

§3241. Housing Opportunity Program

1. Program established; administration. The Housing Opportunity Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the Maine Office of Community Affairs, established in section 3202 and referred to in this section as "the office." The program must encourage and support the development of additional housing units in the State, including housing units that are affordable for low-income and moderate-income individuals and housing units targeted to community workforce housing needs. The office shall administer the program and provide technical and financial assistance to support communities implementing zoning and land use-related policies necessary to support increased housing development. The program must support regional approaches and municipal model ordinance development and encourage policies that support increased housing density, where feasible, to protect working lands and natural lands.

[PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW).]

2. Housing Opportunity Fund. The Housing Opportunity Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a fund within the office for the purpose of providing funds for the program. The fund consists of money appropriated to the fund by the Legislature and any funds received by the office for the purposes of the program.

A. The office shall solicit applications for grants from the fund through a competitive application process. Grants may be awarded to experienced service providers and municipalities to:

- (1) Support municipal ordinance development, provide technical assistance and encourage public participation and community engagement in the process of increasing housing opportunities;
- (2) Provide community housing planning services to municipalities to support the creation of housing development plans, including municipal ordinances, and policy amendments to support those plans; and
- (3) Provide community housing implementation services.

Programs receiving grants under subparagraph (1) may encourage regional coordination between municipalities.

Grants awarded must be for a period of up to 3 years, with required progress reports each year. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW).]

B. The office shall provide technical assistance, housing policy development and guidance directly to regional groups, municipalities and other housing stakeholders, to the extent feasible with available resources. This may include, but is not limited to, assisting municipalities with information about available grant opportunities, sharing best practices from jurisdictions inside and outside of the State, providing model language for municipal ordinances and policies and providing information to the general public, which may support local and statewide policy changes meant to increase the supply of housing. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW).]

C. The office shall assist a municipality with 4,000 or more residents in meeting the requirements of subsection 5. The assistance must include reimbursement of 90% of actual expenses incurred by a municipality if collection or reporting of data as required by subsection 5 is a modification or expansion of municipal activities so as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues. [PL 2025, c. 495, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW); PL 2025, c. 495, §1 (AMD).]

3. Program evaluation. A recipient of grant funds through the program shall cooperate with the office in performing evaluations and specific reporting requirements.

[PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW).]

4. Rulemaking. The office may establish by rule the criteria for eligibility for grants from the program and the process for applying to the program. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW).]

5. Municipal housing data reporting. By January 31st of each year, a municipality with 4,000 or more residents shall provide to the office for use in administering the program an annual report of:

A. Residential building permit applications, including the number of applications submitted, approved and denied, categorized into single-family, single-family with accessory dwelling unit, 2-to-4-family and more-than-4-family homes; [PL 2025, c. 495, §2 (NEW).]

B. The number of dwelling units permitted and demolished; and [PL 2025, c. 495, §2 (NEW).]

C. The number of certificates of occupancy or other final approvals of housing units issued, the number of those housing units affordable to persons or families whose incomes are 80% or less of the area median income as determined by the Maine State Housing Authority and the number of those housing units affordable to persons or families whose incomes are from 81% to 120% of the area median income as determined by the Maine State Housing Authority. [PL 2025, c. 495, §2 (NEW).]

As used in this subsection, "accessory dwelling unit" has the same meaning as in Title 30-A, section 4301, subsection 1-C.

[PL 2025, c. 495, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. D, §13 (NEW). PL 2025, c. 495, §§1, 2 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature and is current through October 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.