



## **WHEDA and REALTORS® Launch Workforce Housing Development Website**

WisconsinHousingWorks.com a **comprehensive resource helping communities, employers develop workforce housing programs**

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In many communities across Wisconsin, quality, affordable housing is not located near major employers. Thanks to a grant from the National Association of REALTORS®, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association have developed a program to help employers and municipalities create workforce housing programs.

WisconsinHousingWorks.com is a comprehensive website designed to walk employers, local governments, real estate professionals, home buyers, nonprofits and lenders through the process of creating a program where employers help their employees to purchase homes near the workplace. The website focuses on stories and video testimonials about how real-world people benefited from the workforce housing initiative.

The campaign surrounding the website launch includes a Twitter page at [twitter.com/wihousingworks](https://twitter.com/wihousingworks) and a Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/WisconsinHousingWorks> where people can share success stories, receive updates, ask questions and welcome new companies. Also featured are Google and Yahoo paid searches and web banner ads on Channel 3000, YouTube, CNN, MSNBC, New York Times, Homefinder, WISSports.net and WISN.com.

“Employer-assisted housing programs have been shown to improve employee morale, increase retention rates and to revitalize neighborhoods that are in need of the stabilizing effect of homeownership,” said WHEDA Executive Director Antonio Riley. “In cities throughout the state, WHEDA has helped companies provide this benefit to their employees, and we want to train more people to be able to do it as well.”

REALTORS®, lenders and nonprofit housing counseling agencies can all become trained in implementing an employer assisted housing program, and can work with the employers in their community to figure out the best fit for them.

“When an employee feels comfortable going to management and saying, ‘I want to buy a home; how can you help?’ it’s absolutely expansive because now you’re working within a team process,” said William Malkasian, President of the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association. “You’re talking about a company and an employee working

together with WHEDA and a REALTOR®, with the end result of getting that employee into housing. There's no question that this is a very unique program and something that Wisconsin needs."

The launch of [www.WisconsinHousingWorks.com](http://www.WisconsinHousingWorks.com) comes on the same day that Meriter Health Services in Madison announced its own Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative with WHEDA, which will provide eight \$10,000 down payment assistance loans to Meriter employees purchasing homes in the neighboring Greenbush-Vilas neighborhoods. To learn more about this program, go to [www.Meriter.com](http://www.Meriter.com).

**For More Information Contact:** Kate Venne, Director of Communications, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority: 608-334-4609 or Tom Larson, Director of Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, Wisconsin REALTORS® Association: 608- 241-2047.

#### **About the WRA**

*The Wisconsin REALTORS® Association is one of the largest trade associations in the state, representing more than 14,000 real estate brokers, sales people and affiliates statewide.*

#### **About WHEDA**

*WHEDA is an independent state authority that works with lenders to provide low-cost financing for housing and small business development in Wisconsin. In March, WHEDA resumed lending with the WHEDA Fannie Mae Advantage, a 100% financing product for first time homebuyers in Wisconsin. For more information on WHEDA's housing programs, call 1-800-334-6873 or visit WHEDA's web site [www.wheda.com](http://www.wheda.com).*