



“Top Ten” Ideas for Housing Affordability: Individual Engagement

June 1, 2017

1. **Follow the News:** The more you know about an issue, the more comfortable you will be to take action. In Social Media, follow a few local Housing Groups, columnists, and resources (like Bob McCartney at *The Washington Post*, the *DC City Paper Daily Digest*, and the Daily WRAG, e.g.)

The Washington Post “Local Headlines” <https://subscribe.washingtonpost.com/newsletters/#/newsletters>

DC City Paper “District Line Daily” <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/subscribe>

The Daily WRAG: <https://dailywrag.com/>

Coalition for Smarter Growth Updates: <http://www.smartergrowth.net/>

Greater Greater Washington Daily Headlines: <https://ggwash.org/>

2. **Introduce yourself** to the advocacy organizations within your community, to stay informed and to support priority issues throughout the year:

DC: Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development www.CNHED.org

Northern Virginia: Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance www.NVAHA.org

MD: Community Development Network www.CommunityDevelopmentMD.org

3. **Add your voice** via Action Alerts on Federal Housing issues where your email, phone calls, in-person visits and co-signed statements can help persuade Congress to support greater affordability:

Enterprise: the ACTION Housing Credit and other Housing Policy campaigns

NLIHC: Mortgage Interest Deduction and Housing Policy campaigns

<http://nlihc.org/issues>

4. **Plug in Locally** to your local government’s “Housing” page to learn what legal, financial, and programming best practices are – and aren’t – in place in your own back yard to support more housing affordability. Ask – does my community have this tool? If so, could it use more resources, fewer barriers, broader implementation?

Some best practices in local housing affordability:

Land Use:

Inclusionary Housing/Zoning policies

Comprehensive Plan elements including housing affordability throughout the community

Using Public Land to achieve multiple community goals, including housing affordability

Financial Resources:

Create and/or dedicate revenues for local housing trust funds

Local rent support for people at extremely low incomes, seniors, and/or other vulnerable residents

More examples of best practices and regional statistics are available at the Housing Leaders Group of Greater Washington website: www.HousingLeadersGroup.org, including the forthcoming publication: [A Guidebook for Increasing Housing Affordability in the Greater Washington Region; local Resources and Strategies for Housing Production and Preservation](#), June, 2017 by Lisa Sturtevant.

Learn more about the local housing programs in your community:

- Arlington County, VA: <https://housing.arlingtonva.us/>
- Alexandria, VA: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Housing>
- Charles County, MD: <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/cs/housing/housing-authority>
- District of Columbia: <http://www.dchousing.org/default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
- Fairfax County, VA: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/>



- Loudoun County, VA: <https://www.loudoun.gov/housing>
- Manassas, VA: <http://www.manassacity.org/340/Housing>
- Montgomery County, MD: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/housing.html>
- Prince William County, VA: <http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/housing/pages/default.aspx>
- Prince George's County, MD: <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/906/Housing-Authority>

5. **Invest in the “Our Region, Your Investment” Impact Note** to support preservation and production of housing that’s more affordable in the DC Metro area

<http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/invest/impact-note/our-region-your-investment>

6. **Talk to Elected Officials – And Candidates for Office** Learn your local, state, and federal representatives email addresses and phone numbers; keep them in a Contacts list for reference on any issue you care about.

Use their website home pages to see their calendars for events and public appearances, opportunities to post questions on their social media pages, how to call/send emails.

Ask questions about housing affordability as a priority, including what they would do to expand support that isn’t being done today. You don’t need talking points for this one; they do!

<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

7. **Ask your networks** professionally, within your faith, in your community or your alumni networks, for example, if housing affordability can be part of a future meeting or event agenda. Spread the word to encourage housing-related programming options for the next newsletter, blog post, or volunteer activity, where such topics make sense & can inform others to get involved also.

8. **Engage your Employer:** Is there a philanthropic, advocacy, or internal program opportunity to support housing affordability for your co-workers, and/or neighbors where your offices are located?

9. **Read Matt Desmond's *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*** to better understand how the pervasive issue of housing insecurity compounds poverty and related negative community outcomes for everyone. It will inspire you to take action! Available Here: <http://a.co/2m2XfZq>

Then Read *Call The Question* report by Rick Cohen, to see the statistics that affect the Metropolitan Washington region on how many people need greater housing affordability now, and in the future:

<http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/call-question-will-greater-washington-region-collaborate-and-invest-solve-its-affordable>

10. **Make the Pie Higher:** Tell 3-5 people in your social circles about the importance of housing affordability in our region, and provide them a copy of this list and resources!