

### WHY IMMIGRATION REFORM MATTERS

#### KEY TALKING POINTS

*Background: Immigration policy directly impacts the rental apartment industry. It's a significant driver of growth in rental housing demand – one in five renter households is headed by an immigrant and among immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years or less, 73 percent rent. For immigrants here 10 years or less, 68 percent rent. Immigrants also play an important role in building and operating rental apartment communities, and they make up 22 percent of the construction workforce. Without a robust labor force that includes immigrants, the apartment industry's ability to meet the growing demands for rental housing could be compromised.*

#### NAA/NMHC support comprehensive immigration reform.

- Immigration policy is a federal responsibility with national security and economic implications.
- In the absence of congressional action, state and local immigration laws have created a burdensome patchwork of compliance obligations for apartment companies.
- Comprehensive immigration reform legislation should provide for: strengthened interior and border enforcement; an improved employment eligibility verification system; amply sized temporary programs; and a practical process for earned legalization.

#### Temporary visa programs can help meet the apartment industry's employment needs.

- Temporary visa programs, such as the H-2B Program, should be designed to meet labor demands when local labor markets are inadequate – without capping participation by individual industries.
- Arbitrary visa limits for the construction industry could exacerbate market-level labor shortages and rising development costs, challenging the rental apartment industry's ability to hire workers and help meet housing needs.

#### The employment eligibility verification process must be reliable, and participation requirements should be predictable.

- The E-Verify employment verification system must be accurate, efficient, and protect employers against liability when acting in good faith.
- State and federal requirements for employer participation in E-Verify are inconsistent, creating an uneven, unpredictable environment for employers, including apartment companies.
- Inconsistent participation requirements limit the system's overall effectiveness in preventing unauthorized employment.

#### U.S. House of Representatives

- The House of Representatives is considering a number of individual bills aimed at addressing immigration reform. NMHC/NAA are encouraged by the Standards for Immigration Reform, announced by House Republican leaders, for recognizing the critical importance of immigration reform to our nation. **We urge members of the House to pass legislation to meaningfully reform immigration policy.**

#### U.S. Senate

- The Senate has passed a bipartisan comprehensive approach to immigration reform (S. 744). **We urge senators to continue to support the components of this comprehensive legislation and remove the arbitrary cap on temporary work visas for construction.**

