Setting income eligibility levels for local housing programs overview

In designing programs that fund the creation or preservation of dedicated affordable housing units, cities, towns and counties will need to determine what income level(s) each program will target.

This is often a contentious issue. While there is no single solution that will be “right” for every locality, the following points may be helpful for cities to consider as they work on tailoring their programs to local circumstances:

- Households with extremely low-incomes are much more likely to face severe housing cost burdens than higher-income households.
- On the other hand, it generally costs more to serve lower-income households.
- Cities, towns, and counties should examine local data on housing cost burdens and the level at which a household can afford a decent-quality unsubsidized unit in a typical neighborhood.
- Many cities adopt different housing programs and policies targeted at households of different levels.
- Localities should also consider the existing affordable housing resources available in the community.
- Funding, policy and political issues may also affect income targeting decisions.