



Housing Justice Coalition Platform

On Saturday, April 30, 2022, the Housing Justice Coalition CLT convened an assembly of residents to attend a session to decide on a political platform to pursue policies and actions in order to achieve housing as a human right in Mecklenburg County. The policies adopted are in the areas of Tenants' Rights, Gentrification and Displacement, and Development Policy/Community Benefits.

The following actions, adopted by vote of all members of the assembly, constitute the official policy and organizing platform of the Charlotte Housing Justice Coalition:

Housing Resolution: A Radical Call to Action

Whereas Housing is a human right and Housing Justice Coalition CLT is a group dedicated to organizing for the realization of housing as a human right in the Charlotte, NC area;

Whereas local government actors have significant power to enact policies and utilize their decision-making toward the realization of housing as a human right;

Whereas government is elected by the people and should prioritize the needs of citizens and the public above all else when it comes to decision making;

Charlotte, NC is an unaffordable city with rents and property taxes that are ever-increasing and outpacing wages for the majority of citizens;

Corporations have purchased more than 40,000 homes in the Charlotte, NC metro area consolidating the housing market as a speculative profit-making vehicle for outside investors;

Charlotte's historically African-American neighborhoods and working class neighborhoods are vanishing as a result of displacement and gentrification;

Local government decision making has directly contributed to gentrification and displacement (i.e. the Blue Line and Urban Renewal);

Community Benefits Agreements are legal in NC and the local NC municipalities have the power to require community benefits when development projects receive public funds, tax breaks or any other form of public incentive;

Given the items above, the Housing Justice Coalition CLT states the following demands for action in the areas of Tenant's Rights, Gentrification and Displacement, and Development Policy/Community Benefits for the Charlotte City Council, the Board of County Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, Landlords, Developers, community groups, and ourselves as an autonomous organization:

Tenants' Rights

1. City and County governing bodies shall fund and enact the Right to Counsel: Representation for tenants in eviction proceedings;
2. City and County governing bodies shall facilitate education about eviction process through grassroots organizations and government (i.e. appeal);
3. City Council shall pass an ordinance for Housing voucher acceptance that eliminates source of income discrimination
4. Local governing bodies shall enact Right of first refusal for tenants when landlord decides to sell a property;
5. The City and the County alongside nonprofits and legal advocates shall work toward the establishment of Eviction expungement at the local level;
6. The City shall track and publish annual Housing metrics such as the number of summary ejectments filed in Mecklenburg County Small Claims Court;
7. Housing Justice Coalition CLT shall work toward creating metrics to measure the impact of local housing organizing groups, nonprofits, and advocacy organizations;
8. Landlords shall create incentives for tenants who attend housing trainings on tenants' rights and obligations convened by organizations such as TORC, Eviction is Real, Inc, and other tenant advocacy groups;
9. The City shall promote and provide logistical, financial and material support for social housing, land banking, especially as alternatives to selling city-owned land to private developers.
10. The City shall create an office for Tenant/renter assistance and counseling;

Gentrification & Displacement

11. Housing Justice Coalition CLT shall create organizing toolkits to empower neighborhoods and community associations with tools to create community power and to hold leaders accountable;
12. The City shall pass Local legislation that increases the oversight & accountability of community members in local decision making impacting displacement;
13. The City and County shall increase funding for programs that are preventing displacement such as RAMP, Tax relief programs and other related programs;
14. The City shall facilitate the procurement of materials, land and resources for local organizations seeking to preserve land/housing and provide additional opportunities for upward economic mobility in rapidly gentrifying areas;
15. The City and County shall aggressively fund community land trusts and provide a right of first refusal to community land trusts when City or County owned land is up for sale;
16. City Code Enforcement shall not enforce demolition of home owner occupied homes in distressed neighborhoods wherein there are high levels of displacement;
17. The City shall increase Down payment assistance funds and speed up the process for these funds to reach prospective homebuyers;
18. The City and County shall take immediate action to curtail corporations from buying homes. This includes but it is not limited to strengthening provisions of the proposed UDO overlay districts, providing logistical support for the use of restrictive covenants in applicable neighborhoods, passing an ordinance to further protect neighborhoods etc;
19. The County shall reinstate and where applicable, make property tax relief plans more available to a wider range of citizens;
20. The County shall increase homestead tax exemptions based on what is exempted by the Homestead Act and the full tax bill in addition to lowering the age requirement for eligibility for homestead tax exemption;

Community Benefits & Development Policy

21. The City shall pass a Community Benefits Ordinance that mandates community benefits for projects that receive public incentives similar to the ordinance recently passed in Richmond, VA. (public land, tax incentives etc.);
22. The City shall adopt a robust community benefits package with reference to the Community Benefits Task Force;
23. The City shall expand community notifications and alerts to community groups such as Housing Justice Coalition CLT and the Charlotte Community Benefits Coalition for community meetings regarding developments that impact neighborhoods (such as rezonings, City Council votes on issues that impact neighborhoods);
24. The City shall generate and disseminate a map of pending developments with information about community meetings, project timelines etc;
25. The City shall create a Comprehensive impact assessment for development projects that receive at least \$10 million in public funding;
26. The City and County shall establish a cap on campaign donations from developers and create standard accountability metrics on such donations;
27. The City and County shall enact an Excise tax on development projects as an incentive to generate public benefits for development projects that receive public funding;
28. The City shall require any development project that receives public funding to provide a minimum of 20% affordable housing as a contractual obligation for receiving public funds.

Final Statements

29. **Local governing bodies shall take all available actions and utilize all available resources to make housing as a human right a reality for all citizens;**
30. **Housing Justice Coalition CLT will continue to work for housing as a human right through education, policy advocacy and community organizing informed by our mission and this platform;**

- 31. Housing Justice Coalition CLT will continually reassess and amend this platform as necessary to address material conditions of houselessness and economic injustice in the Charlotte Mecklenburg area.**