



Center for Housing Opportunity

Fairfield County, CT

Update: April 2025

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



MISSION

The Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity brings together a coalition of practitioners, policy makers, residents, community organizations and partners working across sectors to achieve a housing future for the region where every member of our communities and every household in our region has access to a safe and affordable home.

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 Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (FCCHO) is a collective impact partnership between The Housing Collective, LISC CT, Partnership for Strong Communities, Fairfield County's Community Foundation and Regional Plan Association.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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Introduction

In 2024, the Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity made significant strides in addressing housing affordability and advancing housing solutions across Fairfield County. Through regional collaboration, technical assistance, policy advocacy, and community engagement, FCCHO **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, FCCHO played a key role in helping towns implement effective housing policies and supporting nonprofit and for-profit housing development.

FCCHO 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 Fairfield County.

FCCHO by the Numbers: Measurable Impact in 2024

TRACKING PROGRESS, DRIVING RESULTS,
AND EXPANDING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

400+

residents engaged through monthly “Fairfield County Talks Housing” webinars on relevant state and local housing topics during the 2023-2024 legislative session.

4

towns received direct technical assistance including peer learning sessions, supporting municipal leaders in efforts to implement affordable housing plans and advance affordable housing projects.

30

resident leaders and community members came together to co-create an Alliance for Housing Action (AHA!) to reshape housing systems across Fairfield County.

1

new website launched, featuring a digital Resource Library and Event Calendar to increase access to data and best practices, and drive public engagement.

1

weekly calendar distributed to Fairfield County residents, informing communities about local Planning and Zoning meetings and providing resources to support participation.

Highlights

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In summer 2024, FCCHO launched a one-year pilot program to provide direct technical assistance to help four communities implement their local affordable housing plans: Danbury, Fairfield, Ridgefield, and Shelton. FCCHO met with communities individually and as a cohort to both offer direct assistance and create opportunities for peer learning and collaboration across town boundaries. Our staff, as well as guest and peer experts, provided guidance and best practices on identifying development opportunities, communicating with and engaging the public, managing housing trust funds, and more.

A public forum in Shelton is one example: Planning & Zoning Commissioners, City Aldermen, the Connecticut Department of Housing, and more than 40 members of the public engaged in productive dialogue about a path forward for increasing affordable housing in the community.

“From defining the issue of affordable housing to finding real solutions and uniting our community with accurate, factual information, FCCHO’s guidance has been invaluable in helping us foster a productive dialogue around housing in our community.”

Alexandrea Castro

Assistant Administrator, Planning & Zoning, City of Shelton

“Ultimately, the technical assistance provided was far more comprehensive and insightful than we had initially envisioned, and we are grateful for the depth and breadth of support offered.”

Urb Leimkuhler

Affordable Housing Committee Chair, Town of Fairfield

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

In summer 2024, together with PT Partners, FCCHO launched the Alliance for Housing Action (AHA!), a collaborative of resident leaders and community members committed to advancing meaningful housing solutions through collective visioning and systemic change. The Alliance includes many individuals and organizations collaborating for the first time to co-create new approaches to change. Together they are engaging in deeply honest dialogue about the challenges and opportunities for affordable housing in Fairfield County and repositioning the conversation to advance collective action.

Looking Ahead: Advancing Housing Solutions in 2025

**EXPANDING IMPACT, STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS,
AND DRIVING POLICY CHANGE**

ADDRESSING GAPS IN THE HOUSING ECOSYSTEM

In partnership with LISC CT and with the support of Bank of America, FCCHO will convene key stakeholders including lenders, developers, housing authorities, residents, and community and business leaders to share their perspective on gaps and opportunities in the housing ecosystem. As a result of this engagement, FCCHO will identify and model a pilot program that addresses some of the gaps identified.

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN LAND USE DECISION MAKING

FCCHO will release groundbreaking research on land use decision-making in Fairfield 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 MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2025, FCCHO will broaden its Municipal Technical Assistance Program, providing more towns with peer learning opportunities and 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 more municipalities overcome barriers to housing development and build sustainable, welcoming communities.

LAUNCHING A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

In early 2025, the Centers for Housing Opportunity will introduce a monthly newsletter, providing 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 Fairfield County.

Conclusion

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS

FCCHO's progress in 2024 reflects the power of collaboration and shared commitment to ensuring that everyone in Fairfield County 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.