

Stephanie Watkins-Cruz

Director of Housing Policy

NC Housing Coalition

Stephanie Watkins-Cruz is the Director of Housing Policy at the North Carolina Housing Coalition, a statewide nonprofit leading the movement to ensure every North Carolinian has a home in which to live with dignity and opportunity. At the Coalition, Stephanie works at the intersection of research, advocacy and coalition building and partners with policy makers and groups across the state in order to pursue their mission. With nearly a decade of experience spanning local government, development finance, and policy, Stephanie combines both practical know-how and lived experience to inform her big-picture vision for expanding affordable housing across North Carolina.

Prior to joining the Coalition, Stephanie served as a Policy Analyst for Chatham County, where she administered the county's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, served as the Fair Housing Officer, and helped coordinate community development initiatives with local government and nonprofit partners. She holds dual master's degrees in Public Administration and City & Regional Planning from UNC Chapel Hill where she also recently returned as a Professor of Practice to co-teach a graduate course on Housing & Community Development Policy in the Fall 2025.