



# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

*Affordable Housing  
Awareness*

Thank you for supporting the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA) and their partner organizations in their mission to create sustainable communities throughout Northern Virginia through affordable housing advocacy and education.

The following lesson plans are a tool for teachers to create awareness and cultivate greater acceptance of housing opportunities for families of all incomes in our communities.

The curriculum was created by members of the 2007 Emerging Leaders Institute, an initiative of Leadership Fairfax, Inc.,

Thank you for promoting awareness and creating understanding!

<http://www.nvaha.org/>



Created for the  
Northern Virginia  
Affordable Housing Alliance

Created by Leadership Fairfax, Inc.  
Emerging Leaders Institute, Class of 2007

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#### ***Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance Vision***

*The Alliance seeks to unite the many advocates in Northern Virginia who support affordable housing programs, but have not made their voices heard. Opposition to affordable housing, due to myths and misconceptions, make it difficult and costly to complete projects and undermines efforts to win political support for funding and zoning approvals. The Alliance, working through local organizations, promotes the production and preservation of affordable housing as a community asset.*



## OVERVIEW

- Lesson 1: You & Your Community
- Lesson 2: Affordable Housing & You
- Lesson 3: Where Can I Live?
- Lesson 4: Poster Contest
- Lesson 5: Reflect on Affordable Housing

## OBJECTIVES

- Define different aspects critical for a community to 'work'.
- Gain basic understanding of the term Affordable Housing.
- Make "affordable" and "unaffordable" personal to the students.
- Understand how lack of affordable housing affects not only individuals but the overall community; how affordable housing is interconnected within a community.
- Identify how salary relates to career choices and housing options.
- Express affordable housing through art.
- Think critically about the topics presented and translate those thoughts into journal entries.
- Understand and be able to 'teach' someone the basics about affordable housing and why it is an issue.

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## *Affordable Housing Awareness*

Lack of affordable housing creates challenges for individuals and the community. These issues are outlined below and will be a reference point as you work with each lesson plan. Many stakeholders continue to work on solutions, but educating students – future leaders – about this social issue is critical to our economic sustainability. Thank you for your participation in Affordable Housing Week and for all you do.

### I. Moving further from jobs to find affordable housing

- **Individuals issues**
  - Long commute
    - Reduced time with family
    - Stuck in traffic congestion
    - Increased fuel costs
- **Community issues**
  - Decreased job satisfaction/service
  - Relocate to jobs closer to one's home
  - Increased demands and costs for public transportation and infrastructure
  - Individuals spend more of their income on housing and less in community – economic impact

### II. Moving out of area/state to find affordable housing

- **Individuals issues**
  - Leave excellent Metro area schools
  - Burden of moving/finding new job
- **Community issues**
  - Shortage of labor force for expanding job market
  - Lost revenue
  - Loss of invaluable community members

### III. Gain additional income or a roommate to afford housing

- **Individuals issues**
  - Lack of education limits income
  - Reduced or no time with family
  - Mental and physical burden
  - Stress of additional people living together
- **Community issues**
  - Increased cost of temporary shelters and public services for homeless
  - Overcrowding in neighborhoods as multiple households share housing
  - Traffic congestion as workers commute long distances to job centers



### OVERVIEW

- Lead students through a discussion of what makes up their community.
- Narrow focus from community down to student's home and room.

### OBJECTIVES

- Define different aspects critical for a community to 'work'.
- Students consider their room within the community and begin to think about what it would mean if they did not have a place to live.
- Create foundation to discuss affordable housing and how it is interconnected within a community.

### SKILLS

- Critical thinking
- Interpretation
- Introspection

### PREPARATION

- Preview lesson and think about specific examples in your community that will relate to your students to help move discussion forward.

### PROPS

- White board
- Option: different color markers

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## *You & Your Community*

Define community to create foundation for lesson plans 2 through 5

### I. Activity 1 - Define Your Community (30 minutes)

- Lead students through a discussion of what makes up their community. Help them define the different aspects of what is critical for a community to 'work'.
- Begin to draw a rough community infrastructure on the white board, as you lead the students in discussion add to the sketch.
  - Start with a few roads and the school, add other schools
  - Add restaurants: McDonalds Applebee's
  - Grocery stores
  - Shopping & Businesses: malls, Toys R Us, Target, Wal-Mart, card store, bank, barber shop, furniture store
  - Emergency & public services: police, fire, community center, YMCA, park, homeless shelter, Red Cross, food bank, library, hospital
  - Houses: include townhouses, single family homes, apartments & condos, shelter
  - Metro/ bus stops
  - Churches
- Finally, discuss the people in town: teacher, principal, doctor, dentist, nurse, grocery clerk, waiter/waitress, hairstylist, firefighter, executive secretary, cashier at Wal-Mart, car salesman, radio d.j., garbage man, swimming pool cleaner, mail man, etc. Ask what parents or relatives do for jobs to generate ideas of people in the community.
- Write a 5 minute journal entry on what surprised you about our community discussion.

### II. Activity 2 - You and Your Community (20 minutes)

- Have students create a list about what they like about their community. Teacher/Facilitator can start if needed.
  - Examples: Favorite hair stylist, grocery store shopped at forever, favorite park, community/movie theatre.
- Narrow Scope – What do you like about your Neighborhood?
  - Examples: Neighbors check mail, friends, kids come over to play, school, parties
- Like about your House? Like about your Room?
- Take a moment and imagine if all those things were taken away... affordable housing is not just about "a house," it's about how the community works together.
- Write a five minute journal entry on what you would do if you had to move away from your community.



# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

## *Affordable Housing & You*

Discuss affordable housing and how it affects you and your community.

- I. **Activity 1 - Define Affordable Housing** (10 minutes)
- Lead students through an interactive discussion of the terms “affordable” and “housing”. Give brief and basic understanding of the terms and concept to build on through the week.
    - **Affordable:** able to afford and still have money for food, health care, transportation, etc. Discuss range of options when you can and can not afford something. You want a video game, book, basketball, etc. If you can ‘afford’ it, you buy it. If you can not, you save, select something less expensive, or do not purchase.
    - **Housing:** providing of shelter that is safe, decent. Review housing in the community - single family home, townhouse, condo, apartment, transitional housing.
    - **Affordable Housing:** a housing cost that doesn’t exceed 30% of a households gross income.
      - Break down and discuss each phrase “housing cost,” “does not exceed” “30%” “household gross income”
  - Federal, state, and local governments and community groups work to help everyone in the community gain access to affordable housing.

II. **Activity 2 – Simple Math Example on Affordability** (15 minutes)

- Let’s look at some numbers to give it definition. We’ll start small today and build on it tomorrow.
- How many of you get an allowance or wish you did?
  - Let’s say 10% of the students (front row) receive \$15/week. 10% (center row) receive \$10/week. Remaining receive \$5/week.
  - On the board, with students help, calculate monthly allowance  
 $\$15 \times 4 = \$60$       $\$10 \times 4 = \$40$       $\$5 \times 4 = \$20$
- Students earning \$15 can enjoy most everything in the community – movies, ice skating, ice cream. Those earning \$10 and \$5, can not do quite as much, but can still save up and enjoy activities.
- NOW, what if you have to pay \$25 to live at your house?  
 $\$60 - 25 = \$35$       $\$40 - 25 = \$15$       $\$20 - 25 = \$-5$
- Front row is fine. Center row will struggle, but can still manage and save up...what about the rest of the class? They are still working hard without a place to live. What will they have to do? Options: Earn more money, get a roommate, move in with family, move, or become homeless. Housing slightly further away is \$10. Further out, like W. Virginia it is \$5, and in other parts of the country it’s only \$2 or \$1. Discuss what students might consider doing.

III. **Activity 3 - Merge Community & Affordable Housing** (15 min)

- Briefly review the community and people from Lesson 1. Discuss effects not being able to afford to live in the community you serve.
  - Favorite hairdresser has to move. No cashiers at the grocery store to serve you. Police officers further from an emergency. Allow class to explore examples and discuss.
  - Cover issues for both individuals and the community on Page 2.
- After discussion, take 5 minutes and write a short journal entry.

### OVERVIEW

- Define and discuss Affordable Housing
- Work simple math problems to begin grasping the concept
- Discuss how lack of affordable housing affects the community
- Select careers for Lesson 3

### OBJECTIVES

- Gain basic understanding of the term Affordable Housing
- Make ‘unaffordable’ real to the students
- Understand how lack of affordable housing affects not only individuals but the overall community

### SKILLS

- Critical thinking
- Math solutions
- Decision making
- Interpretation

### PREPARATION

- Predetermine how to divide class into approx 10%, 10%, 80%. Rows, colored shirts, alphabetical. Use in Activity 2.
- Review individual and community issues surrounding Affordable Housing featured on Page 1.

### PROPS

- White board

IV. **Select Careers for Lesson 3** (5 minutes)

## Affordable Housing Awareness



## OVERVIEW

- Address how Affordable Housing affects the students in their community, moving from an individual perspective to a global perspective.
- The students identify how career and salary determine where they can live.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify how salary relates to career choice
- Identify how career choice relates to and defines a community

## SKILLS

- Analyzing information
- Decision making
- Math solutions
- Mapping information
- Interpretation

## PREPARATION

- Review Activities

## PROPS

- Table tent with each salary
- Table tent with each career
- Map of Washington, DC Metro Area
- Map with apartment rental ranges identified
- Unique identifier (stars, circles, rectangles)
- Paper
- Markers

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## *Where Can I Live?*

Lesson 1 and 2 discuss and begin to define community and affordable housing. Today focuses on real incomes and housing costs in the community, showing students where they can and can not live based on certain incomes, and potential solutions for those forced to live further from their jobs.

### I. Activity 1 - Briefly discuss previous lessons (5 minutes)

- Define community
- Likes and dislikes of your community
- Select two students to read a journal entry
- Options on how to handle different allowances (based on day two)

### II. Activity 2 - Work in Career Groups, Budgeting (10 minutes)

- Ask students to move into one of the five career groups, as determined yesterday. (1. Waiter/Waitress 2. Doctor 3. Executive Secretary 4. Firefighter 5. Hairstylist)
- Assign appropriate salaries based on Appendix A. Place appropriate salary table tents on each table or set of desks.
- Introduce pie chart discussion (what percentage of salary should be allocated to housing?) Have each group make their own pie chart. Answers: Housing (30%), food (25%), fun (3%), health (4%) transportation (10%) utilities (8%) clothing (5%) savings (8%) insurance (7%)

### III. Activity 3 – Where Can I Live? (35 minutes)

- Students are asked to work through math problems to determine how much their salary can afford them and where they can live in the Metro area.
- Use 30% from above to work through math problem as follows:
  - 1) Salary / 12 months = Monthly Income  
Monthly Income x 30% = Housing Allowance
  - 2) Teacher introduces map and explains range of numbers on each region based on rental price of 1 bedroom condo
  - 3) Students place unique identifier in each region where their career can **afford** them to live on the map. (Appendix B)
  - 4) Discuss solutions for the lowest earnings group (i.e. get a roommate, live with family members) and advantages/disadvantages of living far from work.
  - 5) Discuss how it feels to be limited and not limited in where you live. Example Discussion: People who live in Arlington County (Region 1) – where do you eat and shop? That person working there is the waitress that lives in Prince William County (Region 6). Wow, they have to commute all the way to Arlington County (Region 1). What are those disadvantages? Disadvantages: long commute, frustration, road rage, less time with friends, family, entertainment. Reference issues on Page 2.

\* Additional option is for students to write journal entry about how they feel concerning the affordability of different regions.

**THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME**  
*Where Can I Live?*  
**Lesson 3, Appendix A – Salaries/Rental Prices**

Career	Salary Range*	Annual Salary	Monthly Salary	30% Housing Allowance	Affordability: 1 bedroom
Waitress	\$16,019 - \$25,121	\$17,000	\$ 1,417	\$425	NONE
		\$25,000	\$ 2,083	\$625	NONE
Hair Stylist	\$15,760 - \$28,634	\$19,000	\$1,583	\$475	NONE
		\$30,000	\$2,500	\$750	NONE
Firefighter (law enforcement, security guard)	\$21,386 - \$51,171	\$31,000	\$2,583	\$775	NONE
		\$50,000	\$4,167	\$1,250	All but Region 1
Executive Secretary	\$37,264 - \$53,878	\$42,000	\$3,500	\$1,050	Region 5 and 6
		\$54,000	\$4,500	\$1,350	All but Region 1
Doctor	\$117,633 - \$183,128	\$135,000	\$11,250	\$3,375	All Regions

Location	Regions	1 Bedroom **	Range (\$250)
Arlington	Region 1	\$1,350	\$1,225 - \$1,475
Alexandria	Region 2	\$1,300	\$1,175 - \$1,425
Falls Church	Region 3	\$1,280	\$1,155 - \$1,425
Fairfax	Region 4	\$1,275	\$1,150 - \$1,400
Loudoun	Region 5	\$950	\$825 - \$1,075
Prince William	Region 6	\$900	\$775 - \$1,025

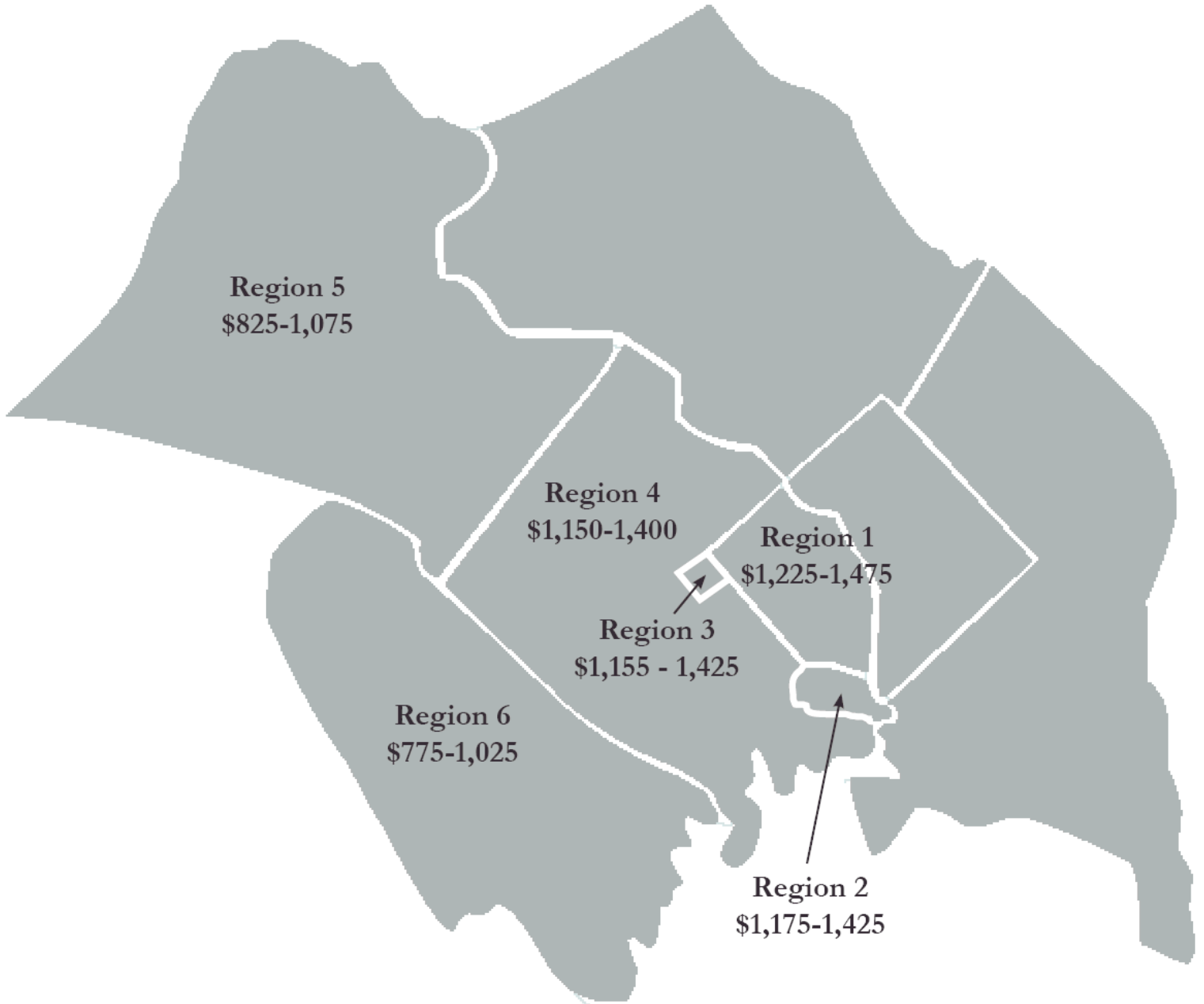
\*Based on average salary ranges for the Washington, D.C. metro area from [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com).

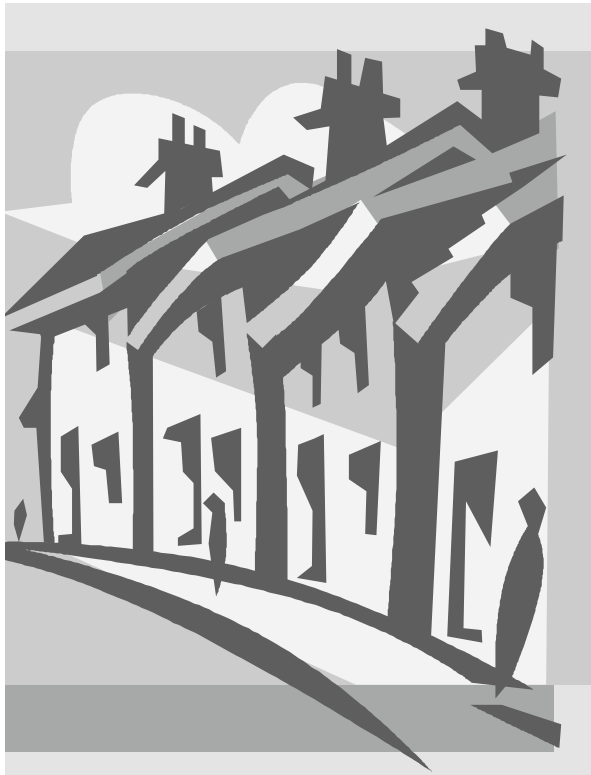
\*\*Based on average rental prices from Metropolitan Regional Information System, Inc. or the MRIS <http://www.mris.com>.

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*Where Can I Live?*

*Lesson 3, Appendix B – Map with Rental Ranges*





## OVERVIEW

- The students will use art to express what they have learned about affordable housing this week.

## OBJECTIVES

- Recap Lessons 1-3
- Brainstorm with students about why it is important that everyone in their community have a home they can afford
- Create a poster that expresses the theme “There’s No Place Like Home”

## SKILLS

- Creativity
- Expression through art

## PREPARATION

- Gather art materials

## PROPS

- Various magazines
- Scissors
- Glue and/or Tape
- Crayons/Colored Pencils
- White Poster Paper

# THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

## *Poster Contest*

Lessons 1 through 3 defined community, affordable housing, and how affordable housing affects you and your community – today is designed to encourage the students to use art to express this week’s theme - “There’s No Place Like Home!”

### I. Activity 1 - Briefly discuss previous lessons (5 minutes)

- Lead discussion reviewing the topic of affordable housing and the topics discussed throughout the week
- Encourage the students to think about what it means to them to have a home of their own and why everyone in their community should have a home.

### II. Activity 2 - Journal Entry (5 minutes)

- Have the students write a short (4-5 sentences) paragraph about what “There’s No Place Like Home” means to them

### III. Activity 3 - Poster Creation (40 minutes)

- Give each student three or four magazines, scissors, glue/tape, and a piece of poster paper.
- Have the students spend about 30 minutes creating a poster that expresses the week’s theme “There’s No Place Like Home” and why it is important that everyone in their community have a home they can afford
- Have some of the students share their posters with the class

### IV. Display posters as appropriate for your school

- Display in class room, principals office, hall way, etc.
- Have students vote on their favorite poster; either all the 5th grade students or the entire school.
- Use relationships in the community to display the posters – restaurants, art galleries, community center, fire department, etc.
- Information to consider including on the back of the poster:
  - Student’s Name
  - School
  - School Address
  - Teacher Contact



# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

## *Reflect on Affordable Housing*

This week you have discussed the topic of affordable housing and how it affects the students personally as well as the community that they live in. Today the students are going to complete a word match to test their knowledge on what they have learned this week. In addition, the students will be asked to write a short, reflective journal entry.

### I. **Activity 1 - Word Match** (15 minutes)

- Have the students complete the word match
- Review and discuss the answers with the class
- Encourage the students to ask questions about what they have learned this week and get them to start thinking about the concept that its important for them to share their knowledge about affordable housing with others in their community

### II. **Activity 2 - Journal Writing** (35 minutes)

- Ask the students to write a journal entry on the following topic:  
When you leave school today, what will you tell someone close to you about affordable housing?
- Examples:
  - Your community is made up of many different people who all make different amounts of money. However, not everyone can afford to live in the community they work in.
  - Everyone in your community deserves to have a home they can afford.
  - Affordable housing means the house you live in costs no more than 30% of your gross income.
  - Your community would not be the same without everyone that is in it- your doctor, your hair stylist, your fire fighters, etc.

### III. **Optional Activity**

- Have several students share their journal entries with the class.

#### **OVERVIEW**

- To recap the week's lessons through a word match and journal writing.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Complete word match.
- Write short journal entry.
- Have students think critically about Affordable Housing, consider what they learned, and articulate what they would 'teach' others.

#### **SKILLS**

- Decision making
- Analyzing information
- Writing
- Expression of thought

#### **PREPARATION**

- Review Activities

#### **PROPS**

- Word Match



## Word Bank

- A. Affordable Housing
- B. Community
- C. Things I like about my community
- D. Jobs in my community
- E. Types of housing
- F. Businesses in my community
- G. Parts of my community
- H. Parts of a budget

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

### *Word Match*

Place the letter of the correct word from the word bank in the blank beside the matching definition.

### DEFINITIONS

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A group of people who interact and share certain things as a group
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Dentist, nurse, grocery clerk, teacher, garbage man
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Savings, fun, utilities, transportation, insurance
4. \_\_\_\_\_ A housing cost that does not exceed 30% of a household's gross income
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Close to school, close to my church, close to my family and friends
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Park, library, hospital, food bank, Red Cross, shelter, school
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Tent, apartment, mansion, transitional housing, townhouse
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Safeway, McDonalds, Target, Payless, Chevy Chase Bank