



## INVESTNH MUNICIPAL PLANNING & ZONING GRANT PROGRAM: HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

### Program Information and Application Instructions

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### SECTION 1: PROGRAM INFORMATION

#### Introduction

The InvestNH Municipal Planning & Zoning Grant Program provides competitive grants for cities and towns to create local regulations that will help increase housing supply. The InvestNH **Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) Grant Program** is part of the Planning & Zoning Grant Program and is administered by New Hampshire Housing under contract with the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA). These programs are all part of InvestNH, a \$100 million initiative funded through the American Rescue Plan Act's State Fiscal Recovery Fund.<sup>1</sup>

#### Program Background

Recognizing that existing land use regulatory frameworks pose unnecessary barriers to housing development, the purpose of the Community Housing Navigator Grant Program is to provide resources to the state's communities to undertake reforms. Local master plans often express communities' desires for a diversity of housing types that are affordable to a range of incomes for people of all ages, including starter homes, apartments near jobs, and places to retire, but the zoning ordinances and other land use regulations adopted by those communities often are at odds with that vision.

In many communities it is hard to undertake regulatory reform. This is the result of inadequate financial and technical resources necessary to make such changes. The HOP Grant Program will help

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municipalities overcome impediments and will also advance earlier efforts in New Hampshire that yielded substantial promise (for example, the Housing and Conservation Planning Program, the Community Planning Grant Program, and the Municipal Technical Assistance Grant Program). These initiatives have produced building blocks of sustainable community development: comprehensive planning and regulations, detailed technical guidance, and a focus on balance among environmental stewardship, historic preservation, social equity, and economic development – all within a context of participatory community planning. The HOP Grant Program provides funding to implement some of these policies in the local regulatory framework for the specific purpose of increasing the state’s housing supply.

### **InvestNH HOP Grant Program Administration**

New Hampshire Housing’s administration of the HOP Grant Program will be guided by a Steering Committee that consists of representatives from the following entities:

- New Hampshire Housing
- NH Community Development Finance Authority
- New Hampshire Municipal Association
- New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development
- Plan NH
- University of New Hampshire (UNH) Cooperative Extension

The Steering Committee will provide assistance in developing public communications materials and reports, evaluate municipal grant applications, and decide on grant approvals.

HOP grants will be administered by Plan NH under contract with NH Housing.

## **SECTION 2: ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND GRANT PHASES**

### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Applicant eligibility is limited to incorporated New Hampshire cities and towns, as well as village districts that have zoning authority or counties in which there are unincorporated places (“municipalities”).

Grants will be available for three phases of regulatory change. A municipality may submit a single application for all three phases or may apply for any phase individually. Municipalities that have been awarded a Community Housing Navigator grant are eligible to apply for a HOP grant. Information about the Community Housing Navigator Grant Program may be found at [www.NHHOPgrants.org](http://www.NHHOPgrants.org).

### **PURPOSE OF GRANTS**

1. **Needs Analysis and Planning.** Grants will be made to municipalities to hire consultants for the following purposes:

- Understanding and mapping housing, income, and demographic data, including housing market costs, housing units needed to meet future expected growth in a municipality and the region, and the affordability of a municipality's housing for all income ranges;
- Reviewing the existing master plan to identify sections that are related to or impact upon housing development, and drafting revisions to those master plan sections for the purpose of supporting increased housing supply; and
- Community engagement efforts to support the development and adoption of master plan revisions.

Note that the state's regional planning commissions (RPCs) have recently released updated Regional Housing Needs Assessments (RHNA). Communities seeking a grant for data compilation and analysis should utilize their RPC's RHNA and then identify data gaps or additional information that would be useful for the community's planning efforts, for which these grants could be used.

**Grant amounts:** Municipalities may apply for up to \$25,000 each to undertake needs analysis and/or planning.

**Application Deadline:** Applications for Needs Analysis and Planning Grants are no longer being accepted.

- 2. Regulatory Audits.** Grants will be made to municipalities for the purpose of hiring consultants to audit the municipality's land use regulations and make recommendations for changes to promote housing development. Regulations to be evaluated may include, but are not limited to, zoning, subdivision regulations, site plan regulations, any provisions adopted under RSA 674:21 that are related to or impact on housing development, local building codes, and local tax incentives, including RSA 79-E.

The audits may be structured to do any of the following tasks (these tasks are intended to be illustrative, not exclusive):

- Identify barriers to housing development that may exist in standards or processes;
- Identify outdated regulatory schemes;
- Specify changes to existing regulations;
- Identify opportunities for new regulations;
- Cross-reference different regulations to ensure that they are not in conflict.

**Grant amounts:** Municipalities may apply for up to \$50,000 each to conduct a regulatory audit.

**Application deadline:**

- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until June 30, 2023 or when funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first.
- Awards typically will be made within 30 days of submission of a complete application.

**3. Regulatory Development.** Grants will be made to cities and towns for the purpose of hiring consultants to create new regulations or revise existing regulations with the stated primary goal of increasing the supply of housing in the community.

Regulations to be created or revised may include, but are not limited to:

- Zoning;
- Subdivision regulations;
- Site plan regulations;
- Any provisions adopted under RSA 674:21 that are related to or impact upon housing development;
- Local building codes; and
- Local tax incentives, including RSA 79-E.

Grants for these purposes must be accompanied by a community engagement effort, which may rely on current or prior community engagement work. Communities must commit to making a good-faith effort to bring regulatory changes to a formal vote for adoption.

**Grant amounts:** Municipalities may apply for up to \$100,000 each to do regulatory development.

**Application deadline:**

- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until November 15, 2023 or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first.
- Awards typically will be made within 30 days of submission of a complete application.

### **SECTION 3: USE OF GRANT FUNDS**

Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) Grants will provide municipalities with the financial resources to hire qualified consultants to conduct proposed project work. Municipalities may use program funds for other direct costs associated with the project with prior approval of the Steering Committee. A maximum of 7.5% of the funds may be used for administrative costs. A consultant's costs may include time, direct costs associated with the project, and indirect costs reasonably attributable to the project.

Grantees may contract with their regional planning commissions<sup>2</sup> or select from the pre-approved list of qualified consultants for project work without engaging in a competitive bidding process. The list of qualified consultants will be approved by the Steering Committee. Any consultant may seek Steering Committee approval by following the instructions included in the *Request for Qualifications for InvestNH Housing Opportunity Planning Grant Program Consultant List* published at [www.NHHOPgrants.org](http://www.NHHOPgrants.org).

Alternatively, grantees may undertake a competitive process to identify a consultant by issuing a Request for Qualifications or Request for Proposals. As a grant condition, the Steering Committee will reserve the right to assess the qualifications of any consultant not included on the pre-approved list and to reject any such consultant it deems to be unqualified to perform the proposed work.

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<sup>2</sup> Find your RPC using the interactive map at [www.nharpc.org/](http://www.nharpc.org/).

**Prohibitions on Use of Grant Funds.**

- Grant funds may not be used for the acquisition of property.
- Grant funds may not be used to pay for equipment.
- Grant funds may not be used to pay for consultant services rendered prior to grant approval.

There is no cash or in-kind match requirement for these grants.

**Community Engagement**

Community engagement is an essential part of the work to be done under these grants. Communities will work with UNH Cooperative Extension to understand and develop appropriate engagement plans. While the application should describe how engagement will complement your plan, the community engagement plan does not need to be fully formed at the time of application submission. To ensure a robust community engagement effort, UNH Cooperative Extension has created Housing Academy to support efforts in this grant program. See the *Housing Academy description in Exhibit A*.

**Scoring Criteria**

Grants are awarded to communities on a competitive basis with the goal of making award decisions within 30 days of receipt of a completed application. Applications will be scored on the following characteristics:

1. Overall clarity of narrative, including goals, and expected outcomes; demonstrate a commitment to increasing housing supply	35 points
2. Consistency with the purposes of the grant phase(s) sought	35 points
3. Commitment to or willingness to develop and implement a community engagement plan	20 points
4. Clarity and thoughtfulness of scope of work and budget	10 points

**SECTION 4: PREPARING THE GRANT APPLICATION**

Please follow the application guidelines below to complete your application. Submit your answers in PDF file format to: [info@NHOPgrants.org](mailto:info@NHOPgrants.org). If you would like to discuss the grant before completing the application, contact us at this email.

**Cover Page**

Include one to two sentences about your community as background for the Steering Committee, and the following information on one page (in this order):

- Name of municipality and address of town hall or governing body;
- Project contact person’s name, affiliation with community, phone, email;
- Date of most recent Master Plan and section(s) of the Master Plan that support this project;
- Which phase(s) of regulatory change you are applying for, and the amount of funding requested;

- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI);<sup>3</sup>
- Dated signature of municipality’s chief executive officer or other authorized representative of the local governing body. Alternatively, the planning board may submit an application pursuant to its authority to receive grants in RSA 673:16, I. A planning board submission should be signed and dated by the board chair and include an attachment of the minutes of the meeting at which the planning board authorized the grant application.

## Application Narrative

The narrative should describe the proposed project in detail, outlining what the municipality expects to achieve. The narrative should include the following sections:

**Housing Challenge and Project Goals** (*maximum 750 words*). Clearly and concisely describe the housing challenge your community is facing and how this project will help to address that challenge.

**Outcomes and Deliverables** (*maximum 500 words*). Describe desired outcomes. What do you hope to achieve? How will you know if the project is a success? How will the results you have obtained be used to increase housing supply in your community? (*Please review the Grantee Responsibilities and Evaluation section below*).

If appropriate, include a link to regulations to be audited or revised.

**Scope of Work and Budget.** List and describe the tasks, milestones, and final work products that comprise the project, together with a timetable for task completion. Details for each task shall include:

- Name of task;
- Who will perform the task (if known);\*
- Milestones and timetable for task completion
- Brief summary of the task, including anticipated final work products;
- All project partners and their role; and
- Overall cost and statement of anticipated expenses.

\* As noted above, grantees may contract with their regional planning commission or choose from the pre-approved list of qualified consultants without engaging in a competitive process. If you know which consultant you will be working with, please include that information in this section. If you have not yet chosen a consultant, please note whether your intention is to contract with your regional planning commission, select a consultant from the pre-approved list of qualified consultants, or engage in a competitive process.

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<sup>3</sup> The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) recently replaced the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as the method used to uniquely identify individuals and entities receive federal funding. You can apply for the HOP Grant Program using your TIN, but for your award to be finalized you will need to show that you have applied for or received a UEI. You can apply for a UEI at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

Please include a budget using this template.

BUDGET TEMPLATE			
	Task Name	Details	Cost
Task 1	Community Engagement		\$2,500
Task 2	Community Engagement, Additional (optional)		
Task 3	Housing Academy Stipend	X people at \$250 per attendee	
Task 4	Administrative costs. No more than 7.5% of total project cost.		
Task 5			
Task 6			
Task 7			
Task 8			
Total:			\$

**Community Engagement Plan** (maximum 500 words). Good public engagement leads to broader citizen participation in public decisions. The engagement process includes listening, discussion, deliberation, and decision-making that builds relationships with the community. Communities will work with UNH Cooperative Extension to understand and develop appropriate engagement plans. Please describe as well as you can how you expect to use engagement as a tool for your grant project.

To ensure a robust community engagement effort, each grantee will identify at least one person (but may identify up to three) to participate in community engagement training and receive support from UNH Cooperative Extension through the **Housing Academy**. Housing Academy has been developed to support community efforts in this grant program and is intended to hone engagement and leadership skills and help you develop a creative approach to community engagement. Housing Academy participants may include municipal staff, elected officials, representatives from land use boards, members of other local boards and committees, or other residents of the community. See *the Housing Academy description in Exhibit A*.

To encourage and support the involvement of volunteers in the municipality’s community engagement efforts, stipends of \$250 per Housing Academy participant will be approved as allowable direct expenses. Paid municipal staff are invited to participate in Housing Academy but are not eligible for these stipends.

The budget template, by default, includes \$2,500 for community engagement but applicants may request additional funding.

**Consistency with Master Plan** (maximum 250 words). If it pertains to your grant application, identify how the application relates to your local master plan, your regional planning commission’s regional plan, or other relevant plans. This section is purely informative to the Steering Committee and is intended to provide background information. Consistency with your local master plan may support your

application; inconsistency will not disqualify your application.

## **SECTION 5: EVALUATION, FUNDS DISBURSEMENT, COMPLIANCE, AND REPORTING**

### **Grantee Responsibilities and Evaluation**

As a condition of selection as a HOP Grant Program grantee, municipalities will be required to report on progress toward implementing their proposed scope of work, completed tasks, and metrics of success including documentation on public meetings, workshops and hearings, public participation levels, and additional outreach and engagement efforts.

Depending on the grant phase, expected deliverables include one or more of the following:

- Demonstrated and documented understanding of values and attitudes toward housing;
- Identified regulatory barriers to housing development;
- Demonstrated understanding of the cost of development as it relates to land use regulations and permitting process;
- Improved skills in community engagement tools and facilitation of effective housing discussions;
- Drafted text of regulatory amendments; and
- A plan to move forward with regulatory change, incentives, or other means to increase housing supply and affordability.

### **Disbursement of Grant Funds**

Funds awarded from the HOP Grant Program will be disbursed for services rendered. Invoices may be submitted monthly to the Program Administrator via email to [info@NHHOPgrants.org](mailto:info@NHHOPgrants.org). Paid invoices can be submitted by the municipality for reimbursement or unpaid invoices can be submitted for payment. Invoices will be paid to the municipality generally within 30 business days. The Program Administrator will review and approve all invoices.

Funds awarded from the HOP Grant Program must be expended by July 31, 2024, at which time reimbursement requests will no longer be accepted.

### **Compliance**

*Terms and Conditions: Compliance with Federal Regulations, State Legislation, Statutes, and Regulations.* By acceptance of this award, each grant recipient agrees to comply with these requirements of “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance)” located in title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR part 200). Failure to comply may result in disallowances, restricted drawdown, and withholding of future awards. Please refer to this website as an example of federal guidance: [www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/ih/regs/resources](http://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/regs/resources)



## **Grant Reporting**

Grantees are expected to submit a monthly report by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month reporting on activities from the preceding month and will be required up through Project Completion Date. Monthly reports should include progress towards implementing the proposed Scope of Work and must include any drafts of any proposed regulations for the purpose of allowing NH Housing to comment on the draft prior to any public hearings.

No later than 30 days following Project Completion Date, Grantee will submit a final report. If Grantee adopts ordinances or regulations, Grantee will report on permitting and development activity under the regulations for a period of three (3) years after Completion Date. The monthly report form can be found at [www.nhhopgrants.org/forms](http://www.nhhopgrants.org/forms).

## **Inquiries and Application Submission**

Submit applications as a PDF to [info@NHHOPgrants.org](mailto:info@NHHOPgrants.org). Questions regarding the grant program may be submitted to [info@NHHOPgrants.org](mailto:info@NHHOPgrants.org). A list of frequently asked questions will be updated on an ongoing basis and posted at [www.NHHOPgrants.org](http://www.NHHOPgrants.org).

## EXHIBIT A

### HOUSING ACADEMY: ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY FOR MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

The **InvestNH Municipal Planning & Zoning Grant Program** will include Housing Academy, developed by UNH Extension, to provide education and community engagement training. This training is for municipalities that receive **Community Housing Navigator** or **Housing Opportunity Planning (HOP) Grant** funding.

Each participant can expect to attend five sessions, two of which take place at New Hampshire Housing's office in Bedford. The remaining three sessions are held virtually. Participants are invited to participate in community visits in the fall of 2023 and may be invited to participate in other, similar activities. The content taught in Housing Academy is cumulative and attendees should plan to attend all sessions. The purpose of Housing Academy is to support grantees as they develop their community engagement plans.

Housing Academy will be a hybrid format with webinars, online materials, in-person gatherings, and place-based training. Community engagement techniques and tools will be taught so participants can develop and implement an engagement plan in their city or town. There will be opportunities for communities to share best practices and challenges and learn from each other.

**For more information visit [www.NHHOPgrants.org/housing-academy](http://www.NHHOPgrants.org/housing-academy) or contact:**

Sue Cagle

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

Field Specialist, Community Economic Development

Sue.Cagle@unh.edu