

Neighborhood Homes Investment Act 2024 FAQs

What is the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act?

The Neighborhood Homes Investment Act (NHIA) is bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Todd Young (R-IN) in the Senate (S. 657) and Representatives Mike Kelly (R-PA) and John Larson (D-CT) in the House (H.R. 3940), that establishes a federal tax credit targeted to the new construction or substantial rehabilitation of affordable, owner-occupied housing located in distressed urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods. It would mobilize private investment to build and substantially rehabilitate 500,000 affordable homes for moderate- and middle-income homeowners over the next 10 years.

In many census tracts and rural areas, developers cannot sell homes for what it costs to construct or substantially rehabilitate them (known as the “value gap”). The NHIA tax credit would incentivize developers to construct new or substantially rehabilitate housing because it closes the value gap, up to 35 percent of eligible development costs. Individual homeowners also would be eligible to receive an NHIA tax credit to fund crucial repairs and rehabilitation to their primary residences.

State agencies would award the NHIA tax credits to project sponsors who would raise capital from investors to finance home building and substantial rehabilitation. Once a home is sold to an income-qualified owner-occupant, the investor would receive the one-year tax credit.

The program would require states to develop qualified allocation plans (QAPs) to determine and demonstrate how they would allocate the NHIA tax credits. Per the legislation, the QAP would include criteria pertaining to a neighborhood’s need for new or rehabilitated homes, neighborhood revitalization strategy and impact, sponsor capability, likely long-term homeownership sustainability, and any additional state-determined criteria (e.g., construction standards, developer fees). Additionally, 10 percent of each state’s allocations would be set aside for nonprofit sponsors. The QAP is subject to review after a public hearing and comment process, so it would reflect state and local priorities.

Where will the NHIA tax credit be used?

The NHIA tax credit is highly targeted to the single-family homeownership needs of the distressed neighborhoods and rural areas that most need it. Eligible neighborhoods must meet all three of the following tests:

- **Elevated poverty rates:** not less than 130 percent of the metropolitan rate where the property is located (150 percent of the state rate in non-metropolitan areas)

- **Lower incomes:** up to 80 percent of the metropolitan median income (100 percent of the state median income in non-metropolitan areas)
- **Modest home values:** below the metropolitan median home value (80 percent of the applicable median home price or below in non-metropolitan areas)

Based on these criteria, about 20 percent of all metropolitan census tracts and 25 percent of non-metropolitan census tracts in the country would be eligible. Maps of eligible NHIA communities in each state may be found [here](#).

In addition, states could use up to 20 percent of their tax credits for non-metro tracts with median incomes below the state median income to help longstanding homeowners substantially rehabilitate and remain in their homes. This limit would be increased to 40 percent for states that have both relatively high non-metro population shares and relatively few census tracts meeting the general standard (MT, ND, SD, VT, WY). NCSHA seeks greater flexibility for states to use up to 20 percent of their tax credits in any census tracts in their states.

What kind of housing would be improved or built with the NHIA tax credit?

One- to four-unit single-family properties, condominium units, and co-op units would be eligible for the NHIA tax credit. The program is flexible and can address the needs of older, existing housing in need of substantial rehab; vacant lots where in-fill homes can be built; or housing in such disrepair it needs to be torn down and rebuilt. In all cases, the NHIA tax credit would fill the value gap preventing developers from producing housing in the eligible areas.

The NHIA tax credit would help revitalize neighborhoods. Construction and rehabilitation improve housing conditions and increase occupancy, stabilizing neighborhoods and encouraging more investment, such as in additional housing, shops, and services, resulting in more vibrant and sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

Whom does the NHIA tax credit serve?

The NHIA tax credit program would directly serve low- and moderate-income households earning 140 percent of area median income (AMI) or less who are seeking to purchase affordable, entry-level homes and live in them for at least five years. Individual homeowners utilizing the credit to pay for repairs of their own homes could earn no more than 100 percent of AMI. If the homeowner sells or rents their home before they have lived in it for five years after using the credit, the homeowner must pay a penalty back to the state agency, which would be calculated as a declining percentage of the gain on the sale of the home (50 percent in Year 1...10 percent in Year 5).

The new or rehabilitated housing resulting from the NHIA tax credit is ideal for those purchasing their first homes, reducing the likelihood they will have surprise repair expenses in

their early years of homeownership (when homeowners are adjusting to the costs of homeownership), thereby contributing to more sustainable homeownership.

Why is the NHIA tax credit necessary?

New homes cannot be built, acquired, and rehabilitated if the post-development sales price doesn't cover development costs. This is the unfortunate situation in many distressed areas. The NHIA tax credit offsets the value gap and makes such development feasible.

Will the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act cause gentrification?

The NHIA tax credit is designed to protect against neighborhood gentrification. Eligible neighborhoods have median home values below the area median income, and an eligible homeowner or purchaser is limited to 140 percent of AMI. In addition, there is a cap on the price at which a home can be sold, which is four times AMI, and the eligible basis for tax credits is limited to 80 percent of the national median new home price.

For example, if the AMI is \$75,000, the maximum homeowner income would be \$105,000 and the maximum sales price of the home would be \$300,000. This should avoid gentrification.

How would the NHIA tax credit work?

States would allocate the tax credits on a competitive basis according to their publicly vetted and publicly available allocation plans.

The states would allocate only the NHIA tax credits reasonably needed to make a project financially feasible. After receiving an NHIA tax credit allocation, project sponsors would raise capital from investors and use it to develop or rehab the home or work with the builder and homeowners.

The NHIA tax credit covers the gap between the development cost and the home's sales price. For example:

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|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Property acquisition cost = | \$ 50,000 |
| Construction or rehab cost = | <u>\$150,000</u> |
| Total development cost = | \$200,000 |
| LESS: Sales price | - \$160,000 |
| NHIA tax credit = value gap | \$ 40,000 |

The NHIA tax credit is capped at 35 percent of the lessor of 1) the total development costs (acquisition, rehab, demolition, and construction) or 2) 80 percent of the national median sales price for new homes, which was \$434,700 in 2023. Additionally, eligible building acquisition costs are limited to 75 percent of rehab costs, and a minimum amount of \$20,000 per unit of rehab must be completed.

Individual homeowners would receive a tax credit for up to 50 percent of the costs associated with their home repairs/rehabilitation, with a maximum individual credit of \$50,000. Homeowners must earn at or below AMI to qualify.

Once a home is completed and inspected, it would be sold to an owner-occupant just like any other home would be: An income-eligible home buyer makes an offer, makes a down payment, and obtains a mortgage to cover the home's sales price.

How will the NHIA tax credit be allocated to the states?

The federal government will provide state housing finance agencies (HFAs) NHIA tax credit authority annually in an amount equal to the larger of \$7 per capita or \$9 million. Nationwide, the tax credits will total approximately \$2 billion annually.

Who will administer the NHIA tax credit?

State HFAs will administer the NHIA tax credit. HFAs are state-chartered authorities established to help meet the affordable housing needs of the residents of their states. Although they vary widely in characteristics, such as their relationship to state government, most HFAs are independent entities that operate under the direction of a board of directors appointed by the state's governor.

Who will oversee administration of the NHIA tax credit?

The U.S. Treasury Department, through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), will oversee the NHIA tax credit program at the federal level and will issue program guidance and regulations. In addition to IRS monitoring, state-level administration and private-sector due diligence — under threat of tax credit forfeiture (for sponsors/developers) and recapture (for homeowners) — eliminate the need for extensive federal involvement and bureaucratic regulations. This two-tiered oversight system is an essential element of the NHIA tax credit program.

What is the projected impact of the NHIA tax credit?

Assuming an average NHIA tax credit of \$40,000, the impact over 10 years would include:

- 500,000 homes built or substantially rehabilitated,
- \$125 billion of total development activity,
- 861,000 jobs in construction and construction-related industries,
- \$56 billion in wages and salaries, and
- \$28 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues and fees.

Would the NHIA tax credit leverage other funding?

Yes. A unique feature of the NHIA tax credit is its ability to leverage private equity, which investors would contribute up front in exchange for a credit against their federal tax liability the (one) year the property is sold to an income-eligible owner-occupant.

Would the private sector finance affordable housing without an incentive like the NHIA tax credit?

No, because the numbers simply do not work without the NHIA tax credit. No investor will spend more money to purchase a vacant lot/abandoned home/home in need of substantial rehab and invest the time and money to undertake the work than they can get back from that property's sale. It just doesn't make economic sense without the NHIA tax credit.

Who is supporting the NHIA tax credit?

The NHIA tax credit is supported by a broad coalition of 39 mostly national organizations, including NCSHA. The coalition also includes the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, National Community Stabilization Trust, Habitat for Humanity, the Housing Assistance Council, Mortgage Bankers Association, National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders, National Association of Real Estate Brokers, Urban League, National Fair Housing Alliance, National Housing Conference, Unidos US, and National Association of REALTORS.