



Office of the City Manager

## INFORMATION CALENDAR

February 19, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Kelly Wallace, Interim Director, Health, Housing and Community Services

Subject: Referral Response: City Maintained Below Market Rate Units (BMR) Online Resource

### INTRODUCTION

In response to Council direction at the January 31, 2017 meeting, this report provides information on the development of a City webpage for affordable housing resources.

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

This report responds to referral # 2016-40 that originally appeared on the agenda of the January 31, 2017 Council meeting and was sponsored by Mayor Jesse Arreguin and Councilmembers Linda Maio and Sophie Hahn. On January 31, 2017, the City Council adopted a recommendation to “establish a City maintained online resource that would provide a brief overview of the history and purpose of Below Market Rate (BMR) units, a current list of all buildings that contain BMR units and the characteristics of the units, the % of median income qualification levels for the units, the HUD published income guidelines for % of median and family size, the property owner, rental agent, and/or management company contact information, and other relevant information that would be helpful to potential renters of BMR units. The City shall update the information as more units become available, and quarterly, to ensure that information is current.” This is also designated as a “High Priority” on the Affordable Housing Action Plan adopted on November 27, 2017.

In their report, the City Council noted it would be useful for the City to have a comprehensive listing of properties that have been approved with BMR units that could be consulted by our service providers and residents in need of housing. Staff created a webpage tailored specifically to community members seeking housing to provide more information on affordable housing options as well as steps and resources to find affordable housing. Staff created a webpage that features information on both BMR units and non-profit affordable housing developments within the city. The webpage also links to Alameda County’s 211 service, which provides the ability to search for affordable housing options across the county (phone and online options are available), and One Home Bay Area, which provides ability to search for affordable housing options across the region.

The website also features:

- Background information on different types of affordable housing options, and instructions on how to apply;
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to address residents' questions and concerns regarding the BMR program;
- Contact and property information for all City-monitored BMR properties (including total units and AMI restrictions);
- An interactive map with the location and contact information for BMR and non-profit affordable developments within the city; and
- A printable brochure with featuring information and resources from the website.

Staff created a unique URL to facilitate easier access and distribution throughout the community: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/>.

#### BACKGROUND

Leasing and waitlists are managed independently by the owner or their representative for each property. Each property has specific requirements for rent and income, and, depending on the property, target populations (seniors, transitional/supportive, etc). This website is designed to assist community members with a general understanding of affordable housing options locally and regionally, and provide a coordinated resource page for the decentralized application process.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no sustainability effects associated with the information of this report.

#### POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Staff will make continued updates to the contact information profiles as they change, and include new developments and resources as they come online.

#### FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There is staff time associated with monitoring and updating the website and resource brochure.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Mike Uberti, Community Development Project Coordinator, HHCS, (510) 981-5114

Attachments:

- 1: Affordable Housing Resources Brochure
- 2: Original Referral Report from January 31, 2017

# Affordable Housing Options in Berkeley



## Resources



### Non-Profit Operated Apartments

1450 units

46 properties

### BMR Projects

410 units

35 properties

### Berkeley Housing Authority Section 8 Vouchers

1939 vouchers

The City does **not** operate any housing, accept applications, track vacancies, or maintain waiting lists. Anyone interested in affordable housing in Berkeley must contact the property owners/managers directly.

Contact information is available at [www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/)

Many of these units are largely occupied due to high demand. Use the Resources panel for ways to find units available now.

### Emergency Housing, Health and Social Services Hotline – Dial 211

- Free, accessible, 3-digit telephone number for all Alameda County residents
- Emergency housing, food, financial aid, healthcare, legal assistance & more
- Available 24 Hours per day seven days a week.
- Use (888) 886-9660 for non-local calls

### Affordable Housing Choices for Alameda County

To explore housing options and other services on the internet, visit 211's website:

[www.achousingchoices.org](http://www.achousingchoices.org)

### Affordable Housing Choices across the Bay Area

For up-to-date affordable housing listings across the Bay Area, visit the One Home website: [www.onehomebayarea.org](http://www.onehomebayarea.org)

### Berkeley-based Non-Profit Housing Providers

Resources for Community Development <https://rcdhousing.org/finding-housing/>  
Satellite Affordable Housing Associates <http://www.sahahomes.org/apply>

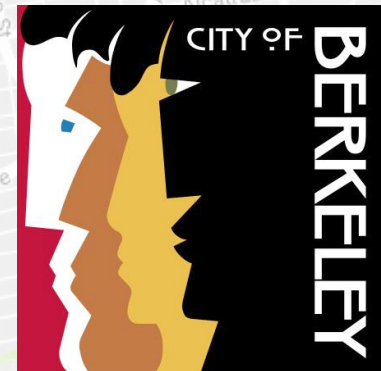
### Berkeley Below Market Rate Units

FAQ and contact information: [www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/)



Attachment 1

# Looking for Affordable Rental Housing in Berkeley?



City of Berkeley  
Department of Health, Housing & Community Services

[www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/affordable/)





## Affordable Housing

Any housing that has rent or sales price restrictions is often called “affordable housing.” Berkeley offers several options to access affordable housing including non-profit/income subsidized units, BMR units, and Section 8 vouchers.

## Area Median Income (AMI)

The area median income is the household income for the median — or middle — household in a region.

Area = A particular geographical area, e.g., Alameda County

Median = Middle point: half of the households earn less than the median while the other half earn more

Income = Total income of the entire household (everyone 18+)

## Below Market Rate (BMR)

The City’s affordable housing program that provides designated affordable units in market rate apartment buildings. Rents are set at fixed “below market” rates based on unit size to ensure affordability.

## Step 1: Identify Your Housing Needs & Preferences

Berkeley provides a variety of affordable housing options, but because the need for affordable housing is much greater than the supply throughout the Bay Area, use 211 phone/web services to identify options across Alameda County. Non-profit affordable housing is often targeted to certain populations:

- **Senior:** Minimum age requirements are either 55 or 62, depending on the development. Children are usually not allowed, but live-in aides may be.
- **Special Needs:** You must have a documented mental, physical or developmental disability.
- **Family:** You may be a single parent with children, a two-parent family with or without children, or two or more individuals.
- **Transitional or Supportive:** Housing for people emerging from homelessness or in need of special services.

## Step 2: Check to See if Your Income Qualifies

Percentages of AMI are frequently used to determine eligibility for affordable projects. Typically, to be eligible, your income must be less than 30%-120% AMI, depending on the property. Each project’s affordability requirements are based on unique, complex criteria - only a property manager can determine your eligibility. If you think your income is close to qualifying, submit an application to find out for sure.

Consider connecting with community resources to help you a credit check, security deposit , and budgeting to prepare for applying. These are some resources to start:

**Money Management International:** <https://www.moneymanagement.org/>

**Spark Point:** <https://uwba.org/sparkpoint/>

## Step 3: Contact Properties and/or Managers and Apply

Contact as many organizations and agencies to increase your chances of finding an affordable home.

- Visit websites and call properties to inquire about vacancies or joining a waitlist
- Use 211 Services to explore options across Alameda County
- Once you’ve submitted your applications or joined a waitlist, let each property know if you move or change your phone number. Ask about the best way to keep in contact.
- Be prepared to provide financial and family information and your housing history.

**Apply to as many affordable housing properties as you can, even if there is a long waiting list. You will probably need to spend time waiting on waiting list. Be persistent & don’t get discouraged!**



CITY COUNCIL  
Linda Maio

CONSENT CALENDAR  
January 31, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmembers Linda Maio and Sophie Hahn, and Mayor Jesse Arreguin

SUBJECT: City Maintained Below Market Rate Units (BMR) Online Resource

RECOMMENDATION:

Establish a City maintained online resource that would provide a brief overview of the history and purpose of Below Market Rate (BMR) units, a current list of all buildings that contain BMR units and the characteristics of the units, the % of median income qualification levels for the units, the HUD published income guidelines for % of median and family size, the property owner, rental agent, and/or management company contact information, and other relevant information that would be helpful to potential renters of BMR units. The City shall update the information as more units become available, and quarterly, to ensure that information is current.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Berkeley has required BMR units in a variety of buildings and it would be useful to have a comprehensive listing of properties that have been approved with BMR units that could be consulted by our service providers and residents in need of housing. While we are thinking of how best we can use these units to address issues such as displacement of Berkeley residents and homelessness, one step would be to set up an online resource that offers a comprehensive profile of the BMR units the City has approved, with the relevant information associated with each unit.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

No environmental sustainability impact.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONTACT:

Councilmember Linda Maio, District 1, 510-981-7110  
Councilmember Sophie Hahn, District 5, 510-981-7130

