



A home is the
foundation.

The National Housing Trust Fund Campaign
c/o National Low Income Housing Coalition
727 15th Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Ph: 202-662-1530 | Fx: 202-393-1973
www.nhtf.org

HOME IS THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

While it is perhaps an obvious conclusion, recent research confirms that housing policy has an important impact on public health.

A 2001 study of families on the voucher waiting list in Boston found that these families were exposed to significantly higher levels of health hazards in their current housing than the general population was, and that the most effective public health intervention would be to provide each household with a voucher to rent a home meeting housing quality standards.¹

In a study of infant mortality and low income mothers in Philadelphia, housing stability was found to be a statistically significant factor in determining if children lived past one year – more important than the mother’s health and social behaviors. Doubling up in someone else’s home or moving two or more times while pregnant made women twice as likely to lose a child to death before one year of age as women who were stably housed.²

More recent research on children demonstrates that those living in subsidized rental housing have better nutrition than children in similar families whose housing is not subsidized.³ And poor children who live in more affordable areas have better physical and emotional health outcomes than those who live in less affordable areas.⁴

This growing body of research provides important arguments for a renewed federal investment in housing for low income people.

¹ Sharfstein et al. (2001). Is child health at risk while families wait for housing voucher? *AJPH*, 91(8), 1191.

² Culhane and Elo. (2001). Social and behavioral determinants of infant mortality among low income women in Philadelphia. Unpublished manuscript.

³ Meyers, Alan, Diana Cutts, Deborah A. Frank, Suzette Levenson, Anne Skalicky, Timothy Heeren, John Cook, Carol Berkowitz, Maureen Black, Patrick Casey, and Nieves Zaldivar. (2005). Subsidized Housing and Children’s Nutritional Status: Data From a Multisite Surveillance Study. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 159: 551-556.

⁴ Harkness, Joseph and Sandra J. Newman. (2005). Housing Affordability and Children’s Well-Being: Evidence from the National Survey of America’s Families. *Housing Policy Debate* 16(2): 223-256.

Congress should create a **National Housing Trust Fund** to provide America's family with healthy homes. A National Housing Trust Fund would create a dedicated source of revenue to produce, rehabilitate and preserve 1.5 million affordable rental units for the lowest income people over 10 years.

- New housing built with Trust Fund dollars will meet basic health and safety standards.
- Allowing rehabilitation as an eligible activity will create further opportunities for safety by facilitating the repair of otherwise unhealthy or dangerous circumstances.
- Trust Fund dollars will be able to be used in conjunction with CDBG, lead-based paint reduction, or other related funds, furthering each program's effectiveness in creating healthier homes.

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

- Alliance for Healthy Homes (formerly the Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning)
- American Medical Student Association
- America's Health Together
- Catholic Health Association
- National AIDS Housing Coalition
- National Center for Healthy Housing

For more information, visit www.nhtf.org or call 202-662-1530.