

# Pro-Housing Communities Program – Frequently Asked Questions

## Program Overview

### 1. What is the Pro-Housing Communities Program? Why should my village/town/city apply for the program?

The Governor signed Executive Order 30 in July 2023 emphasizing her continued commitment to addressing the housing shortage throughout NYS, and creating a program to encourage communities to join her in taking action to address the State's growing housing needs.

The Pro-Housing Communities Program will allow communities to join in the effort to promote housing growth. Communities who are designated as Pro-Housing Communities will receive preference in the evaluations for specific discretionary grant programs.

Communities that share pro-housing values, as shown by submitting their zoning and housing data to NYS and either passing a resolution stating their support or by permitting enough projects to grow by 1% in the past year or 3% over the past three years (MTCDC counties) or 0.33% in the past year or 3% over the past three years (upstate counties), will be eligible for a preference in the evaluation of specific discretionary grant programs.

### 2. Which programs will provide the preference and how significant will the preference be?

The programs currently using the Pro-Housing Communities designation include:

- Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) – Department of State
- NY Forward program – Department of State
- NY Main Street program – Homes and Community Renewal
- Regional Council Capital Fund – Empire State Development
- Market New York (capital grants only) – Empire State Development
- Long Island Investment Fund (LIIF) – Empire State Development
- Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund – Empire State Development
- Public Transportation Modernization Enhancement Program (MEP) – Department of Transportation
- Additional programs may be added in the future

Only municipal applicants are eligible for the Pro-Housing Communities certification. Nonprofit or other entities may still apply for grants from the above programs if they qualify.

Each grant-providing agency will work with HCR to determine the specifics of how Pro-Housing Communities are given preference. Some types of applications may include additional points in the scoring rubric, others may direct reviewers to consider more highly those localities who have joined, depending on the existing judging criteria.

**3. Will we be penalized in our application if we do not apply for Pro-Housing certification?**

Achieving the Pro-Housing Communities designation is not required prior to applying to any of the above grants, and applicants will not be penalized for not having the designation.

**4. What if my community doesn't have any demand for new housing permits/isn't growing?**

It is still important to collect zoning and permitting data from all communities in the State, even if your community is not seeing significant housing demand at the moment. Similarly, the pro-housing principles in the resolution can be supported by all types of communities, and we encourage everyone to explore taking part.

**5. Does my town need to include all the villages within the town borders?**

In communities where the village and town are co-terminus/share the same local government, the templates should be submitted together. Villages should submit only the information for the village. Towns should not include the permitting or zoning for villages within their borders unless the town government has oversight over the village zoning or permitting. Otherwise, towns would submit the zoning for the non-village areas of the town, and remove the total units in the villages within the town. If the town/village has a unique structure not covered here, contact the team at [prohousing@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:prohousing@hcr.ny.gov).

## Applying to the Program

**1. Can we change the text of the Model Resolution to adapt it for our village/city/town?**

Adopting the resolution is one of the options to obtain the baseline preference level. Similar to the Climate Smart Communities, the resolution must be adopted as is in order to qualify for the designation.

**2. How do I learn more about how to fill out the templates?**

The templates have instruction guides attached to help the designated staff work through how to input their data into the required format.

HCR will host online information sessions to help local staffers learn how to pull and format the required information. These sessions will be recorded and placed online for interested staff who cannot make the meetings.

For additional questions not answered by the information sessions or by the guides, feel free to contact the Pro-Housing Communities team at [prohousing@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:prohousing@hcr.ny.gov).

**3. Why do you need our zoning map and code?**

Supporting open data and transparency continues to be one of the goals of NYS government. Zoning codes and maps can have significant impact on residents' way of life, but are often challenging for an average person to navigate.

By creating a unified format, one that is compatible to the nationwide effort spearheaded by the [National Zoning Atlas](#), having the data on the broad range of NY municipalities' zoning will allow all NYS residents the ability to better understand the zoning code in their own village, town or city, to narrow the information gap that currently benefits those with funds and expertise, and to allow localities to compare themselves to other places – taking lessons learned from good policy practices and sharing them.

**4. Why do you need all of our permit data?**

As the housing team talked to New Yorkers during last year's budget process, we heard feedback that the Census and/or NYS did not have an accurate understanding of the state's housing challenges.

By tracking permitting data in localities that are supporting housing growth, we can develop a stronger understanding of where growth is (or is not) occurring, explore best practices to support housing growth, and use that data to inform future policy making.

**5. What if my village or town does not have a zoning code or our zoning map is only in a physical form?**

There are a very small number of localities in NYS that do not have an existing zoning code, and additional communities who may not have a GIS version of their zoning map. If your locality is interested in joining the Pro-Housing Communities Program and has one or both of these situations, please contact us at [prohousing@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:prohousing@hcr.ny.gov) for further discussion.

**6. I am a resident who would like my community to become a Pro-Housing Community. What can I do to make that happen?**

Residents can encourage their local village, town or city councils or boards to adopt the Pro-Housing resolution and direct the local staff to submit the required documentation. Many local elected officials want to know about local support for pro-housing policies in their municipality.

**7. When I open the zoning or permit template and select my municipality, the related fields are not automatically populating – how can I fix this?**

We originally used a formula that does not always work in older versions of Excel; the templates currently on the website (v. 1.2) have been updated to accommodate the older software. If you are still have problems after using the updated template, contact us at [prohousing@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:prohousing@hcr.ny.gov).