



Housing Solutions Lab

Building and sharing knowledge to
advance equitable local housing policy.

NYU
Furman
Center



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

2022 Housing Solutions Lab Peer Cities Network

Call for Applications

Click here to apply by February 25, 2022.

Overview

The [Housing Solutions Lab](#) at NYU Furman Center invites applications for the Housing Solutions Lab Peer Cities Network (Network), an opportunity for leaders from small and midsize cities to engage with their peers, policy experts, and housing researchers to address pressing local housing policy challenges.

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Lab will bring together housing leaders from 6-8 small and midsize cities for peer learning, networking, and planning activities to develop innovative, equitable local housing solutions. The cohort will support city leaders as they continue to respond to the housing crises posed by the COVID-19 pandemic while navigating evolving local and federal funding landscapes. The Network will also help participants address longstanding housing challenges that predate the pandemic, with a focus on leveraging housing policy as a platform to advance racial and health equity in cities.

Participants will have access to an ongoing national community of support, timely and practical data and policy resources, and information from housing experts to help them pursue equitable, evidence-based housing policies.

This opportunity is available to teams of housing policy decision makers and stakeholders from small and midsize cities with populations of 50,000 to 500,000 residents.

[Learn more about the Housing Solutions Lab's focus on small and midsize cities](#)

Network Format

During the 10-month program, city teams will attend monthly virtual sessions of 60 to 90 minutes. Sessions will typically include brief presentations from housing policy experts followed by facilitated discussions among Network participants to exchange questions, reflect on local strategies and challenges, and share lessons learned from local innovations.

Guided by the [Local Housing Solutions Policy Framework](#), discussion topics may address strategies to address housing insecurity and homelessness, affordable housing production and preservation, fair housing and neighborhood revitalization. The Network will include a focus on the relationship between housing policy, racial and health equity by providing content to help participants advance more equitable planning processes and cross-sector strategies in their local housing planning.

Sessions will also provide guidance on effective community engagement and communication strategies and the use of data to identify housing needs, link disparities in housing outcomes to specific policy objectives, and measure progress towards goals.

Participants are expected to actively participate in monthly virtual discussions with the full group of Network participants. Additionally, each city team will participate in quarterly one-on-one calls with Housing Solutions Lab staff over the course of the 10-month program. This will include an orientation call to establish goals for each team's participation in the Network and three follow up meetings. Quarterly calls will focus on identifying opportunities for the Lab to provide tailored technical assistance and/or research support to each city team.

Benefits of Participation

The Network will provide local leaders with timely information to support local policy analysis and decisions. This includes:

- **Peer networking and support:** Network participants will join a national community of peers in small and midsize cities, and an ongoing forum for shared learning, support, and policy innovation.
- **Timely policy resources:** Participants will receive timely, actionable policy updates and access to case studies, research, and other resources to inform small and midsize city leaders' housing-related efforts.
- **Local housing data:** Participants will have access to data describing local housing conditions, trends, and challenges.
- **Access to Housing Solutions Lab technical assistance and research support:** Participants will have access to technical assistance and research expertise to help design, implement, and evaluate local housing policy strategies and solutions.

City Eligibility and Team Composition

The Peer Cities Network is designed for teams of 3 to 4 decision makers and stakeholders from small and midsize cities who are working to develop housing policy solutions that promote more equitable outcomes in housing, health, and related domains. City teams must include a minimum of two officials from relevant local government agencies focused on housing (e.g. housing or planning departments, housing authorities) and may also include officials from other relevant government sectors, such as departments of health or education. Network participants may also include elected and appointed local officials or their senior staff, or representatives from nonprofit and community-based organizations, such as homelessness or health care service providers.

For example, a city team could include a representative from

- the local planning department;
- the local Public Housing Authority;
- the local Department of Public Health;
- a homeless service organization.

This is only one example. Cities may identify the most appropriate representatives for their team.

Each team must identify one team leader to serve as the primary point of contact for the Network and for the purpose of this application. All participants should be prepared to actively engage in monthly group discussions and have an enthusiasm for shared learning, problem solving, and networking with colleagues from across the country.

Application Review

All applications will be reviewed by the Housing Solutions Lab staff.

Strength of application will be determined by:

- Commitment to addressing disparities in housing and related domains (e.g. health, education, environment)
- Commitment to advancing racial equity and opportunity through local policy and programming
- Relationships with stakeholders who represent the diverse voices and perspectives of residents
- Interest in leveraging data and evaluation to improve local housing policies and programs
- Enthusiasm for collaborating with peer cities to foster shared learning, resource sharing, and policy innovation

[View the Application](#)

Application Process and Timeline

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| January 27, 2022 | Call for Applications released |
| February 18, 2022 | Deadline for questions |
| February 25, 2022 | Application deadline |
| March 14, 2022 | Notification of selected cities |
| Week of March 28, 2022 | Network virtual kick-off meeting |
| December 2022 | Final Network meeting |

We welcome questions about the Network opportunity and ways to develop a successful application. Please contact Jess Wunsch, Peer Cities Manager, at jess.wunsch@nyu.edu with questions about the Peer Cities Network or the application process.

About the Housing Solutions Lab

The **Housing Solutions Lab** at NYU Furman Center works with cities across the country to design, monitor, and evaluate promising local housing policies. With funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Lab seeks to help cities advance evidence-based local housing policies that promote racial equity; increase access to opportunity; and support resident health and well-being. The Lab serves cities of all sizes, with a focus on small and midsize cities (those with populations of 50,000-500,000).