

# Investors and nonprofits can play significant role in providing housing diversity | Home & Living

*Lisa Moore*

Housing diversity should be an integral planning component for all municipalities. As such, local governments can help shape housing development by providing building incentives to investors and by funding housing initiatives for nonprofit organizations.

Traditional housing like single-family and multifamily continues to dominate an aging housing market. Without housing diversity, the housing market will not meet the needs of an aging and diverse population.

Modified or new types of housing are needed. Some examples include assisted-living facilities, active-55-and-older complexes, transitional housing for homeless persons, housing for homeless families, foster care and adult housing for the mentally disabled.

Investors and nonprofits can help diversify housing in the region. Diversity helps build stronger community environments that better meet the needs of the population. Instead of flipping traditional housing with simple repairs and minor upgrades, consider remodeling traditional homes to meet current building codes and to provide greatly needed housing.

By doing so, the region would be better equipped to meet the needs of the population.

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a great need for homeless and transitional housing exists in the four federally defined categories of homelessness: literally homeless, imminent risk of homelessness, homeless under other federal statutes, and fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence.

There also is demand for housing for people with disabilities in various stages of mental and physical health. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services is a valuable resource to examine housing for diverse populations like group homes for youths and adult resident homes.

For example, adult resident homes are operated and supervised group homes for those who are 18 and older and intellectually disabled. Residents receive independent-living skills training and supportive services to enhance their sense of independence. By converting traditional real estate to suit an adult group home, investors and nonprofits help the community.

For more resources and information, investors and nonprofits should contact a local, licensed agent to help explore their options. Realtors are trained in assessing housing and evaluating the market through a comparative market analysis, and they have access to housing resources not available to the general public online .

Local Realtors can help navigate interested individuals and organizations through city building codes as well as local and state requirements.

Other resources include HUD ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)) and the DBHD's Office of Licensing, ([www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov)) to learn more about housing needs for group homes for youths, adult living facilities, adult daycare, adult respite care and other diverse housing. The demand for specialized adult and youth housing is immediate.

By being intentional about diversifying housing, local governments play a crucial role in providing direction and incentives to investors and nonprofits.

Many opportunities exist for investors to make a profit while helping to provide diverse housing in the community. Consider building modifications that help properties serve in more than one housing capacity.

Work cooperatively with others to create an environment for diverse communities to meet the needs of the people. Otherwise, the population must continue to make do with an aging housing market with few housing alternatives.

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