

Commonwealth Housing Task Force

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES COMPETITION REQUEST FOR IDEAS

Commonwealth Housing Task Force Expanding Opportunities Committee

Fall 2013

The Expanding Opportunities Committee (EOC) of the Commonwealth Housing Task Force (CHTF) is sponsoring a competition to generate ideas from students about how to make communities in Massachusetts more welcoming to people of color, people of low-income, and people with disabilities. The goal of the competition is to generate innovative ideas that will inform the committee's thinking about projects or programs to develop in the coming months and years. The winning applicant will have the opportunity to network with key leaders in the housing field in greater Boston and will be recognized publicly by CHTF.

The Expanding Opportunities Committee is seeking ideas that will 1) promote access for people of color, people of low-income, people with disabilities and other populations that may face barriers to access to existing housing in communities throughout Massachusetts and/or housing associated with new housing development, or 2) promote strategies that help to create a more welcoming environment in one or more communities for people of color, people of low-income, people with disabilities and other groups that traditionally experience challenges or barriers moving to many cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Ideas for projects, programs, or research may be targeted to a specific Massachusetts community or be more broadly based. Ideas for projects that would be implemented in partnership with a housing developer, municipal or other public agency, nonprofit or community organization are encouraged. CHTF was instrumental in the passage and implementation of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40R, the Smart Growth Zoning and Housing Production Act. Ideas for projects, programs, or research designed to promote access to specific affordable housing development projects in cities or towns with approved Chapter 40R zoning districts are especially encouraged.

The winning project idea may be implemented by CHTF, the Committee, and/or by the winning applicant with support from the Committee. Ideas for future projects, programs, or research that a student has no ability to implement are welcome, as are those that a student hopes to implement as part of a future course or as an independent project.

Winning ideas will be recognized publicly by CHTF and highlighted in CHTF reporting, which reaches a wide audience of individuals in the public and private sectors. Winning students will also have an opportunity to network with members of the Task Force and will be invited to work with the committee on possible future implementation, should the student wish to do so. Note: No funding is provided for completion of the project by the winning applicant; however EOC members will be available to advise students wishing to complete the project.

Deadline for Submission: 5 p.m., November 1, 2013. Please send questions and submissions to Jennifer Erickson at jerickson@mapc.org.

Required Submission:

Please submit a description of your idea that does not exceed 2 pages. Descriptions should include the hoped for project or research outcomes and any partner organizations or entities that would be involved in implementation. If applicable, please specify any plans you have to implement your idea associated with your work in a specific class or with a specific professor, and include a timetable for possible implementation.

About the Commonwealth Housing Task Force: There is a serious and escalating housing crisis in Massachusetts, a situation now recognized by many sectors of the community. Young adults who grew up in the Commonwealth cannot afford to raise their families in their old neighborhoods. Low- and moderate-income families are being priced out of their rental units and feel the dream of homeownership slipping away. And most serious for the economic health of the Commonwealth, Massachusetts employers are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit new workers – and to retain existing highly-skilled staff – because of the very high cost of housing. The Commonwealth Housing Task Force (CHTF) was convened by The Boston Foundation to address these issues. CHTF is an ad hoc group representing widely-diverse constituencies: business and civic leaders, foundation leadership, affordable housing advocates, the environmental community, organized labor, real estate developers, elected and appointed officials at both the state and local levels, and higher education. They have come together to find common ground and to address the state's housing crisis on a coordinated basis. Please visit our website for additional information: www.commonwealthhousingtaskforce.org/.

About the Expanding Opportunities Committee: A primary goal of the committee is to promote broad access to the affordable and market-rate housing, as well as to business and employment opportunities generated by the development of housing under Chapter 40R and other housing programs to a population that reflects the diversity of the state. The committee has a particular focus on families and individuals that may face obstacles to obtaining these benefits, including people of color, low-income people, people with disabilities and members of other protected classes.