



Housing Solutions Lab
Building and sharing knowledge to
advance equitable local housing policy.



Call for Applications: 2023 Housing Solutions Workshop

The NYU Furman Center's Housing Solutions Lab and Abt Associates are pleased to invite applications to the Housing Solutions Workshop from interested small and midsize cities and counties—those with populations between 50,000 and 500,000.

The lack of affordable, quality housing is a major threat to the quality of life and economic competitiveness of many of the nation's small and midsize cities. To counter these challenges, localities need to act boldly and at scale. Small and midsize cities are often less restricted by bureaucracy and can better engage senior staff and elected officials, gain visibility for new strategies, and establish trust and engagement across the community. These benefits position small and midsize cities to effectively develop and implement a local housing strategy. The Housing Solutions Workshop is designed to help localities begin developing comprehensive and balanced housing strategies to better address affordability and other housing challenges.

A comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy provides a guiding framework for cities, towns, and counties to identify and coordinate the many policy tools and stakeholders required to make substantial progress toward meeting their housing needs. A local housing strategy that (a) clearly identifies a jurisdiction's housing objectives, (b) includes a comprehensive and balanced set of policies for meeting those objectives, and (c) specifies numerical goals for tracking progress is essential to organizing and coordinating the many moving parts of an effective local housing policy response.

The Housing Solutions Workshop will include six 120-minute virtual training sessions from October 10 through October 26, 2023, and an additional individual session for each delegation to collaborate with Workshop facilitators. The six main sessions will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the month from 1 to 3 p.m. Eastern time (ET). There is no cost to participate in the Workshop.

KEY DATES

Submission deadline:
September 6, 2023

Virtual interviews with finalists:
Sept 11 - Sept 14, 2023

Selection notification:
September 18, 2023

Attendance at workshop:
October 10 - 26, 2023, Tuesdays
and Thursdays (by Zoom)



Questions?

Contact Peer Cities Manager Jess Wunsch at jess.wunsch@nyu.edu

Housing Solutions Workshop Overview

About the Workshop

Four to five cities or counties with populations of 50,000 - 500,000 will be selected to participate in the Workshop. To ensure the success of the training sessions, each delegation should consist of five to six participants, with at least four being senior local government officials.

Sessions will include both group discussions and presentations. These sessions are meant to promote the sharing of ideas among participating jurisdictions and to help individual delegations in initiating or refining their own local housing strategies. Additionally, to encourage each locality to progress towards a comprehensive and balanced housing strategy, each delegation will participate in one individual session with Housing Solutions Lab facilitators to further discuss policy topics specific to its housing goals. By the end of the Workshop, participants will have (a) a strong understanding of how to develop or refine a local housing strategy, (b) taken initial steps toward this work, and (c) determined next steps for progressing after the Workshop.

The Workshop will combine asynchronous learning, group discussions with peer localities, and working sessions in which each jurisdiction focuses on its specific housing challenges and develops its policy toolkit. Participants will:

- Share local housing policy challenges with other participating localities and Lab facilitators to obtain feedback.
- Learn about ways to use data to assess housing needs, link objectives and policies, and track progress.
- Identify options for strengthening local housing strategies and improving coordination across departments and agencies.
- Participate in small group discussions with peer jurisdictions to exchange ideas for optimizing policy toolkits.
- Discover ways to engage residents and stakeholders to address housing challenges and advance racial equity.

Criteria for Localities to Apply

Cities and counties in the early stages of developing a local housing strategy will benefit the most from the Workshop. Applicants should have a strong commitment to developing a new comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy or refining a strategy that is outdated or narrowly focused.

To be considered for the Housing Solutions Workshop, localities must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be a small or midsize city or county in the United States (population between 50,000-500,000) that has not recently developed a comprehensive local housing strategy. Joint applications—for example, one city and the surrounding county or two adjacent jurisdictions located in one county—may also be submitted if each of the following conditions are met:
 - At least one of the localities has a population of at least 50,000,
 - The combined population of the localities is no greater than 500,000, and
 - The localities can demonstrate previous collaboration on housing policies and a commitment to future collaboration on a local housing strategy.
2. Demonstrate an interest in developing or refining a comprehensive local housing strategy, including evidence of recent steps taken by the city/county towards that goal or consideration of one or more housing policies.
3. Identify a delegation of five to six participants from local agencies or partner organizations to participate in the training who demonstrate a commitment to working collaboratively towards achieving their housing goals. At least four participants should be senior local government officials. Participants should represent senior leadership with decision-making authority to influence and advance the strategies developed during the training in their communities and organizations.

Recommended Makeup of City Delegations

Since housing policy tools fall within the jurisdiction of multiple local agencies and departments, this work is necessarily an interagency effort. Delegations must include five to six senior leaders—generally, heads or deputies—of city/county or partner agencies that are critical actors in the development of a comprehensive, balanced, and coordinated local housing strategy. Applicants may also choose participants from external partners that are essential to and closely involved in the city’s or county’s housing strategy. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include among their delegations:

- Both the public housing authority that serves the city/county, and the city/county agency most involved in the production of affordable rental housing (usually the housing department or redevelopment agency).
- Other local government agencies such as the planning department, planning or zoning commission, continuum of care, local housing finance agency, local or regional transit authority, or a special purpose agency set up to oversee the implementation of a neighborhood or area plan or tax increment financing (TIF) district.
- Other departments or agencies, nonprofit organizations, or legislative leaders, as long as they are key actors whose collaboration is needed to advance and implement the locality’s housing strategy. Nonprofit partners may include organizations that advocate for local housing policies or implement housing programs, developers of affordable housing, and foundations supporting housing and community development efforts.
- The coordinating official in localities with a chief housing officer or in which the mayor or city manager’s office otherwise plays an active role in coordinating housing policies across agencies.

Each delegation must identify one leader to serve as the primary point of contact for the Workshop (and who will be named in the application form). All participants should be prepared to actively engage in all Workshop sessions and be enthusiastic about shared learning, problem-solving, and networking with colleagues from around the country. The estimated time commitment is 8–10 hours per week.

Submission Process

Cities and counties interested in participating in the Housing Solutions Workshop must submit a complete application using the [online application form](#) by September 6, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Please check the Application FAQs or submit any questions about the process to Peer Cities Manager Jess Wunsch (jess.wunsch@nyu.edu) by Wednesday, August 30, 2023. We cannot guarantee a timely response to questions submitted after that date.

Proposed delegations will be invited to participate in a virtual interview between September 11-14, 2023. Delegations will be notified of their participation selection by September 18, 2023.

Facilitators and Partners

The Housing Solutions Workshop will be led jointly by staff from Abt Associates and the NYU Furman Center’s Housing Solutions Lab. Facilitators will include:

- Ingrid Gould Ellen, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at NYU Wagner and Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center
- Martha Galvez, Executive Director, Housing Solutions Lab
- Jeffrey Lubell, Director of Housing and Community Initiatives, Abt Associates
- Matt Murphy, Executive Director, NYU Furman Center
- Stephen Whitlow, Senior Associate, Abt Associates
- Mark Willis, Senior Policy Fellow, NYU Furman Center