



Sensible Housing Principles Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

As businesses and employers invested in New Hampshire, we believe collective action on our state's critical housing shortage will benefit our mutual prosperity, health, and way of life in the Granite State.

Whereas housing has a direct impact on the health of any community and its residents, NHBSR's Housing Principles represent six sensible positions and actions for addressing housing challenges here in New Hampshire.

What is the purpose of having these principles?

For decades, housing availability in our state has fallen behind demand, while housing and rental prices are hurting employment and quality of life. The voice of business has a place in this conversation by helping raise awareness of the problems, and foster actions to stabilize local housing markets and the statewide economy. New Hampshire's long-term economic outlook will benefit from your support.

Can't we just wait for the market to "correct" itself?

Healthy market conditions and opportunities have not existed in New Hampshire's housing market since before the 2009 recession. Since then, competing demands, unique market factors, and restrictive policies have made affordable homes rare across the state.

- Housing [data](#) shows that residents and newcomers are getting priced out of the housing market.
- Older residents, who might be "house-rich, but cash-poor" face financial burdens that prevent aging in place or may find options to affordably downsize practically non-existent.
- Young people and families wishing to stay or move here can't find affordable starter homes.
- Business growth is stifled when employees can't compete for housing, impacting attraction and retention.

The list goes on. These principles focus on ways to get the market out of its rut.

Can improving the housing market improve communities?

If we want a vital society and economy, we have a responsibility to lower and remove obstacles to fair and affordable housing. The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic proves again that essential workers are essential *community* members and often among those who struggle to find housing that is both affordable and accessible to their job. Social diversity is essential to the quality of our communities. Support for these housing principles demonstrates support for the people who keep our communities and quality of life stable during uncertain times. The Voice of business has a place in this conversation.

Can development and conservation be balanced?

We are fortunate that the conservation of open land and the protection of rural spaces have a long record of success in this state. Development of open land can honor wise stewardship of resources including protection of productive farmland as a valuable commodity. Land that is not suitable for productive farming and lacks conservation benefits can be used for sensible housing solutions. In the past 10 years, creative housing solutions from elsewhere in New England and across the country have shown that development and conservation co-exist well. For example, land that is not suitable for productive farming and lacks conservation benefits can be used for sensible housing solutions.

Does “community character” refer to people or architecture?

The character of a town, city, or village refers to the style of buildings and homes. Most people agree that the look of villages in New England is high on the list of what makes our region special. Historic preservation is important. New homes and places for people to live can fit within an existing style that local residents and policies seek to maintain.

Are you seeking support for specific legislation or town policies?

We support policies and legislation that will advance these points and attract innovation and opportunity for our state and our people. These principles are not designed to address specific solutions. Local governance works best when guided by a deep understanding of issues and the challenges faced by people wanting to live, work, and retire here.

Where can I learn more?

These non-profits offer learning, resources, and opportunities to engage with others in your community on this important shared challenge of housing availability and affordability.

[NH Housing](#)

[St. Anselm Center for Ethics and Governance “Housing We Need” Program](#)

[The Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast](#)

[Mount Washington Valley Housing Coalition](#)

[Vital Communities Workforce Housing Program](#)
[Housing Action NH](#)
[Plan NH](#)
[Keys to The Valley](#)