SC 8 - Fostering Employer-Assisted Workforce Housing

**Project Lead:**
Julie Siegert, Housing Director, Scott County CDA
(952) 402-9022, ext. 225
jsiegert@scottcda.org
www.scottcda.org

**Description:** Since 2000, the cost of housing (particularly rental housing) throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area has increased, while incomes have generally stayed the same or decreased. In a recent survey of more than 400 Scott County employers, 1 in 5 respondents said housing for lower-income employees was an issue. Given the historically low unemployment rate, employers have an interest in greater housing affordability and opportunity in the communities where they are located to ensure they have access to a sufficient labor pool to fill open positions and remain competitive.

One approach to address this issue is employer-assisted housing (EAH) programs, in which an employer helps employees acquire housing near their place of work. Assistance can take many forms, from helping with a down payment or security deposit to investing in development of more workforce housing in their community. This project will involve analyzing different EAH models to determine if they are effective at attracting and retaining a workforce, and to identify specific businesses or business sectors in Scott County that would benefit from and potentially participate in an EAH initiative in the county.

**Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas for Exploration:**

- What sorts of EAH programs exist in Minnesota and other states? Based on an analysis of these programs, what are best practices to ensure success?
- How effective are EAHs in attracting and retaining a reliable workforce? Do homeownership or rental models have greater success, and why?
- Are their particular businesses or business sectors in Scott County that are a good fit for EAH programs because of their inability to find sufficient employees, access to developable land, or other characteristics? Specific industries to consider include, but are not limited to, entertainment/hospitality, manufacturing, construction, health care, and education.
- What local and state policies can facilitate or encourage employer participation in an EAH program? How can an EAH program be marketed to businesses in Scott County?
How Will Student Work Be Used to Build Resiliency?

Student research will be used to inform the county’s Live, Learn, Earn working groups about the potential for an EAH program in Scott County, and to begin discussions with potential employers to determine their interest in participating in an EAH program.

Existing Plans and Reports:

- Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, *Employer-Assisted Housing Resource Guide*
- *Employer-Assisted Housing: Competitiveness Through Partnerships*
- City and County of Denver Lower Income Voucher Equity (LIVE) Pilot Program
- Comprehensive Housing Needs Update, Scott County (Maxfield Research November 2016) [https://www.scottcda.org/page.php?id=5](https://www.scottcda.org/page.php?id=5)
- Employer Survey April 2018 [http://nebula.wsimg.com/ae9abf06d1f152def47862d6708d47de?AccessKeyId=BB72E3D85D9D1BF7A1B6&disposition=0&alloworigin=1](http://nebula.wsimg.com/ae9abf06d1f152def47862d6708d47de?AccessKeyId=BB72E3D85D9D1BF7A1B6&disposition=0&alloworigin=1)

Potential Stakeholders and Partners:

- SCALE’s Live, Learn, Earn Housing and Workforce Readiness work groups
- Employers in Scott County
- Housing developers in Scott County
- Chambers of Commerce in Scott County
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

To learn more about this project or discuss how to integrate it into a UMN course or an individual student project (such as a culminating experience, capstone, master’s project, or independent study), please contact Sarah Tschida or Mike Greco with the Resilient Communities Project at [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu).