

# HOUSING PERCEPTIONS IN NEBRASKA FOR THE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC HOUSING PLAN



**In fifteen years, what do you hope is achieved in [our community OR the communities we serve] with regard to affordable and attainable housing?**

- Availability of safe, attainable, and accessible housing for all Nebraskans
- Consideration of the wide range and various needs of home occupants (i.e. young adults, renters, workforce/middle-income, family, low-income, seniors and aging population)
- Data-driven, strategic, and community-driven approaches that deliver a supply of housing that meets the needs of each community
- Various housing programs and tools to make sure all Nebraskans have a stable home, including rental options, rehabilitation, diverse financing options, and education
- Preparation and investment for the construction workforce to ensure supply and rehabilitation of homes in every community
- Representation for individuals in difficult housing situations, including for those going through foreclosure and those with disabilities



**Access to safe, affordable housing is a right. It is a basic need. People of all incomes will be able to access affordable housing, close to their jobs and services...**



## Overview of the Process

Analysis was conducted between May 10-18, 2022, following the closure of Participant and Host Google Forms by Wellstone. The total number of responses for the Meetings in a Box Participant Form was 146. The total number of responses for the Meetings in a Box Host Form was 27. A combined total of 173 responses were reviewed. Responses were exported into a spreadsheet and downloaded from a shared Google Drive. Responses were uploaded to MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. Responses were coded inductively and deductively. Coding was conducted question-by-question to provide organization of key themes.



**We are interested in hearing from you about your views on Nebraska’s housing needs, and we are particularly interested in your opinions on your community’s needs. What do you believe are the unmet housing needs in your community?**

- Match community housing demands to housing supply (i.e. workforce housing, senior housing, special populations, missing middle, rental, and ownership)
- Local capacity building to ensure and plan for housing development into the future
- Rehabilitation and preservation options to improve existing homes in communities
- Ensure mobility within communities including planned development near employment clusters, shopping, and schools and/or ensure access to transportation
- Revitalize downtowns
- Consideration and investment for other factors that are important in our communities, including overall cost of living, high taxes, mental health, cost-burdened families, vulnerable populations, childcare availability, transportation, homelessness and broadband



Think outside the box. Are people interested in small homes? Are people interested in living in multi-family buildings, in which two or three duplexes, for example, are built around a common recreation area, grocery store, restaurant, etc? Are there opportunities for large extended families to rent two or three homes/apartments on a single floor/ in a single building, and pool their costs and resources? What about expandable homes - those with the opportunity to open a wall and shift from two two-bedroom apartments to one four-bedroom apartment? Have we asked anyone about any of these or similar things?



**We are interested in supporting and leveraging opportunities to expand housing efforts that are already working in your community or support efforts that community members are interested in moving forward to address housing needs. What do you think is working well and could be expanded to address the housing needs in your community?**

**Specific housing programs or initiatives mentioned:**

- Shot in the Arm in North Platte
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
- NAHTF
- Rural Workforce Housing
- Crown “rent to own”
- Free lot programs and local OOR programs
- PRR programs done with local funds
- HomeNE effort
- Rapid re-housing
- Prevention services
- Tenant assistant project through UNL Civil Law Clinic
- RentWise tenant education classes
- NeighborWorks in Lincoln
- New CDR (Community Development Resources)
- Lift Up Sarpy
- Coordinated Entry
- Community Action Partnership
- NE Best Program
- Rent to Own



I really like the Rural Workforce Housing Fund. It is working well in some places... Our area has struggled with getting anyone to apply for the funds. We are now starting to see movement and getting money out there. Continuing with this but adjusting where needed will be very beneficial.



## **Are there any other solutions that could have an impact by providing housing that meets your community needs?**

- Advance public-private partnerships to support housing
- Investment and improvement districts
- Legal protections for renters
- Subsidize housing costs for contractors
- Affordable, well-maintained housing
- Availability of grants, loans, and tax credits for housing efforts across the state
- Capacity building for local communities to be more able to support the development of housing
- Bring the community together to understand housing issues



**My community needs staff trained on how to determine the need, build foundation for a successful housing project, how to put together the partnerships needed, and how to administrate it once it is awarded. Small rural communities do not have the money to hire experts to train them or hire experts to run the programs.**



## **What challenges or barriers are there to move the housing solutions you and your community want to move forward? AND How can the state and its resources best support the housing needs we've been discussing across the housing continuum and in your community?**

- Capacity, facilitation, project assistance, and leadership to initiate and bring housing projects to fruition
- Streamline government processes, regulations, and how to apply for tools and programs
- New tools and/or legislation to increase housing supply
- Coordinated statewide planning and planning assistance for communities
- Ensure protections for vulnerable populations
- Grow public-private partnerships for housing, including with large landowners
- Investment in all aspects of communities statewide
- Lack of infrastructure to support housing development (e.g. roads)



**Each time that we find a successful path forward to fund a program, the goal posts are moved. Subsequently, we are in a constant shift to meet new requirements, instead of building on proven quality home building.**



**We understand that Nebraska has communities of all sizes and types. How does this variation in community size, economies, values, and other factors affect how we should approach housing solutions?**



**I really think an area by area analysis is needed in terms of what is already available, where the needs are, and how to best address them in an economical fashion as it may vary by community.**



**... I believe that Nebraska is a place that people want to live in, we just need the houses for them to live in. If we can get this figured out sooner rather than later, there will be a huge economic boom in Nebraska...**

- Nebraska collaboration is strong; however, competition among organizations over resources needs to be avoided
- Rural and urban needs are different - can't take a one-size-fits-all approach
- Financial assistance for local providers trying to meet housing needs
- Implement programs that are successful elsewhere in Nebraska
- Provide grants with flexibility so communities can tailor to their needs
- Share a growth mindset- "if you think small, you will be small"
- Grow and support the construction workforce in the state



**Housing, childcare and reliable internet are the biggest issues in almost all Nebraska communities. I believe that Nebraska does a great job trying to assist in these areas, and anything we can do to help incentivize developers to continue to work in a market with rising costs and rates will have a big impact.**

