

# 2022 *Legislative Agenda*

New York was the epicenter of the country's life-or-death fight against COVID-19 with millions of our neighbors losing their livelihoods, their lifelines, or worse, their lives or the lives of their loved ones. New York City and Westchester County as we knew it ceased to exist in March of 2020. Nearly empty subway cars rumbled under deserted streets, local businesses closed their doors, office buildings became vacant towers, living rooms became classrooms, and for the first time in history, the bright lights of Broadway went dark. New Yorkers were advised to stay home to avoid interactions with our neighbors in an effort to control the virus; cutting off the vibrancy and energy of our communities and, unfortunately, trapping countless families in living situations that were unaffordable, unhealthy or untenable.

We at Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County know a reality that preceded the pandemic: every New Yorker did not, and still does not have access to a decent and healthy home.

Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County transforms lives and communities by building and preserving homes for hard-working New Yorkers. It is imperative that we build an equitable and healthy region in a post-COVID-19 New York City and Westchester County: Housing policies must have a long-term vision for our future; we must combat displacement due to gentrification, preserve existing affordable

housing and ensure that housing is accessible to all New Yorkers; local, state and federal public policy must create new opportunities for affordable homeownership, build inclusive communities and must ensure that affordability will last for generations.

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**Affordable homeownership must be seen as an integral part of the housing continuum.**

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Now is the time for us to build a region as great as the people who live here. For more than a decade, Habitat NYC and Westchester has mobilized to seek a more equitable and sustainable New York for everyone. Our message has traveled from the nation's capital to the state's capital, from City Hall to Borough Hall. Now, we ask that you lift your voice to new levels and become a champion of affordable housing in every county, city, municipality and village in New York City and Westchester, as well as across the state and nation.

Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County presents the following policy actions that will invest in families, communities and neighborhoods today, tomorrow and for generations to come.



## Municipal Priorities

### ■ Increased focus on homeownership within mid- and high-rise RFPs\* across NYC and Westchester's publicly-owned land.

This policy change will increase support for multi- and single-family affordable homeownership opportunities and encourage affordable housing developers to provide low- and moderate-income New Yorkers with new homeownership opportunities for years to come.

*\*An RFP is a request for proposal. In New York real estate, an RFP is generally released by the City, and announces a project, describes it, and solicits bids from qualified contractors (like Habitat NYC and Westchester) to complete it.*

## State Priorities

### ■ Establish a state-wide Community Land Trust (CLT) Acquisition Fund.

A CLT acquisition program seeks to drive speculative housing off the private housing market by allowing community land trusts in New York State to acquire vacant land or housing in need of desperate repair through the New York State CLT Acquisition Fund. The largest sources of financing expenses to building affordable housing in New York is for acquisition of land and the costs of construction. By supporting the growth of the CLT movement through an actual dedicated funding mechanism, the state government will be taking a necessary step towards further driving housing off the speculative, private market.

### ■ Legalize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) across New York State. Pass S4547A/ A4854A.

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a smaller, independent residential unit located on the same lot as a single-family home. Legalizing ADUs would protect some of our vulnerable neighbors who currently live in unsafe and unregulated housing and create 500,000 units in the New York City and Westchester County region.

## Federal Priorities

### ■ Habitat for Humanity affiliates support passing the Build Back Better Act, which allocates significant funding for affordable housing, including tens of billions of dollars that can be leveraged for affordable homeownership.

Our nation is in desperate need of federal housing resources. Millions of families need an affordable home, while affordable housing supply is currently at record lows.