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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Report Documents Bloomington's Shortage of Affordable Housing**

*Housing costs in Monroe County are the highest in Indiana*

BLOOMINGTON, Indiana, January 19, 2017 – With expensive housing costs propelled upwards by the university student market, nearly 69 percent of the city's rental households are considered cost-burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing costs. Finding an affordable home in the City of Bloomington can be a significant challenge for low- and moderate-income families. While many residents already know about local housing issues from anecdotal experience, a new report closely examines the data to document the city's housing needs.

"Some might wonder if these figures about low incomes compared to high housing costs are skewed by the city's large population of college students," noted Deborah Myerson, author of the report. *Community Housing Needs Assessment: City of Bloomington, Indiana* was produced by a new, local nonprofit housing developer, South Central Indiana Housing Opportunities (SCIHO). "Yet, the most recent American Communities Survey data indicates that 39 percent of Bloomington residents live in poverty. Even if you cut that figure in half—that is still one in five residents who are poor."

She added, "Many people may not realize that in Bloomington, over 30 percent of children under 18 live in poverty."

The SCIHO report examines local housing supply and demand, compares housing costs and area household incomes, considers barriers to affordable housing, and offers recommendations to address the issue.

The local combination of low wages and high housing costs creates a substantial housing hurdle. In fact, the SCIHO report notes that a full-time employee would need to earn \$17.77 an hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment in the city. Yet, the average wage of a renter in Bloomington is \$8.25 an hour. Even employees eligible for a higher minimum wage under Bloomington's Living Wage Ordinance—\$12.32 an hour in 2016—would need to earn 44 percent more to find an affordable place to rent.

"Mayor Hamilton's administration is a strong partner to turn the tide on the local shortage of affordable housing," observed Richard Rampley, president of the SCIHO board of directors. "As a nonprofit housing developer, SCIHO aims to be an important resource to produce more affordable units."

With the city's current rate of growth, the report estimates that Bloomington will need 13,551 new housing units between 2010 and 2030. Many of the report's recommendations consider how to reduce the high cost of new construction, including:

- Establish a city land bank to meet community needs.
- Work with major institutional landowners such to identify opportunities for land donations that can support housing development.
- Re-activate the capacity of the city's housing trust fund.
- Adopt policies that will reduce developers' costs to produce affordable housing.

The report is available on the SCIHO website at <http://sciho.org>.

*South Central Indiana Housing Opportunities (SCIHO) is a nonprofit developer of accessible and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households in Bloomington, Monroe County, and South Central Indiana. As a nonprofit affiliate of the Bloomington Housing Authority, SCIHO seeks to build sustainable and safe communities that offer diverse housing options for people of all income levels, ages, and abilities.*

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