



**Office of the County Executive
STEUART PITTMAN**

**Essential Worker Housing Access Act (Bill 78-23)
Frequently Asked Questions**

What does the Essential Worker Housing Access Act do?

The bill would create county-wide housing opportunities for county workers by requiring new developments to offer a portion of their rental and housing units at an affordable price. This means essential workers like teachers and teachers aides, construction workers, public sector workers, police officers, firefighters, service industry workers, and nurses could access affordable housing options in areas of the county where they work.

Why is the Essential Worker Housing Access Act needed?

With the cost of rent and housing outstripping the rise in household incomes, the Essential Worker Housing Access Act will be an important tool to expand housing opportunities for working people.

How will the program work?

The proposed legislation would create an inclusionary housing program where developers would be required to set aside 10% of homeownership units or 15% of rental units to workers earning 100% of Area Median Income or 75% of Area Median Income respectively.

Is the proposed program new?

The proposed program is modeled after inclusionary housing programs existing in over 700 jurisdictions across the United States, including Annapolis, Howard County and Montgomery County.

How can I apply for the program?

The application process will be managed by Arundel Community Development Services Inc. (ACDS) to determine eligibility and maintain a waiting list of eligible households. ACDS will establish and publicize information about the application process to ensure eligible applicants have equitable access after the bill passes. In addition to income eligibility, applicants will need to obtain a first mortgage loan (for homeownership) and meet applicable credit and rental application standards.

Will there be enough eligible buyers to ensure the income-limited rental and housing units will sell?

ACDS currently has over 375 active applicants in their first-time homebuyer counseling program. Additionally, the Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County (HCAAC) has more than 31,000 households on the waitlist for housing. If there are no eligible buyers, ACDS and HCAAC have the right of first option to purchase. If they decline to take the option, units can be sold or rented to non-eligible buyers (over income) at the same reduced price, however the same resale restrictions would be applied.

How would the Essential Worker Housing Access Act impact my community?



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The proposed bill would not displace or alter the character of Anne Arundel County communities. It will set aside a small percentage of housing and rental units in large new developments that would occur anyway across the county for eligible applicants who meet the income limit requirements. Applicants like first time teachers, firefighters, restaurant workers, and healthcare workers would qualify.

How does the Essential Worker Housing Access Act promote economic and racial equity?

The proposed bill is based on existing inclusionary housing programs which were first developed to counteract a history of exclusionary zoning policies that reinforce racial and economic segregation. The proposed bill would ensure housing opportunities are available to a diverse and inclusive cross-section of our county in different geographies.

Did the administration involve community members in drafting the legislation?

Yes. The bill was developed in coordination with a group of stakeholders, including residents, developers, housing experts, and civil rights organizations.

What impact will the program have on rental and home prices in the county?

Local inclusionary housing programs have been found to promote long-term housing affordability and have no known negative impact on home or rental prices.

Will the proposed bill result in a concentration of low income housing?

The proposed bill will ensure affordable housing opportunities are available throughout the county.

What impact will the proposed bill have on the Anne Arundel County Economy?

Studies show that the growth in GDP between 1964 and 2009 would have been 13.5% higher if families had better access to affordable housing. This would have led to a \$1.7 trillion increase in income, or \$8,775 in additional wages per worker.

When will the program go into effect?

If passed, the proposed legislation will go into effect on July 1, 2024.