



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: 12 Days to Avert a Government Shutdown | Congress Considers Defunding Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)

New Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson opened debate today and will call for votes this week on several harmful amendments to the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) budget.

As reported in [our last policy update](#), several members of Congress proposed amendments to deepen structural racism and drive further housing instability through changes to longstanding federal housing and homelessness programs. As shared by our partners at the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) and [True Colors United](#), Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC) filed an amendment to prevent [implementation of the Equal Access rule](#) which protects transgender and non-gender conforming people from shelter and service discrimination by ensuring they can access HUD-funded shelters consistent with their gender identity.

While advocates succeeded in getting the vote postponed last week, due to a suspension of rules on the House floor, all amendments will go to a vote including Amendment 13 on the Equal Access Rule and another proposed to defund the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS Program (HOPWA). The National AIDS Housing Coalition and other advocates hope to retain the President's proposed \$6 million increase in funding as cutting the program would lead to a direct increase in homelessness for thousands.

The [Senate bill](#), passed on Nov. 1, increased funding for Homelessness Assistance Grants and Native housing programs, but would make at least 6,000 Housing Choice Vouchers nonrenewable. House proposals would cut approximately 40,000 vouchers, according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

Congress has 12 days to pass all funding bills in order to avert a federal government shutdown beginning on Nov. 18.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

While advocates have made progress on an issue-by-issue basis amid the turmoil of the House of Representatives, Congress is still wavering on how boldly to support our housing justice priorities. We call on our members and partners to join us in rallying support for

Congress to pass a budget that supports all people and ensures our communities can thrive.

If you can engage in direct lobbying as a public foundation or United Way, we urge you to call on your Members of the House of Representatives to vote **against** all racist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, and otherwise harmful legislation.

Please join partners nationwide in calling on Congress to vote against:

- Eliminating funding for the Housing for Persons with AIDs (HOPWA) program
- Prohibiting HUD from implementing or enforcing its Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule
- Preventing HUD from advancing racial equity or diversity, including amendments
- Cutting funding to the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
- Weakening HUD's Equal Access rule and allowing shelters to discriminate against transgender individuals experiencing homelessness
- Preventing HUD from providing financial assistance to certain able-bodied individuals
- Cutting funding in half for Community Development Block Grants
- Forcing mixed-status immigrant households to separate or face eviction from HUD housing
- Reducing HUD funding by \$4.95 billion or to FY19 levels
- Cutting funding for fair housing activities and rental assistance
- Imposing rigid work requirements and drug testing
- Undermine HUD's ability to use evidence-based approaches to address homelessness

Housing justice advocates can vocalize direct opposition to the proposed actions outlined below with members of the relevant [House](#) and [Senate](#) appropriations committees. Organizations are encouraged to contact their members of Congress to address these issues [with the help of NLIHC](#) and the [NAEH](#).

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 and how funding cuts, a government shutdown, and in the policies and spending outlined above will impact your community. 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: Resourcing Both the Fight and Recovery

It is no secret that advocates, organizers, frontline staff, and people in marginalized communities across the country are experiencing burnout and high rates of emotional and physical fatigue in the midst of ongoing stressful political, traumatic, and racist events in our

country and around the world. With ongoing turmoil in Congress, ever-growing threats of a government shutdowns and budget cuts, and the upcoming election year, this burnout will continue, and likely increase.

This is only compounded when philanthropy is quick to fund the fight, but not the recovery, [as Erica Totten says](#).

Advancing housing justice requires an important balance of addressing the urgency of now along with putting energy into the future vision we want to achieve. And the work to do this is taxing. As philanthropy, there is a unique opportunity to address this by funding rest and well-being before, during, and after hard fought efforts for housing justice and liberation.

Recovery goes beyond a gift card or day off -- it means sustained, non prescriptive, and well-resourced environments and opportunities for people to access collective and self care. When people have agency over their well-being by prioritizing what care and restoration means for them, the conditions are created to renew the spirit and energy to achieve the mission of just and liberated communities. The type of care that is needed is often not funded by government contracts or other means of public dollars. Private philanthropy, however, can provide the resources that create the space necessary to support the whole-person involved in our collective work — not just as campaign organizing in an election year, but for long-term work. [Tell us](#):

- What type of rest and recovery does your institution resource for staff? How can you develop similar resources with your community partners?
- What additional resources can your institution lend to fund the recovery, amidst the fight?
- What more can your networks do to tighten their support for organizers doing often unseen frontline work?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Final Appropriations Package Will Need Additional Funding to Avoid Rental Assistance Cuts](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [Stop the House of Representatives From Cutting Funding and Increasing Homelessness](#)
- **National Housing Law Project:**
 - [A Guide to HUD Tenants' Rights During a Government Shutdown](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Add Your Organization to Letter Urging Congress to Invest in Affordable Housing and Community Development Programs in Fiscal Year 2024](#)
 - [Senate Passes FY24 HUD Spending Bill with Bipartisan Support While House Bill and Damaging Amendments Stall](#)

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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