



Community Engagement to Create Housing Opportunity

The Foundation for Community Health (FCH), Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (BTCF), and its Fund for the Northwest Corner, have come together to support local efforts to create affordable housing opportunities in our region in partnership with the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LCCHO).

Based on community feedback we've heard that many residents and elected officials are eager to move from talking about this issue to seeing progress in action. Progress could mean fostering stronger public will to support town meeting votes or zoning approvals that will result in the creation of housing opportunities that are affordable. It could also mean the intentional leveraging of resources (funding, time, support) across organizations and sectors that lead to the same outcomes.

Our goals for this program are:

- To facilitate a collaborative process that merges the need for housing solutions and economic growth with long-term commitments to conservation of the region's natural beauty and;
- To help build a robust pipeline of feasible affordable housing opportunities in the region through efforts that build public will, foster cross-sector collaboration, and provide support to our all-volunteer local housing non-profits to move projects from concept to reality.

Grant Program

Through this program it is anticipated that 3 to 6 communities will receive grant funds to support community outreach strategies and/or project planning activities that involve cross-sector participation including conservation organizations and other local boards, committees, and organizations. In addition, direct technical assistance will be provided by LC-CHO to help explore or pursue specific affordable housing development opportunities to build a pipeline of projects in the region.

Eligibility to Apply

Eligible organizations to apply for this program must be a town-sponsored board or committee OR a nonprofit or faith-based organization, and must be serving at least one of the following towns in northwest Litchfield County that are in the BTCF and FCH service areas. (Proposals that serve multiple towns will also be considered): Canaan/Falls Village, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, North Canaan, Norfolk, Salisbury, Sharon, Warren



Projects funded to date through this program include:

Kent Affordable Housing | \$17,000

Kent Affordable Housing will utilize this funding to collaborate with the Kent Volunteer Fire Department to explore the feasibility of creating housing for emergency service volunteers, as well as the Kent Chamber of Commerce to better understand the housing needs of those who work and volunteer in Kent.

Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative | \$14,500

Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative, an initiative sponsored by the Housatonic Valley Association, will utilize this funding to bring the region's land trust organizations together with housing organizations and town leaders to create a shared purpose/policy statement and map showing priority areas for conservation and for affordable housing. This will include regional mapping of priority areas for conservation, housing, and features impacting the feasibility of each.

Eligible Activities

Requests should increase meaningful and relevant cross-sector collaboration and community engagement in one or several of the eligible towns (listed above). Example activities include, but are not limited to:

- Develop and implement a community engagement strategy
- Host workshops, presentations, neighborhood or cross-sector conversations that help engage the community in this work in a new way and/or solicit community feedback
- Conduct a feasibility analysis on a specific site, parcel, or building or help identifying and/or accessing funding opportunities for projects
- Conduct a survey to better understand or update your information on the housing needs of those who work and volunteer in your town and then have a community conversation about the results
- Activities that strengthen engagement between decision-makers and those most impacted by policy decisions
- Provide stipends for community members most directly impacted by the lack of housing opportunity to participate in meetings

In addition to supporting direct project costs, technical assistance can be provided by LCCHO to help explore or pursue specific affordable housing development opportunities or assist with the activities listed above.

What do you mean by cross-sector collaboration? *We mean a two-way dialog with people, groups, and organizations that are not engaged in the "housing space" on a day-to-day basis. For example, conservation organizations, employers, educators, faith communities, and economic development committees.*



Proposal/Application Process

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until May 30, 2024. Grantees will need to complete their project by December 31, 2024. Proposals should include the following information:

- Name of town or organization
- Amount requested
- Activities proposed to be carried out
- List of cross-sector collaborators that will be involved in the work
- How these proposed activities build on previous or ongoing affordable housing efforts
- Anticipated results of the proposed activities
- Describe the kinds of technical assistance or project support that might be needed

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed with the following criteria:

- Alignment between program goals and proposed activities.
- Approach and rationale towards community engagement strategies/activities
- Strength and utilization of community partnerships and cross sector collaboration
- Consistency of the proposed activities with [*Building Community Support for Affordable Housing in Litchfield County: A Playbook*](#)

Please submit the proposals by email to: jocelyn@thehousingcollective.org.

Questions? For more information or assistance, please contact Jocelyn at (860) 806-5696 or jocelyn@thehousingcollective.org.