

# State of North Carolina

**JOSH STEIN**  
GOVERNOR

May 19, 2026

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 36

### INCREASING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL NORTH CAROLINIANS

**WHEREAS**, Governor Josh Stein is working for a safer, stronger North Carolina, and housing affordability is fundamental to the promise of economic mobility for all people and the health of the communities we call home; and

**WHEREAS**, demand for housing is growing as North Carolina last year attracted more new residents from other states than any other state and was the 2025 top state for economic development, with announcements of more than 35,000 good-paying jobs and \$24 billion in capital investments; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2025 housing gap analysis found that North Carolina has a shortage of available homes estimated at 764,000 through 2029 (322,000 rental homes and 442,000 homes for purchase); and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina communities need more options that meet people's needs and budgets; approximately half of renter households are housing cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their incomes for shelter, and in many counties that share is much greater; and affordability for buyers declined in all 100 counties from 2020 through 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2025 North Carolina area median income was \$95,000; low-income households make 80% of area median income, which was \$76,000 for a family of four; and

**WHEREAS**, almost half of all North Carolina homes available for purchase are listed at approximately \$400,000 or more; and a household would need to make an annual income of \$110,000 to spend less than 30% of household income on a \$400,000 mortgage; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina is a welcoming and desirable place to live because of its people, its natural resources, its economy, and its policy decisions informed by the requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act and North Carolina State Fair Housing Act that help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live here and enjoy the wonders of our State; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence shows that housing instability during childhood has a negative impact on economic security, educational attainment, mental health, and physical health in adulthood; and

**WHEREAS**, proximity to reliable, affordable, and efficient transportation is essential to housing affordability and access, as transportation is the second-largest household expense and

directly affects where North Carolinians can live and access jobs, education, health care, and other essential services; and

**WHEREAS**, access to housing is a major barrier to those re-entering their communities after incarceration, contributing to significant homelessness and other challenges for the people returning; and

**WHEREAS**, reports show that up to 8% of North Carolinians experiencing homelessness are veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina needs suitable housing options in reasonable proximity to wrap-around supportive services for older adults, people with disabilities, people re-entering communities following incarceration, and people experiencing substance abuse issues or physical, mental, or behavioral health challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, rural North Carolina communities face failing private wells and other water infrastructure challenges; and population growth, economic expansion, and extreme weather place additional pressures on already limited water resources; and investments are needed to increase public water infrastructure capacity and combat contamination of North Carolina's groundwater and surface water supplies; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina households that have access to real property through lineage or inheritance are often impeded from accessing affordable options to build or rehabilitate a home on their property; and

**WHEREAS**, with more than one-third of North Carolina's existing housing stock having been built more than 45 years ago, efforts to increase housing options should include rehabilitation and incorporate advancements to make homes more resilient, more readily preserved, and more affordable over their lifespans; and

**WHEREAS**, shortages in licensed and credentialed trades professionals, an aging workforce, and low skill levels, among other stressors, delay construction and renovation projects; and last year, the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships established goals to advance the careers we need to build and preserve our housing stock; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2025 North Carolina participated in a federal workgroup to address the connection between Medicaid funds and housing services and encouraged collaboration and connection between North Carolina housing programs; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina state agencies including the Department of Administration ("DOA"), Department of Health and Human Services ("DHHS"), Department of Environmental Quality ("DEQ"), Department of Transportation ("DOT"), and Department of Commerce ("Commerce") help our residents keep calling North Carolina home by providing critical expertise, programs, and services that range from rental assistance and housing development finance to road maintenance, sewer line construction, historic preservation, and access to green spaces; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2025 feasibility study highlighted the need for increased coordination among state agency housing-related programs and services and recommended that North Carolina define a statewide housing strategy; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Article III of the North Carolina Constitution and N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143A-4 and 143B-4, the Governor is the chief executive officer of the state and is responsible for formulating and administering the policies of the executive branch of state government; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-12, the Governor has the authority and the duty to supervise the official conduct of all executive and ministerial officers.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and laws of the State of North Carolina, **IT IS ORDERED:**

**Section 1. A new Senior Advisor for Housing Policy role is created in the Governor's Office.**

The Governor establishes the position of Senior Advisor for Housing Policy and directs the Senior Advisor as follows:

1. To work closely with local and tribal governments, state agencies, and agency partners, define the statewide housing strategy, establish housing affordability goals and metrics, communicate North Carolina's statewide housing policy, and oversee implementation of, and progress on, the statewide housing strategy.
2. To consult with decision-makers from the private sector, philanthropy, the faith community, nonprofit service organizations, academia, national and regional associations, and state and local and tribal governments to identify best practices and high-impact housing interventions that can be expanded, launched, or piloted. The Senior Advisor will work with the Governor's Office and agency staff to evaluate and prioritize interventions.
3. To present to the Governor within ninety (90) days of effective date an initial proposal to track, monitor, and ensure progress toward thriving communities, increased housing availability, and improved affordability outcomes and to report the state's progress to the Governor on a semi-annual basis thereafter.

The Governor directs state agencies and the Senior Advisor as follows:

4. State agencies as defined pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-3 and for which the principal head is appointed by the Governor to be prepared to collaborate with the Senior Advisor to prioritize increasing access to housing opportunities for all residents in agency policy and programmatic decisions, to proactively seek alignment in agency outreach and activities across the state's housing-adjacent planning initiatives, including but not limited to
  - a. the North Carolina Interagency Council for Coordinating Homelessness Programs ("ICCHP"),
  - b. North Carolina Strategic Housing Plan,
  - c. Reentry 2030 Strategic Plan,
  - d. State Historic Preservation Plan,
  - e. North Carolina Consolidated Plan,
  - f. North Carolina's Multisector Plan for Aging,
  - g. Strategic Economic Development Plan, and

to collaborate with other state agencies and local governments to effectuate these goals, in accordance with the directives set forth in this Executive Order. The Governor further directs that each principal department as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-6, except the North Carolina State Highway Patrol and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, shall designate a department housing lead who can be involved in implementation of this Order and serve as departmental point of contact for the Senior Advisor.

5. State agencies as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-3 for which the principal head is not appointed by the Governor are strongly urged to work with the Senior Advisor to prioritize increasing access to housing opportunities for all residents in agency policy and programmatic decisions and to collaborate with other state agencies and local governments to effectuate that goal in accordance with the directives set forth in this Executive Order.
6. Within forty-five (45) days of this Order's effective date, and at least annually until expiration, the Senior Advisor shall confer with the department housing leads to discuss the state of housing in North Carolina, the ways their relevant programs and policies will prioritize housing access and housing creation and/or maintaining existing housing opportunities, and any suggestions or ideas for the same.
7. The Senior Advisor shall work closely with the department housing leads, private and nonprofit sectors, regional associations, and local and tribal governments to coordinate and

streamline housing-adjacent resources and align economic development policies and programming to help North Carolinians produce, preserve, and access more housing options.

## **Section 2: Efficient Deployment of State Resources Through Technology and Data.**

1. The Governor directs that state agencies and departments as described in Section 1.5 above shall collaborate with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (“NCHFA”) and other partners to explore the use of advanced technologies and existing data to penetrate more geographic areas that are not sufficiently served by existing housing development infrastructure. Such activity should include efforts to improve access to historic rehabilitation resources and opportunities, highlight locations in under-resourced areas for housing-related economic development and investment, and increase efficiencies in small-scale projects to enable more participation by small developers.
2. These state agencies and departments shall also collaborate with NCHFA and other partners to explore the development of integrated housing information platforms to streamline data across jurisdictions and address critical inputs like zoning, infrastructure capacity, transportation, permitting, and market feasibility.
3. The Governor directs DOT to explore metrics for transportation project impacts on community connectivity, housing availability, and local economic benefits and to collaborate with local planning organizations and community-based organizations to support transit-oriented development, locally driven housing development, and local connectivity. The Governor also directs DOT to incorporate Complete Streets guidance into project design to the maximum extent feasible to support community connectivity, safety, and housing access.
4. The Governor directs DOA to work with the Senior Advisor and state agencies, as part of DOA’s ongoing survey and disposition processes, to evaluate underutilized state-owned properties and identify which may be suitable for housing development or amenities, taking into account various housing types and market segment needs.
5. The Governor directs state agencies and DOA, wherever feasible, to consider enhancing access to state government services through new and/or renewal leases in proximity to areas with residences, sidewalks, and transit access.
6. The Governor directs DEQ to work with the Senior Advisor and state agencies to advise on the use of the Flood Resiliency Blueprint and other natural hazard risk data (e.g., landslide, wildfire), drinking water and wastewater treatment system capacity, stormwater, and water allocation limitations that may impact development patterns for new housing.
7. The Governor directs DEQ to work with the Senior Advisor and state agencies to advise on the latest technology and opportunities to support builders and homeowners in mitigating extreme weather risk.
8. The Governor directs DHHS to work with NCHFA to explore changes to processes and policies and the adoption of technological tools (e.g., dashboards) to increase the availability and array of living options available to persons with Mental Health, Substance Use, Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (“IDD”) and Traumatic Brain Injury (“TBI”) needs to enable the state agencies to prioritize the expansion of supportive housing models that pair affordable housing with coordinated services for individuals with complex needs, including those involved in the justice system, to improve housing stability, reduce recidivism, and decrease reliance on crisis and institutional systems.
9. The Governor further directs DHHS to work with NCHFA to explore changes to processes and policies (inclusive of tenant selection policies for housing owners) and the adoption of technological tools to expand access to populations that are systematically and recurrently excluded from affordable housing (e.g., justice-involved populations, IDD populations, people using housing subsidies/vouchers).

**Section 3. Further Integrate Housing Initiatives at Department of Commerce.**

The Governor directs Commerce:

1. To designate a department housing lead with the visibility to engage and coordinate across all housing-adjacent resources at Commerce. The Commerce Department housing lead will work closely with the Senior Advisor to support the statewide housing strategy, including on engagement with Commerce partners.
2. In consultation with the Senior Advisor, to make efforts to align and catalyze programmatic support for housing, including but not limited to grant passthroughs to communities, developers, and/or secondary parties such as nonprofits, including for housing-supportive infrastructure.
3. To prioritize initiatives that lead to pathways to increased housing development and construction workforce capacity in its deployment of existing resources.
4. To work with state agencies and other partners to expand existing and effective programs and partnerships that will maximize training, graduation, and certifications in construction-related and skilled trades and professions, including inspectors, appraisers, and mappers, to augment local government resources.
5. To work with partners to strengthen the housing construction supply chain in underserved and high-need areas, including workforce capacity, building materials, and innovation-driven production to reduce construction timelines and cost.
6. To give housing creation and support significant weight in the process for nominating eligible census tracts to the U.S. Treasury to be designated Opportunity Zones.


**Section 4. Duration.**

This Executive Order is effective immediately. It shall remain in effect until June 30, 2029, or until earlier rescinded.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in the City of Raleigh, this 19th day of May in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-six.

  
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Josh Stein  
Governor

**ATTEST:**

  
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Timothy L. Crowley  
Chief of Staff, Secretary of State

