SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION

San Diego Housing Commission 2026 Advocacy and Legislative Engagement Guide

October 2025

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Overview & Purpose

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) works to advance policies consistent with SDHC's vision, mission, purpose, core values and strategic priorities, as defined in SDHC's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030. The Strategic Plan was developed with the spirit of resiliency at its core, as SDHC faces fiscal uncertainty and transforms constraints into catalysts for innovation—all while focusing on the people who rely on SDHC daily for housing assistance. In a new and ever-changing environment with limited funding, SDHC is creating new rental homes that people can afford, preserving homes that are currently affordable, helping people stay in their homes, working to provide shelter for those who need it, and advocating for legislation to create more housing opportunities. The 2026 Advocacy and Legislative Engagement Guide supports SDHC's Strategic Initiative to leverage SDHC's prominence and expertise to shape the field of housing.

SDHC collaborates closely with local policymakers, municipal staff, and community partners to identify issues and shape proposed legislation that furthers our mission. The policy team actively engages in legislative and regulatory activities at the local, state, and federal levels, focusing on four key areas of programming to enhance the services provided to the individuals and families served by SDHC's programs:

- Production of Affordable Housing
- Preservation of Affordable Housing
- Sustaining Rental Assistance
- Homelessness Prevention & Best Practices in Addressing Homelessness

In addition to the four main policy priorities, the following policy considerations impact each policy priority and guide the work of the policy team:

- Addressing regulatory and programmatic barriers to housing
- Local, state and federal funding commitments
- Tenants' rights, eviction prevention, and anti-displacement
- Supporting solutions at the intersection between healthcare and homelessness

SDHC engages with elected leaders and officials at local, state and federal levels of government, as well as stakeholders, including SDHC clients, on policy initiatives.

We are committed to ensuring a compassionate, person-centered approach to SDHC's programs, policies, projects and activities and to serving our community impartially, fairly and without bias. We are also committed to ensuring compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and protections relative to nondiscrimination.

Policy Actions

1. Target key policy proposals for SDHC support positions, and advocate on behalf of SDHC priorities.

2. Work with SDHC leadership, policy makers, and community partners to develop and advocate for targeted budget requests and pilot programs based on strategic priorities. Monitor and advocate for ideal funding levels and favorable enabling language within the budget process.

3. Pursue committee testimony opportunities for SDHC leadership to share subject matter expertise and best practices at the local, state, and federal levels.

4. Increase engagement with the members of Congress, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) staff, the Governor's office, state legislators, and state agencies, including the California Debt Limit Allocation Committee (CDLAC), the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC), the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and others. Regularly meet with them to discuss and advance SDHC priorities.

5. Identify ally and industry organizations – including the affordable housing development community, homelessness and social services sector stakeholders, and community-based organizations – and expand advocacy partnerships to advance shared goals. Participate in local, statewide, and national advocacy campaigns that achieve and further SDHC priorities.

Policy Priorities Summary

1. Production of Affordable Housing
   - As a lender, Multifamily Housing Revenue Bond issuer, affordable housing property owner, administrator and monitoring agency of City of San Diego land use programs, SDHC has participated in the creation or preservation of more than 26,000 affordable housing units currently in service in the City of San Diego.

   - As housing challenges intensify across the region, SDHC is committed to identifying resources to create new housing opportunities. SDHC's path forward aligns the efforts of key SDHC divisions to meet urgent housing needs, protect vulnerable households, and ensure more people have access to a place to call home now and into the future.

2. Preservation of Affordable Housing
   - Preservation of the existing inventory of affordable rental housing is a critical part of a comprehensive strategy to address the housing affordability and homelessness crises, ensuring that affordable options remain available for residents who need them. SDHC's preservation study estimated that by 2040, 4,200 deed-restricted units may lose protections, and 9,250 naturally affordable homes will become unaffordable due to market pressures. Without intervention, 35% of all new production will simply replace units that have lost affordability.

   - SDHC continues to maintain the physical infrastructure of the more than 4,300 units within the SDHC portfolio, including SDHC's nonprofit affiliate, Housing Development Partners, to ensure the housing stock continues to provide safe, high-quality housing for our residents, identifying opportunities to inform capital improvement and replacement projects.

3. Sustaining Rental Assistance
   - Key to SDHC's mission to foster social and economic stability in the City of San Diego is the ability to provide rental assistance to approximately 17,000 families with low income, including vulnerable populations and those who formerly experienced homelessness. However, a significant increase in federal funding is needed to sustain rental assistance for the families SDHC currently serves, honor new project-based voucher commitments, and to select new applicant families currently on the waiting list.

4. Homelessness Prevention & Best Practices In Addressing Homelessness
   - SDHC remains deeply committed to addressing and preventing homelessness through evidence-based, person-centered solutions. We will continue to support the Community Action Plan on Homelessness for the City of San Diego through legislative advocacy at local, state and federal levels, with a strategic focus on initiatives that sustain or increase funding for homelessness services, expand access to critical services necessary for program clients' long-term stability, remove regulatory barriers that adversely impact access to resources, and encourage greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to effectively address homelessness and prevent housing instability.

   - SDHC continues to advocate for prevention resources in addition to crisis response interventions. Keeping someone in their home is one of the most effective and cost-efficient, person-centered ways to prevent and reduce homelessness. SDHC prioritizes homelessness prevention programs, which focus on sparing people the trauma of losing a home and keeps other limited emergency resources – like temporary shelter beds and housing assistance – available for people already experiencing homelessness.

Policy Priorities

1. **Production of Affordable Housing**
    a. Engage San Diego partners to raise awareness with state leaders of the impact competitive bonds are having on the supply of affordable housing.
        i. Advocate to extend the deadline to use recycled bonds and increase California's bond capacity.
        ii. Use Private Activity Bonds and allow for an allocation of Mortgage Credit Certificate Bonds to assist first-time homebuyers.
        iii. Encourage mixed-income housing developments through building incentives, reduced impact and local permitting fees for affordable housing, and an expansion of state and local real estate tax exemptions.
    b. Support state and federal legislation, regulations and resources that:
        i. Promote housing production within all communities of the City, as aligned with the most recent Housing Element and updated community plans.
        ii. Align Community Development Block Grant funding levels based on whether jurisdictions are increasing their housing production
        iii. Provide opportunities for increased densification of SDHC's real estate portfolio.
        iv. Increase the production of moderate- and middle-income housing through changes to building code standards and construction methods and provide more flexibility in the use of prefabricated and modular home construction and mass timber.
        v. Create supply-side resources for homeownership accessibility for households with low-, moderate-, and middle-incomes.
        vi. Increase the production of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) consistent with council priorities, including technical assistance, financing products, local zoning changes and construction methods.
        vii. Continue to support the use of public land for affordable housing development, including via new public-private partnerships, and identify funding to accelerate development.
        viii. Increase the feasibility of the co-location of childcare and affordable housing and protect and incentivize growth of childcare providers in the home-based setting.
        ix. Provide opportunities for fast-tracking design, approval, and inspection of utilities for affordable housing developments.
        x. Ensure timely utility hookups for affordable housing developments.
        xi. Expand the California Alternate Rates for Energy to all agency-owned and affiliate owned properties
        xii. Advance energy efficiency, electrification, and decarbonization in new and existing affordable housing, when feasible.
        xiii. Increase Low-Income Housing Tax Credit allocations to states not able to meet their housing production goals.

xiv. Create new sources of capital, including below-market interest rate loans, for affordable housing developments.
xv. Incentivize development near existing or planned mass transit, jobs, and within high resources areas
xvi. Increase the state cap for Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds and Mortgage Credit Certificate Bonds assisting first-time homebuyers.
xvii. Provide resources for permanent supportive housing production, and provide funding for comprehensive supportive services, including those related to veterans' affairs and behavioral health.
xviii. Allocate funding for the planning and construction of housing for active-duty military members, veterans, and their families on federally owned land.
xix. Allocate funding for the planning and construction of intensive/enhanced care managed housing for individuals who previously experienced homelessness with a need for specialized services and who are not able to thrive in an independent living environment.

c. Continue tracking and monitoring legislation, regulations, and resources related to:
    i. Regional Housing Finance Authorities or similar programs
    ii. Regional Housing Needs Determination methodology and allocation
    iii. Implementation of the new California Housing and Homelessness Agency

2. Preservation of Affordable Housing

a. Support legislation, regulations, and resources that:
    i. Preserve existing deed-restricted affordable housing and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH).
    ii. Provide tax relief, such as deferral or exemption from state and local real estate taxes, to assist property stabilization and preservation
    iii. Provide funding for the physical preservation of deed-restricted properties to perform adequate and timely capital replacement and capital improvements of building and property systems.
    iv. Provide financial and political incentives for the acquisition of apartment buildings for preservation.
    v. Increase the viability of nonprofit or municipal bonds to acquire new properties and preserve affordability covenants
b. Track and monitor legislation, regulations, and resources related to limiting or eliminating regulatory barriers to housing preservation, including reducing the costs associated with capital improvements and densification.
c. Monitor and advocate for maintaining and increasing funding and other federal resources for public housing, low-income housing, and NOAH preservation.

3. **Sustaining Rental Assistance**
    a. Support federal legislation that sustains and increases – and oppose attempts to decrease – funding to HUD, including to programs such as Community Development Block Grant, HOME, Emergency Solutions Grants, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, Special Purpose Vouchers, including Emergency Housing Vouchers, etc.
    b. Advocate for greater regulatory flexibility in housing voucher programs, allowing for modernization of practices leading to cost reductions, administrative efficiencies, and expansion of housing opportunities.
    c. Reduce HUD inspection delays by allowing units financed through other federal housing programs to automatically satisfy voucher inspection requirements.
    d. Support federal legislation, regulations, and resources that advance fair housing policies.
    e. Support conversion of the Youth Family Unification Program and Emergency Housing Voucher programs into permanent, non-time-limited models to ensure sustained housing stability for vulnerable populations
    f. Advocate for full administrative fee funding for public housing authorities and timely reimbursements through implementation of HUD's eVMS and HIP
    g. Support federal legislation that provides more ongoing resources for housing placement incentives and services, such as housing navigation, rental application fees, and security deposit assistance for Housing Choice Voucher households, especially for high-need or at-risk populations served with Special Purpose Vouchers.
    h. Advocate for the Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration program. This includes protections for MTW reserves from offsets, flexibility with public housing authority regionalization requirements to expand MTW flexibilities across a region, advocacy for continued flexibility that promotes the long-term sustainability of rental assistance programs, and the expansion of MTW flexibilities to other Public Housing Authorities.
    i. Increase workforce development and financial self-sufficiency funding. Monitor partnerships with state and federal funders, including workforce development funders and the U.S. Department of Labor, for opportunities for engagement, with a focus on funding to support work readiness, job training, job placement and financial literacy for SDHC's housing and homelessness program participants.
    j. Support legislation and funding that would provide shallow subsidies to prevent seniors, people with disabilities, families with children under age 18, individuals previously involved with the criminal justice system, and transition-age youth from experiencing homelessness.
    k. Advocate for retention of evidence-based Housing First principles and funding that supports outcomes-based housing programs.
    l. Support legislation and funding that provide resources and support for tenants, including:

i. Anti-displacement efforts
ii. Relocation assistance
iii. Legal education about housing law
iv. Legal representation and mediation for low-income tenants facing eviction
v. Landlord incentives and housing placement costs
vi. Tenant protection efforts, including assisting low-income tenants to eliminate disparate impact
vii. Housing placement to eliminate common barriers such as credit history, criminal background, and rental history criteria for low-income households seeking to rent in the private market

4. Homelessness Prevention & Best Practices in Addressing Homelessness

a. Advocate for federal legislation, regulations, and resources that:
   i. Promote permanent housing solutions, such as rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing, as essential interventions to address homelessness.
   ii. Support solutions at the intersection between health care and homelessness by targeting resources towards innovative programming.
   iii. Update HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula for Continuum of Care (CoC) funding so it is proportional based on local need and adequately supports provision of homelessness services in the City of San Diego.
b. Advocate for state legislation, regulations, and resources that:
   i. Create statewide housing stabilization and prevention programs to assist high rent-burdened households, prioritizing those most at risk of being evicted, such as households living on fixed incomes.
   ii. Emphasize homelessness prevention and rental subsidy programs prioritizing high-need jurisdictions with a proven record of getting relief to tenants and landlords.
   iii. Provide ongoing, dedicated state resources for homelessness, including, but not limited to, prevention, diversion, crisis response, and permanent housing solutions, such as rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.
   iv. Reduce regulatory barriers and enhance flexibility toward the creation and permitting of emergency housing interventions, including, but not limited to, non-congregate shelters, safe havens, bridge shelters, safe parking and safe storage programs.
   v. Address staffing challenges in the homelessness sector.
   vi. Address needs for data-sharing and cross-agency coordination of homelessness programs
c. Support efforts at the intersection of healthcare and homelessness that:
   i. Promote the retention and expansion of inpatient, outpatient, step-down, recuperative care, and long-term mental health facilities and

services, as well as ongoing resources to secure long-term stabilization.

ii. Maximize the use of evidence-based practices within Proposition 1 (Behavioral Health Services Act) funding in the San Diego region, including Homekey+.

iii. Enhance health outcomes for persons with mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) needs to facilitate transitions to permanent housing, including through California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM).

iv. Encourage community-based behavioral health service delivery models for individuals who frequently use emergency services.

v. Influence the expenditure of behavioral health dollars to counties, including increasing housing interventions for persons with high-barrier and long-term support needs (e.g., adult independent living care, board and care facilities).

d. Monitor legislation, regulations, and resources related to:

i. Implementation of Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court, as well as measures that reform the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, Laura's Law, and conservatorship laws to provide equitable and effective legal tools that allow local governments, health providers, and law enforcement to more effectively help people access behavioral health treatment.

ii. Administration of current and future Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Grants and the Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF), including flexibility allowing public housing authorities to administer and expend the funds.