

Housing Justice National Platform

for a Homes Guarantee

WE ARE

We are a movement of tenants, homeowners and allies, and we are building power and winning victories for housing justice all across the country.

WE BELIEVE

We believe that housing is a human right, not a commodity to be bought and sold for profit. We believe that everyone should be guaranteed an affordable, safe and healthy place to call home. We believe that homes must be accessible for people with physical or other disabilities, as well as to where people work, go to school and have built a community. And we know that to build a just housing system, we must start now.

THE NATIONAL HOUSING CRISIS

The nation's housing crisis has reached emergency levels. Many families spend more than half of their earnings on rent, struggling to hold down jobs that pay too little in order to put more money into landlords' pockets.

Rising homelessness, evictions and housing instability are all the result of a system that advances the interests of Wall Street and corporations over the health and well-being of our families and our communities.

It doesn't have to be this way. We're in a moment of incredible change, where people are fighting for universal healthcare, sanctuary for immigrants, free college and a Green New Deal. We need to be equally bold in demanding homes for all. That is why tenants, manufactured home residents, homeowners and community members across the country are coming together to chart a path forward.



I. CREATE AFFORDABLE, COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED, SOCIAL HOUSING

Everyone deserves housing that allows them to live with dignity, regardless of their income level. No one should ever have to choose between paying rent and having enough food or medicine. And everyone should be able to cover their housing costs, including utilities, and still have enough to meet their other basic needs. Our public policy must guarantee this basic standard of living.

II. PROTECT RENTERS AND MORTGAGE HOLDERS FROM DISPLACEMENT

Eviction is a devastating event that has ripple effects on health, education, employment and future access to housing. We need new protections that prevent landlords and lenders from displacing people and tearing apart communities in search of ever-higher profits.

III. PROVIDE REPARATIONS FOR CENTURIES OF RACIST HOUSING AND LAND POLICY, INDIGENOUS LAND THEFT; STRENGTHEN AND ENFORCE FAIR HOUSING LAW

Our housing policy must actively dismantle and provide restitution for a legacy of racist exclusion and exploitation. Housing, by location and design, must foster the inclusion of its residents, including those currently experiencing homelessness. Historically marginalized communities must lead in decision-making related to housing and community development.

IV. DE-COMMODIFY HOUSING & REGULATE WALL STREET

Housing and land should be democratically owned and controlled by community members, not by Wall Street and corporations. We need strong financial regulations that disincentivize securitization and profit-driven speculation in our housing.

V. ENSURE ALL HOMES ARE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE

Housing is the foundation for healthy, sustainable communities. Housing policy should seek to maximize the well-being of residents and workers and promote climate resiliency, clean and renewable energy, and safe and affordable water systems.

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Stable housing is the bedrock of healthy families and communities. Without it, the physical, mental and emotional health of families and individuals suffers. Children's school performance often declines.

The U.S. has a shortage of more millions of affordable housing units. The chasm between need and availability results from the failure of the private, for-profit market, as well as the federal government's divestment from programs that create affordable housing.

The federal government has not made a large scale investment to address affordable housing shortages since Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal which created our public housing system. Now, we need action even beyond that scale. The country's housing crisis is untenable, and it must end.

WE NEED

- The creation of 12 million new, non-market social housing units in the next decade, prioritizing community ownership and control
- Federal funding to adequately subsidize housing so that people at all income levels can afford their housing, as well as the basic necessities for a dignified life



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Today, more than 43 million American households rent. That number only continues to grow, especially among low-income, working class communities of color and immigrant communities that have been left behind and left out.

In most parts of the country, tenants and manufactured home residents lack even basic protections from eviction by unscrupulous landlords and speculators who may double or triple rents in a single year. Without such protections, landlords are free to engage in predatory behavior, displacing tenants and perpetuating housing insecurity. The far-reaching impacts of evictions are often experienced most intensely by already-marginalized people: Eviction rates are highest among Black women.



WE NEED

- Universal rent control
- Universal just cause eviction laws
- Federal investment in community-controlled anti-displacement funds
- A right to return for displaced residents

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Persistent segregation, high indigenous poverty rates and a yawning racial wealth gap are a feature, not a bug, of our housing system. They're the result of systematic land theft, exclusion from access to capital, and white supremacist policies designed to exclude Black, Brown, Asian and Indigenous people from owning property. These policies must be actively dismantled and restitution made to begin to bring justice and equality to the housing system.

In addition, the federal government must ensure that the Department of Housing and Urban Development fully lives up to its mandate by not only enforcing anti-discrimination laws but also affirmatively furthering fair housing.



WE NEED

- Reparations to address the historic theft of indigenous lands, including principal reduction and zero-interest loans to Black and brown communities impacted by racist housing and land policies
- An end to source of income discrimination and all tenant discrimination policies
- Full eligibility for housing resources, regardless of immigration status or past incarceration
- A federal prohibition on single-family and other exclusionary zoning laws
- A commitment by HUD to reinstate, strengthen and enforce the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule

IV. DE-COMMODIFY HOUSING & REGULATE WALL STREET

Housing and land should be democratically owned and controlled by community members, not by Wall Street and corporations. We need strong financial regulations that disincentivize securitization and profit-driven speculation in our housing.

Wall Street and private equity's deepening control over the rental units has exacerbated the housing crisis. The history of the commodification of housing in the U.S. is long, but has seen a dangerous acceleration in recent decades. Corporate landlords are expanding their reach from multi-family apartment buildings in high-rent cities to student housing, manufactured home communities, low-rent apartment complexes and single-family homes nationwide.

In many places across the country, it is virtually impossible for the average low- or moderate-income person to compete against multinational corporations to buy a home. The practices of these private equity players, who seek to profit from displacement and gentrification, have led to deteriorating conditions and rising housing costs for low-income and working-class tenants who live in their buildings. More robust financial regulations will protect both tenants and homebuyers by limiting the role that private equity can play.



WE NEED

- An end to government support for, and sales to, the predatory corporations buying up homes and communities
- Strong regulation, including transparency and fair taxation, of real-estate development and investment corporations
- Funding and policy preference for non-profit and cooperative ownership, community land trusts and other models that facilitate public and resident ownership

V. ENSURE ALL HOMES ARE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE

Housing is the foundation for healthy, sustainable communities. Housing policy should seek to maximize the well-being of residents and workers and promote climate resiliency, clean and renewable energy, and safe and affordable water systems.

Thirty million homes in the United States contain serious health and safety hazards. The estimated 77 million people who live in these hazardous homes contend with the mental and physical effects of conditions including lead paint, gas leaks, damaged plumbing, poor heating, rats and mold.

Entire communities also face health complications and premature death as the result of land, air and water toxicity caused by nearby polluting facilities and hazardous sites, as well as infrastructure disinvestment. Across the United States, Black people are 75 percent more likely than whites to live in areas adjacent to environmental hazards from oil and gas facilities, including noise, toxic pollutants and traffic emissions. Latinx people are 60 percent more likely than white people to live in such areas. One million Black people live in areas where cancer-causing toxins exceed the “Level of Concern” identified by the Environmental Protection Agency, and they face elevated cancer risks as a result. Lax oversight, combined with a lack of residential zoning protections and enforcement, create living hazards for people with few other places to go. Climate change, created by human environmental impacts, is already leading to more volatile weather and stronger storms, which in turn creates new environmental hazards that leave low-income communities and people of color most vulnerable. And a new wave of mass displacement, fueled by the climate crisis, is already underway and will only intensify.

WE NEED

- A Green New Deal for Housing that creates and rehabilitates millions of housing units, built by people earning a living wage, that supports the health and well-being of people and our planet





Housing is a basic need and a human right. It's also the foundation for neighborhoods where everyone can feel safe and thrive, where good jobs and strong public schools and services are available to all, and where neighbors work together to build the communities they want to see.

By extension, stable and dignified housing is a crucial building block for so much of what our movements are fighting for in this moment. It's central to the health of individuals and communities, as well as the flourishing of our schools and the students they serve. Real sanctuary for immigrants and refugees must include safe and accessible housing. Increases to the minimum wage don't go far for workers paying half their incomes in rent every month, and even the most robust versions of a Green New Deal will struggle to cut carbon emissions as deeply as is required without millions of new, no-carbon homes. In short, without a massive shift in public policy around housing, we won't make real gains around any of the most pressing issues of our time.



ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL

Action Center for Race and the Economy (ACRE)
 Alliance for Housing Justice
 Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG)
 Center for Popular Democracy
 Homes For All (Organizing Committee)

MHAction
 Partnership for Working Families
 People's Action
 PolicyLink
 Right to the City Alliance

STATE/LOCAL

Alliance of Californians for Community
 Empowerment Action (ACCE Action)
 Alliance for Community Transit — Los Angeles
 Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
 BASTA, Inc.
 Building Movement Project | Detroit People's
 Platform
 Causa Justa :: Just Cause
 City Life Vida Urbana
 City-Wide Tenant Union of Rochester
 Community Justice Project
 East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy
 (EBASE)
 East Bay Housing Organizations
 Equal Justice Society
 Esperanza Community Housing Corporation
 Frogtown Neighborhood Association
 Georgia Stand-Up
 Grassroots Collaborative
 Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
 Hill District Consensus Group
 Homes For All (Organizing Committee)
 Homes For All Newark (HFAN)
 Inquilinxs Unidxs Por Justicia (United Renters of
 Justice)
 Investing in Place
 Jane Addams Senior Caucus
 LAANE
 LA Forward

Liberty Resources, Inc.
 Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center
 New York Communities for Change
 NYS Upstate Downstate Housing Alliance
 ONE DC
 ONE Northside
 Organize Sacramento
 Partnership for the Public Good
 People's Alliance for Transit, Housing, and
 Employment (PATHE)
 People's Housing Coalition of Maine
 Pittsburgh United
 Pittsburghers for Public Transit
 Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
 Public Advocates Inc.
 Puget Sound Sage
 PUSH Buffalo
 Raise-Op Housing Cooperative
 Reclaim Philadelphia
 Social Justice Learning Institute
 Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)
 Struggle for Miami's Affordable and Sustainable
 Housing, Inc.
 United for a New Economy
 Urban Habitat
 Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
 and Urban Affairs
 Western Regional Advocacy Project
 Working Partnerships USA