



AB 1961 – STATEWIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DATABASE

SUMMARY

AB 1961 would require the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to create and implement a statewide database of affordable housing listings.

This portal would benefit low-income applicants and property managers in matching tenants, screening and replying to applications, and keeping updated listings of affordable housing units.

BACKGROUND

Low-income households face significant barriers to finding affordable housing that meet their needs. Often, prospective applicants must submit paper applications, going from affordable development to affordable development – sometimes owned and operated by the same entities – simply to apply for a unit. Low-income applicants seeking to expand their housing search beyond their current neighborhoods may struggle to coordinate transportation to and from new geographies. Some must forgo days of work or school to search for available affordable housing.

The process is further complicated if an affordable development has available units that are set aside for special populations like veterans, families with children, or people experiencing homelessness. Because the state lacks a coordinated and streamlined database of available listings, low-income people searching for affordable housing lose valuable time and income applying to available units for which they may not qualify.

The status quo is especially burdensome to housing insecure households that experience multiple moves within a year. These households less likely to have a consistent mailing address to facilitate communication between themselves and property

managers and can fall through the cracks if their application is approved.

THIS BILL

AB 1961 would implement a transformational digital service that will speed the state's policy efforts to improve access to affordable housing and allow low-income residents to broaden their housing search, particularly to high- and highest-resource areas of the state.

AB 1961 includes flexibility for HCD to coordinate with other intergovernmental agencies such as metropolitan planning organizations or councils of government to enhance regional implementation. This bill will ensure that prospective affordable housing tenants can:

- View available publicly subsidized affordable housing listings
- Submit rental applications electronically
- Access the database in multiple languages, including Spanish and Vietnamese
- Store their personal information for reuse in applying for multiple listings

SUPPORT

- Housing California (sponsor)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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