

#RAISETHEROOF – SOLUTIONS BLUEPRINT BUILDER

As new housing coalitions are imagined and explored, the following is an initial list of housing solutions that are working in various communities throughout the United States and internationally. Learn more about these approaches to affordable housing and homelessness. Discuss which are already in place in your community or could be put in place to improve housing in your community.

UNZIPPED was filmed in Venice, on the western edge of Los Angeles, California. Homelessness began to dramatically increase in California as institutional and systemic policy change and public disinvestment resulted in under-building new affordable housing options, failure to protect and preserve existing affordable housing stock, and new restrictions on policies to protect California renters. We didn't reach today's crisis overnight. While there is no "magic wand" or "silver bullet" solution, we know with certainty that accessible and affordable housing alongside services, care, and other forms of social and economic support move people out of homelessness and build the path to housing stability, especially for low- and extremely low-income households.

Many of these evidence-based, equity-centered solutions can be found in [Roadmap Home 2030](#). Created by housing and homelessness experts using a comprehensive approach, Roadmap is a ten-year plan to create the future we want by building affordable homes, protecting low-income renters, solving homelessness, and advancing racial equity and economic inclusion. Home 2030 provides 57 bold evidenced-based policy solutions to get and keep people housed. These solutions are a blueprint that can be tailored and adopted in communities around the globe:

- **Expanding Access to Affordable and Supportive Housing**
Throughout California, there are only 24 affordable homes for every 100 low-income households, with a total shortfall of over 1 million affordable units. Most people who experience or are at risk of homelessness simply need housing they can afford — whether that's through building new subsidized housing or by providing financial assistance to help them afford rent. For the subset of unhoused people who need extra care due to disabilities, supportive housing can solve their homelessness and stabilize their health and health care expenses.
- **Keeping People Housed**
As rent costs have reached an all-time high throughout California and much of the nation, the challenge of keeping a roof over low- and extremely low-income households has become increasingly difficult. Strong and equitable renter protections, along with anti-displacement and rental subsidy programs, can help prevent thousands of people from losing their homes and being forced into homelessness.

As new housing coalitions and campaigns are imagined and explored, they can build on the following housing solutions that are already helping communities throughout the United States and internationally address affordable housing needs and curb homelessness. Learn more about these approaches to affordable housing and homelessness. Discuss which are already in place in your community or could be put in place to increase housing options and accessibility in your community.

- **Expanding Access to Affordable and Supportive Housing**

Increasing the stock of affordable housing options will help virtually every household along the economic spectrum, especially if California dedicates a portion of development to low- and extremely low-income households. By streamlining processes, removing regulatory barriers, simplifying financing options, requiring all jurisdictions to plan for and build affordable housing, and most importantly by funding more development, California can begin to increase the rate of production to meet the scale of need. Below you will find some examples:

- Expanding tax credits and other affordable housing financing tools can create more homes that are affordable to low-income households. Virtually all affordable housing in California is financed in part with support from the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Affordable housing developers can stretch these federal resources even further with additional investment from the state's LIHTC program, resulting in more homes affordable to lower-income households, including people experiencing homelessness.
- Streamlining the approval and permitting of affordable housing would increase the supply of affordable homes. State laws must continue to expand streamlining of approvals and permitting for affordable housing development proposals. Without streamlining, affordable housing proposals are often subject to lengthy and onerous land use entitlement processes that add unnecessary time and costs, and ultimately reduce the speed of affordable housing construction. Addressing the approval process would produce more homes, especially in higher-resource communities that have few affordable homes.
- Expanding permanent supportive housing would protect both low-income renters and unhoused people from discrimination. Providing funding for operating subsidies and needed services would help to stabilize the lives of people experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, mental illness, and other issues so they can focus on realizing a brighter future through skill building and job training.
- Existing buildings can be repaired or retrofitted to prevent displacement of existing low-income tenants or create new residential units. Strategies like acquisition-rehabilitation and adaptive reuse can address California's major housing shortage by making use of what we already have in a way that is more sustainable than new construction.

- Preserving existing affordable housing can ensure future generations will have the opportunity to remain in their communities.
 - Deed-restricted affordable housing preserves the long-term affordability of homes whose prices were reduced to below-market levels through a government or philanthropic subsidy, inclusionary zoning or affordability incentive.
 - Naturally occurring affordable housing has been targeted for acquisition and conversion by for-profit entities seeking to maximize rents, leading to the displacement of low-income residents and the loss of affordability for future low-income residents. These properties can be preserved as affordable for the long-term by mission-driven, nonprofit-controlled organizations with the support and oversight of local government housing agencies.
 - Community land trusts are nonprofit organizations that create permanently affordable housing for low-income residents and community benefit. They often acquire properties and retain ownership of the land or buildings while entering into a 99-year ground lease with the owner. They are an essential tool in fighting displacement and fostering racial justice.
- Expanding rental subsidies and housing vouchers can make housing costs affordable for those struggling the most. Federal Section 8 Housing Vouchers have helped families bridge the financial gap so they can keep a roof over their heads — but similar rental subsidies could be expanded through state or local resources. Similarly, the model of “rapid re-housing” often includes providing a shallow rental subsidy to help meet the gap in what a family can afford to pay for rent, helping quickly move people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness into existing housing stock and supports them with case management and housing retention services.
- Removing systemic barriers to housing that disproportionately impact BIPOC people is an essential step to ensuring more Californians can access stable housing. By eliminating credit restrictions and limiting background checks or other restrictions that limit people with past evictions or criminal records from securing housing, we mitigate some of the rampant discrimination that has forced people into homelessness.

- **Keep people housed**

Even before the pandemic, the number of Californians forced into homelessness steadily rose as property values soared, employment wages stagnated, and rental rates increased, which made it harder for people to retain their homes. Opportunistic landlords aiming to maximize their profits often used dubious means to evict lower-income households. We must balance the scales so we prioritize people over profits. Discuss how fellow renters can organize and learn more about their rights and options by considering the following ideas:

- Expand tenant protections: Ensuring housing stability for all California tenants requires the use of rental subsidies, rent control, just-cause eviction protections, and right to counsel. All renters need to understand their rights and how to leverage them to prevent displacement.
- Expand rental subsidies and “problem solving”: The expanded use of housing vouchers and service coordination is a critical step in helping struggling renters in the midst of financial and personal hardship. Guidance with navigating the housing system can provide renters the clarity and support needed to keep a roof over their heads.
- Improve transitions out of institutional settings: Often Californians exiting institutions like prisons, foster care, or hospitalization require additional assistance and support in securing a stable home. Case management must work in tandem with local housing navigation services to provide subsidized housing as people learn new skills, receive job training or secure stable employment.

TAKE ACTION

“Ensuring that every person has a safe, stable, environmentally sustainable home is one of the most fundamental and pressing challenges we face. It is foundational for health and prosperity. But for millions this basic need goes unmet. Making progress on homelessness, affordable housing, and tenant protections requires accountability to deliver results through the alignment of policies, practices, and partnerships. It also requires scaled, dedicated, and ongoing investments to produce and preserve housing and protect people with low to no income.”
 — Chione Lucina Muñoz Flegal

As we lean in, show up, and speak out in support of our family members, friends and neighbors who are struggling, we must remember the following best practices:

- Highly vulnerable populations must move into housing before services can be effective.
- Housing is independent, integrated, and not conditioned on participation in services.
- Housing is necessary for recovery.
- Anyone is ready for housing.
- Housing is a basic human need, not a reward for clinical success or a contingency for compliance.
- Engagement is key.
- Once stable in housing, clinical and social stabilization occur faster, and are more enduring.

The work to advance housing solutions that improve the lives of vulnerable people, maximize public resources, and build strong healthy communities must be done at every level of

government. It is possible to solve homelessness through recurring governmental investments in housing, shelter, and supportive services that continue at scale for just over a decade.

On the federal level, find and follow national organizations such as the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#) (NLIHC), National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), and [Corporation for Supportive Housing](#) (CSH) that will keep you abreast of opportunities to speak with elected and appointed officials about ways to solve homelessness, such as:

- Advocating for the expansion of federal investments in affordable housing financing, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).
- Supporting the expansion of affordable housing resources in the federal budget, such as community development programs.
- Voicing support for the expansion of public housing assistance, rental subsidies and vouchers, and policies that require local jurisdictions to proactively address housing inequities.

On the state level, you can find and follow a multitude of advocacy organizations dedicated to expanding housing options and subsidies and increasing access to services and programs connecting struggling residents to much-needed support. In California, this list includes [Housing California](#), [California Housing Partnership](#), [Housing Now](#), [Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment](#) (ACCE), [Western Center on Law and Poverty](#) (WCLP), and [California Coalition for Rural Housing](#) (CCRH). They can help inform you of opportunities to take action in support of unhoused people, such as:

- Voicing support for the expansion of state investments in affordable and supportive housing.
- Supporting state-level investments in rental subsidies.
- Expanding access to health and behavioral healthcare and supportive services.
- Supporting expanded tenant protections.
- Supporting streamlining of affordable and supportive housing development.

At the local level, you can learn about upcoming initiatives to affect housing accessibility and upcoming developments by attending city council and county board of supervisors meetings, and by connecting with community advocacy organizations. In Los Angeles, this list includes [United Way of Greater Los Angeles](#), [Southern California Association for Non-Profit Housing](#) (SCANPH), [Los Angeles Community Action Network](#) (LA CAN), [Community Coalition](#) (CoCo), and [Alliance for Community Transit-Los Angeles](#) (ACT-LA). These organizations work with diverse partners and community networks on time-sensitive efforts, such as:

- Supporting local affordable and supportive housing developments – especially in your neighborhood!
- Opposing laws that seek to criminalize people for experiencing homelessness.

By adding your voice to the growing chorus of outspoken advocates who support equity-centered housing policies, you make a difference, motivate leaders to act, and help realize a brighter, more stable future.

You can sign up to show your support of the [Roadmap Home 2030 plan](https://roadmaphome2030.org/action/), and urge your legislators to support it as well: <https://roadmaphome2030.org/action/>

While it is focused on California specifically, it provides a comprehensive framework and solutions guide where you can learn how to advance transformative and impactful policy and structural change to ensure that all people have safe, stable, and affordable housing. We encourage you to take a look, share the information, and show your support!

UNZIPPED IS DEDICATED TO EVA LERRYNN GRAY AND ALL BORN-AND-RAISED VENETIANS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. MAY WE ALL CONTINUE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE.