.a. Upload documentation of housing plan implementation

19.b. Narrative about housing plan implementation: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 19.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 20. Land Use Board Training: Have provided education and training in the last 5 years for all members on a land use board (Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Select Board, and/or City Council) from:

- Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC),
- 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.

20.a. Upload documentation of land use board training

20.b. Narrative about land use board training: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 20.a. (500-character limit).

☐ 21. Regional Collaboration: Collaborated with neighboring municipalities and/or Regional Planning Agencies in the last 5 years to develop and implement housing plans and strategies that address housing needs regionally.

20.a. Upload documentation of regional collaboration

20.b. Narrative about regional collaboration: _____

Provide any additional details needed for question 20.a. (500-character limit).

Certification and Signatures

The Housing Choice Designation application requires e-signatures and attestations of signature of both the Local Building Official and Chief Executive Officer (Mayor, Select Board Chair, or City/Town Manager). **Please complete the section below by having the respective signatories type their name, title, email address, and certify their e-signature.**

Local Building Official E-Signature and Attestation

Local Building Official Name: _____

Local Building Official Title: _____

Local Building Official Email: _____

Local Building Official Attestation:

☐ I hereby attest that the building permit data for additional year-round housing units over the last 5 years is true and accurate. The data includes only net new year-round housing units, where demolished units that were replaced 1:1 with new building permits are not included (or if permits for units replacing tear downs cannot be excluded from other additional unit permits, then demolition data is being provided), and conversions of commercial property to housing (such as mill conversions) or previously vacant properties that have been rehabilitated and brought back online are included.

Chief Executive Officer E-Signature and Attestation

Chief Executive Officer Name: _____

Chief Executive Officer Title: _____

Chief Executive Officer Email: _____

Chief Executive Officer Attestation:

☐ I hereby attest that I am duly authorized to submit this application. By entering my name in the space above, I further certify, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that the responses to the questions provided in this application and the attached documentation, are true, accurate, and complete. I understand that the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) will rely on the information provided in this application to make decisions about whether to award the Housing Choice Communities designation, and that the Commonwealth reserves the right to take action against me, the applicant organization, and/or any other beneficiary of a grant, if any of the information provided is determined to be false, inaccurate, or misleading. I also affirm that, if designated, the applicant community has the capacity to comply with all applicable laws and regulations.