

Introduction

State Housing Element Law requires that local jurisdictions outline the housing needs in the community, the barriers or constraints to providing that housing, and actions proposed to address these concerns over a five-year period. The State of California allocates, through local Councils of Government, each locality's "fair share housing needs" that the jurisdiction is to consider in the development of the Housing Element.

Specifically, the purpose of Housing Element Law is:

- To assure that counties and cities recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the State's housing goal.
- To assure that counties and cities will prepare and implement housing elements which, along with federal and state programs, will move toward attainment of the state housing goal.
- To recognize that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required by it to contribute to the attainment of the state housing goal, provided such a determination is compatible with the state housing goal and regional housing needs.
- To ensure that each local government cooperates with other local governments in order to address regional housing needs.

To address this intent, the Law states that the Housing Element must include an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Further, it is to identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobilehomes, and make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community. The Housing Element must contain the following:

Needs and Inventory -- An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs, including:

- ❖ An analysis of population and employment trends and existing and projected housing needs for all income levels;
- ❖ An analysis of household characteristics, such as level of payment compared to ability to pay, overcrowding, and housing stock condition;
- ❖ An inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having potential for redevelopment;
- ❖ An analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels;
- ❖ An analysis of potential and actual nongovernmental constraints;

- ❖ An analysis of any special housing needs, such as those of the handicapped, elderly, large families, farmworkers, families with female heads of households, and families and persons in need of emergency shelter;
- ❖ An analysis of opportunities for energy conservation with respect to residential development; and
- ❖ An analysis of existing assisted housing developments that are eligible to change from low-income housing uses during the next 10 years due to termination of subsidy contracts, mortgage prepayment, or expiration of restrictions on use.

Goals, Objectives and Policies -- The jurisdiction must provide a statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing.

Program and Five-Year Schedule -- The law requires jurisdictions to provide a program that sets forth a five-year schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element. In order to make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community, the program shall do all of the following:

- Identify adequate sites which will be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards and with public services and facilities needed to facilitate and encourage the development of a variety of types of housing for all income levels;
- Assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households;
- Address and, where appropriate and legally possible, remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing;
- Conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock;
- Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or color;
- Preserve for lower income households the identified assisted housing developments.