



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Advocacy Continues for the Historic Housing Investments We Need

At the close of 2021, [hopes for passing the Build Back Better Act were sidelined](#) after nearly a year of negotiations. Towards the end of the month, Congressional leaders expect to continue negotiating to advance the bill through the budget reconciliation process, which would allow Congress to enact the bill with a simple majority in the Senate, rather than the 60 votes typically required. For Build Back Better to move forward, all Democratic senators must support it, **leaders are therefore making an effort to reduce the overall size and scope of the bill which puts housing investments at risk of being cut or eliminated.**

Advocates are urged to continue to work with members of Congress to put pressure on leadership and the White House to ensure that negotiations to pass the act, as well as the federal FY 2022 budget, do not threaten the hard-fought commitments to invest in affordable housing and homeless services.

In addition to calling on Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act, national partners are lifting up the significant funding increases passed by the House in the FY22 budget. If Congress does not enact the budget and instead passes another continuing resolution, the country will lose the opportunity to support thousands of those experiencing homelessness and housing instability as rates of COVID-19 infection and hospitalization peak again. The House bill proposes to expand:

- The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program to 125,000 additional households
- Funding for Homeless Assistance Grants by more than \$400 million
- Tribal housing resources from \$747 million
- The HOME Investment Partnerships program by \$500 million
- Housing for seniors and people with disabilities by creating 4,000 new units
- Fair housing activities by \$12 million,
- \$3.7 billion for public housing capital repairs and climate-resilient upgrades to the public housing stock, and
- The Community Development Block Grants by \$1.2 billion.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

If you are a public foundation or United Way and can engage in direct lobbying, call on members of Congress to weigh in directly with leadership to [protect these investments in housing](#) and pass the Build Back Better Act with significant resources for affordable housing and homeless services.

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 these levels of 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 review the [HoUSed campaign toolkit](#) with talking points.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Pushing Philanthropy's Role in Public Policy

As we enter a new year with new opportunities and challenges, the importance of philanthropy engaging in and supporting policy efforts that advance housing justice cannot be overstated. Over the past few years, we've seen examples of philanthropy [lead to create new public-private partnerships](#), [support grassroots organizations](#), [convene community stakeholders](#) for candid discussions related to policy, speak out and [take action against harmful policies](#), and [use its voice to lift up priorities](#) that create a pathway towards housing justice.

This year, we encourage you to strategize new ways to engage and challenge your organization to utilize its sphere of influence to both build and shift power to create equitable policies rooted in justice. Consider how philanthropy can:

- Be a community convener and relationship builder;
- Support coalition building, organizing, and activists;
- Provide capacity for people with lived expertise from communities who have been marginalized to engage in policy;
- Support BIPOC community leaders in the development of policies;
- Educate policymakers and elected officials; and
- Utilize philanthropy's voice through media opportunities.

In 2022, Funders Together will continue to provide [learning opportunities](#) around these topics to push philanthropy to be bold in advancing housing and racial justice as well as calls to action for philanthropy as new policy developments arise. We also remain committed to being [available to answer your policy questions](#) and provide thought-partnership around strategic ways to take action.

We look forward to partnering with you this year in being bold and working towards transformational change rooted in liberation and justice through our collective policy efforts.

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together to End Homelessness:**
 - [Leveraging Federal Housing Resources to Equitably Build Back Better](#)
 - [Advancing Housing Justice through Policy Engagement](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Build Back Better Reduces Barriers, Improves Opportunities for People in the Criminal Justice System](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Take Action to Advance the HoUSed Campaign's Affordable Housing Agenda in Build Back Better and FY22 Spending Bill](#)
- **Urban Institute:**
 - [Expanding the Housing Choice Voucher Program Could Bolster Renter Stability in the Face of a Worsening Affordability Crisis](#)

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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