



## PROGRAMS & POLICIES UPDATE

October 2022

### Bureau of Land Management Makes Improvements to Affordable Housing Land Policies

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Nevada State Director officially updated the agency's affordable housing disposal guidance to make it easier, quicker, and cheaper for jurisdictions and affordable housing developers to acquire BLM land for affordable housing developments. A number of Nevada Housing Coalition members, including Clark County, the City of Las Vegas and Ovation Development, contributed significant time and energy in advocating for the updated policy, which is expected to increase opportunities for using BLM land to create affordable housing opportunities state-wide.

Originally adopted in 1998, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act created a program for Nevada jurisdictions and public agencies (including the state's housing authorities) to apply for, and receive at a discounted rate, underutilized BLM land as long as it was used to build affordable housing. Unfortunately, the process (not adopted until 2006) proved time-intensive and costly, resulting in only four total transactions since 1998.

The tireless and persistent advocacy by our southern Nevada partners, along with support by our congressional delegates and our public agencies, will hopefully change that. Two improvements to the old policy include:

- **Reducing Timeline:** Because this program disburses federal land, a federal Notice of Realty Action (NORA) must be published in the Federal Register, which can be a lengthy process. When combined with the need for an appraisal, this can mean months and months of delays. Updates to the program allow the NORA and appraisal processes to be done concurrently, which is estimated to reduce the overall timeline by six months.
- **Increasing Housing Type Opportunities:** The new program guidance allows BLM land to be used for for-sale, single family, mixed-income, and mixed-use developments, increasing the diversity of housing types that can be developed.

It is estimated that these changes could reduce the average time it takes to execute a transaction from three years to between nine months and one year. When taken together, these improvements have the potential to spur exponential use of this BLM tool state-wide to help create much-needed affordable housing.

The Nevada Housing Coalition wants to especially thank all those who advocated for these policy updates and the BLM Team and HUD Nevada State Director.

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