

VISION TO ACTION



**How the Housing for All Campaign
Led Washington, DC from Drastic Cuts
to Momentous Investments
in Housing Funding**

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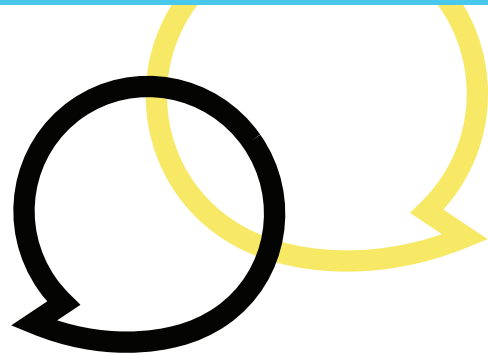
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"Vision to Action: How CNHED's Housing For All Campaign Led Washington, DC from Drastic Cuts to Momentous Investments in Affordable Housing," published by the **Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development** and the **Center for Community Change** in 2016.

“The Housing For All Campaign utilized an unprecedented combination of respected practitioner voices, cultivated opinion leaders, and the activism of residents.” – Steve Glaude, Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing For All Campaign was launched by the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) in 2010 to engage the existing coalition members as well as the public to increase investments in affordable housing in Washington, DC.

The Campaign marked an intentional shift toward a large public campaign directed by CNHED. This case study explores the strategies and steps used to successfully develop and lead a campaign that turned the tide on affordable housing investments in Washington, DC. These include: maintaining a strong coalition, building a wide base, seizing opportunities, and supporting the leadership of those impacted.

Over the course of the Housing For All Campaign, CNHED organized over 4,000 supporters, increased the annual Housing For All Rally from 250 people to 700, and had the ability to mobilize over 100 organizations to take action. This demonstration of power and commitment turned the tide from loss of funding to unprecedented investments in affordable housing.

The Housing For All Campaign significantly changed the housing landscape in Washington, DC, winning a change in political will and significant funding investments in affordable housing.

The Housing Production Trust Fund saw the greatest changes, including the creation of a \$100 million baseline annual commitment. In addition, DC’s locally-funded voucher program received more than \$26 million, and the Campaign helped build momentum for DC to end chronic homelessness.

When CNHED launched the Housing For All Campaign, the organization had a strong external reputation on housing policy and budget issues and an internal coalition which made it a solid home for an ambitious campaign for housing investments. Building a consensus and platform before launching the Campaign created clarity on the Campaign goals and clear self-interest for members. Investing organizational resources and increasing staff capacity enabled CNHED to develop a full-fledged campaign.

Engaging residents impacted by DC’s housing programs and developing their leadership was a key strategy of the Campaign.

Involving CNHED’s existing stakeholders was key to the early development of the Housing For All Campaign. Initial public events and trainings increased participation by members, built skills, and raised the profile of affordable housing and the Housing For All Campaign. Partnerships with fellow advocacy organizations also helped strengthen advocacy events.

Even when winning was unlikely, CNHED’s Housing For All Campaign mobilized members who were concerned about cuts, educated elected officials on the programs’ uses and impact, and positioned themselves as an ethical voice challenging the divestment from key housing programs.

Campaign activities engaged decision makers while inviting them to be part of the solution. Not only were they invited to Housing For All events, Campaign supporters attended hearings, votes, and other government



Team preparing to meet with a DC Council office at Advocacy Day.

The Campaign engaged decision makers while inviting them to be part of the solution.

functions. The Campaign focused on building a strong base while advocating against cuts to housing programs in the DC budget.

Engaging residents who were impacted by DC's housing programs and developing their leadership was a key strategy of the Campaign. Most resident advocates already had a connection with an organization that provided housing or services. Offering many training opportunities prepared residents to be active in advocacy, build relationships with peers, and feel confident to participate. Further, creation of the Resident Leadership Team deepened participation and ownership.

After deepening relationships with DC's housing organizations and residents who were benefiting or needed affordable housing, the Campaign focused on building relationships with Millennials. This diversified the base who could volunteer and participate in activities.

While the work of building leadership and engaging organizations and individuals never ended, the Campaign began to see the fruits of its work when then-Mayor Gray announced a major investment in affordable housing. This demonstrated that sustaining a strong inside strategy and an outside strategy maintained both credibility and political pressure.

Political pressure created by Housing For All that reflected a wide community sentiment led elected officials to act on Campaign recommendations. These initial wins allowed the Campaign to set more ambitious goals, pivoting to call for \$100 million each year for the Housing Production Trust Fund in addition to other program increases.

Along with the annual budget advocacy, the Campaign supported legislation which created additional

opportunities for advocacy and intermediate wins. As Washington, DC headed into a major election, the Campaign's success in creating a sustained narrative of the need for action led to politicians competing to solve the problem in an election year.

Offering concrete solutions made it easy for politicians to align themselves with the goals of the Campaign. After the election, sustained activity and consistent messaging ensured promises made by elected officials translated into government action, leading to a \$100 million investment with a commitment for steady annual funding.

The Housing For All Campaign significantly changed the housing landscape in Washington, DC, winning a change in political will and significant funding investments in affordable housing programs that meet a variety of needs and fund a variety of program models.

Visit h4all.cnhed.org

To view the entire, interactive report and find resources to share, including:

- Materials for educating elected officials
- Training tools for resident advocacy
- Sample actions including letters, phone-in days, twitter storm
- Inside/outside strategy snapshot: permanent supportive housing
- Who was Housing For All's base, and how they were organized
- Timeline of Housing For All Campaign advocacy

MEET THE CAMPAIGN

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

All District residents deserve decent, quality housing at a price they can afford. We call on District officials to invest in the housing programs that meet that need.

The Housing For All Campaign was launched by the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) in 2010 to engage existing coalition members and the public to increase investments in affordable housing in Washington, DC. The Campaign marked an intentional shift toward a large public campaign by CNHED.

CNHED is a dynamic, member-driven 501(c)3 association that supports the nonprofit housing and economic development sector in Washington, DC. Founded in 2000, the organization includes 140 member organizations spanning nonprofit and for-profit affordable housing developers,



Mayor Bowser (Center) with CNHED President Susanne Slater (left) and Executive Director Steve Glaude (right).

housing counseling and service agencies, community development corporations, small businesses, lenders, intermediaries, associations and government agencies. Advocacy has been a core of CNHED's work throughout its history.

However, CNHED's leadership knew that in order to secure the necessary scale of funding for affordable housing programs to make a meaningful impact, they needed to change the landscape in the District to include affordable housing as a top priority. In order to achieve this, they engaged a broad base of supporters and importantly included those directly affected by the affordable housing crisis.

Over the course of the Housing For All Campaign, CNHED engaged over 4,000 supporters, increased the annual Housing For All Rally from 250 people to 700 people, and had the ability to mobilize over 100 organizations to take action. This demonstration of power and commitment turned the tide from loss of funding to unprecedented investments in affordable housing.

The Housing Production Trust Fund saw the greatest changes, including the creation of a \$100 million baseline annual commitment. In addition, the

District's locally-funded housing voucher program received over \$26 million, and the Campaign helped build momentum for the District to end chronic homelessness.

Steve Glaude, CNHED's Executive Director, said, "The Housing For All Campaign utilized an unprecedented combination of respected practitioner voices, cultivated opinion leaders, and the activism of residents. This inside/outside collaboration created the awareness that there was an affordable housing crisis in the District and forged the political will to do something about it."

The Campaign, according to Jim Knight, "was arguably the single most important influence" in successfully securing \$100 million in the District's FY2016 budget. The years of growing resident leadership, consistently engaging decision makers, and capitalizing on opportunities allowed the Campaign to leverage the shifting narrative in the District and secure a critical win for affordable housing.

This case study explores the strategies and steps used to develop the Campaign. These include: maintaining a strong coalition, building a wide base, seizing opportunities, and supporting the leadership of those impacted.



Juanita Mckenzie, Resident Leadership Team member



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

(Formerly Housing First) Provides housing and services for individuals or families with special needs or who are chronically homeless through leasing and wrap-around services. Administered by the DC Department of Human Services.



HOME PURCHASE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Helps low- and moderate-income DC residents purchase their first home through down-payment and closing cost assistance. Qualified HPAP applicants can receive up to \$54,000 in financial assistance to purchase qualified housing. Administered by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development.



LOCAL RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

A locally-funded program modeled on the federal Section 8 program which provides tenant-based vouchers to eligible families and provides operating subsidies to organizations for the production of units for extremely low income tenants. Administered by the DC Housing Authority.



HOUSING PRODUCTION TRUST FUND

Provides low-cost or zero-interest loans to produce and preserve affordable housing. The HPTF is funded primarily by a dedicated revenue stream of 15% of the DC Deed Recordation and Transfer Tax. Administered by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development.

“We want to restore all the housing funds that we’ve lost in the last few years. We want to again make housing and affordable housing a top public priority.”

**– REV. JIM DICKERSON,
MANNA, INC.**



“Housing is changing my life. I invite all Councilmembers to stick with us – and don’t forget us when the budget comes. We need your help.”

**– GILMA MERINO,
JUBILEE HOUSING RESIDENT**

DC HOUSING BACKGROUND

In 2010, as CNHED was beginning the Campaign, Washington, DC was facing huge affordable housing demands. Over the previous decade, the median rents for a one-bedroom apartment doubled, the number of low-cost units was cut in half, and wages were not keeping up with rising housing prices.¹

Yet, after decades of losing population, the District had started to grow in 2006 and soon became one of the most attractive markets in the country, especially for young people.² By 2010, the District was increasing its population by more than 1,000 people a month, a rate which held steady through 2014.³

The District’s local government was slow to react to the increased housing costs faced by residents. In 2009, local government began to feel the financial crunch of the recession, and began a four-year trend of reduced services to pass a balanced budget.

The DC Housing Production Trust Fund (HPPTF) lost funding even earlier. Since 2002, the HPPTF had been funded with a percent of the Deed Recordation and Transfer Tax, which happens at the point of sale of a property. When the credit market tightened, sales slowed down, and revenue fell steeply in 2008.

The specific and general loss of funding for housing programs severely limited the tools the District had available to address the growing cost of housing.

1. Dcfpi.org/disappearing-act-affordable-housing-in-dc-is-vanishing-amid-sharply-rising-housing-costs
2. Theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/11/the-15-most-popular-cities-for-millennials-dc-is-1/281480/
3. Districtmeasured.com/2015/02/12/districts-population-is-increasing-but-at-a-slower-rate/

ADVOCACY TO CAMPAIGN



Mayor Gray (second from left) and Councilmember Evans (far right) with Housing For All leaders.

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- A strong internal coalition and reputation on housing policy/budget issues made CNHED a good home for an ambitious housing campaign.
- Building a consensus and platform before launching the Campaign created clarity on its goals and clear self-interest for members.
- Investing organizational resources and increasing staff capacity enabled CNHED to develop a full-fledged campaign.

CNHED was well respected for its policy and advocacy work in the nonprofit community and within District government. Policy makers routinely relied on CNHED and Bob Pohlman, former Executive Director of CNHED, for housing expertise. The trusted work of CNHED had a significant impact on raising the public sector consciousness around housing issues.

CNHED had long been active in housing advocacy, and led an initiative to develop the Housing Production Trust Fund, helped craft a locally-funded housing voucher program, advocated for a first-time home buyer program, and pushed the District government to convene a Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force in 2003 to

identify housing needs. CNHED also had a strong core of members who participated in committees and working groups to address a variety of affordable housing issues.

Recognizing that organizing and resident engagement were integral elements, CNHED's leadership began to create an infrastructure to support a campaign.

However, two major issues remained. Although programs were in place and the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force had identified housing goals, the District was not following through on funding and implementing those changes. At the same time, there was not a unifying platform for

all CNHED members to support. Organizations worked on advocacy for their own program or issues, and consequently tensions often arose about the best policy solutions. CNHED's Working Groups reflected the separation of issues, as participants undertook budget and policy advocacy outside of a unified agreement on what the broader housing system should be.

CNHED embarked on a series of intentional and strategic internal discussions with their members to strengthen the overall coalition and explore how to expand their work to be both broader and more comprehensive. The discussions were as much an organizing tool as they were a way to develop a unified policy approach. From this deliberative process the notion of a "continuum of housing" emerged.

The conceptual framework was further developed into concrete recommendations for an overall policy framework, which married the diverse housing solutions needed to serve a variety of organizations and residents and the targets identified by the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force.

ADVOCACY CONT.

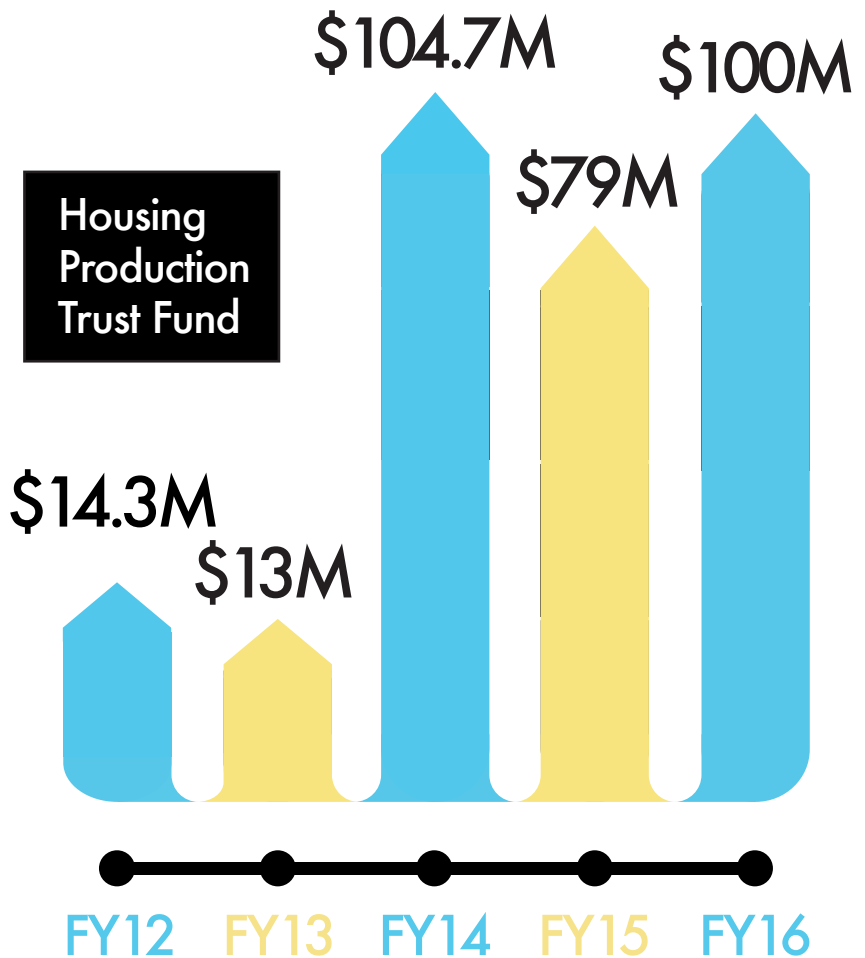
In 2010, CNHED published “Continuum of Housing: Key to a Better City,” which formed the initial campaign platform of what was then known as the Continuum of Housing Campaign. This report identified four existing programs that would form the backbone of the Continuum of Housing and the platform for the public campaign: the Local Rent Supplement Program, the Permanent Supportive Housing Program, the Home Purchase Assistance Program, and the Housing Production Trust Fund.

At this point, CNHED took an important next step beyond their traditional advocacy: developing an intentional, concerted shift toward a more community-involved approach that built power from mobilizing and organizing people, particularly those directly impacted by the programs that comprised a continuum of housing.

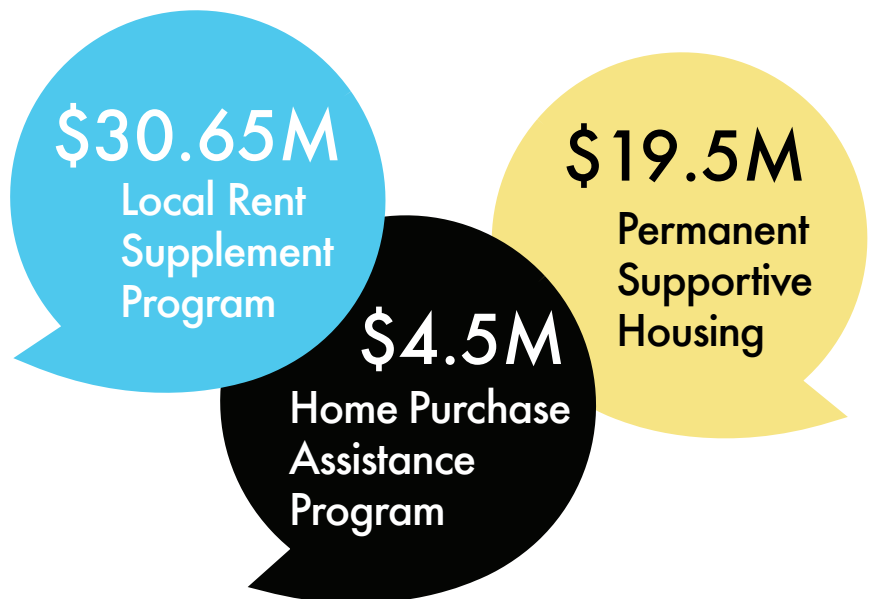
Recognizing that organizing and resident engagement were integral elements, CNHED’s leadership began to create an infrastructure to support a campaign. They developed a Campaign Advisory Committee made of key CNHED members and by using general support funding were able to hire a full-time campaign organizer, Elizabeth Falcon, in 2011.

Now the Campaign had a platform, an Advisory Committee to provide strategic direction and garner buy-in from CNHED member organizations, and an organizer to coordinate member activities and engage new stakeholders to advocate for new housing investments.

FY12-16 INCREASES IN ALLOCATIONS



* Figures exclude amount for debt service.



BUILDING A BASE

Engaging CNHED's member organizations was the key focus in the beginning of the Campaign. For the first two years, the Campaign organizer primarily focused on engaging CNHED's existing base - those with strong self-interest in the platform - to become effective ambassadors of the programs that comprised the Campaign platform.

At the time, however, few member organizations had the capacity or knowledge to engage their constituents in advocacy. According to Jim Knight, President of Jubilee Housing and Advisory Committee member, before the Campaign, when funding for housing programs was on the chopping block, residents of Jubilee Housing would come to budget hearings, but there was no mechanism to keep them involved and informed.

Having a campaign organizer enabled CNHED to deepen relationships and provide support to member organizations. The organizer worked to identify the appropriate staff who could provide the link between the Campaign and the residents the Campaign sought

to benefit.

In 2012, the Campaign established the Campaign Coordinator group of these front-line staff to further member participation and to support more direct resident engagement in Campaign activities. The Campaign also began to hold Town Hall meetings in partnership with key members to deepen engagement by the organizations, councilmembers,

Engaging residents impacted by DC's housing programs and developing their leadership was a key strategy of the Campaign.

and the surrounding community.

Also in 2012, the Campaign held its first resident advocacy training, which focused on educating residents about the budget cycle and effective advocacy. Most residents trained through the program have their primary point of contact with one of CNHED's member groups. (Read more about resident training and engagement below.)

The Campaign also set about developing an outward-facing strategy to be a leading public voice on affordable housing investments. The Campaign held neighborhood

events, rallied to protest program cuts, and supporters wearing the CNHED's bright yellow t-shirts turned out in increasing numbers to DC Council hearings.

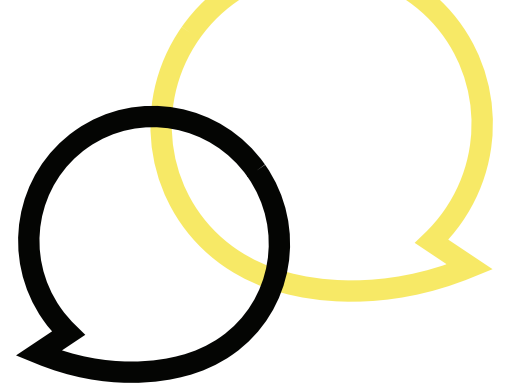
Collaboration was also important. Having a dedicated campaign organizer allowed Housing For All to build stronger relationships with many other organizations and coalitions working on social justice, housing, or homelessness issues and turn those relationships into shared action. For example, the Campaign began to co-sponsor the Latino Economic Development

Center's annual Tenant Town Hall, attended by more than 200 residents each year focused on the needs to preserve and improve existing low-cost rental housing.

Housing For All also partnered with the Fair Budget Coalition and others to hold a rally calling on the DC Council to invest in local vouchers to move families off the DC Housing Authority waiting list. And they collaborated to produce a photo exhibit and rally to highlight the diverse community of homeless individuals, families, and youth in the District.



GROWING THE CAMPAIGN



KEY TAKE AWAYS

- Even when winning was unlikely, the Campaign engaged members concerned about cuts, educated elected officials, positioned themselves as an ethical voice challenging the divestment from housing programs.
- Campaign activities involved decision makers as part of the solution, inviting them to Housing For All events. Campaign supporters attended hearings, votes, and other government functions.
- Engaging millennials diversified the Housing For All base of active volunteers.

In the first two years of the Housing For All Campaign, the Mayor and Council made serious cuts to the District's budget. CNHED realized that economic and political realities made increased investment unlikely for a new campaign in a recession.

The Campaign used that time to engage members who were concerned about cuts, educate elected officials on the programs' uses and impact, and act as an ethical voice challenging the divestment from key housing programs.

A key element of the Campaign's strategy was balancing the need to be assertive while also ensuring that access to government officials would not be negatively impacted; in other words, an inside-outside approach. The Campaign focused on tactics that would engage elected officials about an issue they were

failing to address, with tactics that were consistent, diverse, assertive, and continued the opportunity for open dialogue.

Even the small wins demonstrated that change was possible.

This included increasing attendance at Council hearings, coordinating e-mail and call-in days, holding town hall meetings and rallies, and organizing other creative actions.

In nearly all cases, councilmembers and administration officials were invited to attend to both hear the concerns of District residents and organizations and to voice their support for affordable housing.

Despite the Campaign's efforts,

there were few funding wins early on. However, councilmembers became more familiar with the uses and funding levels of the programs, expressed concern that housing programs continued to be underfunded, and even committed to increase funding if District revenue estimates increased.

In addition to using the first two years of the Campaign to engage and educate members of the Council of the District of Columbia, Housing For All also succeeded in establishing a strong foundation of residents who were beneficiaries of the programs. CNHED member organizations had also become more educated and engaged with the District budget process. Even the small wins demonstrated that change was possible.

Since the Campaign had a strong base within its core constituency, buy-in from members and impacted residents, and solid relationships with key allied organizations, the Campaign was able to create new partnerships and target new audiences.

This included engaging new District residents and other people not directly impacted by the housing programs through the Housing For All Campaign. As a leading city attracting Millennials, they were a large potential base for the Campaign.

The Campaign developed specific

GROW CONT.

activities to attract this younger, highly educated population. For two summers, the Housing For All Campaign sponsored a Summer in the City documentary series as well as a learning circle about gentrification and urban renewal.

The goal was to provide newcomers with ways of becoming connected to their new community, educate them on the issues, offer the opportunity to connect with long-term residents, and work to address a widely-felt need.

Millennials became the core of the Housing For All Campaign's volunteer base, and were also able to react quickly to occasional rapid-response actions like email or call-in days, which were heavily shared over social media.



"It's really a great example for other advocates in the city about what you can do if you really put together a good strategy and ... deliberately bring in members."

**- Karen FitzGerald,
Meyer Foundation**

"Having real people who were impacted by the programs come out and testify had a powerful impact on the Campaign."

**- David Bowers,
Enterprise Community Partners**

"CNHED's reputation only continued to grow and flourish throughout the campaign."

**- Aimee McHale,
Former Campaign Advisory
Committee member**



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Resident engagement was a key component of the Housing For All Campaign. This constituted a shift from CNHED's traditional methods of advocacy which had previously relied on an organization-to-organization model. The Campaign made a critical link between the work of the organizations and the Campaign platform, creating ways for member organizations to engage their residents in advocacy.

The Campaign enabled residents to engage directly. For organizations such as the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC), which previously engaged in direct organizing, the Campaign provided more opportunities to grow and connect to something larger.

Similarly, the Campaign allowed Jubilee Housing and its residents to be more directly and more continuously involved throughout the year, and their staff even grew to include a half-time organizer.

Trainings were a key method of resident engagement. A highly interactive, four-week training leading up to the District's budget process in the spring was aimed at encouraging participants to recognize the knowledge they already had and their past experience as advocates, such as parents with a child in school or in their tenant association.

The trainings were sequential, starting with basic knowledge about District government and the budget process, and then connecting personal stories to political action.

In addition, the trainings included the opportunity to directly engage with a councilmember or staff in

the training room, and in a councilmember's office. This mirrored the Campaign strategy to both create moments of engagement, and seize opportunities to convey the message.

Most participants had never been to the District Council building before the training, so it provided the opportunity to take that step in a supported environment.

Members of the Resident Leadership Team were deeply engaged in the implementation of the Campaign strategy.

From participants of the trainings, the Campaign formed a Resident Leadership Team, comprised of individuals who were directly impacted by programs across the continuum of housing. The Leadership Team grew to become mentors for other residents,

eventually conducting the trainings with the Campaign Organizer and other partners.

Members of the Resident Leadership Team were deeply engaged in the implementation of the Campaign strategy. They took on key roles during events, developed themes for the Campaign's annual rally, recruited new individual campaign supporters, and met with elected officials.

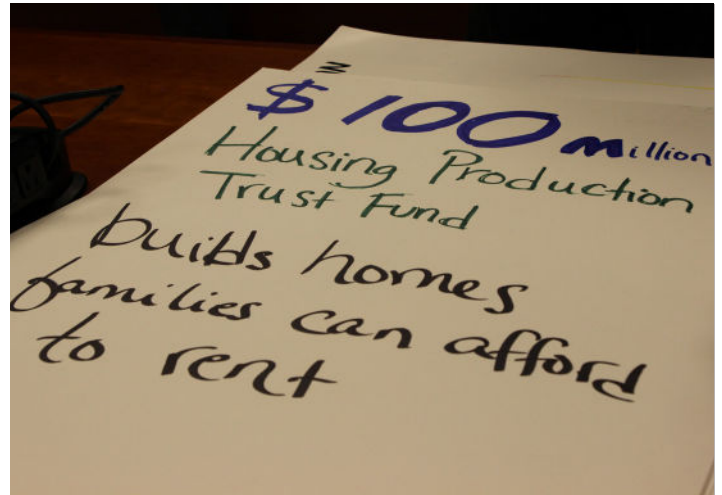
John McDermott, a member of the Resident Leadership team, described how the Campaign allowed real opportunities to learn from each other, in particular how to form a strong personal message that would resonate with the Council of the District of Columbia, and how to apply strategic pressure.

"I have learned from all the members of the Resident Leadership Team," said John. "We all have a lot of experience and share what we have learned."

STARTING TO WIN

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- Sustaining a strong inside and outside strategy maintained both credibility and political pressure.
- Housing For All offered straightforward solutions to a problem that needed to be solved.
- Political pressure created by Housing For All that reflected a wide community sentiment led elected officials to act on Campaign recommendations.



CNHED used the expanding Housing For All base to effectively respond to the changing environment in the District, and built upon their reputation as housing experts to impact the shifting narrative in the District. The Campaign's public presence, consistent pressure and growing grassroots leadership enhanced CNHED's influence during the budget process and made the Campaign a force with which to be reckoned.

As Advisory Council and then-CNHED board member Aimee McHale stated, "[CNHED's reputation] only continued to grow and flourish throughout the Campaign." Due to the success of its base-building strategy, the year-round events that the Campaign held saw major increases in turnout, demonstrating the Campaign's growing strength. At the same time, there was a dramatic shift in the discourse amongst policy makers from a focus on the issues of education and jobs to highlighting the critical need for affordable housing.

CNHED's Housing For All Campaign had been using a two-tiered approach to engage elected officials: create opportunities for them to come to us and show their support, and never miss an opportunity to offer solutions when asked. Therefore, the Campaign encouraged supporters to attend the Summit, which had 1,800 participants, but did not flood it.

The results of the Summit helped validate and propel the Campaign's efforts around affordable housing. In response to the question: "What is the greatest barrier to DC being One City?" the single top answer was the need for housing. ("Gray shows movement on affordable housing," Washington Post, 2/22/12). This bolstered the arguments the Campaign had voiced for the past year, and the Campaign began making the connection between government funding and the needs expressed. This combined pressure pushed Mayor Gray to show leadership on housing. He did so by establishing the 2012 Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force.

The results of the Summit helped validate and propel the Campaign's efforts...

Mayor Vincent Gray, whose 2010 campaign and governance platform hardly spoke about housing, held the One City Summit in February 2012 to "gauge the pulse of the District and hear resident concerns."

CNHED embraced the new political moment, engaging the membership and Campaign supporters to testify before the Task Force, recognizing that it was an additional opportunity to put housing needs on the

“Having the Campaign do the policy and budget work was significant, and it provided more opportunities for leaders to grow and develop.”

**– Farah Fosse,
Former Campaign Advisory
Committee member**

“Affordable housing helps kids like me reach our goals. ... I hope to go to college one day too. Without affordable housing that would not be possible for me.”

**– Gabriel Merino,
Youth Writing Competition
Winner**

“The Housing For All Campaign has changed the conversation about affordable housing in DC.”

**– Susanne Slater,
President, CNHED
Board of Directors**

map, and a way to push for decisive action. Further demonstrating the respect and reputation that CNHED continued to cultivate, several members of the Campaign Advisory Committee as well as CNHED’s Executive Director were asked to join the Task Force.

The Campaign maintained inside pressure by having Task Force members push for strong recommendations, while working on the outside to bring large numbers of residents and practitioners to public hearings. The Task Force ultimately set a goal of the production and preservation of 10,000 units of affordable housing and preservation of 8,000 federally subsidized units. While this was far short of the need, it would require significant increases in investment in affordable housing.

In January, 2013, the Task Force had adjourned, and the Campaign held its annual rally, which focused on funding in the next budget. Mayor Gray spoke at the rally and to a full room of 350 people, indicated that he would make a big housing announcement at the State of the District address a few weeks later.

Two dozen Campaign supporters wearing Campaign t-shirts attended the State of the District address and heard the Mayor announce a \$100 million investment in affordable housing. The majority of this funding was a one-time investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), while the rest undid cuts to the HPTF implemented earlier in his administration and went to small increases to a variety of housing programs that the Campaign had promoted. This was a crucial moment, as Mayor Gray had previously cut housing funding and with this investment made it a major priority of his administration.

The Housing For All Campaign had finally won significant housing investments after two years of campaigning, and began to pivot to capitalize on that win.

CAPITALIZING ON WINS

In 2014, the Housing For All Rally mobilized 500 people, and speakers included Mayor Gray and five of the District's thirteen councilmembers.

CNHED had been incrementally working towards a goal of \$100 million for The Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). Before the launch of the Campaign and at the beginning of the recession, CNHED had won a unanimous DC Council resolution to fund the HPTF at a level of \$80 million a year, plus inflation, but it was not tied to appropriation and was never funded.

From the increasing cost of land, growing levels of housing burden, and estimated amount of inflation, CNHED honed in on a target of \$100 million of baseline funding. After the recession and budget cuts had left HPTF levels in the teens, Mayor Gray's proposed overall investments in affordable housing made the \$100 million proposal for HPTF appear reasonable and attainable.

Sustained advocacy throughout the District's budget season helped ensure that the DC Council passed the \$100 million in total affordable housing investments proposed by Mayor Gray. The Campaign then pivoted to publicly advocate for a \$100 million baseline for the Housing Production Trust Fund. At this point, the HPTF became a banner issue for Housing For All and the \$100 million a central rallying cry. CNHED members supported this shift as HPTF was a program that affected the majority of CNHED members and needed the most funding.

While the HPTF became its cornerstone, the Housing For All Campaign never abandoned a commitment to winning funding for the full continuum of housing.

The Campaign continued to set and win increases in the other programs in the platform as well, in particular the Local Rent Supplement Program and the Permanent Supportive Housing Program. The Campaign continued to connect the HPTF to the other housing programs, arguing that one program simply could not meet the diversity of housing needs. The Campaign also partnered with other advocates, including the Way Home Campaign and Fair Budget Coalition, who shared the priority of ending chronic homelessness.

In addition to advocating for funding in the District budget, the Campaign also advocated for policies that would lead to greater investments and demonstrate a commitment to affordable housing by District government. After discussions between CNHED and elected leaders, Mayor Gray and the Chair of the DC Council Phil Mendelson introduced legislation that dedicated half of the District's future unreserved surplus (the money the District has left over at the end of the year) to the HPTF once reserve goals were met. The legislation was ultimately passed as part of the Budget Support Act.

Additional legislation initiated by the Campaign and introduced by Chair of the Committee on Human Services Jim Graham called on District government to follow the District's Interagency Council on Homelessness' (ICH) plan to end chronic homelessness by increasing funding each year to build homes and provide vouchers for all of the District's chronically homeless individuals and families by 2020. The bill was jointly introduced by all thirteen members of the Council and passed unanimously.

The Campaign also supported legislation to create a \$100 million annual commitment to the Housing Production Trust Fund which is discussed later. These interim wins strengthened the Campaign by demonstrating CNHED could win on multiple fronts and created a record where legislators stated their commitment to increase investments.

Councilmembers who had spoken in support of affordable housing during the recession then found they lagged behind Mayor Gray in their commitment

CAPITALIZING CONT.

to this deeply felt and highly visible issue. Additionally, an election for mayor and multiple council seats was underway, and affordable housing and the Housing Production Trust Fund took central stage as major election campaign issues. All of the candidates for mayor included affordable housing in their platforms, with most naming the Housing Production Trust Fund specifically.

That year, in 2014, the Housing For All Rally mobilized 500 people, and speakers included Mayor Gray and five of the District's thirteen councilmembers, three of whom were running against the Mayor. All were there to demonstrate their support for affordable housing, and were challenged to make an annual \$100 million investment in HPTF. The Campaign used its power and visibility to frame the affordable housing issue as a crisis - with \$100 million for the HPTF a necessary part of the solution.

Councilmember Muriel Bowser ultimately defeated incumbent Vincent Gray to become the Democratic candidate, and then easily won the general election to become Mayor.

In the intervening months between the primary and the announcement of her first District budget, the Housing For All Campaign kept the pressure on Mayor Bowser to deliver on her campaign promises through public events and private meetings.

Mayor Bowser followed through, and the budget she proposed included the largest investment in affordable housing in the District's history.

Early in the election season, then-Councilmember Bowser introduced legislation that would commit the DC Council to dedicating \$100 million to the HPTF each year.

By the time the legislation was affirmed in a unanimous vote, the Campaign had organized 100 organizations to pledge their support and held a rally where then-Mayor-elect Bowser promised make \$100

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- **Initial wins allowed the Campaign to set more ambitious goals.**
- **Supporting legislation created additional opportunities for advocacy and to make intermediate wins.**
- **Creating a sustained narrative of the need for action led to politicians competing to solve the problem in an election year.**
- **Offering concrete solutions made it easy for politicians to align themselves with the goals of the campaign.**
- **Sustained activity, consistent message ensured elected officials' promises translated into action.**

million available for the HPTF every year once she was in office. Before releasing her budget in the spring of 2015, Mayor Bowser reiterated her commitment at the annual Housing For All Rally in front of a 700-person audience.

"When we think about the \$100 million for affordable housing I know we have to think about it across the entire spectrum. From very, very, low-income housing to middle income housing. We have to think about new housing and we have to think about preserving housing... I consider this among the top things I have to do as Mayor." Mayor Muriel Bowser, at the Housing For All Rally, February 2015.

Mayor Bowser followed through, and the budget she proposed included the largest investment in affordable housing in the District's history. It included \$100 million for the HPTF, plus funding for permanent supportive housing and other voucher programs. The Campaign remained vigilant throughout the three-month budget process, attending hearings and holding events, even needing to call on its base (especially highly-connected millennials) to reverse a proposed cut to the HPTF made in the eleventh hour.

CONCLUSION



Housing For All Campaign supporters with Director Polly Donaldson (in blue).

The Housing For All Campaign significantly changed the housing landscape in the District government, winning a change in political will and significant funding investments in affordable housing programs that meet a wide variety of needs and fund a variety of program models.

As a result of the Campaign, a \$100 million baseline for the Housing Production Trust Fund is expected each year and annual increases for the Permanent Supportive Housing Program and Local Rent Supplement Program are expected to continue.

Unfortunately, the Housing For All Campaign struggled to win significant increases in the District's first-time homebuyer program. Program inefficiencies and lack of political interest in homeownership prevented the

Campaign from being able to grow investments to that program, but sustained advocacy is beginning to turn the tide.

Assisted by rising awareness about homelessness and high housing costs, the Housing For All Campaign led investments in the HPTF and other programs in the Campaign platform. Success flowed from a two-pronged approach: engaging elected officials in public hearings, meetings, and events as well as applying public pressure by mobilizing concerned residents for candidate forums and holding large community rallies. Overall, resident engagement and leadership was the critical ingredient.

For now, at least, the importance of affordable housing to the District's success and prosperity has become a core theme within District government. Yet, CNHED

recognizes that it must continue to nurture, educate and advocate for ongoing investments across the platform.

CNHED's Housing For All Campaign is not only maintaining its efforts to achieve sustained funding for the four principal program areas, but it is now incorporating an initiative to improve rent control in the District. CNHED is also continuing to build on the heightened organizational profile that came as a result of the Campaign, and is considering new opportunities to advocate for housing affordability as well as other community needs.

For CNHED, housing affordability is a key component in creating a District where all residents are part of thriving, livable communities that are socially, racially, and economically just.



For now, at least, the importance of affordable housing to the District's success and prosperity has become a core theme within District government.





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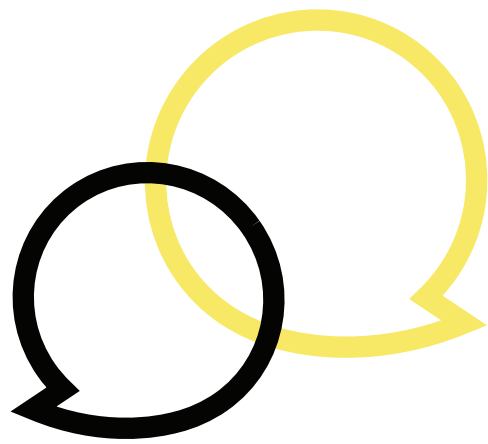


A LETTER FROM CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

“Vision to Action” tells the story of how the Housing for All Campaign responded to budget cuts to housing programs and a burgeoning housing crisis in Washington, DC, effecting an historic \$100 million investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund in 2015. This case study offers many lessons that could inform future campaigns around the country, in particular CNHED’s strategic shift to engage community residents impacted by the lack of affordable housing as leaders in the Campaign to complement its established role as a respected housing policy expert.

The Housing Trust Fund Project is an initiative of the Center for Community Change that for the last three decades has operated as a clearinghouse of information on housing trust funds throughout the country, and provides technical assistance to organizations and agencies working to create or implement these funds. The Center for Community Change’s builds the power and capacity of low-income people, especially low-income people of color, to change their communities and public policies for the better. The Center’s current focus areas include jobs and wages, immigration, retirement security, affordable housing, racial justice and barriers to employment for formerly incarcerated individuals.

We sincerely appreciate CNHED for the opportunity to collaborate on this project, and for vision, time and energy of CNHED staff with whom we partnered. The Housing Trust Fund Project would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Center’s Miriam Savad, whose initiative and leadership made this case study possible. For additional Housing Trust Fund Project publications, check out <http://housingtrustfundproject.org/publications-and-resources/publications/>.



For additional information and resources, please visit the [interactive online](https://h4all.cnhed.org) version of this case study: h4all.cnhed.org.

You will find:

- **Resident training materials**
- **Approaches to engaging residents and decisions makers**
- **Example of an Inside/Outside strategy**
- **Sample presentations and fact sheets**
- **And other helpful resources!**



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