



May 15, 2023

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of the members of the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ and particularly our members in Jersey City, I am writing to urge your support for two critically important ordinances that will have a significant impact on housing stability and affordability in our community: the Right to Counsel and Development Fee Ordinances. The Network fully supports and endorses these efforts, as they will help battle the housing affordability crisis Jersey City and New Jersey as a whole are facing.

We are happy to see that Jersey City aims to adopt a Right to Counsel Ordinance, which will ensure thousands of vulnerable tenants facing eviction have access to legal representation on a level playing field with landlords. Everyone deserves a fighting chance to remain in their homes — and this is especially important for communities of color, who are disproportionately impacted by evictions and often lack the resources they need to defend themselves.

In addition, the Development Fee Ordinance proposed for Jersey City can transform your affordable housing environment. These fees are already utilized in hundreds of municipalities across New Jersey, and will generate tens of millions of dollars for affordable housing initiatives—from emergency rental assistance and building repair programs to the creation of new affordable housing homes.

We urge you to support these ordinances and work towards a more equitable and just housing system in Jersey City. With your support, we can ensure that all residents have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, and affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Staci Berger
President and CEO
Housing and Community Development Network of NJ