

Home for All

Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies

HousingNKY.org



Coordinated by



OVERVIEW



Tara Johnson-Noem
Executive Director



NKADD AT A GLANCE



- One of 15 ADDs in Kentucky
- 501(c)3, SPGE, Unit of local government
- Formed in 1971 via KRS 147A
- Governed by a 37-member board of J/Es (8), Mayors (18) and Citizen members (11)
- 88 staff
- FY25 \$44.9M total budget

NORTHERN KENTUCKY: URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL



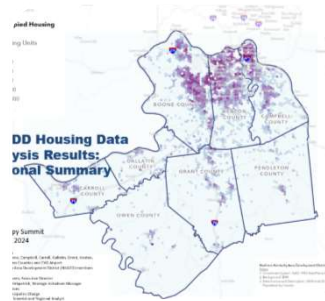
HOUSING:

WORKFORCE + COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



2021-22

Employer feedback sparks housing discussion



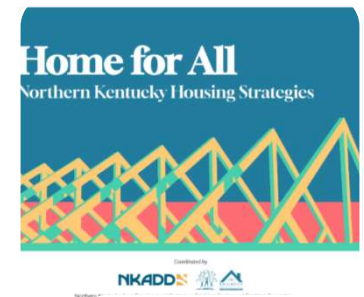
2023

Study finds 6,650 units needed to sustain economic development



2024

Housing Coalition forms to create menu of strategies



2025

Home for All: Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies

2023

HIGHLIGHTS:
NKY HOUSING
DATA STUDY

HOUSING DATA STUDY CONTENTS

- Demographic Analysis by Census Tract
 - Household size
 - Age
 - Household income
- Regional Employment & Commuting Analysis
 - Job types and locations
 - Wages
 - Drive times
- Housing Gap Analysis by Parcel
 - Connecting housing to Area Median Income
 - What can people in NKY jobs afford?
 - Housing supply vs demand
 - Housing production targets
- County Profiles



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE NORTHERN COUNTIES

Workforce job creation is out-pacing workforce housing: The logistics industry is central to job growth in the region, generating demand for high-growth but lower wage “workforce” jobs. Today, there are 2.68 workforce jobs for each housing unit they could afford.

Monoculture of single-family homes is not aligned with household income and size: The supply of single-family, 3-4 bedroom homes outpaces the demand. Targeting ‘missing middle’ homes would better account for the diversity of incomes and smaller household sizes.

‘Missing middle’ houses and affordability strategies are required to continue economic growth: Economic growth creates a strong labor demand. A lack of housing affordable for jobs being created will make it harder and more expensive for employers to find and recruit labor at prevailing market wages.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES

Job density is constant: Job growth is concentrated in northern counties industry clusters while the southern counties maintain a steady baseline of jobs. Job creation generates demand for housing. The majority of housing demand is being met closer to the jobs.

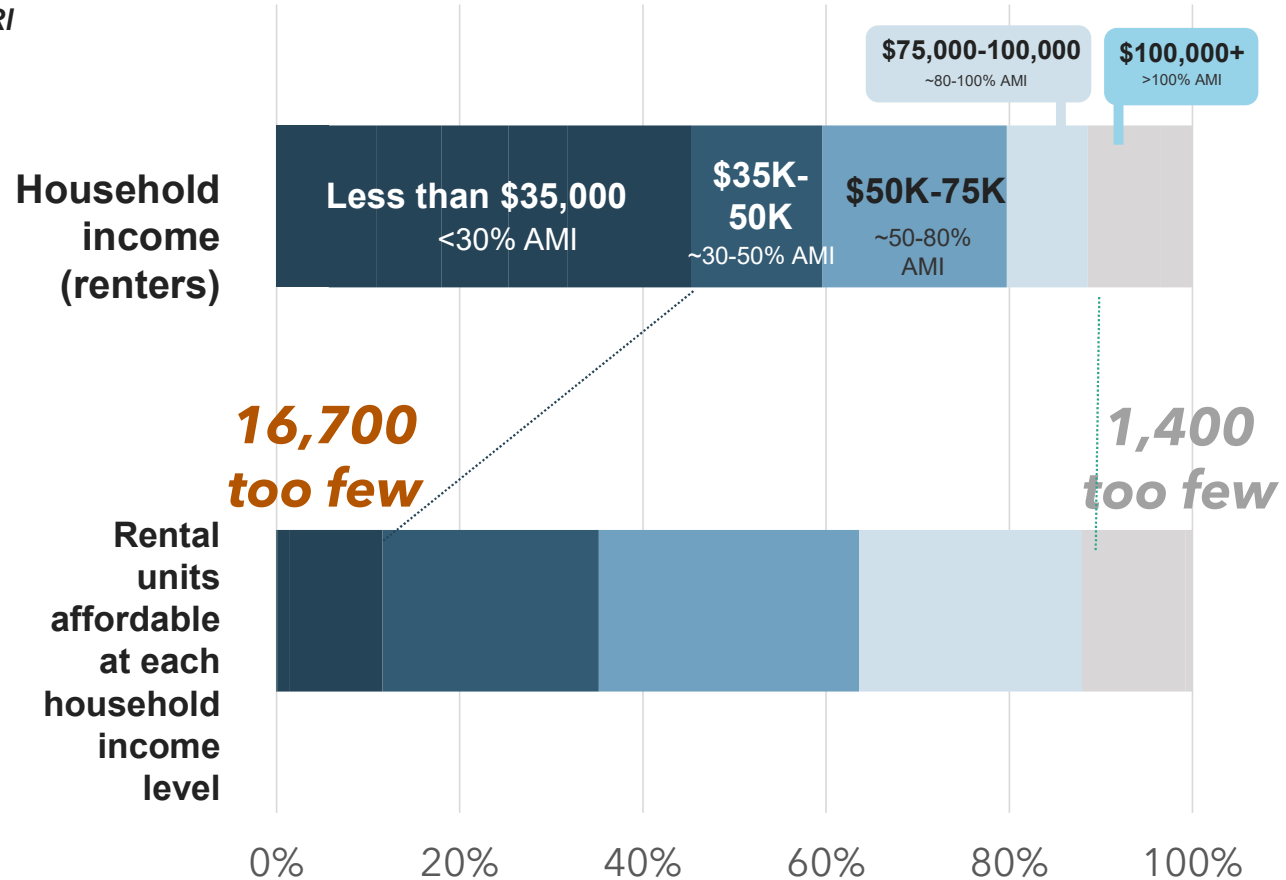
Land in closer proximity to jobs is not fully saturated: Suburban development is occurring in the northernmost portions of the southern counties at the limit for commutes to jobs. Available land in the northern counties is being prioritized by market developers.

Exceptions exist: Carrollton is generating manufacturing jobs, but workforce and middle income housing is lacking. Development of workforce housing near Carrollton seems like a market possibility and could increase available labor supply.

Housing Gap (Rental)

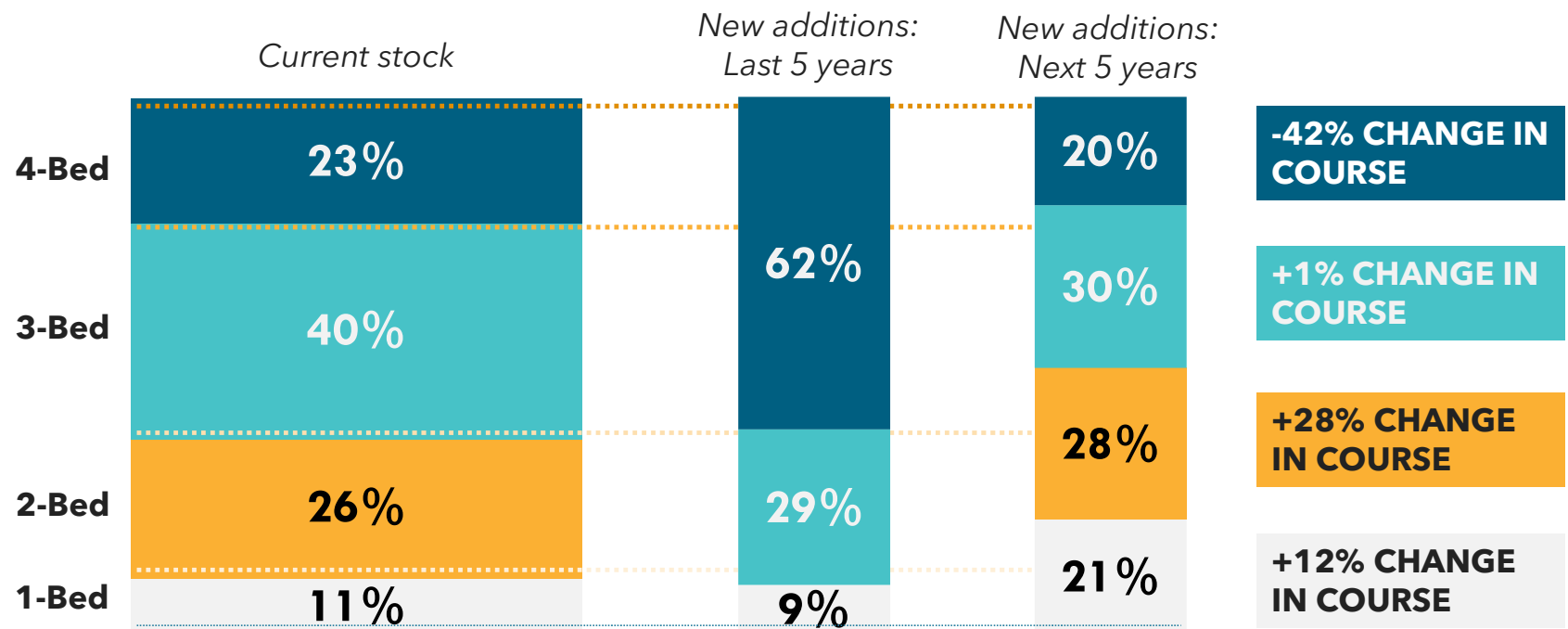
Renter household incomes versus rental units at aligned prices

Source: ACS, ESRI



Housing Gap (Variety of Unit Sizes)

This course correction would bring future development more in line with the overall current housing stock



Source: ACS, Stantec analysis

Housing Gap (Cost)

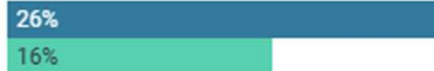
NKADD's economic engine is producing jobs but not an aligned housing stock

Housing Units Affordable Relative to Wages

Percent of housing units that are affordable based on median industry salary

Rental Ownership

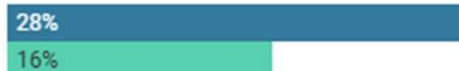
School teacher



Hospital nurse (RN)



Distribution worker



Restaurant server



Elder care



Chart: CommunityScale • Source: 2023 • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

STUDY FINDINGS

The NKADD region needs to build 6,650 housing units to support economic development in the next 5 years, that's 1,330 units per year.

Included in target for new units would be at least:

- 3,260 units for workforce households (\$15 - \$25/hour)
- 4,220 one- and two-bedroom units
- 500 units for very low-income households (monthly <\$320)

TWO-PART COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

**What should
we do about
these gaps
we
identified?**



COALITION COMMITTEES LED BY RESPECTED LOCAL LEADERS

Steering Committee

Retaining Existing Income-Aligned
Housing

New Development

Policy and Finance

Awareness & Community Engagement

HOUSING COALITION



PARTNERSHIPS + STAKEHOLDERS

Northern Kentucky Home for All

6

FOREWORD

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the active participation of representatives from local government, nonprofit organizations, private sector leaders, and community advocates from across our eight-county region. Collaboration of dedicated stakeholders from urban, suburban and rural communities ensured a holistic and regionally-coordinated approach to addressing housing challenges, with a shared commitment to creating actionable strategies that support housing affordability, availability, and income alignment as key drivers of workforce and economic development.

Dedication

In honor of Pat Crowley (1961-2024), a friend to all who had the good fortune to meet him. Pat supported the team and the work that led to this report as a committee chair, a steering committee member, an advocate, a mentor and a friend. He will be greatly missed.

HousingNKY.org

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Kreutzjans, Ross, Kreutzjans Construction
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Miller, Brian, Building Industry Association of Northern Kentucky
Minter, Cindy, Campbell County Planning & Zoning
Mize, Jean, RC Durr Foundation
Moneypenny, Andrea, Model Group
Moore, Judge/Executive Gary, Boone County Fiscal Court
Muth, Ken, Duke Energy
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Peters, Amanda, Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
Pleiman, Laura, Boone County Fiscal Court
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Sand, Jenny, Northern Kentucky University
Session, Chuck, United Way of Greater Cincinnati
Simpson, Colton, Grant County Fiscal Court
Stanton, John, Kenton County Fiscal Court
Steffen, Brian, City of Newport
Stiene, Stephanie, Brighton Center and Brighton Properties
Taylor, Ben, Drees Homes
Watkins, Tyler, Work Architecture
Webb, Kim, Emergency Shelter of Northern Kentucky
Wilson, Janie, Northern Kentucky Association of Realtors
Wilson, Tami, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
Winkler, Wonda, Brighton Center and Brighton Properties
Zengel, Karen, St. Vincent De Paul

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sharing the Housing Study Data

Community Outreach and Presentations

- NKADD - 36 presentations
- Numerous community groups; hundreds in attendance

Data Walks

- Open to anyone; sought a diverse group
- Focus on those making \$15 - \$25/hour

Surveys

- Similar to Data Walk questions
- Website - NKADD, then housingNKY.org

COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE

Data Walk attendees were asked to compare their own experience with housing with the findings from the Housing Study and identified their wishes for the housing market in Northern Kentucky.



Housing for adults
who are
downsizing



More 1 and 2
bedroom units



Priority for 1st time
homebuyers



Housing closer to
where they work



More landlords who
accept Housing Choice
Vouchers



Information about
housing availability



Access to
transportation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Income-aligned housing keeps our community strong



Essential workers

"One of my favorite parts of being a firefighter used to be spending time at the station with my fellow firefighters. But none of us live near enough to the station anymore so it's too far for us all to go there when we're not on duty."

One or two earners at \$45K/year each

Typical attainability is \$1,150 per month

Needs two or more bedroom home



Young adults

"I graduated from college in May and was really excited to start my new job and move out of my parents' house. I'm going to have to spend a few years saving up instead because staying in Northern Kentucky is out of my price range."

Typically earning \$11.00/hour

Up to \$500 a month on rent each

Studio or apartment with roommates



Downsizing seniors

"I'm living on Social Security and would love an apartment in an active community. We're looking at apartments in walking neighborhoods since we won't be driving forever, but they are all too expensive for us."

Still earning or on fixed income

Range of attainability \$550 - \$1,850

Needs one or two bedroom home

Note: The quotes are from feedback collected from NKY residents, but are not related to the photos.

THE RACE TO FIX NORTHERN KENTUCKY'S HOUSING GAP

Strong job creation resulted in demand for affordable homes far outpacing supply

BY BRIAN PLANALP
bplanalp@bizjournals.com

Chris Reinersman sat in the living room of an Independence home over the summer to make the case he had been making for months. The atmosphere was tense and crowded, but as he spoke, people listened.

The proposal from Fischer Homes for 110 new condominiums off two-lane Madison Pike surfaced in February before a city planning commission that would eventually vote against it. Reinersman, the city's mayor and a private real estate appraiser, argued for the proposal in a March City Council meeting — and faced significant public pushback.

Independence is one of the fastest-growing cities in Northern Kentucky. It hasn't gone unnoticed among longtime residents. Signs appeared across the city before the March meeting encouraging people to attend and speak against the Madison Pike project. Another room tense and crowded with opinions. Those who spoke described a place where residential density doesn't



Chris Reinersman, mayor of Independence

belong and whose growth is outpacing its traffic grid.

"We're the heart of Kenton County, and our heart is getting congested," said one resident. Another, citing traffic concerns, warned of Independence suddenly becoming Los Angeles.

Months later, in that Independence living room, Reinersman patiently pressed his points again. Development costs were too high to support a single-family subdivision. In any case, the land was already zoned for multifamily. At least the Fischer Homes project needed city approval, which gave the city some control over the outcome. If it failed to move forward, another developer likely wouldn't create owner-occupied condos, but three-story apartments.

Not exactly a blow for progress, as arguments go — but it won the people in the room, and months later the development advanced through City Council without a detractor in sight.

"Education, education, education — that's my watchword on these things," Reinersman said. "There were a lot of changed minds in that

HOUSING DEFICIT

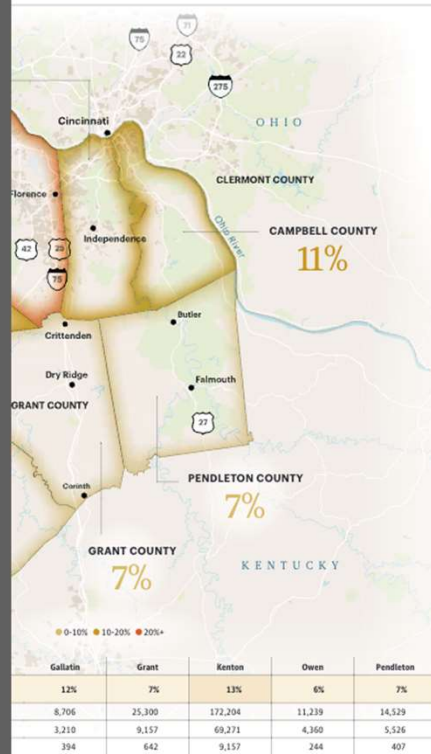
A recent housing study of Northern Kentucky shows the region needs thousands of homes, with Boone County facing the greatest shortage.

County	Boone	Campbell	Carroll
Ratio of units needed to total households	22%	11%	22%
Population	141,920	94,158	10,779
Total households	51,427	39,291	4,088
Total units needed	11,350	4,194	884

living room. We can't be afraid to get out in front of the torches and the pitchforks."

Reinersman recalled the story at a November event updating local officials and business leaders on the progress of the Northern Kentucky Area Development District's

housing study. The 280-page report released last September found the eight-county region's job creation is outpacing its housing availability, an unsurprising result to any who've tried their luck on Zillow in the last two years. Speakers at the event drove home the larger point: Housing



SOURCE: KENTUCKY HOUSING SUPPLY GAP STUDY
MAPCREATOR: JODI OSM AND JOHN LAUER | CBC

ing is a workforce issue, and Northern Kentucky, despite a run of good form, is in danger of suffocating its own growth.

"If we don't make these hard decisions, Northern Kentucky is not going to be a place you want to live," Brian Miller, executive vice president

of the Building Industry Association of Northern Kentucky, said at the housing event. "It's going to be a good thing we have great airfare, because you're going to be getting on a plane to see your grandchildren someday."

The housing study showed Northern Kentucky needs to create 6,650

Lack of affordability and the missing middle are holding our region back. That is undisputed in all the conversations we're having."
Brent Cooper, executive director of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

additional residential units beyond what's currently in the pipeline to support continued economic growth through 2028. It also showed the region's existing housing market is significantly misaligned with respect to income and housing typology. Northern Kentucky does a good job of building "McMansions," as Boone County Judge/Executive Gary Moore described them, but not one- and two-bedroom homes and apartments, which are exactly what the region needs most. Two-thirds of Northern Kentucky's job growth over the next decade is expected to come from jobs earning an average annual salary below \$60,000, according to the housing study.

Compounding the problem, homeowners are staying in their homes on average 13 years, twice as long as they did in 2005. That's a direct result of high mortgage rates — and scarcity of options. Retirees often want to downsize in the community where they've lived most of their lives, but local communities don't have that sort of low-maintenance housing stock in abundance.

Nor does building new single-family communities price out as favorably as it once did. Boone County alone has 4,300 lots platted for single-family homes where nothing is happening. Construction and land costs have forced developers to try for denser designs, sending them into the buzzsaw of public comment, where restrictive zoning and building codes provide the cudgel simple rancher does not.

"This industry dies by a thousand cuts," Miller said at the housing event. Planning commissioners are well-intentioned, he continued, but every additional permit and tree required of developers is passed onto the buyer, which reduces housing production.

With fewer new-build options, buyers in 2023 flooded into existing homes, the supply of which is flared, so prices naturally skyrocketed, and uncounted local families were pushed to the sidelines. The result even today is a housing market snared in an encumbering ouroboros, where the next generation can't buy because the former can't sell and the CEO has trouble hiring because there is little income-aligned housing within a reasonable driving radius —

20 minutes, by some accounts.

"There isn't any debate in the business community that this is a top issue," said Brent Cooper, executive director of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. "Lack of affordability and the missing middle are holding our region back. That is undisputed in all the conversations we're having."

The alarm bells are ringing far and wide. Florence Mayor Julie Metzger Aubuchon said never in her decades of public service has she seen this level of concern about a single topic from so many organizations. Wendy Smith, deputy executive director of housing programs for the Kentucky Housing Corp., noted it's the first time homeless shelters are talking the same language about the same problem. "People are ready to have these conversations," Colton Simpson, deputy judge/executive of Grant County, said.

Recommendations intended to close the region's housing gap are due out in late December from working groups assembled by the Northern Kentucky Area Development District drawing from the housing study's findings. The idea, according to multiple officials, is to offer a "menu" of options for communities to consider: density bonuses, for example, or a housing bond fund.

"This is a collective effort. It's not a one-size-fits-all," Moore said. "Each community has an individual tolerance for different options. What works for one isn't right for another."

Boone County is ground zero for both problem and solution. It's the fastest-growing county in the commonwealth, with 4.4% population growth since 2020, thanks to flat land and the jobs hub around Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. It also has the largest current deficit of housing units as a share of total inventory, according to the Kentucky Housing Corp. The county right now needs to build 11,350 homes and apartments to accommodate current demand.

Its record on dense housing developments remains mixed. The county touts a pipeline of multifamily units in the thousands, but the Boone County Fiscal Court has rejected at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

HIGHLIGHTS: HOME FOR ALL NKY HOUSING STRATEGIES

**It's not a
plan ...**

Home for All Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies

This project was coordinated by the [Northern Kentucky Area Development District](#) with [Brighton Center and Brighton Properties](#). The project was funded by [Interact for Health](#) and [United Way of Greater Cincinnati](#). Communication support was provided by [NKY Chamber of Commerce](#) through [Scooter Media](#). [CommunityScale](#) supported the menu of strategies and documentation.

[Download HOME FOR ALL](#)

Foreword



When I was young, I remember asking my father, a home builder, if we'd ever run out of room to build houses. He assured me Northern Kentucky had plenty of space. Today we still have enough space to build homes, but how can we

This document presents a menu of strategies for local governments, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and private employers to consider. It doesn't recommend uniform application but offers diverse strategies to address housing





Address and prevent neighborhood blight



Building permits and inspections



Enhance communication and awareness



Community engagement



Homeownership assistance programs



Public housing effectiveness



Planning and zoning



Tools and incentives



Transportation and infrastructure



Workforce development

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMUNITY NEED?

More homes? More rentals?

More homeownership?

Rehab older homes?

More price options?

Do you want to keep your older adults and help them downsize?

Do you want to attract younger families?

2025 COALITION UPDATES

Work toward Housing Fund – ongoing partnership

Establishing key metrics – ongoing partnership

Monitoring Kentucky General Assembly Housing Taskforce

Tracking housing successes across the region

Technical assistance for local communities – ongoing

Support for local initiatives

LOCAL WINS

Carroll County:

County leadership and local community development partners have worked to:

1. Identify potential sites for residential development
2. Streamline permitting with KYTC
3. Identify funding sources to offset infrastructure costs
4. Support local groups to secure funding to support residential development

12. Community Engagement

Continue to engage key stakeholders and the public in Northern Kentucky to ensure housing market conditions as well as existing resources, innovative development opportunities and strategies are known and understood.

47. Small Developer Support

Support existing and increase the number of small residential developers in the Northern Kentucky housing industry in order to encourage a wider variety of housing types and price points (see [page 38](#) for details).

LOCAL WINS

Boone, Cambell, Kenton Counties:

Building Industry Association's Enzweiler Building Institute working toward securing funding through both federal EDA and state Education and Labor Cabinet to advance construction trades training.

City of Covington launches Housing Taskforce with participation from NKADD, local business leaders, and other key stakeholders.

Northern Kentucky Chamber releases NKY Housing Blueprint prioritizing key strategies from Home For All report.

36. Local Capacity Leveraging

Leverage existing local capacity to promote and advance income-aligned housing goals through organizations such as nonprofit developers, NKY Port Authority, Catalytic Fund, and others.

49. Construction Training Funding

Enhance existing funding for construction and trades training through creation of additional funding for construction workforce training.

16. Local Resources for Homeownership

Establish locally funded and managed resources for homeownership – that could encourage and incentivize the purchase or renovation of properties (single and multi-family) that could preserve affordability, stabilize rents and lead families toward home ownership.

LOCAL POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

Recent Campbell County Initiatives

- **Parking** - Bellevue and Dayton have downsized their parking ratios. (This is helping increase investment in the Central Business District, including historic areas)
- **Multi-Family** - Woodlawn has added and Silver Grove is planning to a multifamily zone. (We are seeing increased land interest as a result)
- **Accessory Dwellings** - Southgate has added ADU in their largest single family zone. Unincorporated Campbell County now allows ADU in the Rural Residential Estate and Agricultural zones. (This is helping with aging in place in both areas)
- **Attached Units** - Dayton now allows attached single-family units in their largest single-family zone. (This is helping with density and cost. We have new attached homes now under construction)
- **Training** for local Planning and Zoning and Board of Adjustments members - familiarize them with new housing product and techniques.

REGIONAL WINS

NKADD staff support local planning commissions and fiscal court staff in updating data to determine progress in filling housing gaps with a data dashboard.

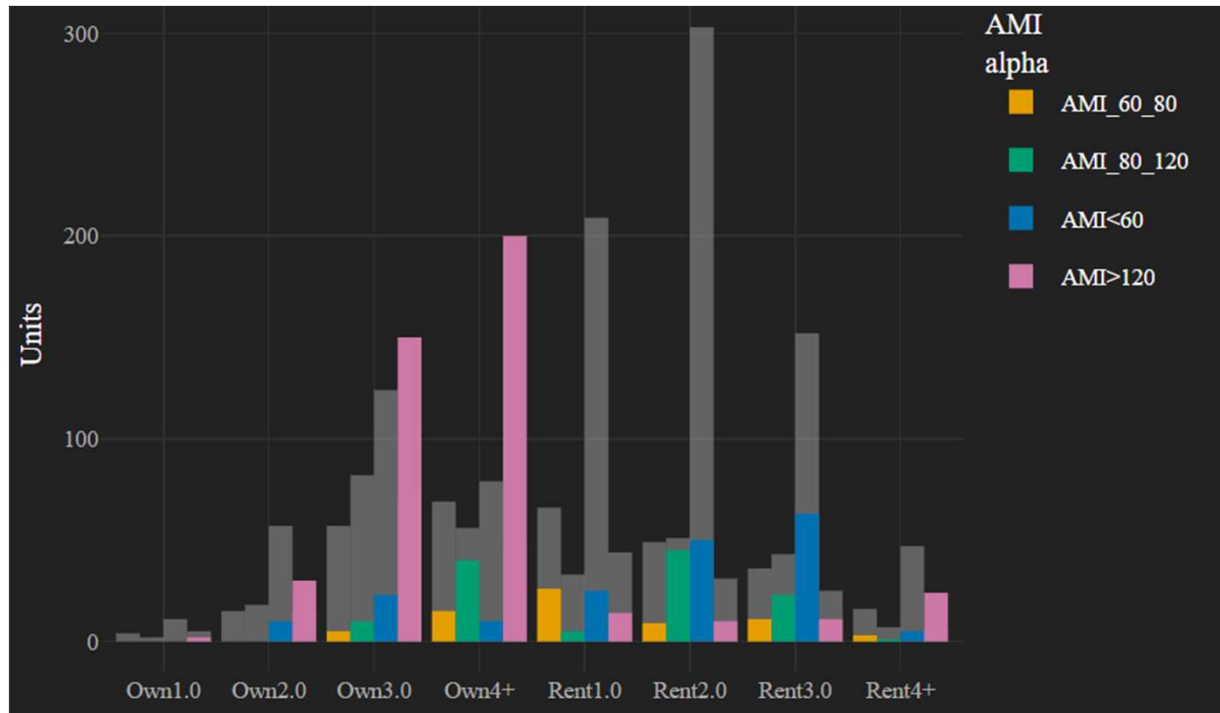
Key partners are engaged in conversations to move forward with development of regional housing fund.

36. Local Capacity Leveraging

Leverage existing local capacity to promote and advance income-aligned housing goals through organizations such as nonprofit developers, NKY Port Authority, Catalytic Fund, and others.

30. Regional Housing Trust Fund

Establish a flexible source of financing to serve the region as a Housing Trust Fund that could offer gap financing through grants, low/no interest debt, or forgivable loans and/or provide funding for maintaining low to moderate income housing product and support new development. (See more details on [page 36](#)).



TRACK METRICS & SUCCESSES

How do you turn a project into a system?

- Measure change!
 - Supply and affordability
- Assign responsibility for moving metrics forward!

Home for All

Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies

HousingNKY.org



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