



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: FY24 Federal Budget Still in Negotiation | U.S. Supreme Court on Johnson v Grants Pass Update

In mid-January, Congress pass another continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open, pushing the new deadline for an FY24 spending bill to March 1. Last week, [appropriation leaders reportedly reached an agreement](#) on topline spending for domestic spending bills, including for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD).

While the spending totals haven't been made public yet, leaked funding levels for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) suggest a major increase in the FY24 budget which leads advocates to believe HUD funding, as well as other domestic programs, is at risk of being cut and will put additional stress on an already inadequate budget that fails to meet the needs.

For example, according to our partners at the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#), "As proposed, [neither the House nor Senate draft THUD spending bills](#) provide substantial enough funding to renew all existing Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) contracts: under the House bill, an estimated 112,000 vouchers would be lost upon turnover, while under the Senate bill, an estimated 80,000 vouchers would be lost." This makes advocacy all the more important for both FY24 and FY25, as we anticipate the President's proposed FY25 budget to be released in March.

As this unfolds, strategy is happening among housing justice advocates at both local and national levels around the [SCOTUS Johnson v Grants Pass case](#) as we prepare for oral arguments to take place in late April. [As a reminder](#), if the SCOTUS does not rule in favor of upholding the current precedent for this case, local and state governments will legally be able to criminalize people experiencing homelessness who are trying to meet their basic needs. This is the most significant SCOTUS case about homelessness and the rights of people experiencing homeless in decades.

On January 31, Funders Together [held a funder briefing](#) with our partners at the [National Homelessness Law Center](#) to provide an overview of the case, its impacts, and then engaged in a strategy conversation around how philanthropy can support coordination efforts.

Funders Together dues-paying members can access the recording to the overview of the case and its impacts [here](#). If you have questions about the case and how philanthropy can

support power-build efforts, [please let us know](#) and we can directly connect you with our partners at the National Homelessness Law Center.

To learn more about the Johnson v. City of Grants Pass case, visit www.johnsonvgrantspass.com.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

It is critical for advocacy to continue and increase to ensure HUD receives full and robust federal funding for housing and homelessness programs for FY24 and federal budgets in the immediate years to come.

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 the White House and congressional 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 \(CHCDF\) letter](#), calling on Congress to 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 your grantee partners are experiencing around affordable housing and housing instability and the impact inadequate funding will have on your community. If your trustees have the ability to weigh in directly with leadership, encourage them to be vocal about the need to hold strong on continual robust housing and homelessness federal resources.

In addition, all philanthropy has an opportunity and obligation to engage in protecting the rights of our neighbors experiencing homelessness. As local and national partners are working in coalition to implement strategy around the SCOTUS Johnson v Grants Pass case, there are crucial opportunities for engagement from philanthropy as leaders in your communities, such as:

- Supporting grantee partners in submitting a "friends of the court" brief (or an amicus brief) before oral arguments begin in April and consider submitting your own.
- Providing the spaciousness to strategize by supporting convening opportunities for partners, people with lived experience, funder peers, and community leaders.
- Considering flexible rapid response resources for housing justice narrative and messaging work that can be utilize before and after a decision.
- Exploring how your institution, board, or trustees can utilize influence and connections in new and creative ways.

[View the recording from our January 31 funder briefing](#) with the National Homelessness Law Center about the case.

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: Leaning Into the Moment

As mentioned in [past policy updates](#), the decision by SCOTUS to hear Johnson v Grants Pass guarantees generational impacts on housing justice efforts. How the Supreme Court rules will either uphold values that create a path for housing justice to be realized. Or - it will give permission for this country to expand efforts on criminalizing and incarcerating Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and marginalized identities who disproportionately experience homelessness.

Philanthropy has a unique position and ability to lean into this moment we are at as a country and model love and disruption. By abundantly resourcing people and movement organizations like we believe housing justice is possible in our generation, the possibilities of what can be achieved expands in new and different ways. Funders should explore creative and justice-centered approaches to invest in people and the movement that provide a foundation to not just win, but avoid potential future threats to the rights, well-being, and safety of all people. We aren't just investing for impact today, but for generations to come.

As philanthropy, we need to ask ourselves: what can we resource now that will open the door for generational impact? How can we lean into the moment now and be flexible with grantmaking so people are protected against future threats to housing and racial justice?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together:**
 - [Policy Update: U.S. Supreme Court Takes Up Landmark Case on Homelessness](#)
 - [Rapid Response Funder Call Recording: Understanding the U.S. Supreme Court Johnson v Grants Pass Case](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Added Funding Needed to Prevent Harmful Cuts to Housing Vouchers and Other Rental Assistance Programs in 2024](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [A Big Year for Homelessness: The Work Ahead in 2024](#)
 - [National Alliance to End Homelessness Statement on Landmark Supreme Court Case on Homelessness](#)
- **National Homelessness Law Center:**
 - [SCOTUS takes up Johnson v. Grants Pass, the most significant case about homelessness in 40+ years](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Appropriations Leaders Continue Talks on FY24 Spending Bills](#)

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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