

2026 Legislative Agenda

Affordable homeownership as a critical part of the housing continuum. In order to build a more equitable region, it is imperative to invest in solutions that build family and community equity. Habitat Advocates for budgetary, legislative and regulatory policies that prioritize access to safe, secure, and permanently affordable homeownership opportunities that prevent displacement and stabilize existing affordable housing options.

Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County presents the following policy actions that will increase and preserve our homeownership supply and invest in families while building the inclusive neighborhoods for today, tomorrow and generations to come.

All municipalities and communities must do their part.

■ Increase affordable homeownership creation from 2% to 20% of NYC production and conversion in the Mamdani administration's housing plan

- Prioritize and scale the Open Door program pipeline for new construction projects
- Expand the Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program beyond heavily distressed, city-owned rental properties
- Support state law to establish a mortgage recording tax exemption for first-time homebuyer purchases and refinance loans
- Support amendments to J-51 tax abatements to allow for the conversion of rental properties to homeownership with durable affordability requirement

■ Establish a comprehensive and Fully funded Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Program

Flexible financing and programmatic support focused on acquiring and converting stable, distressed, or expiring affordable rental properties 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
- Increased acquisition funding for non-profits to acquire rental buildings for conversion to ownership (COPA implementation)
- Re-establishment of an HDC low-interest permanent loan product for HDFC limited-equity cooperatives
- Implementation of a Year 15 and Year 30 homeownership conversion option for expiring LIHTC rental buildings
- Operationalize Affordable Housing Retention Act (AHRA) conversions for qualified expiring mixed-income buildings

■ Increase support for HDFC co-ops and affordable condo owners in meeting energy efficiency requirements

Local Law 97 (LL97) was a historic win for climate justice, requiring buildings to reduce greenhouse emissions 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. However, limited-equity homeowners cannot afford the improvements necessary to comply with the law. NYC must increase support for homeowners to comply with LL97, and create a one- stop shop for LL97 compliance through the NYC Accelerator.

■ Support operational sustainability for CLTs and HDFC cooperatives

- Provide matching funds for the City Council's Citywide CLT Initiative to increase total funding to \$ 6 million annually in support of CLT operations and organizing.
- Establish a \$ 35 million CLT Acquisition & Rehab Fund.
- Permanently exempt HDFCs and CLTs from Housing Connect re-sale marketing and allow for more flexible processes

■ Adopt the 421-p Accessory Dwelling Unit Tax Exemption in Westchester Municipalities

New York State recently enacted legislation allowing local municipalities and school districts to offer a 10-year property tax exemption on the increased assessed value resulting from the creation of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Municipalities in which ADU's are legal should adopt this tax exemption to make creating an ADU more affordable for low- to moderate-income homeowners.

■ Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act (S3397/A3647)

The Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act empowers religious organizations to develop mixed-income and 100% affordable housing on their land. Whether it is that underutilized large parking lot or that five-acre parcel gifted to a congregation years ago, houses of worship are frequently in possession of unused property that could instead be used for low- and moderate-income housing. The FBAHA would remove unduly restrictive zoning on houses of worship to make it easier for them to serve their neighbors in need of affordable homes.

■ End Hedge Fund Control of New York Homes Act (S.9096/A.8829)

Building on Governor Hochul's recently passed limitations on equity acquisitions of homes that should be purchased by New York families, Habitat supports the End Hedge Fund Control of New York Homes Act. The bill would impose a 50% tax on the fair market value of any purchase of 1- to 4-family residences by private equity funds, and require hedge funds to reduce their holdings of single-family homes by 10% per year over 10 years or face significant tax penalties. The money raised through these taxes would create a Housing Down Payment Trust Fund to help New York families buy homes.

State Priorities

■ Sustainable Housing and Sprawl Prevention Act (S3492/A6283)

Habitat supports reform to environmental regulations to Streamline Housing Production by exempting or limiting environmental review under SEQR for the construction of certain new residential units to avoid unnecessary housing sprawl.

■ \$3 Million Funding allocation for the Habitat for Humanity Network

In order to grow capacity, serve more moderate and low-income working families, and address programmatic needs, the 30 affiliate Habitat network in NY seeks flexible funding to implement homeownership services across the urban, suburban and rural communities in NYS.

Federal Priorities

■ ROAD (Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream to Housing) Act

Habitat for Humanity has long called for comprehensive, bipartisan action to address the nation's growing housing crisis, and the ROAD to Housing Act represents a meaningful step in that direction. The package includes proposals that aim to boost housing supply and affordability, reduce regulatory barriers and strengthen program oversight and coordination. As a whole, the bill touches nearly every part of Habitat's work to advance affordable homeownership.

■ Establish the Federal Homeownership Supply Accelerator

The federal government must create a new source of flexible financial assistance that supports the production of starter homes. 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.

■ 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.

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