

CHANGE STARTS HERE

*Tools to Move Policy, Build Power,
and Make Change*

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Today's Outline



- Intro to NLIHC
- Housing Needs
- Housing Solutions
- How We Get There

Mission



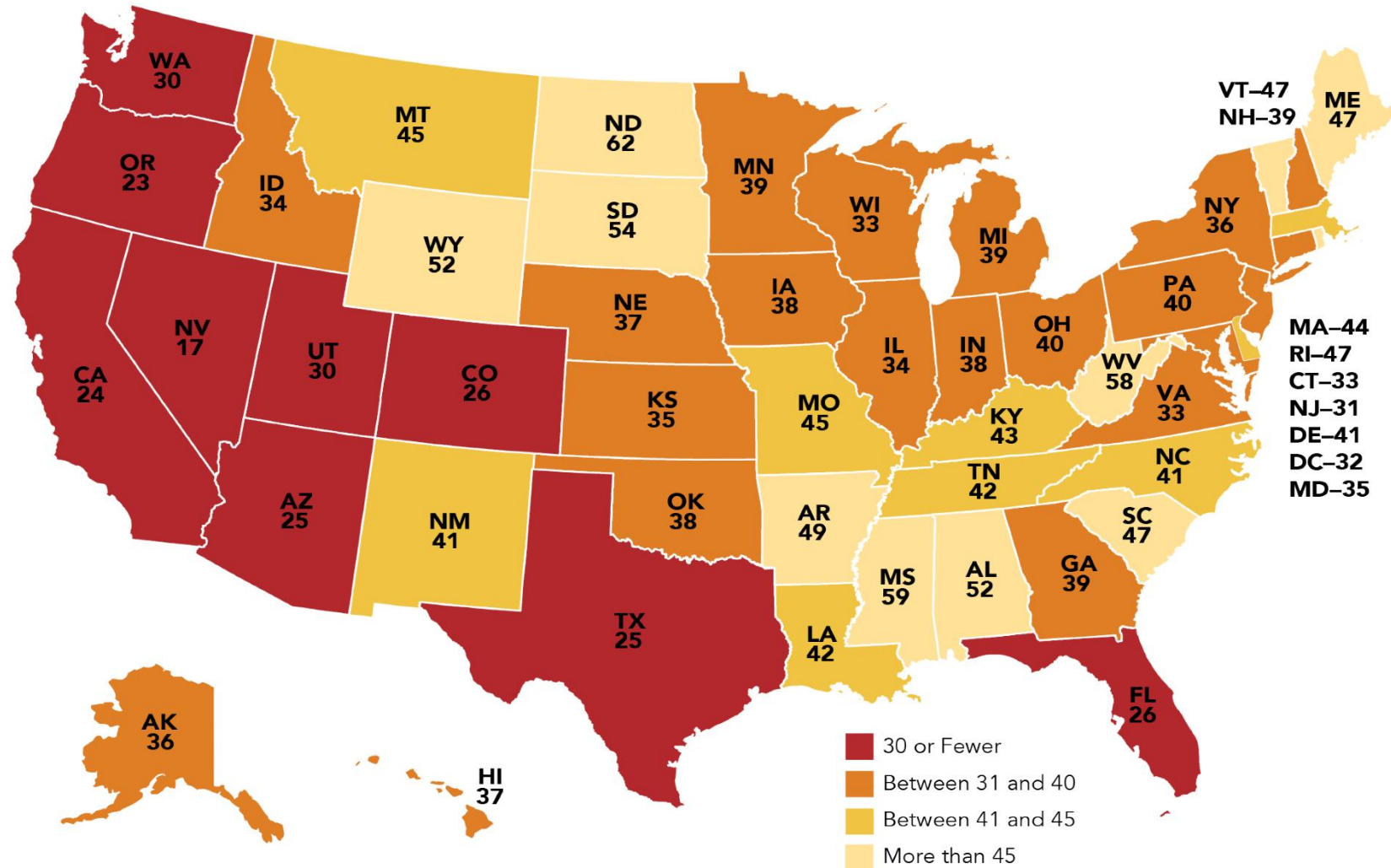
*The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures **people with the lowest incomes** have quality homes that are affordable and accessible in communities of their choice.*

Our Coalition

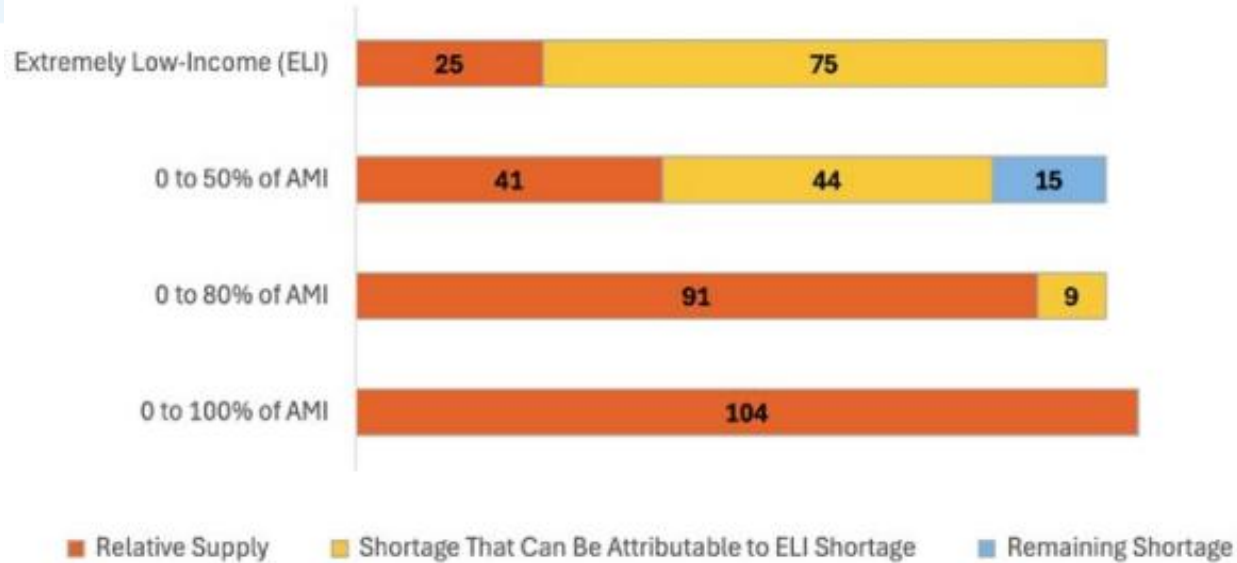


- Tenant leaders, resident associations
- Homeless service agencies
- Public Housing Authorities
- Legal aid groups
- Researchers
- Government agencies
- Housing developers
- Property managers
- Students
- Other service providers

RENTAL HOMES AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE PER 100 EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY STATE

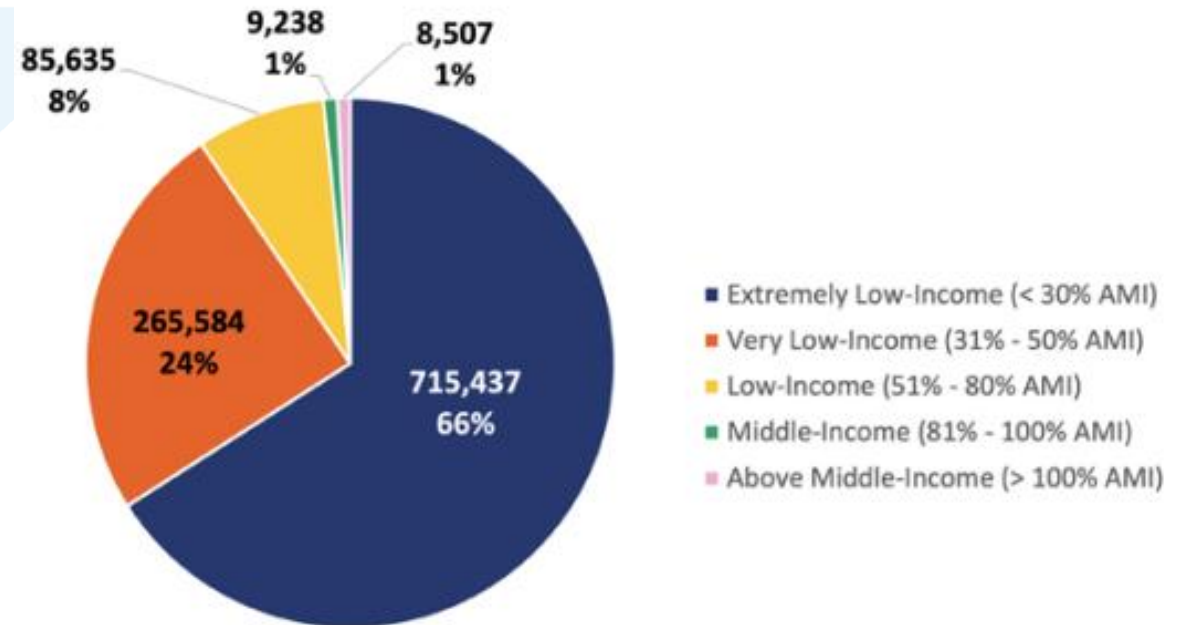


Shortage of Housing By Income Group



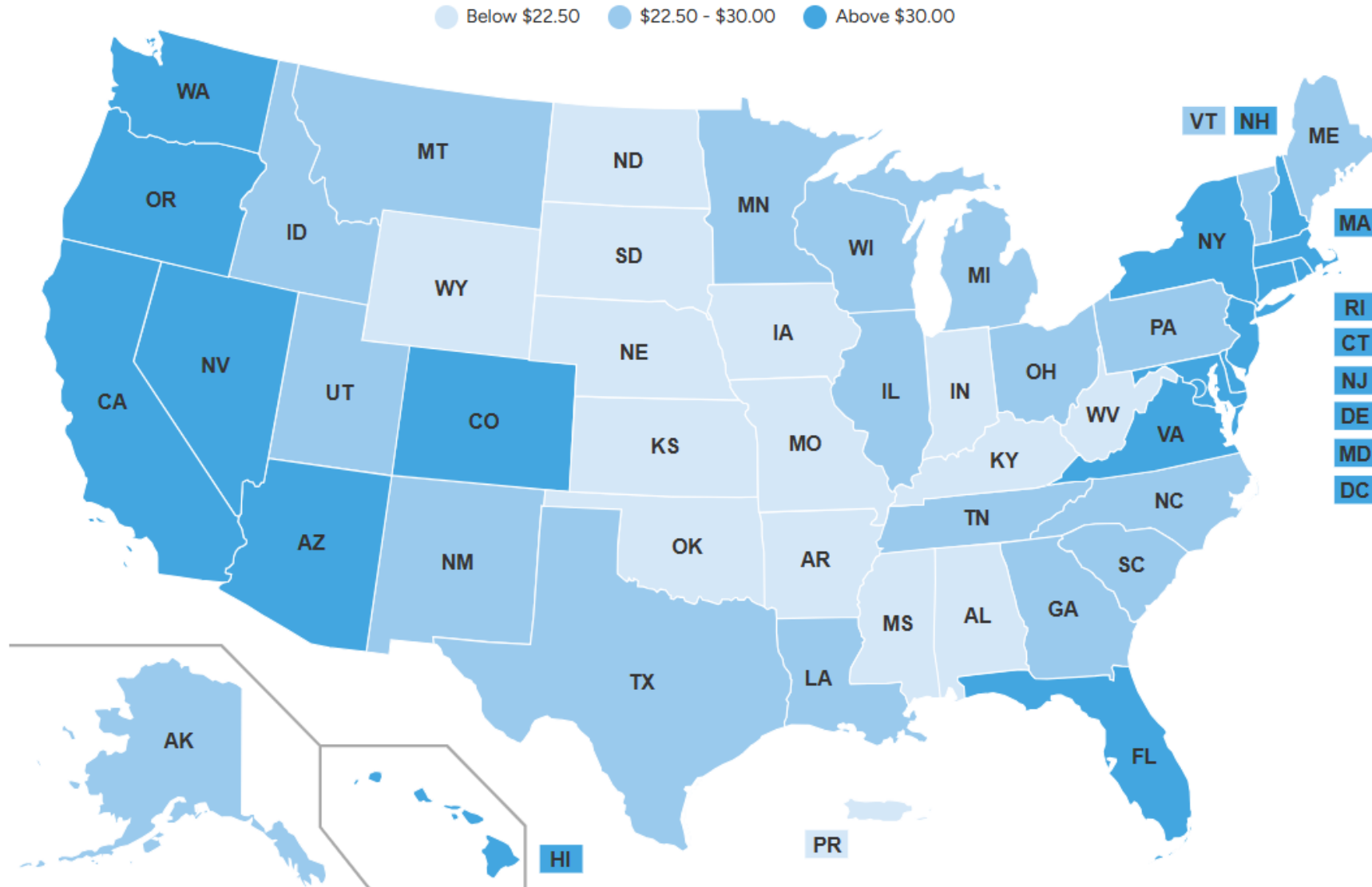
Extremely Low-income Renters Make Up Majority of Severely Cost-burdened Renters

Severely Cost Burdened Renter Households by Income, 2023



How Much Do You Need to Earn?

Hourly wage required to afford a two-bedroom rental home by state.



\$29.64
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING
WAGE

Median Hourly Wages for Common Occupations

Fast Food Workers	\$12.95
Home Health / Personal Care Aides	\$11.09
Janitors	\$14.60
Nursing Assistants	\$17.29
Retail Salespersons	\$14.66

164

Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

137

Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

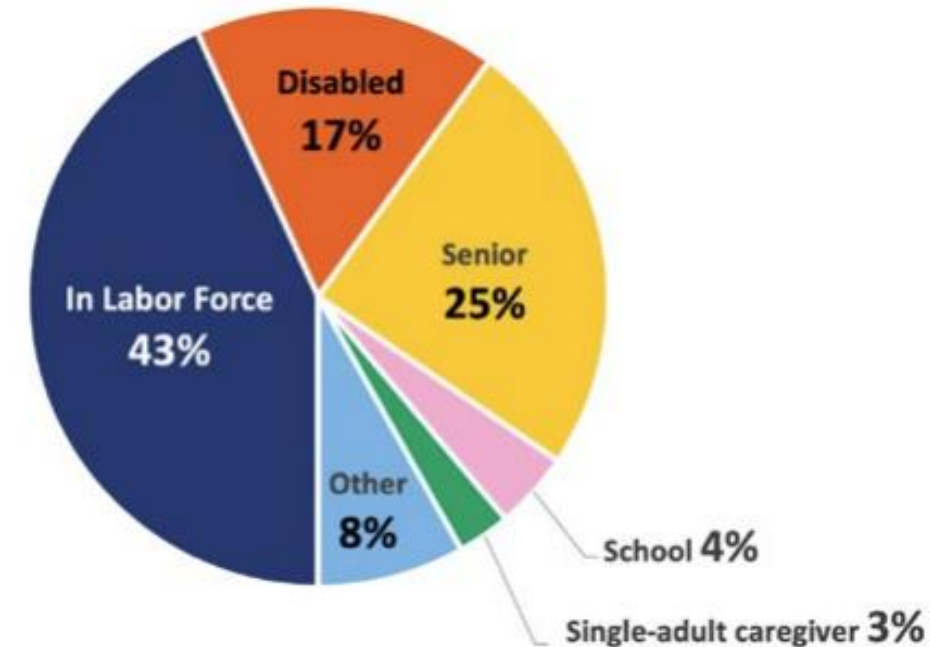
4.1

Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

3.4

Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

Extremely Low Income Renter Households



Policy Solutions

- Federal Appropriations
- Bipartisan Policy Solutions
- Bridge the Gap Between Incomes & Housing Costs
- Expand & Preserve the Supply of Affordable Homes
- Provide Emergency Rental Assistance
- Strengthen & Enforce Renter Protections
- Equitable Disaster Housing Recovery
- Housing First, *Not* Housing Only

How We Get There

- **Build Power**
 - Organizing
 - Coalition building
- **Grow Political Will**
 - Election engagement
 - Advocacy
 - Pressure
- **Pass Federal Policy Solutions & Change Systems**

What does
building power
mean to you?

Organizing vs. Advocacy vs. Lobbying



Organizing

- Bring people together around shared self-interest and a common goal to build and exercise power to shape politics, policies, and outcomes

Advocacy

- Publicly speaking in support of an issue, such as affordable housing , without speaking for or against specific legislation

Lobbying

- Communicating with decision makers about existing or potential legislation and asking them to vote a specific way

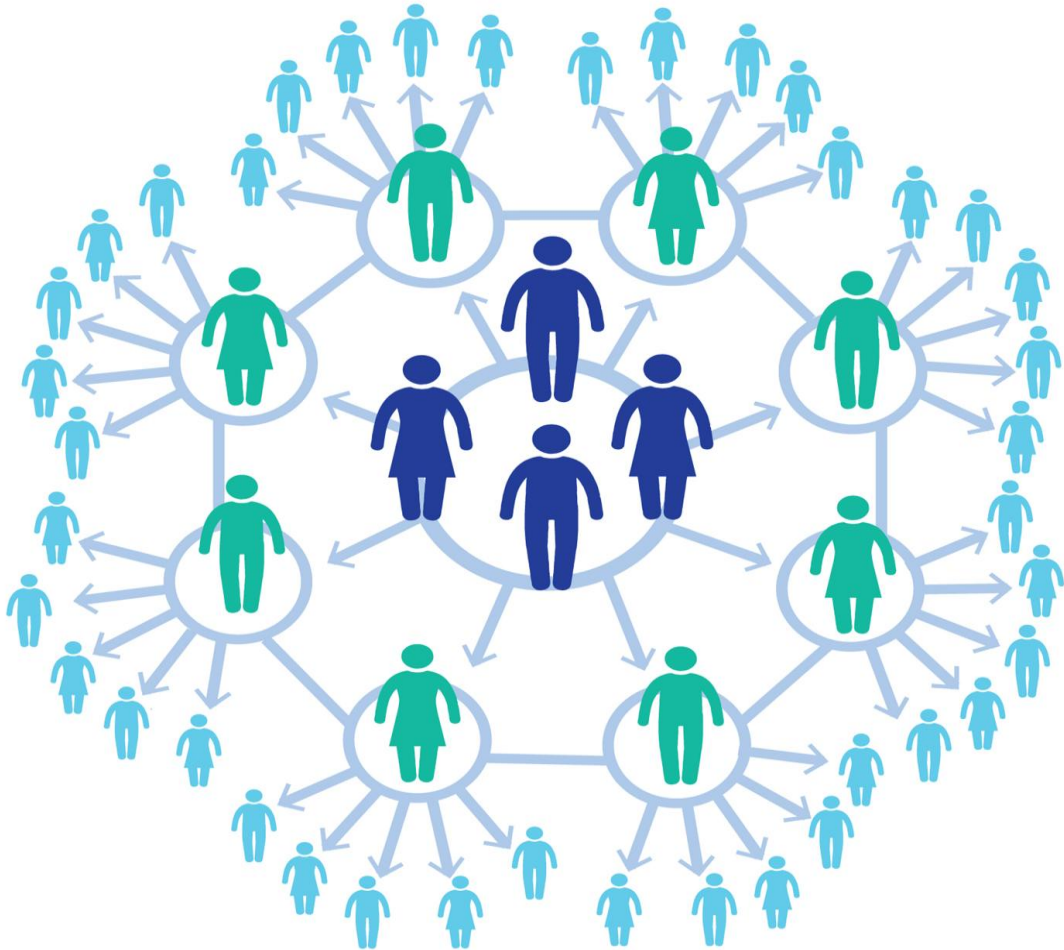
Resources

- www.bolderadvocacy.org

Base Building

- **Principle of Organizing:** Power in relationships
- “Who are your people?” – Ella Baker
- Questions to consider:
 - How much power do we need?
 - What does power in numbers look like?
 - How many people do I want on core team leading organizing?
- **Principle of Organizing:** Organizers teach leaders, leaders organize

Snowflake Model



- Teams organized to replace single leader with team of interconnected leaders
- Success depends on developing leadership throughout the team

What is your level of experience with advocacy?

1 = None

5 = I'm an expert!

Myths and Misconceptions

- 1) Our tax status doesn't allow us to engage in advocacy
- 2) Our elected official has already made up their mind and it won't make a difference
- 3) We don't have the resources or expertise

Types of Advocacy

Self-Advocacy

- Speaking up for oneself:
- Communicating or asserting needs or rights

Individual Advocacy

- Advocacy efforts focused on 1-2 individuals

Systems Advocacy

- Changing policies, laws, or rules that impact people, the environment or how things operate.
- Local, state, or national

What Makes Policy 'In Action'

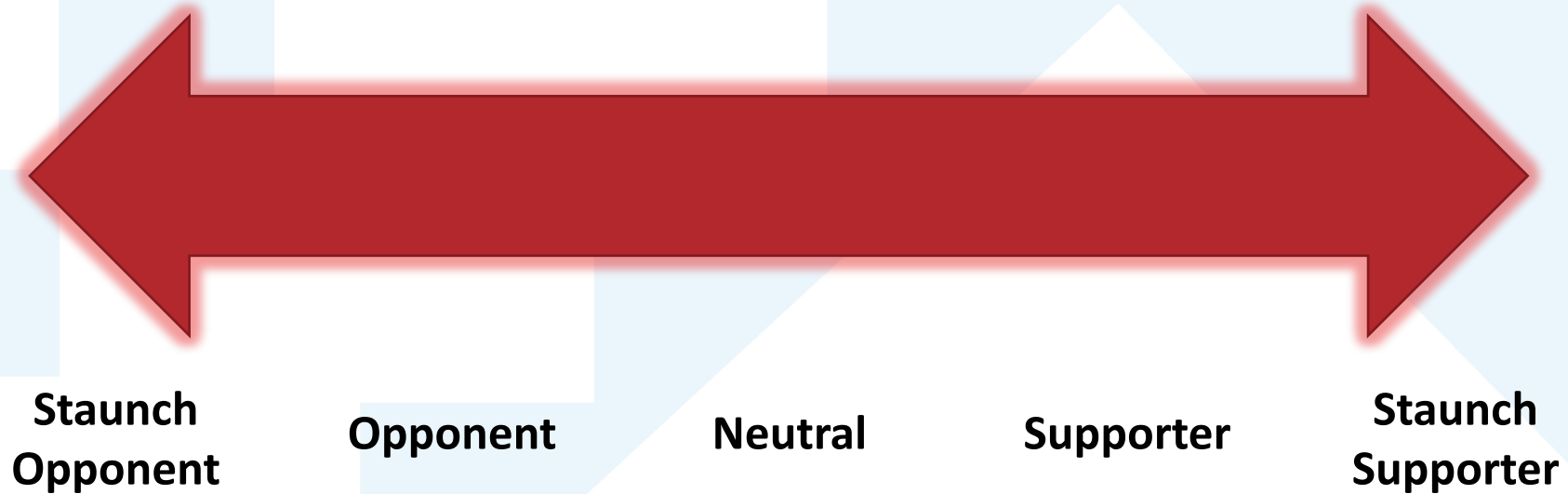
Grounded in Equity:

- Centering the communities most impacted
 - Housing injustice—Black, Indigenous, and people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and low-income renters.
 - Equity means ensuring policies don't just treat everyone the same but address historic and systemic disparities.

Responsive:

- Allow for flexibility and innovation in implementation to meet needs in different communities

Does Advocacy Work?



Building an Effective Organizing & Advocacy Strategy



- Organizing / Coalition Building
- Identifying Issues
- Setting Goals
- Messaging
- Action Plan

Problems vs. Issues



Problems

- Big and overwhelming
- Not effective goals

Issues

- Bite-sized pieces of the larger problem that help us chip away

Effective Goal Setting

Qualities found in <u>Ineffective</u> Wants	Qualities of an <u>Effective</u> Want
Fixes/ends a vague or general problem	Pursues a specific solution to an issue
Centers a symptom (cosmetic change)	Centers a root cause of an issue
Does not address concrete issue in people's lives	If achieved, results in concrete change in people's daily lives
Is in someone else's power to achieve	Your people have specific power to achieve it
Can be achieved through your actions alone	Will be achieved through the work of many
Achieved through cultural shift	Achieved through policy change or systemic change- concrete policies or protections

Engaging with Policymakers

Tips for Effective Engagement

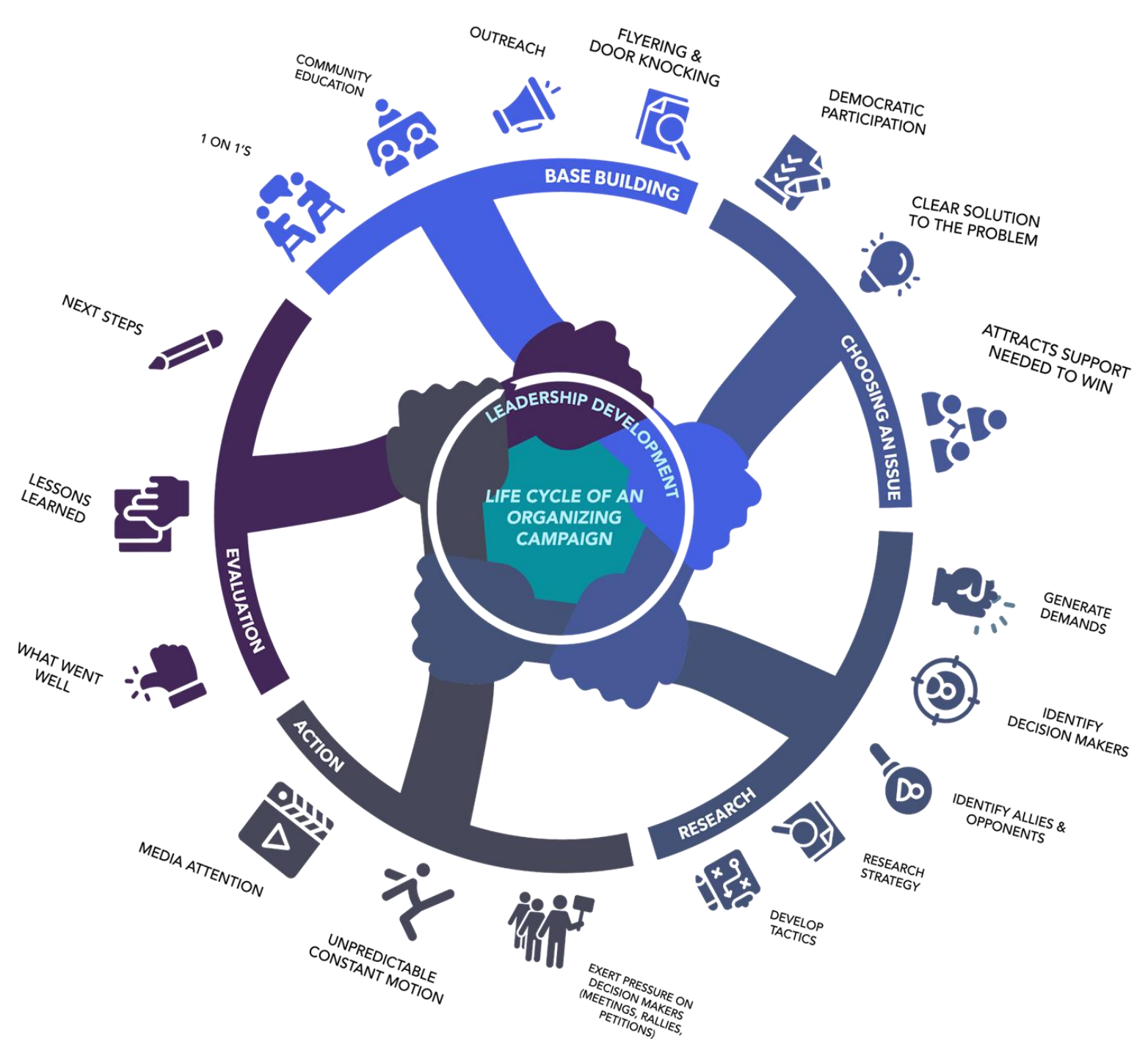
- Research your policymakers: interests and positions
- Tailor your message to align with their priorities
- Establish ongoing relationships
- Utilize multiple channels:
 - Letters
 - Meetings
 - Social media
 - Public testimony

Engaging with Communities

Grassroots Organizing & Mobilization

- Outreach
- Community meetings
- Town halls
- Social media
- Building a base of support
- Volunteer recruitment and coalition building

Cycle of Organizing



Challenges and Opportunities

Common Obstacles & Strategies for Overcoming Them

■ Political Opposition

- Bipartisan coalitions focused on shared values
- Localized data and real stories
- Frame housing as foundation for community well-being and other areas

■ Public Apathy

- Humanize the issue
- Frame in shared vision for our communities
- Visuals and infographics
- Engage people on platforms they already use

Challenges and Opportunities

Common Obstacles & Strategies for Overcoming Them

■ Myths & Misinformation

- Create simple, fact-based messaging
- Train to confidently counter misinformation

■ Resource Limitations

- Leverage coalitions and shared capacity
- Recruit student fellows, interns, or community volunteers

■ Burnout

- Celebrate small wins
- Create spaces for collective care and reflection
- Encourage realistic, shared workload goals within coalitions

Audience Questions

- Any recent policy victories in your community?
- What advocacy made this possible? What did that advocacy look like?

Advocacy Activities

- Meeting with Elected Officials
- Emails
- Phone Calls
- Traditional & Social Media
- Town Halls
- Site Visits or Tours
- Community Events
- Rallies



Storytelling

- Effective emotional appeals: pride, hope, love, and awe
 - Avoid anger, fear, and sadness
- Building blocks
 - 1) Choose your focus
 - 2) Choose your value
 - 3) Describe what you had to overcome
 - 4) Show the climax—what choice did you make in the face of challenge?
 - 5) Describe the resolution
 - 6) Call to action
- Story of self, story of us, story of action

Engaging People with Lived Experience

DO...

- Ask for permission
- Treat people as authentic partners with decision-making and agenda-setting power
- Compensate for sharing their time and expertise

DON'T...

- Tokenize
- Exploit trauma
- Approach engagement as “filling a slot” or “checking off a box”

Mapping Advocacy Strategy

What do we want?

- Why?
- Key targets?
- What have we tried in past?

What do we need?

- Votes?
- Media?
- Public support?

What do we have?

- Relationships?
- Member networks or coalitions?

Strategies

- How do we leverage what we have to get what we need to get what we want?
- What's missing from 'haves'?

Activity: Putting It All Together

Breakout Strategy Session



- **Federal Policy Scenario:**
 - Federal Appropriations for FY26
 - Implications for Texas
- **Map Local Landscape:**
 - Want, Need, Have
 - Power Map
 - Key Players
 - Obstacles
- **Organizing & Advocacy Strategy**

Want (policy priority):

Key targets:

What we've done in the past:



Needs	Haves	Strategies

Discussion, Reflections

- What were a few highlights from the strategy activity discussion?
- How do you plan to apply this advocacy plan back home?
- What resonated with you from this session?
- What was missing from today's presentation that you feel you still need?

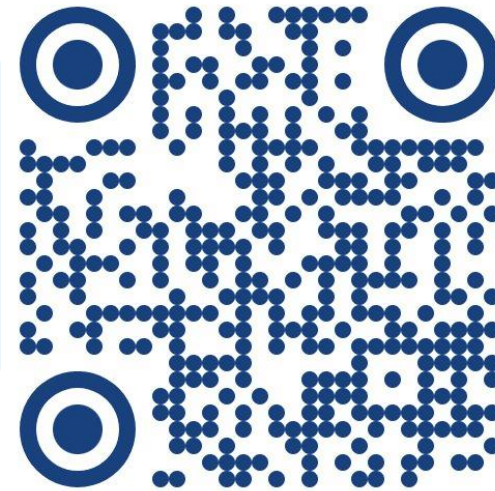
Get Involved:

Become a Member & Take Action!



Why Join NLIHC?

- Discounted tickets to NLIHC's annual Housing Policy Forum in DC
- Exclusive access to quarterly members-only Policy Advisory Committee meetings
- Discounted rates for print publications
- Prioritized support from NLIHC staff to advance affordable housing solutions
- *Support NLIHC in advancing our mission*



www.nlihc.org/membership

Become a Member

Take Action

nlihc.org/take-action





NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION

Thank You!

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