



Summary: Making Sense of Federal Policy Series

Funder Briefing: 5

Date: April 10, 2025

Topic: [Making Sense of Federal Policy: Understanding What it Means for NJ: Housing](#)

Speakers: Adam Gordon, Executive Director — Fair Share Housing Center;

Elisa Harrigan, Policy Strategist — Fund for Housing and Opportunity;

Taiisa Kelly, CEO — Monarch Housing Associates;

Janel Winter, Assistant Commissioner — Division of Housing and Community Affairs;

Moderator: Lucy Vandenberg, Executive Director — Schumann Fund for New Jersey;

HIGHLIGHTS

Fund for Housing and Opportunity – Elisa Harrigan

- Nationwide collaborative working to protect renters and prevent homelessness. FHO brings funders together from across sectors and perspectives to support organizations on the frontlines of housing justice. We serve as a bridge for learning and alignment between funders and housing justice advocates. Fund was created about 7.5 years ago with several large foundations — Ford, Gates, Melville, Charitable Trust, and RWFJ.
- **Implications of Executive Order:**
 - 50% of HUD staff reduced — means less programming and delay in sending information out.
 - Closing of regional HUD Offices.
 - Criminalization of homelessness.
 - Restricting mixed status household regarding subsidies.
- **What Can Funders Do:**
 - Block, Defend, Delay Strategy.
 - Large mobilization around organizations calling congressional leaders.
 - Opportunity to support local and state level – power building and organizing to move policy on the local and state level.
 - Check-in with grantees and let them know you support their work.
 - Don't acquiesce — DEI or justice funding.
 - Increase funding payout or make grants flexible.
 - Host convening for grantees on advocacy training, general legal education, wellness sessions, etc.
 - Encourage other funders to support and fund housing justice cross issues.
 - Join collective funder statements or letters national or regional. State your position.
 - Join bimonthly calls ex. Funders Together to End Homelessness, Fight for Immigrant Rights and Housing Justice, Policy Updates, etc.

- **Additional Resources**
- [Fund for Housing and Opportunity](#)
- [Funders Together to End Homelessness](#)

Division of Housing and Community Affairs – Janel Winter

- DCA, through the division of housing and community resources, administer more than half a billion dollars every year in federal funding.
- **Impact of Federal Policy Changes on New Jersey:**
 - 25,000 households on the health and choice voucher program (section 8).
 - Capital Funding from National Housing Trust Fund.
 - Home programs and utility assistant funding.
 - Community development block grant funding.
 - Office of homelessness prevention (state funded).
 - Office of eviction prevention (state funded).
 - Priority on who can be served might be impacted.
 - Revoking of several rules – fair housing rules, equal access rules.
 - Potential cuts to housing production cuts.
- **How is the State Helping:**
 - Raising awareness on what the impact of the federal policies might be.
 - Using data to develop short/medium/long term predictions for housing and economic impacts.
 - Opportunity to increase affordable housing obligations.
 - Coordinating with other agencies to maximize flexible resources.
 - Reviewing policies and eliminating/streamlining potential barriers.
- **How Can Philanthropy Help:**
 - Educating and advocating to make sure people are aware of the programs offered.
 - Encouraging towns? (communities?) to make sure programs are utilized.
 - Funding is always helpful.
 - Educate and support towns on effective ways to address homelessness.
 - Support data and technology tools for nonprofit and use of them.
 - Fund gaps – targeted funding that's flexible and nimble.

Monarch Housing Associates – Taiisa Kelly

- **Impact of Federal Policy Changes on New Jersey:**
 - Policy Changes
 - Undocumented and mixed documentation status pull backs?
 - Homeless services adjust DEI executive order.
 - HUD contracts pulled or unsigned.
 - Uncertainly around DEI in housing system.
 - Funding Threats
 - HUD cancelled/reinstate section 4 grants.
 - Risk of homelessness due to agency losing resources.
 - Reductions in Medicaid will impact new housing service funding model being implemented in homeless & supportive housing sector.
 - Staffing Changes
 - Responsiveness of programs with limited staffing.
- **How Can Philanthropy Help:**

- Maintain and support funding for housing services to prevent increased homelessness.
- Connect with elected leaders to advocate state laws that will benefit who?
- Contingency plan created at local and state levels.
- Legal support and funding for nonprofit organizations.
- Advocacy to create state-wide messaging.
- Need for support to build data – so impact can be communicated.
- Technical assistance and legal support.
- Bridge funding to help address delays in funding.
- Funding to cover staffing for capacity retention.

Fair Share Housing Center – *Adam Gordon*

Fair Share Housing Center is a nonprofit advocacy organization that uses legal, policy, and community-building strategies to dismantle decades of racial and economic discrimination in New Jersey and nationally that excludes people from the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, and affordable housing.

- **Impact of Federal Policy Changes on New Jersey:**
 - Housing
- **How Can Philanthropy Help:**
 - Community Engagement
 - We can affect change in our community.
 - Building Affordable Homes
 - Increase the number of affordable homes across New Jersey
 - Preserve existing homes.

Additional Resources

- [New Jersey's New Affordable Housing Law](#)
- [Developing Effective Housing Plans in the Fourth Round: A Guide for Municipalities, Planners, Developers, Nonprofits, and Advocates](#)
- [Affordable Housing in New Jersey: Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- [Fair Chance in Housing Act Toolkit](#)