
Racial Equity Progress & Accountability Report

January 2025 – June 2025

Transparency & Accountability in Housing and Utility Policy

- RHLS is working with a community housing development organization that helps lower-income homebuyers to purchase homes at affordable prices and helps to stabilize neighborhoods struggling with older housing stock.
- PULP's Executive Director testified before the Senate Democratic Policy Committee on recommended policy solutions to address energy unaffordability and reliability, including establishing prevention-based billing, collections, and termination standards, approving state funding to supplement and/or expand the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and more.
- PULP submitted comments to the Department of Energy urging them to prioritize the impact on utility bills when making decisions on whether to permit additional Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports.
- RHLS is working with a client to close funding gaps and complete the deal on the construction of a multifamily apartment building that will have 25 to 30 rental homes for low-income families. The client is both a social services provider and affordable housing developer. They work with low-income women and their families, who are disproportionately Black and Brown, to regain and maintain social and economic equity.
- PULP began serving as a member of the Hub project team within the Regional Clean Energy Activation Hub, led by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Through this work, PULP has contributed to the Project's Community Engagement Plan, reviewed community data and policy analyses, and contributed to the Clean Energy Implementation Plan in order to ensure that building decarbonization planning in Southeastern PA is prioritizing low income and communities of color.
- RHLS is working with an organization on a multifamily affordable housing development that will provide homes for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This organization provides supportive services to persons with IDD and has comprehensive programming to serve this community in Southeast PA.

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- RHLS is working on a new transit-oriented development in Philadelphia that will help to address inequities stemming from the long-term disinvestment that has resulted in economic and health disparities in this community. In addition, the development will give residents access to healthy foods and quality healthcare in addition to the affordable housing which will offset displacement
- RHLS has represented an organization in support of their goal of ending and preventing homelessness in Philadelphia for over 20 years. RHLS initially worked with them on the development of a large building in downtown Philadelphia in 2003 as affordable housing. Recently, RHLS assisted them with a new deal, an acquisition rehab of the existing housing to make repairs and upgrades to the building and the units. The result is the preservation of 144 units of supportive affordable rental housing.
- RHLS is combating the exploitation of basic needs by private equity firms. Just as private equity firms have bought up hospitals and medical practices, maximizing profit while draining the assets and ultimately forcing bankruptcy or closure, they are also targeting housing. A current target of private equity is Manufactured Home Communities (MHC). The owners of manufactured homes are vulnerable to exploitation because, while they may own their homes, they rent the lot where their home is placed. Private equity firms buy up the lots and raise the rent to unsustainable levels, which effectively forces people to abandon their homes. RHLS is working with a group of MHC owners, Community Justice Project, and Pennsylvania legislators to pass a law that will protect homeowners from steep increases to lot rents.
- RHLS continues to support the Philadelphia Bar Association Housing Task Force in its advocacy to prevent deed fraud, fraudulent conveyance and eviction without Due Process. These are housing issues that tend to impact the low income, disproportionately Black communities in the city. Advocating for stronger laws and more robust enforcement protects low income homeowners in Philadelphia.

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Outreach, Engagement, Listening, and Learning

- PULP had the opportunity to present to advocates across the country on the impactful work done through our Utility Accessibility Project during the week-long National Energy and Utility Affordability (NEUAC) conference. PULP's panel presentation highlighted the importance of integrating client feedback into policy development and showcased successful strategies for enhancing utility assistance programs. The presentation also emphasized best practices learned through the Project's focus on serving vulnerable populations, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.
- RHLS policy staff are working on a project to assist returning citizens. The project has several pieces. RHLS is conducting trainings to disseminate information for prospective tenants and housing connectors. Too often, there are blanket bans on renting to returning citizens, a practice that can contradict Fair Housing Laws. These webinars educate tenants and their advocates to help them understand their rights to affordable housing. RHLS has also developed standardized fair housing and HUD-compliant TSP language/best practices for subsidized housing providers. This kind of systemic change both incentivizes and regulates tenant selection for housing providers, allowing more access to affordable housing to populations that tend to disproportionately be people of color.
- PULP co-coordinated a webinar on Community Benefits Agreements focused on environmental justice with the Center for Coalfield Justice and Moms Clean Air Force. Panelists included representatives from Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community, Ohio River Valley Institute, Overbrook Environmental Education Center, and Philly Thrive.
- PULP staff, in coordination with North Penn Legal Services, delivered an in-person training session at the 2025 Fair Housing Summit. The session focused on tenant rights and navigating utility challenges and had 85 attendees, many of whom are residents of Manufactured Home Communities and older Pennsylvanians living in the Northeast region.
- PULP's Executive Director presented a training on equitable decarbonization and energy transition to the Penn State University Climate Solutions Symposium.
- PULP staff presented a training on energy justice and extending natural gas service to unserved and underserved communities at the Public Utility Law Conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

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Resources & Internal Programs

- The DEI Education Subcommittee hosted a virtual viewing and debrief session on an Under the Blacklight series discussion called “Executive Disorder: Resisting the War on Equal Opportunity,” hosted by the African American Policy Forum. The recording featured a panel with Nina Turner, Damon Hewitt, David J. Johns, and Russell Robinson and was facilitated by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw.
- The DEI Education Subcommittee planned an all-staff two-hour Black History Walking Tour led by The Black Journey in Philadelphia. In preparation for the tour, staff were provided resources to complete pre-reading of excerpts from *The Underground Railroad* by William Still and *Never Caught* by Erica Armstrong Dunbar.
- The DEI Internal Policy Subcommittee drafted Legal Fellow/Internship/Volunteer Hiring and Recruiting Guidelines and are in the process of finalizing them with Leadership Team.
- PULP staff attended the 2025 Community Action Association of Pennsylvania’s (CAAP) Summit: Navigating Intersections, where they listened to a talk and met with Civil Rights Movement activist Joan Trumpauer Mulholland, attended educational sessions about DEI, and networked with CAAP network colleagues.