



Teacher Housing Roadmap

If you work in a rural Colorado school district and you need help ensuring your teachers have access to housing, this guide is for you. This is intended as a blueprint, a high-level summary to help guide the process, to figure out what you really need and how to do it. In this document, you'll find categories based on lessons learned from other local communities that should inform your thinking.

To be clear, this is not a foolproof “how to” guide, but it should get you on the right track and provide examples of how others have tackled similar problems.

Step One: Talk to Teachers.

Talk to teachers to identify need.

First of all, it's helpful to get a broad sense of how your teachers are doing. Ask teachers why they've chosen to stay, or why they plan to leave. What are their pain points that you may not see? Think about when you're losing teachers - after how many years do they generally leave? Are they leaving when they start families? Where do they currently live? What are the most rewarding and least fulfilling parts of their jobs? Try to get a sense of their successes and struggles before jumping into a housing-based solution.

If it does seem that housing is a central challenge for your teachers, something that's playing a large role in the choice to stay or go, ask teachers more specifically about what part of housing is the hardest. In undertaking in effort to improve retention and recruitment through offering housing to teachers, it makes most sense to begin with your teachers. Where do they currently live? Where do they want to live? Who struggles most with housing, teachers looking to start families or those who are on their own looking for an apartment? These questions can help you figure out whether you should be thinking about rental housing or ownership solutions.

There's almost no way to overdo this step. To fix the problem, first you have to find out what the problem is. Once you've done that part, don't stop talking to teachers. Include teachers in the process.

Step Two: Rental or Ownership.

Based on what you've heard from your teachers, it's likely that there's a more pronounced challenge in either rental options or finding paths to ownership. If there are needs in both realms, consider which will be a more approachable lift for your district or which will have a greater immediate impact.

Colorado Districts with Rental Solutions:

- Using a percentage of units in existing/new buildings
 - Roaring Fork: Roaring Fork School District used bond money to purchase units in two of their communities in existing developments. They'll rent these units out to teachers.
 - Contact: Jeff Gatlin, COO Roaring Fork School District, jgatlin@rfschools.com
- New build
 - Roaring Fork: In Carbondale, the district elected to use district land to build 15-20 units since there were no existing or new developments in which they could purchase units.
 - Contact: Jeff Gatlin, COO Roaring Fork School District, jgatlin@rfschools.com
- Renovating existing structures
 - Custer County: The Custer County School District renovated an empty preschool building into four apartments for teachers. The high school's vocational construction classes did most of the renovation themselves.
 - Contact: Mark Payler, Superintendent Custer County School District, mark.payler@ccbobcats.net
 - Primero: The Primero School District owned old houses used as teacherages. They used bond money to remodel/update them and rent them out to teachers for \$300/month. This is enough to cover maintenance but not to generate a profit.
 - Contact: Bill Naccarato, Primero School District Superintendent, bnaccarato@primeroschool.com

Colorado Districts with Ownership Solutions:

- Roaring Fork: Glenwood Springs High School's design/build teacher has begun building tiny homes in construction class for teachers. His goal is to create a financially sustainable program building affordable tiny houses for teachers.
 - Contact: Steve Eaton, steaton@rfschools.com
- Roaring Fork: The Roaring Fork School District allowed Habitat for Humanity to use a piece of land on the Basalt High School property to build duplexes and triplexes for teachers.

- Contact: Rob Stein, Superintendent Roaring Fork School District, rstein@rfschools.com
- Denver: Working together with Landed, a startup, to connect investors with teachers for down payment assistance.
 - Contact: Alex Lofton, Landed, alex@landed.com

Step Three: Space.

Whether you've decided to focus on ownership or rentals, either one will have to go somewhere. Consider the assets of your district in terms of space, or the specific challenges you face. Do you have unused district land or a building that's been empty? Are there existing developments in the works or already completed buildings which you could purchase some units for teachers?

Creative Use of District Space:

- Roaring Fork: The Roaring Fork School District used district land, a bit of extra space on the Basalt High School campus, for Habitat For Humanity to build triplexes and duplexes.
 - Contact: Rob Stein, Superintendent Roaring Fork School District, rstein@rfschools.com
- Eagle: The Eagle School district is exploring teacher housing options on land owned by the district in Gypsum and Minturn.
 - Contact: Sandra Mutchler, COO Eagle County Schools sandra.mutchler@eagleschools.net
- Custer County: The Custer County School District used a building in their ownership to create teacher housing options.
 - Contact: Mark Payler, Superintendent Custer County School District, mark.payler@ccbobcats.net

Step Four: Funding.

Consider, again, your assets and challenges. Is the population in your district supportive enough of the idea of teacher housing for them to pass a bond with money set aside for teacher housing? Is a local bank or credit union willing to offer you a no or low-interest loan for construction or purchase costs?

- Bond Dollars: Districts such as Roaring Fork and Primero have gotten voters to approve money set aside within the bond for housing.
 - Contacts: Rob Stein, Superintendent Roaring Fork School District, rstein@rfschools.com; Bill Naccarato, Primero School District Superintendent, bnaccarato@primeroschool.com
- [Historic Preservation Grants](#)

- Local Foundations: Custer County was able to utilize funding from their [Excellence in Education Committee and Fund](#) to help subsidize the renovation of their preschool building into apartments for teachers.
- Local Banks or Credit Unions

Step Five: Partners

Who can you partner with to aid your ability to complete a project? Are there local foundations, banks, or credit unions that would be willing to partner? Does your community have a local Habitat for Humanity chapter?

- [Habitat for Humanity](#)
- [Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts](#)
- [Urban Land Conservancy](#)
- [Landed](#)

Step Six: Guidelines.

Inevitably, it's unlikely you'll be able to provide enough housing for all of your teachers. So, who gets to live there? Will you use a lottery to determine who gets selected? Will teachers be prioritized based on their need? If you'll be providing rental housing consider how long tenants will be able to live in subsidized housing. If you'll be providing paths to ownership, are teachers required to teach for a certain length of time before they are eligible? What if they leave the profession or your school?

Resources Attached:

[Salida RFP: Building Trades Apprenticeship Program and Development of Spartan Heights Housing Complex](#)

[Roaring Fork Residential Housing and Development Opportunity Inquiry](#)

[Roaring Fork Housing Guidelines](#)

[Roaring Fork Rent Guidelines](#)