HAT GUIDE
HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

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What is the HAT?

The Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) is a self-assessment guide for communities to gather and analyze data on their housing inventory, partner with relevant stakeholders, and develop priorities for local housing investment. Communities can use this tool to make data-driven decisions in addressing housing investment opportunities.

The recommended timeline for completing the HAT is one to three months but can be dependent on a community's capacity. Once the HAT is complete, communities have the option to present their housing priorities to the Housing Interagency Advisory Committee (HIAC) to explore state funding opportunities. A tentative timeline is on page 2. More information and resources are on the HAT webpage.

Why is the HAT recommended?

The purpose of the HAT is for communities to assess their housing inventory and needs without hiring a consultant to perform a housing study. When applying for Kansas state funding, it is recommended communities strategically prioritize the greatest housing needs. This ensures the housing investment is most effective to be eligible for grant funding.

Housing is an economic development issue and learning what the housing market demands are improve a community's economic opportunity. If a community strategically implements its housing priorities, it can simultaneously address economic development and housing growth.

The HAT provides a general overview of all considerations related to housing. Not all questions will be applicable to every community.

How do I complete the HAT?

Communities use this document as the guide to answer the questions on the online HAT Form. Answers can be collected on a separate document and entered on the HAT Form found at:

https://kansasdepartmentofcommerce.formstack.com/forms/housing_assessment_tool

For questions or clarifications, please contact Elizabeth Heron at Elizabeth.Heron@ks.gov.

Part 1: Create a housing committee or partner with relevant stakeholders and organizations
The role of the committee is to guide the community through the HAT process, organize engagement, assist with data collection, and set clear priorities. A housing committee or advisory board has 5-10 individuals as representatives from relevant stakeholders, organizations, and residents.

Part 2: Collect and analyze local data
The analysis includes demographics, rental and homeownership data, infrastructure, past housing initiatives, housing market, regional housing needs, physical condition assessment, and workforce housing needs.

Part 3: Community engagement
Public input ensures housing needs, goals, and actions reflect the needs and desires of residents. Communities conduct an engagement effort by a distributed survey, public workshop, or other outreach method.

Part 4: Final assessment of the data, input and setting priorities
The housing committee analyzes the local data and public input to identify the community's greatest housing assets and opportunities for investment.

WEEKS 1-2

Part 1: Establish housing committee

Recruit housing committee members
Organize and schedule meetings (location, time, frequency)
Delegate roles and tasks to complete HAT (optional Task Form available)
Set timeline and target dates to complete HAT
Familiarize with HAT and additional resources

WEEKS 3-4

Part 2: Collecting and analyzing local data

Part 2A: Past Housing Initiatives, Infrastructure, and City Services Questions
Part 2B: Housing Needs Assessment Data Questions
Part 2C: Stakeholder (Major Employer and Realtor) Interviews
Part 2D: Regional Housing Analysis Questions
Part 2E: Housing Physical Condition Assessment

WEEKS 5-6

Part 3: Community engagement

Set community engagement goal, method, and timeline
Conduct engement initiative(s)
Answer analysis questions

WEEKS 7-8

Part 4: Final assessment of data, input and setting priorities

Convene with housing committee to review comprehensive list of housing initiatives, types, attributes and support services to "score" on pages 11-13
Select top three housing assets AND top three housing needs
Answer final analysis questions

Addressing your community's housing needs and strategizing a plan that reflects the long-term community goals is an ongoing decision-making process. A housing committee or advisory board provides continuity and direction. Form a committee with 5-10 individuals who are representatives from relevant stakeholders, organizations, and residents. A stakeholder is anyone who impacts or is impacted by local housing. Communities should cast a wide net to include a broad spectrum of housing stakeholders and participants.

A housing committee can include elected officials, city staff, representatives from real estate and finance, non-profit organizations, major employers, and residents. If your community has minimal resources, you can make a large effort to connect with these relevant stakeholders for input through the public and stakeholder engagement process. When selecting and forming your housing committee, consider individuals that are both good representatives and are willing to work together with others and commit the time. The time commitment expected of a housing committee member is one to three months to complete the HAT. A housing committee can continue to serve the community for housing initiatives beyond the completion of the HAT.

The role of the housing committee is to guide the community through the HAT process. The duties of a housing committee include organizing engagement and outreach, gathering the local data, communicating with stakeholders, and disseminating information from the HAT. The committee should select a chair to set meeting agendas, establish goals, and ensure action planning.

The housing committee will enter the name of each representative and organization in the online HAT Form. The housing committee should have at least one representative from each category: elected officials, city/county staff, public agency, public or private organization, major employer, and community residents. A list of potential housing stakeholder entities and a "HAT Task R-Chart Template" are on the HAT webpage under Additional Resources.

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Before your community can start creating and executing a housing strategy, it is critical to understand the local housing needs by collecting and analyzing local data. Part 2 of the HAT provides useful data resources to collect comprehensive community data. Part 2 has five components:

a. *Past Housing Initiatives, Infrastructure, and City Services Inventory*
b. *Housing Needs Assessment*
c. *Stakeholder Interviews*
d. *Regional Housing Analysis*
e. *Housing Physical Condition Assessment*

A. Past Housing Initiatives, Infrastructure, and City Services Inventory

Past housing initiatives inform what has or has not worked in your city's housing efforts. It can identify potential partnerships and areas your city may want to continue its investment. The status of infrastructure and city services determine whether your city can support more housing development. A city could review city plans, municipal code, and code enforcement for a deeper housing study. If a question is not applicable to your community, answer N/A. Committee members will answer the questions on the online HAT Form.

1. Past Housing Initiatives

Identify any housing activity that has taken place in the last five years (including grants/ programs, pending applications, private new construction, rental development, etc.). Explain what parties initiated the change. What has it done to improve or worsen the housing issues in your community?

2. New Construction Incentives

Has your community currently or previously offered incentives to developers, contractors, and occupants to spur new development? If yes, briefly describe the incentive program and its usefulness in your community.

3. Home Rehabilitation

Has your community currently or previously had any rehabilitation programs to assist homeowners to repair and improve their older homes? If yes, briefly describe the program and its impact.

4. Code Enforcement

What is the extent and effectiveness of code enforcement in your community? Is your community without codes?

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5.   Homeownership Support
Are there any incentives or financial support to encourage homeownership in your community (down payment assistance, local employer incentives, etc.)? If yes, how much are they utilized?

6.   Infrastructure
Describe the infrastructure system (water, streets, sewer, stormwater drainage, internet service, natural gas distribution and electrical distribution) as it relates to housing. Are the operating systems updated and efficient with minimal service interruptions? Are there large updates expected?

7.   Environmental Impacts
What are the environmental issues in your community that could affect new housing decisions and locations? For example, flood zone, wetlands, railroad tracks, major roadways, brownfields, farmland, forest, endangered species, etc.

8.   Disasters
If applicable, describe any persisting natural disaster impacts on your community's housing. Disaster examples include flooding, tornado, fire, windstorm, etc.

9.   Homelessness Prevention
What are the community's homelessness prevention efforts? What assistance does the community provide or need for households near homelessness?

B. Housing Needs Assessment

The Local Housing Solution's Housing Needs Assessment tool, created in partnership with PolicyMap, provides detailed reports for every U.S. Census community. Each report presents data, maps, and visualizations that describe local demographics and measures of housing affordability, housing stock characteristics, and variations in key housing indicators by race, ethnicity, age, and income. The tool compiles and visually displays public available national data sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Go to the link: https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-needs-assessment/ and enter in your community to find your report. There are a set of analysis questions to answer on your community's report found on the online HAT Form or a PDF worksheet on the HAT website (Housing Needs Assessment Worksheet under Additional Resources).

It should take approximately 30 - 60 minutes to navigate the report and answer the questions.

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C. Stakeholder Interviews

The housing committee will interview 1) up to five of the largest employers in the area and 2) up to two local realtors to provide insight on the current and future housing needs in your community.

Housing is an economic development issue and addressing local employer needs and learning what the housing market demands are can improve the economic opportunity in your community. If a community strategically implements its housing priorities, it can simultaneously address economic development and housing growth. The following are some of the ways housing is connected to local economic development:

• The opportunity to attract a new business with developing workforce housing.
• An existing business in the immediate market area may intend to expand its operations and hire new employees with available housing.
• The correlation between the proposed wages of a new or expanding business and the cost (rent/mortgage) of housing development.
• The job retention of a local business is dependent upon adequate housing development.
• Aging housing stock, misalignment between available housing and market needs, and affordability can negatively impact local economic vitality.

Housing committee members identify up to five of the largest employers and up to two local realtors for brief interviews. The representatives chosen to be interviewed could be member of the housing committee. The HAT webpage provides interview questions for download and can be provided to the employer or realtor. See "Businesses / Employers Stakeholder Interview Questions" and "Local Realtor Stakeholder Interview Questions".

The committee enters the responses and answers the following questions on the online HAT Form.

• *Local Business / Employers: Using this data and local knowledge, what are the common trends for housing need for the largest employers in the region? Are there anticipated future housing needs for the workforce? If so, what price range and housing type are needed?*
• *According to the local realtors, what are the local and regional housing needs?*

D. Regional Housing Analysis

Your community can greatly benefit in addressing housing opportunities and challenges by collaborating with neighboring communities and employers. Regional collaboration can be a challenge but provides a comprehensive understanding of the economic conditions that contribute to local housing needs. It brings opportunity to strategically plan and share resources, staff, and knowledge to address the shared housing challenges more effectively. The first step is assessing your regional housing challenges and opportunities.

Find your region in the Kansas Statewide Housing Needs Assessment 2021 found at 2022_01_14-Kansas-Housing-Assessment-Regions-Section-3-Low-Res.pdf (kshousingcorp. org) to answer the questions on the online HAT Form:

1) List the "Housing Opportunities & Challenges" for your region (located at the end of each region chapter) and

2) Describe how these regional housing challenges continue to impact your community's housing.

Consider the questions below while describing your community in relation to its region:

- *How does your community's housing (quality, quantity, availability, etc.) compare to neighboring towns?*
- *Considering the largest employers in your region, in which communities do these workers commute from?*
- *Have current residents previously moved to neighboring communities for better housing opportunities?*
- *Does your community lose potential residents to neighboring communities?*
- *Does your community share any infrastructure with the region?*

E. Housing Physical Condition Assessment

A housing physical condition assessment is helpful to identify the housing needs and areas for redevelopment. The assessment looks at the exterior condition of all residential properties in an area of interest or the entire housing stock. The minimum requirement is to perform a physical condition assessment on a housing investment focus area in your community. Your committee will decide the scope of the survey based on your goals, timeline, and capacity of your community.

Volunteers can either perform a walking or windshield survey for the assessment. For each residential property, a volunteer "rates" the physical condition. There are four condition categories: Excellent, Satisfactory, Deteriorated, and Dilapidated. Volunteers should consider the condition of the following during the assessment: foundation, roof, windows, doors, siding, porch, and the overall impression of the home.

A housing condition rating guide and template for the volunteers is on the HAT webpage for download found as "Housing Physical Condition Rating Guide and Survey Template" and an optional template to evaluate results "Housing Physical Condition Analysis Template" under Additional Resources. The housing committee will describe the focus area surveyed and key takeaways on the online HAT Form.

- *Describe the focus area of your housing assessment (entire community, neighborhood, etc.) and information collected.*
- *What are the primary housing challenges observed from the physical condition assessment?*
- *If collected, is there a higher concentration between owner- vs renter-occupied units being deteriorated or dilapidated?*
- *Are there certain neighborhoods with higher concentrations of deteriorated or dilapidated homes?*
- *What are the key takeaways from the housing physical condition assessment?*

PART 3: Community engagement

Public input and ongoing engagement are essential components of the planning process to ensure the identified housing needs, goals, and actions reflect the needs and desires of your residents. Integrating their input through the planning process increases support for implementation and can reveal new stakeholders to further address housing needs. It is strongly recommended to complete a public outreach effort in your community in addition to the housing committee. Review the engagement methods and choose one strategy that best fits your community and timeline. Facilitators from K-State Research and Extension or the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Division can assist your community in this process. Possible engagement methods include:

- **Community Survey:** conduct a questionnaire in person, online, or a physical copy to gather input (example survey questions are available for download on the HAT webpage.)
- **One-on-One Meetings:** meet with residents and stakeholders individually or in small groups to facilitate more natural and informal conversation.
- **Community Workshop:** engage your residents to share stories, identify challenges and opportunities.

A "Community Engagement Survey Question Bank" and the "Housing Stakeholder List" are on the HAT webpage for download. The committee will answer these questions on the online HAT Form:

1. *Describe your community engagement method and target audience? Approximately how much of the community did you engage?*
2. *What are the identified housing needs and concerns by the community residents?*
3. *What are the identified housing needs and concerns by builders and/or developers? (If applicable)*
4. *What are the key takeaways from the community engagement initiative?*

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PART 4: Final assessment of data, input and setting priorities

Once the housing committee thoroughly reviews the community's data and public input, the committee pulls it all together to establish a clear assessment of the local housing needs. This is the opportunity to set clear objectives and priorities for housing in your community. Approach the review of your community's data and input with an open mind. To achieve long-term and holistic success, it is essential to consider the multitude of factors that affect a local housing market.

The committee, as a group, will assess a comprehensive list of housing initiatives, types, attributes, and supporting services on pages 11-13 to "score" as a housing asset, neutral, or a housing need.

Housing Asset	The housing asset rating means the housing type, initiative, or attribute is a community asset. The component is contributing positively to the community's overall housing.
Neutral	A neutral rating stands for neither an asset or need. It could mean the component does not apply to your community or it is not positively or negatively impacting your community's housing.
Housing Need	A housing need rating means the housing type, initiative, or attribute is a housing need. This is an opportunity for investment. The component is in short supply, missing, or needs improving because it is causing a negative impact to the community's overall housing.

Once the tables are complete, the committee describes and provides explanation on the top three housing assets AND the top three housing needs and opportunities for investment. Note: the identified priorities should include more than one component or attribute.

The last task for the housing committee is to answer four final questions:

- *Are there specific regions or neighborhoods in your community that needs concentrated effort?*
- *Describe the community's timeline for addressing the priorities.*
- *Identify the local stakeholders who will be involved in addressing priorities.*
- *What are the largest obstacles in addressing the priority areas?*

The committee enters the answers on the online HAT Form.

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OCCUPANCY	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Owner-occupied housing	☐	☐	☐
Renter-occupied housing	☐	☐	☐
Temporary housing	☐	☐	☐

HOUSING TYPE	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Entry-level single-family housing	☐	☐	☐
Mid-level single-family housing	☐	☐	☐
High-level single-family housing	☐	☐	☐
Large, lot acreage housing	☐	☐	☐
Townhomes / row houses	☐	☐	☐
Duplexes	☐	☐	☐
Multi-family apartments	☐	☐	☐
Condominiums (condos)	☐	☐	☐
Manufactured / mobile homes	☐	☐	☐
Senior (independent) housing	☐	☐	☐
Senior care facilities	☐	☐	☐
Downtown housing (above commercial)	☐	☐	☐
Temporary housing	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

POPULATION	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Young professional housing	☐	☐	☐
Family housing	☐	☐	☐
Senior housing	☐	☐	☐
Workforce housing	☐	☐	☐
Disabled housing	☐	☐	☐
Low-to-moderate income housing	☐	☐	☐
Moderate income housing	☐	☐	☐
High income housing	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

HOUSING INITIATIVES	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
New construction	☐	☐	☐
Rehabilition	☐	☐	☐
Infill development	☐	☐	☐
Demolition	☐	☐	☐
Homeownership incentives	☐	☐	☐
Developer incentives	☐	☐	☐
Code enforcement	☐	☐	☐
Regional collaboration	☐	☐	☐
Homelessness prevention	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

HOUSING FACTORS	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Affordability	☐	☐	☐
Demand	☐	☐	☐
Land availability	☐	☐	☐
Historic homes	☐	☐	☐
Housing type variety	☐	☐	☐
Housing price variety	☐	☐	☐
Housing quality	☐	☐	☐
Aging housing stock	☐	☐	☐
Construction costs	☐	☐	☐
Worker shortage	☐	☐	☐
Vacancy	☐	☐	☐
Flood zones	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐

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INFRASTRUCTURE / AMENITIES	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Water distribution	☐	☐	☐
Stormwater drainage	☐	☐	☐
Sanitary sewer	☐	☐	☐
Sidewalks / trails	☐	☐	☐
Streets	☐	☐	☐
Parks / open space	☐	☐	☐
Reliable internet	☐	☐	☐
Childcare	☐	☐	☐
Schools	☐	☐	☐
City services (library, pool, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Emergency / safety (fire, police)	☐	☐	☐
Health services	☐	☐	☐
Retail / restaurants	☐	☐	☐
Jobs / employment	☐	☐	☐
Proximity to urban areas	☐	☐	☐
Transportation services	☐	☐	☐
Community center	☐	☐	☐
Other:	☐	☐	☐