

WELCOME TO THE "OPEN HOUSE" BLOG

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[Guest Blogger Jaimie Ross: Implement the Federal Vision for Housing Opportunity at the Local Level](#)

As one of those fortunate enough to have participated in the "Solutions for Working Families: 2009 Learning Conference on State and Local Housing Policy" in Chicago, I congratulate NHC, the Center for Housing Policy and its partners for putting together an extraordinary event. Bravo!

The conference was chocked full of housing policy and practice experts excited about the new leadership at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the abundance of initiatives that give us reason to believe the people in charge really "get it." HUD Secretary Donovan spoke about the Sustainability Initiative and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative. HUD, at its highest level, understands the importance of creating affordable housing in mixed income neighborhoods with access to public transit, economic and educational opportunity.

Our challenge outside of Washington, DC, is to translate the wisdom at the highest level of the Administration into change at the state and local level. The development or redevelopment of housing affordable to low-income people in areas of opportunity will not happen without local inclusionary housing policies (land use regulations) that provide for long term or permanent affordability.

Local housing advocates would be mightily assisted in persuading local jurisdictions to adopt inclusionary housing policies if the adoption of an inclusionary housing ordinance resulted in an increase in federal funding to the community. For example, if a community were to receive additional [Community Development Block Grant Program](#) (CDBG), [HOME Investment Partnerships Program](#) (HOME), or transportation funding provided it had adopted a mandatory inclusionary housing ordinance, the adoption of that ordinance would likely meet with much less resistance.

Best practices for inclusionary housing policies were highlighted at the National Inclusionary Housing Conferences put together by [NHC](#), the [Innovative Housing Institute](#), [PolicyLink](#), and [BPI](#) (for 2005 and 2007 see [NIHC](#)). Those policies improve as the National Inclusionary Housing Movement continues to evolve.

Incentives from the federal level could open the door for the adoption of local ordinances that reflect best practices from around the globe. The result: more equitable and long term sustainable development; smart growth and new urbanism that actually deliver on the promise of incorporating affordability.

Jaimie Ross is the director of Affordable Housing at [1000 Friends of Florida](#), a not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1986 to serve as Florida's growth management "watchdog."