



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of
Housing and Livable Communities

A Home for Everyone

Massachusetts' Comprehensive Housing Plan 2025 – 2029

**A presentation to the
Water Resources Commission**

March 13, 2025



We All Know the Challenge



CommonWealth
— BEACON —

POLITICS, IDEAS, AND CIVIC LIFE IN MASSACHUSETTS

**Business leaders
say housing
shortage is top
concern**

*Many companies growing workforce outside
Massachusetts*



**Housing is in short supply in
Massachusetts. Here's why that matters.**

The Boston Globe

**\$217,000 a year to afford a home
in Boston? Who can even afford
that?**

CBS NEWS

**What can Massachusetts do about
its housing crisis?**



Work in Progress

The Healey-Driscoll Administration entered office focused on increasing production and driving down housing costs for all residents:

- **First**, by establishing EOHLC – the **first Housing Secretariat** in 30 years.
- **Next**, bolstering **Low-Income Housing Tax Credits** and the **Housing Development Incentive Program**.
- **Then**, drafting, advocating, passing, and now **implementing** the **Affordable Homes Act**.
- Implementing **three executive orders**:
 - Surplus Land, Unlocking Housing Production Commission, 5 Year Housing Plan.
- **All while** aggressively implementing the **MBTA Communities Law**, amid court challenges and local hurdles.

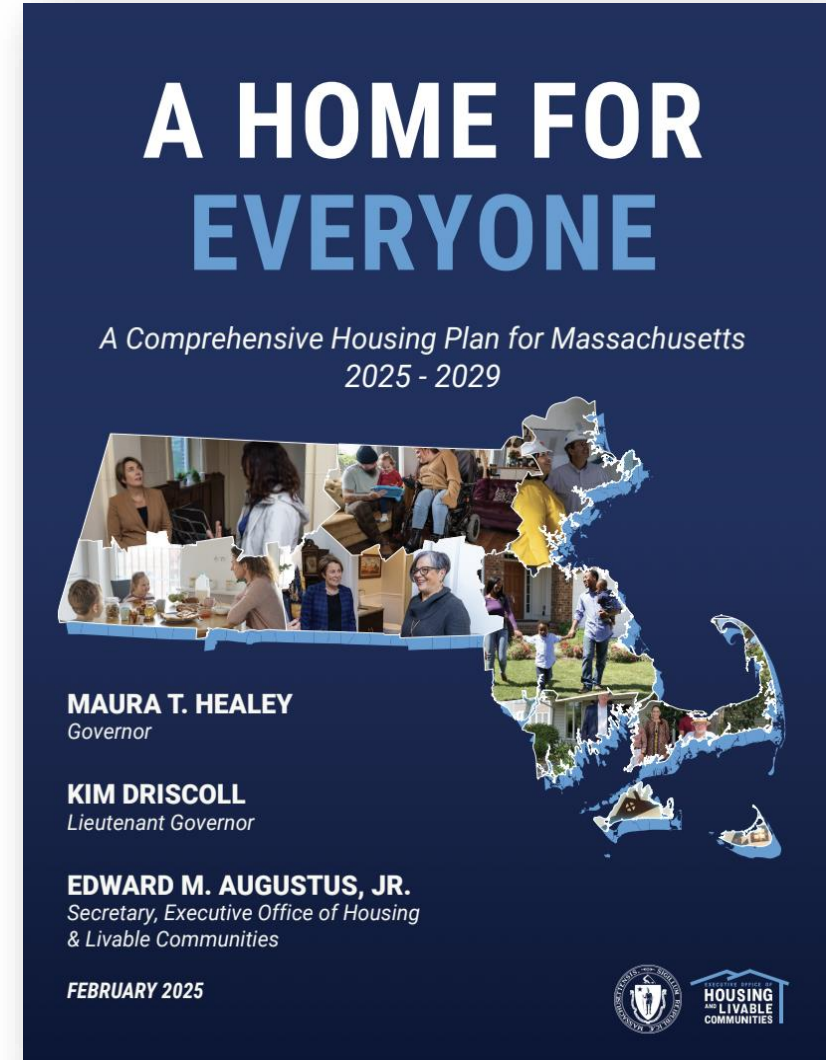
So, what's next?

The First State Housing Plan



A Home For Everyone: *Massachusetts' Comprehensive Housing Plan*

1. Presents unified goals to increase production.
2. Identifies concrete production targets.
3. Offers recommendations to get us there.





Key finding: A shortage of homes is the root cause of housing cost crisis

- Housing production has not kept pace with household growth for past two decades
- Statewide vacancy rate is historically low – only 1.6% of homes available for sale or rent. This results in intense competition and bidding wars for the few homes that are available.
- Low vacancy rate also makes it hard for households to use vouchers, exit homelessness, and avoid eviction
- Zoning and discretionary permitting are major barriers to housing
- High costs & investor expectations make it hard for development to pencil out
- Residential construction industry employment is lower than it was in 2008



Key finding: Massachusetts is at risk of losing the homes we have

- Nearly 200,000 homes are at risk due to increasingly severe coastal and riverine flooding. Many recent flood claims are due to damage outside a mapped hazard area.
- 9,000 year-round homes converted to seasonal or occasional use over a decade from 2010 – 2019.
- Corporate purchasers and investors are acquiring a larger share of moderately priced housing, resulting in higher sale prices and rents and increased evictions
- The state's public housing portfolio has \$4+ billion capital maintenance backlog
- 6,000 deed restricted affordable homes at risk of being converted to market rate before 2027



Key finding: A growing share of residents struggle to afford cost of living

- The number of households paying more than 30% of their income to housing is increasing at all income levels. More than one quarter of middle-income households are cost burdened, and more than three quarters of very low-income households.
- The cost of utilities, transportation, insurance, and maintenance are becoming increasingly burdensome.
- Applying for privately-owned subsidized housing is a confusing, time-consuming process.
- Broker fees add to already high cost of leasing a home.

Key finding: There is a growing population with complex housing and medical needs.



- The number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 54% from 2023 – 2024.
- There are approximately 2,000 chronically homeless individuals, many in need of supportive housing.
- There are eleven different Continuums of Care providing services in designated regions. Lack of efficient data sharing systems impedes effective coordination of service delivery.
- Premature nursing home admissions result in higher costs and worse health outcomes than seniors staying in community settings



Key finding: Housing Crisis affects everyone

- Cost of housing is driving away young people. If trends continue, Massachusetts resident workforce will decline from 2025 – 2035.
- Evictions and frequent moves affect health and childhood wellness, driving up healthcare and educational expenditures. High utilization of emergency rooms drives up health care costs borne by taxpayers.
- Lack of housing options near jobs, amenities, and transit leads to long commutes, more traffic congestion, and higher emissions.
- Many downtowns and town centers are struggling due to lack of local customers.
- Community concerns about financial, environmental, or traffic impacts of new housing often overstated or not supported by the evidence.



Housing Production Target

How many additional homes does Massachusetts need over the next ten years?

Net increase in year-round housing units needed to achieve housing abundance, with estimates of the *net* increase in demand for housing at different income levels.

NOT an estimate of existing affordable housing shortfall or a measure of how many affordable units need to be created through production or conversion.



Components of Anticipated Housing Need

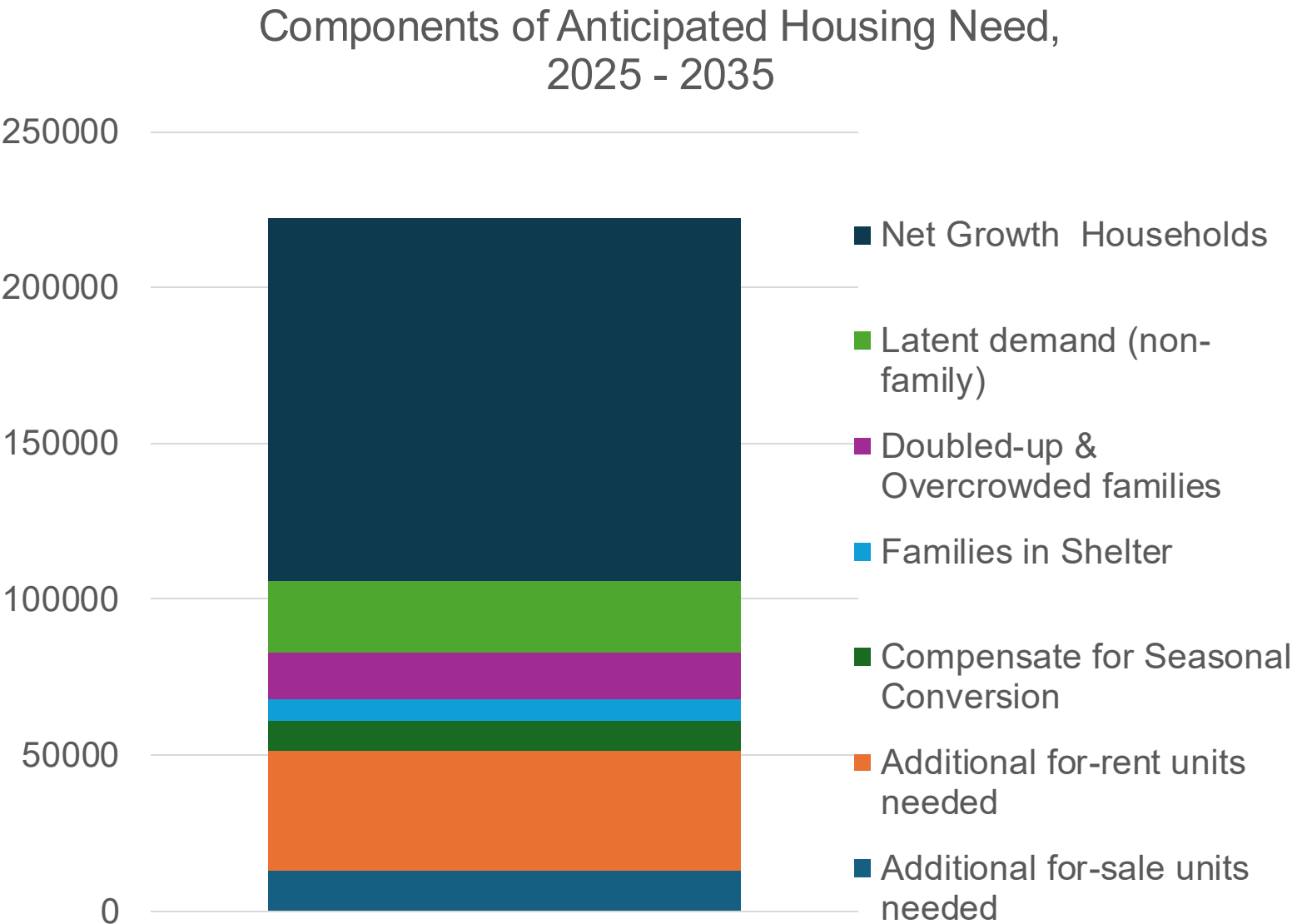
Massachusetts needs to add 222,000 year-round homes to the available housing stock from 2025 – 2035.

About 106,000 homes are needed to accommodate new Millennial and Gen Z households under a moderate growth scenario.

About 56,000 needed to address “latent demand” (doubled-up and overcrowded families, families in shelter, and roommates)

About 9,600 homes needed to compensate for anticipated seasonal conversion.

About 51,000 additional homes for-sale or for-rent needed to achieve a healthy vacancy rate.





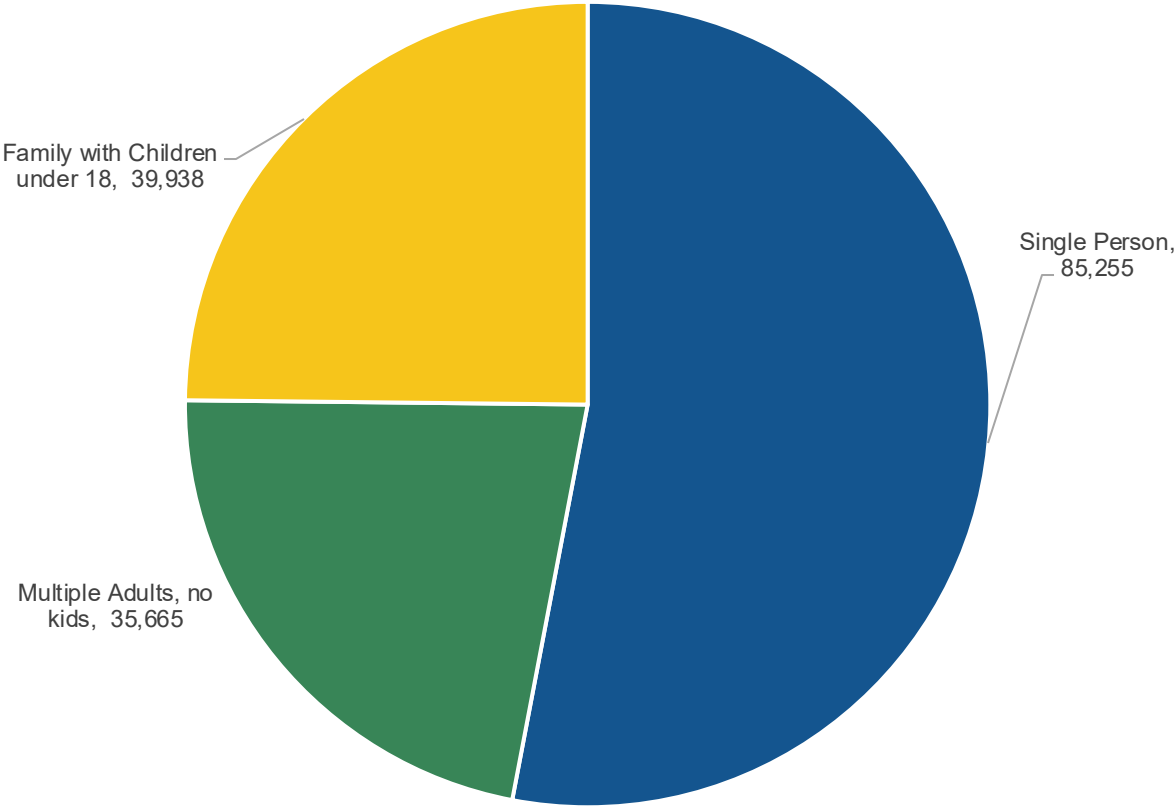
Projected Net Household Change by Type

More than half of net household growth is projected to be people living alone.

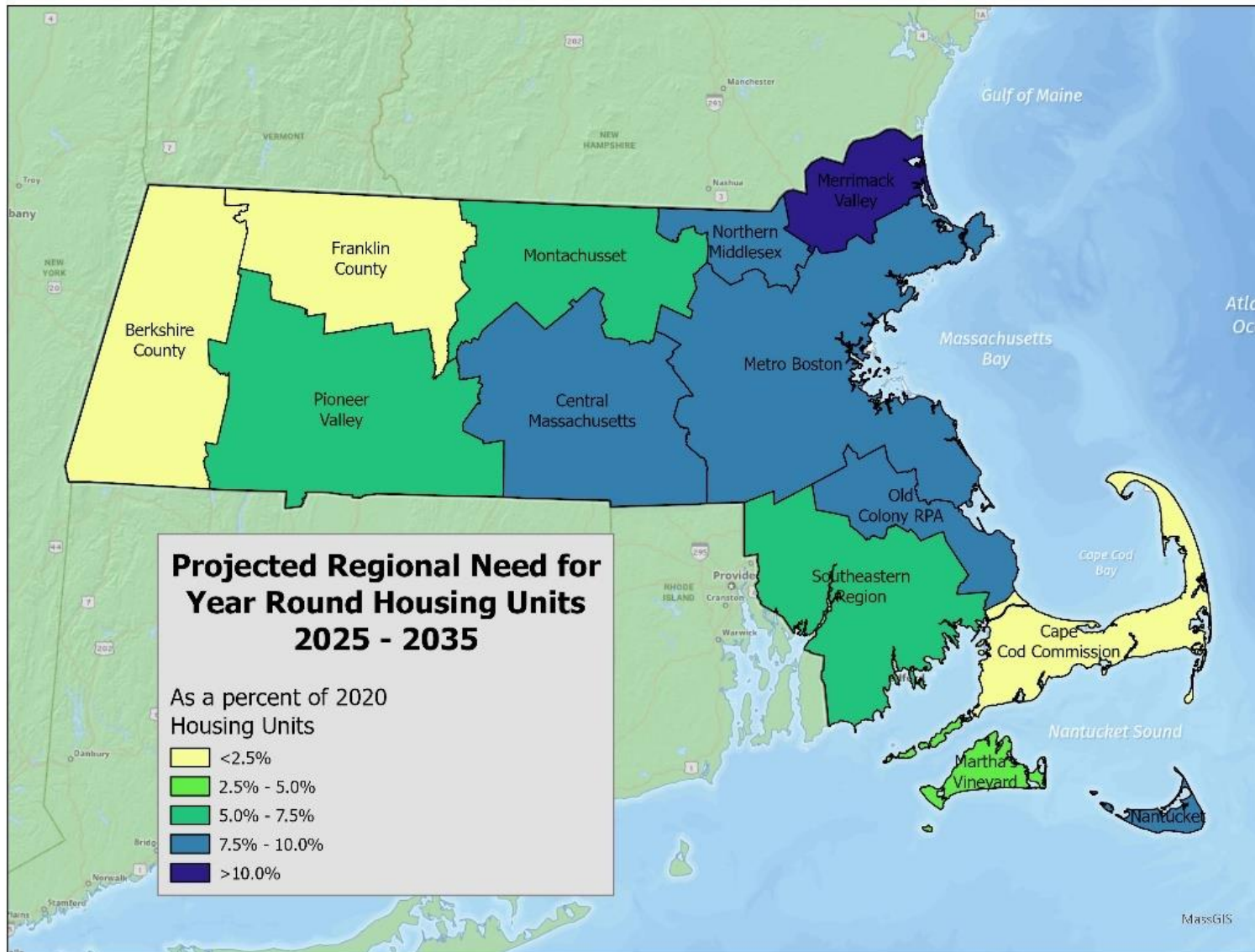
22% of net growth is multiple adults with no children under 18 (roommates, couples, adult children living with parents, etc.)

25% of net household growth is families with children. Most of these households are *families already living in Massachusetts*, either in doubled up & overcrowded situations or in family shelter system.

Projected Household Change, by Type
2025 - 2035



Housing Need by Region, Scenario 3



This is the anticipated net increase in year-round housing units that would be needed to achieve housing abundance.

It is *not* a measure of how many affordable units are needed to serve unmet housing needs of existing low-income residents.

The low-income shortfall may be *larger* than the net housing need.



Achieve a state of Housing Abundance

Lack of supply is the root cause of our housing cost crisis. In order to meet existing needs and anticipated growth in demand, Massachusetts needs to add 222,000 year-round homes to the available housing stock over the next decade. The strategies to achieve housing abundance includes actions to open up development opportunities in the right places; drive down the cost and timeline of production; increase availability of capital, labor, and expertise; advance new approaches to housing production; and provide the infrastructure needed to support growth.

- Increase as-of-right zoning capacity for multifamily housing
- Ramp up production and preservation of affordable rental housing
- Reexamine and refine state and local regulations that drive up the cost of housing
- Repurpose underutilized state-owned land for housing
- Build a workforce and industry to achieve production goals
- Solve the middle-market development feasibility gap
- Advance innovative and nontraditional housing such as cohousing, social housing, office conversions, and accessory dwelling units
- Support the growth of the offsite construction industry
- Create new funding streams for affordable housing
- Support infrastructure improvements to enable new growth



Protect Existing homes and affordability

Protecting existing homes and affordability requires acting well in advance of natural disasters, speculative acquisition, rent hikes, expiration of deed restrictions, or demolition by neglect. Preserving homes will take more than just money. It also requires innovative approaches to resilient retrofits of existing homes, speedier and less expensive pathways for public housing improvements, public private partnerships for refinancing and repositioning our public and affordable housing stock.

- Repair, rehabilitate, and reposition the State's public housing stock
- Provide financial support and technical assistance for decarbonizing affordable housing
- Build well-informed resiliency considerations into community planning, housing development, and preservation initiatives
- Preserve homes with expiring affordability restrictions
- Invest in accessibility, availability, and affordability of existing homes
- Bring vacant, distressed, and underutilized housing back online
- Develop new strategies to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing



Support Households

As efforts are underway to create an abundant and affordable housing supply over the long term, many households need assistance today to get by, much less get ahead. With improved access to mobile vouchers and improved availability of rental housing, households would have more options to stay in their community or move to a new one for work, school, or other reasons. These actions will facilitate a shift from emergency systems to cost-effective upstream interventions that enable households to remain stably housed.

- Provide direct subsidies for households struggling to afford rent and heat
- Increase access to homeownership opportunities for first-time homebuyers
- Make it easier for residents to find and apply for affordable rental housing
- Ensure residents have access to workforce development and training opportunities, affordable broadband internet, and social services
- Help tenants avoid unreasonable rent hikes and fees



Build a stronger safety net

A strong safety net prioritizes upstream interventions in a manner that efficiently targets state resources to ensure housing stability. This is not a one-size-fits all approach, but an approach inclusive of an array of appropriate targeted housing, health, socio-economic, and tenancy supports to maximize limited resources.

- Develop new policies and programs for specific populations through Affordable Homes Act Commissions
- Expand and coordinate provision of services and supportive housing for those most at risk
- Ensure the Emergency Assistance Shelter System is sustainable, scalable, coordinated, and effective
- Continue efforts to prevent evictions and foreclosures



Work together for the Commonwealth

Tackling our housing crisis isn't just an 'all of government' task—it's 'all of Massachusetts.' Every community, stakeholder, and sector has a role to play. A top-down approach will not be successful in achieving the state's need for more housing as it requires collective efforts across municipalities and entities that encompass our housing ecosystem.

- Strengthen partnerships with municipalities to create an environment that welcomes new housing while mitigating local impacts
- Conduct joint planning, research, evaluation, and engagement to develop a shared understanding of problems and solutions
- Ensure Massachusetts housing stock and production goals are aligned with state transportation, climate and land use goals
- Coordinate with private sector employers and partners to create a competitive environment for the Massachusetts workforce
- Advance Environmental Justice and Fair Housing



Next steps for Statewide Housing Plan

February 2025

- Publication of A Home for Everyone is not the conclusion of the state's housing planning process; it's just the beginning.
- 30-Page housing plan is accompanied by a comprehensive statewide housing needs assessment report.

Spring 2025

- EOHLC will launch an online interactive website with additional research, data dashboards, advocacy resources, and action steps for achieving a more affordable housing future.
- The plan will live in a digital format and be used for myth busting, local engagement and advocacy, legislative and budgetary prioritization, and more

On going

- Findings and recommendations of Affordable Homes Act commissions will be added to the plan, making it a 'living document.'
- EOHLC will work with regional planning agencies and municipalities to explore how align housing production plans with regional production targets.