



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Federal Efforts to Bolster the Fair Housing Act Need Public Support

Next Monday, April 10th, the public comment period will close for input on the Administration's proposed rule to [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing \(AFFH\)](#).

Funders Together and Funders for Housing and Opportunity created [A Guide for Philanthropy: Supporting Efforts to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing \(AFFH\) and Advance Housing Justice](#) to assist you in ensuring your communities' voices are heard on this critical issue by submitting public comment in support of the rule while also providing recommendations to strengthen it with a justice-lens. We encourage you to use the talking points included in the guide as a reference and resource to help refine your comments to be specific to your organizations', communities', and states' experiences and needs.

The AFFH rule, as proposed by the Administration, will require federally funded housing programs to identify fair housing issues, set priorities, and establish community Equity Plans. The rule builds on the Obama Administration's [original 2015 policy](#) and prioritizes community engagement, transparency, oversight, and accountability in advance of this unmet mandate of the Fair Housing Act. **To learn more, [review our AFFH Proposed Rule Action page](#) and watch the recording of our [AFFH Policy Call from March 14th](#).**

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

Beyond submitting public comments, philanthropy can co-lead and support communities in reflecting on local history and the impact of racial segregation and subjugation through housing policy over time. That reflection is important data for HUD and local partners to understand as clearly as possible in order to leverage the new rule to the advantage of housing justice.

In addition, philanthropy can help increase participation in this final week by sharing critical information about AFFH and creating space for more voices to be reflected in your community analysis through grantees and partners. 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.

As a reminder, submitting comments to proposed regulatory changes is NOT considered lobbying. Private foundations can provide comments in response to this proposed rule, and

public charities, like community foundations, can do so [without tracking and reporting it as lobbying on their 990s](#).

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Supporting Equity While Moving Towards Justice

As we've shared in [recent policy updates](#), this public comment period is an important opportunity for philanthropy to demonstrate our values and support community organizers advocating for more resources, accountability, and access to housing resources, particularly for communities of color who have been most impacted by the insufficient and incomplete implementation of the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

On the receiving end of public input, our comments offer an opportunity for HUD to better understand the obstacles, opportunities, and needs of your community. With this rule, it is our hope and expectation that communities will have a more functional set of tools and supports from federal partners to not only dismantle structural racism within our housing systems and processes, but to also rebuild systems that are oriented toward housing justice and to begin to repair the harm and disservice done to communities of color through decades of redlining, segregation, gentrification, and divestment.

At Funders Together, housing justice is our [North Star](#). We seek a society that assures safe, secure, affordable, and dignified living conditions where people have power and agency over how and where they live. While the AFFH proposed rule is not transformative in its current form, it is centered in equity and an important milestone on the road to justice and liberation. As we set our sights beyond equity to move towards a more just and liberated society, we are dedicated to supporting and holding accountable our federal and local partners to their commitments of racial equity and the principle that we must level the playing field that is housing opportunity. At the same time, we must continue to challenge and push our partners to think and act in ways that are rooted in justice and will advance us towards transformational change.

If you have questions about the talking points, or would like help in crafting unique messaging to include with your public comment, feel free to reach out to Amanda Andere at amanda@funderstogether.org or myself at lauren@funderstogether.org.

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together:**
 - [AFFH Proposed Rule Action Resources for Philanthropy](#)
 - Funder Call Recording: [AFFH Proposed Rule and Immediate Actions for Philanthropy](#)
 - [AFFH Public Comment Talking Points for Philanthropy](#)
- **Alliance for Housing Justice:**
 - [Understanding AFFH](#)
 - [AFFH Sign-On](#)
- **PolicyLink:**
 - [AFFH Public Comment Guide](#)
 - [Our Housing Futures AFFH Proposed Rule webinar recording](#)

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:**

- [AFFH Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#)

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

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