

Creating Workforce Housing: Understanding Needs, Capacity and Readiness

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We make housing ‘affordable’ by supporting wages adequate to cover local housing costs or by creating and preserving housing types and price points within reach of any full-time worker. Workers who commute long distances or live in substandard or overcrowded housing provide an involuntary subsidy to employers and customers. Otherwise, they must rely on taxpayer subsidies to make ends meet.

This questionnaire explores conditions that impact long-range community/workforce housing strategies. *Workforce* refers to anyone working for a living in your community—at any wage level. If you get stuck, consult local building officials, planners, social service professionals, realtors, city/county clerks, assessors, appraisers and key employers. The goal is to inform a local discussion about housing. These questions are informed by the work of [BBC Research and Consulting, LLC](#) as well as the [Idaho Community Review](#).

Community Identity

City name		County name	
Your name (optional)		Organization(s) you represent	

Please summarize your community’s identity in one or two sentences. Has it changed recently?

Community dynamics

Name four of the most influential groups, organizations or individuals in your community today, and briefly characterize their feelings or behaviors regarding workforce/affordable housing.

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

- How are most planning and development decisions made in your community?
- How would you describe the relationship between your community and county?
- How would you describe the relationship between local residents and elected officials?

Community assets

Developable land owned by community or public/quasi-public entities or key employers (government, school/highway/other districts, hospitals, etc.) Describe location, ownership and estimated acreage.

Organizational capacity. Describe individuals or organizations that have expertise in planning, development and/or public participation

Financial assets. Describe any potential local funding sources that could be used to support workforce housing planning and/or development (family or community trusts/endowments, corporate neighbors, local chamber or economic development associations, etc.).

Infrastructure. Describe physical assets that would make housing development more feasible (sewer/water/utility capacity and location, existing housing stock for rehab, etc.)

Leadership. Do local leaders share a vision for managing change proactively? Is it inclusive?

Local barriers to housing affordability/availability (check any that apply and briefly describe)

- Real estate inflation/speculative outside investment (this activity has had a significant impact in many Idaho communities).*
- Landscape, environmental or geographic limitations.*
- Regulation (fees/permitting, minimum lot size/square footage requirements, exclusionary zoning, etc.).*
- NIMBYism (who or where would opposition most likely come from and why?).*
- Gentrification or conversion of traditional 'affordable' housing stock to costly or short-term rentals*
- Insufficient local development or planning capacity.*
- Local prevailing wages too low.*
- Lenders unwilling to partner on proactive solutions to vacant/abandoned property.*

Workforce Housing

Where are most jobs located in your community?

Where has employment been growing? (city/county)

Is there housing near new/projected employment growth?

What type/price ranges?

Describe your perception of local workers' experiences in locating:

- a. housing to rent
- b. housing to purchase
- c. Would you characterize their housing search experiences in general as (check one)

Very Difficult; Difficult; Easy; Very Easy?

Why?

What is your perception of local housing market changes over the past 5 years?

- a. Has the change affected local employer's ability to recruit or retain quality workers? Yes / No
- b. If Yes, would you say it has affected recruitment or retention (select one)
 Very Negatively – Negatively – Positively – Very Positively

What is your perception of local housing market changes over the past six months?

What types of people have the hardest time finding decent housing in your area? (check any that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled persons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food service workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Police/Fire professionals | <input type="checkbox"/> Students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> City/County workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nurses | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors | |

Why? (check any that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor condition of housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Commute time |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Have there been planning efforts (citywide, regional) to strengthen the jobs/transportation/housing linkage in the area? What would you like to see happen?

Last question. If you were given unlimited authority and a large pot of money to “fix housing,” in your area, what would you do on your first day? What would be your top priorities? What would you spend money on, and in what proportions?