

*****Draft State Housing Policy Recommendations*****

Virginia Housing Coalition

Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness

Habitat for Humanity Virginia

Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME)

Housing Virginia

As interested advocates and practitioners, we are united in recommending the following principles that we believe should guide the policy development process. Our hope is that the policies that come out of this process will result in goals and strategies that will have specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-specific outcomes. We also believe that the policy development process should be flexible enough to meet differing needs in different regions and dynamic enough to change over time with changing economic, demographic and environmental patterns. We offer the following principles and consider them to be of equal importance in guiding policy development.

- 1) Recognize that housing markets are regional and require inter-jurisdictional cooperation—Thriving communities are generally part of thriving regions—State housing policy should encourage regional planning efforts that achieve local goals and meet local housing needs.
- 2) Housing policy cannot be separated from Education, Employment, Economic Development, Transportation, Human Services and Public Safety —Different policy areas must be integrated and strategically linked between Secretariats— Programs and funding allocations must be aligned with these integrated policies and priorities.
- 3) Sustainable solutions can only be achieved through the active involvement of both the public and private sectors (including all levels of government, quasi-governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and private industries and trades). Adequate public resources should be provided to ensure that all household's needs can be addressed.
- 4) Regulatory policy affects housing quality, affordability, choice, safety, accessibility and community development— All new regulations should create outcomes that are aligned with the broader policy objectives.
- 5) Recognize that housing policy development is a dynamic process that changes over time—Any policy should be reviewed periodically to examine its validity in light of changing economic, demographic and environmental patterns. Goals and objectives should be measurable and evaluated regularly.

The State-wide Housing Policy should:

- Be based on reliable data and quality objective analysis
- Establish goals that address unmet needs by providing quality choices for households at all income levels and allocate resources in accordance with these goals
- Focus on permanent housing solutions, including those programs and developments designed to end homelessness throughout the Commonwealth
- Achieve an appropriate balance between rental and home ownership needs
- Ensure high housing quality standards and eliminate poor quality, substandard and overcrowded housing.
- Support neighborhood preservation through coordinated efforts that address housing quality, affordability, infrastructure, services and safety.
- Promote and support energy conservation and green building principles in the Statewide Uniform Building Code and all state housing programs
- Promote and support programs and developments that are aligned with other policy areas (transportation, education, jobs, human services, etc.)
- Promote and support laws and regulations that encourage the inclusion of affordable housing and special needs housing in all communities
- Promote and support Fair Housing and Fair Lending practices
- Promote and support programs and developments that result in economic and racial integration and de-concentration of poverty— programs should balance the need for revitalization of depressed communities with the need to provide lower-income residents access to affordable housing near jobs, transportation and quality schools
- Promote and support programs and developments that link residents with appropriate services.
- Promote and support the principles of Universal Design and Visitability in all state housing programs