



Americans for Prosperity (AFP) strives to create an economy that works for all—empowering people to earn success and realize their potential. **Overly burdensome regulations** related to housing, land use, and zoning make housing more costly and erect barriers to economic growth that inhibit opportunity and geographic mobility. For example, expensive housing prevents people from moving to pursue new job opportunities. It also makes it harder to start and raise families and seek out other opportunities. This erodes peoples’ dignity and diminishes their pursuit of happiness. **Preempting these local barriers through changes in state law** would bolster property rights and foster economic opportunity, improving outcomes for workers, renters, homeowners, and landlords.

AFP is focused on enacting these **foundational housing reforms** in all 50 states. Though the precise impact of a given policy change may depend on state or regional housing market dynamics, demographics, or other state or regional factors, research and AFP’s policy analysis support the following hierarchy of reforms.

AFP’s Solutions:

Tier 1 - Highest value:

- **Eliminate single-family zoning and permit “missing-middle” housing by right (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes):** Single-family only zoning prohibits any non-single-family home (such as duplexes, triplexes, and apartment buildings) from being constructed on a given residential lot. Single-family zoning significantly reduces housing supply, [raising prices](#) for prospective buyers and renters.
- **Legalize multifamily and mixed-use buildings in commercial zones and allow commercial-to-residential conversions:** Many localities also have commercial-only zoning, limiting where housing can be located. States should [legalize](#) multi-family housing and mixed-use buildings in previously commercial-only zoned areas. Additionally, as increased remote work has reduced commercial office space utilization, states and cities should allow commercial buildings to be converted into apartments.
- **Legalize accessory dwelling units (ADUs):** An [ADU](#) is an additional residential unit built on the same lot as an existing, larger home. ADUs can be a separate, detached residence or attached to the main residence. However, many local governments either ban or severely restrict ADUs, worsening housing crises in those areas.
- **Eliminate or reduce indirect density restrictions:** Many local governments have additional land-use regulations that limit housing development, including minimum lot sizes, minimum parking requirements, height restrictions, floor area ratio requirements, minimum setback requirements, and more. [Minimum lot size requirements](#) mandate that housing lots be at least a certain square footage, increasing the cost of parcels of land to build homes. Parking requirements mandate that houses and apartment buildings provide residents with designated parking spaces, reducing the available space for housing, while building height restrictions limit skyscrapers and apartment buildings.

Tier 2 - Moderate value:

- **Repeal restrictions on manufactured housing, tiny houses, and alternative, non-stick built construction methods:** Many state and local regulations exist on mobile and tiny homes, limiting where they can be situated, their uses, what materials the homes can be built of, and more. Additionally, states and localities also restrict or ban the use of new technologies and innovations in home building, such as 3D printed homes, factory-built housing, and modular homes.
- **Repeal or prohibit mandatory inclusionary zoning:** Mandatory inclusionary zoning is the practice of requiring certain new housing developments to set aside a percentage of units for income-restricted housing. While this requirement is ostensibly to create more affordable housing, research [shows](#) that mandatory programs actually increase overall housing prices. To increase inclusionary zoning unit buildings, local governments often entice developers with density bonuses - the ability to build more units than would otherwise be allowed under the area's zoning laws. Rather than entice developers with density bonuses, states and cities should eliminate or significantly reform residential zoning laws for all housing types.
- **Repeal and preempt rent control laws:** Rent control is a price-fixing scheme limiting the rental increases a landlord can institute. While aimed at increasing affordable rental housing, rent control [reduces](#) the housing supply by diminishing the profit incentive to build more, and results in inadequate and worsening housing conditions for low-income people. As a result, local governments should repeal any existing rent control laws, and state governments should preempt local government by banning rent control policies statewide.

Tier 3 - Lower value:

- **Eliminate Urban Growth Boundaries:** Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) are boundaries around city centers that limit housing and commercial development outside the urban area. By limiting housing development, UGBs raise the cost of housing, making cities less affordable.
- **Allow single-room occupancy (SRO) housing:** In the first half of the 20th century, SRO housing (such as rooms in boarding houses) provided a quick and affordable housing option for single adults and low-income individuals. However, since the 1970s, many localities have banned SROs.
- **Allow single-staircase apartment buildings:** Single-staircase buildings are common in Europe but are banned in many cities in the U.S. Allowing single-staircase apartment buildings would increase housing supply and affordability.
- **Create a housing taskforce:** To start the process of zoning and land-use reform at the state level, an executive branch task force or special legislative housing committee can provide a platform and venue for legislators, housing policy experts, state-based advocates, and other stakeholders to discuss and formulate concrete housing reform proposals.