

The Supply of Affordable Housing in Arlington Has Fallen Nearly in Half in the Past Ten Years

There are two sub-groups that together represent the supply of “affordable housing” in Arlington: market rate private affordable housing units, and so-called “committed affordable” units (CAFs) that are owned by nonprofit and for-profit housing providers that received government financing (typically for 15 years commitment). Most of the CAFs are owned by AHC Inc, APAH, Wesley Housing Corporation, and nonprofit senior citizen housing groups. The “affordable” market rate units must be affordable to a family or individual making 60 percent of the area median income, based on U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards. In 2009, the median income in Arlington was about \$100,000; HUD guidelines indicate no more than 30 percent of income be spent on housing.

Market rate affordable housing

In 2000, Arlington County reported 19,700 affordable housing units (mostly rental apartments in low rise buildings) that could be rented by someone making 60 percent of Arlington median income Source: Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, Fair Housing Report, May 17, 2005, p.IV-2). In 2009, Arlington County reported there were 6,700 such housing units available at 60 percent of the median income (about \$100,000 in 2009). Source: Annual Affordable Housing Targets for FY 2009, p. 35).

In 2009, the median rent in Arlington was \$1,711 monthly. To afford the median rent in Arlington, a person would have needed an annual income of at least \$61,000, according to HUD guidelines. Thus during the ten years 2000-09, there was a loss of 13,000 affordable private apartment units in Arlington.

CAFs

In 2000, Arlington County reported that there were 4,307 CAFs, and in 2009, 5,927 units. Thus during 2000-09, the number of CAFs rose by 1,620 units. However, most of the gain occurred during 2000-04 when 1,300 units were added.

Since 2004, the number of CAFs has remained virtually unchanged. In 2004 there were 5,627 CAF units in Arlington; and by 2005 5,877 CAFs reported. During the most recent 4 years 2005-09, there was a gain of only 50 units or 12 CAFs annually.

The County reports the number of “new committed units,” but these include re-committed units that were in apartment complexes that were already counted. During 2000-09, the total number of reported “new CAFs” was about 3,154, but actual gain in the stock of CAFs was only 1,620.

Total affordable housing supply

In 2000, the total affordable housing supply in Arlington was about 24,000 units (19,700 + 4,307). In 2009, the total supply was about 12,600 (6,700 + 5,900). Thus, during the 10 years 2000-09, there was a drop of 11,400 or 48 percent in the total supply of affordable housing units in Arlington.

Sources: Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/housing/hpp/CPHDHousingHppAffordable.aspx>; and email from staff, dated Sept. 9, 2010.