

2025 *Legislative Agenda*

Addressing our housing crisis requires a collective effort through equitable housing policies. These policies should ensure that all New Yorkers have access to safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Our region faces a significant housing shortage, and many neighbors struggle with housing insecurity and the inability to own their own homes. Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County has built and preserved over 2,600 homes for low- to moderate-

All municipalities and communities must do their part.

income families in the past 40 years. Affordable homeownership is crucial for building an equitable city, fostering diverse neighborhoods, preventing displacement, and building both family and community wealth.

We must increase affordable homeownership opportunities and preserve these investments for future generations. Local, state, and federal government policies are essential to achieving this vision. We urge policymakers to advance strategies that serve all New Yorkers.

Habitat NYC and Westchester presents the following policy actions to increase homeownership supply and invest in families while building inclusive neighborhoods for today, tomorrow, and generations to come.

■ **Require at least 6% of affordable housing financed to be homeownership opportunities.**

Pass Intro. **0958**, requiring NYC to double the affordable homeownership opportunity units created to equal or exceed 6% of all affordable units financed on a five-year average, with a 2% minimum achieved each fiscal year.

■ **Establish a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Program for non-distressed rental buildings.**

Flexible financing and programmatic support focused on acquiring and converting stable, well-maintained rental buildings and units to limited-equity cooperative ownership is the most cost-effective way to increase the supply of affordable homeownership opportunities. A successful program must include:

- Programmatic funding for technical assistance to tenants and landlords.
- Utilize Neighborhood Pillars and the NYC Acquisition Fund for non-profits to acquire rental buildings appropriate for tenant-to-ownership conversions.
- Re-establish an HDC low-interest HDFC permanent loan product to reduce purchase prices for low-income shareholders.
- Implement a Year 15 and Year 30 homeownership conversion option for expiring LIHTC rental buildings.
- Support the passage and implementation of the Martin Act Amendment **S1354** (see State priorities).

Municipal Priorities

■ Create a density bonus for multi-family affordable homeownership properties.

Establish a new zoning incentive program specifically tailored for affordable cooperative and condominium developments. Zoning incentives could allow for additional density in return for the new construction, substantial rehabilitation, or preservation of affordable homeownership.

■ Westchester County municipalities should advance the Welcome Home Westchester 5 in 2025 housing options.

Westchester County remains in a housing shortage which threatens the health of our economy and the vibrancy of our communities. The Welcome Home Westchester campaign strongly urges our local leaders to promote much-needed housing in a way that makes sense for their individual communities. Not every community needs to do the same things, but every community should do something. **WHW 5** in 2025 options include:

- Produce a Housing Action Plan.
- Create a fast-track environmental review for sustainable, energy-efficient housing and transit-oriented development.
- Promote Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Transit-Oriented Development (TODs).
- Establish a “Core Curriculum” for Volunteer Land Use Board Member Training.
- Use the New State-Provided Tools and Become a Pro-Housing Community.

State Priorities

■ Pass the Martin Act Amendment to permanently preserve expiring and increase inclusionary affordable homes.

S1354 allows subsidized mixed-income buildings built using programs such as 421-a to convert the luxury rental units to homeownership in exchange for making expiring affordable units permanently affordable, increasing the percentage of already permanently affordable units, and transferring them to qualified non-profits. This bill could add affordable housing in high-cost communities, save thousands of affordable units from going market rate, increase tax revenues, and bolster the portfolios of non-profit and community housing organizations. .

■ Establish fair and sustainable taxation of affordable homeownership.

Existing tax exemptions, abatements, and assessment practices are insufficient to ensure the long-term affordability of low-income homeowners. Non-profit built and Community Land Trust homes throughout the state are vulnerable to unfair tax assessments. The State must take action to maintain the affordability of affordable and resale-restricted homes by establishing a partial tax exemption for low-income homeownership.

■ Increase access and investment in affordable mortgage products for first-time homebuyers purchasing state-financed affordable homes.

High interest rates have made it even more difficult for low-income families to purchase affordable homes and for affordable homeownership developers to predictably underwrite new projects. Enabling and expanding subsidized mortgage products that buy down interest rates for new affordable homeownership opportunities for low-income homebuyers and purchasers historically excluded from the market would help support the creation of and access to first-time affordable homeownership.

■ Clarify existing legality of split-deed community land trust homeownership structure.

Community Land Trusts have legally built and sold homes to low-income homeowners while retaining ownership of the land for decades. The State should further clarify the already legal structure of split-deed ownership in which the land is owned by a CLT and the improvements are owned by the homeowner.

■ Invest in first-time affordable homeownership programs, including AHC, AHOP, and Starter Home Innovation.

The undersupply of affordable homeownership limits mobility within the housing continuum, preventing young families from becoming homeowners and older New Yorkers from downsizing. The State legislature should support the creation of more affordable homes for ownership through the following appropriations:

- \$36M for the Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC).
- \$50M for a new Starter Home Innovation Fund.

Additional items of support

■ Disincentivize institutional investors from buying up one- and two-family homes.

Homebuyers are often competing with institutional cash buyers that can easily outbid families, preventing first-time homebuyers from a fair chance of purchasing a home. Disincentivizing bulk purchases of single-family and two-family homes by removing the tax benefits of institutional investors and establishing a 75-day period in which corporate landlords cannot bid on single-family homes will create a fairer marketplace for individuals and families.

■ Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act.

The Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act empowers religious organizations to develop mixed-income and 100% affordable housing on their land.

Federal Priorities

■ Establish the Federal Homeownership Supply Accelerator.

The federal government must create a new source of flexible financial assistance that supports the cost of property acquisition, new home construction and rehabilitation, and other financial barriers faced by homeownership providers serving modest-income homebuyers. Habitat for Humanity's proposal of a federal Homeownership Supply Accelerator would regrow the nation's affordable homeownership stock by providing federal investments to spur the construction of starter homes across the U.S. and make homeownership more attainable, especially for homebuyers of color.

■ Protect funding for critical affordable housing programs.

Congress and the White House must maintain and strengthen affordable housing programs like HOME, CDBG, Section 4 Capacity Building, and SHOP to ensure non-profit homebuilders like Habitat can grow our impact and provide more working-class families with affordable homeownership opportunities across the country.

