



GrowSmart Maine

Keeping Maine...*Maine*

**Building lasting prosperity without sacrificing
the quality of life that defines Maine.**

Securing Housing Choices for a Well-Rounded Community

Build strong communities, more stable tax base, economic opportunities

We provide educational workshops to interested communities, offering an overview of current housing stock and potential tools to address deficits. The workshops will also cultivate interest in technical assistance that will provide more detailed data and facilitate community discussions of potential strategies toward desired outcomes. Included in this will be an express focus on equitable housing goals: diverse, quality, physically accessible, affordable housing choices for a range of incomes and abilities with access to services and amenities.

- **Our solution is different** from current alternatives because we are not seeing this sort of layered approach being offered in Maine. While there are resources available, there is no other deliberate cultivation of interest in those resources. It is our intention to provide workshops at no or minimal cost and offer grant funding toward a portion of the consultant fees for the technical assistance.
- **Our target audiences for workshops** are Maine communities with an interest in raising awareness of the connections between housing stock and community and economic growth. We can partner on a regional strategy to increase efficiency in technical assistance.
- **For technical assistance, our target audiences** are those communities that have identified housing stock as a potential barrier to achieving economic and community goals and have the interest and capacity to utilize support in developing and deploying strategies.



Why It Matters

The outcomes of this work will be a stronger community fabric, more stable tax base, greater economic opportunities and with good planning, appropriate conservation of working and natural open spaces.

- **The challenge our target customer has** is that they seek a broader community awareness of the connections between housing and economic and community development and lack resources to develop a pragmatic set of strategies for incorporating housing into their comprehensive plans and deploying strategies in their community.

There are additional dynamics at play. While some resist broadening housing choices because they see only the added costs that families bring to a town budget, others want to actively recruit families to relocate as a way to sustain their towns. This is an opportunity to explore with participants the many proven benefits of a well-rounded community that includes a diverse population in income, age and stage of life, race and ethnicity and other factors. All this requires a concerted effort to match housing opportunities with the preferences of residents and potential residents.

Details

WORKSHOPS facilitate local conversations about the intersections between housing and other community priorities. Participants would be asked to share their town of residence and any success/challenge stories that motivate their participation when they register. This allows presenters to prepare relevant housing and income data and adapt the presentation to each audience. For efficiency, we will create workshop templates around both the type of municipality; rural, urban, suburban; and the geographic regions in Maine.

While many towns understand the potential consequences of rising home costs, and others deal with decreasing population and weakened demand for housing, few have a clear plan for how to respond. While some towns debate the added costs that families bring to a town budget, and others want to actively recruit families to relocate, there are many proven benefits to a well-rounded community. All this requires a concerted effort to match housing choices with preferences of residents and potential residents. Participants can learn the ways in which choices in housing can be added to a town's housing mix and how appropriately-placed higher density housing can be an asset. This session is a hands-on opportunity for attendees to look at housing solutions for their community, and turn these ideas into practice.

Housing policy can be thought of as a box with a variety of tools that are known to work in different situations. Not every community uses all the tools, and not all of them work well for all tasks. Looking at the needs of your community and the political landscape are both important steps to choosing the right tools. Attendees will learn how to determine which policies and programs are likely to meet the needs of their community through discussion with other leaders in similar towns. At the end of the session, everyone should walk away with one or two actionable ideas relevant to their communities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: For those audiences ready for more comprehensive work, we will offer a housing SWOT analysis with prioritized strategies to align housing stock with community and economic development goals. This includes collection and analysis of community-specific information including current housing stock and relevant community plans and documents.



What is Smart Growth?

Smart growth provides choices in how communities respond to growth and change.

We work to revitalize historic neighborhoods and vibrant communities suited for residents of all ages, to foster entrepreneurs and creative thinkers, and to provide a safe and inclusive place to raise children.

We advocate for a balance of business regulations in tandem with environmental regulations, allowing Maine's economy to grow and prosper while conserving and enriching our beautiful and productive natural spaces.

We support the continuation of traditional livelihoods like fishing, farming and forestry; keeping Maine families working their heritage and making it possible for their children to do the same.

We provide leadership by convening a broad range of voices in meaningful conversations on how to arrive at common-sense solutions as united Mainers.