

Affordable housing investments could provide stable, safe homes in every community

At this critical moment in history, elected officials must ensure that every North Carolinian can access the resources necessary to be healthy and safe so that our state can fully recover from the pandemic. Leaders have taken steps to reduce unemployment, improve access to health care, and increase the financial security of families, among others. Affordable housing is an area of particular concern that has long surpassed crisis levels.

Due to persistent policy shortcomings, housing inaccessibility has become a systemic and deep-rooted issue that highly correlates with poorer life outcomes. Hundreds of thousands of families have struggled as a result. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue even further with evictions and a lack of adequate rental/housing assistance. Inaccessibility also has been linked to increased COVID-19 cases and deaths during the pandemic. Unfortunately, affordable housing continues to be overlooked and underprioritized.

The state's current system of financing affordable housing is disconnected and inadequate, even with the creation of NC HOPE. Rental assistance provided by the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan has largely been exhausted. The CDC's eviction moratorium, which has been unevenly enforced and has left many families unprotected from the harms of housing insecurity, will soon expire. Federal and state assistance for the creation of affordable housing properties has been all but nonexistent in recent history, and development decisions continue to be made that fast-track displacement and gentrification.

With an unreserved cash balance over \$7 billion, \$5.4 billion in State Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan, and a projected \$6.5 billion in additional tax revenue over the next two years, our state has the funding available to elicit change. It is up to our elected officials to fund the building of affordable housing in every community and the services that ensure that households can afford housing costs even with low income.

For the past decade, North Carolina has chronically underfunded the state infrastructure, programs, and services that are critical for supporting every family and community in our state with the resources they need. **In order to rebuild a more equitable state, the NC General Assembly must prioritize people over profitable corporations** and make the public investments necessary to ensure every North Carolinian can thrive.



BY THE NUMBERS

- North Carolina has a shortage of nearly 200,000 affordable units for extremely low-income renters. ([National Low Income Housing Coalition](#))
- Only 67 units are available and/or affordable for every 100 households at or below 50 percent Area Median Income (AMI). ([National Low Income Housing Coalition](#))
- Minimum-wage renters in North Carolina would have to work 83, 86 and 102 hours a week to afford a studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom unit, respectively. ([National Low Income Housing Coalition](#))
- By 2030, North Carolina is expected to add 866,000 households and nearly 2 million people. Low-income households will account for more of this growth than middle- and high-income households, further increasing the need for affordable housing. ([Urban Institute](#))
- By 2030, affordability commitments will expire for nearly 50 percent of North Carolina's federally assisted housing units (Section 8, Public Housing, etc.). ([Urban Institute](#))
- 61 percent of all households in North Carolina with average wages below \$39,100, which includes commercial drivers, food prep workers, firefighters, and housekeepers, are "cost burdened" or spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing expenses. ([Urban Institute](#))

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Telling the story of impact

The response throughout the pandemic has not done enough to help ailing families.

Although temporary housing assistance was provided to those in need via federal legislation, thousands of North Carolinians fell behind on housing payments. Some were subsequently evicted from their homes. According to the most recent [Census Household Pulse Survey](#), roughly 399,000 homeowners and renters are still behind on housing payments. With the national eviction moratorium ending on Oct. 3, these families and individuals are at risk for being evicted as well. Because the affordable housing stock has never met demand, people who are unable to make payments or who are at-risk for eviction will struggle to find suitable living options in the future.

- INDY Week: [The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities in the Triangle's housing market](#)
- WCNC: [Experts fear for looming evictions crisis as NC moratorium is extended](#)
- CNBC: [He's 75 and facing eviction. Many other older renters are, too](#)
- ABC11: [The Housing Crisis](#)
- The Center for Popular Democracy: [To President-elect Biden: Families need your immediate action to protect up to 40 million Americans at risk of eviction](#)

Development decisions and a booming housing market are placing a financial strain on lower-income households that are already struggling. The price of housing in many communities, both urban and rural, has continued to increase. Unfortunately, wages and the amount that homeowners and renters can afford have remained constant or in some instances declined. In some communities, alternative housing options do not exist because units are not being built. In others, housing options and developments are being built for middle- and high-income households, with little to nothing being reserved for the lowest earners. Not only does that building do little to increase affordable housing, but it also could raise the costs in surrounding areas, further displacing families.

- WRAL TechWire: [Feeling the squeeze in NC's scorching real estate markets](#)
- WCNC: [An in-depth look at Charlotte's affordable housing crisis](#)
- The Charlotte Observer: [Affordable rent? Charlotte region doesn't even have half of what's needed](#)
- Spectrum News 1: [North Carolina lacking affordable housing](#)
- The Times-News: [Want to rent in Alamance County? Here is what you'll need to make an hour](#)

For more information about this fact sheet or other budget topics, please contact Suzy Khachaturyan at suzyk@ncjustice.org or Alexandra Sirota at alexandra@ncjustice.org.



MORE RESOURCES

- [Urban Institute: Housing for North Carolina's Future](#)
- [New Deal for Housing Justice: A Housing Playbook for the New Administration](#)
- [National Low Income Housing Coalition: Out of Reach 2021](#)