

Congregations for Social Justice is a coalition of Raleigh faith communities committed to advocating for public policies that create a better Raleigh for all people; working for social justice in solidarity with our most vulnerable neighbors; and building a sustainable, diverse network of relationship across our faith communities and with other partners.

Statement on Affordable Housing Congregations for Social Justice

CORE BELIEF

We all need a place to call home. Safe, decent, affordable housing is a basic need which should be available to all. In order for our community to be well balanced and diverse it is essential that housing is available for all income levels. This not only ensures community vitality and continued economic growth but also reflects our faith commitment to the common good.

CURRENT CLIMATE

Raleigh enjoys a large and diverse base of well-maintained housing. However, the high cost of good housing places it beyond the reach of many residents. Affordable Housing was consistently named by the public as one of the top two issues during the 2008-09 Raleigh Comprehensive Plan process. According to the 2006 American Community Survey, Raleigh had 29,000 renter and 11,000 homeowner households, with annual incomes below \$50,000, who are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. This was more than 25% of all households in our city. Those with the very lowest incomes pay more than one-half of their gross income for housing, leaving little money for food, health care, transportation, childcare, and other necessities. Paying too much for housing is a root cause of family and community problems, and it is only getting worse. Based on projected population growth, housing affordability will “remain an issue for all below-median income groups in Raleigh, especially on the lower end of the spectrum.”* We need to address this problem now, while we still can, before the projected growth in our community makes it impossible to meet our community’s needs.

CALL TO ACTION

Our Community needs and CSJ supports:

1. A publicly-recognized body (at the city or county level) to address affordable housing in an authoritative, comprehensive, ongoing manner. This group would nurture partnerships between the public and private sectors to address housing needs in our community, evaluate alternative approaches, and recommend policies to ensure fair-priced housing is available for all.
2. Immediate and sustained attention to the housing needs of the 3,300** persons, including 600 children, who are homeless during a year and to the households earning 40% or below of Area Median Income, since the free market cannot provide this level of housing.
3. A comprehensive approach to ensuring the development of mixed-income neighborhoods throughout Raleigh and Wake County with fair-priced housing available to all income levels.

* Bay Area Economics – City of Raleigh Housing Market Analysis – 2005. Also, from the 2007 Wake County Housing Analysis: “The deficit of units affordable to families at or below 30 percent of median is increasing by 8.2 percent, or more than 1,300 units annually. Rental units for families at or below 30 percent median are the fastest growing need in the county.”

** Estimate, Raleigh / Wake County Continuum of Care