

Who We Are

Equity in Place is a diverse group of strategic partners from organizations led by people of color and housing advocacy organizations working to advance housing justice and equitable community development. We organize and advocate by **leading with a race equity lens** to understand and center how **power** inequities in our region and society **shape inequitable outcomes** for our communities.

We believe that everyone in the Twin Cities region deserves **access to opportunity wherever they want to live**.

We recognize that **current systems are failing our communities** and together we are building power to advance a more just and fair housing system.

We believe that to correctly solve for a problem, we must correctly identify the problem and its root causes. To do that, **people most impacted by the problems must define the solutions**.

We believe that advocacy on issues that most impact people of color and indigenous communities must be done by leading with **a lens and understanding of racism and power**.

We believe that programs and policies created to **address systemic inequities must disrupt the market**, rather than affirm and sustain narratives of neoliberalism and individualism.

Our Frame

Our policy solutions are informed by five key pillars that center our communities and move toward **transformative systemic change**.



Power: Renters and communities most impacted and historically marginalized must be centered in and have lasting influence on the decision-making processes that impact their housing stability.



Placement: The location and type of housing must be directed by communities most impacted and have access to essential daily needs like transit and healthy foods.



Protection: Existing renters and homeowners must have the tools and rights to remain in their homes and not experience the impacts of housing instability or displacement.



Preservation: Existing affordable housing must be maintained at truly affordable levels and improved as needed to remain safe, livable and healthy for the same residents.



Production: New housing units must be produced at a diversity of affordability levels with a commitment to using public resources for the most deeply affordable housing.

Our Policy Solutions

Informed by community, our agenda focuses in the following **areas**:

Guided by outcomes locally and nationally we recommend these **policies**:

Current and future policies and in these areas must be aligned with and measured against these **core principles and beliefs** to ensure equitable outcomes:

 **Housing Access**


**Tenant Screening Reform
Right to Return**

Proximity does not equal access. Low-wealth people and people of color are regularly discriminated against in accessing equitable and affordable housing options. As criminal justice and financial systems in this country have targeted and exploited low-wealth communities of color, many people are left with limited options for rental housing.

 **Housing Stability**

**Just Cause Eviction
Rent Control**

Involuntary displacement must be prevented and the rights of renters must be protected and expanded. We must eliminate deficit-based and false narratives about renters and people of color, challenge the idea that relying on the market will solve housing issues, and move policies that stabilize rents, support community/renter ownership, and prevent displacement.

 **Community Ownership**

**Tenant Opportunity to Purchase
Community Ownership**

People of color and indigenous people have been denied equitable access to own land and property and secure a permanent place in the communities we have lived in, contributed to, and called home. Policymakers must address this historic and ongoing injustice by pursuing reparative strategies for communities to own their homes, land, and communities.

 **Community Investment**

**Community Organizing
Qualified Allocation Plans**

The legacies of injustice are ever present in shaping current inequities in wealth, housing, and power. From redlining to freeway placement, these decisions were made intentionally by people in power. We must intentionally shift public and philanthropic resources to support renters and communities of color in organizing for housing justice, wealth building opportunities, and healing.

Equity in Place member organizations

African Career Education and Resource (ACER) | Alliance for Metropolitan Stability | Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of MN | Community Stabilization Project | Frogtown Neighborhood Association | Harrison Neighborhood Association | Hope Community | Housing Justice Center | Jewish Community Action | Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers | MN STEP (Standing Together to End Poverty) | Native American Community Development Institute | New American Development Center | Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza MN | Urban Homeworks | West Side Community Organization

Housing Access

Policy Solution: **Tenant Screening Reform**

JURISDICTION: City

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
Tenant screening criteria such as criminal records, income requirements and credit are used as a proxy for race, which lead to discrimination and disparate outcomes in our rental housing market. Changing tenant screening criteria helps decrease barriers to housing, which result in increased access to housing opportunities.	Reduce housing discrimination and increase access to rental housing for communities of color and low-wealth communities	<p><u>City of Portland’s FAIR (Fair Access in Renting) policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants don’t have to provide proof of citizenship or government-issued photo ID, if other forms of photo ID can reasonably verify their identity • Landlords can require applicants to have income that is 2.5 times the rent for units affordable to 80% AMI, or 2 times the rent for more expensive units • Landlords can’t reject applicant with credit score of 500 or higher <p><u>City of Seattle’s Fair Chance Housing Ordinance</u></p> <p><u>Federal Fair Chance at Housing Act (introduced)</u></p>	Tenants Together Campaign Archive

Policy Solution: **Right to Return**

JURISDICTION: City, Public Housing Authorities

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
Right to Return, or community preference policies, can help ensure that residents who were displaced due to government action (code enforcement, urban renewal activities, redlining, gentrification) or no-fault evictions receive priority in accessing affordable housing in their neighborhoods or cities.	Ensure residents displaced from their homes can return to their neighborhood and have access to an affordable home in that neighborhood	<p><u>North/NE Portland Preference Policy:</u> Gives priority placement to applicants displaced, at risk of displacement, or descendants of households displaced due to urban renewal</p> <p><u>Chicago Public Housing Authority’s Right of Return:</u> Tenants who have left their buildings guaranteed first choice of living in any rehabilitated or redeveloped property</p> <p><u>New York City Community Preference Policy:</u> 50% of the units in certain affordable housing developments are reserved for residents of the local Community District</p> <p><u>San Francisco Lottery Preference Programs:</u> Applicants for city-sponsored rental or ownership housing can choose from 6 preference categories; percentage of units are set aside for each preference</p>	<p>Berkley Law Review: <i>Portland’s “Right to Return” Housing to the Underrepresented</i></p> <p>PolicyLink webinar: <i>Fair Housing and Right to Return</i></p> <p>City of Seattle Office of Housing: <i>Affirmative Marketing and Community Resident Preference Policies</i></p> <p>Eli Kaplan, UC-Berkeley: <i>Implementing a Community Preference Policy for Affordable Housing in Berkeley</i></p>

Housing Stability

Policy Solution: **Just Cause Eviction**

JURISDICTION: City, State

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
<p>Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from eviction in inappropriate ways by allowing landlords or property owners to evict tenants only for specific and allowable reasons under law, including non-payment of rent, noncompliance with lease terms, intention of the landlord to occupy the unit themselves or rent the unit to an immediate family member, among many others. The policy ranges from city to city, with some statutes only applying to certain unit sizes or building ages.</p>	<p>Prevents unfair and arbitrary eviction of tenants</p> <p>Enhances renter and community stability</p> <p>Limits the extractive and racially discriminatory behavior of landlords</p>	<p><u>Oregon</u></p> <p><u>Oakland</u></p> <p><u>Seattle</u></p> <p><u>San Francisco</u></p>	<p>San Francisco Tenants Union: <i>Just Cause Explainer</i></p> <p>Tenants Union of WA State: <i>Just Cause Eviction Protection</i></p> <p>PolicyLink: <i>Equitable Development Toolkit: Just Cause Eviction Controls</i></p>

Policy Solution: **Rent Control**

JURISDICTION: City (unless pre-emption at state level), State, Federal

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
<p>Rent control or rent stabilization contains the rate at which landlords can increase rent, usually capped at an annual percentage plus inflation.</p>	<p>Protects tenants from excessive rent increases by creating a schedule for reasonable and gradual rent increases</p> <p>Can immediately stabilize prices, halt rent gouging, and reduce the risk of displacement and homelessness, while increasing housing security and affordability over the long term</p>	<p><u>Oregon</u>: Rent increases limited to 7%, plus local rate of inflation</p> <p><u>California</u>: Rent increases limited to 5%, plus local rate of inflation</p> <p><u>New York (state)</u>: Rent increases for rent-controlled tenants set at average of the last five Rent Guidelines Board annual rent increases, or 7.5%, whichever is less</p> <p><u>Berlin, Germany</u>: Rent freeze for five years</p> <p><u>Richmond, CA</u>: Maximum allowable rent equal to base rent, plus annual adjustment as decided by the Rent Board</p>	<p>San Francisco Tenants Union: <i>A Defense of Rent Control</i></p> <p>PolicyLink report: <i>Our Homes, Our Future: How Rent Control Can Build Stable, Healthy Communities</i></p> <p>Columbia University report: <i>Rent stabilization doesn't impact property values</i></p> <p>Shelterforce: <i>Tenant Protections Are a Cornerstone to Solving the Housing Crisis</i></p>

Community Ownership

Policy Solution: **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase**



JURISDICTION: **City**

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
Tenant Opportunity to Purchase gives tenants the first right to purchase their building if the owner plans on selling, demolishing, or discontinuing a building's use as rental housing	<p>Prevents displacement and increases resident stability</p> <p>Facilitates resident control over rent and management of property</p> <p>Results in the long-term affordability of units</p>	<p><u>Washington, D.C. Tenant Opportunity to Purchase policy</u></p> <p><u>Baltimore Right of First Refusal</u></p> <p><u>Portland Tenant and City Notice Provisions for Local Preservation Projects</u></p>	<p>Next City: <i>How Tenants in D.C. Are Preserving Their Affordable Apartments</i></p> <p>All-In Cities Policy Toolkit: <i>Tenant/Community Opportunity to Purchase</i></p> <p>Local Housing Solutions: <i>Rights of First Refusal</i></p>

Policy Solution: **Community Ownership**



JURISDICTION: **City, State, Federal**

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
Community ownership strategies remove land from the speculative real estate market in which shareholders extract value from community assets, and ensure community members experience the full benefits of economic growth and development in their neighborhood.	<p>Actively promote local control of land and community assets</p> <p>Fight community wealth-stripping and extraction</p> <p>Combat resident displacement and gentrification</p>	<p><u>Community Investment Trust (Portland)</u></p> <p><u>Champlain Community Land Trust</u></p> <p><u>Proud Ground (Portland CLT)</u></p> <p><u>Community Land Trust paired with Limited Equity Cooperative</u></p>	<p>Democracy Collaborative: <i>Community Land Trust Overview</i></p> <p>Center for New Economics: <i>Community Land Trust Directory</i></p> <p>Grounded Solutions: <i>Community Land Trust Technical Manual</i></p>

Community Investment

Policy Solution: Qualified Allocation Plans (QAP)



JURISDICTION: City, State

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
<p>Jurisdictions that administer federal tax credits for low-income housing have to create Qualified Allocation Plans that outline criteria and eligibility requirements for proposed housing projects. Proposed development projects earn points based on how many of the QAP's itemized criteria they satisfy and tax credits are subsequently awarded to projects that score the highest. Because of this, QAPs serve as a blueprint for developers when they design their projects, and can significantly shape the development of affordable rental housing.</p>	<p>Increase investments in affordable housing occur in our communities</p> <p>Addressing intentional institutional disinvestment in communities of color</p> <p>Shifting tax credit allocation away from extractive for-profit developers</p>	<p>Long term affordability: Massachusetts awards 3 points if units remain affordable for 50 years; California awards up to 52 points if units remain affordable for 55 years</p> <p>Tenant ownership: Connecticut awards 1 point for developments that are planned to be tenant-owned within 15 years</p> <p>Large units: New Jersey awards 5 points to developments where 25% of units are large family units</p> <p>Resident outcomes (idea): Award points for history of positive resident stability outcomes and "end of affordability period" or "disposition" outcomes</p>	<p>Novogradac: <i>Directory of state QAPs</i></p> <p>National Housing Law Project: <i>Advocating for changes in your state through the QAP process</i></p> <p>National Low Income Housing Coalition: <i>Housing Tax Credit Qualified Action Plans Affect the Location of Affordable Housing</i></p> <p>ChangeLabSolutions: <i>Qualified Allocation Plans: Linking Public Health and Affordable Housing</i></p>

Policy Solution: Funding Community Organizing



JURISDICTION: City, County, Regional, State, Federal

Definition	Impact	Examples	Resources
<p>People are experts in their own lives and have the best ideas to make positive changes in their communities. Building power and expanding leadership through organizing is one of the most effective ways to create lasting change.</p>	<p>Integrate the leadership and expertise of directly impacted communities into current decision-making processes and structures</p> <p>Build power for near- and long-term improvements in community</p>	<p>Federal Funding: Community Engagement Team Micro-Grants around Transitway Development</p> <p>Regional Funding: Fair Housing Implementation Council Community Engagement Micro-Grants</p> <p>County Funding: Bottineau Community Works Project</p>	<p>The Alliance: <i>Why Communities of Color Challenged a Fair Housing Complaint and What We Learned</i></p> <p>Minnesota Housing Partnership: <i>A New Approach to Fair Housing Community Engagement</i></p>