

FACT SHEET



Affordable Housing Priorities (2024 session)

Background

There is a housing crisis all over Virginia. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) released a study in 2021 reporting a shortage of 200,000 affordable units across the Commonwealth. That study also said that around 905,000 households are cost-burdened by housing, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their income toward keeping a roof over their head. Virginia has the second highest eviction rate in the country, according to the Eviction Lab, with three of the top five highest evicting localities. Even when people want to build affordable housing, they are stopped by high costs, red tape, archaic and racist zoning regulations, and NIMBY (not in my backyard) attitudes. Virginia needs to take concrete steps to prioritize affordable housing through increasing funding, protecting renters, and supporting development by faith communities (YIGBY).

Funding

Virginia's General Assembly should prioritize affordable housing in the budget. The Virginia Housing Trust Fund supports building new affordable housing, and JLARC recommends that it receive \$300 million annually. The Housing Stability Fund would give rental vouchers to families that qualify for federal Section Eight vouchers but are on the waiting list. \$45 million would fund a pilot program supporting 1,000 families per year. The Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Program has proven its efficacy at keeping families housed and should be fully funded. Finally, it is important to offer down payment assistance to first-time

homebuyers, especially those transitioning out of public housing. VICPP supports its partner, the Virginia Poverty Law Center on its housing funding priorities.

Renter protections

People with lower incomes tend to rent instead of owning homes. Virginia needs to ensure that tenants have access to support when they need it. Rather than facing an eviction without recourse from a bad landlord, renters should have rights under state law. The General Assembly should expand the "pay or quit" period from 5 to 14 days. In addition, there should be clear protections when a landlord doesn't maintain livable environment or tries to charge hidden fees. VICPP supports its partners at the Virginia Housing Alliance and HOME on tenant protections.

Yes, in God's Backyard (YIGBY)

Faith communities around Virginia recognize the need to support low-income residents, and many want to use faith-owned land to develop affordable housing. However, zoning restrictions often prevent faith communities from building affordable housing. Virginia's General Assembly should allow congregations to build multi-family affordable housing on land owned by the congregations. This is important in allowing people of faith to live their mission, as well as integrating affordable units in every locality throughout the Commonwealth. The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy is leading on this work, and engaging denominations and people of faith.