

Jefferson County Association REALTORS
Housing Affordability Policy

A healthy community requires housing and home ownership opportunities for people of all income levels. The lack of affordable housing is reflected in several ways including access to employment, education, a good environment and safe neighborhoods. In addition to the benefits that accrue to the individual, affordable home ownership opportunities benefit the community. Homeowners are more likely to vote and volunteer their time for political and charitable causes more frequently than renters. For homeowners, the value of their home – the largest investment many of them will make in their lifetimes – creates an incentive to stay abreast of local government and to be concerned about their community. The long-term result of a lack of affordable housing is a decline in the quality of life. Families are stressed to the breaking point, neighborhoods decline, and employment opportunities dwindle as businesses locate in communities in which their employees can afford to live.

The Jefferson County Association of REALTORS believes a healthy community requires housing and home ownership opportunities for people of all income levels. Our commitment to housing opportunity for all our citizens is demonstrated through participation in the Colorado Association of REALTORS Housing Opportunity Foundation and our partnership with Habitat for Humanity. We are also committed to addressing systemic impediments to home ownership.

1. Our communities should strive to achieve a balance of housing and jobs. Local comprehensive plans must include an affordable housing component, as well as planning for the overall number of homes needed to accommodate projected population growth.
2. Local regulations can operate as significant barriers to the production of affordable housing. JCAR will encourage local governments to eliminate regulatory barriers and fees which unnecessarily reduce the affordability of housing. Cities should have a coordinated and consolidated development review process to make permitting more consistent and predictable.

3. JCAR will evaluate local regulations and processes on the basis of whether they impede development and increase development costs. Impact fees, land development regulations, stringent building codes, zoning and subdivision regulations, and the permitting processes must be relaxed or even eliminated to stimulate affordable housing production.
4. JCAR supports development fee waivers and accelerated permit reviews as tools to reduce the cost of housing. The cost of fee waivers should not be shifted to other properties within the development.
5. JCAR supports increased densities and less restrictive requirements for lot dimensions as tools to achieve housing affordability.
6. Government-assisted housing programs should have a homeownership component.
7. JCAR supports down payment assistance programs that reduce home buying costs and help people achieve the American dream of homeownership.
8. JCAR supports public/private partnerships to provide housing including rental housing and home ownership opportunities.
9. The goal of homeownership is achievable for many in our community but many people are not aware of the opportunities that are present. JCAR will develop and /or support the promotion and creation of programs designed to increase homeownership in targeted income groups. Such programs may include:
 - a. programs that increase consumer awareness of the benefits of and opportunities for homeownership.
 - b. the development of programs that educate junior high, high school, college or vocational students and their parents about the benefits of homeownership and practical advice on achieving homeownership that dispels the myths about opportunities to become homeowners.
 - c. the development of classes and seminars for elective continuing education credit to educate agents on ways to reach, communicate with, and assist consumers with overcoming obstacles to

homeownership.

10. JCAR opposes using the fees generated by the document filing fee to fund a housing trust fund. Fees imposed by government entities must be tied to the cost of the service for which the fee is paid. Increasing the “doc” fee for an unrelated program is essentially a transfer tax on the sale of real property, which JCAR opposes. A small segment of our society, property sellers and buyers, should not bare the burden of providing affordable housing. This is not equitable and it increases the cost of a real estate transaction, exacerbating the problem the tax is designed to address.