



*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
*Office of the Governor*

## *Executive Order*

**NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE (2018)**

### **ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS VIRGINIA'S UNMET HOUSING NEEDS**

#### **Importance of the Issue**

The sustained welfare of Virginians and the communities in which they reside depends upon the quality, availability, and affordability of housing. In recent decades, Virginia has made substantial progress in improving the quality of housing and the living environment of Virginians. However, both our urban and rural communities face a shortage of affordable housing. The high cost burden of housing, especially for lower wage earners or those with special needs, is contributing to housing instability and homelessness.

In addition to these existing needs, communities across the Commonwealth must also produce substantial new affordable housing units in order to accommodate anticipated economic and workforce growth. As the Commonwealth continues to diversify and strengthen its economy, ensuring the availability of quality, affordable housing that is proximate to employment and educational opportunities will continue to be a critical measure of community vitality and readiness for new economic investment.

To address these needs, the Commonwealth's housing initiatives should focus on enhancing Virginia's economic growth and promoting education, health, and job opportunities for all Virginians. The Commonwealth must continue to work with public and private partners to address housing instability and homelessness, provide permanent supportive housing for vulnerable populations with special needs, and expand the supply of quality, affordable housing required to meet the needs of a growing and diverse workforce. The Commonwealth must also commit to fostering inclusive communities through the deconcentration of poverty and efforts to ensure fair housing is a priority.

#### **Establishment of the Commonwealth's Housing Initiatives**

Accordingly, by virtue of the power vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, and subject to my continuing

and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby direct the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, with the assistance of the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Executive Director of the Virginia Housing Development Authority, to identify and implement actions to enable the development of quality, affordable housing with the goal of strengthening communities and fostering economic growth. I also direct the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and its agencies to partner in this effort and to identify personnel and resources to assist in the implementation of this Executive Order. The Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall work with the Commonwealth's economic development and workforce development agencies on this effort.

The housing policies and actions developed pursuant to this Executive Order shall include the following:

1. Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing. This evidence-based housing model is critically important to address the most urgent areas of housing need, including programs to reduce homelessness and housing instability for vulnerable populations. The effort should bolster the ongoing inter-agency structures aimed at providing permanent supportive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities, serious mental illness, or substance use disorders, including pregnant and parenting women. The effort should also focus on individuals experiencing homelessness and individuals with other support service needs.
2. Address the shortage of quality affordable housing. The effort shall prioritize identifying and promoting policy solutions that reduce the cost of housing and provide additional affordable housing units, especially in proximity to existing and developing employment centers. The effort shall include engagement with local governments, the business community, nonprofit organizations, and other interested stakeholders. The effort should focus on coordinating economic development projects with housing production, supporting housing production technology, and supporting regional and local pilot projects that increase the supply of affordable housing units.
3. Reduce the rate of evictions across the Commonwealth. The effort shall include diversion and prevention programs that bolster housing stability for individuals and families, evaluating potential pilot programs that provide eviction relief, and counseling and education services. The Commonwealth should collaborate with stakeholders and researchers to ensure strong data collection and metrics are readily available to address this challenge, especially in communities with high eviction rates. The effort shall also prioritize policy solutions to address the underlying challenges of poverty that contribute to housing instability.

### **Staffing and Funding**

Staffing shall be furnished by the Offices of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and Secretary of Health and Human Resources, their agencies, and other agencies and offices as

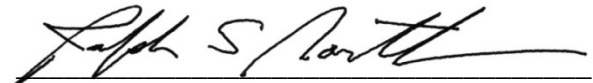
needed. Stakeholders consulted in the review and development of housing policy shall do so without compensation.

**Effective Date of the Executive Order**

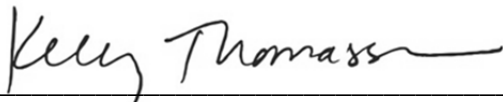
This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018.



  
Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:

  
Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth