



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Government Shutdown Averted Until Mid-November | No House Majority Leadership

Last Saturday, a government shutdown was avoided (for now) as [Congress passed a continuing resolution](#) for government spending at FY23 levels until Nov. 17, awaiting final appropriations bills. With a little over a month until the next deadline and the [Speaker of the House position vacant](#) since Tuesday, most expect the race for Speaker to eclipse priorities around funding negotiations and appropriations for House Republicans.

Senators on both sides of the aisle have publicly said they hope to work closely with new House leadership to pass comprehensive spending bills ahead of the Nov. 17 deadline, though they continue to face obstinance from the House's far right caucus.

The political calculations of a government shutdown are clear and intentional: members of our communities historically underserved by the government are sure to be impacted first, most severely and individually by a government shutdown. Last week, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack estimated that mere days of a government shutdown could affect access for the 7 million pregnant people, mothers and children enrolled in WIC. [Recipients of the WIC program](#), which includes 53% of newborns in the country, are more likely to be families of color, a direct result of centuries of economic oppression of people of color.

A shutdown of any length is unnecessary. Our communities face continued inflation pressures – particularly in the housing market – a looming recession, COVID-19 rates spiking again, and increasing rates of natural disasters as a result of climate change, all of which are more likely to impact communities of color across the country. These facts render any consideration of a shutdown in November a cruel and irresponsible political tactic.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

If you can engage in direct lobbying as a public foundation or United Way, we urge you to call on Members of the House of Representatives to put an end to the potential of a shutdown and a return to honest governance by passing a federal budget that fully funds housing programs and homelessness services. Organizations are encouraged to sign onto the National Low Income Housing Coalition's [letter urging Congress](#) to pass a budget expanding funding for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs in the FY24 budget.

If you are a private foundation or unable to partake in direct lobbying activities, contact local policymakers to educate and inform them about what communities of color are facing in your area in light of a potential shutdown and amplify demands from historically marginalized and routinely underserved communities for supplemental and ample services as a form of justice and repair. You can also encourage your trustees to utilize their voice to educate both the public and government partners about the detrimental impacts of a government shutdown and urge them to do their job.

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.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Connecting Housing Justice and Civic Engagement for Thriving Communities

Historical analysis and critical race theory teach us that systemic failures and their impacts, like a shutdown, can be traced to policies and systems specifically designed to protect white communities. These politics are just the latest in a long-term and incisively strategic effort to push back against the shifting to and wielding of power by Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. We cannot stand for it and we must not validate it. Philanthropy must support communities that have been marginalized by shifting and building power to change and implement policies that most impact them.

Housing justice cannot be achieved until individuals that have been marginalized - including people with lived experience - are not just heard by our local, state, and federal government leaders, but are in decision-making positions themselves. Civic engagement opportunities among all communities, but especially by Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, is critical to our housing justice aims and vice versa. As we explore how to work through a framework of abundance and come together as cross-sector issues, our intersecting movements for racial justice values must work collectively to resource a future that gives people power and agency over how and where they live. And understanding the connection between housing justice, civic engagement, and power-shifting is essential to this work.

As philanthropy, you should consider:

- What can you and your institution do to help identify potential gaps in food, nutrition, and housing assistance locally, should a shutdown come to pass?
- Who do you know working to advance civic engagement in your state or area? What do housing justice advocates have to offer those organizations, and vice versa? How might you build bridges and facilitate relationships for the most impact?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Partisan House Appropriations Bills Underfund Non-Defense Priorities and Are a Sharp Break From the Bipartisan Debt Ceiling Agreement](#)

- [Policy Basics: Introduction to the Federal Budget Process](#)
- [Record Rise in Poverty Highlights Importance of Child Tax Credit; Health Coverage Marks a High Point Before Pandemic Safeguards Ended](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [Potential Government Shutdown: What You Need to Know](#)
- **National Housing Law Project:**
 - [A Guide to HUD Tenants' Rights During a Government Shutdown](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Federal Government Stays Open After Congress Reaches Agreement on Continuing Resolution – Take Action!](#)
 - [Impacts of Government Shutdowns & Long-Term CRs on Affordable Housing, Community Development, & Homelessness Assistance Programs](#)

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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