



### What is a Housing Production Plan?

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts set a goal of making at least 10% of each community's housing stock affordable for low- and moderate-income tenants.

The Legislature enacted the Comprehensive Permit process under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B to eliminate barriers developers face in creating new affordable housing units in communities with less than 10% of their housing stock on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The law reduces local approvals and empowers a state Housing Appeals Committee to settle conflicts between the developers and municipalities.

A Housing Production Plan is a state-certified regulatory tool guiding a municipality's development of low- and moderate-income in specific areas or properties. The plan sets measurable goals of increased subsidized housing and defines actions the municipality will take to meet the state's expectations.

A municipality successfully implementing a Housing Production Plan retains the ability of the local Zoning Board of Appeals to analyze a Comprehensive Permit based on alignment with local needs.

The first step for a community to develop a Housing Production Plan is to conduct [a Housing Needs Assessment](#) to review the socioeconomic factors impacting the current housing market and identify current and future gaps in housing options for different community needs.

The Housing Production Plan elaborates on the needs assessment by carefully considering the community's opportunities, limitations, and capacity to fill those gaps, with a specific focus on where subsidized housing is best suited. The plan establishes a roadmap for the community to reach its goal by identifying locations, strategies, and policies to steadily increase the availability of low- and moderate-income housing units.

### A Housing Production Plan Contains Three Main Sections:

Housing  
Needs  
Assessment

Numerical  
Affordable  
Housing  
Goals

Locations,  
Strategies,  
Policies, for  
Housing  
Production

### BRPC PROGRAM

Community Planning Program  
[berkshireplanning.org/programs](http://berkshireplanning.org/programs)

## Certification and Progress Reporting:

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development reviews a municipality's Housing Production Plan to ensure all required elements are addressed in a consistent manner prior to certifying its adoption.

Following a simple majority vote of a community's governing body, the Department of Housing and Community Development's conducts a 90-day review and approves Housing Production Plans for five years.

The Department will not certify the plan if it does not meet the required standards and will notify the municipality of the deficiencies. A municipality can submit a new or revised plan at any time.

Municipalities maintain the ability to make minor amendments to the Housing Production Plan to adjust to changes of circumstances after certification. A municipality must submit substantial changes such as changes in overall goals or strategies to the Department for approval, which may require another 90-day review.

During implementation, municipalities request the Department of Housing and Community Development to certify new affordable housing units to demonstrate that a town is steadily moving toward the goal of having 10 percent of the housing stock affordable to low-and moderate-incomes.

Municipalities can submit units for certification of compliance with the Housing Production Plan at any time during the calendar year in which the units are constructed. The Department of Housing and Community Development will certify a municipality as compliant with the production plan if it increases the percentage of its housing stock on the Subsidized Housing Inventory by .5% per year.

## Required Elements:

- Most Recent Census Data on population, demographics, and housing stock, including future projections.
- Identified barriers to development and plans to mitigate limitations.
- Municipal Infrastructure Capacity.
- Goals to develop mixed types of housing.
- Zoning proposals for specific areas to assist in meeting production goals.
- Specific sites ideal for affordable housing redevelopment.
- Preferred characteristics of residential or mixed-use development.
- Municipally owned parcels optimal for redevelopment.
- Participation in regional organizations addressing affordable housing.

## Funding Assistance for A Housing Production Plan:

- Community Preservation Act.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development's Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program.
- Community Development Block Grants.
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's District Local Technical Assistance Program.

## Western Massachusetts Housing Production Plans:

- [Lenox](#)
- [Shelburne](#)
- [Easthampton](#)
- [Agawam](#)
- [South Hadley](#)
- [Ludlow](#)
- [Sheffield](#)

## Other Examples of Certified Housing Production Plans:

Approximately half of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns have an active Housing Production Plan. The Department of Housing and Community Development makes all plans available [on its website](#).