Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

California continues to face a serious housing shortage. To make sure every community does its part to address the crisis, the state has a program called RHNA – short for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

RHNA is about planning ahead. Every eight years, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) estimates how many new homes are needed across the state to keep up with population growth, job opportunities, and affordability. HCD assigns each region a share of that total. For our area, that responsibility falls to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), which works with the 28 towns, cities, and counties in our region to distribute housing targets to each community.

Each of the 28 towns, cities, and counties are assigned a specific number of housing units to plan for across all income levels: acutely low, extremely low, very low, moderate, and above moderate income. This helps ensure housing is available for a range of people, including seniors, young workers, and families, creating a balanced economy and workforce.

RHNA doesn't require local governments to build homes themselves. Instead, it requires them to plan for future housing by updating their General Plans and zoning rules to make room for new homes. This process happens through a document called the Housing Element, which shows how a community will meet its RHNA targets.

RHNA aims to:

- Create more affordable and inclusive communities
- Reduce long commutes by placing homes near jobs and public transit
- Support people who are priced out of the market
- Fight climate change by reducing sprawl and car dependency

If a local government fails to meet its RHNA obligations, it may lose access to state funding or face legal action.

At its core, RHNA is about building a better future by making sure every community plans for housing that meets the needs of people today and for generations to come.

Questions? Reach out!

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