

Omaha Affordable Housing Campaign: \$1 Million Initiative

Campaign Overview

Goal: Raise \$1 million to create affordable housing solutions in the Omaha metropolitan area

Target: Working families, young professionals, seniors, and others priced out of the current housing market

Timeline: 12-18 months

Current Omaha Housing Crisis Context

Key Statistics & Challenges

- Average home price: \$279,760 (2024)
- Rent increases outpacing wage growth statewide
- Housing shortage affecting thousands across Nebraska
- Recent legislative tensions with LB 840 creating uncertainty for public housing

Recent Positive Developments

- City received \$20 million federal award for affordable housing expansion
- Mayor John Ewing Jr. proposing "single largest investment" in affordable housing
- New "direct-to-housing" pilot program launching
- ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) laws being updated for 2025

Campaign Strategy

Phase 1: Foundation & Legal Structure (Months 1-2)

1. Establish Legal Entity

- Form 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- Register in Nebraska and obtain necessary permits
- Establish board of directors with housing, finance, and community expertise

2. Partner with Existing Organizations

- Connect with United Way of the Midlands
- Partner with Habitat for Humanity Omaha
- Collaborate with Front Porch Investments (already awarded \$12M in city loans)

- Work with Omaha Community Land Trust

3. Legal Compliance

- Ensure compliance with Fair Housing Act
- Follow Nebraska anti-discrimination laws
- Align with city's Housing Affordability Action Plan

Phase 2: Campaign Launch (Months 3-4)

1. Multi-Platform Fundraising Strategy

- GoFundMe for individual donors
- Corporate sponsorship program
- Grant applications to foundations
- Community events and partnerships

2. Marketing & Outreach

- Social media campaign highlighting personal stories
- Local media partnerships
- Community presentations
- Church and organization partnerships

Phase 3: Implementation Models (Months 5-18)

Option A: Micro-Housing Development (\$1M Impact)

- **Target:** 8-10 small affordable units
- **Model:** Tiny homes or efficiency apartments
- **Cost:** \$80,000-\$120,000 per unit including land
- **Timeline:** 12-15 months to completion

Option B: Down Payment Assistance Program

- **Target:** 40-50 first-time homebuyers
- **Model:** \$20,000-\$25,000 per family assistance
- **Impact:** Leverage additional mortgage lending
- **Timeline:** Ongoing program over 2-3 years

Option C: Housing Rehabilitation Program

- **Target:** 15-20 existing properties
- **Model:** Purchase and renovate distressed properties
- **Cost:** \$50,000-\$70,000 per unit renovation
- **Timeline:** 8-12 months per property

Option D: Land Banking Initiative

- **Target:** Acquire strategic parcels for future development
- **Model:** Purchase land now for affordable development later
- **Impact:** Control costs and ensure long-term affordability
- **Timeline:** Immediate acquisition, future development

Phase 4: Sustainable Operations

Revenue Streams

1. **Rental Income** (if developing rental properties)
2. **Shared Equity Programs** (recover funds for reinvestment)
3. **Ongoing Fundraising** (annual campaigns)
4. **Grant Funding** (state, federal, foundation sources)

Community Impact Metrics

- Number of families housed
- Average income of beneficiaries
- Cost savings per family served
- Community economic impact
- Long-term housing stability rates

Addressing Recent Legislative Issues

Opportunity from LB 840 Situation

- Position campaign as community-based alternative to troubled public housing
- Emphasize local control and accountability
- Partner with tenant advocacy groups affected by OHA disputes

Compliance Strategy

- Work with housing attorneys familiar with Nebraska law

- Ensure all programs meet fair housing requirements
- Establish clear, transparent governance structure

Personal Testimony Integration

Campaign Messaging

- Share authentic story of housing challenges
- Connect personal experience to broader community need
- Emphasize solutions-focused approach
- Highlight importance of stable housing for life success

Storytelling Strategy

- Video testimonials from campaign founder and beneficiaries
- Written stories for website and social media
- Speaking engagements at community events
- Media interviews focusing on solutions

Budget Allocation Recommendations

Capital Projects (70% - \$700,000)

- Land acquisition and development costs
- Construction or rehabilitation expenses
- Infrastructure and utility connections
- Professional fees (architects, contractors, legal)

Program Operations (20% - \$200,000)

- Staff salaries and benefits
- Office space and administrative costs
- Program management and case work
- Financial counseling and support services

Marketing & Fundraising (10% - \$100,000)

- Campaign materials and website development
- Social media and digital marketing

- Events and community outreach
- Professional fundraising support

Success Metrics

Year 1 Goals

- Raise \$1 million in committed funds
- Establish legal structure and partnerships
- Begin first housing projects
- Serve 10-50 families (depending on model chosen)

Long-term Vision (3-5 Years)

- Create permanent affordable housing pipeline
- Establish \$5-10 million endowment
- Serve 200+ families annually
- Become model for other communities

Risk Mitigation

Financial Risks

- Diversify funding sources
- Establish reserve funds
- Use phased development approach
- Regular financial audits and transparency

Regulatory Risks

- Work with experienced housing attorneys
- Maintain compliance monitoring
- Build relationships with city officials
- Stay informed about legislative changes

Market Risks

- Focus on truly affordable price points
- Build flexibility into development models
- Monitor local economic conditions

- Maintain community partnerships

Next Steps

1. Immediate Actions (Next 30 Days)

- Consult with nonprofit attorney about legal structure
- Research similar successful campaigns in comparable cities
- Begin building advisory team and board of directors
- Draft initial case statement and campaign materials

2. Month 2-3 Actions

- File incorporation paperwork and obtain 501(c)(3) status
- Launch preliminary fundraising with close contacts
- Identify and approach potential major donors
- Begin conversations with city planning and housing officials

3. Month 4+ Actions

- Launch public campaign
- Begin property identification and acquisition
- Implement chosen housing model
- Establish ongoing operations and sustainability plan

This campaign represents an opportunity to create lasting change in Omaha's housing landscape while building a sustainable model for ongoing affordable housing development.