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Gen RE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

State: New portal could save developers $20K per home

Common application site will speed up construction by cutting paperwork

Translate



In this archival photo, a Denver Housing Authority project is under construction at North Decatur Street and West 10th Avenue in Denver in 2024. Hyoung Chang — The Denver Post

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In a move meant to save developers from the headache of paperwork, Colorado will launch a standardized application for affordable housing builders to unlock federal and state funding.

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The common application, as state officials are calling it, will offer developers a single point of entry to pursue lucrative financing opportunities, from tax credits to grants, at both the state and federal levels.

"For years, developers trying to build affordable housing have had to navigate different applications, answering as many as 189 questions," Gov. Jared Polis said Monday during a news conference in Denver. "... This can be very costly. It can lead to construction delays of several months."

Chasing down various sources of funding to make affordable housing projects a reality can mean reproducing market studies, legal work, design and construction information, and financial projections for multiple applications.

All of that adds costs, said Laura Brudzynski, the CEO of Archway Communities, a nonprofit affordable housing developer based in Lakewood.

Officials say the new application, set to launch in February, will cut costs per unit of housing built by roughly $20,000 and save developers up to four months of work.

"These savings translate into more homes for our community, because behind every application is a person who needs a safe, stable and affordable place to call home," she said.

The policy builds off a website, Housing Hub Colorado, launched last year to centralize the resources available to affordable housing developers, including information on funding opportunities and how to apply.

Both the website and the common application were born out of the Colorado Housing Consortium, a coalition of public and private sector housing leaders formed to make recommendations on ways to make building affordable housing easier.

Denver Mayor Mike Johnston said the new common application was about "making government work better on the things that are most important to our residents — there is nothing more important right now in the state of Colorado than affordable housing."

Colorado's housing deficit was estimated to be 106,000 homes, condos and apartments in 2023, the most recent year for which data was available, according to a study published last year by the state's demography office.

While that's down from a peak deficit of 140,000 units in 2019, it means the state needs to build roughly 34,100 new homes each year over the next decade to meet demand.

The study notes that while housing supply has started to ratchet up, affordability has worsened because of compounding factors like rising interest rates and costs for home insurance and construction. Rent prices have also outpaced wage growth, with the study finding that, between 2000 and 2023, rent had jumped 164% while personal income had increased 144%.

Streamlining funding for affordable housing developers is among the many levers state officials have pulled to try and reverse those trends.

Polis has made housing a core of his second term, working with the legislature to pass a number of housing-related laws in recent years largely aimed at boosting supply.

Those include loosening zoning restrictions on development near transit centers, banning growth limits in cities and counties, and making it easier to build modular homes and accessory dwelling units on homeowners' properties.

But those measures have also rankled some local governments who say the policies are an overreach. Polis in 2025 signed an executive order withholding certain state funding from municipalities and counties that don't follow new housing laws.

In response, six Front Range cities sued Polis and the state. They challenged the constitutionality of the governor's order and claimed that new housing laws, which were aimed at increasing density and removing minimum parking requirements for certain developments, violated their home rule status.