

Build Back Better

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



BUILD BACK BETTER TOOLKIT

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HouseSeed
Universal • Stable • Affordable

INTRODUCTION

NLIHC's HoUSed campaign for long-term affordable housing advances anti-racist policies and works to achieve the large-scale, sustained investments and reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home. Bold policies are needed to ensure the most marginalized people in the U.S., especially low-income people of color, have decent, stable, accessible and affordable homes.

To achieve this, we must:

1. Bridge the gap between incomes and housing costs by expanding rental assistance to every eligible household. Today, only [one in four](#) households eligible for rental assistance receives it. [Learn more](#) about how we can ensure rental assistance is universally available.
2. Expand and preserve the supply of rental homes affordable and accessible to people with the lowest incomes. There is [no state or congressional district](#) in America with enough supply of affordable housing for families with the lowest incomes. [Learn more](#) about ways to build and preserve affordable homes.
3. Provide emergency rental assistance to households in crisis by creating a national housing stabilization fund. Millions of households are one financial shock away from economic hardship that could quickly spiral out of control. [Learn more](#) about how we can stabilize households during a crisis.
4. Strengthen and enforce renter protections. The power imbalance between renters and landlords puts renters at risk of housing instability and homelessness. [Learn more](#) about how we can build power for renters.

Stay up-to-date on campaign news and events at nlihc.org/housed.

Be sure to direct your audience to the HoUSed website for resources and information.



TALKING POINTS

Congress is working to enact the “Build Back Better Act” to improve health, advance racial equity, address climate change, and strengthen the care economy. To help achieve these ambitious [goals](#), the economic recovery package includes bold housing investments to ensure households with the greatest needs have a stable, accessible, affordable home, including the HoUSed campaign’s [top three priorities](#).

- \$25 billion to expand rental assistance to an additional 300,000 extremely low-income households, including those experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Rental assistance is a critical tool for helping the lowest-income people afford decent, stable, accessible housing, and it has a [proven track record](#) of reducing homelessness and housing poverty. A growing body of [research](#) finds that rental assistance can improve health and educational outcomes and increase children’s chances of long-term success.
- \$65 billion to repair and preserve public housing, which is home to 2.5 million residents. Public housing is critical to ensuring people with the greatest needs have a safe, decent, affordable, and accessible place to call home, and the preservation of this community asset must be included in any strategy to ensure housing is a human right.
- \$15 billion to build and preserve 150,000 homes through the national Housing Trust Fund for households with the greatest needs. The national Housing Trust Fund is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to build and preserve rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. It is the only federal housing production program targeted to address the market failure that is an underlying cause of homelessness.

These housing investments are foundational to the goals of the Build Back Better Act.

TALKING POINTS

- **The Build Back Better Act directly addresses the growing disparity between housing costs and stagnant incomes for people with the lowest incomes:**
 - By expanding rental assistance, the economic recovery package can help bridge the gap between wages and housing costs for America’s lowest-income and most marginalized households.
 - In the U.S., renters need an annual income of nearly [\\$50,000](#) or \$23.96 an hour on average to afford a modest, two-bedroom apartment. This is far above the incomes of many working families, seniors, and people with disabilities.
 - Since 1960, renters’ incomes have increased by 5%, while rents have risen 61%.
 - In only [5% of all U.S. counties](#) can a full-time minimum-wage worker afford a one-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.
 - There are [no counties](#) where a minimum wage worker can afford a two-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.

- **The Build Back Better Act directly addresses the underlying cause of America’s housing crisis: a severe shortage of rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes.**
 - By preserving the nation’s public housing and building new homes affordable to people with the greatest needs through the national Housing Trust Fund, the Build Back Better Act directly addresses the severe shortage of affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes.
 - Nationally, there is a shortage of [7 million homes](#) affordable and available to the lowest-income renters.
 - For every 10 of the lowest-income renter households, there are [fewer than 4 homes](#) affordable and available to them.
 - There is [not a single state or congressional district](#) in the country with enough affordable homes to meet this demand.
 - [Eight million](#) of the lowest-income renters pay at least half of their incomes on rent, leaving them without the resources they need to put food on the table, purchase needed medications, or make ends meet.
- **The housing resources in the Build Back Better Act are critically needed after decades of federal disinvestment:**
 - The private sector cannot – on its own – build and maintain homes affordable to the lowest-income renters without federal support.
 - Despite the clear and urgent need, only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress.
 - Millions of eligible households are on waiting lists – often for several years – waiting for housing assistance, and most never receive it. While people wait for assistance, many are pushed into homelessness, institutionalization, or incarceration.
 - Congress has divested from public housing for decades, resulting in over \$70 billion in unmet capital backlog needs. As a result, our nation loses 10,000 to 15,000 units of public housing every year to obsolescence or decay, and other units fall into disrepair.
 - Recent estimates show that converting public housing through Rental Assistance Demonstration could consume massive amounts of Low Income Housing Tax Credits over the next ten years – up to 61% of the 4% credits and 20% of the 9% credits. Repairing public housing will make these tax credit development resources available to other projects for new affordable homes.
- **People of color – especially women of color – and other marginalized renters are most harmed by the housing crisis and would directly benefit from the targeted housing investments in the Build Back Better Act.**
 - Ensuring accessible, affordable housing is provided to the lowest-income people – through rental assistance and investments in the HTF and public housing – would help ensure that renters of color and individuals with disabilities have access to affordable housing and robust housing choice.
 - [Black households](#) account for 13% of all households, but 26% of all extremely low-income renters and 40% of people experiencing homelessness.
 - Latino households account for 12% of all U.S. households, 21% of extremely low-income renters, and 22% of people experiencing homelessness.
 - Native Americans are dramatically overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness.

- Decades of structural racism and ongoing discrimination have created [racial disparities in housing](#), which contribute to inequities in wealth, education, health and more. Housing segregation was designed through intentional public policy, resulting in today's highly segregated communities.
- People with disabilities face barriers to affordable housing because of the lack of accessibility in our housing stock and the location of housing far from critical services.
- **Because housing is linked to nearly every measure of having a high quality life, the housing investments in the Build Back Better Act will have broad, positive impacts.**
 - Housing justice is [racial equity](#). Racial inequity in education, income, wealth, employment, and health is driven in large part by racial segregation and discrimination in housing.
 - Housing can help close the [education](#) gap. Children learn better and are more likely to graduate when they live in stable, affordable homes.
 - Housing is [health](#) care. A quality affordable home is a prescription for good health. It has been linked to prevention of long-term health problems and promotes healthy, productive lives.
 - Housing supports [economic mobility](#). Safe, affordable housing allows low-income people to climb up the income ladder and achieve financial stability.
 - Housing assistance [reduces poverty](#). Access to affordable housing increases stability for marginalized households and helps avert homelessness.

The **#BuildBackBetter**
Act is estimated to create,
preserve or retrofit at least
1,396,200 homes
and **867,916 households**



RESOURCES

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT/LEGISLATION

[HoUSed Campaign Priorities in the Build Back Better Act:](#)

- Expand rental assistance by \$25 billion to serve 300,000 additional households;
- Invest \$65 billion to repair public housing, which is home to 2.5 million residents; and
- Invest \$15 billion in the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve 150,000 homes affordable to people with the greatest needs.

[HoUSed Factsheet](#) - share this resource with your elected officials for a more detailed look into NLIHC's [top policy priorities](#) in the Build Back Better Act.

[Why Housing Investments Are Foundational to Build Back Better](#) - share this resource with your elected officials for more information on why housing investments are central to any strategy to improve health, address climate change, advance racial equity, and strengthen the care economy.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[National Sign On Letter](#): More than 1,800 organizations have signed a letter to congressional leaders urging Congress to support the HoUSed campaign investments in the Build Back Better Act. [Sign on](#) and share it with your networks.

[The Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) endorsed the HoUSed campaign's three priorities for the Build Back Better Act.

[Dear Colleague Letter](#): Signed by 125 representatives and led by Congressman Ritchie Torres (D-NY), calling on Congress to include the HoUSed campaign's priorities in the Build Back Better Act.

[Dear Colleague Letter](#): Signed by 36 senators and led by Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Alex Padilla (D-CA), calling on Congress to include robust housing investments in the Build Back Better Act.

[Support Letters from Other Sectors](#): Multiple letters are signed by 40+ leading national cross-sector organizations in support of expanding rental assistance and investing in public housing and the national Housing Trust Fund (October 2021).

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

[State-by-State Estimates](#) - see how many housing vouchers your state would receive under the Build Back Better Act.

[CBO Report](#) - providing universal housing vouchers for all households with incomes of no more than 50 percent of area median income (AMI) would ultimately assist about 8 million additional households.

[CBPP report](#) - there is a clear need to increase housing vouchers in the Build Back Better Act and,

ultimately, to make them available for anyone who is eligible.

[Advocacy Toolkit](#) - including talking points, sharables, and action ideas.

[Benefits of universal housing vouchers](#) – resources from the Urban Institute on the beneficial impacts of universal vouchers.

HOUSING TRUST FUND

[State-by-State Estimates](#) - see NLIHC's breakdown of how much HTF funding each state would receive under the Build Back Better Act.

[State Housing Profiles](#) - learn more about your state's shortage of housing affordable to people with the greatest needs.

PUBLIC HOUSING

[Analysis estimates](#) that \$70 billion to repair public housing would result in \$132 billion in regional economic activity and 770,000 jobs.

IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR STAFF



Scheduling an in-district meeting with your member of Congress or their staff during in-district work periods – another term for when Congress is in recess – is always a highly effective tactic. Whether you already have a relationship with your member of Congress or are meeting with their office for the first time, it will be a powerful relationship-building experience you can draw on over the months and years to come.

Of course, operate within your own best safety guidelines during the pandemic when considering in-person meetings to discuss housing issues or congressional visits to homes built with federal resources. Some organizations and individuals, particularly in areas with high vaccination rates, are showing a greater openness to direct interactions when masks are worn and social distancing is practiced. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) produces periodic guidance for host small and large gatherings. An October 21, 2021 resource from the CDC can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/gatherings.html>. Many advocates are scheduling and conducting virtual meetings with their members of Congress and their staff.

GETTING STARTED

- Locate the phone number for the district offices of your representative and senators. If needed, NLIHC staff can help with this; just reach out to an organizer on the NLIHC field team or email outreach@nlihc.org.
- If possible, recruit 3 to 4 advocates from other organizations dedicated to alleviating poverty and expanding access to affordable, decent, and accessible homes for your community.
- Call each office and ask to speak with a scheduler. Tell the scheduler who you are, that you are a constituent, and what organization you are affiliated with. Inform them that you and leaders from

other organizations would like to meet with a staffer from your representative/senator's office during an upcoming visit to the home district.

PLANNING LOGISTICS

- Have the best talking points! NLIHC's factsheet on housing elements of the Build Back Better Act is available at: shorturl.at/nqCQR
- Use the event as an opportunity to share how federal housing resources are used in your district and to raise awareness for the need for further investments in homes that are affordable.
- A mix of personal stories and data to explain the importance of affordable housing can be powerful.
- Prepare other advocates attending the meeting by sharing talking points with them, hosting a call to review the talking points, and determining who will speak about which topics.
- Review and print NLIHC's State Housing Profiles and Congressional District Profiles and bring any applicable informational materials from your office. These materials can be found at: <http://www.nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state>

AFTER THE EVENT

- As the meeting ends, ask for a picture. Then tweet and post this picture with the #HoUSed hashtag.
- Send your members of Congress and their staff a follow-up email to provide additional information in a clear and concise manner. Be sure to confirm any agreed-upon actions. Be sure to thank them once again.
- Tell NLIHC staff what you learned in your meeting. The feedback you hear from members of Congress and their staff informs further meetings happening on Capitol Hill.

PLANNING A SITE VISIT WITH A MEMBER OF CONGRESS

If you manage or work with an affordable housing property, shelter, assisted living property, or other development that has used federal housing funds, consider hosting a site visit and tour for your elected officials. This activity will allow officials to see the property and meet residents, helping them to better understand the impact of federal investments in housing on a personal level.

GETTING STARTED

- Choose a time and location for your event. Ensure common safety standards, especially for anything indoors, by providing masks and hand sanitizer for all attendees.
- Recruit other organizations to host the site visit with you; even if the event is at your property, other local groups should be on hand to support your call for increased federal investment in affordable housing. Expect organizational differences but unite the groups around the importance of homes that are affordable and the need to invest in them.
- If there is a resident council, make sure to engage them in the planning process. Members of Congress often enjoy seeing first-hand how federal spending can make a difference in the lives of households in their districts. Ask for the resident council's help planning the visit.
- Contact your elected officials' offices and ask to speak with their scheduler.

- Explain that you work with an organization dedicated to providing decent homes that are accessible and affordable to those most in need and that you would like to host the official and their staff at your site so they can meet residents and better understand what affordable housing looks like in your community.
- If they tell you the elected official is not available, consider inviting a staff member to come in their place.

SHARING THE EVENT

- Promote your event on social media and your organization's website. Include details about the time and place and how advocates can engage from home if they so desire.
- Work with your elected official's press secretary to coordinate media contacts in advance of the site visit. Use the event and the presence of your local official to raise awareness for the need for affordable housing.
- Task a member of your team with taking pictures of the event, making sure to post them to social media.

PLANNING LOGISTICS

- Work with resident council leaders and/or the property manager to identify residents who would be interested in sharing their stories.
- In the days leading up to the event, ensure any organizations you have coordinated with know the plan for the day, and consider sending a site map or other materials to your elected official's office if there is not a clear meeting place. Consider reaching out to any offices that declined your invitation to again invite them to the site visit. Work with the property manager to ensure the site is looking its best.
- Plan a clear path around the property or neighborhood, considering what areas are least crowded and will allow for appropriate distancing.
- On the morning of the event, bring refreshments and plan to meet the officials as they enter the property.
- Share with them about the property and about the funding it has received from the city, county, state, and federal government.

AFTER THE EVENT

- After the event, send an email thanking the official and their staff. Be sure to include answers to any questions that were raised. Also send a letter thanking them and including photos from the event. Ask them to continue to support affordable housing.

VIRTUAL LOBBY MEETING TIPS

BEFORE THE MEETING

Scheduling the meeting:

- Requesting a meeting about one to two weeks in advance is usually best.
- You can schedule a meeting by phone or email.
 - By phone: Call the office and ask for the scheduler. Some offices will ask you to fill out a form, but most of the time a phone call will suffice. During the pandemic, emails might be preferable to phone contact because many congressional staffers are working from home.
 - By email: Send a request to the scheduler.
 - [Contact your NLIHC organizer](#) for help getting scheduler contact info.
- When you make the request, ask to meet with the member of Congress or a housing policy staffer.
 - Often, meeting with staff members is just as good as or even better than meeting with the elected official. The member of Congress relies on staff for key information as they make decisions. It's also true that when you meet with staff, they are more likely to have more time to explore the various issues you are discussing and to ask good follow-up questions that provide for more dialogue.
- Let the office know what issue you will be discussing, the number of people attending the meeting, whether constituents will be in attendance, and your available times.
- After requesting the meeting, follow up to ensure your request was received.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, confirm what virtual platform will be used (i.e. a conference call, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.).
 - [Contact your NLIHC organizer](#) for help setting up a virtual platform, if desired.
- 24 hours before your meeting, be sure to confirm the meeting with the scheduler or aide. In this email include:
 - The virtual meeting login information or phone number if you are using your own meeting room or conference line;
 - Links to materials you want to share with the office and agenda (optional);
 - The meeting organizer's phone number; and
 - "Cc" everyone planning to attend the meeting.
- If you are conducting the meeting with a group of advocates, you may want to designate roles such as a facilitator, a tech manager, a note-taker, etc. Discuss in advance who in your group will open, close, and deliver specific asks.
- Outline an agenda with tasks for each person.

- Review the NLIHC Talking Points.
- Plan to tell stories! Stories stick in lawmakers' and staffers' memories better than data and are emotionally compelling.
- Practice, practice, practice! Write out your part and rehearse.
- Establish cues for when each person should speak (this can be part of the facilitator's role).
- Practice and test technology.
- Gather materials you want to share with the office.
- Do research on the person you are meeting with—for example, if you can say, "It's great to be meeting with you today. I was happy to see that the congresswoman received an award on [a particular issue]" – it shows that you're interested in what they are doing, and not looking for them only to be interested in your issues. Furthermore, knowing your legislator's past votes on housing policy will help you craft a more effective argument.

MEETING TIME

- Dress professionally and avoid background clutter (if meeting on video) and background noise (for both phone and video meetings).
- Be punctual—login or call in 10 minutes before the start time.
- Open your meeting with introductions.
 - Make sure to mention your connection to the state or congressional district represented by the office you're meeting with—whether you are a constituent and voter or your organization serves their constituents.
- Stick to your agenda and speaking times.
- When switching speakers, pause to allow the next speaker to unmute.
- Actively listen and ask questions.
- If you don't know the answer to a question you receive, simply saying "I don't know" and "I will follow up with an answer to that question" is perfectly acceptable.
- Take detailed notes, especially of any feedback you receive or follow-up information you promise.
- Your elected official may not have much knowledge of affordable housing challenges in your community. Use this as an opportunity to educate them.
 - Provide the elected official or legislative staff with the NLIHC materials and refer to those materials during your meeting. You can provide these materials via email ahead of time.
- You should provide numbers and stories about the issues you are talking about as often as possible. Share your personal story of why affordable housing matters to you.
 - Connect your work to the elected official's interests as much as possible, which is another reason to do your research on them before your meeting. If you can connect your work on affordable housing to the elected official's other interests - for example, better outcomes for children - this will often create a key connection that will lead to a stronger relationship as you move forward.
- Always make a specific ask in your meeting using a question that requests a a yes-or-no answer, such

as, “Will you support the Build Back Better Act and the historic investments in affordable housing solutions?” Most often, they will say they need to think about it. This is fully acceptable. You can use that as an opportunity to follow up later.

- Confirm with whom you should follow up.
- Ask the member of Congress or staff member if you can take a snapshot of the screen or a selfie with the screen to share later!
- Thank the elected official or legislative staff for their time and consideration.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Remember: No advocacy meeting is the final conversation with a member of Congress. The best advocacy focuses on sustained relationship building, rather than on single conversations.
- Tweet your members of Congress to thank them for the meeting with them or their staff, including a photo if you have one. Doing so strengthens your relationship because you’ll have given public gratitude for their availability; reminds them that they are accountable to follow up on the commitments they made to you; and allows you to share information on questions they said they wanted answers to. Remember to:
 - Mention (@) your members of Congress and @NLIHC.
 - Include the hashtags #BuildBackBetter and #HoUSed.
- Share what you learned by completing the NLIHC [Lobby Visit Report Form](#) for your meeting. NLIHC can take the information you provide and follow up with specific action items, clarify any questions the members of Congress or staff might have, and get them to engage on specific legislation. We are in a better position when we know the outcomes of your meetings.
- Share what you learn during your meeting with your network – including your members, your board, and your volunteers.
- Stay in touch by sending a follow-up email or thank you card to everyone you met with. You can also follow up to check in about the status of the request you made during your meeting.

SHARE THE MESSAGE

Post on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). Use the hashtags

#BuildBackBetterAct, #HoUSed, #Housing4UsAll. It is helpful if you tag @NLIHC in your posts and follow us for ideas on what to repost on your social media channels.

Go Viral -

Share the HoUSed images. Sample images and graphics for the campaign are included in this toolkit. Share the images with your social media networks and include information about your specific state.

Host tweetstorms and LIVE events on Instagram and Facebook – engage with your audience and amplify your messaging.

Only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it.

Solution: Investment in proven affordable housing solutions – rental assistance, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund

SOCIAL MEDIA SUGGESTIONS:

Post and re-post comments on campaign news throughout all your social media networks. Sample language and graphics are below. Consider pairing your posts with images for increased visibility, impact and engagement.

Major investments in affordable housing are at stake! **[Your Senator's Name]:** The \$150B+ proposed for affordable housing in #BuildBackBetter is monumental! When enacted, it will aid in energy-efficient & climate-resilience homes, rural housing & more. <https://bit.ly/3ohDuVI>

#DYK The #BuildBackBetter Act is estimated to create, preserve or retrofit at least 1,396,200 affordable homes and assist 867,916 households in need. <https://bit.ly/3ohDuVI>

#DYK 276,480 homes w/ lead-based paint hazard control, housing-related health and safety hazard mitigation in housing of families with lower incomes will be assisted w/ funding from #BuildBackBetter. <https://bit.ly/3ohDuVI>

People w/ the lowest income deserve the opportunity to climb the income ladder and achieve financial stability. \$\$ for rental assistance, public housing, & the Housing Trust Fund will reduce poverty and keep low-income renters #HoUSed. #BuildBackBetter <https://bit.ly/3khH7ZR>

[Your Senator's Name], #DYK renters who pay more than half of their limited incomes on rent are 23% more likely to face food insecurity. #BuildBackBetter serves as the foundation for any strategy to improve health, advance racial equity, address climate & more. <https://bit.ly/32YVbRX>

Congress must advance anti-racist policies and provide the large-scale, sustained investments and reforms needed to ensure renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home. #BuildBackBetter <https://nlihc.org/housed>

#ICYMI #BuildBackBetter provides \$500M to develop housing for people w/ disabilities & \$500M to develop housing for our nation's seniors, creating a total of 12k rental homes.

[Your Senator's Name], it's time to invest in your community. Pass the #BuildBackBetterAct and its historic affordable housing investments! <https://bit.ly/3DiAKeQ>

The #BuildBackBetter Act is once-in-a-lifetime bill that will revitalize communities, advance racial justice, address climate change & invest in affordable homes and the care economy. It is time to pass this bill in the Senate. <https://bit.ly/32YVbRX>

The Senate must pass the #BuildBackBetterAct to provide the large-scale, sustained investments needed to ensure renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home. #HoUSed <https://nlihc.org/housed>

The #BuildBackBetterAct includes bold policies that puts our nation on a path to #Universal, #Stable, #Affordable housing for the lowest-income and most marginalized people. #HoUSed #Housing4UsAll <https://nlihc.org/housed>

We are just a few steps away from ensuring the lowest-income people are #HoUSed. W/ #BuildBackBetter, we will preserve & expand the supply of rental homes through investments in public housing & the national Housing Trust Fund. <https://bit.ly/3gfQUho>

#DYK only 1 in 4 households who qualify for housing assistance receives it, and most are left to fend for themselves. #BuildBackBetterAct puts us on a path to end homelessness once and for all.

[Your Senator's Name]: Let's get this done! Pass the #BuildBackBetterAct and its major expansion of rental assistance for those most in need! <https://bit.ly/3gfNA5U>

#BuildBackBetter includes over \$150B in robust funding to build & maintain affordable homes through the national Housing Trust Fund, vouchers, rental assistance and more. <https://bit.ly/3gzMm5R>

[Your Senator's Name], #BuildBackBetter addresses the growing disparity between housing costs & stagnant incomes for people w/ the lowest incomes!

Now make your mark in history and pass #BuildBackBetter ! <https://bit.ly/3ohDuVI>

SAMPLE IMAGES: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/3RAGTG8](https://bit.ly/3RAGTG8)

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

THE HOUSED CAMPAIGN: PASS THE 'BUILD BACK BETTER ACT' TODAY

WASHINGTON, DC— Congress is working to enact the “Build Back Better Act” to improve health, advance racial equity, address climate change, and strengthen the care economy. To achieve these ambitious goals, the economic recovery package invests \$154 billion in [bold housing solutions](#) to help ensure a stable, accessible, affordable home for households with the greatest needs.

America is in the grips of an affordable housing crisis, most severely impacting the most marginalized and lowest-income people. Nationally, there is a shortage of [7 million homes](#) affordable and available to the lowest-income renters. There are proven solutions that can address the affordability crisis, but current funding levels from Congress leave three out of four eligible households receiving no housing assistance at all. This shredded social safety net is what brought us to the brink of an eviction tsunami during a global health emergency.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) and [\[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION\]](#) urge Congress to repair the housing safety net and address the pervasive shortage of homes affordable to the lowest-income renters by quickly enacting the housing investments in the Build Back Better Act, including expanding rental assistance to 300,000 additional households, investing \$65 billion to preserve our country’s public housing infrastructure, and providing \$15 billion to build new affordable homes through the national Housing Trust Fund to serve America’s lowest-income and most marginalized renters.

[\[INCLUDE QUOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR\]](#)

The [HoUSed](#) campaign advocates for four solutions to America’s housing crisis: expanding rental assistance to every eligible household; increasing the supply of affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes; providing emergency housing assistance to help stabilize families in a crisis; and strengthening and enforcing robust renter protections.

“Our first and best opportunity to advance some of these bold, long-term housing solutions is in the ‘Build Back Better Act,’ the economic recovery proposal from President Biden,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. “This economic recovery legislation is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in proven affordable housing solutions, including rental assistance, public housing, and the National Housing Trust Fund.”

An underlying cause of America’s housing crisis is a market failure that results in a severe shortage of rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. In [\[STATE\]](#) there are [\[#\]](#) extremely low-income households but only [\[#\]](#) affordable rental homes available to them. The result is only [\[#\]](#) affordable and available rental homes for every 10 households with extremely low incomes. [\[NOTE: find the data to insert into this paragraph on NLIHC’s state pages at: <http://www.nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state>\]](#)

Despite the clear and urgent need, only [one in four](#) households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress. People of color – especially women of color – and other marginalized renters are most harmed by the housing crisis.

The Build Back Better Act proposes a historic \$154 billion investment in the country’s affordable housing infrastructure. This investment includes the HoUSed campaign’s priorities of \$15 billion for the national

Housing Trust Fund to build, preserve and rehabilitate apartments affordable to the lowest-income people, \$65 billion to repair and preserve public housing throughout the country, and \$25 billion to expand rental assistance to help 300,000 more households afford to keep roofs over their heads. Any final economic recovery bill must include these critical investments.

Through sustained advocacy with congressional champions and national, state, and local partners, the HoUSed campaign advances anti-racist policies and works to achieve the large-scale, sustained investments and reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home.

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For more information about the HoUSed campaign, please visit www.nlihc.org/housed.



#DYK renters who pay more than half of their limited incomes on rent are **23%** more likely to face food insecurity. **#BuildBackBetter** serves as the foundation for any strategy to improve health, advance racial equity, address climate & more.

OPINION EDITORIAL TEMPLATE

CONGRESS MUST PROVIDE UNIVERSAL, STABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL IN [STATE] AND THROUGHOUT THE U.S.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, millions of America’s lowest-income and most marginalized households—people of color, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, low-wage workers—were just one financial shock away from falling behind on their rent and threatened with eviction, and in worst cases, homelessness. With growing housing costs and stagnant incomes for low-wage workers, too many renters – including in [STATE] – are living paycheck-to-paycheck and at imminent risk of losing their homes.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), nearly 8 million of the lowest-income households pay more than half of their limited incomes on rent, leaving very little for other basic needs such as groceries, childcare, or medicines. To combat this crisis and ensure that the lowest-income and most marginalized households have stable, accessible, and affordable homes, Congress should expand rental assistance, preserve public housing, and provide robust resources to build new affordable homes for the lowest-income people through the national Housing Trust Fund.

The “Build Back Better Act” is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Congress to improve health, advance racial equity, address climate change, and strengthen the care economy. To meet these ambitious goals, robust affordable housing investments must be a key part of the Build Back Better Act.

Today’s housing crisis reflects the structural disparity between growing housing costs and inadequate incomes for far too many people in America. With insufficient federal investments in housing assistance and in the creation and preservation of affordable housing, not a single state or congressional district in the country has enough affordable homes to meet the needs of people with the lowest incomes, disproportionately people of color.

There are only [# OF AFFORDABLE HOMES AVAILABLE] rental homes affordable and available for every 10 of the lowest-income renters in [STATE]. Working at the minimum wage of [STATE MINIMUM WAGE] per hour in [STATE], a wage earner needs to work [#FULL-TIME JOBS AT MINIMUM WAGE] full-time jobs or [#WORK HOURS PER WEEK AT MINIMUM WAGE] hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment. They must work [#FULL-TIME JOBS AT MINIMUM WAGE] full-time jobs or work [#WORK HOURS PER WEEK AT MINIMUM WAGE] hours per week to afford a two-bedroom apartment. [NOTE: find the data to insert into this paragraph on NLIHC’s state pages at: <http://www.nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state>]

Despite the clear and urgent need, only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress. Congress must act now to advance bold housing solutions that move our nation towards universal, stable, and affordable homes for everyone – by passing the Build Back Better Act!

[ORGANIZATION NAME] and the HoUSed campaign advocates for four solutions to America’s housing crisis: expanding rental assistance to every eligible household; increasing the supply of affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes; providing emergency housing assistance to help stabilize families in a crisis; and strengthening and enforcing robust renter protections. The Build Back Better Act is our first and

best opportunity to advance bold housing solutions to help guarantee those with the greatest needs have affordable homes.

Expanding rental assistance and building and preserving more affordable homes will have a broad and positive impact on racial equity, education, healthcare, economic mobility, and poverty-reduction. Affordable housing can close the education gap because children learn better and are more likely to graduate when they live in stable, affordable homes. Affordable housing has been linked to prevention of long-term health problems and promotes healthy, productive lives. Affordable housing supports economic mobility, allowing low-income people to climb the income ladder and achieve financial stability. By providing housing assistance, we can reduce poverty, increase stability for vulnerable households, and help avert homelessness, institutionalization, and incarceration.

These critical investments have a proven track record of reducing homelessness and housing poverty, and they are vital for helping the lowest-income people afford decent, stable, accessible housing.

America is in the grips of an affordable housing crisis, most severely impacting the most marginalized and lowest-income people. The Build Back Better Act proposes a historic \$154 billion investment in the country's affordable housing infrastructure, including the HoUSed campaign's priorities of \$15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build, preserve and rehabilitate apartments affordable to the lowest-income people, \$65 billion to repair and preserve public housing throughout the country, and \$25 billion to expand rental assistance to help 300,000 more households afford to keep roofs over their heads.

The Build Back Better Act provides a unique opportunity for Congress to begin to end homelessness and housing poverty in America, once and for all. Build Back Better should be passed immediately!

[YOUR NAME, ORGANIZATION]

#DYK only **1 in 4 households** who qualify for housing assistance receives it, and most are left to fend for themselves.
#BuildBackBetterAct puts us on a path to end homelessness once and for all.



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