

WHAT ARE EDUCATION WORKFORCE HOUSING PROJECTS?

Education Workforce Housing (EWH) specifically targets providing affordable housing solutions tailored to the needs of educators and school staff within a school district's vicinity. These initiatives aim to address the housing challenges faced by teachers and educational professionals, ensuring they can live comfortably within or near the communities where they work. These projects demand careful consideration of district priorities and resources. Balancing initial investments, employee cost reductions, and revenue generation is essential. Clear goals, regularly scheduled internal meetings, and forming a dedicated committee facilitate effective project management. Aligning external partners with district objectives ensures a cohesive approach to addressing educators' housing needs.

1. DEFINE GOALS THOUGHTFULLY

Give careful consideration to your priorities. These projects typically balance factors such as:

- How much of an initial investment a district must make
- The cost reduction available to employees
- The General Fund revenue generated from the project (if any)
- The answer to threshold questions/considerations including:
 - Is the primary goal to attract/retain talented workforce or to generate revenue?
 - Do our employees feel that workforce housing is appealing/of value?

Tip: Any of these goals can be prioritized, depending on the District's own goals. These priorities will have an impact on the type of project you want to pursue.

2. PREPARE TO INVEST IN THE PROJECT

A successful EWH project represents an asset that can enrich the lives of educators, staff, and students for decades into the future. It can be a meaningful tool for attracting and retaining talent, and a source of revenue that can supplement the general fund for years to come. That being said, these projects also require an investment of staff time, and can potentially involve a commitment of funds and/or property.

Tip: Be prepared to dedicate the necessary staff time to study and implement an EWH project.

3. MANAGE COMMUNICATIONS ARTFULLY

EWH projects involve complex internal and external communications. They create interest from the community, politicians, unions, and the press. It is important to enlist the help of someone with communications expertise who can help ensure that accurate information about the project is available to the public.

Tip: Have a team of communications professionals create your communications plan before you launch the discussion so you can set the tone, trajectory, and key message.

4. MEET “INTERNALLY” AND REGULARLY

To avoid setbacks, consider assembling an “internal” team that meets regularly. This approach allows for a division of labor and can employ the specialized skill sets of different team members. Some team members are strong in political relationship management, others in public messaging, and still others in construction and project management.

Tip: Setting regular meetings can allow for an easy exchange of information, and the generation of short-term task assignments which keep the project on track and moving forward.

5. CONSIDER FORMING A COMMITTEE

Workforce housing projects create interest from the community and school board members who want to be actively involved. Consider assembling a committee of key stakeholders to facilitate conversations about the project. The committee can meet periodically. The committee can be a vehicle for communication, and can help manage important relationships within the community.

Tip: Clearly outline the committee’s role; it should guide but not get in front of the Board of Education.

6. YOUR “EXTERNAL” TEAM SHOULD FIT YOUR GOALS

Developing workforce housing requires consultants. It is important that your team is aligned with your District’s goals early on.

Tip: Meet with your consultant team regularly as they perform their scopes of work to ensure the project proceeds in accordance with District priorities.

F3 Law Next Level Client Services (NLCS) communications professionals can partner with F3 attorneys to create a strong communications and community engagement plan to complement the workforce housing project.

THIS GUIDE IS A SUMMARY ONLY AND NOT LEGAL ADVICE. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONSULT WITH LEGAL COUNSEL TO DETERMINE HOW THIS MAY APPLY TO YOUR SPECIFIC FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

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