



**PENNSYLVANIA
STANDS UP**

Whole Home Repairs

Winning the Campaign to Improve

Housing Quality in Pennsylvania

November 2024





Dēmos is a non-profit public policy organization working to build a just, inclusive, multiracial democracy and economy. We work hand in hand to build power with and for Black and brown communities, forging strategic alliances with grassroots and state-based organizations.

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At Pennsylvania Stands Up, we organize for power. Across race, place, and generation, we are building a Pennsylvania that works for all of us.

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Introduction

On March 11, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed the *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)*, a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This historic legislation authorized the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program, which provided state, local, tribal, and territorial governments with \$350 billion in flexible funding to replace lost revenue, respond to the pandemic's economic and health impacts, and invest in critical infrastructure.¹

In Pennsylvania, community organizers, housing and environmental justice advocates, and elected officials saw this influx of resources as an opportunity to address the state's ongoing housing crisis. This coalition created a campaign rooted in environmental and economic justice to fight for weatherized, green, and affordable housing. Through strategic communication and organizing, the **Whole Home Repairs Campaign** developed broad-based, bipartisan support for a statewide program to help improve housing quality through home repairs. A little more than a year after they began, they secured \$125 million to provide funding directly to low-income Pennsylvania residents for home repair and weatherization.

The success of the Whole Home Repairs Campaign teaches us two powerful lessons. First, addressing the housing crisis will require multiple solutions, including improving housing quality. Home repair programs can be critical to increasing the supply of quality housing in our communities.

The campaign also illustrates how organizing and community-involved decision-making can steer public investments toward community needs. Grassroots organizations were at the table, and lawmakers listened. As a result, Pennsylvanian families have another valuable public resource for supporting their health and economic security.

The Whole Home Repairs Campaign illustrates how organizing and community-involved decision-making can steer public investments toward community needs.



The Problem:

Many Pennsylvanian Homeowners Struggle to Afford the Costly Home Repairs that Can Improve Housing Quality

Like the rest of the country, Pennsylvania faces a housing crisis. While affordability often dominates housing discussions, housing quality is also crucial to meeting housing needs in the Commonwealth.² While data on housing quality in Pennsylvania is limited, research suggests that thousands of residents live in inadequate housing with issues related to electric wiring, heating, plumbing, and, most commonly, leaks and mold.³ Pennsylvania residents face risks to their health, economic security, and general well-being without critical home repairs, upgrades, and weatherization that can improve the quality of existing homes.⁴

Home disrepair undermines households' health and safety.

Poor housing quality is linked to physical and mental health issues. For example, research links respiratory issues to poor ventilation, lead, and mold in homes.⁵ Children are particularly vulnerable to poor housing conditions; home pollutants, such as lead and mold, can have long-term and severe impacts on their health and development.⁶ Mental health is also linked to housing quality. A 2011 study found that, for low-income urban women with children, housing disrepair is associated with immediate psychological distress.⁷

Neglected home repairs may cost households more in the long run, undermining their economic security.

Without needed home repairs and upgrades, such as fixing a leaking roof or faulty plumbing, households may experience more costly, extensive repairs down the line.⁸ Repairs can also impact households' monthly expenses. According to the Department of Energy, heating and cooling costs account for 43 percent of a household's utility bill nationwide, and 47 percent in Pennsylvania.⁹ Repairs and upgrades to these systems could significantly cut down utility costs.¹⁰ This may be particularly true for Black homeowners who live in inadequate housing; they bear higher utility costs than their white counterparts and are more likely to receive a utility shut-off notice due to inability to pay.¹¹

Disrepair may contribute to displacement

Homeowners who cannot afford repairs may opt to sell their homes to large institutional investors, who can more easily afford to make needed repairs and upgrades.¹² These investors often sell or rent repaired homes at a much higher cost, driving up housing costs and potentially displacing low-income residents.¹³ Pennsylvania elected officials and their staffs have noted that real estate investors target low-income residents using "Homes for Cash" programs in the state:

[Residents] are being bombarded with the "Cash for Homes" people, and [think it's] the best option to go with . . . [Residents need] a \$10,000 repair or something, and they're offering [them] \$90,000, and that sounds great. But what it means is you're being displaced from your neighborhood, and then those houses are being flipped . . . [This creates] this cycle of un-affordability and displacement.¹⁴

Weatherization and repairs are critical to helping households endure the effects of climate change.¹⁵

Many homes, especially older homes, were not built to withstand the increasing impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, rising sea levels, or extreme weather events.¹⁶ By 2050, Pennsylvania residents will experience 37 extreme heat days with temperatures over 90 degrees; twenty years ago, the state averaged five days a year.¹⁷ Households with inadequate cooling systems will become increasingly vulnerable to heat-related illness and death.¹⁸ Similarly, the state has seen significant increases in precipitation levels due to climate change.¹⁹ With heavier rains comes increased flooding, leaks, and toxic mold that require repairs.²⁰

Pennsylvania's aging housing stock likely contributes to a high need for costly home repairs and weatherization, especially for vulnerable households. Older homes generally require more repairs. In 2021, an estimated 45 percent of homes nationwide built before 1940 needed repair, compared to only 26 percent of homes built after 1999.²¹ Pennsylvania homes are among the oldest in the country. In 2021, the median age of Pennsylvania homes was 57, and nearly a quarter of homes were built before 1940.²² In 2021, in the Philadelphia, Camden, and Wilmington areas, 38 percent of homes needed repair.²³

National data also suggests that home repair needs in Pennsylvania are higher for low-income households, Black and brown households, and households with children.²⁴ Nationally, in 2021, an estimated 40 percent of households with incomes below the federal poverty level needed home repairs, compared to 33 percent of households with incomes 200 percent of the poverty level or higher.²⁵ Households of color may similarly face higher need. Nationally, an estimated 40 percent of Black households, 38 percent of Hispanic or Latino households, and 48 percent of Native American households had home repair needs, compared to 33 percent of white households.²⁶ Households with children also had higher rates of need for home repair nationally.²⁷

Older homes may also mean costlier repairs for Pennsylvania residents. Nationally, repair costs for homes built before 1940 average about \$1,000 more than those built after 1999.²⁸ In 2021, aggregate repair costs were estimated at \$3.7 billion in the Philadelphia, Camden, and Wilmington areas.²⁹ Home repair costs in this area averaged \$3,942.³⁰ The average repair costs for households of color and households with children are hundreds more than for their counterparts.³¹

Many Pennsylvania homeowners cannot afford these costly home repairs and face inadequate external financial support options. For example, a \$3,942 home repair in 2021 in Philadelphia would represent nearly 20 percent of the yearly income for a three-person family at the federal poverty guideline that year.³² Even for households bringing in the state's median income in 2021, repair costs would amount to more than half of their monthly income.³³ As activist and Director of Climate Justice at POWER Interfaith, Rabbi Julie Greenberg, observed, "A lot of times, there are people who own the homes but have no resource base to keep the home repaired and livable. And certainly not weatherized or have extra resources for energy transition. So, it's really, really challenging."³⁴ Jamir Hubbard, Climate Justice & Jobs Organizer at POWER Interfaith, added, "With food and other prices going up, it's really hard to [try] to figure out which bill you're [not going to pay] to try to stop the water from dripping on your head."³⁵

Taking on debt to pay for home repairs may not be possible for many homeowners, especially low-income and Black and brown households. In 2022, an estimated 29 percent of all applicants in Pennsylvania were denied home repair loans.³⁶ Half of all very low-income homeowners were denied these loans.³⁷ And nearly half of Hispanic and Black applicants were denied home repair loans, compared to only about 25 percent of white applicants.³⁸

Current government programs in Pennsylvania that support home repairs and weatherization fail to meet residents' needs fully. Programs may be effective but lack sufficient funding—limiting reach—or restrict the type of repairs that can be supported through funding. For example, Philadelphia's Built to Last program has a waitlist of 1,600 homes as of June 2024, and Philadelphia's Basic Systems Repair program funds only emergency repairs.³⁹ As Pennsylvania organizer Pele IrgangLaden noted:

People could get their windows sealed, could get a couple other things done in their homes. But what we were finding was that the contractor would show up, seal somebody's window, and then say, "Well you gotta get somebody else for the door and somebody else to replace the water heater."⁴⁰

The Solution:

A Statewide Program to Improve Housing Quality Through Home Repairs and Weatherization

Building a Coalition, Aligning on Priorities, and Seizing the Moment

In 2018, the PA Climate Equity Table (PACET) formed as a statewide coalition of community partners, advocates, and workers working to build power for communities impacted by environmental injustice. The coalition sought to address the climate crisis, prevent displacement, and build power for Pennsylvanians impacted by environmental injustices.⁴¹ The coalition dedicated its first years to developing strategic relationships with policymakers, building trust with community members, and creating policy priorities. Among the coalition members was Pennsylvania Stands Up, a grassroots member organization formed to build power across race, place, and generation to build a Pennsylvania for all.

In 2020, several coalition members supported Nikil Saval, labor organizer and co-founder of Reclaim Philadelphia, in his successful campaign for state senator. Soon after the 2020 election, many PACET member organizations met with Nikil Saval to advocate for their respective organizational priorities, hoping the state senator-elect would focus on environmental justice and displacement. A few months after taking office, Senator Saval's new advocacy and organizing director set up issue-based tables that included organizations that represent and include directly impacted people and Black and brown communities.

From this work, Senator Saval's office created a table dedicated to addressing the housing and climate crises. Home repair emerged as an intersectional approach to the housing crisis during these discussions. As Rabbi Julie Greenberg pointed out, "When you do weatherization, housing efficiency, and home repair, you actually lower energy use, you lower energy bills, you build a green workforce, and you stabilize communities against gentrification."⁴²

Just as Senator Saval began discussions on the Commonwealth's worsening housing crisis, the federal government moved to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This historic legislation authorized the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds⁴³ program, which provided state, local, tribal, and territorial governments with \$350 billion in flexible funding to replace lost revenue, respond to economic and health impacts of the pandemic, and invest in critical infrastructure. On May 21, 2021, Pennsylvania received nearly \$7.3 billion in SLFRF dollars.⁴⁴



PA Climate Equity Table Coalition Members

CASA

Center for Coalfield Justice

Make the Road Pennsylvania

ONE PA

Pennsylvania Stands Up, People's
Action affiliate

Pittsburgh United, People's
Action affiliate

Philly Thrive

Power Interfaith

The influx of flexible federal money offered progressive legislators the opportunity to move policy without battling conservatives for precious state funds. Senator Saval recognized this opportunity to meet the urgency of the moment and advance his housing and climate priorities for Pennsylvania:⁴⁵

The vision, the initial seed, for Whole-Home Repairs certainly preceded ARPA. While we obviously did not anticipate the COVID-19 crisis, we did anticipate an opportunity at some point to do something different. So, when ARPA passed in March, it was extraordinary. We said, “Let’s use this.” It created urgency around getting something done.⁴⁶

In February 2022, recognizing the urgency of addressing Pennsylvania’s housing crisis and window of opportunity with the influx of federal funding, PACET launched the Whole Home Repairs campaign to provide Pennsylvania residents with funding for home repairs, upgrades, and weatherization. PACET had among its priorities—

- making housing more affordable while combating the climate crisis,
- addressing critical health and safety concerns with housing, and
- preventing displacement and helping residents build wealth through housing.⁴⁷

Developing Policy With Community Input and Generating Broad Support for the Bill

Senator Saval got to work drafting a bill to use ARPA funds for a home repair program. In developing the policy, his office prioritized direct input from community members. In describing his approach, Senator Saval remarked, “We had this theory that we would co-govern with social movements. We wanted social movements to have a direct influence on policymaking, on decision-making, on votes, and created a structure for that.” As Senator Saval’s office drafted legislative language, his existing issue table on housing and environment gave the office the opportunity to receive direct feedback on draft language from advocacy organizations and hear directly from home repair practitioners. As Rabbi Julie Greenberg of POWER Interfaith noted:

The community was at the table in creating this. ... [These solutions] have to be community driven because it’s [going to] be people on the ground’s lives who have to live with it. And those are the experts on what’s actually [going to] be workable.⁴⁸

From this engagement, Senator Saval’s office crafted a bill that reflected the needs of the community. The bill—

- provided counties with funding to (1) ensure owner-occupied and rental units are free of habitability concerns, (2) improve coordination across existing home repair programs, and (3) increase retention in workforce development programs;
- directed grants and loans of up to \$50,000 to address habitability concerns, improve energy or water efficiency, and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities;
- limited grants to homeowners with incomes no higher than 80 percent of the area’s median income and limited loans to small landlords who provide affordable housing, have no serious housing violations and agree to limit rent increases after receiving funds; and
- provided funding for workforce development programs connected to improving habitability.

Once a bill was drafted, Senator Saval’s office and the Whole Home Repairs Coalition pivoted to winning support from Pennsylvania voters. They knew that passing a large, new spending program would be challenging. The state legislature was controlled by conservatives, who may have resisted creating a new program requiring significant public spending.

The coalition adapted to meet the moment. For example, PACET initially sought to call the campaign “Green New Deal for Housing in Pennsylvania,” building off nationwide momentum around investing in green infrastructure. But in response to conservative and corporate opposition to Green New Deal policies, the coalition strategically chose to name the campaign “Whole Home Repairs.” As Armando Jimenez, Make the Road PA organizer, noted, the shift also made the legislative language more accessible to Spanish-speaking community members:

Using the right language, that only comes out of the people. If we come to somebody and say, “Green New Deal,” as an organizer, they’re going to look at you blankly. If you translate it into Spanish, people really won’t understand it. Using language that is more available to most people helps them understand it.⁴⁹

Ahead of the bill’s introduction, Senator Saval held events alongside coalition partners and took advantage of bipartisan policy hearings across the state to generate awareness of and support for the bill. He also worked with his colleagues in the state legislature to garner Republican support.⁵⁰ In March 2022, the Whole-Home Repairs Act was introduced with 21 co-sponsors, including five Republican co-sponsors.

After the bill was introduced, PACET continued to build momentum. In April 2022, they rallied in cities across the state for a week of action, including residents who would benefit from the program. In May 2022, the coalition organized a lobby day for organizers and coalition members to engage directly with their legislators. In June 2022, PACET focused on call-ins to the legislature.

In its advocacy, the coalition framed the *Whole Home Repairs Program* as a benefit for all Pennsylvanians, amplifying the stories of residents who struggled to make repairs in their homes. PACET integrated this storytelling tactic in public-facing events. PA Stands Up led a social media storytelling campaign, creating and sharing videos that incorporated the voices of directly impacted homeowners. As Armando Jimenez noted:

I just remember having really good representation of membership at the rallies and press conferences. ... I think the secret sauce was having directly affected people [share] their testimonies at each rally. So, we were able to have somebody in Reading, Berks County, Lehigh County in Philly, and also Spanish speakers to show that this affects everybody. That’s very much like the secret sauce [of] any movement.⁵¹

The coalition also made postcards addressed to the governor and had several letters of support from various groups with varied interests, including labor, environmental organizations, and home repair practitioners. This helped generate media coverage and demonstrate to lawmakers that there was a broad base of support for the bill.

After less than a year of campaigning, the coalition claimed victory. On July 8, 2022, the General Appropriation Act of 2022 was enacted, appropriating \$125 million in federal funds from that state’s COVID-19 response to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for the Whole Home Repairs Program.⁵² Three days later, legislation was enacted authorizing DCED to establish the Whole Home Repairs Program; the legislative language passed was substantially the same as Senator Saval’s bill.

Bill passage was met with overwhelming positive reactions from community members and residents eager to access the funding. Armando Jimenez noted that the community’s enthusiasm wasn’t just about its passage:

People were excited. Not only about learning that it passed but by being directly involved. I always make it a point to tell our members like, “Hey, you did this. You were part of this win.” For our membership, they were just really, really happy to be there since the beginning, the middle, and the end. Organizing works, and I think people actually see that going to protests and speaking up about getting their homes fixed is so fulfilling and proves too that organizing works.⁵³

Senator Saval remarked on federal funds’ critical role in the fight: “I just believe very strongly we would not have passed and created this program in such a short period of time were it not for the American Rescue Plan.”⁵⁴

Timeline:

2018

..... **May:** Climate Equity Table forms

2019

..... **December:** State Senator Nikil Saval launches his campaign for office with key campaign planks on a Green New Deal for Pennsylvania.

2020

..... **February:** Pennsylvania Stands Up forms, joining together local chapters to create a statewide organization.

November: Senator Saval wins general election.

2021

..... **January:** Sen. Saval takes office

March 11: *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)* enacted

March: Sen. Saval's office begins hosting meetings with advocates and community members to discuss a "Green New Deal for Housing for PA."

May 21: Pennsylvania receives \$7.2 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under ARPA.

2022

..... **February:** PA Climate Equity Table decides on repairs and weatherization as a priority. Whole Home Repair Coalition launches.

March: *The Whole-Home Repairs Act* introduced in the Pennsylvania State Senate with two Republican co-sponsors

March-June: The Whole Home Repairs Coalition hosts rallies across Pennsylvania.

March 21-25: Whole Home Repairs Coalition's Week of Action

May: Whole Home Repairs Coalition's lobby day and rally at state capitol

June: Whole Home Repairs Coalition organizes community members to call the state legislature to advocate for passing the Whole Home Repair Act.

July 7: State budget passed with \$125 million from ARPA funds for Whole-Home Repairs Program

July 11: Legislation enacted authorizing the Department of Community and Economic Development to establish the Whole Home Repairs Program.

December 12: Application period opens for counties and nonprofits to access Whole Home Repairs Program funds.

2023

..... **January 31:** Application period closes for county governments or authorized nonprofits to apply for funding from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

March 10: Initial funding dispersed to eligible county administrators.



Implementation Challenges Have Limited Access to the Program and Undermined Key Goals

Pennsylvania counties, which administer the Whole Home Repairs Program, have taken different approaches to implementation. Many counties without home repair programs used funds to stand up comprehensive programs; without the influx of federal funds, it is unlikely these counties would have developed this program infrastructure. Counties with existing home repair programs used funding to serve more residents. For instance, Philadelphia County allocated funds to its Built to Last and Basic Systems Repair programs. However, Ella Israeli, Policy Fellow at Philly Thrive, pointed out concerns with supporting existing programs that are not comprehensive:

Basic Systems Repairs [is] kind of piecemeal. They'll come in and maybe fix one thing, but it's not a holistic program. Some money went into the Built to Last program, which is a much more efficient, transparent, and holistic repair program. It also focuses specifically on energy transitions, like weatherization. It has more of a green lens than Basic Systems Repair[.]⁵⁵

Insufficient funding for the Whole Home Repairs Program has limited its reach. The funding allocated for counties falls far short of meeting demand. According to DCED, as of June 30, 2024, county administrators received 25,715 applications but less than 10 percent of applicants were identified to receive a grant.⁵⁶ According to a February 2024 survey from the Department of Community and Economic Development, nearly 17,000 applicants are on waitlists.⁵⁷ As PASU organizer Celine Schrier notes, community members were excited to see a program that addressed critical home repair needs but also felt discouraged by its limited capacity due to limited funding:

There was a lot of hype about it and, unfortunately, not enough funding to meet that hype, which is a problem. So there's frustration there, I think, from people, but there is excitement that there's a program that exists that actually supports people's needs.⁵⁸

The Whole Home Repairs Program caps administrative expenses at 4 percent, leaving county administrators standing up new programs with limited funds to cover staffing costs.⁵⁹ In contrast, counties with existing infrastructure have leveraged program funding to improve the customer experience. For example, Allegheny County created a very user-friendly application that allows homeowners and landlords to track their applications online throughout the process.⁶⁰

In March 2024, Governor Josh Shapiro proposed a \$50 million investment in the program for fiscal year 2024.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the final negotiated budget deal did not include funding for the program.⁶²

Local administrators have implemented the Whole Home Repairs Program in ways that undermine the program's key goals. In particular, many counties have opted not to provide loans to small landlords who provide affordable housing, undermining the program's capacity to boost the number of affordable, quality housing options.⁶³ As of June 30, 2024, only one grant application has been identified to receive a landlord loan.⁶⁴ Excluding landlords from the program largely excludes renters, who are disproportionately Black and brown households and low-income families, from benefiting from the Whole Home Repairs Program.⁶⁵ Some counties opting out of the loans to landlords cite concerns with the requirement that they ensure the landlord continues to maintain affordable rents for 15 years after the loan.⁶⁶ Emma Boorboor, Senator Saval's Organizing and Advocacy Director, noted that some counties also opted out due to funding concerns:

[The Allegheny County] program made the choice, knowing that the funding was limited to start, to not take on the landlord piece. They had over 4,000 applications for their homeowner program [and were] only able to do 200 homes with the funding that they had. So they knew that they just didn't have the funding to take on the landlord piece as well. And then also there's an issue of [having] the administrative funding over time to track those loans.⁶⁷

Implementation has also undermined the program's impact on labor conditions for communities. The maximum grant to a homeowner is \$50,000 under the Whole Home Repairs Program. Under Pennsylvania prevailing wage laws, construction workers on government-funded projects over \$25,000 must be paid the

prevailing wage, or the minimum wage rate required based on the location and type of work on a publicly funded construction site.⁶⁸ However, some counties have capped grant amounts at \$25,000—just below the amount that triggers prevailing wage requirements for construction workers. This both limits the amount of funds households can access and deprives workers of wage standards that might lead to higher pay.

Preliminary Reports Suggests Positive Impacts from The Whole Home Repairs Program

Despite implementation challenges, initial data suggests the program has enabled critical home repairs across Pennsylvania.⁶⁹ According to DCED, as of June 30, 2024, a total of 1,151 homes have been repaired benefiting 5,667 residents.⁷⁰ About 1,200 additional applicants have been identified to receive funding.⁷¹

Organizers have noted anecdotal evidence of the program's impact. For example, Edwin Stubbs of PASU emphasized the significant impact the program has already had on reducing utility bills for residents: "People are getting their houses fixed, and those who are getting their houses fixed have reported that their electrical bills or all their other bills—if they've got their roof replaced or their windows replaced—have dramatically dropped."⁷²

Reports specifically from program recipients tell a compelling story about the program's impact.

Dominique, a resident of Philadelphia County, faced safety and economic challenges due to home upgrade needs. Her home had serious electrical issues, forcing her to rely on dangerous and costly space heaters to stay warm in the winter. Extremely high utility bills were a strain on her resources. Inadequate heating put her and her children's safety at risk; She was even forced to rent a separate place to keep her and her children safe from the cold one evening. Funding under the Whole Home Repairs Program allowed her to secure energy-efficient heat pumps for both heating and cooling, along with other critical repairs. Her home is now fully electric, and she's paying just a fraction of what she used to on utility bills.⁷³

Kelly, an Allegheny County resident, faced several structural issues in her home that posed threats to her immediate safety. Kelly's home had a leaking chimney, a roof in disrepair, and damaged pillars supporting her front porch. She could not afford these critical repairs, nor could she afford to buy or rent another home. Through Action Housing, Allegheny County's Whole Home Repairs Program administrator, her home was evaluated for repairs. She was connected to a team of workers who fixed her roof and foundation and replaced her porch pillars.⁷⁴ Kelly reflected on the importance of the repairs:

Home should be the place where you feel safe, and now I have that. I can relax in my house and not worry that it's going to fall down on me. Now that I've gotten these repairs, I feel like I have a solid foot on the ground. I feel like I'm actually a homeowner because I'm here for good.⁷⁵



Replicating the Success of the Whole Home Repairs Program

Despite implementation challenges, Pennsylvania's Whole Home Repairs Program is a victory for the commonwealth's residents. The Whole Home Repairs Campaign offers key lessons for enacting change and leveraging public funds for the public good. It illustrates the importance of coordinated organizing and advocacy to connect resources to community needs and provides helpful lessons for crafting legislation for an effective home repair program.

Key Lessons from the Campaign

The Whole Home Repairs Campaign successfully advocated for a bill that met the needs of low-income Pennsylvanians despite an unfavorable legislature. These are some key lessons from their campaign:

1. **Build infrastructure to create policy through co-governance.** Senator Saval's office was intentional in creating a co-governance structure where communities helped design policy and co-create solutions. Senator Saval's office provided a channel for directly impacted community members to weigh in on legislation. Advocates made full use of the opportunity to ensure the bill reflected the needs of the people.
2. **Cultivate broad-based support with strategic messaging.** Shifting messaging was a key component of getting a Green New Deal-aligned program to pass a conservatively held legislature. This included rebranding the program away from a "Green New Deal for Housing" to "Whole Home Repairs" and connecting home repairs and weatherization to the conservative legislators' priority issues of addressing blight.
3. **Center real-world impacts and lived experiences to make campaign goals feel tangible for community members and policymakers.** The campaign centered on the stories of directly impacted community members to make the bill relatable and underscore the urgency of acting on the housing crisis.
4. **Build bipartisan support for the bill by campaigning outside areas of likely support.** Instead of limiting campaigning to places that were more politically favorable and bought in, the campaign brought WHR across the state to build support from a more diverse range of constituents. Taking the bill outside of more progressive cities and prioritizing statewide actions and campaigning helped bridge political divides that could have stalled legislation.
5. **Have a plan for successful implementation.** Winning the campaign was a long shot, which meant organizers had not yet developed a comprehensive strategy to ensure proper implementation of the program when the bill passed.

Considerations for an Effective Home Repairs Program

As states and the federal government develop legislation to establish home repair programs, legislators should consider the following:

- 1. Robust, regular funding to meet demand.** For an ambitious new program to successfully address repair needs in a community, lawmakers must ensure that the program has sufficient resources to meet ongoing needs.
- 2. Adequate resources for local administrators to effectively implement the program.** Lawmakers must also ensure local administrators have the tools, staff, and funding to administer the program, including outreach, education, and case management.
- 3. Strong labor standards that remain tied to program funding.** For communities to fully realize the impacts of a home repair program, lawmakers must ensure that strong labor standards follow funding to promote good jobs in the community. This means home repairs are completed by local workers who are covered by prevailing wage laws and are free to join a union. Lawmakers must also ensure that local program administration does not undermine these requirements.
- 4. Workforce development to support good jobs.** It is essential to incorporate stable, long-term funding for workforce development into home repair programs. This will help to improve housing quality and create pipelines for local workers to gain the skills to provide repairs in their communities. Lawmakers must ensure that workforce development programs provide training and onramps to high-quality employment opportunities for residents from marginalized communities.
- 5. Guardrails to ensure program benefits are distributed equitably.** While local administrators should retain the flexibility to implement the program in a way that supports local needs, administrators should not have leeway to limit grant amounts or recipients of grants in a way that results in inequitable distribution of the program's benefits. This includes ensuring the program benefits both renters and homeowners, and residents in urban and rural areas.



Appendix A

Methodology

Information was collected through 12 interviews with advocates, government officials, and staff members involved in the Whole Home Repairs Campaign or the ongoing work to implement and expand the program. During the hourlong interviews, interviewees were asked questions to identify approaches, challenges, and potential factors that led to the success in the Whole Home Repairs Campaign. Interview questions focused on four core areas:

1. The fundamentals of the Whole Home Repairs Program, including its scope and intended purpose
2. Organizing strategies and the specific ways that individuals and organizations contributed to the campaign and the bill's final passage
3. Implementation and impact of the Whole Home Repairs Program, including impacts for low-income and Black and brown communities
4. Lessons learned from the campaign and its implementation in Pennsylvania

Additional information was collected through discussions with national advocacy organizations working on implementing federal funds passed under the Biden-Harris administration, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

List of Interviewees:

- Emma Boorboor, Advocacy and Organizing Director, Office of State Senator Nikil Saval
- Carol Gonzalez, Member Leader, Lehigh Valley Stands Up (Pennsylvania Stands Up Chapter)
- Rabbi Julie Greenberg, Climate Justice Director, POWER Interfaith
- Jamir Hubbard, Climate and Jobs Organizer, POWER Interfaith
- Pele IrgangLaden, Organizer and former Program Director at Pennsylvania Stands Up
- Ella Israeli, Policy Fellow at Philly Thrive
- Armando Jimenez, Deputy Organizing Director, Make the Road PA
- State Representative Rick Krajewski, Pennsylvania 188th District
- Senator Nikil Saval, Pennsylvania Senate District 1
- Edwin Stubbs, Director of Narrative and Communications, Pennsylvania Stands Up
- Celine Schrier, Berks Stands Up Organizer, Berks Stands Up (Pennsylvania Stands Up Chapter)
- Otis Ubracio, Member Leader, Lancaster Stands Up (Pennsylvania Stands Up Chapter)

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