

Baker administration awards \$90 million to affordable housing projects



Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Chrystal Kornegay and Gov. Charlie Baker announce \$90 million in tax incentives and subsidies for affordable housing at a Boston event on Aug. 15, 2016. (SHIRA SCHOENBERG / THE REPUBLICAN)

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BOSTON — Gov. Charlie Baker on Monday announced \$90 million in government subsidies and tax credits awarded to 26 projects to create or preserve rental housing.

Most of those projects' units — 1,334 out of a total of 1,420 — will be affordable housing.

The projects include four senior housing projects and five projects that provide support services to residents, such as access to substance abuse or mental health counseling. Some of the projects also allot some of their units to individuals or families at risk of becoming homeless.

HOUSING NEWS

Baker said the state is "building more inclusive communities" and providing economic and social pathways for both working families and the state's most vulnerable residents. Baker, speaking at the site of a soon-to-be-rehabilitated building in Boston, said the goal is to create opportunities for residents "to get back on their feet" and become more productive.

[Baker administration awards \\$90 million to affordable housing projects](#)

The \$90 million announced Monday includes:

- \$31 million in state and federal low-income housing tax credits, which is expected to generate \$218 million in private investment;
- and, \$59 million in housing subsidies, including state and federal money.

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Although nearly one-third of the projects are in Boston, a handful of them are in Western Massachusetts, including:

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- Forrest Springs in Great Barrington, sponsored by Construct, Inc., will build 11 affordable family rental units in three buildings, with two units reserved for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income.
- New Home Sewing Apartment Complex, an old mill building in Orange, will be redeveloped into 63 affordable family units, with seven units for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income.
- E. Henry Twiggs Phase II in Springfield, sponsored by Home City Housing, will preserve 61 units of rehabilitated affordable housing, with 16 units reserved for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income.
- Maple Commons Apartments in Springfield, sponsored by First Resource Companies, will preserve 173 rehabilitated affordable housing units, with 18 units for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income.
- James Commons Apartments in Springfield, sponsored by Valley Real Estate, will preserve 42 affordable units for families, with nine units reserved for families earning less than 30 percent of area median income.

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The Baker administration sees a focus on affordable housing combined with support services as part of its strategy to combat homelessness.

Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Chrystal Kornegay said the goal is also to help working people — receptionists or restaurant workers or preschool teachers — afford to live in high-priced areas like Boston.

In Boston, where the Roman Catholic Archdiocese is rehabilitating a building to provide housing and support services for formerly homeless individuals, Lisa Alberghini said, "It's about advancing a strong vibrant and inclusive community."

"We can't be strong and grow unless we care for all people," said Alberghini, president of the diocese's Planning Office for Urban Affairs.

Speaking to reporters after the event, Baker was asked about his administration's work to move homeless families out of hotels and motels.



Massachusetts sees steep drop in homeless families housed in hotels

Baker said his approach is a mix of helping people stay in housing and developing "scattered sites," where shelters contract with landlords to rent apartments to homeless families.

Baker said hotels are "not appropriate sites for kids and families" and are generally located far from the support systems, schools, and friends and neighbors that homeless people rely on. There is no activity space for children and no access to home cooked meals.

Between January 2015 and July 2016, the number of homeless families in hotels dropped from more than 1,500 to fewer than 420.

"We said we'd get it down to zero by the end of our administration. I think we're going to be way ahead of that," Baker said.

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