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Date: Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 11:07 AM

Subject: housing expert

To: <[participate@ketchumidaho.org](mailto:participate@ketchumidaho.org)>

Hi all,

I am a Ketchum native and affordable housing professional, visiting my Mom and sister in Ketchum for the summer before returning to Buffalo where I develop affordable housing. I previously worked three years for the state of Georgia financing affordable housing and have a dual masters in urban planning and real estate (from Harvard, resume [here](#)). I'm writing because, as you can imagine, the housing stress is tough to miss and I care about what happens to the place I still consider home.

While I haven't followed which specific tools you use or are considering, I am happy to chat and discuss specifics. I also have some broad recommendations below.

Take care,

Carissa

1. **Hire a housing consultant** (not me, I'm enjoying my current job), firm, Master's in Urban Planning studio, or [housing lab](#) to analyze the situation and make recommendations. I recommend looking farther afield than you may think: The housing crisis is by no means unique to the Wood River Valley and professionals that have worked in a range of locations typically have a larger toolbox. For example, [Development Strategies](#) in St. Louis does great work. They could do the following:
  - [Blaine County-level housing needs assessment](#). Blaine County Housing Authority has a [2011 version](#) that appears updateable. This identifies the income levels experiencing the greatest gap and what type of housing is needed.
  - [Analyze and recommend which tools best suit the area's needs](#), specifying what is immediately actionable and what are long-term methods. This involves sensitive community engagement, research, and familiarity with policies, regulations, and tools. This consultant could also educate city staff and the public. Here are examples of potential tools:
    - Equitably address the immediate need: I do not recommend setting up a tent city without surveying those workers who might live there to see if they would voluntarily live there.
    - How to access and use housing-specific CARES funding and liaise with the state housing finance agency. Ketchum may also be eligible to receive these funds directly from the federal government. This funding includes rental assistance, new construction, and rehabilitation assistance for income-restricted housing.
    - An empty homes tax or fee where the revenue goes directly to an affordable housing fund (there must be a nexus/relationship between the tax or fee and the output).

- Ground leasing for low-income housing tax credits or other affordable housing development means that, while you don't own or operate the building you can guarantee the affordability of housing on that lot in perpetuity.
  - Recruit permanent housing staff. It can be difficult to recruit for a position in an industry when one is not from, or intimately familiar with, that industry.
- 2. **Hire staff** whose full-time job is, and background is in, affordable housing. This person ideally has experience developing and financing affordable housing. The emphasis here is on the affordable part: The financing and regulations that apply to affordable housing development and management are substantially more complex than traditional housing development. They would:
  - Administer federal and state funds for local housing development, where applicable
  - Partner with affordable housing developers to make use of the relevant recommended tools
  - Work with Ketchum, County, and neighboring city staff, including planning and zoning. They would help ensure that goals are supported throughout other city efforts and not siloed or undermined. Once a housing plan is in place, the zoning should be updated to reflect it.