



## **Demand: D.C. Council, commit \$50 million to Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHCs)**

### **There is an affordable housing crisis in D.C.**

The District continuously chooses corporate development over the needs of its residents. The effects of this gentrification are astounding.

- Between 2000 and 2010, our median rent increased by 50 percent. We lost half of all low-cost rental units, while the number of high-cost units tripled.
- Rent control policy does little to quell this surge. It only applies to buildings built before 1976 – a rapidly shrinking set of units – and pretty much ensures a return of 10 percent to landlords. It isn't tied to actual cost-of-living increases, or to actual wages.

### **We need real affordable housing**

A family needs to earn \$27 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at market rate. Our minimum wage currently is \$8.25 per hour. We must preserve and create true affordable housing.

- Affordable housing is tied to area median income (AMI). But our AMI is distorted since it measures not just the District, but many of the wealthy surrounding counties. In D.C., as long as housing is accessible to families making \$65,000 per year, it is “affordable.”
- This means as long as rent is \$19,500 per year – \$1,625 per month – a unit is “affordable.”
- The general rule is that you shouldn't spend more than 30 percent of your income on rent, but the median rent in D.C. is now \$1,400 per month.
- We currently have 71,000 people on the public housing waiting list.



## **District policies must change**

Too often, the District government uses housing funds to pay developers, rather than to preserve, upgrade or build new units for residents.

- We have tens of thousands on waiting lists for affordable housing, but hundreds of units sit vacant. Housing everyone would cost an estimated \$2.3 billion. Simply upgrading our current stock would cost \$1.3 billion.
- The District claims there is no budgetary solution, but over the last 10 years it gave \$1.7 billion to developers. That would have housed 60,000 families for more than two years.

## **We can make a real difference – now!**

Currently, housing policy in the District is developed ad-hoc, without a consistent and focused plan. We need not only significant investment, but also investment that is targeted for those most in need.

- Instead of using funds to pay developers, the District needs to earmark portions of those funds to affordable housing for projects and programs that will make a big impact.
- Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHCs) present one of the most powerful tools we have. They are cost-effective ways to preserve affordable housing (an average development cost of under \$165,000 per unit). Yet, funding for LEHCs has fallen sharply.
- LEHCs provide long-term affordable housing stock, and turn tenants into owners of their units, improving their economic position over time.

**Join us to demand the Council commit \$50 million  
of affordable housing funds to LEHC's**

The money is there, it's even already committed to housing.

We just want it to go to residents.

**Sign the petition at [JusticeFirst.org](https://JusticeFirst.org)**