

# “Yes in God’s Backyard” Legislation

Federal, State, and Local  
Policy Updates



## ***Yes in God's Backyard Act (S.2720)***

- Introduced by Senator Mark Warner (D-VA)
  - Other supporters: Senators Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), Andy Kim (D-NJ), Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD), Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Tim Kaine (D-VA)
- Representative Nanette Barragán (D-CA-44) plans to introduce the bill in the House soon
- The *YIGBY Act* would:
  - Provide technical assistance to faith-based organizations and institutions of higher education seeking to use their land for affordable rental housing;
  - Provide technical assistance to local governments on best practices to streamline permitting and reduce barriers; and
  - Create \$50 million per year in grants for communities that adopt policies removing barriers to affordable housing on property owned by faith-based organizations or colleges.

## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

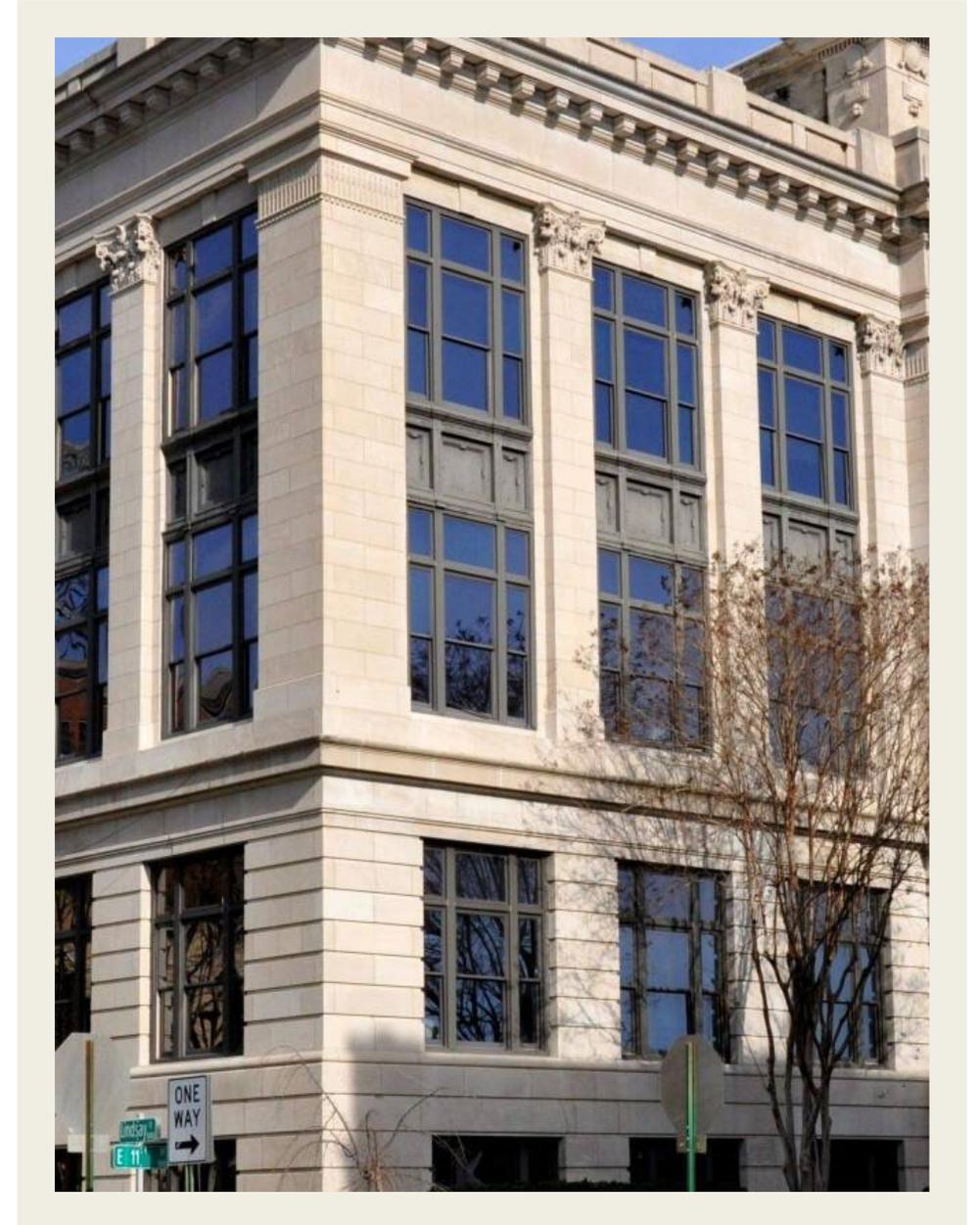
# Chattanooga

In 2022, Mayor Kelly selected an Equitable Recovery Commission to develop the framework for the “One Chattanooga Relief and Recovery Plan”, a comprehensive plan emphasizing equitable development and community partnerships.

The plan provides over \$30 million in investments for innovative, community-based initiatives, focusing on addressing deep-rooted social and economic inequalities. These initiatives aim to tackle issues such as lack of access to opportunity, housing, mental healthcare, and quality education, thereby catalyzing generational change and creating a more just and prosperous future for all residents of Chattanooga.

### Values that Guided the Process:

- Focus on equity & disproportionately affected communities.
- Prioritize catalytic impact over existing operational funding accessibility for smaller, community-rooted organizations.
- Take calculated risks on high-impact ideas.
- Provide a real opportunity for community input into priorities.
- Proximity to the problem matters.



## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

# Charlotte

Guided by the Housing Charlotte Framework and in partnership with nonprofits, housing developers and other community partners, the City of Charlotte has developed a robust toolbox of policies and programs focused on affordable housing issues ranging from homelessness to homeownership. The framework is a response to the city's long history of racial segregation and its effect on residents, as well as the current deficit of about 24,000 units for households at or below 50 percent of area median income.

As a result, in January of 2024, Mayor Vi Lyles formally launched a Faith-Based Development Initiative that is being championed by City Council Representative Mayfield and has offered a series of opportunities targeting engagement with houses of worship.

In 2025, the City of Charlotte passed a \$100 million housing bond and partnered with Enterprise to provide training, technical assistance and support to 12 houses of worship who desire to utilize land and assets they own to provide affordable housing. The City has set aside an allocation of the bond financing to support the predevelopment cost for these houses of worship.



## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

# Ohio

Ohio communities face a shortage of affordable housing. Many faith-based and nonprofit organizations own underutilized land that could help address this need, but they lack incentives and resources to develop it. Existing tax and financing structures do not sufficiently support nonprofit-led housing construction, limiting local solutions.

Introduced in September 2025, Senate Bill 250 – the Promised Land Act, creates a targeted tax credit for faith-based organizations (and mission driven nonprofits) that develop or lease their land. It is a nonrefundable, transferable, 10% tax credit, to convert underutilized land into affordable, owner-occupied housing.

We met with the sponsor and provided feedback before introduction. We have created community awareness and provided testimony in support and suggested changes. It's expected to move to a new committee in early 2026 for further hearings.



## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

# New York

Faith-based developers lack the zoning flexibility to develop on their own land, and have significant technical assistance needs to overcome development obstacles.

In 2024, New York City adopted the 'City of Yes' zoning overhaul, making infill development easier and allowing faith-based organizations to add housing to large lots with unused space. This also includes \$1 million for faith-based technical assistance.

In 2025, voters approved a series of changes to the New York City charter that make it easier to build affordable housing, with streamlined approvals and a city-wide appeals process.

In both cases, Enterprise advocated in favor of these proposals and uplifted the technical assistance needs of our faith-based partners, allowing them to take full advantage of these changes.



## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

# Florida

Across Florida, many faith-based organizations own underutilized land that could support much-needed affordable housing, but restrictive zoning and costly, unpredictable rezonings often block development — leaving more than 30,000 parcels effectively locked behind these barriers.

In response, the Legislature enacted [SB 1730](#), giving local governments the authority to approve affordable housing on faith-based parcels regardless of zoning — with at least 10% of units required to be affordable — enabling them to activate this underutilized land.

Enterprise collaborated with the Florida Housing Coalition and key housing partners to advance this tool, working closely with the House and Senate sponsors to incorporate it into SB 1730 during the 2025 Florida legislative session.

In July, SB 1730 went into effect, and cities and counties across Florida are now beginning to work toward activating the tool in their jurisdictions. By creating a clearer pathway for faith-based institutions to use their land for housing, this law will help communities expand their local housing supply and respond to the state's growing affordability needs.



## LEVERAGING LOCAL POLICY CHANGE

# Colorado

Faith-based institutions / advocates interested in affordable housing faced NIMBYism – and sought a more navigable process.

[HB25-1169](#), *Housing Developments on Faith and Educational Land*, would have required local jurisdictions to allow faith-based organizations, school districts, state colleges to utilize an administrative review process.

2025 legislation failed to pass Senate; concerns over local control, religious discrimination.

Enterprise and others had advocated for more robust affordability provisions; in conversation with next year's sponsors and diverse partners.

Expect 2026 bill to expand qualifying entities to include PHAs, certain nonprofits.

