



PUT HOUSING FIRST

**Call to Action**

## **City of New Orleans Final Budget Hearings**

Last year, New Orleans produced almost 1,500 new affordable housing opportunities after committing \$17 million annually to produce 7,500 over five years. This year we are off target, so we have asked the

city to revise their plan and are asking City Council to appropriate the necessary resources to get back on track and continue our work to end housing insecurity in New Orleans. The 2018 City Budget should:

- **Prioritize Affordable Housing Over Short-Term Rental Units: We ask that City Council allocate any and all undedicated revenue from short term rental taxes into the Neighborhood Housing Improvement Fund.** As New Orleanians struggle with a housing crisis, over 4,000 units in the city are being used as short-term rentals for tourists.
- **Facilitate the Permanent Return of Formerly Incarcerated Citizens to the Community: We ask that City Council allocate funding for immediate housing for returning citizens, and support the larger and long-term restorative network for formerly incarcerated citizens who are reentering New Orleans communities.** As Governor John Bel Edwards begins his prison release program, the state of Louisiana is preparing for those leaving incarceration to reenter society. Over the next few years, it is expected that more than 16,000 cases will be reviewed for release. HousingNOLA is part of a triage team that is working with the transition specialists from the mayor's office to secure resources for those leaving incarceration. Specifically, we are working to secure temporary housing for those leaving incarceration who have nowhere to sleep. In the long-term we would like to create a permanent facility used for transition from prison to society.

Please call or email your councilperson and the Mayor's office and ask them to #PutHousingFirst and allocate funding to these crucial housing initiatives. Let them know that you're one of the New Orleans citizens who believes that the city should prioritize producing or preserving at least 1,500 affordable homes each year - because we still need more!

If you can attend the budget hearing and would like to support, we would greatly appreciate it. You can contact Bri Foster at (504) 224-8300 or email at [bdfoster@gnoha.org](mailto:bdfoster@gnoha.org)

There is a sample script below for those who would like assistance with what to say to your representatives. **We hope to have your support at the hearings on December 1, 2017.**

#### **Mayor's Office**

- Mitch Landrieu ([504 658-4900](tel:5046584900))
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#### **At Large Councilmembers**

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#### **District A**

- Susan Guidry ([504 658-1010](tel:5046581010))
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#### **District B**

- LaToya Cantrell ([504 658-1020](tel:5046581020))
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- Nadine Ramsey ([\(504\) 658-1030](tel:5046581030))
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## Sample Script

“We've reached the point in New Orleans that our affordable housing problem is unavoidable. Typical wage-earners can no longer afford rent and homeownership is out of the question. The crisis is exacerbated even further with the thousands of formerly incarcerated citizens returning home over the next year, resulting in extreme cost burden and homelessness for a growing number of New Orleanians.

After the HousingNOLA plan determined the need for over 33,000 affordable housing opportunities for New Orleanians at every income level, Mayor Landrieu committed to preserving or producing 7,500 affordable housing opportunities in 5 years.

As we are currently off target for those goals, we hope that revenue received from short-term rentals can be allocated to the Neighborhood Housing Improvement Fund to help reach our affordable housing goals. We also hope that City Council will allocate funding for short term housing for returning citizens, and support the larger and long term restorative network for formerly incarcerated citizens returning to the community.

We can tell you that voters agree—93% of likely voters think that the city should be spending more on affordable housing. That priority is not yet reflected in our City's budget.

Thank you for your time.”

In August, [Enterprise Community Partners](#) commissioned a poll, with funding from [HousingNOLA](#), [the Power Coalition](#) and the [Greater New Orleans Foundation](#), supported in part by the [Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation](#). **The poll surveyed 500 likely voters in Orleans Parish to gauge perceptions and attitudes concerning housing issues in New Orleans and found:**

- Likely voters ranked affordable housing as the second most important issue they would like to see New Orleans' Mayor and City Council address, behind Public Safety/Crime and ahead of other issues such as Flood Control, Jobs and Economy and Infrastructure. Overall, 59 percent of respondents noted Public Safety/Crime as one of the top three issues while 46 percent noted Affordable Housing in the top three.
- 78 percent of likely voters favor or strongly favor having the city require that new market-rate housing in New Orleans set aside some units as affordable for low to moderate wage earners.

- 74 percent of likely voters favor or strongly favor having the city increase funding for the production and preservation of affordable housing