

2017 Housing Agenda:

Permanent Solutions for an Ongoing Crisis



As New York City's housing crisis continues to worsen, the five boroughs are at the risk of becoming the nation's largest gated or rather, *moated* community. Already, more than half of New Yorkers are rent burdened, more than 60,000 people experience homelessness each night, and homeownership continues to move further and further out of reach for nearly 70% of New Yorkers. Habitat for Humanity New York City is focused on doing our part to reverse this troubling trend and we cannot do it alone.

This is why at Habitat NYC we place a significant focus on mobilizing New Yorkers around the cause of affordable housing and ask you to lend your voice to help us to build a more equitable city.

In an effort to combat displacement due to gentrification, to preserve units of housing already in place and to ensure the evolution of a city that is accessible to all New Yorkers, **local, state, and federal public policy** must create and preserve permanently affordable homeownership opportunities as an integral part of the housing continuum. Habitat NYC stands in coalition with our housing sector partners to advocate for

policies that will provide generations of New Yorkers to access the life-changing opportunity that Habitat is so well-known for and that affordable homeownership provides. Together, we will lift our voices and mobilize our keyboards to advocate from the steps of City Hall to the Legislative Chambers in Albany to the Halls of Washington D.C. all in order to ensure that families have access to owning a piece of the neighborhoods within which they live, love and serve.

Housing policies today must have a long-term vision for the future and set the course for keeping New York City within reach of people of all incomes and all backgrounds. We must create new opportunities for affordable homeownership and make smart long-term investments that will keep our neighborhoods affordable.

In that spirit, Habitat for Humanity NYC presents the following policy actions as a road map for how we can invest in families today and see that investment preserve communities and neighborhoods for generations to come:

HABITAT NYC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

NEW YORK CITY

- Support the role of Community Land Trusts in NYC by supporting the passage of Intro 1269 and a resolution calling on NY State to create a new tax exemption for land utilized by CLTs which will support permanently affordable housing.
- Increase financial resources for the creation and preservation of multi- and single-family affordable homeownership opportunities.

NEW YORK STATE

- Increase funding and per unit allocations for permanently affordable homeownership construction and rehabilitation projects in high cost communities.
- Establish a state CLT tax exemption and assessment caps for permanently affordable housing on CLT land.

U.S. & GLOBAL

- Protect federal housing resources and programs that support the work of Habitat for Humanity nationwide – including AmeriCorps/VISTA funding.
- Support Habitat for Humanity International's Solid Ground campaign to change land policy and systems to ensure that more people around the globe can have a decent home.

ADD YOUR VOICE: How you can make an impact through advocacy



JOIN OUR ACTION NETWORK

Receive action alerts and take part in targeted advocacy efforts. Sign up:
www.habitatnyc.org/takeaction



SIGN A HABITAT NYC "PAPER HOUSE"

Add your name to Habitat NYC's unique petitions sent to City Hall in support of our local priorities.



CONNECT WITH US

for opportunities to engage our elected leaders through social media.



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2017 PRIORITIES

NEW YORK CITY

■ Support the creation of permanently affordable homeownership opportunities across the city through Community Land Trusts (CLTs).

Habitat for Humanity NYC is committed to investing in mechanisms which will produce housing in perpetuity for low-and-moderate income families. The CLT model retains land ownership in a community-focused not-for-profit which stewards and enforces permanent affordability restrictions for housing owned thereon. HFHNYC supports passing Councilmember Donovan Richards CLT bill (Intro 1269) and a Resolution calling for the Governor and State Legislature to create a new tax-exemption for land owned by CLTs for the purpose of permanently affordable housing.

■ Increase support for multi- and single-family affordable homeownership opportunities.

Habitat NYC seeks to increase the City's inclusion of affordable homeownership in its ambitious housing goals. This is made possible through:

- Expansion of down-payment assistance grants to low- and moderate-income families,
- Increased focus on homeownership within mid- and high-rise RFPs on city-owned land,
- Re-establish support for the provision of bond and subsidy financing for affordable cooperative projects through the Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

These policy changes will encourage affordable housing developers to provide low and moderate income New Yorkers with new homeownership opportunities for years to come.

NEW YORK STATE

■ Establish a state CLT tax exemption and assessment caps for permanently affordable housing on CLT land.

Existing tax exemptions, abatements, and assessment practices are insufficient to ensure the long-term and permanent affordability of housing on Community Land Trusts throughout the State. Habitat NYC and our coalition partners call on Albany to establish a tax-exemption for land owned by CLTs that maintain 99-year ground leases with permanent affordability restrictions. The State must also direct tax-assessors to limit the taxable values of homes with restricted resale values to ensure affordability is maintained in accordance with the ground lease.

■ Increase Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC) funding and per unit allocations for permanently affordable homeownership construction and rehabilitation projects in high cost communities.

Funding levels for rental housing has vastly outpaced homeownership programs, leading to very limited resources for Habitat and other home builders at the City and State levels. In fact, allocations to build a homeownership unit has not increased since AHC's establishment in 1985 despite dramatic increases in the cost of construction over the past 30 years. Habitat supports legislation which will increase per unit allocation for homeownership projects in high cost communities from \$40k/du to \$110k/du. This proposed legislation will mandate that projects accessing increased funds require permanent affordability restrictions, ensuring anyone who wants to sell their home in the future must sell to another low-income family.

U.S. & GLOBAL

■ Protect federal housing resources and programs that support the work of Habitat for Humanity nationwide – including AmeriCorps and HOME funding.

Habitat for Humanity International seeks to leverage United States government programs and resources to build homes and to create resilient communities. To support this initiative, the federal government must maintain and enhance the following funding streams:

- **AmeriCorps:** More than 9,000 AmeriCorps members have served with Habitat affiliates nationwide since 1994, serving more than 24,000 U.S. families, contributing more than 15 million hours of service, raising tens of millions of dollars in cash and in-kind resources, and mobilizing more than 3.3 million volunteers. \$1.1 billion is needed for National Service programs in the fiscal year 17 Labor-HHS appropriations bill to continue meeting the needs of communities they diligently serve.
- **HOME:** Since its inception, the **HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)** has been the most productive federal resource for low-income homeownership. HOME helps organizations like Habitat for Humanity make decent, affordable housing possible for low-income Americans who are ready to become successful first-time homeowners. **Habitat NYC seeks support for HOME funding at \$1 billion in the fiscal year 17 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill.**

■ Support Habitat for Humanity International's #SolidGround campaign to change land policy and systems to ensure that more people around the globe can have a decent home.

As a local affiliate in a global city, Habitat NYC is an active supporter of the larger international #SolidGround campaign. Through financial "tithing" support and participation in the larger international effort to mobilize new and existing allies to enact and implement policies and systems around the world that advance access to land for shelter; particularly in the areas of disaster resilience, gender & property rights, secure tenure, and slum upgrading.