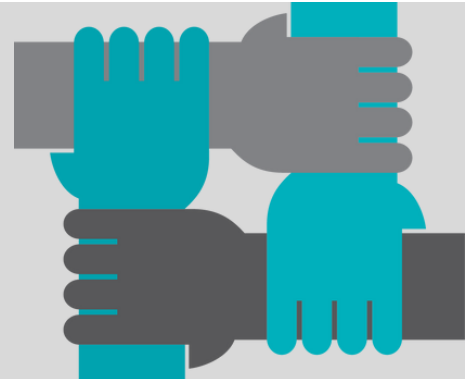


Social Housing

✦ An Overview | United for a New Economy



Hard-working families pay far too much for rent in Colorado, where over 50% of renters pay over 30% of their income towards housing. These families are being used by corporations who treat housing as a product to buy, sell, invest in, and profit off of. [Corporate control of rental housing](#) is at an all-time high and only continues to grow, with drastic consequences for our communities.

When corporations and Wall Street investors control our housing, they prioritize profit over people, leading them to raise rents at unreasonable rates, evict renters at their discretion, and neglect critical maintenance and safety issues on the property. While CEOs of multinational corporate real estate companies like [Greystar become billionaires](#), the people who live in their properties struggle to afford rent, pay for their kids' school supplies, or cover their medical bills. When renters cannot afford their homes, they risk losing their homes and being displaced from our communities.

Not only do these harmful practices hurt individual renters and families, they also exacerbate [systemic racial and economic inequality](#), undermine community health, and ultimately destabilize our communities by forcing people out of their homes. We need a housing system whose purpose is to **house people**, not **extract profit**.

One possible solution to these problems is **Social Housing**.

READ MORE



Social housing is a model for housing that is built on a few key principles:



Permanently affordable:

Social housing should be permanently and deeply affordable to all income levels, and no one should pay more than 30% of their income for housing.



Socially owned:

The property and/or land is typically owned by a public entity (such as a city, county, housing authority, state, or federal government) or non-profit entity (such as a community land trust or cooperative) or the renters themselves. The property will never be sold for profit on the private market.



Democratically managed:

The development, management, and operation of the property is accountable to the community, and residents have an important role in decision-making over the property's management and operations. Renters often form tenant unions at social housing properties to increase tenant power.



Cross-class:

Social housing is intentionally mixed-income, and rents are set to match specific income levels.

Social housing benefits both renters and their communities:



Renter benefits:

- **Financial security-** When rents are set by income level and stay permanently affordable, renters pay what is truly affordable for them, and they can better cover other necessities like food, medicine, school supplies, and save for emergencies and plan for other expenses.
- **Stability and safety-** Renters don't have to worry about being unexpectedly displaced or evicted from their home, which creates a sense of security and also benefits overall health and wellbeing.
- **Decision making power-** Renters can participate in the management and operation of their housing and can have their voice heard.



Community benefits:

- **Lowered housing costs-** Public investment in housing drives housing costs down and dampens price inflation.
- **Job creation-** The large-scale construction and long-term maintenance and preservation of social housing creates strong union jobs for the community.
- **Reinvestment in community instead of profit extraction-** Instead of rents going to increase the profits of corporations, rents get re-invested in the community and contribute to the public good.
- **Rooted communities-** Permanent affordability allows renters and families to stay in their homes and put down roots in their communities for the long term.

Social housing already exists across our nation and world:

While there is no “perfect example,” there are housing models in place in various parts of the US and the world that demonstrate this kind of model could work. [Vienna, Austria](#) has a robust social housing system where 3 out of every 5 residents live in social housing. [Helsinki, Finland](#), has adopted a “Housing First” approach, which focuses on providing permanent supportive housing for long-term unhoused individuals, leading to a decline in their levels of homelessness over time.

In the United States, a number of communities across the country are moving forward social housing projects:

- In 2021, Montgomery County, MD, created the [Housing Production Fund](#) to begin the funding of mixed-income affordable housing units. The fund aims to create 6,000 new affordable housing units.
- In 2023, Seattle, WA voters passed [Initiative 135](#) to create the Seattle Social Housing Developer, which plans to develop social housing in the city.
- In 2023, Atlanta, GA established the [Atlanta Urban Development Corporation](#), whose goal is to consolidate publicly owned property, partner with developers, and then develop affordable mixed-income housing.
- In 2024, Chicago, IL approved the development of a [Green Social Housing Revolving Fund](#), The project hopes to develop 600+ rental homes every five years.

When we use social housing models that prioritize the needs of our communities instead of corporate profits, we can create stable, thriving, and safe homes. By taking cues from the projects around the country and learning from their successes and stumbles, we can envision ways to adapt these models for hard-working Colorado families. Join us on our journey to learn more about social housing and create the Colorado that we know is possible.