

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Fairfax County Housing Activities January 2021

Temporary Shelter Available During COVID-19: More than **1,050** people have transitioned into Quarantine, Protection, Isolation, and Decompression (QPID) Hotels since April 16, 2020 with locations operating across Fairfax County. The QPID hotels are managed by several non-profit partners, including Cornerstones, FACETS, New Hope Housing, and Shelter House. Northern Virginia Family Service operates a Central Intake (703-267-3511) to triage referrals to the QPID hotels. Fairfax County released a video to provide [information on how to access temporary shelter](#).

COVID-19: Rental Assistance

- o [Fairfax County Coordinated Services Planning \(CSP\)](#): CSP remains the best resource for residents seeking assistance to help pay rent and utilities, securing housing, accessing food, obtaining prescriptions, and meeting other basic needs. Call 703-222-0880, Monday thru Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- o [Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program \(RMRP\)](#): As of December 15, 2020, the Rent and Mortgage Relief Program is being administered through a state-wide Call Center. Persons in need of rent or mortgage relief can be directed to 703-962-1884 or initiate a new application through the [online portal](#). Landlords and property managers can continue to apply for the rental assistance on behalf of tenants by contacting [Virginia Housing](#).

Recently passed federal legislation provides approximately \$580 million in rental assistance to Virginia, and extends the CDC moratorium on evictions to Jan 31, 2021. This financial assistance will be provided through the state's RMRP, and may be available to eligible households for a maximum of 12 months, with an additional 3 month allowable extension if necessary to ensure housing stability for the household. The [Aspen Institute](#) estimates that almost 265,000 households in Virginia will be [were] at risk of eviction by the end of 2020. How we address our longer-term systemic housing shortage is the issue we need to confront sooner rather than later.

Workforce Dwelling Unit (WDU) Proposed Policy Changes [This presentation](#) to the Planning Commission provides good background information on the WDU policies, and why both developers and advocates agree it's time for a revision. [This matrix](#) provides

clear examples of the impact these changes will have, on both the number of units created and income levels served, if the revisions are adopted by the Board of Supervisors (BOS). There will be a Planning Commission (PC) hearing on the proposed WDU policies January 27 at 7:30 PM, and the BOS will take them up at their hearing on February 23 at 4 PM.

While the number of WDUs is slightly reduced under the proposed changes, households at lower income levels will be served (see slide #2 of the matrix). This advances the County's housing goal of increasing the production of housing for persons earning \leq 60% of the area median income (AMI) - approximately \$74,000 for a household of 4. WDUs are developed at transit and employment centers, and provide a level of affordability in higher cost areas of the county. NVAHA supports the recommendations of the WDU task force, however some members of the development community are not in favor of the changes, and plan to testify against the recommendations at the PC and BOS hearings. Advocates should be prepared to testify in support of these changes.

Leveraging County-owned Land Fairfax County has used county-owned land strategically to support affordable housing. From [the Residences at the Government Center](#) to [the Fallstead](#) to the [Oakwood Senior development](#) to the [North Hill development](#) and, most recently, the award of Autumn Willow in the Sully District, the county has used public private partnerships to provide land to affordable housing developers. Together, these developments have provided over 900 units of multifamily rental housing for families, seniors and households with incomes \leq 60% AMI. The latest addition to the 'county land for housing' inventory is [a parking area\(s\) at the Government Center which Supervisor James Walkinshaw has proposed be transferred](#) to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority to begin the RFP process for developing affordable housing. This is an attractive location given its proximity to retail, services and the job center that is the Fairfax County Government Center. A park and ride lot for express bus service on I-66 is being planned to encourage transit options. On January 26, the BOS will hold a public hearing on this transfer. It's important for housing advocates to testify in support of this best practice that leverages underutilized county-owned land for one of the county's greatest needs - affordable housing.

Virtual 2021 Northern Virginia Housing Expo Looking for resources or information related to affordable housing in Northern Virginia? Join the [virtual 2021 Northern Virginia Housing Expo beginning January 1, 2021](#). The free, online public event will be hosted at [NoVaHousingExpo.org](#) and will be available for the entire year. The expo will feature monthly workshops and exhibits designed to educate participants about COVID-19-related housing assistance, location options, being prepared for buying or renting, understanding and improving credit scores, improving energy efficiency and more. The virtual expo will also offer confidential individual financial counselling and provide a 24-hour Exhibitor Hall featuring lenders, property management companies, developers, contractors, real estate agents, service providers, local jurisdictions and more. This event, now in its 11th year, is made possible through a cooperative effort of

representatives from the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church; the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William; and Virginia Housing (formerly VHDA).

Virginia General Assembly The General Assembly convenes annually on the second Wednesday in January. In odd years, a short session of 30 days is held. This year's session begins on January 13th. We will be watching legislative action on the state housing trust fund; a proposed state low-income housing tax credit; support for homeless prevention and permanent supportive housing; and the increasingly important issue of expanding broadband to address the affordability and accessibility of appropriate devices for low income residents in high-cost urban areas.