



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
HOUSING

BEA

New Hampshire Department of  
BUSINESS AND  
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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## **New Hampshire Housing Activities - 2023**

*The following successful programs and activities in both rural and urban areas wholistically support everyone living in New Hampshire.*

### **State and Regional Housing Needs Assessment**

As the State continues to navigate housing challenges, per NH State Statute, RSA 36:47, NH's Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) developed [regional assessments](#), and New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) worked with Root Policy Research to establish a [statewide analysis of New Hampshire's housing market](#). Both organizations collaborated with the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA)s to conduct the assessments, which will inform housing development and needs on both a state and local level. This is the first-time statewide numbers will guide communities to reach their local goals and illustrate how a collective impact model can positively shape the future of housing in New Hampshire.

### **Adoption of the Fair Share Housing Model Estimated Production Numbers**

In an unprecedented vote, New Hampshire's Council on Housing Stability unanimously [adopted the State's Fair Share Housing Production Model's estimated production numbers](#) developed through a collaboration between the state's nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) and New Hampshire Housing(NHHFA). The Model was funded by the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) and coordinated by staff at the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA). This is the first-time statewide numbers will guide local communities to reach their housing production goals.

### **New Hampshire Housing Toolbox**

This tool was developed jointly by the NHBEA and the state's nine Regional Planning Commissions, contains 20 planning and zoning strategies to increase housing production in New Hampshire communities. The [New Hampshire Housing Toolbox](#) was developed in the Spring of 2023 through the coordinated efforts of the New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development and executed with assistance from Outwith Studio. The initiative was supported by the American Rescue Plan State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Grant and was part of the New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions' Regional Housing Needs Assessment. The toolbox compiles planning and zoning strategies to increase housing production throughout the State of New Hampshire.

## **New Hampshire Zoning Atlas**

The National Zoning Atlas Project ([www.zoningatlas.org](http://www.zoningatlas.org)) launched in the Spring of 2023, is a new initiative creating state-by-state datasets on specific land-use regulations affecting housing at the level of the zoning district. The first atlas completed was Connecticut's ([www.desegregatect.org/atlas](http://www.desegregatect.org/atlas)).

Inspired by this project, The [NH Zoning Atlas](#) was developed through a collaboration between BEA, Saint Anselm College's The Center for Ethics in Society and New Hampshire Housing. It was the third completed zoning atlas nationally. Project founder Sara Bronin has stated that the NH Zoning Atlas is the gold standard for other states to follow. Phase 2 of the NH Zoning Atlas which includes zoning changes adopted by communities through May 2023 will be published in December 2023. Additional work is also underway to overlay data on the existence of water and sewer infrastructure statewide to help support additional residential density over the NH Zoning Atlas interactive map.

The extensive database also features an interactive map highlighting the zoning restrictions impacting housing production across the state.

## **InvestNH**

Governor Sununu's \$100 million [InvestNH initiative](#), created with federal American Rescue Plan funds, included a \$60 million Capital Grant Program to provide flexible gap funding to developers (including \$10 million to NH Housing), a \$30 million Municipal Per Unit Grant Program and a \$5 million Municipal Demolition Grant Program is helping to fund the construction of 2,330 new units of multifamily rental housing including 1,153 units affordable to households earning less than 80% AMI. These units are located in 60 projects in 32 communities throughout the state. These funds have augmented other federal, state, and local funding programs administered by NHHFA and CDFA, resulting in the creation of more than 2,330 new units in aggregate.

## **Municipal Planning and Zoning Grant Programs**

The InvestNH initiative also included a \$5 million Municipal Planning & Zoning Grant program which provides funding through the Housing Opportunity Planning Grant Program to 58 communities to understand their housing needs, analyze, and update their land use regulations to help increase housing development opportunities. 47 communities have received a Phase 1 HOP grant to update the housing-related chapters of their master plan or complete a municipal housing needs assessment. 33 communities have received a Phase 2 HOP grant to analyze their land use regulations and complete a regulatory audit. 27 communities have received a Phase 3 HOP grant to update their land use regulations/zoning ordinance and develop new innovative planning tools, which lower regulatory barriers to new housing development. 11 New Hampshire communities are also being supported by a Community Housing Navigator funded through the InvestNH Municipal Planning & Zoning Grant program.

- **New Hampshire Housing Opportunity (HOP) Grants**

The \$5 million allocated for HOP Planning and Zoning grants helps municipalities analyze and update their land use regulations and further increase housing development opportunities. It enabled 58 of the state's 234 municipalities to update the housing related

chapters of their master plan and audit their land use regulations including zoning ordinance to identify barriers to affordable housing development. NHBEA contracted with NHHFA to administer this program.

- **Community Housing Navigator Grants**

These grants accompany HOP grants as part of the InvestNH Initiative and have provided staff capacity in 11 municipalities to coordinate regulatory change and increase housing development. There are five full-time Navigators working with the eleven municipalities focused on housing development, regulatory change and community engagement. Each Navigator position will take on different forms depending on the size and capacity of each community. The work being done in these communities lowers the regulatory barriers for future housing development funded by both private and public sources and unlocks opportunities across the state.

- **Municipal Housing Commissions/Committees**

Enabled by state law (RSA 674:44-h et seq.) and serve as an advisory body to help communities pursue their housing goals and provide guidance in the development process. They are an important tool to explore the housing needs of current and future people living in their community and the balanced, diverse supply of housing that will meet those needs. Housing Commissions serve as an advisor to other town boards on housing related matters.

## **NowWhatNH**

[A coalition](#) of educators, housing industry experts, planners, and community leaders committed to helping New Hampshire's communities remain strong and vibrant. The coalition includes the Center for Ethics in Society at Saint Anselm College, New Hampshire Housing, New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development, 603 Forward, the New Hampshire Municipal Association and NH Planners Association. It encourages residents with diverse viewpoints, backgrounds, and life experiences to take part in municipal zoning and land use boards. The team of volunteers pairs local planning/zoning board members with a mentor.

## **Housing Academy**

Community Engagement is a key component of [Housing Academy](#) to encourage community engagement and local solutions to eliminate affordable housing barriers key metrics of this program are: total number of participants receiving training, number of towns/cities represented, number of policy or regulation changes presented for consideration or change, and number of policy or regulatory changes enacted in cities/towns.

## **Fair Housing Advisory Council**

In August 2023, NHHFA and CDFA jointly established the Fair Housing Advisory Council, consisting of eight individuals with connections to groups that are underserved in today's housing market.

The group was formed in response to the 2020 report, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in New Hampshire, which identified and analyzed barriers to equal access to housing. One of the primary recommendations of the report was that New Hampshire establish a fair

housing advisory panel to review the state's progress on addressing the impediments to fair housing identified in the report, and to report emerging issues.

The advisory council provides vital feedback to NHHFA, CDFA, and other interested parties, to inform the state's efforts to address discrimination and inequities in the housing sector adversely impacting historically marginalized and underserved communities. The group will also share its findings with the state's Housing and Community Development Planning Council and other entities such as the state's Council on Housing Stability.

## Legislative Developments

- *New Hampshire Senate Bill 110* passed and became effective on September 26, 2023. This legislation reflects the most significant change to RSA165 and the local welfare system, including language mandating that local welfare departments seek to improve coordination and communication with each other.
- The *New Hampshire Housing Champions* program is a newly established voluntary program within the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NHBEA) which will launch in late spring/early summer 2024 recognizing municipal efforts that encourage the production of workforce housing and other types of housing necessary for the economic development of the state. A total of \$5 million in the FY24-25 state budget has been appropriated to the program. The program establishes qualifications for municipalities to be designated "*housing champions*" related to housing friendly zoning regulations and ordinances, training of local land use board members, implementation of water and sewer improvements, construction of walkability infrastructure that support housing, and establishment of financial incentives that incentive workforce housing. In exchange for a municipality becoming a *Housing Champion* designated community they will have the opportunity to apply for grants for infrastructure improvements which support new housing development and receive funds for the permitting and production of workforce housing. There will also be limited funds available for any municipality to revise housing related chapters of their master plan, conduct a regulatory audit to review regulatory barriers to housing development, and make regulatory changes including drafting zoning changes which lower barriers to new housing. Limited funds will also be available for municipalities who lack the current qualifications to become a *Housing Champion*.
- Designated The State Operating Budget for 2024-2025 included funding for housing initiatives that also advanced the Council's priorities. The Historic Housing Investments included the following:
  - \$25 million for the Affordable Housing Fund
  - \$10 million for InvestNH
  - \$10 million for a funding increase for homeless services, and
  - \$5 million for New Hampshire housing champion designation initiative