



# Center for Housing Opportunity

Eastern CT

Update: March 2025

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS

COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF EASTERN  
Connecticut



EASTERN  
CONNECTICUT  
STATE UNIVERSITY



The Housing  
Collective

LISC CONNECTICUT

PARTNERSHIP  
FOR STRONG  
COMMUNITIES



UNITED WAY  
Southeastern  
Connecticut

## MISSION

Our mission is to align a diverse coalition of practitioners, policymakers, residents, and community organizations to collectively identify and build upon community-driven and data-informed solutions that preserve, protect, and produce safe and affordable housing for all.

The Centers for Housing Opportunity is a program of The Housing Collective, LISC CT, and Partnership for Strong Communities, together with community foundations and regional partners in Connecticut, working collaboratively across sectors to deliver safe, affordable housing solutions for families and individuals. We leverage our strengths in capacity building, policy, planning, lending, and investment to support housing solutions that change systems and improve lives.

The Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut is a collective impact partnership between The Housing Collective, LISC CT, Partnership for Strong Communities, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut College, Eastern Connecticut State University, and United Way of Southeastern Connecticut.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

**Beth Sabilia, Director, Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut, [beth@thehousingcollective.org](mailto:beth@thehousingcollective.org), or visit us at [cho.thehousingcollective.org/regions/eastern-ct](http://cho.thehousingcollective.org/regions/eastern-ct)**

## Introduction

In 2024, the Center for Housing Opportunity Eastern Connecticut (CHO-EC) made significant strides in addressing housing affordability and advancing housing solutions across New London, Windham, and Tolland counties. Through regional collaboration, technical assistance, policy advocacy, and community engagement, **CHO-EC strengthened local capacity to expand affordable housing opportunities, support municipalities, and empower residents.**

This year's efforts have been particularly critical as **demand for affordable housing continues to grow, economic pressures increase, and barriers to housing access persist.** By aligning resources, fostering partnerships, and elevating data-driven strategies, CHO-EC played a key role in helping towns implement effective housing policies and supporting nonprofit and for-profit housing development.

CHO-EC is **driving long-term systems change** by strengthening regional housing infrastructure, aligning municipalities around shared data and strategies, and fostering a more coordinated, strategic approach to housing development in Eastern Connecticut.

## By the Numbers: Measurable Impact in 2024

### Tracking Progress, Driving Results, and Expanding Housing Opportunities

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**358 new housing units** supported across seven developments in five towns, advancing affordable housing production throughout Eastern Connecticut.

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**5 new regional resources published**, equipping municipalities and advocates with critical data and strategies.

- Eastern Connecticut Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)
  - Affordable Housing Plan Scorecards for Windham and Tolland Counties
  - Stable Homes, Strong Communities: Changing the Narrative around Affordable Housing in Eastern Connecticut
  - Eastern Connecticut Housing Conversations Toolkit
  - Eastern Connecticut Weekly Housing Calendars
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**1 new website**, featuring a digital Resource Library and Event Calendar to increase access to data and best practices, and drive public engagement.

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**13 events**, including four quarterly convenings which brought cross-sector stakeholders from the entire region together for discussions on key housing issues:

- Presenting ALICE Report with United Way of Southeastern CT
- Presenting Affordable Housing Scorecards with Regional Plan Association (RPA)

- Screening and discussing CT Public documentary *Fighting For Home* with Access Community Action Agency and Columbia CoDE
- Hosting Faith in Affordable Housing panel with CommUnity Street Ministry and Shiloh Family Life Center

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**300+ students and community members engaged** through the Housing Justice Brown Bag Lunch Series with Connecticut College, expanding awareness and advocacy on housing as a social justice issue.

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**4 towns received direct technical assistance** to support them as they implement affordable housing plans and move projects forward.

## Driving Change: Stories of Impact for 2024

### How Collaboration, Community Engagement, and Innovation Are Transforming Housing in Eastern Connecticut

#### EMPOWERING TENANTS AND STRENGTHENING RENTER PROTECTIONS IN EAST LYME

After a new management company bought the Windward Village Apartments in East Lyme and raised rents substantially, CHO-EC helped to **equip tenants with information about renter rights, legal protections, and advocacy strategies** to address unjust rent hikes and service reductions. As a result, residents organized and pushed East Lyme to establish a Fair Rent Commission, leading to stronger tenant protections and greater accountability for landlords in the community.

[read the full case study](#)

#### LAUNCHING THE HOUSING JUSTICE BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

In partnership with the Holleran Center for Community Action at Connecticut College, CHO-EC launched **this in-person event series engaging students, faculty, and community members** in critical discussions on the intersection of housing and social justice. These conversations deepen awareness and foster collaborations across disciplines to highlight the intersectionality of housing justice.

#### CONVENING REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS FOR A HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

Convening Regional Councils of Governments for a Housing Needs Analysis CHO-EC convened and collaborated with Eastern Connecticut's Councils of Governments, as well as stakeholders including Hartford Healthcare and Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer), to produce a regional housing needs analysis. This effort helped to foster a shared, data-driven understanding of housing needs for municipalities across New London, Windham, and Tolland counties—informing regional and state housing strategies.

[view the Housing Needs Analysis](#)

#### **EXPANDING CAPACITY THROUGH A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH LISC CT**

In 2024, LISC CT joined CHO-EC's six founding partners, significantly enhancing regional capacity to advance housing affordability. With LISC CT's expertise in community development financing, technical assistance, and policy advocacy, CHO-EC can better support municipalities, developers, and nonprofit organizations in expanding and preserving affordable housing. Through this partnership, CHO-EC is connecting proposed projects to LISC's pre-development funding program, accelerating the production of affordable homes across Eastern Connecticut.

[learn more](#)

#### **LAUNCHING CHO-EC'S NEW WEBSITE AS A HUB FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS**

CHO-EC launched a new website in 2024, serving as a digital hub for housing data, resources, and advocacy tools tailored to Eastern Connecticut. This platform increases access to research, technical assistance, and community engagement opportunities, empowering municipalities, advocates, and residents to advance housing solutions.

[explore the website](#)

## **Looking Ahead: Advancing Housing Solutions in 2025**

### **Expanding Impact, Strengthening Partnerships, and Driving Policy Change**

#### **EXPANDING MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

In 2025, CHO-EC will broaden its Municipal Technical Assistance Program, providing more towns with direct planning support, data analysis, and funding guidance to implement affordable housing plans, revise zoning policies, and advance local housing projects. This expansion will help municipalities overcome barriers to housing development and build sustainable, welcoming communities.

#### **BRINGING HOUSING, HISTORY, AND JUSTICE TOGETHER**

In partnership with Connecticut College, CHO-EC will play a leading role in a multi-year project exploring the intersection of housing, history, and justice through public humanities. By leading community engagement, outreach, and programming efforts, CHO-EC will ensure that research and storytelling elevate resident voices and inform fair housing solutions.

#### **PUBLISHING RESEARCH TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN LAND USE DECISION MAKING**

CHO-EC will release groundbreaking research on land use decision-making in New London County, providing key insights into who makes land use decisions, demystifying on ramps to participation, and providing recommendations to broaden participation and support informed decision making.

### **EXPANDING THE HOUSING JUSTICE BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES TO EASTERN CT STATE UNIVERSITY**

Building on the success of the Housing Justice Series Brown Bag Lunch in partnership with Connecticut College, CHO-EC will expand this initiative to Eastern Connecticut State University, engaging more students, faculty, and community members in conversations about the intersectionality of housing, justice, and opportunity.

### **LAUNCHING A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

In early 2025, the Centers for Housing Opportunity will introduce a monthly newsletter, providing more timely updates on regional housing initiatives, policy developments, funding opportunities, and community engagement efforts. This new resource will help stakeholders stay informed, connected, and engaged around advancing housing solutions across Eastern Connecticut.

## **Conclusion: Working Together for Housing Solutions**

CHO-EC's progress in 2024 reflects the power of collaboration and shared commitment to ensuring that everyone in Eastern Connecticut has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. As we move forward, we look to partners like you—municipal leaders, housing advocates, service providers, and community members—to continue working together with us to advance policy solutions, build community support, and drive meaningful change. Together, we can strengthen regional efforts, break down barriers, and create a future where housing opportunity is a reality for all.