



Association Newsletter Article

Housing Opportunities are Business Opportunities

Yes, there's a housing affordability crisis.

Yes, this crisis affects more than the indigent and working poor.

Yes, it's the right thing to do to help people find decent and affordable housing.

Yes, the affordable housing market is brimming with business opportunities for REALTORS®.

While soaring home prices have made housing the brightest spot in our economy, they have also put affordable housing beyond the reaches of millions of Americans.

The Problem

Nearly 13 million Americans – that's 5.4 million families – have critical housing needs. Moderate-income working families now make up the fastest growing segment of the population that is virtually shut out of the housing market. A vital need for America today is an adequate supply of workforce housing, both affordable rentals and homes for first-time buyers.

Today's face of affordable housing is our child's schoolteacher – our firefighter, nurse and police officer. Affordable housing is about where our parents, our children, our grandchildren and our local heroes can live.

NAR's 2004 Housing Pulse Survey revealed that two-thirds of voters are concerned about the cost of housing in their community. Seven out of ten said they want government to make affordable housing a higher priority; two-thirds said they considered this to be an important issue in making a decision about voting for a candidate.

REALTORS® Can Help

The real estate office is the first stop for consumers' housing needs. Therefore real estate professionals are in a unique position to be advocates for effective solutions to today's critical housing needs.

That's why the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® is working hard to help our members do what you do best – that is, help more of our nation's families find homes.

Providing affordable housing can be profitable to those who do it correctly, and it can open up future business opportunities as renters become first-time homebuyers and begin to move up the housing ladder.

NAR's Housing Opportunity Program, now in its third year, is helping REALTORS® to become strong advocates for successful housing initiatives in our own communities. The program takes advantage of the role REALTORS® play in their communities by providing them tools they can use, including training, research, communications pieces and opportunities to work in coalition with allied interests.

The Housing Opportunities Program is only as good as its grassroots involvement. REALTORS® around the country are already doing so much. Much of these local efforts are highlighted on NAR's web site at www.realtor.org/housingopportunity as model programs for others to use in formulating their own.

Success Depends on Partnerships

On the national level, NAR is creating official partnerships with organizations to help advance our mission. Each national partner has state or local chapters for REALTORS® to work with, as well. Some of these partnerships include:

- The Ambassadors to Cities program with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Through this program, REALTORS® all over the country are working with their local mayors and other non-profits on affordable housing initiatives that will raise city homeownership rates.

- The NeighborWorks Program with the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. This new partnership produces case studies on winning strategies and best practices, highlighting where REALTORS® have worked successfully with NRC's NeighborWorks organizations on homebuyer education.
- The National Association of Counties new Presidential Initiative focuses on assuring accessibility to quality housing and homeownership programs.
- The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials national network of more than 230 community-based organizations helps create health communities and educated homebuyers.
- NAR's partnership with Habitat for Humanity. Each year NAR builds an affordable house in the annual convention city. NAR also supports a Habitat project abroad each year. Finally, NAR has partnered with Habitat to build "REALTOR® Villages" to help people who lost their homes during the tsunami that devastated several South Asian countries on Dec. 26, 2004.

NAR's Housing Opportunity Program serves as a blueprint to position REALTORS® as leaders in identifying, developing, advocating and promoting business opportunities, programs, products and resources that expand housing availability.

Get Involved

Peter Marshall, a former chaplain of the U.S. Senate, once said: "A different world cannot be built by indifferent people."

REALTORS® are not indifferent. Rather, they care about making a positive difference in their communities. This initiative requires all of our best efforts to make it happen. Don't waste another minute. Get involved today.

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