



Education/Employee Workforce Housing Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need workforce housing?

Like many other districts in the state and across the nation, NUSD faces tremendous challenges in hiring and retaining qualified educators to work with our students. With the high cost of living in our area, it is increasingly difficult for the profession's best and brightest educators to live in the community where they work. Exploring workforce housing is just one of several initiatives NUSD has implemented to recruit and retain talent.

In addition to the benefit of reduced living costs for residents of workforce housing, depending on how the project is ultimately implemented, the District is exploring the possibility that it could provide a new funding stream for the District.

Who is in charge of the project?

In April 2022, the Board of Education approved a position and job description for a Director of Workforce Housing. Subsequently, this position has been filled. The Board believes that having a dedicated professional focus on this work will help to advance this project.

- The Director is responsible for moving this project forward.
- The Board of Education is responsible for providing direction and all decision-making.

At their August 23, 2023, meeting, the Board approved the formation of an Education Workforce Housing Committee in order to bring the voice of the community into the discussions. meetings of this committee are open to the public. Meeting dates, times and locations are available on this website <https://nUSD.org/staff-housing/>.

How do we know we need Workforce Housing in NUSD?

We have anecdotal evidence that workforce housing would make our district a more desirable employer, given the high cost of living throughout Marin County. That said, the Director of Workforce Housing is currently initiating a demographics study and a staff survey to make a current determination of need and interest.

Why don't you just pay teachers more so that they can afford to live here?

NUSD is not in control of how much funding it receives. The board prudently maintains a budget that keeps us living within our means. The unfortunate reality is that our school district is in declining enrollment and we are facing the expiration of temporary funding upon which we have relied these past few years. This confluence of events means an overall decrease in funding for NUSD, as most other California school districts. NUSD does not have the funds to raise wages for every employee to a level that would be necessary to afford to live in our community without being housing-burdened.

Workforce housing builds community and has a positive effect on employee commitment and retention, thus benefiting both students and the community overall.

When will construction begin?

The project is in an exploratory stage. After receiving all of the necessary information, if the Board directs the District to move forward, a typical timeline might have construction beginning in three years; though that is strictly an approximation. There is much that needs to happen prior to breaking ground.

Where will the housing be built?

Determining the best location is part of the work that is currently underway. The District is exploring and evaluating all possible options. NUSD is in the fortunate position of having several under-utilized parcels of land that are under consideration. Information about land options will be presented to the Board at a future, publicly-noticed meeting.

Who is eligible to live in the housing?

The Board of Education is the decision-making authority for the workforce housing project. At this time, the Board has not made any decisions regarding the specifics of the housing occupancy – who is eligible, how long they can stay, what the rent will be,

etc. The project is currently in an exploratory stage and those kinds of decisions will be made by the Board at a future date, if the project moves forward.

Is the term "Workforce Housing" just another way of saying "Affordable Housing?"

No, these terms are often confused, but they are not one and the same. Affordable housing carries income restrictions and is generally available to the public. Workforce Housing does not necessarily carry the same income restrictions, but is intended to provide a discounted housing option geared toward school employees.

What will workforce housing look like?

No decisions will be made about the specifics of this project until more information is available and the Board has provided direction. NUSD is a loyal community partner and takes pride in their history of excellence in developing and maintaining quality construction that benefits the aesthetic of the surrounding community.

How can I be sure that the District will do what it says and the Board will make good decisions?

NUSD is committed to a transparent process that keep staff, students and community members informed throughout the process. Workforce Housing Committee meetings are open to the public. Meeting agendas and recaps will be posted on the website for public accessibility.

We want to earn your trust and we welcome your questions and concerns. Please email Derek Knell dknell@nUSD.org to submit your comments.