

HOUSING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Updated August 2026

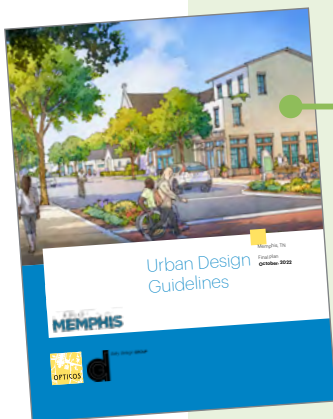


City of Memphis and Shelby County
Community Redevelopment Agency

Housing Design and Construction Guidelines

CHEAT SHEET

The CRA is dedicated to addressing blight and increasing the availability of affordable housing. This packet is designed to support and facilitate the development of high-quality, well-designed, affordable housing. We encourage the use of green building techniques, materials, and equipment. This cheat sheet provides a quick reference, while the following pages offer more detailed information.



DESIGN STANDARDS

Memphis Urban Design Guidelines

- Memphis Medical District Collaborative Form Book
- AIA Framework for Design Excellence
- Whole Building Design Guide
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

- Memphis & Shelby County Adopted Building Codes and Local Amendments
- Energy Efficient Requirement

ZONING & LAND USE

- Unified Development Code
- Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan

DO'S

- Sustainable Design
- Energy Efficiency
- Durable & Healthy Materials
- Accessibility/ Universal Design

DONT'S

- Disregard the Contextual Character
- Use Substandard Materials
- Ignore Building Codes or Permitting Requirements

DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD:

- Align with community plans
- Incorporate community feedback
- Contextually fit within a neighborhood
- Support strategic investment

IF REQUESTING TIF FUNDING, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT MUST MEET AFFORDABILITY GOAL:

- Household incomes do not exceed 120% of the area median income (AMI)
- Properties sold or rented comply with HUD standards
- Property will be deed restricted with a 15-year affordability period

SITE PLANNING:

- Contextual structures, both form & size
- Include outdoor spaces and/or green spaces
- Plan for landscaping
- Interact access points of structures with sidewalks and parking areas





INTRODUCTION

The **Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)** is committed to blight removal and to developing affordable housing. The guidelines contained herein are intended to promote and assist in the development of well-designed, quality, affordable housing. Green building techniques, materials, and equipment are encouraged and may be required as further outlined in this document. Additionally, considerations for review and approval will include analysis of location and site plans for compatibility with neighborhood characteristics, plan and elevation stylistic compatibility to existing housing and infrastructure, universal design components, and landscaping and lighting.

These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for the design and construction of residential housing. The objectives are to ensure structural safety, environmental sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and occupant well-being. They apply to single-family and multi-family housing developments.

CRA reserves the right to fully review all design documents and to approve, reject, or require modifications at its discretion.

CONTENTS

4

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

5

AFFORDABILITY

6

DESIGN AND
PLANNING FRAMEWORK

8

CONSTRUCTION
STANDARDS

10

MANUFACTURED AND
MODULAR HOUSING

12

BEST PRACTICES

13

BASIC DON'TS



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Directed by the TIF Community Redevelopment Plan, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) collaborates with residents, property owners, institutions, businesses, and the City to support and facilitate the revitalization of communities. To further communicate goals related to the redevelopment of affordable housing opportunities, promoting and supporting minority-owned entrepreneurs and locally owned small businesses, and maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) neighborhood redevelopment plans guide the work of the CRA and its stakeholders who seek to benefit from the redevelopment.

Alignment with the Community Plan

Before beginning design or development activities, developers and builders are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review the applicable Community Plan for the neighborhood in which their project will be located. Community Plans are adopted planning documents that outline the vision, goals, and priorities for growth, investment, and quality of life within specific areas of the city.

Why This Matters:

- **Ensures Contextual Development:** Reviewing the Community Plan helps developers understand the historical context, community preferences, and desired character of the neighborhood.
- **Supports Strategic Investment:** Aligning with the plan increases the project's eligibility for support and investment by ensuring it complements broader goals for housing, infrastructure, transportation, and equity.
- **Demonstrates Responsiveness:** Proposals that reflect the priorities outlined in the plan (e.g., affordability, density, design quality, or access to amenities) are more likely to gain public and institutional support.

By actively incorporating the Community Plan into the project's planning and design, developers demonstrate a commitment to place-based development and reinforce the community's long-term vision for inclusive and sustainable growth. The CRA's website has these [Community Redevelopment Plans](#).

Locally Owned Small Business (LOSB) Goals

All projects receiving funds from the CRA are strongly urged to submit a Locally Owned Small Business (LOSB) Plan that is both attainable and workable. The plan shall identify goals for the participation of Locally Owned Small Businesses. The CRA uses the following suggested percentage or degree of participation by certified LOSBs for its expenditures, but shall at least meet the City and County's goals for each category. For all projects, the CRA sets an overall goal of 75% LOSB participation, as defined by Shelby County ordinance and City of Memphis ordinance, as they may be updated. The CRA will monitor its projects, requiring contractors to submit regular reports and reviewing the goals on an annual basis. The entity implementing the project will be responsible for implementation of the LOSB Plan and for filing with the CRA Staff reports that reflect the names of the certified firms involved, the amount of money received by such firms and the total amount spent.

AFFORDABILITY

The CRA housing development initiatives must prioritize the creation of affordable housing units specifically designed, priced, and marketed to serve low to moderate-income households. These units should be financially accessible, meet essential living standards, and be integrated within the broader community to promote social inclusion. The design and construction should focus on cost-effective, sustainable, and durable solutions that reduce long-term living expenses while ensuring safety, functionality, and dignity for all residents.

The CRA defines low- to moderate-income households as households that earn 120% or less of the Memphis MSA's Area Median Income (AMI). Any housing project requesting TIF funds from the CRA must meet these income guidelines. In addition, the CRA prioritizes using TIF funds for low-income households whose income does not exceed 80% AMI.

Target Households:

Homes must be sold or rented exclusively to households whose income falls within low-to-moderate income limits, as defined by HUD and updated annually. Household income cannot exceed 120 percent (120%) of Area Median Income (AMI). The CRA will update the income limits chart annually to reflect changes.

Pricing Limits:

For Sale Units

This is the highest price a home can be sold for while remaining affordable to low-to moderate-income households, as defined by HUD income limits. CRA will publish updated sales price limits annually or as needed, based on changes to local income levels and housing market conditions. Developers and builders participating in CRA housing developments must ensure their proposed sales prices do not exceed the established affordability threshold at the time of sale. This requirement supports long-term housing stability and expands access to homeownership for families who are often priced out of the private market.

Rental Units

Rents must remain at or below affordable housing levels, typically defined as no more than 30% of the household's monthly income. Rent limits should reflect published affordability thresholds for the applicable AMI bands. The CRA will reference the most current HUD-published fair market rents (FMRs) for the Memphis metropolitan area and may adjust program rent limits. Developers and property

managers are expected to stay informed about annual FMR updates and structure their rental models accordingly to maintain affordability and compliance with CRA policies.

Compliance Verification:

- Developers are required to submit documentation verifying the income eligibility of buyers or tenants.
- Pricing must be approved by CRA prior to listing, marketing, leasing, or sale.

Sustained Affordability:

- The CRA requires resale or rent restrictions to ensure continued affordability for 15 years through deed restrictions.
- Developers must not engage in speculative sales, market-rate conversions, or short-term rentals that violate affordability requirements.

Equity in Access:

- Marketing and tenant selection must comply with local, state, and federal fair housing laws and promote equitable access to all qualified applicants.
- By maintaining strict affordability, this program ensures that essential workers, seniors, and working families have access to safe, dignified housing in growing neighborhoods across the city.

DESIGN AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

To support high-quality, context-sensitive development aligned with community goals and best practices, the CRA encourages the use of established local and national planning and design resources. These frameworks guide building homes that are not only durable and affordable but also well-integrated into the fabric of Memphis neighborhoods.

1. Unified Development Code (UDC)

The Shelby County Unified Development Code (UDC) is a critical regulatory document that guides land use, zoning, site design, and development standards throughout Memphis and Shelby County. All proposed development under CRA Programs must comply with the UDC to ensure orderly, sustainable, and compatible growth.

- Defines what can be built and where, including housing types, setbacks, lot coverage, and height limitations.
- Regulates site design, including parking, landscaping, signage, lighting, and access.
- Encourages context-sensitive development that aligns with community character and planning goals.
- Supports livability and environmental quality through provisions related to open space, stormwater management, and sustainable practices.

Developer Responsibilities:

- Review applicable UDC sections for the project's zoning district and overlay requirements.
- Incorporate UDC guidelines into site planning, architectural design, and landscape layout from the beginning of the project.
- Submit site plans and building designs that demonstrate UDC compliance during the permitting process.

The UDC serves as a foundation for creating well-designed, code-compliant housing that enhances Memphis neighborhoods and supports long-term community objectives.

For more information and access to the full UDC, visit: www.develop901.com/planning/udc

2. Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan

The Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan is a guide that outlines a vision for a more connected, equitable, and sustainable city.

- Developers and builders should reference the Memphis 3.0 Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider land use, connectivity, and neighborhood context outlined in the plan when designing site layouts, densities, and housing typologies.
- Support the plan's goals related to inclusive housing, community resilience, and infrastructure efficiency.

3. Memphis Urban Design Guidelines

The Memphis Urban Design Guidelines offer detailed recommendations to help new construction reinforce neighborhood identity, pedestrian-friendliness, and design consistency.

- Incorporate setbacks, massing, and scale consistent with existing neighborhood patterns.
- Ensure frontage designs, including porches, entryways, and landscaping, contribute positively to the public realm.
- Promote active street edges and safe, walkable streetscapes.

For more information and access to the full Memphis Urban Design Guidelines, visit: <https://www.develop901.com/land-use-and-development-services>

4. Memphis Medical District Collaborative (MMDC) Form Book

For all projects, but particularly for those located in or near the Medical District, developers should consult the MMDC Form Book, which provides a framework for context-based, mixed-use, and human-scale design.

- Align with building form, height, and placement standards appropriate to the area's urban character.
- Integrate shared amenities, green infrastructure, and walkability enhancements to support a vibrant district.

- Utilize MMDC tools to coordinate with district initiatives and community partners.

For more information and access to the full Form Book, visit: <https://www.memphismedicaldistrict.org/mmddc-form-book>

5. AIA Framework for Design Excellence

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Framework for Design Excellence promotes holistic, sustainable, and equitable architecture through ten measures, such as Energy, Equitable Communities, and Design for Well-being.

- Apply the framework to enhance building performance while addressing climate resilience, occupant health, and neighborhood equity.
- Use the measures to self-assess and improve project planning and design.
- Incorporate sustainable materials, life-cycle thinking, and inclusive design.

For more information and access, visit: <https://www.aia.org/design-excellence/aia-framework-design-excellence>

6. Whole Building Design Guide (WBDG)

The Whole Building Design Guide, managed by the National Institute of Building Sciences, offers integrated guidance on high-performance, cost-effective, and lifecycle-conscious construction.

- Reference WBDG for technical best practices in areas like thermal protection, mechanical systems, moisture control, and accessibility.
- Emphasize an integrated design process that includes all disciplines early and often.
- Support maintainability, flexibility, and occupant comfort throughout the building's life cycle.

For more information and access, visit: <https://www.wbdg.org/whole-building-design>

7. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The National Crime Prevention Council's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidebook outlines thoughtful design to make neighborhoods feel safer and reduce opportunities for crime. Housing design should incorporate CPTED principles to promote secure, welcoming, and livable communities. Key strategies include:

Natural Surveillance: Position windows, entrances, and active community spaces to increase visibility of streets, pathways, and shared areas, discouraging unwanted activity.

Access Control: Use fencing, lighting, and landscaping to guide residents and visitors toward designated entrances while discouraging access to private or sensitive areas.

- **Territorial Reinforcement:** Clearly distinguish public, semi-public, and private spaces through design elements such as signage, landscaping, and boundary markers to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- **Maintenance and Management:** Ensure regular upkeep of buildings, lighting, and landscaping to project care and deter crime, as neglected spaces are more vulnerable to undesirable behavior.
- **By incorporating CPTED principles into housing design and construction,** developers and builders can create safer environments that encourage community interaction, support resident well-being, and contribute to long-term neighborhood stability.

For more information about CPTED, visit: https://remseid.gov/docs/mobile_docs/cpted-guidebook.pdf

Implementation Tips

- At the start of the design process, consult relevant documents based on the project's location and scale.
- Engage design professionals who are familiar with these frameworks to ensure meaningful application.
- Include references in your development proposal to show how these resources informed your approach.

By leveraging these comprehensive design and planning tools, developers and builders will contribute to a higher standard of housing that reflects the values of resilience, equity, quality, and long-term community benefit.

CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

All construction under CRA programs must meet professional standards of quality, safety, and durability. To ensure full compliance and protect long-term investment in affordable housing, all work must be performed in accordance with the City of Memphis and Shelby County's adopted building codes, as amended and updated.

New Construction and Rehabilitation Housing

The following codes must be followed:

Building	2021	International Building Code with Local Amendments
Existing Building	2021	International Existing Building Code with Local Amendments
Residential	2021	International Residential Code with Local Amendments
Energy Conservation	2021	International Energy Conservation Code with Local Amendments
Electrical	2020	National Electric Code with Local Amendments
Plumbing	2021	International Plumbing Code with Local Amendments
Mechanical	2021	International Mechanical Code with Local Amendments
Fuel Gas	2021	International Fuel Gas Code with Local Amendments
Fire (City)	2021	International Fire Code Local Amendments (City of Memphis)
Fire (County)	2021	International Fire Code Local Amendments

Developers and contractors are responsible for staying current with the most recent code versions adopted by Shelby County and the City of Memphis and ensuring full adherence throughout design, permitting, and construction. Failure to comply with these codes may result in project delays, denial of occupancy, or disqualification from CRA programs.

Contractors shall comply with the State of Tennessee Contractor's License Law & Rules, Regulations, and Inspections. General Contractor responsibilities include:

- Project management, supervision, site safety
- Field layout, shop drawings, record and as-built drawings, testing services, quality control
- General liability, workman's compensation insurance
- Temporary service (electrical, water, sanitary)

In addition to these requirements, all housing units that receive TIF funding from the CRA must be built to be energy efficient. This program promotes energy efficiency, improved indoor air quality, and reduced utility costs—further supporting the long-term affordability goals of the CRA housing programs.

Developers and contractors are responsible for staying up to date with local code requirements.

For the most current code information, permitting resources, and licensing please visit: www.develop901.com



CRA ENERGY CONSERVATION NOTES

All construction standards extrapolated from IECC 2021.
Contractor shall submit Energy Efficient Build Plan to CRA prior to construction.
Contractor to coordinate hers inspection which includes: blower door test, duck blaster test, and insulation inspection prior to drywall installation to verify presence and placement of submitted plan.
Mechanical systems rated at 16 SEER or higher.
Hard sheet metal ductwork that is to be sealed with mastic compound or mastic rated tape and performance tested by hers rater, via duck blaster test.
Ductwork should have minimum of R-8 insulation wrap.
Duct leakage cannot exceed 5%. Builders are allowed to use minimal amounts of flexible ductwork, with individual runs not longer than 10 feet.
Low-E windows with superior energy ratings to minimize heat gain and reduce UV damage to floor coverings and furnishings. The maximum U-factor is 0.30 And the maximum SHGC is 0.27.
Attic insulation of R-38 is required, with the following wall cavity insulation options: • R-20 or R-19 • R-13 + R-5ci • 0 + R-15ci • Crawl space insulation should be a minimum of R-25 with a 6 mil vapor barrier at grade <i>Note: ci means continuous insulation on the exterior of the home, out board the structural sheathing</i>
Roof decking should feature a radiant barrier to reduce heat gain, and or be a sealed deck with insulation (R-30 min) pushed to the rafters.
All wire and piping penetrations sealed with caulk or foam to block air flow.
Interior finishes - such as paints and stains with low volatile organic compounds (VOC), those “new smell” gases that can cause respiratory problems.
Planting — use native or adapted plants to reduce landscape watering.

MANUFACTURED AND MODULAR HOUSING

The CRA recognizes the potential for high-quality manufactured and modular housing to contribute to the creation of affordable, durable, and attractive homes particularly when designed and installed to meet community design standards and modern performance expectations.

For the purposes of this program, manufactured homes are factory-built housing units constructed after 1976 that comply with the HUD Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (commonly referred to as the HUD Code). To be eligible under CRA housing development program, manufactured homes must meet the following minimum standards:

- All units must be installed on a permanent foundation system that meets HUD and manufactured units must be constructed to meet the International Residential Code (IRC), International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), and all relevant local building codes with amendments. The home must also comply with Memphis and Shelby County's Unified Development Code (UDC) and be permitted through the local building authority.
- Temporary or mobile installations (e.g., on blocks or skids) are not permitted. Homes must be installed and inspected in accordance with the HUD Code, standards set by the state of Tennessee, local zoning, and Memphis and Shelby County Unified Development Code (UDC).
- Units must reflect the design character of the surrounding neighborhood and adhere to local architectural standards.
- Homes must be installed and inspected in accordance with the HUD Code, standards set by the state of Tennessee, local zoning, and Memphis and Shelby County Unified Development Code (UDC).
- Driveways, walkways, and other hardscaping should be included to ensure a fully completed and welcoming appearance.

The CRA supports the use of modular construction as an innovative, efficient, and high-quality method for delivering affordable housing. Modular homes offer controlled production, reduced construction timelines, and consistent quality.

Modular homes are factory-built structures constructed in sections (modules) that are transported to the site and assembled on a permanent foundation. Unlike manufactured homes, modular homes are built to the same building codes as site-built homes, following the International Residential Code (IRC) with local amendments. To be eligible under CRA housing development program, modular homes must meet the following minimum standards:

- All modular units must be constructed to meet or exceed the IRC, International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), and all relevant local building codes and amendments. The home must also comply with Memphis and Shelby County's Unified Development Code (UDC) and be permitted through the local building authority.
- Units must be installed on a permanent, code-compliant foundation with appropriate grading, drainage, and utility connections.
- Modular homes must be sited with attention to neighborhood character, lot orientation, and landscaping.
- Driveways, walkways, and other hardscaping should be included to ensure a fully completed and welcoming appearance.

The CRA reserves the right to review and approve manufactured and modular home models and site plans to ensure quality, compatibility, and alignment with community goals.

By incorporating manufactured and modular housing development, CRA seeks to support cost-effective, sustainable, and scalable solutions to meet Memphis's housing needs without compromising quality or community fit.

Multi-family Housing

The CRA supports the development of high-quality, well-integrated multi-family housing as a critical strategy for increasing housing supply, promoting affordability, and meeting the diverse needs of Memphis residents. Multi-family developments such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings must be thoughtfully designed to enhance the character of existing neighborhoods while providing safe, functional, and attractive living environments.

- Multi-family projects may include two or more dwelling units within a single building or multiple buildings on one site, subject to zoning and site constraints.
- Projects must be located on lots where multi-family residential use is permitted under the Memphis and Shelby County Unified Development Code (UDC). If current zoning does not allow multi-family uses but the location is a good fit for increased density – particularly for missing middle housing and moderate density residential uses - the developer shall follow the applicable process in the UDC to gain the appropriate zoning entitlement.
- The CRA encourages a variety of unit sizes to support different household types, including singles, families, and seniors.

Design and Site Planning Requirements

- Building massing, height, and form should complement the surrounding neighborhood. Transitions should be thoughtfully managed when adjacent to single-family homes.
- Each unit should have a clearly defined entrance. For walk-up or townhouse-style buildings, front entries should face the street or shared open spaces.
- Include shared or private open space, such as courtyards, patios, balconies, or green spaces for resident use.
- Provide off-street parking as required by zoning. Avoid placing large surface parking lots in front of buildings; instead, locate parking to the side or rear of the site.
- Ensure safe and direct pedestrian connections to sidewalks, transit stops, and neighborhood amenities.

Property Management and Compliance

- Developers must submit a property management and maintenance plan outlining how the building will be operated and maintained over time.
- Long-term compliance monitoring may be required for developments receiving CRA funding, land, or other program incentives.

Multi-family housing plays an essential role in meeting housing needs across income levels and life stages. Developers are encouraged to pursue innovative, inclusive, and context-sensitive designs that expand access to quality housing while enhancing Memphis neighborhoods.

Landscaping

Thoughtful landscaping is an essential component of high-quality residential development. It enhances curb appeal, supports environmental sustainability, and contributes to the overall livability and character of neighborhoods. Landscaping should be integrated into the design of each home and site as a visible commitment to creating welcoming, healthy, and resilient communities.

All CRA housing development projects must include a basic landscaping plan that meets the following minimum standards:

- All yards must be stabilized with sod, seed, mulch, or approved drought-tolerant alternatives to prevent erosion and dust.
- Planting areas should include defined mulch beds or edging to separate landscape elements from lawn areas.
- Use regionally appropriate and native or drought-tolerant plants to reduce maintenance and water use.
- Landscaping should support positive site drainage and reduce erosion, especially on sloped lots.
- When feasible, preserve mature trees on the site to maintain shade, character, and ecological value.
- Landscaping should support safe pedestrian access by maintaining clear walkways and visibility at entry points.

While not required, developers are encouraged to incorporate features that add long-term value, such as:

- Rain gardens or bioswales for stormwater management
- Edible landscaping (e.g., fruit trees or herb gardens)
- Privacy screening with hedges or fencing in rear yards

All landscaping must be installed prior to project completion and maintained until the unit is sold or leased. The CRA may request photos or conduct a site inspection to verify that landscape elements have been implemented as approved.

BEST PRACTICES

The CRA promotes high-quality, sustainable, and resilient housing solutions for low- to moderate-income households. Adopting construction and design best practices ensures long-term durability, energy efficiency, livability, and affordability. These practices go beyond minimum code compliance to encourage thoughtful, future-oriented housing development.

1. Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- Design for passive performance by maximizing natural daylighting, ventilation, and thermal mass. Orient homes to reduce heat gain and enhance energy performance.
- Ensure tight building envelopes with continuous air barriers, proper insulation, and minimal air leakage through blower door testing.
- Use ENERGY STAR® certified appliances, equipment, HVAC systems, windows, and lighting to reduce utility costs and environmental impact.

2. Water Conservation

- Install WaterSense® labeled fixtures and drought-tolerant landscaping.
- Utilize rain barrels or stormwater management techniques to minimize runoff and reduce potable water use for irrigation.
- Consider low-flow plumbing and dual-flush toilets to enhance water efficiency.

3. Durability and Low Maintenance

- Choose materials and finishes that resist moisture, wear, pests, and UV exposure. Design for long-term performance, including durable siding, roofing, and mechanical systems.
- Use simple, replicable construction details that facilitate maintenance and minimize lifecycle costs.

4. Health and Indoor Air Quality

- Use low- or no-VOC paints, sealants, and adhesives.
- Install whole-house ventilation and ENERGY STAR® exhaust fans in moisture-prone areas.
- Avoid materials known to off-gas or cause allergies and respiratory issues.

5. Accessibility and Universal Design

- Apply universal design principles to support multigenerational households and aging in place.
- Include features such as no-step entries, wider doorways, lever handles, and blocking for future grab bars.

- Plan flexible spaces that can adapt to changing resident needs.

6. Site and Community Integration

- Design homes to fit within the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Provide safe pedestrian access, porches, and outdoor spaces to promote community interaction.
- Preserve existing trees and natural features where possible and incorporate green infrastructure for stormwater control.

7. Construction Quality Control

- Conduct regular on-site inspections during critical construction stages (foundation, framing, mechanical rough-ins, etc.).
- Require clear documentation, punch lists, and warranties from subcontractors.
- Encourage continuous education and certification for tradespeople (e.g., EPA Lead-Safe Certification, HERS Rater, etc.).

8. Climate and Resilience Planning

- Build with materials and assemblies suitable for the regional climate (e.g., termite-resistant framing, mold-resistant drywall).
- Elevate mechanical systems and electrical panels above flood-prone levels when applicable.
- Design roofs and connections to withstand high wind loads and severe weather.

9. Equity and Inclusion

- Engage locally owned small businesses (LOSB)
- Support mentorship opportunities for emerging developers and contractors within the program.

10. Post-Occupancy Support

- Provide clear user manuals and orientation for new homeowners or renters on system operation and maintenance.
- Offer basic homeownership or property management resources to promote housing stability.

By incorporating these best practices developers and builders participating in the CRA housing development can deliver lasting value to residents, neighborhoods, and the broader Memphis community.

BASIC DON'TS

To ensure high-quality, code-compliant, and resident-ready homes under the Essential Housing Program, all developers and builders must avoid the following common pitfalls during the construction process. These basic “don’ts” help maintain standards for safety, durability, and long-term affordability.

1. Don’t Build Homes That Disregard the Contextual Character of the Community

- Do not design or construct homes that clash with the surrounding neighborhood’s scale, form, or appearance.
- Do not use generic or out-of-place designs that disregard the architectural rhythm, rooflines, porch elements, or materials common to the area.
- Homes should reflect thoughtful integration into the local fabric and enhance rather than disrupt the existing streetscape.

2. Don’t Use Substandard Materials

- Avoid low-grade or unapproved materials that reduce durability and increase maintenance.
- Do not install non-certified or off-brand mechanical, electrical, or plumbing components.

3. Don’t Ignore Building Codes or Permitting Requirements

- Never bypass required building permits, inspections, or code requirements.
- Do not proceed with any construction without appropriate approvals from the county and utility agencies.

4. Don’t Cut Corners on Site Prep

- Don’t neglect proper grading or drainage—this can lead to foundation problems and water intrusion.
- Avoid compacting fill poorly or skipping soil testing in areas with questionable subgrade conditions.

5. Don’t Install Systems Without Coordination

- Do not install plumbing, HVAC, or electrical systems without coordination across trades.
- Avoid overlapping routes or crowded mechanical spaces that compromise system performance or serviceability.

6. Don’t Overlook Moisture Protection

- Never leave building materials exposed to the elements without proper weather protection.
- Do not install roofing, siding, or windows without flashing, sealants, and drainage planes.

7. Don’t Allow Unsafe Work Conditions

- Do not allow workers on-site without personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Avoid creating unbarricaded hazards or working around incomplete electrical, structural, or open trenching conditions.

8. Don’t Disregard Manufacturer Instructions

- Don’t install appliances, systems, or materials in a way that voids their warranty or violates performance specs.
- Avoid mixing incompatible products or skipping required underlayments and fasteners.

9. Don’t Neglect Finish Quality

- Avoid poorly installed trim, uneven surfaces, or visible fasteners.
- Don’t apply paint or coatings over unclean, wet, or unprimed surfaces.

10. Don’t Ignore Accessibility Standards

- Do not install doors, hardware, or fixtures that fail to meet ADA or visitability standards where applicable.
- Avoid narrow pathways or thresholds that create barriers for residents.

11. Don’t Leave Without a Final Walkthrough

- Never turn over a unit without completing a full quality control walkthrough and punch list.
- Do not leave behind debris, construction waste, or unaddressed defects.

Following these basic “don’ts” ensures construction quality, reduces warranty claims, and supports long-term program success. Developers and contractors are expected to monitor their teams and subcontractors for full compliance throughout the construction process.