

A Path Forward
Delaware State Housing Authority
Advocacy

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Housing Finance Agency: Delaware State Housing Authority
Entry Title: Affordable Housing Production Task Force recommends path forward
Category: Advocacy



From legislation to final report, task force delivers on housing production solutions

Bipartisan legislation convened a 20-member task force in 2024 with a goal of assessing the affordable housing landscape and identifying solutions to the crisis in Delaware. The task force brought stakeholders from various sectors to the table, meeting regularly in hybrid settings to ensure access to the discussion through in-person and virtual options.

In April, the Affordable Housing Production Task Force released its final report – on time -- to the Governor and General Assembly, outlining nine main objectives on how to increase production of homes in Delaware. Those objectives were developed based on a review of 71 specific recommendations that the Task Force’s subcommittees approved following months of meetings and deliberations.

Charged with staffing the task force initiative, the Delaware State Housing Authority created a webpage dedicated to this work and set a goal of total transparency. Staff posted meeting minutes, agendas, and committee membership online and also advertised task force meeting notifications and updates through our social media platforms. Once the final report was released with nine objectives, we featured that report online and spotlighted it in a banner across the top of our homepage, where it has remained for the past month and continues to be a frequently visited page.

In the press release we issued celebrating the final report’s release, our director best explained its impact:

“Housing is a human right. Increasing housing supply is a critical step to ensuring safe, stable and affordable housing for all Delawareans,” said **Delaware State Housing Authority Director Matthew Heckles**. “I am proud of the work that the Affordable Housing Production Task Force has done to identify policy changes and recommend solutions to increase housing production in Delaware. I want to thank the task force and subcommittee members, my co-chairs in this work, Senator Huxtable and Representative Johnson, and especially the public who participated in the process. We look forward to working with Governor Matt Meyer, the General Assembly and our housing partners on this critical issue.”

Policy makers, stakeholders achieve strategic objectives

The Affordable Housing Production Task Force was established in August 2024 via House Bill 442 to make recommendations on how the State and local governments can increase the supply of housing that is affordable to households across the income spectrum.

This report, [available online](#), represents the collective work of the 20-member, bipartisan Affordable Housing Production Task Force, and five subcommittees. The members of the task force and its subcommittees included State and local officials, state agencies, housing-focused organizations, homebuilders, community members, and multiple representatives from the housing sector.

The task force outlined the following high-level objectives to increase the overall supply of housing in Delaware and affordable housing in particular:

- Objective 1: Increase/expand funding opportunities for affordable housing;
- Objective 2: Implement local zoning reform;
- Objective 3: Streamline the approval/permitting process;
- Objective 4: Adopt a statewide building code;
- Objective 5: Strengthen comprehensive plan requirements;
- Objective 6: Provide incentives to developers to create affordable housing units;
- Objective 7: Develop the construction workforce pipeline;

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- Objective 8: Assist in the purchase of manufactured home communities by homeowners;
- Objective 9: Optimize and improve the capacity of existing programs/processes.

“Every Delawarean deserves a safe and affordable place to live. As expenses continue to climb, it is more important than ever to address our state’s housing crisis,” said **Senator Russ Huxtable, co-chair of the Affordable Housing Production Task Force**. “I’m proud to have served on the Affordable Housing Production Task Force alongside dedicated leaders like Representative Johnson, Director Heckles, and former DSHA Director Cynthia Karnai. Since the task force convened last summer, we’ve gathered valuable input from constituents and advocates to assist in the creation of a comprehensive housing report that will be used to guide housing policy moving forward. Lasting change requires a multi-faceted approach, and this report represents one tool at our disposal as we work to deliver affordable housing solutions to communities across Delaware.”

“Delaware is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. That fact cannot be overstated,” said **Representative Kendra Johnson, Co-Chair of the Affordable Housing Production Task Force**. “Not every Delawarean feels the negative impacts of this crisis, but for far too many, the lack of affordable housing in our state has drastically changed their lives for the worse. Those Delawareans will not be left behind. The Affordable Housing Production Task Force was created with the goal of ensuring that every resident of our state can go to bed with a roof over their heads without having to make difficult sacrifices. I am so proud of the work that we have done over the past few months to determine the best possible solutions to increasing the production of affordable housing units, and I look forward to implementing policies that will see us through this crisis.”

Advancing the overall mission of the agency

The task force convening marked the beginning of the legislative path toward reducing homelessness and ensuring that every Delawarean can afford a roof over their head in the First State. The task force helped to clarify that path and its final report outlines possible solutions that will now be addressed through legislation, policies and zoning reform. The report serves as a model for collaboration, problem solving and consensus building going forward.

Addressing housing challenges

The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment was a catalyst in illustrating the needs of a coordinated effort to address housing supply in Delaware.

As the assessment shows:

- An average of 2,400 units needed per year/45,000 units needed total
- 50% of Delaware renters are cost-burdened
- Homeownership rates continue to decline

We appreciate the legislators and advocates who responded to the assessment with action.

Demonstrating DSHA leadership

Working with our legislators and stakeholders, DSHA was able to lead in this area in many ways:

- Action to pass HB 442 (passed unanimously)
- Co-Chair with state senator & state representative

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- DSHA created a webpage for the Affordable Housing Production Task Force and has kept the site regularly updated with all meeting information, agendas and minutes, public comments, and supporting documents
- Staff this task force
- Created the final report

Building coalition & effective partnerships

We knew that the scale of the affordable housing crisis required cross-sector action and involvement, so a 20-member, bipartisan task force with state & local governments, advocacy groups/nonprofit organizations, and private sector partners was an effective way to begin the collaborative, problem-solving process.

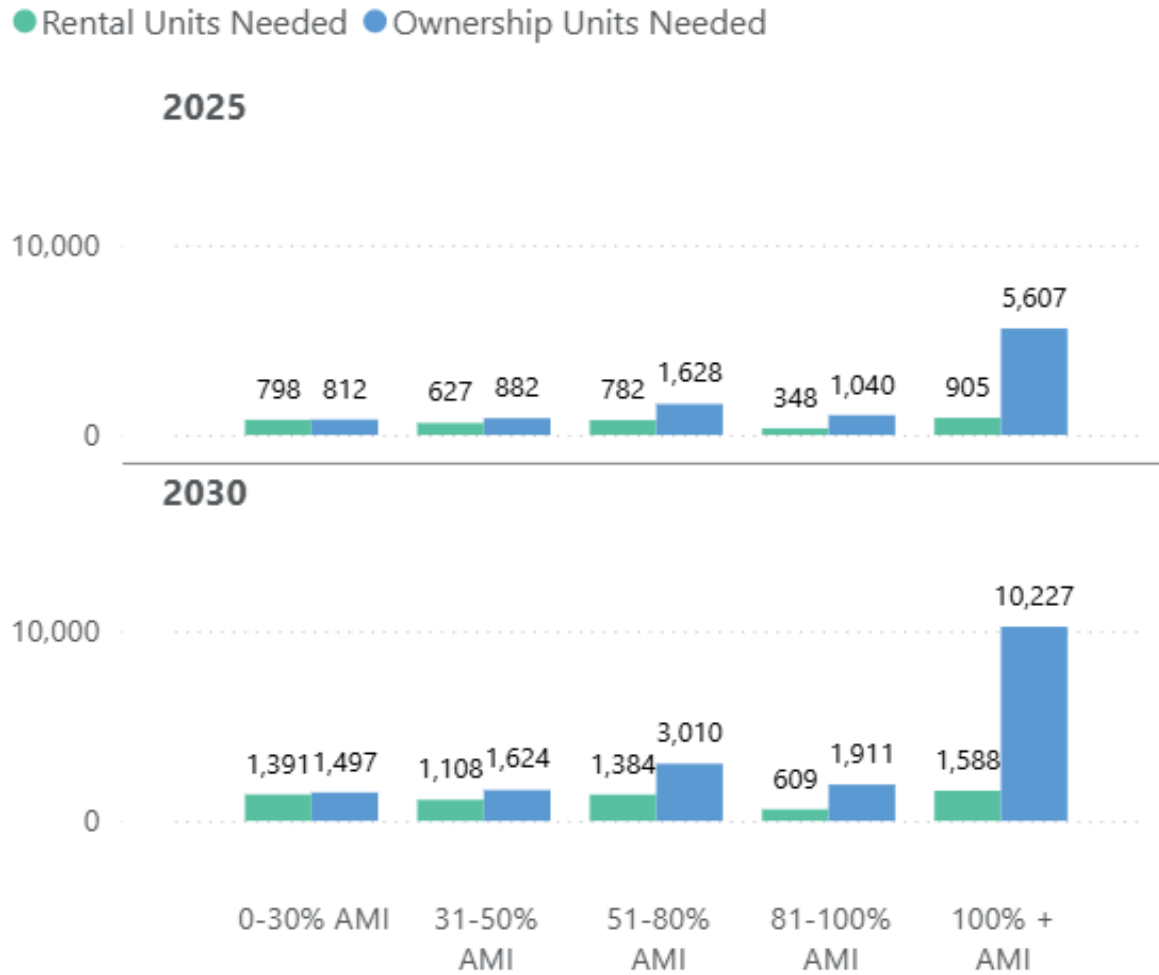
We know that we must create an environment that encourages new investment and reinvestment in housing, and that mitigates risks for those seeking to develop/manage housing units.

Reaching target audiences

- Website views: 8,277 / Event count: 19,019
- 6 full task force meetings & 18 subcommittee meetings
- 167 email contacts



Projected New Housing Units Needed by 2025 and 2030 Delaware



Source: Delaware Population Consortium, HUD CHAS 2019 estimates, and Root Policy Research




About The Affordable Housing Production Task Force


The Affordable Housing Production Task Force was established via House Bill 442 to make recommendations on how the State and local governments can increase the supply of housing that is affordable to households across the income spectrum.

[View the final report from the Affordable Housing Production Task Force here.](#)




 [Task Force Final Report](#)



 [House Bill 442](#)




 [Task Force Webpage on General Assembly's Website](#)



 [House Bill 30](#)



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Co-Chairs

 Matthew Heckles DSHA Director	 Kendra Johnson State Representative	 Russ Huxtable State Senator
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Task Force Members

- State Senator Gerald Hocker
- State Representative Jeff Hilovsky
- David Edgell, Office of State Planning Coordination
- Dayna Cobb, Division of Climate, Coastal & Energy
- Kevin Spence, Delaware League of Local Governments
- Wes Stefanick, Delaware Association of Realtors
- Debra Burgos, Delaware Apartment Association
- Mike Riemann, Home Builders Association of Delaware
- Jerry Heisler, Reybold
- Karen Speakman, NeighborGood Partners
- Korey Thompson *Resigned, effective 2/6/25*
- Kevin Smith, Habitat for Humanity of New Castle County
- Amy Walls, Discover
- Rachel Stucker, Housing Alliance Delaware
- Sarah Keifer, Kent County Levy Court
- Preston Schell, Ocean Atlantic Companies
- Pamela Scott, Saul Ewing LLP

Task Force Subcommittees

- Regulatory & Permitting Subcommittee
- Finance & Development Subcommittee
- Construction Subcommittee
- Manufactured Housing Subcommittee
- Community Focus Groups Subcommittee

Full Task Force Meeting Archives

- 3.20.25 Meeting
- 3.13.25 Meeting
- 2.20.25 Meeting
- 2.06.25 Meeting
- 10.07.24 Meeting
- 8.29.24 Meeting

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Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)

Published by SocialPilot

August 30, 2024

Yesterday, the Affordable Housing Production Task Force kicked off its first meeting! Their goal? To make Delaware a place where everyone can find an affordable home. The task force will focus on:

Key Objectives:

- Best Practices:** Exploring successful strategies from other states to boost affordable housing.
- Zoning & Permitting:** Reviewing current laws to see how they impact affordable housing production.
- Industry Practices:** Identifying what limits affordable housing opportunities for households below 120% Area Median Income (AMI) in Delaware.

The Approach:

1. Identify Challenges & Barriers: Understand what's stopping us from meeting housing needs.
2. Propose Solutions: Find practical ways to overcome these challenges.
3. Prioritize Actions: Focus on strategies that can make the biggest impact.

For Each Recommendation, it will be Detailed:

- Who Should Implement: State, Local Government, or Private Sector.
- Requirements: Whether we need new legislation, regulatory changes, or funding subsidies.

Join Our Subcommittees!

We're forming subcommittees of up to 9 members each to dive deeper into these issues. If you're passionate about affordable housing and want to make a difference, we want to hear from you!

Location To be determined.

#AffordableHousingDE

#HousingForAll

#TaskForceInAction



What is Affordable Housing?

Workforce Housing
Housing that is affordable to households earning up to 100% AMI and meets the needs of wage and service industry workers.

Examples of occupations and wages by income range:

Extremely Low-Income (0-30%)	Vary Low-Income (30%-50%)	Low-Income (50%-80%)	Median Income (100%)
Less than \$18,930	\$18,930-\$31,200	\$31,200-\$51,120	\$51,120 - (\$66,400)
Mostly in labor force, over age 18, family has member with a disability	Nursing assistants, wait staff, home care aides, cashiers, retail, childcare, food prep	Nursing assistants, cosmeticians, office and administrative support, construction	Teachers, paramedics, social workers, paralegals, electricians

Source: HUD Income Limits, Rent Policy Research, Delaware Department of Labor.

Subcommittee Structure

- Must be chaired by a task force member
- Can have up to 9 members total, including the chair
- Will meet approximately **+5** times outside of regular task force meetings
- Each subcommittee has specific topics to consider per HB 442

19

11 shares

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YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE FIRST AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCTION TASK FORCE MEETING

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024
10 A.M. TO 11:30 A.M.**

***This meeting will be held both in-person and virtually.**

IN-PERSON MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

Delaware State Police Troop 2
100 Cpl. Stephen J. Ballard Way
Newark, DE 19702

VIRTUAL MEETING REGISTRATION LINK

<https://bit.ly/HTFMeeting>

To sign-up for the task force mailing list,
please email housing.taskforce@delaware.gov

**The AHPTF is co-chaired by DSHA Director Cynthia Karnai,
Representative Kendra Johnson and Senator Russ Huxtable.**



The Affordable Housing Production Task Force was established via HB 442 to make recommendations on how the State and local governments can increase the supply of housing that is affordable to households across the income spectrum.



News coverage:

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Delaware media outlets covered the process, from the creation of the task force to its final report.

Examples of coverage follow:

New report calls for more housing diversity and density

Delaware Public Media | By [Martin Matheny](#)
Published April 9, 2025 at 5:30 PM EDT



▶ LISTEN • 1:12



[New report calls for more housing diversity and density | Delaware First Media](#)

[Delaware Affordable Housing Task Force releases final report with nine key recommendations | News | coasttv.com](#)

[Delaware Task Force unveils final report on increasing affordable housing production](#)

[Delaware Task Force Unveils Final Report to Tackle Affordable Housing Crisis | Latest News | wbc.com](#)

<https://baytodaynews.com/stories/task-force-incentives-state-support-needed-to-boost-affordable->

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[housing,218537#:~:text=The%20task%20force%20recommended%20giving,decades%20for%20affordable%2Dhousing%20production](#)

<https://www.delawarepublic.org/politics-government/2024-10-07/delawares-affordable-housing-production-task-force-looks-at-other-states-for-solution-inspiration>