

Insights and Analysis

As part of the strategic planning process, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (the Agency) underwent a communications analysis and survey of our stakeholders and consumers to better understand their needs and what information they are seeking from the Agency. We found that one area we were lacking in communications was policy-related content. With multiple policy analysts on staff, the decision was made to provide more policy-related content to our audiences to help keep them informed on affordable housing topics.

Enter the Policy Matters Blog campaign, developed in-house with a dedicated partnership between the Policy and Research business group and the Public Relations, Marketing and Communications business group. By revamping an existing policy blog effort that had stalled and dedicating a specific integrated communications campaign to promote it, the Policy Matters Blog campaign provided an avenue for renewed efforts to keep North Carolinians, legislators, researchers and other groups up to date on the latest research, data and policies impacting affordable housing in North Carolina.

Not only was the Policy Matters Blog and the comprehensive, multi-channel, integrated marketing campaign successful, but its approach and implementation are also replicable. This innovative campaign achieved our strategic objectives ahead of schedule, fully engaged our target audiences and accomplished measurable results that provided benefits that far outweighed the cost.

Objective

Our overall objective was to increase the readership of the Policy Matters Blog by 50% from in one year through the use of a focused and timely blog narrative backed up by a comprehensive marketing campaign, and increasing subscribers month over month.

Campaign Tactics

Our marketing tactics and strategy to meet the goals for the Policy Matters Blog included a four-tier approach to reach target audiences:

Tier 1: Transition from sporadic policy focused blogs to monthly blogs optimized for search engine optimization (SEO)

Tier 2: Utilize eblasts as a delivery medium

Tier 3: Drive subscriptions via social media, eblasts, cross promotion on other Agency communications and website buttons

Tier 4: Utilize the newsletter and blog analytics to shape decisions around topics, scheduling, timing, etc.

These tiers utilized the blog itself, a creative campaign, subscriber acquisition, SEO and website updates to drive traffic to the content.

The Blog

The heart of the Policy Matters Blog campaign is the blog itself. Kicking off the 2025 year with a new and improved blog released once per month, the Policy Matters Blog focuses on a mixture of housing

themes. To develop the editorial calendar, the Agency's Policy and Research team developed the following primary metrics for relevancy:

- Relation to housing activities undertaken by the Agency
- Element of timeliness and newsworthiness including data trends in research, questions from stakeholders and others
- North Carolina related and relevant
- Annual recurring themes of broad housing interest, e.g., Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies *The State of the Nation's Housing Report*
- Evergreen topics to explain key concepts or provide context for ongoing discourse

Once topics are selected, the author narrows the focus by asking what the audience needs to understand the most, what element is most relevant to the Agency's work or for North Carolina, what important information may be underemphasized elsewhere, what the key data points are and implications as a whole. Each blog is focused on takeaways rather than broad explanation.

A key element of the Policy Matters Blog is its use of data visualizations to help tell a story by utilizing a mix of internal and external resources for each post, including analysis from reputable data, academic research and trusted publications. The result is a blog that is informative, provides deeper analysis and understanding of complex topics and positions the Agency as an authority on affordable housing research and policy in North Carolina.

After development, the blog is posted on the Policy Matters Blog section of the Agency website, which serves as a hub for all of the campaign elements to point to.

Policy Matters Newsletter

The Policy Matters Newsletter serves as the cornerstone of the integrated marketing strategy for the Policy Matters Blog. Utilizing short narrative, keywords and branded imagery, it serves as a vehicle for communicating the top line findings and insights from the blog accessible to a broad audience.

The newsletter focuses on an approachable tone, strong visual design and accessible content, elevating policy communications from the Agency beyond its traditional formats and to new audiences, ensuring critical information is available, accessible and compelling. Each newsletter features links to additional internal or external reports and resources that are relevant to the blog topic or the Agency's work in general.

As part of the Agency's larger integrated marketing strategies, the newsletter plays a pivotal role in reinforcing the mission of the Agency and expanding its reach. By highlighting real-world data, amplifying research and driving readers to additional resources, the Policy Matters Newsletter not only informs but inspires action. Its consistent performance and growing audience demonstrate its effectiveness as a key communications tool that strengthens transparency, builds trust and advances affordable housing in North Carolina.

Subscriber Acquisition

Prior to this campaign's launch, the Policy Matters Blog was only promoted when it was published (an average of six times per year) via the website, social media and eblast. The incorporation of the

newsletter allowed the Agency to acquire subscribers who were interested in the content and wanted to receive it directly, packaging the blog more holistically and providing a promotion of the blog along with serving an editorial function by elevating other research and resources.

The Agency team led with an opt-in subscriber acquisition campaign utilizing a subscription form via Mailchimp, our chosen e-newsletter platform. The subscriber base continues to grow through action-oriented social media posts, cross communicating throughout other Agency platforms like the Home Matters Newsletter and Housing Impacts Newsletter and other efforts.

Search Engine and AI Optimization

The team performed keyword research at regular intervals to ensure that the blogs, graphics, website and other digital items had a strong foundation to target, and we continued to expand and refresh keywords regularly. In addition to writing for search engines, the Agency also writes for AI as it continues to expand as a way for audiences to find information on the internet.

Social Campaign

We used social media to enhance credibility and online presence of the Policy Matters Blog and Newsletter. As a new product, it was important to promote brand consistency on multiple platforms. We utilized Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram the most to market this product.

Budget

The Policy Matters Blog and campaign did not cost any additional dollars, as it applied platforms already in use by the Agency for other purposes. Employing existing resources kept financial costs flat, while personnel costs were minimized by working the blog, newsletter and subsequent campaign into existing workloads.

Evaluation and Results

The variety of our campaign tactics necessitated a need for the use of many key performance indicators. We measured success of the Policy Matters Blog and the campaign with KPIs including:

- Total subscribers: 337 (24% increase YTD)
- Open rate: 42.3% (in line with industry standard of 43.4%)
- Clicks: 11% (above industry standard of 8.8%)
- Total reads in 2025: 15,664 (2024 total reads 6,886)

In the entire year before the project began, the Policy Matters Blog had 6,886 views. By the end of 2025, readership of the Policy Matters Blog had grown to 15,664 views, far surpassing the 50% threshold for success that the team had set upon launch.

Most importantly, the data shows that the Policy Matters doesn't just provide content, but the audience engages with it as well. Open rates and click through rates meet or exceed the industry standard for our sector, indicating that the audience was not just interested, but involved.

North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
Policy Matters: Policy Blog Campaign
Communications: Integrated Campaign

Visual Aids

Social Media Post Promoting Subscription

**NCHFA**
6,932 followers
5mo • 

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Stay in the know with exclusive insights, the latest on housing policies and much more.

Sign up for our Policy Matters newsletter today! <https://ow.ly/bPwY50X9Mas>



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1 repost

  Like  Comment  Repost

North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
Policy Matters: Policy Blog Campaign
Communications: Integrated Campaign

Social Media Posts Promoting Blogs and Eblasts

NCHFA
6,932 followers
2mo • 🌐

Want a clearer picture of housing affordability in North Carolina?

This list highlights 10 trusted resources that explain the forces behind today's housing costs. <https://ow.ly/QmRw50XU4PE>

Policy Matters Blog



10 MUST-KNOW HOUSING AFFORDABILITY RESOURCES FOR NORTH CAROLINA

Kim Gore and 14 others • 1 comment • 5 reposts

Like Comment Repost

NCHFA
6,932 followers
3mo • 🌐

From roof repairs to accessibility upgrades, the Urgent Repair Program (URP) helps keep families safe and communities strong.

Learn more about how URP makes a lasting impact in our Policy Matters Blog: <https://ow.ly/1E8650XtC3W>

Policy Matters Blog



HELPING NORTH CAROLINIANS STAY SAFE AT HOME: INSIDE THE URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM

11 • 1 comment • 1 repost

Like Comment Repost

NCHFA
6,932 followers
6mo • 🌐

Housing costs continue to rise, making it harder for families to find stability.

The 2024 State of the Nation's Housing report shows record highs for home prices, rent and homelessness nationwide.

Read our latest Policy Matters Blog to see how these trends impact North Carolina: <https://ow.ly/o0hp50WRPMT>

Policy Matters Blog



NEW REPORT ON THE US HOUSING MARKET FINDS RECORD NUMBERS ACROSS THREE KEY METRICS

7 • 3 reposts

NC Housing Finance Agency @nchousingbuilds • Nov 8, 2025

While [#homelessness](#) is rising across [#NorthCarolina](#), fewer [#veterans](#) are without shelter than at almost any point in the last 20 years.

Read more in our Policy Matters Blog: ow.ly/mrtv50XopeN

And don't forget to subscribe: ow.ly/sMU650XopeM

Policy Matters Blog



VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IS DECREASING IN NORTH CAROLINA

1 • 1 • 26

North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
Policy Matters: Policy Blog Campaign
Communications: Integrated Campaign

Policy Matters Newsletter Examples



Policy Matters

Research, Reports and Trends on Affordable Housing



Severe Housing Affordability Challenges Worsen for Many North Carolinians.

More North Carolinians are facing severe housing cost burdens, spending over half their income on housing each month.

What happens when even modest housing slips out of reach for working families, older adults, people with disabilities and others across North Carolina living on limited incomes?

Skyrocketing rents and a shortage of affordable homes are making it harder than ever for North Carolinians to find a place they can afford. For many, the gap between income and housing costs is growing wider by the day.

This month's blog takes a closer look at the worsening affordability crisis in North Carolina and what it means for the people and communities we serve.

[Read the Latest Blog](#)

Dig Deeper into the Challenges and Opportunities in Affordable Housing:



May is Affordable Housing Month!
Check out past Policy Matters blogs for data, research and information on pressing issues affecting access to affordable housing across North Carolina.

[Read More](#)



"Deteriorating Rental Affordability," a research brief from the Joint Center for Housing Studies, details rising rates of cost burden and severe cost burden for renters across the US.

[Read More](#)



New research published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond quantifies Hurricane Helene's impact on housing affordability and availability in Western North Carolina.

[Read More](#)





Policy Matters

Research, Reports and Trends on Affordable Housing



From Complicated Data to Actionable Insights: NC Launches New Housing Data Visualization Tool

Housing data is now easier to access and analyze across all 100 counties.

To help policymakers, housing professionals and other stakeholders make data-driven decisions, the NC Housing Finance Agency has launched the NC Housing Snapshot—an interactive, online tool that brings together key housing data for all 100 counties. Explore trends in affordability, supply and demand and demographics through customizable maps and dashboards designed to turn data into actionable insights.

Learn more about the NC Housing Snapshot in our Policy Matters Blog.

[Read the Latest Blog](#)

Resources on Keeping Housing Affordable:



30 Years Later: New Research on Trends in LIHTC Affordability Exploration. This recent Agency publication explores trends in the expiration of affordability requirements for the state's Housing Credit properties.

[Read More](#)



NOAA Story Map "Helene In Southern Appalachia": This story map by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides an event analysis of Hurricane Helene, one year after the storm.

[Read More](#)



Data from the NC Rural Center: Complementary to the Housing Snapshot's housing information, this resource includes information about financial stability, education, employment and health for each county in NC.

[Read More](#)

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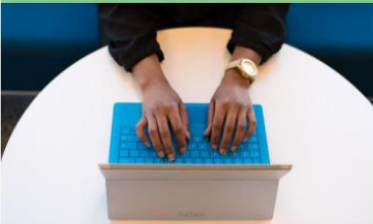
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<https://www.nchfa.com/news/policy-matters-blog/new-data-new-insights-nc-housing-snapshot-updated-latest-data>

<https://www.nchfa.com/news/policy-matters-blog/complicated-data-actionable-insights-nc-launches-new-housing-data-visualization-tool>

<https://www.nchfa.com/news/policy-matters-blog/recent-research-finds-rising-down-payments%E2%80%94and-need-assistance>