



Affordable Housing Policy Advocacy at the Housing & Community Development Network of NJ

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About the Housing & Community Development Network (HCDNNJ)



- ▶ The HCDNNJ is a community-based nonprofit organization comprised of over two-hundred member nonprofit organizations
- ▶ Centered on promoting affordable housing, the development of healthy homes & communities, and providing opportunities for low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents to become homeowners.
- ▶ From the Network's mission statement: "[We] share a commitment to promoting economic justice and the empowerment of low-income individuals and communities, and encouraging wider participation in the framing and implementation of public policies."

Affordable Housing Trust Fund



- ▶ Administered by the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- ▶ Assists municipalities, for-profit, and non-profit developers (like nonprofit Community Development Corporations, some of which are member organizations at the HCDNNJ) in developing affordable housing
- ▶ The HCDNNJ set an advocacy goal for the AHTF to reach a state government investment of \$125 million
- ▶ The proposed FY2022 budget suggested diverting funds from the AHTF to housing programs that benefit middle-class (not LMI) residents

Affordable Housing Trust Fund



Where is the money being diverted to?

- ▶ **\$22 million:** for HMFA's Multifamily Gap Financing Pool
- ▶ **\$20 million:** For HMFA's Down Payment Assistance Program
- ▶ **\$10 million:** For HMFA's Risk Share Pilot Program
- ▶ **\$5 million:** For DCA administrative costs
- ▶ **TOTAL:** \$57,000,000

Affordable Housing Trust Fund



Advocacy Strategies

- ▶ May 2021 – Rally to Protect the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Keynote speaker, Asw. Britnee Timberlake: “We cannot talk about losing any of those [AHTF] dollars for a diversion....our developers are relying on that money to be there.”

- ▶ June 2021 – Legislative Day

Virtual meetings conducted between staff from Network member orgs and their state legislative reps

The Fair Share Housing Center and *Mount Laurel* doctrine



- ▶ The *Mount Laurel* doctrine, named for a court decision, compels municipalities to provide a pathway for developers to create affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans
- ▶ These legal obligations were formerly enforced by the state Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) – dissolved under the Christie admin
- ▶ Currently, enforcement of these obligations has fallen to the nonprofit sector, including the FSHC – “Fair Share Housing” obligations

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Key documents: Fair Share Plan and Midpoint Review Report

The City of Summit adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, which included 41 credits toward its 36-unit Realistic Development Potential. Since the adoption of that plan, the project 27-31 Euclid Avenue changed from a 5-unit project to a 4-unit project, which no longer generated an affordable obligation under the ordinance, and the 4-6 Ashwood Avenue project (Now 86 Park Avenue) is only constructing one unit on-site and giving the City a payment in lieu of construction for the second unit. The City still has more than enough credits to satisfy its RDP.

Very Low Income Analysis

<u>Project Containing VLI Units</u>	<u>VLI Requirement</u>	<u>Number of VLI Units Produced</u>	<u>Status</u>
Mason Properties	2-3 units	This project is not yet under construction.	City is entering into Developer's Agreement and has rezoned the property.
Parish 100% affordable project	13 units	This project is not yet under construction.	Ordinance revised.

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The Network's Fair Share advocacy strategies:

- ▶ **Identify Key Localities:**

- ▶ Which towns are most behind on their midpoint review?
- ▶ Do those towns have direct A-Team representation?

- ▶ **Who Are our Legislative Allies:**

- ▶ Identify which legislative districts our focus towns are in. Who represents?
- ▶ Work with our A-Team leaders to explore local mayor/council relations.

- ▶ **Municipal Housing Trust Funds:**

- ▶ What resources do towns have in their municipal housing trust funds? Have to work with individual towns to provide that information.
- ▶ Every settlement has a trust fund and spending plan.

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Fair Share “cheat sheets”

- ▶ Resource for the Network’s county-level A-teams
- ▶ Paired with slideshow presentation on FSH obligations

Core Counties FSP Progress

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- Monmouth County
- Morris County
- Middlesex County**
- Mercer County
- Union County
- Bergen County

Middlesex County

County	Municipality	3rd Round Obligation	Completed Units based on MPR	Midpoint Review
Middlesex	Cranbury Township	133 AHU (total oblg.)	17 AHU	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SwyMSxL_aAT5vwwBRZY2OdaEU-0DCAj/view?usp=sharing
Middlesex	Dunellen Borough	66 AHU	96 AHU unmet	https://cms1files.revize.com/dunellenj/AffordableHousing/Midpoint%20Review%20Report%206-30-20.pdf
Middlesex	East Brunswick Township	75 AHU	560 AHU	
Middlesex	Edison Township	695 AHU (total oblg.)	-	https://www.edisonnj.org/About%20Edison/Edison%20midpoint%20review.pdf