

To: Interested Parties
Fr: National Women's Law Center
Re: Housing Public Opinion Research
Date: February, 13, 2025

NWLC partnered with HIT Strategies to commission this public opinion research work. HIT conducted five online focus groups between August 26 and September 5, 2024, recruiting nationwide, including:

- seven Black women with annual household incomes below \$75,000;
- seven women of color ages 18 to 39 with annual household incomes below \$75,000;
- seven women of color ages 40 and over with annual household incomes below \$75,000;
- six LGBTQIA+ people of color of all ages and incomes; and
- eight women with disabilities of all ages and incomes.

An opt-in panel online survey conducted between October 23 and 30, 2024, reached 1,000 adults nationally, as well as oversamples of 150 Black women, 150 Latinas, 150 LGBTQIA+ people, and 160 AANHPI women. To ensure a representative sample, weights were applied to demographic variables. The margin of error (MOE) for the sample is +/- 2.91% and larger for subgroups.

Please note that throughout this report, some values displayed in data tables may not add up to the totals column due to rounding.

Key Takeaways

- Respondents overwhelmingly favor strong action on housing. Respondents most strongly supported efforts banning landlords from unreasonable rent increases (77% support) and implementing some form of a Tenants Bill of Rights to ensure renters have the right to push back against exploitative landlords (74% support).
- The housing message that respondents found the most convincing is one that highlights inequality:
"All of us, regardless of our race, gender, or income, want the best for our families. But big corporations are getting tax cuts while many of us are paying rent that eats up nearly half of our income. We must make the wealthiest individuals and wealthy corporations pay their fair share in taxes so we can provide more rental assistance and make the economy work better for everyone."
- When asking how much of a priority it should be to expand access to safe, affordable housing free from discrimination to people who need it the most, including women of color, disabled people, and LGBTQIA+ people, 77% of respondents select it as a priority at the beginning of the survey. After receiving information through messages and statements, 82% of respondents select the statement as a high priority.
- Respondents perceived women with disabilities, Black women, LGBTQIA+ people of color, Latinas¹, and mothers as having the most difficulty finding safe, affordable housing free from discrimination.

Respondents Struggle With Housing Costs

- Housing costs (including rent, mortgages, or property taxes) were selected by 40% of respondents as the cost causing the most stress for them and their family after groceries and food (54%).
 - **Among respondents, 51% of Latinas, 47% of Black women, 46% of disabled women, 45% of AANHPI women, and 45% of parents² report housing costs causing the most stress for themselves and their families.**
 - When selecting from a list of factors, two-thirds of respondents consider the cost of housing to be an important factor when looking for a new place to live. This was perceived as more important than other notable factors like safety in the neighborhood, proximity to family and friends, and proximity to grocery stores.

- In selecting the top two or three biggest problems when it comes to housing, 33% of respondents believe most people don't have enough savings to be able to buy a house these days, 29% believe there is not enough affordable or accessible housing for people with the lowest incomes or people with disabilities, and 25% believe landlords and property managers are fixing rent prices to keep them high and are raising rents faster than our wages are increasing. Some groups of people selected other concerns on the biggest problems in housing:
 - o Nearly one in four Black women (24%) believe difficulty finding housing because of a low or lack of credit score, poor rental or eviction history, landlords not accepting certain types of income, or say that past involvement in the criminal legal system is a big problem in housing.
 - o Just under one in four Latinas (22%) believe that big corporations that come into communities and buy up single family homes and build expensive housing that no one can afford is a big problem in housing.
 - o LGBTQIA+ respondents (37%) were especially likely to respond that there is not enough affordable or accessible housing for people with the lowest incomes or people with disabilities is a big problem in housing.
 - o Just under one in four disabled women (22%) believe that a big problem in housing is that most people could face the threat of eviction if an unexpected financial crisis comes up.
- **Despite these obstacles to finding housing, eight in 10 respondents report homeownership as a life goal for themselves.**

Respondents overwhelmingly support housing proposals that help communities, increase tenant protections, and prohibit discrimination.

Top Proposals	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Total Support
Make our communities safer by addressing the root causes of crime and violence and investing in community services that reduce poverty, increase employment, healthy food options, mental health and addiction services, and help people get housing.	61%	24%	84%
Ban landlords from unreasonably or excessively increasing rent on tenants.	61%	16%	77%
Create Tenant Bills of Rights at the federal, state, and local levels that include protections against unfair application practices and rent increases, protections against displacement, and the right to healthy and accessible housing.	52%	22%	74%
Make the wealthiest people and big corporations pay their fair share in taxes, so we have more public dollars to support investments in truly affordable housing.	57%	15%	73%
Ban algorithms and software that allow landlords to fix high prices on rental units.	50%	20%	70%
Remove barriers like long paperwork processes and red tape that make it hard for people to access the government assistance programs that can help them meet their basic needs.	46%	24%	70%
Prohibit discrimination based on the source of income people use to pay rent like government benefits, which are particularly helpful for communities of color, women, disabled people, and people with low incomes.	44%	26%	70%

In selecting from a list of who bears responsibility for expanding access to safe, affordable housing free from discrimination, respondents selected **state governments** (85% say very or somewhat responsible), **local governments** (84%), **large landlords and property management companies** (83%), the **federal government** (80%), and **big corporations** (65%).

The Role of Identity and Personal Factors in Housing

- Nearly nine in 10 respondents (89%) believed a person's annual income has an impact on their ability to access safe, affordable housing free from discrimination.
- When selecting from a list of specific groups facing multiple forms of oppression, 71% of respondents reported women with disabilities have difficulty finding safe, affordable housing free from discrimination, in addition to 70% of respondents selecting Black women, 66% selecting LGBTQIA+ people of color, 64% selecting Latinas, and 62% selecting mothers as having difficulty finding safe, affordable housing.
 - In comparison, 35% of respondents reported they believe white women have difficulty and 23% reported white men have difficulty finding safe, affordable housing.

Language and messages that respondents support.

- When asked about aspects of **fair housing**, respondents reported making housing costs more affordable (72% of respondents selected as most important).
 - LGBTQIA+ (39%), disabled women (36%), and Black women (31%) respondents also highlighted preventing discrimination in housing to be an important aspect of fair housing.
 - Mothers (31%) also highlighted increasing the number of available homes to be an important aspect of fair housing.
- When asked about aspects of **safe housing**, respondents reported safety from crime and violence (74%) and safety to physically access a home (22%) to be the most important.
 - Nearly three in 10 Black women (29%) reported safety from discrimination and/or prejudice to be an important aspect of safe housing.
 - Over one in five Latinas (21%) reported safety from eviction to be an important aspect of safe housing.
 - Over one in five mothers (22%) reported safety from pollution and other public health threats to be an important aspect of safe housing.
- **Overwhelmingly, respondents believe that gender, race, and disability have a clear impact on housing.**
 - Nearly seven in 10 respondents (69%) strongly or somewhat agreed that we should make sure housing solutions close disparities based on race, gender, and disability.
 - Over three in five respondents (63%) strongly or somewhat agreed that women are paid less than men for the same amount of work, which makes it harder for them to afford housing costs.
 - Three in five respondents (60%) strongly or somewhat agreed that women of color have a harder time than white men accessing housing due to discrimination based on their intersecting identities of gender and race. And nearly three in five respondents (58%) strongly or somewhat agreed that women of color have a harder time than white women accessing housing due to discrimination based on their intersecting identities of gender and race.
 - A majority of respondents (56%) believe a person's disability status has a major or big impact on a person's ability to access safe, affordable housing free from discrimination.

- Respondents overwhelmingly believe housing is essential to people's lives:
 - o Nearly nine in 10 respondents (88%) strongly or somewhat agreed that safe housing is a basic human need.³
 - o Over eight in 10 respondents (83%) strongly or somewhat agreed housing is foundational to the lives of women, children, and families, impacting everything from health to access to care services to education.⁴
 - o Eight in 10 respondents (80%) strongly or somewhat agreed safe housing is a human right.⁵
 - o **Nearly eight in 10 respondents (79%) strongly or somewhat agreed everyone should live in a safe and affordable home regardless of their financial situation.**⁶
- The top four messages that respondents found extremely convincing include:

Message	Found Very Convincing	Total Convincing (Very or Somewhat Convincing)
All of us, regardless of our race, gender, or income, want the best for our families. But big corporations are getting tax cuts while many of us are paying rent that eats up nearly half of our income. We must make the wealthiest individuals and wealthy corporations pay their fair share in taxes so we can provide more rental assistance and make the economy work better for everyone.	54%	83%
Recently, the country's biggest landlords raised rents by more than 5%, far outpacing inflation, and are raking in record profits. Meanwhile, women, particularly women of color, are more likely to spend more than half of their income on housing costs compared to their male counterparts. We must ensure that everyone has safe, affordable housing by preventing excessive rent increases, allowing people to remain in their homes long-term.	47%	82%
Many families today live paycheck to paycheck, putting them at risk for falling behind on rent and being evicted. Women of color, particularly Black women, are more likely to experience eviction due to racist and sexist policies by landlords. If a person receives an eviction notice, they could lose access to housing, child care, employment, and more. We must increase tenant protections and make it easier for tenants to have legal assistance during the eviction process.	47%	81%
Every day, women wake up and work hard to provide for their families. But nearly half of mothers raising children on their own spend most of their income on rent, leaving little for healthy foods, child care, and health care. We must ensure everyone has a safe, affordable home where they can raise their family and give their children a good start in life.	45%	86%

When asked at the beginning of the survey how much of a priority respondents think it should be to expand access to safe, affordable housing free from discrimination to people who need it the most, including women of color, disabled people, and LGBTQIA+ people, 77% of respondents selected it as a priority, including 39% selecting it as a major priority. After receiving more information from the messages and statements, 82% of respondents selected the statement as a high priority, including 46% selecting it as a major priority, a seven-percentage point increase.

- After being informed by the messages and statements, the groups of people who ranked expanding access to safe, affordable housing free from discrimination as a high priority include LGBTQIA+ people (92% said major or somewhat high priority), Black women (90%), disabled women (88%), mothers (87%), Millennial women (88%), Gen Z women (87%), and Latinas (86%).

In the **initial ask**, many demographic groups believed it was a major priority to expand safe, affordable housing free from discrimination to people who need it the most. After the **informed ask**, when the groups had seen the messages and statements, there was major shift from key groups **showing even greater support** that belief.

Share of respondents who believe it was a major priority to expand safe, affordable housing free from discrimination to people who need it the most, including women of color, disabled people, and LGBTQIA+ people

	Initial ask	Informed ask	Percentage point change between initial and informed ask
Households with income under \$75k	39%	49%	+10
White men	29%	38%	+9
Men aged 50 and over	29%	37%	+8
Latinas	47%	55%	+8
Renters	47%	53%	+6
Parents	40%	45%	+5

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- 1 Respondents self-selected if they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
- 2 Respondents self-selected if they were the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 18 years old.
- 3 In a split sample method, we found 88% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree safe housing is a basic need.
- 4 In a split sample method, we found 83% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree housing is foundational to every person's life, impacting everything from health to access to care services to education.
- 5 In a split sample method, we found 71% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree housing is a human right.
- 6 In a split sample method, we found 77% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree everyone should live in a home that allows them to thrive regardless of their financial situation.