



**Housing Finance
Agency**

2027 Design & Architectural Process Manual

Draft – May 2026

Office of Multifamily | Effective December 1, 2026

Seeking to Provide Input?

OHFA will be accepting comments on these draft standards beginning Friday, May 15, 2025 through Monday, June 29, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to DAS@ohiohome.org.

Please join the June Multifamily Committee Meeting for a presentation of the 2027 DAS draft. Register here ([Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#))

Table of Contents

- 1. Architectural Submission and Review Process 3**
 - Submissions and Correspondence 3*
 - Review Process 3*
 - Required Documents - Preliminary Architectural Submission 3*
 - Required Documents - Final Architectural Submission 4*

- 2. Exception Requests 5**
 - New Construction 5*
 - Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse 6*
 - Exceptions after Architectural Review Approval 6*

- 3. Construction Progress & Monitoring 6**
 - Quarterly Construction Monitoring Reports 6*
 - Notification of Construction Start 6*
 - Construction Monitoring 6*
 - Additional Documentation required for HOME and NHTF 7*
 - Construction Completion 7*

1. Architectural Submission and Review Process

Submissions and Correspondence

All communications related to the architectural review, including notification of submission of architectural plans, should be sent to arch@ohiohome.org. State the project name as it appears in the AHFA/GFA and OHFA tracking number in the subject line, and copy the OHFA architectural staff, and the OHFA Underwriting Analyst on the email. Architectural plans must be submitted with the project's application via [OHFA's File Transfer Site \(FTS\)](#). Notify OHFA if there are changes to the contacts after submission and send [Change of Contacts Form](#) to the OHFA Underwriting Analyst and arch@ohiohome.org.

Review Process

OHFA staff are available to meet with applicants early in their design and planning process, and to provide guidance before the formal submittal. Staff are also able to join applicants in meetings with any other governmental entity involved in the project as requested, including but not limited to USDA, HUD, SHPO, and local governments.

After submitting 80 percent drawings, applicant should expect to receive a review letter from OHFA architectural staff prior to the indicated date of financial closing. If the review identifies any items of noncompliance, the development team must reply to OHFA with a response to each comment and corrected drawings, specifications or forms as applicable.

All OHFA architectural reviews and approvals must be completed prior to construction commencement. For any outstanding items the development team must contact the OHFA architectural staff the earlier of 60 days prior to construction commencement or as identified in the architectural review. All requirements identified in the Architectural Review/Approval must be followed. OHFA architectural reviews and approvals must be posted on site with the permit and construction documents.

Decisions made by the OHFA Staff Architects may be appealed to the Director of Multifamily Housing in writing. Appeals must be specific and, where appropriate, cite the governing regulation that conflicts with the Staff Architect decision.

Applicant must notify OHFA of any substantial changes in plans, scope of work, or materials that are contemplated after submitting 80 percent drawings. See [Construction Progress & Monitoring](#) for more details.

Required Documents - Preliminary Architectural Submission

At minimum, the proposal application architectural submission must include all of the following:

- The [Design and Construction Features Form](#) (DCF), including Construction Certification, completed, signed and submitted as a pdf.
- [Scope of Work form](#) (SoW).
- Exception Request form(s), if applicable.
- Preliminary drawings, which must include all of the following:
 - Cover sheet with name of development, development address, development team, drawing index, code information, and table indicating unit schedule (including mobility and sensory impaired units), types and sizes

- Site plan
 - include adjacent parcel information (e.g. zoning, roads, railroad tracks, etc.)
 - clearly show the context of the neighborhood where property will exist
 - include all site details, landscape intent, and parking data and layouts
- Description of existing historic features, if applicable
- Dimensioned floor plans with room designations and proposed finishes
- Color-coded floor plans with legend, indicating area classifications per BOMA and OHFA guidelines. See DCF and [OHFA Square Footage Calculation](#) for more details.
- Exterior elevations with material notations (rehab may provide notated photographs)
- Typical wall sections (new construction only)
- Schematic Drawings and/or written descriptions for HVAC, plumbing, and electrical or similar items that are included in the scope of work.

Preliminary drawings described above must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file. Should questions arise regarding dimensions or areas, OHFA reserves the right to request floor plan files in DXF or DWG format.

Required Documents - Final Architectural Submission

Final applications must include 80 percent complete drawing sets, including complete plans for all trades. Unless approved by OHFA, the plans must include the project name as submitted with the proposal application and OHFA tracking number. The submission must show conformity to the preliminary submittal drawings and forms if applicable.

At minimum, the final application architectural submission must include all of the following:

- AHFA, DCF, SoW, and 80% drawings must all be consistent with matching information (e.g. safe harbor, number of units, accessible units, contact information, etc.).
- The DCF included/incorporated into the front of the 80% drawing sets. The DCF must include:
 - Updated information, if needed, from the proposal application submission, matching the information in the 80% drawings;
 - The signed Construction Certification pages;
 - Completed verifications, as applicable, that the drawings comply with accessibility, energy efficiency and/or green building requirements required for the development or committed to in the application for funding.
- Updated Scope of Work form.
- Asbestos, mold, lead-based paint considerations as required.
- Documentation that all items required to be completed per Phase I or II Environmental Site Assessment, or per applicable Environmental Review performed by OHFA, have been or will be completed during construction.
- If applicable, a description of condominiumized space:
 - Plans identifying any areas that are not part of OHFA's funding, and/or identifying which project features & common areas will be shared by multiple entities.
 - Draft legal agreement detailing costs & maintenance of common space (including percentages to be paid by each condo unit if applicable), parking availability, air rights, default remedies, commercial uses, and tenant selection.
- Drawing sets should provide documentation of the project meeting all design requirements of the DAS, and must include all of the following, each to a level of 80% completion or greater:
 - Site plans

- including adjacent parcel information (e.g. zoning, roads, railroad tracks etc.), all site details, and parking data and layouts;
- Landscape intent
- Demolition plans if applicable
- Plan identifying existing historic features if applicable
- Interior and Exterior elevations with material notations
- Dimensioned floor plans
- Color-coded floor plans with legend, indicating area classifications per BOMA and OHFA guidelines. See [OHFA Square Footage Calculation](#) for more details.
- Wall sections (if applicable)
- Structure (if applicable)
- Finishes and schedules
- Details
- Mechanical plans
- Specifications

80% sets, described above, must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file for drawings and a separate PDF for specifications. Applicant must also submit CAD files for dimensioned floor plans in either DXF or AutoCAD R14 DWG format. CAD files must include the polylines used for the area calculations as required by BOMA. Include or bind all xrefs; proprietary authorship information such as title blocks, Architecture seals, etc. should be removed from files.

2. Exception Requests

All program participants must conform to these requirements unless waived by OHFA in writing. OHFA will accept requests for an exception to specific requirements as noted throughout the document and as summarized below.

All requests for exceptions must be submitted using the [OHFA Exception Request form](#), must include reasonable justification for the exception including supporting documentation, and must be submitted to OHFA on or before the date indicated in the respective program calendar. A final determination to accept, deny, or modify the exception will be made by OHFA by the date indicated in the program calendars. All exceptions granted are based on the unique circumstances of the project and the QAP, DAS, and guidelines for the funding year, and will not be transferred to other projects. Among other factors, OHFA may consider:

- How different is the proposed exception from the OHFA standard?
- What impact will the proposed exception have on the project?
- What unique characteristic(s) of the project have created a technical infeasibility or justification for the request? (For example: unique site, design, or use of the development)
- Is there a conflict between the DAS and other funding sources (e.g. HUD, USDA-RD, SHPO)?

New Construction

Requests for exceptions may only be submitted for the following:

- Items that are subject to non-OHFA (such as local codes or design standards, funding source, etc.) requirements that may conflict with the DAS; or
- Items that are unable to be complied with for a compelling reason, as fully described by the applicant in the Exception Request form.

Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse

Projects involving rehabilitation or adaptive reuse may seek an exception to any design requirement in the DAS if able to provide evidence that incorporating a specific element is infeasible. The exception request must include adequate supporting documentation to demonstrate how incorporation of the element is infeasible. Justification is often focused on structural infeasibility but can include other considerations (e.g. terrain, historic features).

Exceptions after Architectural Review Approval

Exceptions submitted after Architectural Review Approval must be based on something that is outside of the control of the project team. Any exceptions requested cannot violate the program requirements or scoring criteria used for OHFA funding received. OHFA must be notified of such a request within 30 days, and the complete exception request can be submitted when a solution has been identified. The complete exception request must include all information noted above.

3. Construction Progress & Monitoring

Quarterly Construction Monitoring Reports

All developments utilizing HTC or HDAP funds are required to complete the [OHFA Quarterly Construction Monitoring Report \(QCM\)](#), available on the OHFA webpage. The Report must be submitted quarterly beginning the first quarterly reporting period following either OHFA Board approval or actual construction start, whichever is earlier. Reports are due January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 of each year until the project is placed into service. OHFA reserves the right to suspend disbursement of funds if the Report is not submitted.

Notification of Construction Start

Projects must notify OHFA at the constructionmonitoring@ohiohome.org mailbox when construction begins. Projects with HDAP funds must hold a preconstruction meeting, and provide OHFA with documentation of that meeting with the first draw of HDAP funds.

Construction Monitoring

The OHFA Construction Monitoring team ensures that construction progresses according to schedule and that the recipient fulfills all terms of the funding agreements and related policies. Staff will conduct periodic site visits during construction to provide technical assistance, verify that the project is on schedule to meet required deadlines, and to ensure requirements of the various funding sources are being met based on the Architectural Approval for the project and DAS that the project was awarded under. A member of the development team (owner or architect) must attend all Construction Monitoring site visits.

For projects utilizing HDAP funds, staff will also review construction costs, progress, third-party inspection reports and change orders as part of each request for funds. OHFA may request copies of change orders if additional information is needed to verify project costs or to verify that commitments made by the recipient during the application process will still be met.

Additionally, for all OHFA projects, OHFA requires the submission of any change orders for any major building systems that do not have a substantially similar material or solution.

Examples of change orders that should be submitted included but or not limited to: 1) durability of materials, 2) changes in or removal of features, e.g. fences, pools, community rooms/buildings, accessibility features, 3) loss or moving of units between buildings, 4) changes in programmatic space, 5) substantial changes in costs including, cost changes of 20% or greater, use of contingency 10% or greater, cost savings of \$10,000 or more, and value engineering.

The development must notify OHFA of any substantial changes in plans, scope of work, or materials that are contemplated after submitting 80 percent drawings and throughout construction of the project. This includes any damages, fires, or environmental issues that adversely impact the project, project completion or occupancy. Notifications must be made to the constructionmonitoring@ohiohome.org mailbox. When a change order is submitted it should include the related AIA G702 and AIA G703. OHFA staff will provide a response within two weeks.

Additional Documentation required for HOME and NHTF

All HOME and NHTF awards must complete documentation to comply with Section 3 requirements. Documentation at minimum includes identifying the total hours, Section 3 hours, and Section 3 targeted hours for all contractor employees working on the project on the [Monthly Section 3 Utilization Report](#), identification of whether the contractor has Section 3 business concern status, and verification of meeting or exceeding benchmark goals to the greatest extent feasible. Review [Policy 21-04](#) for details on compliance including when the benchmarks aren't met to complete "Qualitative efforts".

Starting with 2024 awards, all HOME and NHTF awards must maintain compliance with the Build America Buy America (BABA) Act.

All Section 3 submissions to OHFA and any applicable BABA documentation can be attached to [the OHFA Quarterly Construction Monitoring Form](#). Contact your Project Administration Analyst with any questions.

Construction Completion

OHFA Construction Monitoring staff will conduct a construction closeout visit once construction is substantially complete to verify all requirements are being met based on the Architectural Approval for the project and DAS that the project was awarded under. A copy of the applicable DAS must be provided to the property management team as part of the final O&M manual.

In addition, the following documents are required to be submitted to OHFA with the request for HDAP project closeout and/or issuance of Form 8609:

- Certificate(s) of Occupancy (or Final Inspection from the governing jurisdiction, if applicable);
- AIA G704 Certificate of Substantial Completion;
- O&M Manual;
- Evidence of final certification from third-party for Sustainability requirements;
- Verification that architectural/design requirements that were committed, such as Exceptional Development criteria, exercise and wellness features, or universal design features, have been completed; and
- Verification that any unresolved site-specific mitigations as specified in the project's environmental review clearance letter from OHFA have been completed (HDAP and 811 only).

Project closeout and issuance of Form 8609 will not occur until the above have been submitted and reviewed by OHFA and any remaining issues have been resolved.