Greening Public Housing to Lower Costs, Make Homes Healthier, and Spur Market Transformation

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Introduction

Housing and energy costs have emerged as key pain points for United States residents amidst a brutal cost-of-living crisis.[1] In response, a national debate on housing affordability solutions has erupted, from supply-side, market-unleashing "Abundance" approaches to President Trump's pressure on the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates in order to spur home mortgage demand.

Public housing—rarely if ever mentioned in housing affordability debates—should be a central pillar of a progressive supply-side housing agenda as a tool to preserve deeply affordable housing, expand public development, and help spur market transformation for a green transition. In this brief, we argue for a departure from the status quo for public housing. Specifically, we advocate for a path wherein Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are invested in and given the resources needed to lead the next era of green housing investment, with bold steps taken toward full preservation of the existing public housing stock and setting PHAs up to be the engines of new permanently affordable housing supply.

The Green New Deal for Public Housing legislation would do just that, and reflects core planks from Climate and Community Institute's "Stop Greed, Build Green" agenda, which puts forward policies driven by a "Green Economic Populist" framework.[2] These policies offer an alternative agenda for a new era of climate and economic urgency, calling on policymakers to advance policies that are:

Green — They improve working class lives through tangible climate policy—like utility caps and free buses—which cuts carbon pollution and increases resilience.

Economic — They grow working class agency by rapidly lowering costs, breaking up the oligarchy, investing in high-quality public goods, and creating good jobs.

[1] Sophia Wedeen, "Renters Struggle with Competing Costs of Food, Energy, and Housing," Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, August 8, 2024, https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/renters-struggle-competing-costs-food-energy-and-housing.

[2] Patrick Bigger et. al., "Stop Greed, Build Green: A Working Class Climate Strategy," Climate and Community Institute, April 2026, https://stopgreedbuildgreen.climateandcommunity.org/posts/strategy; Climate and Community Institute, "Stop Greed, Build Green: A Working Class Climate Agenda," April 2026, https://stopgreedbuildgreen.climateandcommunity.org/posts/agenda.

Populist

They build working class power to counter the elites—from fossil fuel firms to home insurance companies—driving climate and economic crises and to manage the transition.

The Green New Deal for Public Housing would enable massive green investments by dedicating $16.2 to $23.4 billion a year for 10 years to preserve, upgrade, and grow the public housing stock.[3] This would rebuild public sector capacity in agencies starved of resources and expand their ability to create more public goods as well as ensure fast action, coordinated deployment, and fair outcomes. It would also provide direct health benefits to Black and Brown residents, as all-electric appliance upgrades reduce indoor air pollution in communities disproportionately burdened by high asthma rates and provide adequate cooling in the face of intensifying extreme heat events.[4] It would eliminate 5.7 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, the equivalent of 1.26 million cars off the road. Lastly, the legislation would scale up green building technological capabilities and working class agency—creating approximately 280,000 good union US manufacturing and construction jobs.

Public housing is one of the few forms of permanently affordable housing that still exists, a lifeline for approximately 1.7 million people across urban, rural, and suburban communities. The federal government has chronically disinvested in this critical form of affordable housing for generations now, leaving its low-income residents without access to decent living conditions—let alone green investments. Public housing is facing an existential crisis. A 2025 analysis found the combination of this long-running fiscal austerity and recent spikes in construction costs will require the infusion of $170 billion in funding to adequately repair and preserve existing public housing.[5] As a consequence of this alarming funding shortfall,

[3] Kira McDonald, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Ruthy Gourevitch, "The Case for a Green New Deal for Public Housing," Climate and Community Institute, March 2024, https://climateandcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/GND4PH-Report-050824.pdf.

[4] Naomi Wang, "Air Quality: A Silent Stressor in Vulnerable Communities," Enterprise Community Partners, August 12, 2025, https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/story/air-quality-silent-stressor-vulnerable-communities; Juan Declet-Barreto et al., "Colliding Crises: The Dangers of Extreme Heat in Affordable Housing," Union of Concerned Scientists, October 16, 2025, https://doi.org/10.47923/2025.16006.

[5] The 10 Year Roadmap for Public Housing Sustainability, "Estimating the Cost to Preserve the Nation's Public Housing," October 2025, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6643b58704450327703354 92/t/68f7f02d39b3dc033401e835/1761079341507/10+Year+Roadmap+INTERIM+REPORT+Estimating+the+Cost+to+Preserve+the+Nation%27s+Public+Housing.pdf.

from 2009 to 2022, the United States lost over 25 percent of its public housing units to conversions, demolitions, or dispositions.[6]

The United States's more than 3,000 PHAs have a critical role in addressing both the shortage of deeply affordable housing and decarbonizing the housing sector in small towns and large cities across the country. PHAs are well suited to the task for several reasons:

1. PHAs are mission-driven public institutions dedicated to providing housing as shelter for the lowest-income households, rather than as an investment opportunity. They serve working class residents who too often cannot otherwise find safe, healthy, and high-quality homes.

2. Though imperfect, public housing is committed to the principles of resident oversight and tenant protections which far exceed those found in the private rental sector, giving residents a pathway for greater input into what kinds of repairs occur.

3. The wide distribution of PHAs nationwide and the existing local-federal partnership make them well positioned as vehicles for an integrated climate and housing policy approach, especially those PHAs with a large portfolio of fossil-burning buildings.

Despite the many barriers they are facing, some local Public Housing Authorities have found creative ways to advance climate justice in their buildings. In the process, they have created models for green industrial policies for housing that reduce costs, decrease carbon emissions, and improve the lives of low-income households.[7] With additional investment, the federal government could completely repair and modernize its public housing stock. These resources would also enable PHAs to increase their development capacity, making them engines of new permanently affordable housing supply. This brief provides an overview of promising efforts to decarbonize the public housing stock in New York City and argues that these initiatives could be massively scaled up with a Green New Deal for Public Housing—transforming the whole housing sector along the way. Green

[6] McDonald, Cohen, and Gourevitch, "The Case for a Green New Deal for Public Housing."

[7] Sonal Jessel, "Public Housing Can Drive a Clean Energy Market Transformation," Climate and Community Institute, July 23, 2025, https://climatecommunityinstitute.substack.com/p/public-housing-can-drive-a-clean.

Economic Populist policies of this kind reverse the status quo of green quality-of-life upgrades accruing first to the rich by first and foremost centering the working class.

An unlikely leader of green housing market transformation: the New York City Housing Authority

PHAs are already experimenting with this alternative approach by advancing green industrial policies which proactively jumpstart technological innovation and lower costs, instead of waiting for private sector advancements to reach their residents' doors. Green Industrial Policy for Housing is based on the need for an affirmative public role in investment, coordination, and alignment of the building sector in the direction of bold green improvements.[8] This involves mobilizing coalitions across government, labor, finance, building science, manufacturing, and residents. New York City provides an excellent case study of this multifaceted green industrial policy strategy—a blueprint that can be replicated nationally.

NYC context and NYCHA conditions

New York City is the nation's public housing capital. Across programs, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is home to one in 16 New Yorkers, and the traditional public housing program houses 300,000 residents in 153,000 apartments within 243 housing developments.[9] NYCHA is the city's largest landlord and provides affordable, stable homes to residents across the city from a broad spectrum of backgrounds. Public housing is a critical refuge from

[8] Julia Wagner, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Ruthy Gourevitch, "Transforming the Housing Sector with Green Industrial Policy," Climate and Community Institute, July 2025, https://climateandcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Transforming-the-Housing-Sector-with-Green-Industrial-Policy-report.pdf.

[9] New York City Housing Authority, "2025 Fact Sheet," January 2025, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

New York's extremely expensive and crushing private rental sector, as can be seen by the lengthy 160,000 person waiting list to access it.[10] At the same time, like other PHAs, NYCHA faces major challenges following decades of disinvestment from the federal government and funding cuts. NYCHA public housing is also threatened by ever more extreme weather, from damaging floods to life-threatening heat.[11]

Despite these challenges, NYC is an exciting hub for public housing experimentation as well as climate and energy efficiency leadership. NYCHA has a long history of prior sustainability efforts, such as Energy Purchase Contracts that leveraged up-front financing for energy efficiency upgrades—LED lighting, low-flow water fixture upgrades, and Building Management Systems to monitor energy expenditure—paid for by reduced utility bills.[12] Furthermore, there is significant potential for additional ambitious action under Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who has made explicit the links between affordability and greening public housing early in his administration.[13]

NYCHA residents desperately need repairs. Based on 2025 estimates, NYCHA has identified a need of $80 billion in major repairs across its portfolio to address critical deferred maintenance and improve resident quality of life. The average age of a NYCHA building is roughly 60 years old and more than 70 percent of NYCHA's portfolio was built before 1970.[14] One of NYCHA's residents' most consistent demands regarding improvements to quality of life are the persistent issues with inadequate heating and cooling in their homes, with repairs sometimes taking months to execute.[15] While waiting for repairs, some residents have been forced to rely on space heaters for warmth and hot plates to cook, both of which can be serious fire hazards. NYCHA is also subject to the city's Local Law 97, a major piece of building decarbonization legislation, which directs the

[10] New York City Housing Authority, "NYCHA Metrics," accessed March 18, 2026, https://eapps.nycha.info/NychaMetrics/Charts/PublicHousingChartsTabs/?section=public_housing&tab=tab_repairs.

[11] Anushi Garg, "New York City Needs Affordable, Climate-Resilient Housing. There Are Policy Solutions to Help Us Get There.," Environmental Defense Fund, November 7, 2025, https://blogs.edf.org/growingreturns/2025/11/07/nyc-needs-affordable-climate-resilient-housing/.

[12] New York City Housing Authority, "NYCHA Capital Projects Fact Sheet: Energy Performance Contracts," accessed March 23, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/Learn-More-About-NYCHA-Energy-Performance-Contracts.pdf.

[13] Jeanmarie Evelly, "More NYCHA Apartments to Get Climate-Friendly Heat Pumps," City Limits, February 4, 2026, https://citylimits.org/more-nycha-apartments-to-get-climate-friendly-heat-pumps/.

[14] Peter O'Hanlon and Stirling Edward Moore, "New York City Housing Authority 2023 Physical Needs Assessment Final Report," New York City Housing Authority, June 2023, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/2023-PNA-Report-Physical-Needs-Assessment-NYCHA.pdf.

[15] Ray Vann, "Carleton Manor Residents Demand Repairs," *The Wave*, February 7, 2022, https://www.rockawave.com/articles/carleton-manor-residents-demand-repairs/.

agency to make efforts toward achieving the city's 2050 goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050.[16] This intervention is crucial, given the building sector represents nearly 70 percent of NYC's greenhouse gas emissions, and buildings are a leading driver of emissions nationwide.[17] Moreover, multifamily rental housing has been identified by experts as one of the most difficult building segments to decarbonize, given split financial incentives between landlords and renters; yet among policymakers, it has received comparatively less focus and funding, in comparison to single-family homes.[18]

Using public procurement to achieve NYCHA's climate action goals and drive down costs

Despite these large challenges and ambitious goals, New York City has emerged as a leader in climate action in public housing. NYCHA's robust sustainability agenda lays out a roadmap for achieving the 2050 emissions target, cultivating healthy and resilient communities through design excellence, and empowering residents along the way.[19] Notably, "market transformation"—the use of NYCHA's purchasing power to drive and influence industry—is explicitly called out as a key principle to this strategy.[20] While this approach may sound like a novel form of green industrial policy, it is not new to NYCHA. Back in the 1990s, more energy-efficient fridges were rolling out on the market, yet manufacturers were not focusing on developing smaller models that would serve apartment units. NYCHA set up a product challenge to produce some of the first Energy Star-rated fridges for apartments

[16] New York City Housing Authority, "NYCHA Climate Mitigation Roadmap," October 2020, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA-LL97-Whitepaper.pdf.

[17] Technically, the statistic is for "stationary energy"—the bulk of which is building sector energy use—but this figure also includes fugitive emissions from natural gas distribution within city limits. New York City Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice, "NYC Greenhouse Gas Inventories," accessed March 24, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/content/climate/pages/initiatives/nyc-greenhouse-gas-inventories.

[18] Ruthy Gourevitch, "Decarbonization Without Displacement: Tenant Advocacy in the Context of Inflation Reduction Act Implementation," Climate and Community Institute, January 2024, https://climateandcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/CCP-IRA_final-brief.pdf.

[19] New York City Housing Authority, "NYCHA Sustainability Agenda," September 2021, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA_Sustainability_Agenda.pdf.

[20] New York City Housing Authority, "2025 Progress Report on NYCHA's Sustainability Agenda," 2025, https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/sustainability-2025.page.

and purchased 150,000 units over the course of several years, successfully slashing energy costs.[21]

Similarly, today, NYCHA recognized heat pumps as a critical tool in building decarbonization, given they enable a transition from gas-powered boilers, can run off renewable electricity, and provide both heating and cooling. However, standard heat pump technologies are difficult to incorporate into existing NYCHA buildings, due to the requirement for substantial work in resident-occupied apartments, the invasive opening up of walls to insert refrigerant pipes, and costly electrical upgrades.[22] In response, NYCHA's sustainability team undertook an iterative process, surveying the existing heat pump manufacturer landscape for a better heat pump solution through information requests and conversations with equipment vendor representatives. While the vast majority of capabilities NYCHA was looking for were already achieved by manufacturers across the industry, there was not an offering that brought together all the specifications NYCHA sought into one product.

Taking the initiative, NYCHA partnered with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and New York Power Authority (NYPA) in 2021 to launch the **Clean Heat for All Challenge (CH4A)**, a technology competition aimed to spur heating and cooling equipment manufacturers to produce a new, innovative heat pump designed to better serve existing multifamily buildings.[23] The public sector took the lead in catalyzing technological innovation for the working class, as the agency-developed Request for Proposals detailed key design specifications, including the ability for units to be installed in existing windows, similar to a window AC unit; utilization of existing electrical wiring and panels; easy and fast installation without specialized tools or expertise; and the capability to efficiently operate in cold weather. Competition entrants were incentivized to participate by NYCHA's commitment to purchase thousands of heat pump units for use in scheduled heating equipment replacements in its portfolio over the coming years.[24] In addition to the purchase

[21] Patrick Sisson, "The Future of Urban Housing Is Energy Efficient Refrigerators," MIT Technology Review, June 23, 2022, https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/06/23/1053662/energy-efficient-refrigerators-urban-housing/.

[22] New York Power Authority, "NYCHA, NYPA and NYSERDA Announce Global Innovation Challenge to Decarbonize NYCHA Buildings Using New Heat Pump Electrification Technologies," December 20, 2021, https://www.nypa.gov/news/press-releases/2021/20211220-decarbonize.

[23] New York Power Authority, "NYCHA, NYPA and NYSERDA Announce Global Innovation Challenge to Decarbonize NYCHA Buildings Using New Heat Pump Electrification Technologies."

[24] NYSERDA also provided funding for the effort via the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative operating plan, which included commitments to green New York City's public housing.

commitment, the public sector also coordinated demand aggregation by sourcing letters of interest from 13 other public and private stakeholders that expressed interest in purchasing the newly developed heat pumps—representing over 75,000 housing units.[25] Both elements were critical in convincing manufacturers it would be worthwhile devoting the time, resources, and research and development expertise to create this new product offering. Under the Biden administration, the federal government also undertook similar innovation work, with the Department of Energy launching a Residential Cold Climate Heat Pump Challenge in 2021.[26]

Heat pumps installed at NYCHA's Woodside Houses. Photos courtesy of NYCHA.

[25] "How & When? Clean Heat and Climate-Friendly Homes for All," Building Energy Exchange, January 16, 2025, 14, https://be-exchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/20250116_CleanHeat_Slides-UPDATED.pdf.

[26] "DOE to Partner with Heating Industry to Improve Performance and Energy-Efficiency of Cold Climate Heat Pumps," U.S. Department of Energy, November 1, 2021, https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-partner-heating-industry-improve-performance-and-energy-efficiency-cold-climate-heat.

The manufacturers Midea America and Gradient were awarded contracts to manufacture 30,000 pumps for NYCHA, and thus far, 150 have been installed at Woodside Houses in Queens and 5,000 more have been purchased for future installations.[27] More is expected to come given the city has set a goal of expanding CH4A to reach more than 10,000 NYCHA apartments by 2030, and the State is likely to open program participation to other housing portfolios. NYCHA alone will invest $250 million in heat pump purchases, installation, and related green improvements to building weatherization and hot water systems. This will be done in part by NYCHA reallocating a portion of its capital budget dedicated to boiler replacements to heat pump procurement. NYSERDA grants also helped fund a demonstration pilot, measurement and verification of the heat pump prototype's real-world performance, and also paid for a portion of the initial batch of heat pumps purchased.

NYCHA is now using a similar strategy to produce energy-efficient stoves suitable for its older buildings that utilize standard electrical outlets, launching a **120V Induction Stove Challenge** in 2023. The manufacturer Copper Stoves was selected after a competitive process, and a $32 million commitment to develop, pilot, and produce these stoves for NYCHA's portfolio was announced in 2025.[28] Copper will manufacture 100 stoves to be piloted in NYCHA buildings, and the goal is for the stoves to be suitable for both NYCHA and the broader national building sector. Similar to the demand aggregation strategy for window heat pumps, more than 12 organizations, representing over 300,000 housing units, have already indicated their interest in this product.[29] Over the course of these innovation challenges, NYCHA resident input was gathered to inform equipment specifications and prototype design. The challenges were also structured so that manufacturers could not move beyond the pilot phase without meeting a minimum threshold of positive resident feedback. The in-house expertise of NYCHA's sustainability program managers and their deep industry relationships were critical in executing these

[27] New York City, Office of the Mayor, "Mayor Mamdani, NYCHA Announce $38.4 Million Investment to Bring Clean, Reliable Heat Pumps to Beach 41st Street Houses," The Official Website of the City of New York, February 4, 2026, https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/02/mayor-mamdani—nycha-announce—38-4-million-investment-to-bring-.

[28] New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, "$32 Million Commitment Announced to Electrify Cooking Appliances in NYCHA Buildings Through Induction Stove Challenge," November 13, 2025, https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2025-Announcements/2025-11-13-NYPA-NYCHA-and-NYSERDA-Announce-32-Million-Commitment-to-Electrify-Cooking-Appliances.

[29] New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, "$32 Million Commitment Announced to Electrify Cooking Appliances in NYCHA Buildings Through Induction Stove Challenge."

challenges, as well as NYCHA's institutional familiarity with coordinating innovative building technology pilots with the private sector.[30]

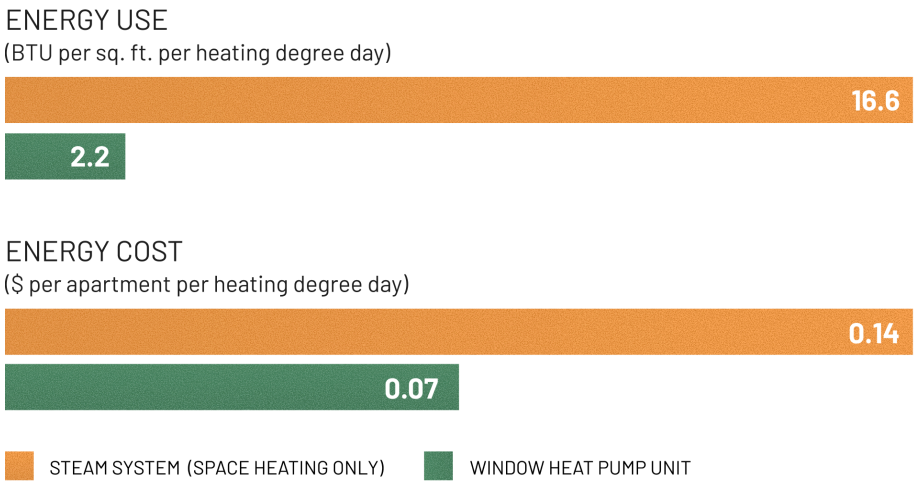
The impact: immediate relief and green benefits

To ensure real-world feasibility and resident input, the Clean Heat for All Challenge set up a demonstration project inside a NYCHA building. From 2023 to 2024, 72 heat pumps were installed in 24 units of NYCHA's Woodside Houses and evaluated against a variety of metrics.[31] The results of the pilot found great success. From a technical and operational standpoint, the new heat pumps were simple to install, provided consistent and comfortable temperatures in summer and winter, and achieved major reductions in both energy use and cost. The pilot found 87 percent reductions in energy use and 50 percent reductions in energy cost compared to the performance of the building's existing heating system. Equally important, residents provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 89 percent reporting satisfaction, 93 percent reporting the units kept them warm during the winter "just right," and two thirds indicating the unit "looks great."

[30] New York City Housing Authority, "The Fund For Public Housing Announces Inaugural NYCHA Tech Pilots Winners," October 16, 2017, https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2017/tech-winners-20171016.page.

[31] Building Energy Exchange, "How & When? Clean Heat and Climate-Friendly Homes for All."

NYCHA installed 72 heat pumps in 24 units of its Woodside Houses, reducing energy use by 87% and costs by 50%.



Source: Climate and Community Institute, adapted from Building Energy Exchange.[32] **Note**: Results are based on average results from both heat pump manufacturers.

The new heat pumps are a win–win for both NYCHA and residents. Given that NYCHA is responsible for resident energy costs, it is poised to capture long-term operational savings. The residents benefit from improved thermal comfort; access to efficient cooling; ability to control their own thermostats; and improved indoor air circulation, filtration, and quality. As deployment continues, NYCHA's operations team will incorporate lessons from ongoing data collection and improve its efficiency at scaling up this effort across NYCHA's portfolio of buildings. With the manufacturers committed to making product improvements based on performance results for units already deployed, these newly developed heat pumps will be an important tool to expand heat pump adoption and building decarbonization throughout multifamily buildings in NYC and nationwide.

[32] Building Energy Exchange, "How & When? Clean Heat and Climate-Friendly Homes for All," 22.

Other Public Housing Authorities are following suit

New York is making strides with the Clean Heat for All pilot and NYCHA's sustainability plan to scale up its public housing greening initiative, but PHAs across the country are also advancing several exciting efforts:

1. The **Boston Housing Authority** took similar steps to NYCHA in 2025 by installing high-efficiency window-mounted heat pumps to replace aging electric resistance heating in 100 units in a development home for seniors and adults with disabilities.[33]
2. **Rhode Island** launched the Public Developer Program in 2026 to expand affordable housing supply and kickstart new construction driven by PHAs. The program guidelines explicitly prioritize green and sustainable building practices.[34]
3. In **Chicago**, focus groups with public housing residents indicated residents were acutely aware of the environmental hazards within their homes and were overwhelmingly receptive to electrification and associated upgrades as a lasting solution to recurring dangerous housing deficiencies.[35] The Chicago Housing Authority is piloting several building electrification pilots and launched a Healthy Homes Division in 2025.[36]

[33] Boston Housing Authority, "Boston Housing Authority Celebrates Energy Savings, Climate Leadership and Resident Comfort with Innovative Heat Pump Installation at Hassan Apartments," November 7, 2025, https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/News/Boston-Housing-Authority-celebrates-energy-savings.aspx.

[34] "Public Developer Program," State of Rhode Island Executive Office of Housing, accessed March 26, 2026, https://housing.ri.gov/programs/public-developer-program.

[35] Public Health Law Center, "Petition for Rulemaking to Electrify and Weatherize Public Housing and Housing under HTF, HOME, and CDBG," October 25, 2022, https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/electrify-weatherize-public-housing-petition.pdf.

[36] Chicago Housing Authority, "CHA Joins the Better Climate Challenge," July 12, 2023, https://www.thecha.org/news/cha-joins-better-climate-challenge; Chicago Housing Authority, "CHA Launches New Healthy Homes Division," June 6, 2025, https://www.thecha.org/news/cha-launches-new-healthy-homes-division.

The Green New Deal for Public Housing would bring green housing to urban, rural, and suburban communities nationwide

New York City has made impressive strides with its embrace of technological innovation in service of greening public housing and delivering material benefits to the working class. As the largest PHA in the country by far, NYCHA can move manufacturers via the scale of its procurements, and it benefits from substantial in-house expertise and capacity to launch design challenges and similar novel programs. Building off the success of the Clean Heat for All Challenge, in 2024, NYSERDA announced a $10 million competitive program to fund additional product development of innovative, cold-climate heat pumps to replace less efficient air conditioners and "field demonstrations of cold-climate heat pumps in multifamily, senior living and hospitality buildings."[37] Smaller PHAs may have difficulty executing similar pilots, due to limited internal capacity and more limited procurement scale. Responding to the scarce federal funding landscape, PHAs have increasingly turned toward alternative financing pathways to preserve their housing stock, through programs like the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) and Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT), which have triggered debates over the potential privatization of public housing.[38] Nevertheless, other PHAs can still follow NYCHA's lead on green industrial policy, rebuilding the public sector by hiring in-house sustainability champions on staff to move this work forward. The operational

[37] New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, "$10 Million Is Now Available To Advance Clean Heating and Cooling Technology for Large Buildings," November 27, 2024, https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Newsroom/2024-Announcements/2024-11-27-Governor-Hochul-Announces-10-Million-Now-Available-To-Advance-Clean-Heating.

[38] Josh Cohen, "Does RAD Privatize Public Housing?," *Shelterforce*, February 10, 2022, https://shelterforce.org/2022/02/10/is-hud-using-rad-to-privatize-public-housing/.

savings from successfully implemented energy efficiency and decarbonization initiatives—and the in-house capacity to apply for external grants—could cover these staffing investments many times over while providing direct benefits to residents.

A Green New Deal for Public Housing would fundamentally change this calculus by supercharging the resources available for greening and preserving the United States's shrinking stock of public housing. Additionally, a Green New Deal for Public Housing would put the public sector in the lead position of transforming the market for building decarbonization—creating a conducive environment for the public and private sector to work together to develop, evaluate, and install green technologies at scale while improving residents' health and quality of life. Efforts to produce new types of induction stoves, heat pumps, and low-cost energy-efficient building materials could transform the housing market at large, including single-family homes. The proposal would also help grow the required green building workforce, such as practitioners skilled in building to passive house standards, which may be lacking in certain communities. A Green New Deal for Public Housing would build on successful models in the United States and abroad that have leveraged investments in public housing to accelerate decarbonization of the building sector.[39] These types of green, economic, and populist policies flip the script of green public goods trickling down from the rich to the working class. Instead, public provisioning and strategic coordination of the building sectors can lead the way of climate action that both cuts emissions and delivers housing affordability.

[39] Daniel Aldana Cohen, Ruthy Gourevitch, and Gianpaolo Baiocchi, "Green Social Housing: Lessons from Vienna," Climate and Community Institute, June 2025, https://climateandcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Green-Social-Housing_Lessons-from-Vienna_report.pdf.