Employer-assisted housing programs overview

Employer-assisted housing (EAH) programs provide a channel through which employers can help their employees with the cost of owning or renting a home, typically in neighborhoods close to the workplace. Assistance may be provided in a variety of ways, including through down payment grants or loans that are forgiven over a period of employment, homeownership counseling and education, rental subsidies and, less commonly, direct investment in the construction of rental housing.

In addition to offering their own EAH programs for public-sector employees, cities, towns, and counties can provide incentives to encourage private-sector employers to initiate their own programs. For example, local governments can provide a dollar-for-dollar match for employer contributions to EAH programs. Local governments (either directly or by funding a nonprofit) can also offer administrative assistance to employers interested in adopting an EAH program; this can range from help designing the program all the way to managing it on behalf of the company.

To the extent this support stimulates additional employer participation in EAH programs, it helps to increase available funding for affordable housing. Participating companies also benefit from improved recruitment in high-cost areas and higher rates of employee retention.[ii] EAH programs can also be used to help promote community stabilization and redevelopment – for example, by encouraging an influx of new residents in neighborhoods that may have experienced disinvestment.