

Housing Case Studies 2026 Summer Research Opportunity

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC), as part of the Better Urbanism, Infrastructure, and Land-Use Decisions (BUILD) Research Network program, seeks proposals from researchers to recruit and supervise students to conduct high-quality case studies during the summer of 2026 on state legislative sessions that passed bills intended to legalize or encourage housing production.

Context

State governments have been experimenting with policies intended to encourage housing production for the past several years. These policies include laws aimed at legalizing more diverse structure types (e.g., accessory dwelling units and duplexes) in residential areas, allowing apartment buildings in commercial areas, making development permitting faster and more transparent, and relaxing strict dimensional requirements, such as large lot sizes or off-street parking requirements. Evaluating the outcomes and impacts of these policies is important for policymakers. Challenges to evaluation include i) the absence of a centralized, publicly available inventory of policies, ii) the complexity of the legislative changes, with multiple components that interact with one another and require careful analysis, and iii) lack of information about regulatory discontinuities that could plausibly be leveraged to identify the causal effect of policy changes.

Description

SSRC will provide funding to create high-quality case studies on state legislative sessions that passed bills intended to encourage housing production.

Supervising researchers should recruit PhD and master's students to conduct and write-up the case studies in exchange for a summer stipend. Each case study should be approximately 3,000 – 5,000 words and be written in a style accessible and appropriate for non-technical audiences, including policymakers, media, and other general audiences. Each case study also must include a one-page visually engaging briefer designed to summarize the key takeaways from each study.

Case studies should be drawn from the [list of legislative sessions of interest](#). Applicants should be explicit about which legislative sessions they are proposing. Preference will be given for researchers or students in the state or geographic region of the case study.

The case studies should contain consistent information about the policy's design, legislative history, and implementation. The case studies will serve as inputs to future research evaluating the impacts of policy changes intended to increase housing production. Because the policies vary widely in design, complexity, and length since adoption, the case studies will not all be identical. However, each case study will use a standardized template provided by BUILD to address a [set of primary questions](#) and may also go into depth on particularly important or interesting features.

Supervising researchers will receive an honorarium of \$2,500 and students will receive a grant of \$7,500. Case studies should be completed during the summer with final case study reports completed no later than September 30, 2026.

Submission Instructions and Selection Criteria

To apply, supervising researchers should submit a proposal through the [SSRC's application portal](#). The proposal should be no more than 2 pages and describe the case study(s) proposed, its importance to future research evaluating the outcomes and impacts of policy changes intended to increase housing production, how the supervising researcher will guide the student(s) conducting the case studies to ensure a high-quality case study(s) are completed during the specified time period, and include short bios of the supervising researcher and student(s). The proposal should also submit the CVs for the supervising researcher and student(s).

The BUILD Research Network will select proposals based on fit with the grant's objectives, supervising researcher's expertise in the topics, and student(s)' demonstrated interest or experience with the topic and location.

The application deadline is **March 30, 2026**.

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