



Housing Solutions Lab

Building and sharing knowledge to
advance equitable local housing policy.



Call for applications: HOUSING SOLUTIONS WORKSHOP

The NYU Furman Center's Housing Solutions Lab, Abt Associates, and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy 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 better able to engage higher leadership, gain visibility for new strategies, and establish trust and engagement across the community. These benefits position small and midsize cities well to effectively implement a local housing strategy once one has been created. The Housing Solutions Workshop is designed to help localities develop 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 that will be required to make substantial progress toward meeting their housing needs. A local housing strategy that (a) clearly identifies a locality'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. Since the available policy tools fall within the jurisdiction of multiple local agencies and departments, this work is necessarily an interagency effort.

The Housing Solutions Workshop will include eight 90-to-120-minute virtual training sessions and be held from October 25 to November 18, 2021 (sessions are expected to be held on Mondays and Thursdays each week; specific times will be determined after applicants are selected to participate in the Workshop). There is no cost to cities for participation in the Workshop. The Workshop is presented in partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Key Dates

Proposal submission deadline:
September 10, 2021.

Phone interviews with finalists:
September 20 to 24, 2021.

Selection notification:
October 4, 2021.

Attendance at the Workshop:
October 25 - November 18, 2021
(by Zoom).



QUESTIONS?

Contact HSW@abtassoc.com



The Housing Solutions Workshop Overview

About the Workshop

A total of four cities or counties with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 will be selected to attend the Workshop (see below for information on joint applications including multiple localities). Each delegation will be expected to include **five-to-six members** to participate in each of the eight virtual training sessions. At least four members of the delegation must be senior local government officials. Refer to the section below on recommended makeup of delegations for more information.

Sessions will include a combination of group discussions and workshops designed to facilitate sharing among participating localities and to refine localities' housing strategies. Additionally, to encourage each locality to progress towards a comprehensive and balanced housing strategy, individual sessions will be held with each locality with Housing Solutions Lab facilitators on topic(s) specific to each locality's 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 developing or refining a strategy, and (c) determined next steps to continue developing or refining its strategy after the Workshop.

Who should Participate in the Workshop?

The Workshop is intended for cities or counties that are at the early stages of developing a local housing strategy. Applicants should have a strong commitment to developing a new comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy or refining a strategy that is older, outdated, or narrowly focused. Because the Workshop will focus on developing comprehensive and balanced local housing strategies, it is not well suited for localities that have recently developed one.

The Workshop will combine asynchronous learning, group discussions with peer localities and working sessions in which each locality focuses on its specific housing challenges and develops its policy toolkit. The Workshop will help accelerate the process of developing and refining a comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy. Participants will:

- Share their local housing challenges and policies with other participating localities and Housing Solutions Lab facilitators to obtain feedback
- Participate in small group discussions with peers from other localities to share ideas for how to optimize each agency's policy toolkit
- Identify options for strengthening local housing strategies and improving coordination across departments / agencies
- Learn about ways to use data to assess housing needs and track progress
- Learn ways to engage the community to address housing challenges and advance equity

Schedule

Session 1: Individual sessions with each delegation to learn about their housing planning efforts and specific challenges and opportunities they are experiencing with respect to addressing housing needs	Oct. 25 or 26
Session 2: Kick-off session with all delegations to include introductions and small group discussions on the status of each city's housing strategy	Oct. 28
Session 3: Assessing housing needs and identifying policy objectives	Nov. 1
Session 4: Explore policies to help achieve a balanced and comprehensive local housing strategy	Nov. 4
Session 5: Community engagement and how cities may advance equity through their housing strategies	Nov. 8
Session 6: Strategy development and implementation	Nov. 11
Session 7: Individual sessions with each delegation to discuss topic areas selected by participants	Nov. 15
Session 8: Funding sources, establishing goals and metrics, and wrap up	Nov. 18



Eligible Applicants and Expectations for Selected Localities and Attendees

Eligibility Criteria for Localities to Apply

Localities must meet the following minimum eligibility criteria to be considered for the Housing Solutions Workshop:

- Be a small or midsize city or county (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 cities 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.
- Have a demonstrated interest in developing or refining a comprehensive local housing strategy, including evidence of recent steps taken by the city / county that indicate its commitment to addressing housing challenges. This may include passage or consideration of one or more housing policies, or public statements from the mayor or other senior officials of the need to address housing problems.
- Identify a delegation of five-to-six participants from local city / county agencies or other partner organizations to jointly participate in the training; at least four participants should be senior local government officials. Partners should represent government agencies or external stakeholders with key roles in housing planning and implementation and community engagement; participants should represent senior leadership with decision-making authority to influence and advance the strategies developed during the training in their communities and organizations. See the section below on recommended makeup of city delegations for more information.
- Identify a designated point of contact to coordinate the city / county delegation's participation in Workshop activities.

Additional Selection Criteria

In addition to the above requirements, applicants are strongly encouraged in their application to demonstrate the following:

- An understanding of key housing challenges the locality faces and goals for participating in the Workshop.
- A commitment among key city / county agencies (and external partners, such as local nonprofits or foundations, if applicable) to work collaboratively toward the development and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy. This may include a statement of intent to collaborate signed by senior agency or organization officials expected to develop and implement the strategy.
- A rationale for including the agencies and the specific individuals in the delegation, including the current roles and backgrounds of members of the delegation.
- A willingness to provide additional information to help the Housing Solutions Lab understand the locality's housing challenges and strategies, if selected as a finalist or accepted for attendance at the Workshop.
- The availability of and commitment from proposed participants to attend and actively participate in all of the training sessions. Applicants should affirm that all of the individuals identified in the proposed delegations will make a good faith effort to participate in most Workshop sessions if their application is accepted and complete asynchronous assignments between sessions. The estimated commitment is approximately 8-10 hours a week.

Recommended Makeup of City Delegations

Applicants must send delegations of 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. We expect that delegations will include no less than four local government representatives. Applicants may also choose participants from external partners that are essential to and closely involved in the city's housing strategy.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to include both the public housing authority that serves the city and the city agency most involved in the production of affordable rental housing (e.g., usually the city housing department or redevelopment authority).
- In addition to these agencies, other local government agencies may include 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 district.
- Other departments or agencies, nonprofit organizations, or legislative leaders, can also be represented in a locality's delegation as long as they are key actors whose collaboration is needed to advance and implement the locality's housing strategy. Nonprofit partners may include, for example, organizations that advocate for local housing policies or implement housing programs, developers of affordable housing, and foundations and community organizations that support local housing and community development.
- 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, the coordinating official is strongly encouraged to participate.



Submission Process

Cities and counties interested in participating in the Local Housing Solutions Workshop must submit a complete application by September 10, 2021, 11:59PM ET. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Please submit any questions about the application process or Workshop to HSW@abtassoc.com by **August 30, 2021** – we cannot guarantee a timely response to questions submitted after that date.

Submit your complete application by **September 10, 2021, 11:59PM ET** using the online application form. A link to the complete application form can be accessed via localhousingsolutions.org/lab/workshop.



Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and scored by Housing Solutions Lab staff. Applicants should ensure their submissions meet all of the requirements of the Call for Applications and provide sufficient detail. Do not assume that reviewers will be familiar with your locality's housing landscape or housing strategy.

Applications submitted by the September 10, 2021, application deadline will be reviewed for completeness. Late applications will not be reviewed and will be excluded from consideration.

The selection process will involve four steps:



Step 1

Beginning September 13, staff will review submitted applications for completeness. To be considered complete, an applicant must:

- Be a city or county (or may include multiple localities, as discussed above) with a population between 50,000-500,000,
- Propose a delegation of 5-6 members for the training,
- Identify one city / county official to serve as the lead point of contact for the Workshop and to coordinate the delegation's participation in Workshop activities, and,
- Present evidence of recent steps taken by the applicant that indicates its commitment to addressing its housing challenges.



Step 2

Housing Solutions Lab staff will score complete applications according to the scoring criteria listed below. Up to eight of the highest-scoring localities will be selected as finalists.

Criteria	Weight
Evidence of applicant's strong interest in and goals for developing or refining a comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy.	25%
Extent to which the applicant's proposed delegation includes representation from a diverse set of government agencies (and nongovernmental partners, if applicable) most responsible for the coordination of housing policies.	25%
Extent to which the applicant's proposed delegation includes senior-level officials with decision-making authority to influence and advance the strategies developed during the training in their communities and organizations.	20%
Articulation of the applicant's key housing challenges and housing policies it is implementing or considering to address those challenges.	20%
Evidence of the commitment from and capacity of participants to attend and actively participate in all of the training sessions and to complete the self-guided component.	10%
Total	100%



Selection Process (continued)



Step 3

Housing Solutions Lab staff will schedule interviews with the eight finalist localities to learn more about their housing challenges and goals for participating in the Workshop. Following the discussions, the Housing Solutions Lab will rank the finalists based on the extent to which they (a) are well-positioned to develop or refine a comprehensive and balanced local housing strategy in the near term, (b) are likely to benefit from the training curriculum and activities, and (c) are likely to contribute to the success of the Workshop by actively participating in all sessions with other selected localities.



Step 4

Based on the rankings, and in consultation with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, staff from Housing Solutions Lab will select four cities or counties to participate in the Workshop. Selected applicants will be notified via email by October 4, 2021.

Facilitators and Partners

About Housing Solutions Lab facilitators: 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 Jeffrey Lubell, Abt's Director of Housing and Community Initiatives; Stephen Whitlow, an Abt Senior Associate; Ingrid Gould Ellen, Paulette Goddard Professor of Urban Policy and Planning at NYU Wagner and Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center; Mark A. Willis, Senior Policy Fellow at the NYU Furman Center; and Martha Galvez, Executive Director of the Housing Solutions Lab.

About the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy: The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy seeks to improve quality of life through the effective use, taxation, and stewardship of land. A nonprofit private operating foundation whose origins date to 1946, the Lincoln Institute researches and recommends creative approaches to land as a solution to economic, social, and environmental challenges. Through education, training, publications, and events, we integrate theory and practice to inform public policy decisions worldwide. More information is available at lincolnst.edu.