

Meeting the Housing Needs of Public Sector Workers in Fairfax County

Allison Evelti is a third-grade teacher at Sunrise Valley Elementary School. She has been a Fairfax County Public Schools teacher for 3 years and loves her job. She earns \$51,000 a year (about 50 percent of Area Median Income).

Allison currently lives with two roommates but she would really like to find her own place. She likes living in Fairfax and is excited about everything that is going on in Reston and Tysons Corner, but most of the new housing there is out of her price range. She has considered moving back to her hometown in southeastern Virginia. She would earn less money, but the cost of living is so much lower.



The high-quality public services in Fairfax County have been essential for growth of the economy. Fairfax County has a great reputation for its first-class public services and education. However, the high cost of living in the County is a major obstacle to attracting and retaining public sector employees who provide these services.

There are ways the community can support public sector employees. The County and Public Schools make rental homes available to teachers at below market-rate rents. This type of employer assisted housing could be expanded to include more teachers and public school employees, as well as other essential County workers such as fire fighters, police officers and public health professionals.

Discussion Questions

Fairfax County Public Schools has said that it continues to lose teachers to other school districts. Do you think the community can help public sector workers find housing they can afford in the County?

Do you support the idea of developing workforce housing for public employees on county-owned land?

Note: The individual reflected in this story is fictional but is a representation of many actual residents in Fairfax County, based on an analysis of demographic data for the County.