



Strategic Framework

2022-2025



Funders Together
TO END HOMELESSNESS

Photo: Tinu Roland/Nappy

Words from our CEO

Amanda Andere

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, overdue awakening to structural racism, and rightful continued uprising in our country, I think we've all wrestled with the tension between wanting the world to go back to normal and knowing we can't. I think about this quote often from Sonya Renee Taylor, an author and visionary, who has shared her own lived experience with homelessness:

"We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature."

I have especially thought about the idea of stitching a new garment or planting new seeds and toiling new soil as Aisha Alexandra-Young reminds us that the tree of racism is over 400 years old, the roots are deep, and the fruit they bear is rotten. So, we must uproot the whole thing and start anew.

As we embarked on a new strategic framework for Funders Together over the last two years, we pushed ourselves to ask tough questions about what we believe and how those beliefs are reflected in our values and actions. Our learning, unlearning, and commitment to liberation have led us to affirm while racial equity is an important step in addressing disparities, we will not transform, upend, or rebuild without leading with racial and housing justice at our core and knowing the difference



Photo: Life Matters/Pexels

between equity and justice is essential as we stitch a new garment rooted in liberation.

This strategic framework codifies the ways in which we have been acting and truth-telling for the last couple of years. It is a roadmap for how we want our collective work to be different so we can move beyond systems change and equity, and be led by people with lived expertise towards transformation, justice, and liberation.

We are excited to put forth our vision for how philanthropy can advance housing justice grounded in racial justice and how our organization's North Star is rooted in radical love and collective care, where people can show up as their true authentic selves in radical opposition to the dominant culture.

We want to be bold. We want to model and incubate all the ways we tell funders how to act more justly in community. We want to use joy as a resistance to the oppression we face. We will still be a place where all are welcome on their learning journey towards equity and justice. Our goal is always to meet folks where they are, but not leave them there.

We want to imagine with you a world beyond incremental change in housing justice policy and resources and begin to uproot the commodification of housing. We will get there together. We wrestle with hard truths. We will not always agree on the path, but hopefully when we get to the place of a more liberated community where housing for all is a reality, we will look back and thank ourselves for not sitting in the comfort of small change but rejoice with joy in the ability to reimagine community rooted in housing and racial justice. Thank you for your continued partnership. Thank you for taking this journey with us into a sacred space of truth-telling, reconciliation, and transformation.



Amanda Andere
Chief Executive Officer
Funders Together to
End Homelessness



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Overview

Between May 2020 to May 2021, Funders Together to End Homelessness (Funders Together) embarked on a strategic planning process in collaboration with Wayfinding Partners. The goal was to develop organizational capacity and action steps to actualize Funders Together's demonstrated commitment to racial equity and housing justice. Throughout the process, Funders Together built on previous work, including the 2016-2020 strategy plan and our [Commitment to Racial Equity](#). As an organization, board and staff contended with and further articulated Funders Together's mission, vision, and guiding principles as well as its strategic priorities in pursuit of housing justice.

In this document, you'll find a comprehensive recap of Wayfinding Partners' work with Funders Together to gather information, surface alignment, and map the organization's next steps over the next 3 to 5 years. While this is designed as a living document knowing that our actions may change in response to unknown and unanticipated developments in the world, the vision, mission, and strategic

positioning and priorities offer a foundation and a compass for charting a new course.

How to Read The Strategic Framework

This document contains Funders Together's Strategic Framework for 2022-2025. Because it is unrealistic to expect that all our objectives will go as planned, we've mapped core components in the form of **North Star Coordinates** and **Strategic Pathways**.

The **North Star Coordinates** tell us *who* we are, *what* we believe, and *why* we do the work we do. As change is inevitable, we will return to these coordinates to guide us to decisions that advance Funders Together's mission and vision.

The **Strategic Pathways** provide a narrative of *where* we are in our journey – our organizational life-cycle. They help us focus on strengths we want to refine and possibilities we want to grow into. The subsequent actions give us a *how* for moving along the pathway. These Strategic Pathways will be revisited each fiscal year.



Background

Building on our existing commitment to housing and racial justice, Funders Together's new strategic planning process began in the summer of 2020. During this time, we witnessed the global COVID-19 crisis and the rightful racial justice uprisings because of the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and other Black people in the U.S. Given the disproportionate people of color experiencing homelessness, specifically Black people, the public reckonings created a new environment for Funders Together to move the field forward through the aspirational direction of our work for housing and racial justice.

In August 2020, Wayfinding Partners met with CEO, Amanda Andere, and Chief Strategy Officer, Stephanie Chan,¹ as well as the board's strategic planning working group to begin the Discovery phase. As part of Discovery, Wayfinding Partners collected data from more than 30 stakeholders through one-on-one empathy interviews, two (2) focus groups, and a community survey. Stakeholders

Photo: JMacPherson/Flickr

¹. At the time of the strategic framework initiative was launched, Stephanie Chan was in her former role of Director of Membership and Programs.



Photo: Kelly L/Pexels

represented a cross-section of Funders Together members, partners, and the board. Discovery culminated in November 2020 with Wayfinding Partners' development of an Insight Report, an overview of thematic findings and strategic questions from the Discovery phase.

The Strategy Development phase began in late November 2020 at the two-day Funders Together Board Retreat. A facilitated discussion between board and staff resulted in prioritization of two "Big Questions":

- Does Funders Together want to be a philanthropy serving organization (PSO) that serves philanthropy or a PSO that works to end homelessness? How does this inform our strategic position?
 - Who holds Funders Together accountable? What is our role in holding the sector accountable?
- In December 2020, at a follow-up retreat for Funders Together staff a foundational question emerged. Funders Together's work addresses the intersectionality of multiple sectors affecting homelessness, including but not limited to health, environmental, criminal legal system, education, and workforce development. Staff identified a desire to be even more intentional and targeted to achieve greater impact. Is Funders Together ready to go deeper as opposed to broad in our housing justice work by remaining committed to bringing a cross-sector approach and being more intentional about intersectional issue partnerships?



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North Star Coordinates

Who We Are and Where We Are Going

True justice and liberation cannot be achieved until we confront and hold accountable the reality that the current ways philanthropy operates needs to be dismantled, then reoriented and reimagined towards a more liberated way of resourcing communities. To that end, we use the following as our North

Star in our work for transformational housing and racial justice with the aspiration that philanthropy's resources that were born out of the oppression of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, will be returned to these communities.

Housing Justice

Housing is a fundamental human right.

Housing justice is a building block for racial justice and liberation. A just housing society offers the assurance of safe, secure, affordable, and dignified living conditions where people have power and agency over how and where they live.

Housing justice recognizes that for generations equitable access to housing has been denied to Black and Indigenous people and other communities of color, which has fueled the disproportionate numbers of Black and other people of color experiencing homelessness.

By pursuing housing justice, Funders Together is unapologetically stating that homelessness is a racialized experience created and exacerbated by the forces of structural racism. Funders Together advocates for corrective action, such as reparations, to address the cumulative disparities and transform systems of accountability to ensure housing for all.

Vision

In collaboration with our members and partners, the housing and homelessness fields will understand the legacy of racism in its practices and policies and with that knowledge reimagine and transform systems to be Pro-Black and Pro-Indigenous using an intersectional lens to achieve housing and racial justice.

Mission

Funders Together to End Homelessness mobilizes its members to use philanthropy's voice, influence, and financial capital to end homelessness by creating and advancing lasting solutions that are grounded in racial and housing justice, driven by love and disruption, and centering people with lived expertise.

Guiding Principles

With respect to each area of work, Funders Togethers' strategic positioning is informed by the following guiding principles/questions:

Centering Housing Justice

Recognizing racial equity is the starting point, how might we refine our focus to identify the differences and parallels between racial equity and racial justice, thus elevating Pro-Black and Pro-Indigenous solutions that realize housing justice as racial justice?

Reframing Philanthropy's Point of View on Homelessness and Housing Justice

How might we use our position as a "philanthropy-mobilizing organization" to carry out our unapologetic justice stance?

Implementing with Intention

How might we move with intention *and* uplift our wellbeing to help us prioritize what we say yes and no to?

Organizational Wellness

How do we model wellness and liberation internally so we can serve as external ambassadors for housing justice?



Photo: Disabled and Here



Charting the Course

Strategic Pathways

Strategic Pathways

Throughout the strategic alignment retreats, Funders Together Board and staff affirmed that prompting bold action to achieve housing justice is central to our organization's purpose. To achieve this, we will leverage philanthropy's voice and grantmaking power to influence policy and transform the philanthropic sector via four areas of impact:²

- Programming
- Funders Together Network
- Public Policy and Advocacy
- Organizational Sustainability

What follows are the actions we plan to take along each of these strategic pathways.

Strategic Intention

Our strategic pathways are driven by an intention to move the philanthropic sector towards investing in power-building and power-sharing. Philanthropy has tools beyond grantmaking to end homelessness and achieve housing justice. In fact, grantmaking is not enough. Justice requires all of us to take a bold, unapologetic look at the dynamics that perpetuate racial inequity, and then take the necessary steps to rectify it.

² These areas were previously identified in the 2016-2020 strategic plan.

Strategic Pathways:

Programming

Funders Together's role is to help philanthropy understand the link between homelessness and housing justice so that philanthropy can advance its equity and justice-centered grantmaking and advocacy.

To that end, we will:

- Endeavor to reframe philanthropy's point of view on housing justice by engaging our members in dialogue that advances their thinking around issues of structural racism, white supremacy, and racial justice
- Prioritize and be purposefully selective with our work and intentions, in order to maximize our impact

Funders Together Network

The purpose of Funders Together is to promote bold vision and action in pursuit of housing justice. We believe we are well-positioned to guide our members, philanthropy, and the housing justice movement in confronting the power dynamics embedded within philanthropy and the racialized disparities amongst individuals and communities experiencing homelessness. As our core focus is to mobilize philanthropy, we define the Funders Together Network as consisting of our philanthropic members. We acknowledge, however, that expanding our sphere of influence and partnership beyond philanthropy to include the broader housing justice movement partners will create the conditions for transformational change.

To that end, we will:

- Engage with member requests that are aligned with and rooted in equity and justice, while still serving as a resource for requests outside our framework
- Seed and incubate in partnership with the field to model for our members what is possible in the work for housing and racial justice through coalition-building
- Support and engage broader field partners and coalitions in housing justice action

Public Policy and Advocacy

Funders Together leverages philanthropy's voice to influence public policy and transform the philanthropic sector's role in advocacy. We believe we are positioned to elevate and diversify the voices of organizers and activists doing regional work and center individuals with lived expertise.

To that end, we will:

- Develop and share a framework for members to use to assess their advocacy funding with a focus on increasing resources and accessibility
- Promote accountability by supporting our members in the tracking of their progress on a continuum of racial equity and justice funding
- Engage with our members and change partners aligned with our goals in order to expand our capacity

Organizational Sustainability

Justice work is life's work, yet we must not let this work overtake our wellbeing. Embedded within the notion of justice is liberation from systems of oppression. We run counter to our guiding principles if we sacrifice our wellness to the demands of our day-to-day work.

In pursuit of this pathway, we will:

- Model internal accountability by prioritizing and pursuing projects that align with housing justice and racial equity and justice as outlined in our North Star Coordinates
- Respect and elevate wellness as embedded in the just and liberated future we seek for all.



Funders Together
TO END HOMELESSNESS

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