



The Council for Health and  
Human Service Ministries  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
#BeAVoiceCHHSM

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## BE A VOICE SUMMARY: AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

*All Be A Voice Health and Human Service Advocacy Toolkit sections are on the advocacy page listed on the bottom of this summary.*

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### BACKGROUND:

- Access to safe and affordable housing is one of the single greatest factors impacting a family's ability to thrive. Stable housing means economic stability for parents, access to dependable education for children, and increasing economic wellbeing overall.

### CURRENTLY:

- There is a massive shortage in access to housing, with more than 500,000 people facing homelessness each night. Only 1 in 4 families who need low-income housing actually receive it. The lack of affordable housing means that low-income working families often pay more than half of their income to rent, having to choose between rent and food, or healthcare, or other essentials. Too many people are living on edge, one emergency away from homelessness.
- Low-income housing is at the bottom of the budget pile. Over time, funding levels have remained below what is needed to make meaningful strides in homelessness prevention. In the past decade, a third of the programs that provide healthcare, education, or low-income housing have been cut by 25 percent or more. The current budget proposal includes dramatic and devastating cuts to public housing funding. Additional regulatory changes that lessen the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s oversight and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act will remove protections that guard against discrimination.
- The [General Synod](#) has spoken repeatedly on issues of economic justice, particularly naming the essential need for safe and affordable housing. For example, [GS 29](#) called on the denomination to support robust funding under HUD for quality affordable housing and for the continuation and strengthening of the low-income housing tax credit program.

### QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- The affordable housing crisis continues to expand, meaning millions of families are struggling to pay rent, with many others unable to access housing or receive assistance. What plans do you have to address the backlog in affordable housing assistance?
- The gap between the increase in rent vs the increase in wages keeps widening. What measures will you enact to ensure that people don't have to make the choice between buying food or medicine and eviction?
- Rollbacks in regulations that ensure strong enforcement of the Fair Housing Act will increase discriminatory housing practices and amplify the inequities caused by lack of access to safe and stable housing. Will you ensure that the Fair Housing Act is enforced by not just maintaining, but by continually improving the methods by which fair housing standards can be prescribed?