

Adaptive Reuse Act of 2026

AN ACT

To modify under-utilized existing commercial buildings executing conversion to affordable housing of mixed use and multi-family residences.

BE IT ENACTED that this act may be cited as Adaptive Reuse Act of 2025

SECTION 1. FINDINGS

- (1) Homelessness increased 18% from 2023 to 2024 which is an all time point in time count high. *[Increase any specific statistics from your state that you want to lift up.]*
- (2) Housing unaffordability is a root cause of homelessness. Incomes have not risen as quickly as housing costs. Too many households pay more than they can afford to maintain housing and some people are priced out altogether.
- (3) The elderly and families are the fastest growing housing insecure population.
- (4) This legislation targets overpopulated municipalities *[not enough resources to support the population or infrastructure]* with lack of affordable with more than 75K residents.
- (5) Criminalization prohibits life sustaining activities such as sleeping, eating, sitting, camping or asking for resources in public spaces. Law enforcement actions such as ticketing, arresting and giving out fines make it harder for people to exit homelessness by creating arrest records and debts. *[Insert any specifics about how your city/state criminalizes homelessness and how it harms people and sets back efforts to solve homelessness]*

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

- (1) Housing insecure means a person who is unable to sustain their residence based on income, health, or other circumstances.
- (2) Homelessness means a person who is unable to obtain lack of finances, affordable housing, stable health, and the ability to live in habitable places based on life conditions. *[Conform to your local jurisdiction or state definition of homelessness]*

(3) Adaptive Reuse means the retrofitting and repurposing of existing buildings to convert into mixed use or multifamily residential housing

(4) Affordable Housing means a residential site where a portion of dwelling units are reserved as affordable to people with low-income meaning households pay no more than 30% in rent.

(5) “Barriers to housing” means policies and practices that prevent people from achieving housing stability including but not limited to excessive credit checks, paying high upfront costs including any payments that exceed first and last months rent, and security deposit that exceeds one month’s rent.

(6) Under-utilized sites are former single room occupancies, apartments, row houses, commercial office space, abandoned buildings, and government asset forfeiture housing

(7) Applicant means someone who has fallen into the category of housing insecurity that can exit homelessness through this legislation.

(8) Rent control means a policy that determines how often and when increases are approved to make housing affordable for renters. [Please refer to your local jurisdiction, state or redefine this definition].

(9) Housing Unit – One or more habitual rooms comprising complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and including within those rooms’ permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

SECTION 3. FINANCING ADAPTIVE REUSE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(1) Cities and States agree to acquire and finance costs of adaptive reuse projects. Community land trusts remain a viable option to finance and acquire properties

(2) 30% of units are set-asides for those experiencing housing insecurity and wage challenged, 30% for senior citizens, 20% for retired military or veterans, 10% for the disabled, 10% for dv survivors, and fair market rent residents (rethink this position and talk to some developers). *[Consider what kind of affordability and population set-asides you want to include].*

- (3) Barriers such as livable incomes, community opposition, lack of housing units, and red tape procedures reduce the chance of people exiting housing insecurity

SECTION 4. PREFERENCE AND ARCHITECTURE

(1) Preference will be given to residents already connected to necessary services such as health care, employment/leadership training.

(2) 20% of housing units must use universal design (building friendly elements to satisfy the needs of all such as clear signage, wider doorways, and designs that minimize physical strains) and meet ADA requirements with accessible elevators, ramps, and units with walk in showers with benches, non-toxic necessities such as paint, and carpets.

SECTION 5. DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

(1) Local jurisdictions can allow for various residential development in a classification granting mixed use development, office space, multifamily residential, or retail to be established locally. City council or state legislature will review all ordinances, and regulations prior to development before enforcing other state laws.

(2) Housing advocates involved from the beginning phase of the projects can file written assessments to the local/state legislature. The comments must meet and organized under written laws of the state. Those comments must be consistent with reducing barriers and improving building standards including historical landmarks, original designs meeting the 5-year building age limit.

(3) Construction of conversion properties may or may not include some form of parking availability. *[Conform to your local jurisdiction or state regulations]*

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on January 1st