



NATIONAL
MULTIFAMILY
HOUSING
COUNCIL



NMHC/NAA Viewpoint

Immigrants are a key driver of apartment demand and an important force in apartment construction and operations. Congress should enact comprehensive immigration reform to address the current patchwork of state and local requirements that impose additional responsibility on apartment firms for the immigration status of employees and apartment residents beyond federal law.

One in five renter households is headed by an immigrant.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The flawed nature of America's immigration system and the programs that administer it is widely acknowledged at this point, leading to the consideration of reform proposals in the 114th Congress. Immigration is a noteworthy driver of rental housing demand, and immigrants play an important role in building and operating apartment communities. Among immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years or less, 73 percent rent.

In the absence of congressional action, state and local governments have approved numerous immigration-related measures, creating a burdensome patchwork of compliance obligations for apartment firms. Rental apartment firms are particularly concerned about those laws that would hold them responsible for the immigration status of apartment residents and impose various additional employment-related mandates beyond federal requirements.

Comprehensive federal legislation would help create predictability and consistency for both businesses and workers. NMHC/NAA support:

Interior and border enforcement that safeguards national security and strengthens our economy;

A temporary visa program that addresses changing workforce needs and allows U.S. businesses to hire the talent necessary to grow our economy while preventing future illegal immigration. Arbitrary visa quotas for the construction industry could exacerbate market-level labor shortages and rising development costs, challenging the industry's ability to help meet our nation's housing needs;

A national employment verification system to efficiently and reliably check the legal status of direct employees. The program should include a safe harbor for employers against liability when acting in good faith and be phased in over time; and

A practical earned legalization process for undocumented individuals currently working in the U.S.