

# From Emergency Protections to Equitable Solutions

Narrative shifts and policy approaches to end the epidemic of housing injustice

**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. Our communities know that Minnesota renters faced a housing crisis long before the COVID pandemic – but the public health emergency underscored that policymakers have the power to safeguard the lives of renters when there is the political will. The eviction moratorium provided evidence that strong tenant protections are not just possible but beneficial to all residents – and another paradigm is possible. As emergency protections expire, **we must adopt new narratives and policy approaches to move beyond temporary measures to lasting systems change** that delivers justice and equity for renters.

## What we're told

## What we've learned

## What housing equity looks like

Housing access and stability is a distinct issue from public health and community safety.

When people do not have housing during a global pandemic and economic crisis, they lack the fundamental ability to keep themselves – and their neighbors – healthy and safe.

**Everybody having a secure home is an essential component of public health and safety.**

The government cannot and should not interfere with the housing market.

When peoples' lives are at risk, policy makers must step in to ensure that everyone has a place to stay, no exceptions.

**The government has always played a role in the housing market in ways that preference and subsidize property owners – including wealthy homeowners. It's time to re-balance the scales with policies like rent stabilization to address the needs of renters.**

Landlords must have complete authority over the amount, timing and method of rent payment from their tenants, regardless of external circumstances.

When challenging circumstances or emergencies arise and people can't pay their rent, we make exceptions that may delay the near-term profits of landlords to serve the longer-term goal of preventing the cascading impacts of housing instability and homelessness for all of us.

**Minnesota has some of the weakest tenant protections in the nation, giving excessive latitude to landlords while providing little recourse for renters. We need policies to ensure that tenants have the basic dignity, fairness and respect we all deserve in our homes.**

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## What housing equity looks like

Property owners provide a necessary service and are focused on taking care of their tenants, not making money beyond a reasonable return on investment.

Even in the face of dire threats to renters' physical safety, the landlord lobby fights to undermine life-saving protections to preserve their ability to maintain profit margins and safeguard private property interests over the potential loss of human life.

Because of their financial resources, industry organizations, like the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, have more access to policymakers and can pay to shift public narratives. Tenant-led and community-based organizations must be resourced and have a seat at the table to ensure our housing solutions incorporate renters' realities.

Evictions are an inevitable and routine part of providing housing in our communities.

The notion that property owners must be able to put our neighbors into the streets or the housing market will collapse has proven false. Even during an economic crisis, responsible landlords managed to address tenants who posed a risk to the safety or maintenance of their housing without evicting them.

Eviction is a tool that is both expensive for taxpayers given the reliance on the court system and fundamentally unfair to renters, who, even when their case is resolved or dismissed, still bear the burden of an unlawful detainer on their record – impacting their housing options potentially for the rest of their lives.

People who receive government assistance must prove their eligibility and need through whatever process is determined by institutional leaders.

When governments work with and respect the expertise of cultural and community-based organizations, they can create programs that rapidly respond to urgent needs and ensure those most directly impacted by the harm have access to the resources.

Government assistance programs must stop asking marginalized households to endure dehumanizing and time consuming evaluations to access resources that have been intentionally withheld and, as is the case for wealthier people and communities, make it easy for people to receive public benefits.

Housing is a commodity obtained through the market – a vehicle for wealth and investment as opposed to a social good.

Housing is a human right and we must pursue strategies in line with this paradigm shift. The statewide eviction moratorium and investments in rental assistance demonstrate that we can create policy to protect people's right to housing at a large scale.

Housing should not be a vehicle for profit, and a luxury reserved for those with financial privilege. We envision a future where strategies – like cooperatives, community land trusts, and expanding social and public housing – take housing out of the speculative market.

**Learn more and see our member groups at [thealliancetc.org/equity-in-place](https://thealliancetc.org/equity-in-place)**