



Housing North Legislative and Advocacy Strategy Executive Summary

Mission:

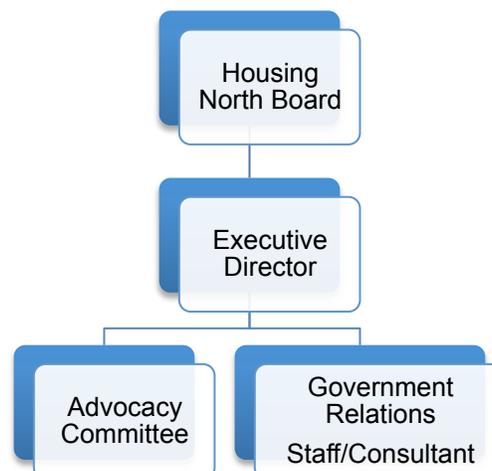
Deliver a collective voice of influence from rural northwest Michigan to identify, influence, and advocate for state policies that support diverse housing options.

Northern Strategies 360 is pleased to provide the Housing North Board with this executive summary of the Housing North Legislative and Advocacy Strategy. The strategy provides a framework for the development of a robust advocacy and government relations role that Housing North must assume in order to be a collective voice of influence for rural communities seeking to change state policies (and to some degree local and federal policies) and create tools that provide a multitude of housing options in the region.

The strategy recommends focusing on state government policymakers, at times shifting focus to educating and influencing county government officials, identifying advocacy champions in the legislature as well as key influencers throughout the community, and building appropriate statewide partnerships.

Board Roles and advocacy structure

The strategy recommends that the Executive Director have the autonomy and discretion to be the authority on housing issues in Northern Michigan. The Housing North Board is the policy setting body for the organization and should strive to set a concise, yet flexible public policy agenda that gives sufficient latitude for the executive director and appropriate staff to execute the policy and achieve the advocacy mission and goals. The Executive Director is charged with directing and overseeing the work of advocacy staff/consultants and the efforts of the advocacy committee.



Policy Pillars

Based on a review of materials from the 2018 Housing Summit along with interviews and discussion with the Housing North Executive Director and Housing North Advocacy Committee, the following is the recommended 2019/20 Advocacy Pillars and Strategic Policy Priorities for Housing North.

1. Tax Structure

Develop a new and innovative tax structure for property owners seeking to provide long-term (greater than one month) rental housing for the workforce.

- Create rural payment in lieu of taxes program for qualifying rural local units of government interested in incentivizing and building workforce housing.

2. Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

Amend the MSHDA Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to better address rural housing needs

- Modify PILOT requirements in QAP process

3. Short Term Rentals

Ensure that impacts of short-term rentals on year-round housing stock are mitigated

- Ensuring that local governments can determine locally appropriate methods for regulating short-term rentals.

4. Revenue Streams

Ensure the creation of new and preservation of existing revenue streams that can be used for housing initiatives.

- Find a dedicated funding source, such as the real estate transfer tax, for the Michigan Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Explore earned income tax credit enhancement connected to housing expenses

5. State Government Structure

Ensure that rural housing and related needs are considered part of the structure of state government

- Create a statewide rural housing policy/plan
- Create rural housing/economic development cabinet position or ombudsmen
- Establish rural housing (or simply housing) legislative caucus
- Establish a housing-related committee in legislature

A complete list of identified policy goals that fit within the five key Advocacy Pillars can be found in **Appendix A** that accompanies the full report.