



NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

January 26, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development
Washington, D.C.

To President Biden and Secretary Fudge:

More than ever, bold policies are needed to ensure that America's lowest-income and most marginalized people have accessible, stable, and affordable homes. Even before the pandemic, America was in the grip of an affordable housing crisis that most severely impacted those with the lowest incomes. Today, after two years of surviving this pandemic, these households are even more precariously housed and in need of transformational policies. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget request provides the Biden administration with a unique opportunity to advance our shared goals of achieving the large-scale, sustained investments and anti-racist reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes have affordable places to call home. I urge you to use the FY23 budget request to call for robust funding for programs housing the lowest-income people and to outline your vision for ensuring stable, accessible, and affordable housing for all those in need.

NLIHC is solely dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. NLIHC's members include residents of public and assisted housing, people experiencing homelessness and other low-income people in need of affordable homes, housing providers, homeless services providers, fair housing organizations, state and local housing coalitions, public housing agencies, faith-based organizations, concerned citizens, and others. While our members include a spectrum of housing interests, we do not represent any segment of the housing field. Rather, NLIHC works on behalf of and with low-income people who need or receive federal housing assistance, especially extremely low-income people and people who are homeless.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress and the Biden administration have secured nearly [\\$85 billion](#) in emergency housing and homelessness assistance. While vitally important, these historic resources are a short-term solution to a long-term problem: our country's chronic affordable housing crisis. Even before the pandemic, there was a [national shortage](#) of nearly seven million affordable, available rental homes for renters with the lowest incomes – those earning less than the federal poverty rate or 30% of their area median income – and only [one in four](#) households qualifying for housing assistance was receiving help. Without affordable options, nearly ten million

very low-income households were severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half their limited incomes on rent and utilities every month.

In response to the crisis, NLIHC launched HoUSed, a national campaign supported by more than [1,800 local, state, and national organizations](#). The campaign focuses on four major policy goals: (1) bridging the gap between incomes and housing costs by expanding [rental assistance](#) to every eligible household – a core element of President Biden’s [housing platform](#); (2) expanding and preserving the [supply of rental homes](#) affordable and accessible to people with the lowest incomes; (3) providing [emergency rental assistance](#) to households in crisis by creating a permanent national housing stabilization fund; and (4) strengthening and enforcing [renter protections](#). Each of these policy goals must also include anti-racist reforms to correct for decades of systemic racism in housing.

The administration’s leadership ensured that the “Build Back Better Act” includes robust investments in the [HoUSed campaign’s top priorities](#): \$25 billion to expand rental assistance to an additional 300,000 households, \$65 billion to make critically needed repairs to public housing, and \$15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve homes affordable to those with the greatest needs. These investments would provide the long-term solutions needed to address the underlying, structural reasons for our nation’s housing crisis, but the bill’s uncertain future makes it all the more urgent that the administration formulate a strong FY23 budget request for affordable housing programs.

We were pleased to see the 15% increase to HUD’s budget proposed in the [President’s FY22 budget request](#), including the expansion of rental assistance through HUD’s Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program to 200,000 additional households. Now, we are calling on the administration to push for at least the same level of expansion in affordable housing for the nation’s lowest-income households in order to put the country on a path towards ending homelessness and housing poverty once and for all.

NLIHC and our broad, national network of members and partners stand ready to work with you to end our nation’s housing crisis. To discuss this further, please feel free to contact me at dyentel@nlihc.org or NLIHC Senior Vice President of Public Policy Sarah Saadian at ssaadian@nlihc.org.

Sincerely,



Diane Yentel
President and CEO
National Low Income Housing Coalition