



VOICES FOR JUSTICE

in the Movement to End Homelessness

As part of our [Commitment to Racial Equity](#) and in light of the racial justice awakening in this country, Funders Together is sharing statements, articles, and other resources that highlight the voices of Black leaders in the fields of philanthropy, homelessness, and intersecting systems. While it's important for white leaders to speak up, we can further our commitments to racial equity by listening to, learning from, and incorporating the recommendations of Black leadership into not only our grantmaking but also into the structures of our organizations.



Last month, Nikole Hannah-Jones [released a statement](#) about her decision to decline a tenure offer at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). [Mimi Fox Melton](#), CEO of Code2040, wrote a [series of tweets](#) in response to Hannah-Jones's statement that demonstrate how philanthropy perpetuates harm through control and paternalism.

Beyond Surface-Level Change

Racial equity can't be achieved unless we address the white supremacist roots of our systems and country. As funders, it's our responsibility to fund both the immediate needs of communities who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and housing instability, and that we are collaboratively working alongside communities toward equitable systems transformation.

Mimi shares an example of a time when Code2040 received a grant, but was asked to return it after refusing to remove 'white supremacy' from their website at the funder's request. This example highlights how philanthropy can attempt to silence Black, Indigenous, and other people of color who are working to dismantle racist systems. When funders attempt to control how organizations address racism and don't support systems change, they reinforce the power dynamics of white supremacy and lead us further from liberation.

Undoing Philanthropy's Paternalism

Mimi shares, "I can't tell you how many conversations I've been in with funders who richsplains to me how to run our programs. Who suggest new programs they're willing to fund that have nothing to do with our mission. If I address it or redirect, we never hear from them again."

Paternalism goes against the belief that the solutions to ending homelessness lie in the hands of communities who are disproportionately impacted by housing instability and homelessness. Philanthropy cannot, on the one hand, state that Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and people with lived expertise must be centered in the process for creating solutions to end homelessness, and then micro-manage how BIPOC led organizations run their programs. This dynamic reinforces white supremacy and makes it impossible for transformative systems change toward justice and liberation to take place.

[Read the Twitter thread.](#)

Funders Together to End Homelessness

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