



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: White House and HUD Advance Key Protections for Renters

Both the White House and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made significant announcements this week with the [Blueprint for a Renters Bill of Rights](#) and the latest [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule](#) (referred to as AFFH), respectively. On the 55th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act, the White House recognized it has never been fully implemented and rolled out the Blueprint of five principles to guide federal, state, and local action to strengthen tenant protections and encourage rental affordability:

- **Safe, Quality, Accessible, and Affordable Housing:** Renters should have access to housing that is safe, decent, and affordable.
- **Clear and Fair Leases:** Renters should have a clear and fair lease that has defined rental terms, rights, and responsibilities.
- **Education, Enforcement, and Enhancement of Renter Rights:** Federal, state, and local governments should do all they can to ensure renters know their rights and to protect renters from unlawful discrimination and exclusion.
- **The Right to Organize:** Renters should have the freedom to organize without obstruction or harassment from their housing provider or property manager.
- **Eviction Prevention, Diversion, and Relief:** Renters should be able to access resources that help them avoid eviction, ensure the legal process during an eviction proceeding is fair, and avoid future housing instability.

The Administration also announced the Resident-Centered Housing Challenge, a call to action to housing providers and other stakeholders to strengthen practices and make their own independent commitments that improve the quality of life for renters. While these principles and the challenge reflect many of our values and those we share with the [National Coalition for Housing Justice](#), there is [more the federal government must do](#) to address the role of corporate landlords in driving the rising cost of rental housing and to protect all renters from racial discrimination.

Looking to the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) proposed rule, the lack of fully implementing and enforcing the rule since its initial inception has left generations of communities and renters of color, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, or Latinx, vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and displacement. President Obama advanced an AFFH rule in 2015, only for it to be eliminated by the following administration. The Fair

Housing Act mandate requires all recipients of federal housing or development funding to use those funds in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing opportunities by:

- **Undertaking a robust community engagement process** to surface the fair housing issues facing their communities, as well as to inform the goals and strategies that will remedy those issues;
- **Outlining community goals and strategies in an Equity Plan** submitted every 5 years and integrated into other local planning (Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and Public Housing Agency Plans); and
- **Conducting and submitting annual progress evaluations.**

Under the rule, members of the public could file complaints with HUD if program participants are not living up to their AFFH commitments and other accountability provisions.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

Before the proposed AFFH rule can go into effect, [HUD is required](#) to receive comments from the public on the rule for a period of 60 days. As advocates may recall from [past federal advocacy efforts](#), it's important to organize and offer our best analysis, support, and argumentation for the rule. Funders Together is working with our partners in the National Coalition for Housing Justice to develop templates and tools for advocates and partners to submit comments in support of the AFFH as a mechanism to advance housing justice.

Philanthropy is able to participate and support the public commenting process because this is not a statutory or legislative action. Funders Together will send out additional alerts and resources when the public comment period opens and is here to help you strategize around submitting comments.

We're also encouraging members of philanthropy to begin or pick up discussions with grantees and local advocates about displacement, segregation, and discrimination to inform our collective federal advocacy and to pave the way for action and accountability when it comes to local implementation of AFFH.

Philanthropic partners can leverage our convening power to begin setting the table or reinvigorating these conversations locally. Given the 60-day comment period, we have the chance for slower, more intentional community engagement and power building. Valuable resources for your grantees might include funding for policy analysis, writing, and convening as well as thought partnership and facilitation. If our communities have the time to understand the challenge and opportunity at hand, we'll be better positioned to ensure accountability and progress when it comes to implementing the AFFH this year.

If you need assistance or if your community has already surfaced valuable data and information about the need to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing, [please reach out](#). We're looking forward to moving this forward together!

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Pro-Black and Pro-Indigenous Systems Transformation

While progress of any kind can grab our attention, we know that the tools of white supremacy are hard at work preventing that progress from reaching too far into our communities. That is why the team at Funders Together is keeping our [Strategic Framework](#) close at hand as the first major policy advocacy opportunities of the year unfold. It's a reminder and touchstone that we must strive for our sector to "***understand the legacy of racism in its practices and policies and with that knowledge reimagine and transform systems to be Pro-Black and Pro-Indigenous using an intersectional lens to achieve housing and racial justice.***"

As we celebrate unprecedented protections for renters, we must hold that this race-neutral approach falls short of our aspirations for housing justice and fails to address the market dynamics that are driving housing insecurity and homelessness, disproportionately harming Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.

As these opportunities cross our desks, we can walk with the wisdom of Grace Lee Boggs and ask, "How we can change ourselves to change the world?" In this case, how can philanthropy cede our power and influence as our community approaches this opportunity? How can we share our resources, voice, and power with members of our community to achieve a more just and powerful outcome than we were offered?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together:**
 - [Letter to California Governor Gavin Newsom on Need for a Permanent Revenue Source for Housing Justice](#)
- **National Coalition for Housing Justice:**
 - [National Coalition for Housing Justice Responds to Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)
 - [Involuntary Hospitalization of People Experiencing Homelessness or Mental Illness Perpetuates Harm and Trauma](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [NLIHC Statement on HUD's House America Initiative](#)
 - [Key Provisions Of The 2023 Proposed AFFH Rule](#)
 - [Civils Rights and Housing Organizations Supporting Proposed Fair Housing Rule](#)
 - [HUD Announces Proposed Fair Housing Rule; NLIHC Releases Statement in Support](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [Homelessness in 2023: What Can Congress Do?](#)
 - [New Year, New Goals for Ending Homelessness](#)
 - [What Does the New AHAR Report Tells Us About Family Homelessness?](#)
 - [What Can FY23 Funding Do for Homelessness?](#)
- **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness:**
 - [All In 101: Webinar Recording and Slides: Overview of New Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)
- **The White House:**

- Fact Sheet: [Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Protect Renters and Promote Rental Affordability](#)

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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[Funders Together to End Homelessness](#)

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