

Morris Habitat Advocacy Mission (MHAM)

2021 Advocacy Agenda

Supporting the following public policies:

- I. **To increase the supply and preservation of affordable housing**
 - a. **Expand affordable home production:**
 - Housing trust funds
 - General obligation bonds
 - State housing tax credits
 - Tax increment financing
 - b. **Increase access to existing housing stock:**
 - Tenant-based rental assistance
 - First/last month rental assistance/security deposit assistance
 - c. **Preserve existing affordable homes:**
 - Property acquisition and preservation funding
 - Tax incentives and low-cost financing
 - Sale notification requirements/local rights of first refusal

- II. **To equitably increase access to credit**
 - a. **Expand asset development and housing counseling:**
 - Down payment assistance
 - Mortgage subsidy programs
 - Individual development accounts
 - Housing counseling and education
 - Tax incentive programs for homebuyers
 - b. **Promote fair lending and consumer protections:**
 - Combat predatory lending
 - Improve fair lending
 - Expansion of loan alternatives

- III. **To optimize land use for affordable homes**
 - a. **Streamline zoning:** Local and state zoning reforms
 - b. **Making land available for affordable housing:**
 - Land banks
 - Use of public land for affordable housing
 - Land acquisition funds
 - c. **Create incentives or requirements for affordable housing:** Inclusionary zoning
 - d. **Promote long-term equity, affordability, and asset building:** Shared equity models

- IV. **To increase access to, and the development of, communities of opportunity**

- a. **Promote renter and homeowner housing stability:**
Property tax relief
Renter protections
- b. **Improve the quality of existing housing stock:**
Housing codes, building codes and enforcement
Income targeted resources for home repair
- c. **Support healthy and economically integrated neighborhoods:**
Strategies to ensure the usability of vouchers

V. **To advance affiliate operations**

- a. **Reduce costs:**
Property tax exemptions for Habitat affiliates
Sales tax exemptions
- b. **Mortgage lending compliance:** Mortgage licensing

Through various measures, we will make sure that our important work is known in the community and use Habitat's brand to build a strong, common, collective voice on advocacy issues and strengthen our impact in Morris County.

Therefore, by tracking our advocacy efforts, we will understand which types of events, letters, posts, etc., have the biggest impact which will allow us to improve our means of advocating for affordable home ownership and securing sources of sustainable funding.

- a. **Track Advocacy Efforts:** We will use monitoring and evaluating programs to help focus our activities and allow MHfH to understand and communicate our progress to a variety of audiences
- b. **Add an Advocacy line item to the Budget:** By allocating revenue towards advocacy projects, MHfH will become more involved in the community and will reach a broader audience, have a bigger impact and source more donors
- c. **Encourage Volunteering/Donating to MHfH:** At each event, online post, virtual engagement, we will include advocacy info that tie into supporting our sources of sustainable funding
- d. **Maintain cohesion within Morris Habitat's internal members:** We will educate and inform Board, Leadership Council, staff, and supporters on advocacy issues to reach a larger audience and strengthen our collective knowledge
- e. **Form a Homeowners Alliance:** In an effort to better allocate resources for our homebuilding and repair program, we will deepen our collaboration with our Morris Habitat homeowners in our advocacy and program development efforts.