

# Working Homes, LLC

## Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs

June 8, 2023

### What is Workforce Housing?

“Workforce Housing” refers to properties that are designed to be affordable to the local workforce. Housing is considered affordable when the monthly payment (rent or mortgage) equals no more than 30% of a household’s monthly gross income.

### Why Was Working Homes, LLC created?

Working Homes, LLC was created to increase the number of attractive, well-built, energy-efficient homes available to people in Wallowa County whose household income is between 60% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI), roughly \$46,800 to \$93,600 per year. This income range is too high to qualify for most subsidized housing (often limited to households below 60% AMI), but not enough to afford most of the market-rate homes in our County. The cost of land and construction today requires new sources of funding to develop affordable workforce housing.

Area Median Income figures come from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), based on Census data etc. The income ranges here reflect federal and state definitions for various types of housing.

### What types of homes are needed?

Based on an initial assessment, we believe there is a need for a mix of owner-occupied and rental homes, with owner-occupied homes priced in the range of \$150,000 to \$340,000--for households earning the following income.

Wage/Hr	Annual Pay	Household AMI%
\$10.00	\$20,800	27%
\$15.00	\$31,200	40%
\$22.50	\$46,800	60%
\$25.00	\$52,000	67%
\$30.00	\$62,400	80%
\$35.00	\$72,800	94%
\$40.00	\$83,200	107%
\$42.50	\$88,400	114%
\$45.00	\$93,600	120%

Hourly Wages generally considered "workforce housing wages" for a household living in Wallowa County (60% - 120% AMI).

Based on 2023 HUD Median Income for Wallowa County

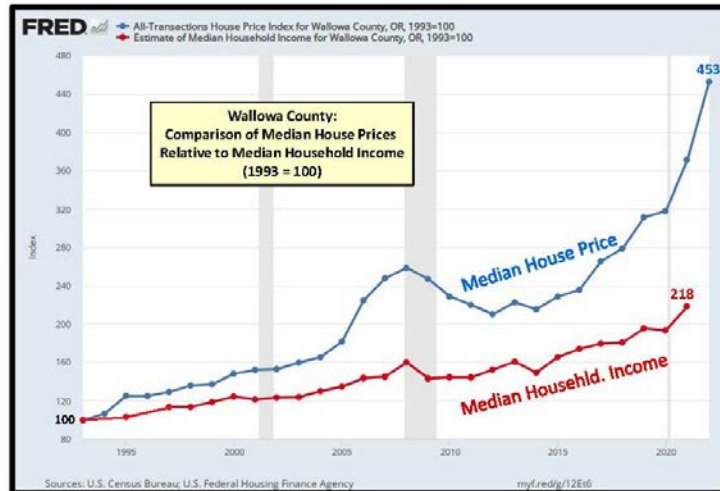
### Why is workforce housing important?

Vibrant communities are places where people can live, work, raise a family, start a business, and retire. Housing is a foundation of Wallowa County’s economy – as essential as good jobs, schools, and health care. Communities depend on workers at a variety of levels in an assortment of industries and preserving livability requires housing that is affordable at various income levels.

Nearly every employer in Wallowa County has expressed concerns about finding employees and ensuring new hires have a place to live. If employees can’t live in the County where they work, it impacts the economy and community – including our Main Street businesses, our schools, and our neighborhoods.

## Why can't many workers find an affordable place to live in Wallowa County?

Housing construction over the last decade has not kept up with demand--both here and across the country. A fair amount of existing workforce housing has been converted to recreation use as second homes or vacation rentals. And County wages have not kept up with rapidly rising rents and home prices. The following chart shows that the median home price in Wallowa County over the last decade increased by more than 115% while median household income rose just 45%.



These same dynamics affect housing affordability nationwide – especially across the rural West. In many respects, the current housing problem is similar to the severe housing shortage our country faced at the end of WWII when Congress declared a national housing emergency.

Wallowa County needs more homes that are affordable and available to the local workforce. Current real estate, construction, and financing options are not meeting this need. This problem is not temporary. We need to think long-term. We welcome your ideas on how to solve the problem.

## What types of housing will be built?

Housing developed by Working Homes, LLC will be guided by a community design process. For the 20-acre parcel under contract near Joseph, Wallowa Resources hired Scott Edwards Architecture to develop concepts that respond to community values and provide attractive, high-quality, and energy-efficient housing that is affordable for our local workforce. A community survey launched in early June of 2023 represents our first step in seeking your input on the types and sizes of workforce housing that our community needs. A series of public workshops to be held over the next several months will share design concepts and invite additional community input.

## Who will build the homes?

Working Homes, LLC will continue Wallowa Resources' practice of prioritizing local economic benefit for any investments we make in housing. When we have final design plans and funding in place, we will include local and regional contractors in the solicitation of bids for all new construction and/remodeling work.

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