

8.1 Design and Implement a Housing Needs Assessment

10 Points

15 Points

25 Points

30 Points

35 Points

Objective

Understand your community's residents and existing housing options, and assess what type of housing is needed and where it might be needed.

A **webinar** regarding this action is available for viewing. [Check out past Webinars.](#)

Complementary action:

- [Grow Affordable and Sustainable Housing](#)

What to Do

Municipalities may choose to work collaboratively on implementing this Action. Each participating municipality will receive points.

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Create, expand or maintain your community's housing data profile, starting with information in municipal housing data profiles produced by the Partnership for Strong Communities and potential additional data points outlined in this [worksheet 1](#). Analyze the data and describe the implications of the data for your community's housing future by filling in [worksheet 2](#). Present the housing data profile at a regular meeting of your municipality's legislative body or other public meeting. **(10 or 15 points)** see [worksheet 1](#)

Submit: The most recent municipal Partnership for Strong Communities [housing data profile](#) and other data for additional points (see [worksheet 1](#)), your completed housing data analysis worksheet ([worksheet 2](#)), and the date on which you presented the data at a public meeting.

2. With a process of community engagement and education, conduct a municipal or regional housing needs assessment that includes the following basic elements: **(15 points)**

All elements must be completed to receive credit.

a. Scope. Identify areas to study (municipal-wide, neighborhood-level, or regional).

b. Demographics. Evaluate demographics to determine housing needs for the future. In addition to including race, national origin, family status and disability status, this evaluation should identify areas that have racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAP).

c. Economics. Evaluate economic information, including, but not limited to: jobs per household, projected job growth (or loss), and projected income from jobs in the future.

d. Community Services. Evaluate community services, which includes access to public transit, access to child care, access to health care, and other areas of inquiry.

e. Affordability. Determine how many income-restricted housing units are currently available and at

what income threshold (e.g., 80%, 60%, 50% or 25% the lesser of state or area median income).

f. Housing Gap Analysis. Conduct a housing gap analysis, based on existing housing stock and demand estimates. The analysis should also include the number of shelter beds and the extent of supportive housing, if any.

g. Zoning Analysis. Conduct a zoning analysis of single-family, two-family, multi-family, affordable, and elderly housing zones. Include information about how to request a reasonable accommodation to zoning rules for older adults or people with disabilities, rules regarding group housing, housing of unrelated persons, and rules for temporary health care and similar structures.

h. Strategies. Plan strategies to diversify housing stock to meet the needs. For example: increase the number of zones for various types of housing, ensure a legal procedure exists to request reasonable accommodation, or change any illegal rules for group housing. **Note:** Pursuant to Section 2 of Public Act 17-170, every five years, each municipality is required to prepare, amend or adopt a detailed plan to increase the number of affordable developments in the municipality. This section of the housing needs assessment and plan should directly or by reference, incorporate the required affordable housing plan.

i. Retrospective Analysis. Analyze past applications for new construction and/or rehabilitation permits that would have expanded housing stock, diversified housing stock, and/or change neighborhood composition. This also includes information about the success or failure of such applications, the reasons for the success or failure, any changes that were made to zoning or planning documents as the result of such application, and recommendations for future applicants. **Note:** If your city or town is one of the "entitlement communities" receiving Community Development Block Grant funding directly, you'll find this analysis similar to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Assessment of Fair Housing required by regulation 24 CFR §5.154. Data provided by HUD can be used to complete the analysis for this action step.

Submit: The housing needs assessment.

3. Distribute the completed housing needs assessment to relevant municipal departments and relevant regional organizations. Conduct a presentation of the housing needs assessment to your local elected official(s), governing body(ies), and other town leaders. **(5 points)**

Submit: Evidence that you distributed the housing needs assessment to relevant municipal departments and a copy of your presentation.

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

There are numerous potential collaborators for this action: anyone who collects and maintains information about your community demographics, your local elected officials and other representatives from your municipality's governing board, the planning and zoning commission, public health professionals, transportation and housing agencies, redevelopment agencies, businesses, municipal planning department staff, nonprofit leaders, community leaders, regional councils of government and other regional planning groups and statewide and community housing organizations.

Funding

For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Sustainable CT Resources for Certification](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- [Partnership for Strong Communities: Municipal Housing Data Profiles](#)
- [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)

- [U.S. Census: American Fact Finder](#)
- [Connecticut Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice](#)
- [MAGIC at UConn \(maps and data about Connecticut\)](#)
- [Does Your Town Have Real Housing Options?](#)
- [Conducting A Housing Needs Assessment for Your Community: A Manual Provided by the Minnesota Housing Partnership](#)
- [Connecticut's Urban Housing Policy: A New Approach Focused on Sustainable Neighborhood Revitalization](#)
- [Benchmark CT](#)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- [Partnership for Strong Communities](#)
- [Connecticut Data Collaborative](#)
- [Operation Fuel](#)
- [Connecticut Energy Assistance Program](#)
- [Connecticut Fair Housing Center](#)
- [Open Communities Alliance](#)
- [Urban Land Institute](#)
- [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)
- [Connecticut Economic Resource Center](#)
- [Connecticut Department of Housing](#)
- [Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development](#)
- [Connecticut Office of Policy and Management](#)

Why This Matters

Municipal and statewide economic challenges, changing demographics, challenges in affordability, and preferences for more walkable neighborhoods that offer high quality of life all suggest that Connecticut municipalities will need to adapt their housing stock to emerging needs. For example, the vast majority of occupied homes in Connecticut are single-family, but demand is increasing for other housing types. The majority of Connecticut's housing stock is more than 50 years old, and the need for energy efficient housing that utilizes more renewable energy and incorporates universal design and other features will demand retrofits and new constructions.

Benefits

Collecting, reviewing and analyzing your municipality's housing data is the first step in planning for the community's housing future, setting the stage for conducting a housing needs assessment. Things like transit-oriented development, affordable housing, accessible housing, and housing density often intertwine when building sustainable, thriving communities. With the information from the assessment, you'll be able to lower adverse environmental impacts from development, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve health and wellness, enhance economic well-being, and increase community and regional equity.

CT Success Stories

- [Fairfield Housing Needs Assessment](#)

Credit for Past Action

- The most recent Partnership Strong Communities municipal housing data profile must be submitted. Any other data submitted must be from years within 3 years prior to application submission. The data profile must be presented at a public meeting within 1 year prior to application submission.
- Your housing needs assessment must be conducted or updated within 5 years prior to application submission.

- Your housing needs assessment may have been distributed within 1 year prior to application submission, and the assessment must have been presented within 3 years prior to application submission.