



Habitat for Humanity - New York City 2010 Housing Covenant

*“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.”
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

In 2010, Habitat for Humanity - New York City remains committed to promoting affordable housing and financial stability for all. We invite New Yorkers to come together, raise our voices in unison and strengthen our great city, state and nation.

New York City has made significant strides in building and preserving affordable housing. However, the recession, high unemployment, surging homelessness and threats to the citywide supply of affordable units, present formidable challenges this year.

Foreclosures have devastated neighborhoods in New York City, especially in low-income communities of color, which are rapidly becoming destabilized. Faced with a political landscape that now favors rental housing, Habitat-NYC believes we must underscore the life-changing — and community strengthening — benefits of affordable homeownership.

In addition to building and renovating affordable homes, we will work to ensure that public policies incorporate a balance of new construction and preservation of affordable rental and ownership housing, which will impact the most residents and communities.

This year, Habitat-NYC will continue to combat predatory lending practices that prey on our most vulnerable people. We will: (1) raise awareness of predatory practices and (2) educate low-income New Yorkers about better financial practices that will help them avoid spiraling debt so they can save their money for such necessities as food and shelter.

[Read More About 2010 Goals on Back](#)

Habitat-NYC will address these issues by focusing on the following legislative priorities:

New York City

- Keep Affordable Homeownership at the Forefront of Public Policy
- Build Awareness of Predatory Lending Practices

New York State

- Sign the Empire State Housing Investment Fund into Law (A09115 / S5727)
- Increase Our State's Affordable Housing Investment
- Repeal Vacancy Decontrol

United States

- Increase Funding for National Affordable Housing Programs



A CALL TO ACTION:

Here's how you can impact affordable housing and consumer protections and education:

- Join Our Housing Justice Action Network: Receive monthly advocacy newsletters, action alerts and information on housing and consumer legislation and advocacy efforts. To sign up, go to: www.habitatnyc.org/advocate
- Sign a Habitat-NYC "Paper House" Postcard: Sign a postcard calling for the passage of the Empire State Housing Investment Fund and an increase in the state's capital investment in affordable and supportive housing.
- Become a Habitat-NYC Loan Ranger: Join Habitat-NYC's Loan Rangers Campaign and provide information and resources to low-income consumers across the city on predatory lending practices. You can also arrange to have a Loan Rangers volunteer come to your organization or your congregation to provide a free workshop on these practices. Please visit: www.habitatnyc.org/advocate
- Sign Up as an Advocate with Habitat for Humanity International: Take action on federal and international housing issues by joining HFHI's advocacy network. Go to: www.habitat.org

2010 GOALS

NEW YORK CITY

Keep Affordable Homeownership at the Forefront of Public Policy: Affordable homeownership gives low-income families critical economic and social benefits — building equity; significantly improving educational achievement; fostering greater civic participation, satisfaction and self-esteem and improving physical health. Building and preserving affordable homeownership units is a powerful economic engine that quickly creates jobs, generates new tax revenue and stabilizes communities. Habitat-NYC will ensure our elected officials understand the vital importance of affordable homeownership and continue to support it.

Build Awareness of Predatory Lending Practices: On behalf of the homebuyers we serve, as well as all low-income New Yorkers, Habitat-NYC will continue to advocate for consumer protections and educate consumers about predatory practices that drain families' budgets and threaten their ability to remain in decent housing. In 2010, we will target: 1) refund anticipation loans, 2) deceptive credit card practices, 3) rent-to-own businesses, and 4) foreclosure rescue scams. For more information, go to: www.habitatnyc.advocate.org.

NEW YORK STATE

Sign the Empire State Housing Investment Fund into Law (A09115 / S5727): This bill will create a dedicated revenue stream that will support affordable housing for years to come, while stimulating statewide economic development. The Housing Investment Fund is more flexible than any existing state housing program and targets low-income New Yorkers who are most in need of affordable homes. This Fund is positioned to be a perfect repository for federal Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars once they come on-line in early 2010. Read the full bill at:

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A09115>

<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/api/html/bill/S5727>

Increase State Affordable Housing Investment: For the past six years, applications for New York State housing capital funds have exceeded availability by an average of \$167 million per year. In 2008, the gap was \$125 million — despite an additional \$200 million one-year appropriation. Today, more New Yorkers than ever before are experiencing a housing crisis, and we are urging the Governor to increase the state's capital investment in affordable housing and the economic activity that homebuilding generates.

Repeal Vacancy Decontrol: Since vacancy decontrol was enacted over a decade ago, New York City has lost an estimated 300,000 once-affordable apartments because this practice allows landlords to charge market rates for vacated units with rents over \$2,000. Because New York City faces an extreme shortage of affordable homes, and rent control is overseen by the state, Habitat-NYC is asking the Governor and State Legislature to repeal the decontrol provision.

UNITED STATES

Increase Funding for National Affordable Housing Programs: In support of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, Habitat for Humanity International seeks to leverage United States government programs and resources to revitalize neighborhoods and to create resilient communities. To support this initiative, the federal government must enhance the following funding streams:

- SHOP (Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program): Provides Habitat affiliates with resources to acquire the land and infrastructure needed to rebuild communities hard-hit by the foreclosure crisis;
- Section 4 Capacity Building: Provides resources to support the staffing and skills needed to rebuild communities hard-hit by the foreclosure crisis;
- National Service (AmeriCorps and VISTA): Provides affiliates with the capacity to engage tens of thousands of volunteers in efforts to rebuild struggling neighborhoods;
- National Housing Trust Fund and Capital Magnet Fund: Provides production resources for new construction and rehabilitation of vacant properties.
- Preservation Programs: Provide affordable rental homes for low-income families and individuals through public housing, Section 8 and Section 202.