



Sterling Strategic Advisor Community Advocacy & Affordable Housing

Why is affordable housing an important cause to you?

Access to affordable housing is linked to various life outcomes, including education, health, and finances. My personal experience of homelessness in my youth and young adulthood significantly impacted my mental health, academic achievement, and financial stability. Overcoming these challenges has fueled my commitment to leverage my personal experience and professional knowledge to assist children and families in securing or preserving quality, safe, and affordable housing.

What strategies are you and your team using to expand access to affordable housing here in Houston?

Utilizing the Community Land Trust model, we create genuinely affordable housing for low to moderate income individuals and families burdened by increasing housing prices. Removing land from the speculative market allows us to offer homeownership at a fraction of market rate housing costs, with an average mortgage payment of \$1,029, including taxes, insurance, and association fees. Families in 3- and 4-bedroom homes across Houston experience significantly lower costs than most apartments while gaining modest equity. Our expanding 2024 programs include small footprint homes and rentals, ranging from 450-1,000 square feet, catering to buyers and renters seeking lower maintenance and payments.

How is your organization's work contributing to positive change in Houston?

Houston Community Land Trust has enabled 197 Houstonians to achieve homeownership, with an average purchase price of a little over \$106,000, in contrast to Houston's average and median purchase prices of \$328,000 and \$414,000, respectively. One notable success story is Ms. Brown, a tenant facing the prospect of buying her rented home. Despite being unable to qualify for a traditional purchase due to increased prices and interest rates, Ms. Brown discovered Houston Community Land Trust through her realtor and applied for the Homebuyer Choice Program. She not only bought her current rental at a reduced cost but also lowered her mortgage from \$1,375 to \$852, providing essential savings as she supports her twin daughters in college while pursuing her Master's degree.

What do you hope Houston will be able to do over the next 5-10 years to significantly expand access to affordable housing?

Affordable housing could vanish in Houston within 5-10 years without prompt action. Although Houston is currently more affordable than coastal cities, mass migration is swiftly diminishing affordability. The city is fortunate to possess numerous housing affordability tools, including the Houston Community Land Trust, Land Bank, CDCs, a housing research center, and ample vacant land. As the nation's 4th largest city, it is essential to utilize these tools now to address the crisis and safeguard people and neighborhoods that contribute to Houston's desirability.

What are you looking forward to in your role as a Sterling Strategic Advisor?

Having worked in education, biotechnology, workforce development, and public policy, I look forward to utilizing my diverse knowledge to assist organizations in creating solutions to improve how we live, work, and even play. My primary strength lies in building programs and policies to address problems, and I am interested in exploring new and challenging ways to leverage this strength.
