



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Time to Build Back Better

Senate leadership hopes to pass the Build Back Better Act before December 25th, but there have been obstacles in getting it to the floor for a vote as it currently stands. Because of this, [advocates are encouraged](#) to continue calling on their Senators to encourage their support for these investments in the Build Back Better Act:

- \$25 billion towards expanding rental assistance
- \$65 billion towards our public housing infrastructure
- \$15 billion towards the national Housing Trust Fund

In addition to these resources, the Build Back Better Act includes investments in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, HOME, rural housing, the Capital Magnet Fund, Section 202, Section 811, and tribal housing programs.

The bill would support a new program to address barriers to zoning reform and create the Community Restoration and Revitalization Fund, which will fund community-based organizations focused on anti-gentrification efforts to planning, implement, and support new rental construction, homeownership, create community land banks, and assist households at risk of displacement.

As Congress prepares to vote on and hopefully pass the Build Back Better Act, national experts are advising members of philanthropy to work with community partners to identify needs and begin paving the way for equitable implementation.

Last week, Ann Oliva, Vice President for Housing at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Sarah Saadian, Vice President of Public Policy at the National Low Income Housing Coalition joined us for a policy call on Leveraging Federal Housing Resources to Equitably Build Back Better. You can [watch the recording](#) and learn more about how philanthropy can support your communities in equitable implementation [here](#).

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

If you are a public foundation or United Way and can engage in direct lobbying, call on your members of Congress to [protect these investments in housing](#) in the Build Back Better Act and encourage the Senate to take up a vote on Build Back Better as it stands. Below are the list of key offices for outreach:

- Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV);
- Senator Krysten Sinema (D-AZ);
- other centrist Democrats in the Senate.

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 you are seeing in your community and hearing from grantee partners around affordable housing and housing instability. You can also encourage your trustees

to advocate for the Build Back Better Act federal investments in housing and homelessness services. Here's an [overview of priorities necessary to advancing housing justice](#).

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.

If you need assistance or talking points, please [contact us](#) or view the [HoUSed campaign toolkit](#) with talking points.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Supporting Housing First in the Work of Housing Justice

Housing is a foundation for thriving and provides the stability we need to take care of our families, earn a living, and to address the many challenges we may face. Funders Together and our members know this to be true, but attacks against people experiencing homelessness and against the Housing First approach to supportive services continue through [misleading media](#) and [legislative initiatives](#). Housing First is an approach that brings dignity and choice to people in the throes of unique and difficult life circumstances. We must not abandon it.

We cannot allow these false narratives to pull focus from what drives homelessness in America: unfettered structural racism, ever-ballooning housing costs benefitting only the wealthy, and exploitatively low wages.

In the face of these continued attacks on proven solutions coupled with the rise of criminalization of homelessness, we are working through the [National Coalition for Housing Justice](#) to respond and create a proactive strategy on the narrative and messaging around homelessness and evidence-based solutions to end it. We are partnering with the newly launched [Housing Narrative Lab](#), supported by FTEH members Melville Charitable Trust and Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to develop this strategy and speak with one voice.

We call on our members and partners to double down on our message: housing justice is racial justice. Housing is a human right.

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together to End Homelessness:**
 - [Leveraging Federal Housing Resources to Equitably Build Back Better](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
 - [Investing in Housing Vouchers Critical to Protecting Children from Hardship, Building More Equitable Future](#)
- **National Coalition for Housing Justice:**
 - [Policing- and punishment-based approaches: A really expensive way to make homelessness worse](#)
- **National Homelessness Law Center:**
 - [Housing Not Handcuffs 2021: State Law Supplement](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Historic Housing Investments in the Build Back Better Act](#)
- **Urban Institute:**
 - [Expanding the Housing Choice Voucher Program Could Bolster Renter Stability in the Face of a Worsening Affordability Crisis](#)

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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