



Funders Together

HOMELESSNESS ENDS HERE

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL

EQUITY

Adapted from the National Working Group on
Racial Equity and Homelessness Shared Values

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This commitment articulates how Funders Together to End Homelessness (FTEH) has and will use a racial equity lens to support our members and the philanthropic sector to shift its practice, policy and grantmaking actions and how we will foster greater diversity, equity, and inclusion¹ within FTEH as an organization. We encourage this document and its language to be a template or guide for funders to use in their own statements and work around addressing racial inequities in housing and homelessness.

Our commitment begins with revising our Mission, Vision, and Values to better represent a racial equity lens in our work:

Revised Mission Statement:

Funders Together to End Homelessness will mobilize its members to utilize the voice, influence, and expertise of philanthropy in ways that will advance lasting solutions to ending homelessness, including addressing its underlying causes like structural and racial inequities, and helping create policies and systems that center people with lived expertise.

Revised Vision Statement:

Because of the contributions from Funders Together to End Homelessness to this work, homelessness is a rare, short-term, and one-time event, and housing and services opportunities are not conditioned by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other personal characteristics.



¹For readers who are new to these terms, as well as other equitable language used throughout this document, we have provided a helpful Glossary at the end.

WE RECOGNIZE...

We recognize that because of historical and current structural racism:



People of color are dramatically overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness — comprising approximately **60%** of the homeless population in America, compared to **39%** of the general population.

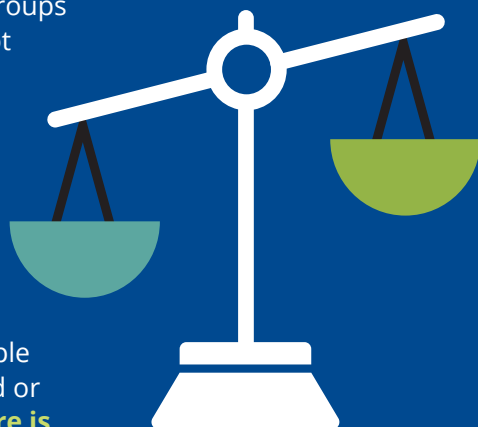


Young people of color are especially impacted, with as many as **9 out of 10** young adults who experience homelessness identifying as people of color.



Research has shown that Black Americans and Native Americans are the **most likely** to experience homelessness.

All racial and ethnic groups are affected, albeit not equally. For example, Asian Americans **are underrepresented** among those seeking homelessness assistance, and it is unclear whether Latin(x)/Hispanic people are underrepresented or undercounted as **there is not adequate data**.



WE UNDERSTAND...

We understand that:

- Structural and racial inequities are a root cause of homelessness.
- Historical and persistent racial discrimination in housing, employment, healthcare, education, criminal justice, and other systems contribute to high rates of homelessness for people of color.
- People of color have been excluded from opportunities for home ownership, wealth accumulation, and economic mobility throughout the history of America.

WE BELIEVE...

Because of this, we believe:

- To develop lasting solutions to homelessness, it is our collective responsibility to address its underlying causes, including racial inequity and government sanctioned racism.
- The homeless crisis response system must look at its systems and ensure that they are not perpetuating inequity.
- Our work must center racial equity to strengthen existing strategies and solutions and create new approaches that more effectively recognize and meet the needs of people of color experiencing homelessness.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

These inequities are reflected in the funding practices of private philanthropy. As Funders Together, we recognize our organizational practices, policies, and programs should encourage philanthropy to take explicit actions to structurally change funding behaviors and norms.

OUR 8 COMMITMENTS

In partnership with philanthropy that is committed to prevent and end homelessness, we will:



Advocate that funders support prevention strategies—to the extent we are able—to stem the inflow of people of color into the homelessness system. We will advocate that homeless service systems and local leaders partner with other public systems—particularly criminal justice and child welfare—to better understand how these systems can address racial inequity, and help prevent and end homelessness.



Where we have influence, **engage people of color with lived expertise of homelessness** in efforts to develop programs, set public policy, conduct research, and redesign how the crisis response system works.



Engage in short- and long-term strategies to center racial equity in Funders Together's response to homelessness.



Commit to learning more about the systemic racism and anti-black, anti-native, and other forms of violence and oppression that is our nation's history and our present so that we can educate ourselves and our members about how this results in disproportionate homelessness among people of color.



Commit to diversity of speakers in all in-person and virtual presentations, panels, public talks, and other programs.



Commit to providing ongoing training and learning, through Funders Together, that will allow us to analyze data through a racial equity perspective, and encourage our members to make policy, budget, and programmatic decisions based on this analysis.



Commit to improve organizational skills and capacity to address racial inequity in homelessness—including diversity in board and executive leadership, career pathways for emerging leaders of color, equity-focused competencies in hiring and promotion, skills-based anti-racism training for all staff and board, and engagement with broader anti-racism initiatives.



Use an intersectional lens and analysis to understand how experiences of systemic racism and homelessness are also shaped by gender and gender identity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other factors, so that our analysis and strategies respond to the diverse experiences of people of color.



OUR 4 ASPIRATIONS

With philanthropy committed to preventing and ending homelessness, we aspire to:

- 1.** Continue to focus on long-term, population-based solutions to homelessness, including increasing and advocating for affordable housing and employment opportunities for communities and people of color.
- 2.** Recognize homelessness as an immediate, life-threatening crisis for the people who experience it and advocate for policies and approaches that move people quickly from homelessness into housing with adequate support. We will advocate that Black and Native Americans should receive assistance at least in proportion to their presence in the homeless population.
- 3.** Where we have influence, include racial equity in all national, regional, state, and local strategies to prevent and end homelessness.
- 4.** Where we have influence, ensure that research and evaluation efforts are racially-explicit in nature and involve community participation in design and execution.

This is the work of racial justice, anti-oppression, and human rights for all. To accomplish these ambitious aims, we commit to one another and to people experiencing homelessness that we will continue this work until homelessness is a relic of the past.

WALKING THE TALK

Additionally, Funders Together to End Homelessness commits to building a race equity culture, and practices/policies that focus on diversity, equity and inclusion within FTEH. We commit to dedicating financial and human resources to educate ourselves, our members and other funders on institutional racism and the power struggle innate within grantmaking. We commit to addressing structural inequities with the following actions:

- Maintain a Racial Equity board committee to oversee and direct FTEH's work in this area.
- Conduct, and annually revisit, an equity audit of the internal policies and external communications of FTEH to provide internal guidance.
- Ensure that all FTEH programs and policy priorities are developed using a racial equity lens.
- Ensure that policies in governance and organizational administration are conducted using a racial equity lens.
- Regularly promote racial equity throughout FTEH's communication platforms.
- Provide regular learning and training for FTEH board and staff to build capacity around racial and other inequities; including explicit training on structural and historic racism and its impact on systems and policies.
- Intentionally consider and select members from underrepresented and priority populations for the FTEH board of directors and staff (African-American, Native American, Latin(x), and the LGBTQ community).
- Select staff and members for board service whose values include racial equity and social justice.
- Maintain a topic-area webpage on racial equity in homelessness and housing that includes up-to-date research and information for funders and the general public.
- Provide support for individual members and groups of funders who seek to end homelessness and center racial equity in their communities.
- Collaborate with other national, regional, and local organizations who are also working toward greater racial equity in philanthropy.

DEFINITIONS

Equity: Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. We recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It's important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn't always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or 'implicit bias' helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

Intersectionality: The theory that the overlap of various social identities, as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to the specific type of systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual.

Racial Equity: Racial equity is one part of racial justice. Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. Therefore, we also include work that addresses the root causes of inequities and not just their manifestation. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Philanthropic Racial Equity: Racial equity in philanthropy is the investment of social and financial resources in policies, practices, and actions that produce equitable access, power, and outcomes for historically marginalized communities.



Funders Together
TO END HOMELESSNESS


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