



## Who we are

Equity in Place is a strategic group of diverse partners from place-based, housing, and advocacy organizations.

- We recognize that current systems are failing our communities and together we are building connection and power across geographies to advance a housing system that is more just and fair and in harmony with our shared beliefs.
- We believe everyone in the Twin Cities region deserves to live where they want and have access to opportunity.
- We believe equitable growth creates healthier outcomes for everyone—individuals, communities, and the greater region.
- We believe equitable growth requires intentional planning, policymaking, and implementation.
- We believe plans about investment and opportunity in communities of color must be made in partnership with communities of color.

## Where we are

Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the surrounding suburbs are facing acute affordable housing challenges. Since the Great Recession, housing costs have increased much faster than wages, which have mostly been stagnant. As a result, the share of households in the 7 county Metro Area that pay more than 30% of their income for housing has risen by almost 50% in the last decade.

Additionally, communities of color and low-income communities across the region are facing displacement pressures as our metropolitan growth patterns shift and we experience the effects of demographic inversion. In the past year, thousands of individuals and families have been forced to move from parts of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Richfield, Golden Valley, Bloomington, Saint Anthony, and Saint Louis Park.

All of this builds on a history of racial disparities in our region related to homeownership, income, wealth, and education. While the Twin Cities has many assets, not everyone benefits from them, especially communities of color and low-wealth communities.

**And while demand has risen, affordable housing supply and assistance has not.** Affordable housing production has dropped precipitously since the Great Recession. Even as market rate housing production has bounced back, affordable production has not. In the Twin Cities, there are already 155,899 low and moderate-income cost-burdened renter households. On top of that, due to past Federal budget cuts, 85,000 households nationwide and about 950 households in Minnesota are losing access to programs like Section 8. Additional cuts appear likely.

## How we got here

What we are experiencing today continues our country's long history of explicitly racist housing, planning, and economic policy that has resulted in consistent disinvestment in communities of color. Our country was founded on practices of cultural imperialism, violence, and the forced displacement of Indigenous people. These practices run through our DNA and continue today. The racial and spatial inequalities we see today in our region are the result of centuries of decisions made by public and private actors in favor of White Americans. For example, during the WWII era, the Federal Housing Administration and the GI Bill subsidized homeownership and college education for White Americans. While at the same time, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Urban Renewal program purposefully destroyed the places communities of color called home.

Additionally, those most impacted by the lack of adequate affordable housing have been, and continue to be, largely excluded from decision-making arenas. Communities of color and low-income communities need to be in the driver's seat shaping their communities' future so that everyone can have access to high quality opportunities wherever they choose to live.

It may look different today, but in the end, we are using the same principles and values that privilege the lives and preferred locales of White Americans over the well-being of low wealth communities of color and Indigenous people.

## What we must do

In the Twin Cities, we have spent too much time on conversations narrowly focused on where to place affordable housing. These conversations miss the most important point regarding affordable housing in our region. Rather than debates about where affordable housing should be located, we should be working to create more affordable housing everywhere. We need solutions that expand housing choice and mobility, while simultaneously investing in the places where people of color live right now. Getting stuck in a binary debate that focuses on only one solution while ignoring our history of institutional and structural racism is misguided and ineffective.

We must change our demands of the public and private sectors and fight back when we are told that our views are not pragmatic. We must shape new narratives around affordable housing and fair housing issues. We must eliminate deficit-based language about renters and people of color and emphasize assets. We must correct the historical and ongoing inaccessibility of decision-making processes for people of color, renters, and low-wealth people, while also enacting new policies and investments that will address many of the current issues our region is facing. We must push for new policies and changes in processes and systems to address the issues related to housing in our region.

## Strategies for Equitable Neighborhood Revitalization

There are many organizations and coalitions doing the hard work of advancing equitable development in our region. Leaders are organizing and working at the policy, electoral and legal levels to ensure that the interests and well being of low wealth communities of color are advanced in our neighborhoods and communities.

### **To make effective progress we must work together to:**

1. Ensure that a dedicated percentage of every neighborhood or community's overall housing stock is affordable to the residents who live there.
2. Prevent involuntary displacement and protect the rights of renters.
3. Help build the economic resources and wealth of communities of color.

*Attached are a number of detailed strategies we support to make progress in our region. We hope you review them and figure out how to provide your leadership to making a new and much more equitable future for our communities.*

---

**Equity in Place is a coalition convened and supported by The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. Members include:**

African Career and Education Resource  
The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability  
American Indian Family Center  
Asamblea  
Community Stabilization Project  
CURA  
Frogtown Neighborhood Association

Hope Community  
Housing Justice Center  
Jewish Community Action  
MCCD  
MN STEP  
Native American Community Development Institute  
New American Academy  
Urban Homeworks