Talking Points: Washington

These talking points are meant to be used during conversations with Washington state lawmakers, potential allies and the media.

* A growing number of Washingtonians are struggling to find housing they can afford. It is a clear strain on families that must be addressed.
* In lieu of innovative solutions, some state officials are beginning to advocate for antiquated rent control policies that we know too well are ineffective and harmful.
* Instead, we need solutions that get to the root of the problem and address the needs of all residents.
* First, we must address the tremendous shortage of homes and remove barriers to adding more supply.
  + [71% of extremely low-income renters](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_WA.pdf) in Washington spend more than half their income on housing. Between now and 2030, Washington will need to add [9,787 new apartment homes](https://www.weareapartments.org/data/Washington/) each year to keep up with demand.
  + Vacancy rates [show](https://www.nmhc.org/research-insight/research-notes/2021/affordability-toolkit-redux/) that there is still a supply and demand imbalance, and the COVID-related downturn financially harmed those that were already struggling the most, continuing to make it difficult for those at the lower end of the income spectrum to find an affordable unit.
* Second, state and local governments should explore creative, public-private partnership opportunities to bring the price point down to create more affordable housing.
* Third, we must use targeted subsidies to help the neediest families today. These solutions will lead to a wider range of housing options being built, from apartments and duplexes, to single-family homes and townhouses.
* We need to learn from the mistakes of cities like San Francisco and New York, which, due to increased regulation, housing opposition, rent control laws, and other factors, now have the highest median rents in country.
* When considering rent control, Washington would be better served implementing [solutions](https://www.nmhc.org/research-insight/research-report/the-impacts-of-rent-control-a-research-review-and-synthesis/) that will truly make a dent in addressing our housing affordability challenges.