



# HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS FOR CAREER EDUCATORS

## Addressing the Challenge of Workforce Housing for Teachers

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the future of our society, yet many face significant challenges when it comes to finding affordable and suitable housing especially within the neighborhoods and communities they serve.

The rising cost of living in many parts of the United States has created a pressing need for workforce housing developments specifically tailored to meet the housing needs of teachers. This challenge, and how we rise to it, will have a ripple effect through our communities for generations to come.

The absence of affordable housing in communities across the United States has placed significant strain on career educators, particularly those just beginning their vocations who may be burdened with significant student loan debt. The pandemic has compounded the strains already present in the profession, and many educators are opting to leave the occupation altogether.

According to a 2022 survey from the National Education Association, across the U.S., a lack of affordable housing is exacerbating the national shortage of teachers, school bus drivers, paraprofessionals and other education support professionals, with “a staggering 55% of educators thinking about leaving the profession earlier than they had planned...” a disproportionate percentage of which were Black and Hispanic/Latino educators, who are already underrepresented in the teaching profession.<sup>[1]</sup> With salaries not keeping pace with the rising costs of housing, it can be difficult to afford homes in desirable areas near schools. To compound this, many teachers work in urban areas with high housing costs, forcing them to commute long distances or settle for inadequate housing options far from their schools. These issues can create significant challenges for quality recruitment and retention of young talent to the profession, as educators may be forced to relocate to areas with lower living expenses.

Workforce housing initiatives contribute to the retention and overall well-being of teachers by significantly reducing the financial burden and stress levels of the educators. Dedicated workforce housing developments offer numerous advantages for teachers and the communities they serve.



The foremost benefit is providing financial relief for teachers, allowing them to allocate more resources towards professional development and improving their overall well-being – both factors key to retaining top talent, sustaining positive performance, and developing the next generation of educators. But developing affordable housing near schools has other benefits: it reduces commuting, enabling teachers to live closer to their workplace, increasing their availability to students and extracurricular activities, and building greater engagement with the community. It also allows educators and school staff to live, and vote, in the community they work in, allowing their voice to be heard in matters such as bonds and the selection of elected officials. Concentrating teachers in dedicated housing developments can also foster a sense of communal collaboration, promoting potential professional development, collaboration, and networking opportunities.

### How Can We Address the Challenge?

#### District & Developer Collaboration

Our team has found that collaboration between educational institutions and housing developers is crucial to addressing the housing needs of teachers. There are several strategies that can help move the needle in developing workforce housing for teachers and education staff.

- **Land Allocation:** Educational institutions can allocate land for workforce housing developments or partner with developers to create affordable housing on existing school property.
- **Rent Subsidies or Assistance:** Schools can work with housing developers to secure rent subsidies or assistance programs specifically targeted at teachers, ensuring housing affordability.
- **Supportive Services:** Collaborative efforts can also include the provision of supportive services such as financial education, counseling, and homeownership assistance programs for teachers and staff.
- **Planning:** Districts should be educated about the housing development process and how it can add long term value to their existing assets. Working with a planning consultant versed in both pre-K-12 and housing development to develop a plan will make the district better prepared to get the most development potential and offer safe and high-quality solutions for teacher housing.

#### Public-Private Partnerships and Funding Alternatives

Public-private partnerships and diverse funding sources are essential to the success of workforce housing developments for teachers. Government entities can provide financial incentives, tax breaks, and subsidies to encourage the development of affordable housing for teachers. Private sector organizations can contribute financially or provide resources to support workforce housing initiatives, recognizing the importance of a stable and dedicated teaching workforce to the development of students and future talent pipelines. Lastly, foundations and philanthropic organizations can play a crucial role in funding and supporting workforce housing developments for teachers through grants and donations.

Workforce housing developments tailored for teachers are crucial to addressing the affordable housing crisis they face in the United States. By providing affordable housing options, these initiatives support teacher retention, improve job satisfaction, and enhance the overall well-being of educators and students alike. Collaboration between educational institutions, housing developers, and various stakeholders is essential in securing funding, creating partnerships, and implementing sustainable solutions that address the housing needs of teachers. It is imperative that concerted efforts are made to prioritize the development of workforce housing for teachers, recognizing their invaluable contributions to our society and the future of education.



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<sup>[1]</sup> Walker, T. (2022, February 1). Survey: Alarming Number of Educators May Soon Leave the Profession | NEA. [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org); National Education Association. <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/survey-alarming-number-educators-may-soon-leave-profession>