



# Funders Together

## TO END HOMELESSNESS



### Policy Alert

#### **What's Happening: Holding the Line to Protect Federal Investments in Housing & Other Critical Domestic Programs**

Threats to default on the nation's debt are being used as leverage to move forward with a [Republican proposal](#) that will reduce funding for domestic programs and limit future spending increases to 1% annually for 10 years, rescind unspent COVID-19 relief funds, and put in place rigid work requirements for some anti-poverty programs, among other harmful provisions. [House Republicans are voting on their proposal](#) this week - as soon as Wednesday, April 26.

This approach will harm millions of people served by federal programs at a time when rents are rising, we are seeing an increase in homelessness, and more and more evictions are happening in communities across the country. It is a political move that will have a dramatic impact on people, especially those in historically marginalized communities, and serves as an unnecessary distraction from the work of governing and developing the [FY24 budget](#).

The Biden-Harris Administration and Democrats in Congress will likely oppose proposals that include large cuts to domestic programs. However, there is concern that there may be a forced compromise to avoid defaulting on the national debt or a government shutdown.

As the National Low Income Housing Coalition [points out](#), the debt ceiling is the legal limit on the maximum amount of debt the federal government can accrue to finance obligations that have already been approved by Congress. Moody's Analytics estimates a default on the national debt would result in impacts similar to those of the Great Recession where we saw 6 million jobs lost, an unemployment rate as high as 9%, and \$15 trillion lost in household wealth. While the U.S. Department of the Treasury may be able to use extraordinary measures to continue to pay federal obligations until June, there will be a risk of defaulting on the federal debt at that point.

We are in the midst of an incredible need for federal investments in affordable housing and solutions to prevent and end homelessness. Any reduction in funding for critical housing and homelessness programs will slow efforts to advance housing justice and result in significant harm to individuals and families across the country - with a disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. Strong advocacy rooted in justice is needed to push and hold our leaders accountable to the people they serve and ensure that these programs are protected from threatened cuts.

## How Philanthropy Can Take Action

Now is the time for advocates to push their Representatives and Senators to protect the domestic programs our communities rely on and to urge further investments in affordable housing and homeless services, reminding them that level funding is still a decrease in resources that will have dramatic impacts.

**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 and urge them to increase – not cut – [critical investments in housing](#), [ending homelessness](#), and community development in FY24. You can also sign [your organization on to the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding's \(CHCDF\) annual budget letter](#), calling on Congress to reject spending cuts and instead provide the highest possible allocation for HUD's and USDA's affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs in FY24.

**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 and the impact of remaining at FY22 levels for the next decade. You can also encourage your trustees to advocate for robust levels of federal investments in housing and homelessness services.

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: Holding Leaders Accountable to our Potential for Justice

In 2011, when the Republican-controlled House demanded steep budget cuts in exchange for lifting the debt ceiling, the programs that were hardest hit for the 10 years that followed included those used to finance the construction and preservation of affordable homes, including homes for low-income seniors and people with disabilities; those providing resources for community development; and those supporting the operation of public housing. While other programs, such as those providing rental assistance and resources to repair public housing, received an increase in funding, most of this increase was needed to cover inflationary costs. The impacts of this has been evident over the past decade.

Our communities are striving to become places where everyone has an affordable, accessible, quality place to call home. No one should have to choose between paying the rent and putting food on the table or paying for medications. This is a false choice people are given - mainly as a consequence of poor policymaking and white supremacy. Our

elected officials must stop prioritizing politics over people. In pursuit of justice, we must hold them accountable to that. Philanthropy plays a critical role in supporting accountability mechanisms by resourcing our community partners in their advocacy, convening stakeholders, and being bold in our positions of housing justice as racial justice through our public-private partnerships.

Federal investments in affordable housing provide households with the resources they need to afford a roof over their head. Rather than cutting housing investments, we need to expand housing assistance to ensure it is universally available to every eligible household. **This budget advocacy season, all partners in the housing justice movement, including philanthropy, must be bold in supporting justice-oriented advocacy efforts for robust federal funding and continue to align to [our values in pursuit of housing justice](#).**

---

### Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together:**
  - 2023 Funders Forum Recording: [What True Philanthropic Partnership and Accountability Look Like in Housing Justice Work](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
  - [President's Housing Proposals Are Both Practical and Progressive](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
  - [What Communities Need to Know About the Criminalization of Homelessness](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
  - [Oppose Dramatic Cuts to Federal Investments In Affordable Housing](#)
- **Opportunity Starts at Home:**
  - [The Coming Threat of Dramatic Budget Cuts and the Impact on Affordable Housing](#)

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.

Lauren Bennett  
Director of Communications and Policy  
[Funders Together to End Homelessness](#)

Funders Together to End Homelessness

This email was sent to [lauren@funderstogether.org](mailto:lauren@funderstogether.org). To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).