



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Build Back Better Act Negotiations Continue

The White House and congressional leaders are considering cutting \$300B in investments in affordable housing from the Build Back Better Act. Last week, members of the House Financial Services Committee, led by Rep. Maxine Waters (CA-43), sent [a letter to the White House and Congressional leadership](#), stating: "We cannot ignore the immediate housing infrastructure needs facing individuals, families, and communities throughout the United States."

Echoing demands from advocates, the letter asserted that **"Housing is health care, it is stability for children, it is climate justice, and it is racial justice."** This is an investment that simply cannot wait and must be included at robust levels in the budget reconciliation package.

On Monday, Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) told advocates that "not enough members of Congress are raising housing as a priority." [Rep. Torres is circulating a sign-on letter among his colleagues](#) to urge House and Senate leadership to prioritize and protect funding to expand rental assistance, public housing, and invest in the Housing Trust Fund (see list of current signers [here](#)). Senators Padilla (CA), Merkley (OR), and Feinstein (CA), and their colleagues are also sending [a letter to leadership](#) urging these priorities.

In addition, the National Coalition for Housing Justice released a [statement calling on Congressional leaders](#) to enact these historic investments in the country's affordable housing infrastructure.

Leaders are expected to come to an agreement on the final budget reconciliation package in the coming days in order to pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill by October 31st.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

If you are a public foundation or United Way and can engage in direct lobbying, call your members of Congress and [encourage them to sign on](#) to [Rep. Torres' letter to Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer](#) by noon tomorrow, October 15.

If you are a private foundation or unable to partake in direct lobbying activities, contact your federal policymakers to educate and inform them about what you are seeing in your community and hearing from grantee partners around affordable housing and housing instability. You can also encourage your trustees to advocate for the Build Back Better Act federal investments in housing and homelessness services. Here's an [overview of priorities necessary to advancing housing justice](#).

Remember: Public and private foundations may educate legislators about a broad range of issues without referencing or providing views on specific legislation. Public and private foundations can also provide capacity for grantee partners to contact their Representatives and Senators on behalf of their community.

If you need assistance or talking points, please [contact us](#) or view the [HoUSed campaign toolkit](#) with talking points.

What's Happening: USICH Seeks Input on Federal Strategic Plan

Last week, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness convened national stakeholders to share updates on the [forthcoming federal strategic plan](#) to prevent and end homelessness. The agency is seeking input [online](#) and conducting targeted listening sessions with stakeholders from across the country. Feedback is requested by November 30, 2021.

Funders Together will be hosting a listening session for philanthropy in early November. We will also be participating in two listening sessions with USICH through the National Racial Equity Working Group and the National Coalition for Housing Justice to represent philanthropy's voice and priorities of ending homelessness through a housing and racial justice approach.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Decriminalizing Homelessness

Despite insufficient funding for affordable housing and supportive services, communities across the country are increasing funding for surveilling and over-policing people experiencing homelessness, as reported in the [statement](#) on criminalization issued by Funders Together and the National Coalition for Housing Justice earlier this month.

This week, Invisible People reported on a [nationwide trend in cities deputizing civilians](#) to conduct surveillance and police the actions of people experiencing homelessness. The Coalition's statement, "[Policing and Punishment-Based Approaches: A Really Expensive Way to Make Homelessness Worse](#)," called on communities to:

- abolish laws and policies that criminalize homelessness and/or poverty;
 - end the use of police and all forms of punishment, retribution, and control in homeless services, education, and child welfare settings; and
 - outlaw discrimination and abolish policies that exclude or otherwise marginalize people from housing.
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Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together:**
 - [Policing- and punishment-based approaches: A really expensive way to make homelessness worse](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Congress Should Balance Vouchers and Development of Less-Expensive Housing in Recovery Legislation](#)
- **Invisible People:**
 - [Negotiations Threaten \\$327 Billion in Affordable Housing Investments](#)
 - [Austin's Homeless Residents Left with Nowhere to Go Amid Camping Crackdown](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [Keeping Historic Housing Funds in the Build Back Better Act](#)
- **National Coalition for Housing Justice:**
 - [National Coalition for Housing Justice Calls on Congress to Enact Historic Housing Investments in Build Back Better Act](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [NLIHC Analysis of House Financial Services Infrastructure/Economic Recovery Bill](#)
 - [HoUSed Campaign](#)
 - [Advocates and Congressional Champions Mobilize to Preserve Housing Investments in Build Back Better Act, Continued Action Needed](#)

As always, we are here to answer your questions or provide insights on public policy developments and opportunities. Please reach out to me or [Amanda](#) at any time.

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