

**MEMO To:** Governor-elect Kelly Ayotte & Transition Team

**From:** Kara Anne Rodenhizer, Home for All Coalition

**Date:** January 6, 2025

**Re:** Recommendations to Address Key Housing & Homelessness Priorities

Congratulations on your historic win as Governor of New Hampshire. On behalf of the Home for All Coalition (HFA), I would like to commend your commitment to expanding affordable housing opportunities across our state. HFA, is a diverse partnership of over 90 individuals and organizations, dedicated to preventing housing insecurity and homelessness while ensuring equitable access to affordable housing in the Seacoast Region and beyond.

As New Hampshire faces rising housing costs and homelessness, we are eager to collaborate with your administration to address these urgent challenges. To guide your transition, we offer the following key recommendations to create lasting solutions for all Granite Staters.

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### **1. Expand Shelter Capacity to Address Rising Homelessness**

In 2023, New Hampshire experienced a 52.1% rise in homelessness—the highest in the nation. Calls to 211 for emergency shelter persisted into 2024, highlighting the urgent need for expanded capacity. With shelters underfunded and heavily reliant on private donations, many individuals and families are left without options, forcing municipalities to rely on costly alternatives like hotel placements and prolonged hospital stays.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ✓ **Expand Funding for Low-Barrier Shelters:** Reduce reliance on private donations by increasing state support for shelter providers, enabling expanded capacity and consistent service delivery.
- ✓ **Adopt a Statewide Definition of Emergency Shelter:** Establishing a uniform definition in zoning ordinances to allow for shelter development and ensure equitable access across the state.

Expanding shelter capacity will meet immediate needs, reduce taxpayer costs, and provide a foundation for individuals to transition into stable housing.

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### **2. Prioritize Affordable Housing Development and Preservation**

The state faces a shortage of over 21,000 affordable rental homes, disproportionately impacting low-income residents. Rising housing costs are driving families into homelessness or out of the state. Addressing this crisis requires both new housing development and the preservation of existing affordable units.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ✓ **Increase Investments in Supportive Housing:** Develop deeply affordable housing paired with wraparound services like mental health counseling, recovery supports, and individualized case management to promote long-term stability.
- ✓ **Foster Public/Private Partnerships:** Incentivize collaborations between developers and nonprofits to create housing tailored to underserved populations, such as survivors of domestic violence, aging adults, and individuals with disabilities.

✓ **Preserve Existing Affordable Housing:** Establish a preservation fund and tax incentives to protect units at risk of conversion to market rates.

✓ **Provide Incentives to Property Owners to Bring Units up to HUD standards to**

**Increase Participation in Assisted Housing Programs:** Provide one-time grants or financial incentives to help landlords bring units up to HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS). In return, landlords could agree to maintain affordability, eliminate barriers like excessive screening criteria, and lease to tenants in federal housing programs.

Investing in affordable housing not only addresses the immediate crisis but also strengthens New Hampshire communities, retains workforce talent, and promotes economic stability.

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### 3. Enhance Eviction Prevention and Diversion Strategies

With 64% of extremely low-income renters classified as severely cost-burdened, rising rents and stagnant wages are driving evictions and first-time homelessness. In 2024, an average of 439 evictions were filed monthly, with many families facing insurmountable barriers to securing new housing after displacement.

#### Recommendations:

✓ **Extend Notice Periods:** Require 90-day notice periods for rent increases, non-renewals, and evictions, giving families sufficient time to secure alternative housing or adjust to new terms.

✓ **Strengthen Diversion Programs:** Invest in rental assistance, mediation, and tenant education to prevent evictions and preserve housing stability.

These measures will protect vulnerable households, reduce homelessness risk, promote equity in the housing market, and alleviate strain on local shelters and social services.

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Strategic investments in both short- and long-term solutions—such as expanding shelter capacity, increasing affordable housing, enhancing supportive services, and strengthening eviction prevention efforts—are critical to addressing New Hampshire's housing crisis. These measures represent the most cost-effective and sustainable approach, ensuring the optimal use of the state's limited resources. We urge local, state, and federal policymakers to follow our combined lead to prioritize humane, effective solutions to preventing homelessness and ensuring equitable access to housing opportunities. Our communities and economies thrive when everyone has a safe, stable place to live and the support to succeed.

We look forward to collaborating with your administration to address New Hampshire's housing and homelessness challenges. Together, we can create a legacy of stability, dignity, and opportunity for all New Hampshire residents

Sincerely,



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