



AMERICAN RIVIERA  
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# WORKFORCE HOUSING RESOURCE GUIDE

California's Central Coast is one of the most desirable, and most expensive, places to live in the nation. The workforce housing shortage is not just a social concern. It is a direct threat to business competitiveness, employee retention, and regional economic growth. When workers cannot afford to live where they work, businesses lose talent, productivity suffers, and communities begin to hollow out from the inside.

**\$974K**

peak median home price in  
Ventura County (2024).  
Projected to top \$1M.

*Ventura County Economic Report, 2024*

**65% +**

of workers on Santa Barbara's  
South Coast cannot afford to  
live there.

*SB County Civil Grand Jury 2025*

**Only 5.4%**

of San Luis Obispo households  
can afford to buy a median-  
priced home.

*National Assoc. of Home Builders, 2023*

## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Workforce housing isn't just a quality-of-life issue. It has measurable consequences for businesses across every sector of the Central Coast economy.

**Recruitment:** Employers report difficulty filling positions because candidates cannot afford local housing. Healthcare, education, and public safety sectors are hit hardest.

**Retention:** Employees who cannot afford to live locally are more likely to leave for other regions. Turnover costs businesses an estimated 50–200% of an employee's annual salary.

**Commute burden:** 35% of workers on Santa Barbara's South Coast commute more than 50 miles, twice the statewide average, contributing to burnout and lower productivity.

**Loss of local spending:** Workers who commute from distant counties spend their dollars there, not in the communities where they work, reducing local tax revenue and consumer spending.

## WHAT YOUR BUSINESS CAN DO

Businesses of all sizes can play a meaningful role in addressing the workforce housing crisis. Here are concrete steps to consider:

Join or form an **employer housing consortium**. Initiatives like the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce's Employer-Sponsored Housing Consortium pool resources to help fund and secure housing.

**Offer housing stipends or allowances** as part of your compensation package to help employees bridge the gap between wages and local housing costs.

**Partner with local housing trusts.** Housing Trust Fund VC and Housing Trust Fund SBC both accept donations and offer partnership programs for employer-investors.

**Advocate at the local level.** Attend city council and county supervisor meetings where housing policy is made. Business voices carry real weight in these conversations.

**Support your Chamber of Commerce** on housing-focused initiatives. The Ventura Chamber, Greater Conejo Valley Chamber, Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber, and SLO Chamber all have active workforce housing programs.

**Explore employer-assisted homeownership** through the Coastal Housing Partnership (SB County). Your employees may qualify for discounts on commissions, inspections, and loan fees.



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## KEY ORGANIZATIONS & RESOURCES BY COUNTY

### VENTURA COUNTY

#### Housing Trust Fund Ventura County

Provides low-interest loans to developers of affordable & workforce housing. \$51M+ committed; 2,193 affordable homes created since inception. [housingtrustfundvc.org](http://housingtrustfundvc.org)  
CEO: Linda Braunschweiger

#### Ventura Chamber of Commerce

Advocates for business-centered solutions to the workforce housing crisis. A leading voice connecting employers, civic leaders, and housing policy.  
[venturachamber.com](http://venturachamber.com)  
President & CEO: Stephanie Caldwell

#### Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

Active regional voice on workforce housing policy. Connects employers with partners and initiatives addressing the housing gap.  
[conejochamber.org](http://conejochamber.org)  
President & CEO: Danielle Borja

#### AREA Housing Authority of Ventura County

An independent, non-profit agency serving the residents of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and unincorporated areas of Ventura County.  
[ahacv.org](http://ahacv.org)

### SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

#### Housing Trust Fund of Santa Barbara County

Workforce Homebuyer down payment loans up to \$200K (North County) and \$125K (South County) for low-to-middle income workers. \$6.3M in new funding received Jan 2026.  
[sbhousingtrust.org](http://sbhousingtrust.org) | (805) 845-3585

#### Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce

Leads an employer-sponsored housing consortium connecting businesses and developers as part of their five-year plan.  
[sbscchamber.com](http://sbscchamber.com)

#### Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara

Administers workforce housing for employees working 20+ hrs/week at 80% or below AMI. Manages nearly 1,600 affordable rental units countywide.  
[hacsb.org/workforce](http://hacsb.org/workforce)

#### Coastal Housing Partnership

Employer-member organization offering discounts on homebuying costs, commissions, inspections, loan fees, for employees of member companies.  
[coastalhousing.org](http://coastalhousing.org)

### SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

#### Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO)

Assists lower-income county residents in securing long-term housing. Administers Section 8 vouchers and affordable rental programs throughout SLO County.  
[haslo.org](http://haslo.org) | (805) 543-4478

#### SLO Chamber of Commerce

Partnered with the Economic Vitality Corporation and Home Builders Association to study and advocate for workforce housing policy solutions.  
[slochamber.org](http://slochamber.org)

#### San Luis Obispo Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC)

Regional economic development organization addressing workforce housing as a primary barrier to business growth and talent retention in SLO County.  
(805)788-2012

#### City of SLO Workforce Housing Programs

Administers Below Market Rate housing standards and down payment assistance at Avila Ranch and San Luis Ranch for workforce-income buyers.  
[slocity.org/housing](http://slocity.org/housing)

In addition to [commercial and construction loans for businesses](#), American Riviera Bank is a participating lender offering access to two grant programs designed to help first-time buyers bridge the gap to homeownership.

The [Middle-Income Downpayment Assistance \(MDPA\) Program](#) provides eligible first-time buyers with grants of up to \$50,000 for down payment and closing costs. Additionally, the [Workforce Initiative Subsidy for Homeownership](#), or [WISH Program](#), is currently live and supports low to moderate income first-time buyers with 4-to-1 matching grants of up to \$32,837 in 2026.

Learn more at [AmericanRiviera.Bank](http://AmericanRiviera.Bank) or visit one of our branches on the Central Coast.

