

## Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH): A Unique Approach to Address Local Workforce Housing Challenges

### DISCUSSION LEADER

*Lora McCray, Manager*

*Housing Opportunity, National Association of Realtors*

### DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The group discussed the basic concept of employer-assisted housing and the benefits that EAH programs can provide. For employees, EAH programs provide education, counseling, and financial assistance to help them access affordable housing options. For employers, EAH programs provide an excellent recruitment tool and a way to build employee loyalty and reduce turnover. Programs like forgivable loans, through which an employer loans an employee funds to assist with down payment or closing costs then forgives a portion of the loan each year, for a set number of years, can improve employee retention as employees generally stay with the employer for the life of the loan. For communities, EAH programs that allow workers to live closer to their jobs or transit help reduce traffic congestion and pollution. Employees who live within the community spend their revenue dollars in the community, and contribute to the community's tax revenues with their personal and property taxes.

The group also discussed the challenges to creating affordable housing for the workforce. A couple of the key challenges discussed were financing the development (land costs, impact fees, etc.), and regulatory barriers such as density limitations. The group also discussed the importance of having a variety of stakeholders involved as partners and the strength of collaborative efforts. Having a variety of partners often results in more effective advocacy efforts. When policy makers hear different voices supporting the same issue they take more notice.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

There is a need for examples of program models and best practices of successful workforce housing and EAH programs so that groups working on these issues have some guidelines to follow and success stories to inspire them.

### LEARN MORE

Contact Lora McCray with any questions at [lmccray@realtors.org](mailto:lmccray@realtors.org) or 202-383-7560.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- EAH Initiatives Guide: This guide outlines the different types of EAH Initiatives and provides examples of each. <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/workforce-housing/eah-toolkit/EAH-Initiatives-Guide.pdf>
- EAH Factsheets: The EAH Factsheets outline the benefits of participating in an EAH program for key stakeholders.
  - Nonprofits: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/workforce-housing/eah-toolkit/FactSheet-NonProfit-StandAlone.pdf>
  - Lenders: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/workforce-housing/eah-toolkit/FactSheet-Lenders-StandAlone.pdf>
  - State and local governments: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/workforce-housing/eah-toolkit/FactSheet-Government-StandAlone.pdf>
  - Businesses: <http://www.realtoractioncenter.com/for-associations/housing-opportunity/workforce-housing/eah-toolkit/FactSheet-Business-StandAlone.pdf>
- Bring Workers Home Workforce Housing Forums: To see presentations and materials from NAR's most recent national Workforce Housing Forum and information from past forums, visit <http://www.realtor.org/events/workforce-housing-forums/presentations>.
- Tackling Workforce Housing State by State: The Ira Gribin Workforce Housing Grants: This report includes profiles of 52 workforce housing programs that were funded through NAR's Ira Gribin Grants. The program resulted in the creation of 52 workforce housing programs across the US. <http://www.realtor.org/sites/default/files/reports/2011/ira-gribin-tackling-workforce-housing-state-by-state-final-2011-05.pdf>
- Understanding Employer-Assisted Housing: A Guide for Employers: This guide provides an overview of employer-assisted housing and its benefits and then provides examples of successful EAH program across the country. <http://www.msgcrc.com/pdfs/UnderstandingEmployerAssistedHousing.pdf>
- Housing Communications Network: The National Housing Conference has launched a Housing Communications Network to examine how we communicate about affordable housing. <http://www.nhc.org/media/NHC-LAUNCHES-NEW-COMMUNICATIONS-NETWORK-IN-CONTINUING-EFFORT-TO-RAISE-AFFORDABLE-HOUSING-TO-A-FIRST-TIER-ISSUE-ON-NATIONAL.html>