



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Advocacy Needed for Sufficient Federal Funding for Homeless Services

The Build Back Better Act is stalled in Congress and unlikely to be revived, though there are early efforts to pass individual bills related to climate change and early education.

Federal budget negotiations continue, but housing and homeless services spending levels are all but certain to be insufficient to meet the growing need of households [facing housing insecurity and homelessness](#) across the country. While the federal response to COVID-19 brought unprecedented resources to our communities to support those in need, those resources are running out and sustainable funding is necessary to address these crises.

Advocacy partners are [leading efforts](#) to encourage members of Congress to fully fund President Biden's budget request of \$500M in Homelessness Assistance Grants and \$4.6B increase in Tenant-Based Rental Assistance. Current Senate proposals would serve 26,000 fewer people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. In addition, partners are stressing the importance of another [surge of advocacy for federal investments in rental assistance, public housing, and Housing Trust Fund](#).

As it stands, FY22 negotiations are likely to result in flat or near-flat appropriations for many housing and homeless services programs for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, which may strain local social service capacity in new ways. These Congressional appropriations decisions are following on the heels of the end of monthly child tax credit payments last month and despite the impact of the pandemic on communities and members of the social services workforce.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

In addition to continued outreach and education to Congressional leaders about the vast resources needed to address homelessness and housing insecurity, the time is ripe for philanthropy to revisit our public-private partnership strategies and iterate on the priorities we outlined early in the pandemic. As states and cities start to anticipate the impacts of these shifts in funding, prepare for the budgeting season as well as elections and transitions later this year, private sector partners and funders should be rethinking and reengaging in:

- [Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships and Brokering Relationships](#)
- [Identify and Funding Capacity Needs](#)
- [Advocating for Systems Change](#)
- [Keeping Racial Equity and Housing Justice at the Forefront](#)
- [Focus on Housing Stability and Homelessness Prevention](#)
- [Following Grantmaking Best Practices](#)

Communities and funders who have leveraged the [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Response](#) and Funders Together's guidance on [COVID-19 Response and System Redesign: Recommendations for](#)

[Philanthropy to Support Solutions to End Homelessness](#) may already have a strong foundation of public private partnerships to build on. Funders Together is available for support in strategizing as you iterate and we're eager to [hear your feedback](#) on what's working and changing.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Strategic Narrative Change and Messaging

As we shared in our last update — and as Earl Edwards emphasized in his closing remarks at the [National Alliance to End Homelessness Ending Unsheltered Homelessness Conference](#) last week — we must grapple with the present-day impact of colorblind policymaking and advocacy in our sector.

As violence against people experiencing homelessness is becoming more visible and even increasing in some communities, many media outlets and social media accounts are releasing degrading and false information about homelessness, politicizing this humanitarian crisis and endangering our neighbors. Principled responses to these related and devastating dynamics are needed from across our sector; now is not the time for the hesitation or over-analysis that often prevents meaningful action on justice issues.

The Narrative Initiative offers a [trove of valuable messaging and communication resources](#) to support narrative change for equity social justice. These resources may help you and your grantees explore messaging and communication strategies to mirror your community organizing and policy advocacy efforts and to move our sector beyond equality and scarcity mindsets toward principled action for housing justice.

Likewise, the [Housing Narrative Lab](#), which launched last winter and is supported by FTEH members Melville Charitable Trust and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, offers research, guidance, and capacity for communities and sector partners to build a proactive strategy on the narrative and messaging around homelessness and evidence-based solutions to end it.

Tell us: How is your foundation or organization thinking about the impacts of narrative and messaging around homelessness in your community? How can philanthropy support comprehensive communications strategies as part of the work to end homelessness and housing instability?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together to End Homelessness:**
 - [Advancing Housing Justice through Policy Engagement](#)
 - [2021 Funders Institute: Narrative Change Research: What is it Telling Us?](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Chart Book: Funding Limitations Create Widespread Unmet Need for Rental Assistance](#)
- **Housing Narrative Lab:**
 - [Public Opinion Research on Homeless Messaging](#)
- **Narrative Initiative:**
 - [Rapid Response: Tools and Techniques for Seizing the Moment and Driving Your Narrative](#)
 - [Using Social Media for Narrative Change](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Ask Congress for Increased Housing Investments in Fiscal Year 2022](#)
- **USICH:**
 - [My Vision for Preventing and Ending Homelessness: A Message From USICH Executive Director Jeff Olivet](#)

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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