

Housing Program Readiness Checklist

Use this checklist to assess whether your city, county, agency, or organization is ready to launch, expand, or strengthen a housing program.

How to use this checklist

Review each section with your internal team. Check the items that are already in place. Leave items blank when more planning, documentation, or support may be needed.

1. Program Goals

Do you have a clear housing goal?

- We know what housing issue we are trying to address.
- We have identified the population or community we want to serve.
- We understand whether the program is focused on preservation, production, rehabilitation, rental assistance, homeownership, infrastructure, or another need.
- We have connected the program goal to broader community development priorities.
- We can explain the desired outcome in simple terms.

Ask your team: What problem are we solving, and how will we know if the program worked?

2. Funding Readiness

Do you understand the funding source and requirements?

- We have identified potential funding sources.
- We understand eligible and ineligible uses.
- We know the required deadlines, reporting periods, and spending timelines.
- We understand match requirements, if applicable.
- We have a plan to track funds by activity, project, or program area.
- We know who will monitor compliance with funding requirements.

Ask your team: Do we have the administrative capacity to manage this funding from award to closeout?

3. Administrative Capacity

Do you have the staff, systems, and processes to manage the work?

- We have assigned internal roles and responsibilities.
- We know who will manage applications, documentation, procurement, reporting, and public communication.
- We have a timeline for program launch and implementation.
- We have a system for tracking tasks, deadlines, and approvals.
- We have identified where outside support may be needed.
- We have a backup plan if key staff are unavailable.

Ask your team: Where are we most likely to lose time, documentation, or momentum?

4. Compliance and Documentation

Are your compliance processes clear before the program begins?

- We understand the federal, state, local, and program-specific requirements that may apply.
- We have a documentation process for decisions, approvals, eligibility, payments, and outcomes.
- We have reviewed procurement requirements.
- We have considered Fair Housing, accessibility, VAWA, privacy, environmental review, and other applicable requirements.
- We know how records will be stored and retained.
- We have a process for responding to monitoring, audits, or public records requests.

Ask your team: Could we explain and document every major decision six months from now?

5. Community Need and Eligibility

Have you clearly defined who and what the program will serve?

- We have reviewed local housing data and community needs.
- We know the geographic area the program will cover.
- We have defined eligibility requirements.
- We have identified any income limits, property requirements, or beneficiary criteria.
- We have considered how residents, landlords, developers, nonprofits, or other partners may participate.
- We have a process to review and verify eligibility.

Ask your team: Are the program rules clear enough for the public and staff to understand?

6. Partner and Stakeholder Coordination

Have you identified the partners needed to make the program work?

- We know which departments, agencies, nonprofits, developers, or contractors need to be involved.
- We have identified decision-makers and approval points.
- We have a plan for coordinating with elected officials, boards, or public bodies.
- We have considered procurement or contracting needs.
- We know who will communicate with residents, applicants, and community partners.
- We have a process for resolving questions or delays.

Ask your team: Who needs to be at the table before the program launches?

7. Public Communication

Can you clearly explain the program to the community?

- We have a plain-language program description.
- We have key messages for residents, elected officials, partners, and media.
- We have a webpage or public information source.
- We have a plan for announcements, updates, and community outreach.
- We know how the public can ask questions or get help.
- We have prepared talking points for difficult or sensitive questions.

Ask your team: If someone asks, "What is this program and who does it help?" can we answer clearly?

8. Implementation Plan

Are you ready to move from planning to action?

- We have a launch timeline.
- We have identified major milestones.
- We know what must happen before funds are spent.
- We have a process for reviewing applications, proposals, or project requests.
- We know how decisions will be approved.
- We have a plan to monitor progress and adjust if needed.

Ask your team: What must happen in the first 30, 60, and 90 days?

9. Reporting and Impact Tracking

Can you show what changed because of the program?

- We have identified the outcomes we want to measure.
- We know what data must be collected.
- We have a process for tracking beneficiaries, activities, spending, and results.
- We have assigned responsibility for reporting.
- We can connect program activity to community impact.
- We have a plan to share results with leadership, funders, and the public.

Ask your team: What story will the data help us tell?

10. Risk and Support Needs

Have you identified gaps before they become problems?

- We know our biggest capacity challenges.
- We know where compliance risk may exist.
- We know whether outside technical assistance is needed.
- We have identified procurement, staffing, reporting, or communication concerns.
- We have a plan to address delays or unexpected issues.
- We know who to contact for help.

Ask your team: Where would outside support help us move faster, reduce risk, or improve outcomes?

Readiness Score

Count the number of checked boxes and use the guide below to identify the next step.

Checked boxes	Readiness level
45-60	Your program appears well-positioned for implementation. Review any remaining gaps before launch.
30-44	Your program has a strong foundation, but some areas need attention before moving forward.
15-29	Your team may need additional planning, capacity, or technical support before launch.
0-14	Your program may not be ready for implementation yet. Start with goals, funding requirements, staffing, and compliance basics.

Next Step

Housing and community development programs are complex. The right support can help public partners manage funding, strengthen compliance, communicate clearly, and turn housing priorities into measurable community impact.

Talk with Navigate about your housing program needs.

[NavigateHousing.com](https://www.navigatehousing.com)