

Colorado's housing crisis has gotten so bad that small towns are now building people homes

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The Bobcat Quad apartments are shown in this Feb. 13, 2020 photo in Westcliffe, Colo. The building is owned by Custer County Schools and they lease to district employees at a reduced rate as incentive to stay in the small, rural school district. (Mike Sweeney, Special to The Colorado Sun)

The vacant lot along First, Second and Third streets is lined by wooden stakes that delineate the Bobcat Subdivision, a site for affordable housing in this southern Colorado town.

Eventually, this area could be filled with more than a dozen homes with stunning views of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range.

This isn't the work of a developer seeking big profits, but rather a Custer County Schools project aimed at keeping the community afloat.

The housing crisis in rural Colorado is so severe that school districts, towns and counties, with the help of organizations like Habitat for Humanity, are building homes and apartments for teachers and deputies and others who are the lifeblood of the communities, but are being priced out of the market or living in substandard housing.

A couple miles west of the Bobcat Subdivision, on the outskirts of adjacent Westcliffe and with equally breathtaking views, is the Bobcat Quad – another school district project named for the school's mascot. Its four one-bedroom apartments are offered to district employees for \$500 a month, and there's always a waiting list.

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