



NEW ENGLAND HOUSING NETWORK

c/o Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

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Who We Are

The New England Housing Network (NEHN) is a coalition of affordable housing organizations from each of the New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont). Created in 1995, NEHN was the first organization to leverage the political diversity of our region for advocacy towards a broad range of affordable housing issues.

The region is a diverse microcosm of the entire country. We have coastal cities dealing with escalating rents or struggling for economic revitalization; a persistent and looming expiring-use preservation crisis in hot markets and in rural areas alike; low-income homeowners struggling to make necessary repairs and updates; low-income renters forced to commute long distances due to a lack of affordable housing; and an aging baby-boomer population with limited options to age-in-place. We are advocates, nonprofit developers, local and state housing agencies, and private citizens, but we are also a resource for you.

NEHN appreciates Congress' investments in housing and homelessness through the CARES Act. This spending bill was an important first step, but Congress must provide additional resources in both the short and long term in order to meet the dire and urgent needs of people who are experiencing homelessness and individuals on the brink of homelessness. Accordingly, NEHN urges Congress to consider the following New England priorities for the next stimulus package and any subsequent legislative efforts during and after the COVID-19 pandemic:

For Immediate Relief

\$100 billion for Rental Assistance: A \$100 billion appropriation for rental assistance is needed to protect tenants once the CARES Act and local eviction moratoriums are lifted and payments for back-rent are due. This investment should be provided through a combination of programs including: HOME, Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance, ESG, and/or the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). In addition, we support any rental assistance fund that makes central the provisions of the Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act.

Urgent Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) relief: In the next potential coronavirus response funding package, NEHN urges Congress to enact the provisions of the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act and the following immediate measures to help mitigate the damage to affordable housing production:

- **Support the 4% LIHTC Minimum:** LIHTC rate has diminished to a low of 3.12% (and will likely decline even further). NEHN urges Congress to enact a minimum 4% rate.
- **Reduce the '50% Test' To Increase Access to 4% LIHTCs:** To increase access to 4% LIHTCs, NEHN urges congress to reduce the "50% test" to 25%.

\$11.5 billion for ESG: At least \$11.5 billion to the ESG program to respond to coronavirus among people experiencing homelessness. This funding is needed to minimize the number of people living in homeless encampments and congregate shelters and identify alternative space, including hotels, for isolation and self-quarantine. Additional funding is also needed for short-term rental assistance and housing stabilization services.

To Support Recovery

\$48 billion for HOME: A \$48 billion appropriation to the HOME program would help stabilize low-income families, cover increased operating costs, and stimulate the preservation and production of affordable homes during the country's recovery. Funds should be allocated to support state and local efforts, and targeted towards: 1) Emergency rental assistance for tenants (without a rental subsidy), 2) landlord operating costs (for cleaning, health and safety), and 3) grants or flexible debt funding for short and long term housing needs.

New England Housing Network Lead Agencies

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association / Connecticut Housing Coalition / Housing Action New Hampshire
HousingWorks RI / Maine Affordable Housing Coalition / Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition



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LIHTC Recovery Package: LIHTC is our most successful tool for investing in affordable housing. However, diminishing value of the credit is threatening the viability of many critically needed affordable housing properties. NEHN requests the following additional supports for LIHTC:

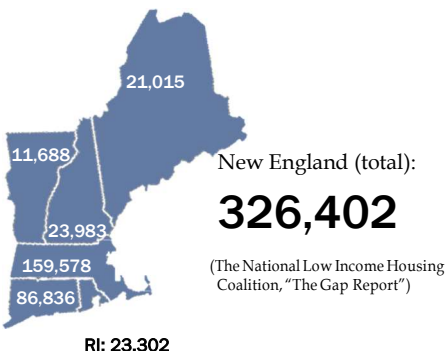
- **Increase the 9% LIHTC allocation.** A minimum 9% rate was critical to the 2008 recession recovery. NEHN urges Congress to increase the 9% allocation or extend the current increase period.
- **Provide Additional LIHTC Basis Boosts:** NEHN proposes enacting additional basis boost provisions for properties identified as needing additional equity in many circumstances, such as: 1) a 30% boost for Housing-Bond financed properties, 2) a 50% boost for developments serving extremely low-income tenants, and 3) a 30% boost for properties in rural areas.
- **Extend Key LIHTC Deadlines:** LIHTC developments in the middle of construction are in jeopardy of missing key program deadlines. NEHN requests one-year extensions for: 1) 10% test; 2) Placed in service; 3) Rehabilitation expenditure; and 4) Difficult to develop areas designations.
- **Increased rental assistance for LIHTC tenants:** NEHN requests addition rental assistance for LIHTC rentals without PBRA, PBV's, or PRAC to compensate for income loss.

Fund the Rural Development and Preservation Programs: Broad investments to address rural housing are needed to offset rental revenue losses and cover added costs at housing developments receiving rural rental assistance. For rural recovery, NEHN recommends the following allocations: 1) **\$500 million** for Rental Assistance; 2) **\$200 million** for Section 515 Rural Rental Housing; 3) **\$100 million** for MFH Preservation and Revitalization Demonstration Program; 4) **\$1 billion** for Section 502 Direct Loans; 5) **\$50 million** for Section 523 Rural Housing Site Loans; and 6) **\$10 million** each for Rural Community Development Initiative Grants at USDA and Rural Capacity Building at HUD.

\$45 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund: The National Housing Trust Fund helps create and preserve housing for those with the lowest incomes and those experiencing homelessness. NEHN requests that \$45 billion be allocated for the purpose of expanding the National Housing Trust Fund, which can be used to build and operate affordable rental housing.

Support the Eviction Crisis Act: The nation's eviction crisis will be exacerbated once the eviction moratoriums are lifted. The Eviction Crisis Act provides essential short-term aid to help tenants at risk of losing their homes and improves legal representation for all tenants to keep them in their homes.

Shortage of Homes Affordable & Available for Extremely Low Income Renters



Wage Needed To Afford a Two-Bedroom Rental Home

	HOUSING WAGE	AVG RENTER WAGE	MINIMUM WAGE
CT	\$25.40	\$17.53	\$12
MA	\$33.81	\$20.72	\$12.75
ME	\$19.91	\$11.82	\$12
NH	\$23.23	\$15.63	\$7.25
RI	\$20.86	\$14.03	\$11.50
VT	\$22.78	\$13.40	\$10.96
National	\$22.96	\$17.57	\$7.25

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