



# Funders Together

## TO END HOMELESSNESS



### Policy Alert

#### **What's Happening: Housing Justice is on (Some) Ballots this November**

This November, many voters have unprecedented opportunities to weigh in on local policy and investments in housing justice. Voters will see proposed amendments to their cities' charters and changes to local tax collection and spending policies. Initiatives focus on a variety of housing justice issues from zoning to increasing affordable housing development and acquisition, funding rental subsidies, establishing a right to counsel for those facing eviction, and expanding or establishing homebuying assistance programs.

[Colorado's statewide Proposition 123](#), the only initiative of its kind nationwide, seeks to designate 0.1% of state income tax revenue for affordable housing development, rent subsidies, and support for municipal planning processes. The initiative also requires jurisdictions commit to fast-track housing approvals and increase affordable housing stock by 3% each year. The proposition, which will require a majority of voters' approval to pass, also seeks to create a groundbreaking "tenant equity vehicle" that would redirect a share of the profit made through affordable housing development back to renters. This is the first proposal of its kind to make it onto a statewide ballot.

In New York, residents of four [Long Island towns will vote](#) on the Community Housing Fund, a 0.5% real estate tax to fund affordable housing development in each municipality. In Seattle, community organizers and nonprofit advocates crafted Initiative 135, which would create the Seattle Social Housing Developer to build, own, and maintain social housing in the city.

Here are several other examples of housing justice issues on local ballots:

- [Denver](#), Colorado: free and fair right to counsel for those facing eviction
- [Flagstaff](#), Arizona: redevelopment, affordable housing developer incentives, homebuyer assistance
- [Honolulu](#), Hawaii: increasing real estate tax spending for affordable housing
- [Los Angeles](#), California: taxing high value real estate transactions for affordable housing
- [Pasadena](#), California: rent control and renter protections
- [Pflugerville](#), Texas: affordable housing for teachers and homebuying assistance programs
- [San Francisco](#), California: competing measures propose to streamline the creation of new affordable and workforce housing

## How Philanthropy Can Take Action

**Support your local partners and community organizers in advocating for the resources and policies your community needs to pursue housing justice.** Over the last year, community organizers, advocates, and service providers around the country built and strengthened coalitions to craft policy frameworks and build community support necessary to get initiatives on the ballot.

Philanthropy is uniquely suited to facilitate relationship-building and broaden community support for initiatives in your region. Local partners and community organizers may also be interested in learning from other communities' ballot measures and strengthening relationships with other partners, providers, advocates, and elected officials before considering voter-based initiatives.

[PolicyLink](#) recently found that advocates are interested in efforts related to: rent control, right to legal counsel for tenants facing eviction, landback initiatives, source of income discrimination protections, proactive housing inspections, just cause eviction, anti-displacement and anti-gentrification initiatives, fair housing, and inclusionary zoning.

Philanthropy should also explore how it can truly resource rest and joy for organizers and advocates who are doing this work. While some foundations are unable to engage in supporting ballot measures and other local initiatives, funding capacity for ample recovery and healing for community partners on the ground is another critical component of effective advocacy.

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## Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Supporting Collaboration for Housing Justice

In our [last policy update](#), we discussed the impact of the midterm Congressional elections on housing justice policy. While a deadlocked Congress may be in the country's near future, local organizers and advocates are hard at work leading groundbreaking policy change initiatives that could begin to change our housing landscape from the grassroots up and advance racial justice.

"Ballot initiatives have been a long-standing, and increasingly utilized tool for all of us to come together and advance the housing solutions we know will work to transform our housing system," [according to PolicyLink](#). "Ballot initiatives are never won by one organization, sector or funder. If anything, they require more collaboration and shared leadership than any other effort we pursue collectively."

As our colleagues and communities embrace the election season locally, we have a responsibility to lift up the opportunities and connections that can help us continue moving in solidarity towards a just and liberation society.

How can philanthropy contribute to local organizing efforts for housing justice? What resources or information do our colleagues and partners need to be able to envision and work toward a better housing future? How can we create more space for new and different types of support?

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## Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Center for Effective Philanthropy:** [Think Your Foundation Can't Engage in Election Season Advocacy? Think Again.](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
  - [High Hardship Among Black and Latinx LGBTQ Renters Underscores Need for More Housing Vouchers](#)
  - [New HUD "Fair Market Rent" Policy Can Help Local Agencies Reduce Homelessness and Expand Housing Choice](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:** [How Providers Can Boost Voter Engagement](#)
- **National Coalition for the Homeless:** [You Don't Need a Home to Vote Toolkit](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:** [NLIHC Releases New Report on Ballot Measure Campaigns for Affordable Homes](#)
- **PolicyLink:** [Housing Justice on the Ballot: The Critical Leadership of Tenant Organizers & Grassroots Organizations](#)

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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