

SAMPLE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE |

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES SERVE TWO PURPOSES:

- I. Collect information about candidates' views for voters.
- II. Inform candidates about the range of issues that are important to your organization.

The candidate questionnaire uses open-ended questions to solicit the candidate's opinions on a range of important issues.

The questionnaire should go to all candidates and it should be publicly posted. Provide clear instructions to candidates including a word limit, a clear deadline, and instructions for how to submit. Give candidates a reasonable amount of time to respond and be sure to keep the survey brief to ensure a good response rate.

Develop a plan for how the answers will be shared, and indicate to candidates how you will distribute their answers. Do not modify candidate responses in any way.

Remind candidates ahead of the deadline to submit their responses—and let them know that "Did not respond" will be used if no response is received. It is completely acceptable to list "Did not respond" for their responses.

Offer the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire to **all** candidates. This is important to ensuring that your efforts are nonpartisan.

SAMPLE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE |

[Print on Organization's Letterhead]

[Date]

Re: 2022 Affordable Housing Election Questionnaire

Dear [Name]:

Today, the affordable housing crisis continues to reach new heights. In our [city/county/state], [#] renters are cost-burdened and [#] people experience homelessness on the average night. Among those hardest-hit are low-income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness. These families must make desperate tradeoffs between keeping a roof over their heads and buying food or medicine. Recent reports show that nearly every community in our nation—in urban, rural, and suburban areas alike—is impacted.

As a nominee for [Elected Office], [Organization Name] invites you to complete the attached **2022 Election Questionnaire** on key affordable housing issues. The purpose of this questionnaire is to educate and inform communities on each candidate's stance on the housing issues directly impacting them. *It is not meant to serve as an endorsement of/for any particular candidate and/or political party.* All major nominees for [Elected Office]—regardless of party affiliation—have been invited to complete the questionnaire.

In [recent polling](#) by NLIHC's Opportunity Starts at Home campaign, 74% of respondents supported policies that expand investments in housing development programs that will build more housing units that are affordable for low-income people. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents said it was important to them personally that their elected officials work to make sure there is enough affordable housing available. For many Americans, this issue is personal: nearly 6 in 10 respondents said that the amount they pay for housing is a concern.

Please send your completed questionnaire to [Point of Contact] at [Email] by [Date]. Upon receipt, we will post your response on our websites at [website] and use social media to connect the public to your completed questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

2022 ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

[Questions for ALL candidates; include local data where available]

1. The Availability of Affordable Housing

46 percent of U.S. renter households are cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Nearly one-quarter are severely cost-burdened and pay at least half their income on rent. In our [state/county/city], [#] renters are cost-burdened, and [#] pay more than half of their monthly income on rent. The lack of supply—especially for those with the lowest incomes—has only made this problem worse. **What would you do to encourage the production of more affordable homes for these families?**

2. Mobility and Discrimination

According to research from Raj Chetty, moving a poor child out of a high-poverty community to a more affluent community increases access to college, decreases their chances of becoming a single parent, and increases future earnings. Despite the benefits, many low-income families face barriers to moving to high-opportunity areas, including discrimination based on source of income and lack of access to housing assistance. **What actions would you take to encourage mobility and stop source of income discrimination?**

3. Achieving Racial Equity

Because of centuries of structural racism and ongoing discrimination in the housing market, people of color are far more likely than white Americans to face evictions and experience homelessness in the United States today. **What is your plan to remedy these injustices and promote housing stability for communities of color?**

4. Housing Intersections

Having an accessible, affordable place to call home is critical to improving education, health, and economic outcomes. **What housing-based strategy would you use to address the education, health, transportation, and economic needs of low-income families?**

5. Homelessness

On any given night, more than half a million people are experiencing homelessness—sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

6. Housing Challenges In Rural America

Although millions of rural families have trouble paying their rent or mortgage, rural housing issues are often overlooked. Moreover, resources used by rural communities have been cut significantly. **How would you prioritize the housing needs of our rural communities?**

[Questions for federal candidates only]

7. Housing as a Safety Net Program

Unlike other federal safety net programs like Social Security and Medicare, federal affordable housing assistance is not guaranteed, even if a family qualifies for the program. Today, just one in four households that are eligible get the assistance they need. **What specifically will you do to expand access to this assistance?**

8. Legislative and Regulatory Changes to Federal Housing Programs

Several proposals to change federally assisted housing programs have been introduced over the past sessions of Congress. **How, if at all, would you propose to change federally assisted housing programs that serve low-income households, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Section 8 housing vouchers, and public housing?**

9. Preservation of Affordable Housing

The preservation of existing affordable housing—including public housing and developments receiving project-based rental assistance—is a critical and cost-effective component in addressing the housing crisis. Due to chronic underfunding, there is an estimated backlog of \$70 billion in deferred maintenance costs for public housing alone. Communities like [cities in the state] are in severe need of updates for public housing developments, as well as developments receiving project-based rental assistance. **What would be your plan to preserve this critical resource for the long-term?**

10. Permanent Housing Stability Solutions

Emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs established in COVID-19 relief legislation have provided necessary support to keep low-income renters stably housed through a time of crisis. Many low-income renters, however, were experiencing housing instability prior to the pandemic, and will once again struggle to pay their rent once emergency resources are no longer available. **What is your plan to enact permanent solutions that would be used to prevent evictions and homelessness in the way that ERA has done during the pandemic?**