

# TARGETING IMMIGRANTS WILL NOT SOLVE THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

Trump policies targeting immigrants will make America's affordable housing crisis worse

**A**cross America, millions of households – particularly those with the lowest incomes – struggle to afford high housing costs. Rather than investing in proven solutions to the nation's affordable housing and homelessness crisis, the Trump administration has blamed immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

Policies proposed by President Trump, including those that target immigrants such as withholding federal resources from [sanctuary jurisdictions](#), allowing immigration enforcement to [raid shelters](#) and other sensitive areas, [evicting mixed-status immigrant households](#) from HUD housing, and discouraging [access to public benefits](#), will lead to even more housing insecurity and make it harder for states and communities to address pressing housing needs.

## HIGH HOUSING COSTS ARE DUE TO SYSTEMIC DRIVERS, NOT IMMIGRANTS

America's affordable housing and homelessness crisis is primarily caused by the gap between incomes and housing costs and the severe shortage of homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes.

For those with the greatest needs, incomes have not kept up with housing costs. While a full-time worker needs to earn more than [\\$26 an hour](#) to afford a modest, one-bedroom apartment at fair market rent, 14 of the 20 most common occupations in the U.S. – representing 42% of the entire workforce – pay median hourly wages less than that amount. For seniors and people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), there are no housing markets in the U.S. where they can afford a home without assistance.

Nationally, there is a shortage of [7.3 million](#) homes affordable and available to people with the lowest incomes. This severe shortage stems from a market failure, where the private market cannot reliably build, operate, and maintain rental housing with rents low enough for extremely low-income families and individuals to afford without federal resources.

Targeting immigrant households, however, will not increase income supports for seniors and people with disabilities, expand housing assistance to more families, create the good-paying jobs and educational opportunities needed for low-wage workers to increase their earnings, or address the systemic market failure underlying our nation's housing shortage. The only solution to America's housing crisis is to increase federal investments in proven solutions at the scale needed to ensure everyone has an affordable, accessible home.

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<sup>1</sup>To avoid confusion about legal citizen status, we use "immigrant" instead of migrant, refugee or asylee to encompass the intersecting identities of immigrants regardless of documentation status.

## IMMIGRANTS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN SOLVING AMERICA'S HOUSING CRISIS

Immigrants, like all of us, have inherent dignity and worth by virtue of their humanity alone. Importantly, immigrants also play a critical role in solving America's housing crisis.

Immigrant workers contribute a significant portion of the construction labor required to increase the affordable housing supply. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2023 immigrants [account for 34 percent](#) of those who work in construction. The National Association of Home Builders & Wells Fargo Housing Market Index found in [its 2024 report](#) acute shortages in trades with particularly high rates of immigrant workers, specifically bricklayers and masons. The same report found that some states are even more reliant on immigrant construction workers, particularly California, Texas, Florida, and New York.

Deporting immigrant workers will decrease the size of the labor force, slow housing construction, raise costs, and ultimately decrease the number of new homes that can be built, worsening housing supply issues.

## TRUMP IMMIGRATION POLICIES WILL LEAD TO EVEN MORE HOUSING INSECURITY AND HOMELESSNESS

The first and current Trump administration have proposed several policies targeting immigrants which, if implemented, would make it harder for our nation to ensure that everyone has access to an affordable, accessible place to call home. His policies:

- **Undermine state and local efforts to address housing and homelessness.** In an executive order, President Trump directed federal agencies to prevent [sanctuary jurisdictions](#), or jurisdictions that limit or deny cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, from receiving critical federal investments. If this executive order is used to deny states and localities access to federal housing, homelessness, and community development investments, it would undermine local governments' ability to help families purchase a home, build more affordable rental housing, and prevent and address homelessness.
- **Harm people at their moments of greatest need.** The Trump administration rescinded guidelines that prohibit immigration enforcement from arresting undocumented people in ["sensitive" areas](#). By allowing immigration law enforcement to target disaster relief centers and domestic violence and homeless shelters, the administration is cruelly denying immigrant families, including U.S. citizen children, safety and creating fear. This action will deter them from seeking critical assistance when they need help the most and leave them with no safe place to go.
- **Put families, including U.S. citizens, at greater risk of housing insecurity and homelessness.** During his previous term, President Trump [proposed](#) to force mixed-status immigrant families, including U.S. citizens, living in HUD-assisted housing to choose between separating as a family or facing eviction and potentially homelessness. According to the Trump administration's own analysis, the proposed rule would have resulted in the eviction of 25,000 mixed-status families, including 55,000 U.S. citizen children. Under a new executive order, the Trump administration [abruptly cancelled](#) contracts with refugee resettlement agencies to help newcomers access housing.

## CONGRESS MUST ENACT PROVEN SOLUTIONS

Rather than targeting immigrants, Congress should work to provide the long-term, large-scale investments required to end the affordable housing crisis, including:

- Expanding rental assistance to ensure it is universally available to every eligible household.
- Expanding investments in programs like the national Housing Trust Fund to build homes affordable to people with low incomes.
- Providing emergency rental assistance to help stabilize households in crisis and avoid eviction and homelessness.
- Strengthening and enforcing renter protections.

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