Assess trade-offs and refine strategies

In developing a comprehensive local housing strategy, cities, towns and counties will need to make a range of important policy decisions. Some of these decisions will involve difficult choices about how to allocate limited resources—for example, to determine which income group(s) to target and to balance the needs of older adults, persons with disabilities and families with children. Other decisions involve questions of strategy—for example, to determine which rental housing developments to prioritize for preservation and which neighborhoods to prioritize for the development of new affordable housing.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to any of these issues, the briefs listed below can help policymakers and stakeholders craft an appropriate solution for their community by providing guidance on how to approach making these difficult judgments:

Setting income eligibility levels for local housing programs
Guidance on how to determine the income eligibility levels for local housing assistance programs and policies. Learn more about setting income eligibility levels for local housing programs.

Balancing increases in affordable housing in resource-rich areas with investments in low-income neighborhoods
An overview of how to balance the dual goals of expanding the availability of affordable housing in resource-rich areas and improving the quality of life in neighborhoods with high poverty levels. Learn more about balancing increases in affordable housing in resource-rich areas with investments in low-income neighborhoods.

Developing mixed-income housing
Guidance on the circumstances in which mixed-income development can be used to break up concentrations of poverty, prevent displacement, or increase access to resource-rich areas. Learn more about developing mixed-income housing.

The pros and cons of large-scale, small-scale, and scattered-site development
An overview of the relative advantages and disadvantages of large- and small-scale multifamily development and scattered-site development, and circumstances in which each approach might be preferable. Learn more about the pros and cons of large-scale.
small-scale, and scattered-site development.

Balancing trade-offs between the quantity, quality, and location of affordable housing
Guidance on how to balance local standards and priorities for the quality of construction, mix of amenities, and location of new affordable housing to address housing needs with a limited budget. Learn more about balancing trade-offs between the quantity, quality, and location of affordable housing.

Determining the duration of required affordability for dedicated affordable housing
A discussion of the benefits of long-term affordability requirements, which help jurisdictions serve more people with a fixed amount of funding, and the trade-offs involved in requiring them. Learn more about determining the duration of required affordability for dedicated affordable housing.

Balancing the preservation of existing affordable housing with new construction
Guidance on how to determine whether and under what circumstances the preservation of existing affordable housing or the development of new affordable housing will be more effective in achieving local policy goals. Learn more about balancing the preservation of existing affordable housing with new construction.

Allocating resources between tenant-based and project-based rental assistance
A discussion of scenarios in which it may be preferable to structure rental assistance as a tenant-based subsidy, which provides greater flexibility, or as project-based assistance, which helps to guarantee the availability of affordable units in specific locations. Learn more about allocating resources between tenant-based and project-based rental assistance.

Balancing the goals of promoting homeownership and increasing the availability of affordable rental housing
An overview of the benefits of homeownership, and the trade-offs involved in allocating resources to support first-time homebuyers when low-income renters have urgent housing needs. Learn more about balancing the goals of promoting homeownership and increasing the availability of affordable rental housing.

Allocating resources to address housing needs among older adults and families with children
A discussion of the factors that local jurisdictions may wish to consider when determining how to allocate spending on housing for different populations. Learn
more about allocating resources to address housing needs among older adults and families with children.