



# **NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM**

## **Guidelines and Application**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key Elements of the MTAG Program .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MTAG Application Guidelines</b>	
I.    Community & Project Eligibility .....	5
II.   Grant Requirements .....	6
III.  Grant Awards .....	8
<b>Application and Instructions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions .....</b>	<b>12</b>

**Visit the Plan NH website:**

<https://plannh.org/programs/municipal-technical-assistance-grant>

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## **Guidelines and Application**

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The New Hampshire Municipal Technical Assistance Grant Program offers grants to incorporated cities and towns in the Granite State to support expanding the supply and type of available housing in their communities through the modification of ordinances and regulations.

The MTAG program is administered by Plan NH and funded entirely by New Hampshire Housing. The reporting process for grant recipients is streamlined and not time-consuming. The program uses no federal funds.

### **OVERVIEW**

New Hampshire has had a low inventory of affordable housing, both single-family homes as well as rental housing, for more than a decade. In order to create sufficient housing for our workforce and to support a healthy economy in the Granite State, there is a critical need for communities to expand the supply of available housing, and to support diversity in its housing stock. Changing regulations is challenging. Technical knowledge is necessary, and there must be both public will and political will to make it happen.

At the local level, many communities have land use regulations (such as zoning ordinances) in place that make it difficult, if not impossible, to expand the range of housing options and opportunities. Multi-family homes, co-living, cottages, detached accessory dwelling units (ADU), smaller homes on smaller lots and even tiny houses are some of the potential solutions to the challenge of allowing housing diversity.

However, many Granite State communities' zoning or other regulations do not permit homes other than detached single-family (and now, by state statute, attached accessory dwelling units). Mixed-use buildings that have apartments above retail shops, or homes shared among unrelated friends, or new multiple-family homes in denser neighborhoods are often prohibited by local regulations.

Facilitating the creation (or adaptation) of a diversified type of housing may support a larger vision or plan the community has (e.g., economic development, downtown revitalization, job creation, etc.) and would be an important step in creating fairness for all community members.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MTAG PROGRAM

- Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 are available to pay a consultant to provide technical assistance to the community. The consultant (such as a regional planning commission or a private individual) provides technical assistance in the following ways:
  - Assessing and helping to identify the community's housing needs
  - Reviewing current zoning and regulations related to housing
  - Re-writing or creating new land use regulations to permit a wider range of choices in home location, design, and/or price-point that support what the community has identified it needs
- Apply anytime. Applications may be submitted to Plan NH at any time during the year, and will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt.
- The municipality must make a cash and/or in-kind match commitment of 15% of requested MTAG Program grant funds.
- Participating communities are required to engage in outreach and engagement to identify local housing needs, concerns, challenges, and desired outcomes. UNH Cooperative Extension, a Plan NH partner, will assist grantees in developing a final outreach and engagement plan (based on what is outlined in the application). Individual assistance by UNH Cooperative Extension is available for each grantee throughout the grant project.
- At least 5% of the MTAG funds must support community outreach and engagement that contributes to the development of new (or re-written) ordinances.
- A community may hire a consultant to assist in preparing an MTAG application. However, MTAG funds cannot not pay for this service retroactively.
- **Plan NH will provide assistance to communities in completing the application, including those who may not have the resources to do so. Communities that need assistance should contact Robin Leblanc at Plan NH at [r\\_leblanc@plannh.org](mailto:r_leblanc@plannh.org)**

## MTAG APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- **Applicants must demonstrate a readiness for the process, and have support from key municipal leaders and decision makers.**
- **MTAG Program applications may be submitted to Plan NH at any time.**
- **Communities that need assistance in completing the application should contact Robin Leblanc at Plan NH at [r\\_leblanc@plannh.org](mailto:r_leblanc@plannh.org)**

### I. COMMUNITY & PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be an incorporated New Hampshire city or town (“municipality”).
- MTAG Program applications may be submitted to Plan NH at any time.
- Consultants may assist participating communities in preparing MTAG applications. Please note, however, that MTAG funds may not be used retroactively to pay for these services.

*If your community has limited resources for preparing a grant application, please contact Plan NH for assistance.*

Projects must be clearly intended to increase housing options. You must have a project that demonstrates need and readiness.

#### **What Kinds of Projects Qualify?**

Eligible projects that relate to increasing housing options may include, but are not limited to:

- Form-based codes
- Mixed-use zoning
- Inclusionary zoning and workforce housing solutions (as defined in NH RSA 674:21(IV)a; it can help a community fulfill its obligations under the NH Workforce Housing Law, RSA 674:58-61)
- Lot-size averaging
- Village plan alternative zoning and subdivision regulations
- Regulatory standards promoting infill development
- Growth boundaries intended to maximize efficiency of infrastructure
- Transfer of development rights and density transfer credit codes
- Neighborhood heritage districts
- Building codes for energy-efficient rehabilitation of older structures
- Corridor planning to increase mixed-income housing near employment nodes
- Pedestrian- and transit-oriented development and affordable housing
- Economic development connecting housing and transportation investments;
- Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, RSA 79-E
- Analysis of ordinances and regulations for workforce (or other) housing’s economic viability

## II. GRANT REQUIREMENTS

### Required Municipal Cash and/or In-Kind Match

Applicants must make a cash and/or in-kind match commitment of 15% of requested MTAG Program grant funds. For example, if an applicant requests an MTAG Program grant of \$10,000 for a project, it must demonstrate a local commitment of \$1,500 in either cash and/or in-kind match, or a combination of both.

For the purposes of this program, “cash match” is defined as a financial contribution toward the total project costs made by the applicant. This may consist of:

- Direct municipal appropriations contributed by the municipality specifically for the approved scope of work, OR
- Financial gifts or contributions, or grant funds from other sources, provided directly to the municipality

In-kind services may be paid staff time or volunteer time that is directly related to implementation of the project.

- Volunteer hours are valued at \$27.20 per hour (refer to Independent Sector, [www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)) unless a person is volunteering services in his or her professional capacity. In this case, the volunteer rate is the person’s “billable” rate for the service.

Proof of match must be documented and submitted with invoices. The documentation should demonstrate how the amount claimed as match was calculated. It should specify sources of match and relate sources to completion of work tasks specified in the contract.

A consultant’s costs may include time, direct costs associated with the project, and indirect costs reasonably attributable to the project.

### Community Engagement

At least 5% of the MTAG funds must support community outreach and community engagement that contributes to the development of new (or re-written) ordinances.

Participating communities are required to engage in outreach and engagement to identify local housing needs, concerns, challenges, and desired outcomes. UNH Cooperative Extension provides one-on-one assistance throughout the grant project. As a Plan NH partner, it also will work with grantees in developing a final outreach and engagement plan (based on what is outlined in their application). There is no charge to the municipality for this work.

Grantees will conduct an ongoing outreach and education process to gather input from a broad range of community members, including those who may be most affected by a new ordinance but who may feel they have no voice – as well as those who are traditionally opposed to changes.

Community engagement will ensure that residents and local businesses are fully informed of and contribute to any proposed ordinance. Funds may be used to conduct online and in-person surveys. Discussions (virtual or in-person) that provide an opportunity for dialog are required. Grantees should have one final public *discussion* (not just a hearing) about the final draft of an ordinance before it is submitted to the regulatory process.

Grantees are encouraged to hold a public forum at the outset of the work, outlining the purpose of the program, its goals, and the steps they envision will be needed to achieve them. This will be the first of what should be several opportunities for residents, commercial property owners and local businesses to collaborate in identifying the community's needs and what changes could address them.

### **Procurement and Role of Consultant**

MTAG provides funding to hire a consultant to provide technical assistance to the community. The consultant (such as a regional planning commission or a private individual) provides technical assistance in the following ways:

- Assessing and helping to identify the community's housing needs
- Reviewing current zoning and regulations related to housing
- Re-writing or creating new land use regulations to permit a wider range of choices in home location, design, and/or price-point that support what the community has identified it needs

*A consultant that is hired through the grant must be approved by Plan NH.*

A community may hire a consultant to assist in preparing an MTAG application. However, MTAG funds cannot not pay for this service retroactively.

Some communities may wish to wait until a grant is awarded before they hire a consultant. Simply make a note of this in your application and include an outline of the RFP you would issue, including qualifications sought. Once notified that you have received a grant, plan to issue the RFP as soon as possible. Once the consultant is hired, we will finalize documents so that the project can begin. We will still require a specific timeline for your project, which we will work out with you.

Some communities already have a consultant with whom they have worked. The MTAG Program does not require a competitive bidding process. However, do follow the procurement policies of your municipality. The qualifications of your consultant *must* be included in your application, and the consultant who you wish to hire must be approved by Plan NH.

**III. GRANT AWARDS**

**Review Process**

Grants are awarded *on a competitive basis* to communities that demonstrate both a need and readiness for their project.

Grants will be no less than \$5,000 and no more than \$25,000. At least 5% of the MTAG funds must support community outreach and engagement that contributes to the development of the new (or re-written) ordinances.

Plan NH and its Advisory Board will review the application within 30 days and schedule an interview with the Applicant Team.

The applicant community will be notified within five business days thereafter. If the grant is approved, an Agreement will be sent to the community. The municipality then has 30 days to review, sign and return the Agreement to Plan NH.

**SCORING CRITERIA**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Supports demonstrated community plan or need	0-10
Strength of how the use of this grant will help achieve the desired outcome(s)	0-10
Proposed community outreach and engagement process	0-10
Readiness to proceed (e.g., studies, outreach already done?)	0-10
Broad community support (e.g., letters of support)	0-10
<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>50</b>

**GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Municipalities must submit monthly reports by the last business day of each month, describing progress made on its scope of work, including:

- Completed tasks and outcomes, accomplishments
- Metrics of success (documentation on public meetings, workshops and hearings, public participation levels, and additional outreach efforts)
- Status, as applicable, regarding questions that have arisen and whether they need to be answered or responded to; areas that are sticking points; impediments to progress; changes or strategy or action plan and why; etc.

A grantee may be asked to report on its experience and lessons learned at a future meeting or conference.



## **Disbursal of Grant Funds**

Grant funds are disbursed as reimbursement to the municipality. Upon submission of copies of paid invoices, Plan NH will provide reimbursement up to the amount requested. Please note:

- Cash community match funds must be drawn down before MTAG funds are requested from Plan NH.
- Invoices must indicate which tasks/items are related to Community Outreach and Engagement activities, and which to Technical Assistance (i.e., consultant fees).
- Invoices are to be submitted at least quarterly to Plan NH.

A consultant's costs may include time, direct costs associated with the project, and indirect costs reasonably attributable to the project.

The final 25% of MTAG funds will be disbursed when the municipality demonstrates that the intended ordinances, whether new or revised (in accordance with the municipality's project and work plan), have been drafted and submitted to the appropriate governing body for final approval or vote. Grantees must make a reasonable effort to secure adoption by the appropriate municipal body.

## **Prohibited Uses of Grant Funds**

Grant funds may NOT be used to:

- Acquire property
- Pay for municipal staff or equipment
- Pay for food, unless food is available to all attendees at a publicly noticed meeting (e.g., a listening session); MTAG or match funds for food may NOT exceed 2.5% of the total project budget

## **Post-Grant Requirements**

After the close of the grant period, grantees will be required to submit annual progress reports for a period of five years (by December 31 of each year) to Plan NH, reporting on implementation and outcomes. For example, an MTAG grantee that adopts a co-living ordinance will be required to submit data on the number of times it is used in a five-year period by development applicants after adoption.

## **New Hampshire Municipal Technical Assistance Grant APPLICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

***For assistance in completing the MTAG application, please contact:***

Robin LeBlanc | Plan NH | [r\\_leblanc@plannh.org](mailto:r_leblanc@plannh.org) | 603-452-7526

***All application components must be compiled into one PDF file and sent, via email or a link to an online file exchange service such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Teams, etc., to Plan NH at [r\\_leblanc@plannh.org](mailto:r_leblanc@plannh.org)***

### **1. Cover Page (include this information on one page, in this order).**

- 1.1. Name of municipality and address of town hall or governing body
- 1.2. Project contact person's name, affiliation with community, phone, e-mail
- 1.3. Population of community (year-round/seasonal)
- 1.4. Median income of community, year-round
- 1.5. Date of most recent Master Plan and section(s) of Plan that support this project
- 1.6. Amount of MTAG funding requested
- 1.7. Amount of pledged (or actual) cash match (identify source of this funding and include documentation)
- 1.8. Total project budget (requested grant funds + match)
- 1.9. Dated signature of the municipality's chief executive or other representative designated by the local governing body.

### **2. Narrative. Describe, in no more than three pages, the scope of your project**

- 2.1. What is the housing challenge that your community is facing? Verify the need with separate documentation or links.
- 2.2. How is this showing up/being demonstrated (e.g., surveys, reflected in Master Plan)? What impact is this challenge having on the community?
- 2.3. What do you intend to do with the funding?
- 2.4. What outcome(s) are you aiming for? What do you want to achieve?
  - 2.4.1. Would these outcomes support any part(s) of your Master Plan?
  - 2.4.2. Would these outcomes have an impact on the community's economic development, job creation, transportation investments, or other plans?
- 2.5. How will you know if the project is a success?
- 2.6. How do you know that your municipal leaders and citizens are ready to undertake this project?
- 2.7. Who in your community will you reach out to and include in your project?

### 3. Other Documentation Needed.

3.1. Commitment to proceed, in the form of letters of support from City Council/Select Board, Planning Board and other key decision-makers or relevant organizations/individuals

3.2. Resume or qualifications of the technical assistance consultant you wish to hire

### 4. Timeline and Budget.

For the purposes of this application, provide a timeline of activities, and itemize estimated costs (see table below for example of format).

*Hint: start at the end of the proposed project, and work backwards to create your timeline.)*

Generally, it takes a community about 18 months to complete the process. We recognize that, in the course of the grant, the timeline may need to be adjusted to meet a community's needs or circumstances.

Task	Activity	Timing	Who?	Estimated Cost	Notes
1	Public meetings 1.5 hours each	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant and MTAG committee	3 x \$100 per hour = \$300 for consultant; \$100 for food (x2)	Intro to program, what do community members need?
2	Review current ordinances	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant	10 x \$100 per hour = \$1000	
3	Recommendations to community – what to tackle?	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant	10 hours x \$100 = \$1,000	What does community think – where does it want to go?
4	Regulations re- write, create new	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant and MTAG committee	3 x \$100 per hour = \$300 for consultant; \$100 for food	Meet with public after each draft
5	Final revisions; hearings	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant	10 hours x \$100 = \$1,000	
6	Language Acceptance by Planning Board	Est. start / end date for task	Consultant and MTAG committee		
7	Advocate for changes	Est. start / end date for task	Citizens, MTAG committee		
8	Town meeting vote	Est. start / end date for task			

## **MTAG PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Can we find out if a project is eligible for consideration before we dive into the application process?**

Yes. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions about the program and application. Email a brief description of the project along with any questions you might have to [r\\_leblanc@plannh.org](mailto:r_leblanc@plannh.org). Or, feel free to call us at 603-452-7526.

### **Will the grant help pay for a housing chapter for our Master Plan?**

No. MTAG funds are specifically for technical assistance in reviewing, re-writing or creating zoning regulations or ordinances related to housing. You may want to do this in support of/to meet the goals of your existing/current housing chapter.

### **Our municipal planner spent a lot of time last year on a regulatory review. May we use grant funds to offset that cost if they support establishing regulations based on those findings?**

No. Grant funds may only be used to pay for consultant services provided in support of a MTAG Program-approved project, not any expenses incurred prior to grant award.

### **May two or more towns share an MTAG award?**

Yes, as long as the grant will be administered by a single municipality. Note that *regardless of the number of municipalities included in one application, funding limits (\$5,000 - \$25,000) are per application.*

### **If my community receives an MTAG Grant but finds that it cannot spend the entire award, what should we do?**

Contact the MTAG Administrator at Plan NH as soon as possible.

### **Are we bound to a particular timeframe?**

No. We will work with you and your consultant to figure out a timeline that makes sense for your project and your community. We recognize on occasion an extension may be needed for a project. That is why the monthly reports are important in that provide a timely status report on your project. Otherwise, your grant could be in jeopardy.