



As the city, state, and nation face one of the greatest challenges of our time, the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to make sure the most impacted and most vulnerable communities, particularly low-income people, people of color, the elderly, LGBTQ individuals, and those living with disabilities, are not literally left out in the cold. And that all people, regardless of immigration status, country of origin, or language have access to safe, quality, energy efficient, and affordable housing.

**We need — now more than ever — a Buffalo Homes Guarantee!**

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### **1. Right to Good Cause Eviction**

Thousands of people, mostly low-income people in the city of Buffalo, lose their homes every year because landlords put profit margins ahead of people's basic right to housing. We need Good Cause Eviction in the city in order to protect tenants from unjustly being thrown out of their homes and into the streets.

### **2. Right to Timely Repairs**

Every tenant in the city has the right to timely repairs to their home, and without retaliation from their landlord. Too often, tenants are met with rent increases instead of the repairs that they need to live comfortably and sustainably.

### **3. Right to Language Access In & Out of City Housing Court**

There are currently almost 100,000 residents in the city of Buffalo who speak over 60 languages. Language access should not be an afterthought, rather prioritized and fully funded. Every tenant who enters Buffalo City Housing Court should be able to be understood as well as understand what exactly is taking place and be able to self-advocate as a result of interpretation and translation provisions.

### **4. Right to Know Who Owns the Building**

Many tenants in the city of Buffalo do not know who their actual landlord is. There are hundreds of properties in the city run by property management companies who have their headquarters in Buffalo and beyond. The management companies serve as intermediaries for landlords that live outside of the greater Buffalo-Niagara area, including out of this country. There needs to be more

transparency and clarity for all tenants. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed this, as tenants struggle to pay their rent and don't know who to talk with in order to seek rent relief.

### **5. Right to Legal Counsel in Buffalo City Housing Court**

Every tenant in the city of Buffalo needs and deserves the right and access to proper legal and housing court professional representation. Nobody should face losing their housing on their own.

### **6. Right to Housing Stability**

Every tenant in the city of Buffalo needs housing stability. This means that our most vulnerable communities – particularly low-income tenants, the elderly, people of color, domestic violence survivors, members of the LGBTQ community, those living with disabilities, and those facing emergency situations, such as fires, must have immediate access to safe, quality, and permanently affordable housing. All people, regardless of immigration status, country of origin, or language should have a right to housing stability.

### **7. Right to First Refusal & Right to Return**

Buffalo has experienced an unprecedented amount of investment in the past decade due to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Buffalo Billion and other economic development programs. This has caused Buffalo to rapidly gentrify and created mass speculation and the further commodification of housing. In order to allow long-time residents, especially low-income tenants and those from vulnerable communities, the ability to remain in their homes, the City of Buffalo must institute a Right to First Refusal policy for tenants to purchase their rental housing, in tandem with the Right to Return for those who have already been displaced from their communities

### **8. Right to Rent Stabilization**

There is no other way to say it: The rent is too damn high in Buffalo. Similar to places like New York City, we need laws that ensure a specified number of apartment units are rent controlled to prevent gentrification and displacement, which are already having a devastating effect on the city

### **9. Right to Representation Through an Advocate**

We need to create an office of "Tenant Advocate" in the city of Buffalo. The Tenant Advocate would be a paid position, with a yearly funded staff and budget. The Tenant Advocate and their office would be empowered to look through all inquiries of potential evictions in the Buffalo to ensure that every tenant is given proper and legal due process, and that no tenant in Buffalo is unjustly evicted

### **10. Right to an Affordable Housing Fund**

There should be a \$1 million revolving rent loan fund in the city of Buffalo dedicated to offering grants and low or no-interest loans to city tenants from our most vulnerable communities.