

Actualizing Equity in Housing: Building a Movement for Community Ownership

Minneapolis is part of a nationwide movement toward tenant and community ownership of our housing but what are the steps we have to take to get there? In recent years, the Housing Justice League has pushed for a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase policy in Minneapolis but entrenched interests and divided political will have blocked progress. At our August 2023 Actualizing Equity event we heard from Ian Rosenthal (Jewish Community Action), Temi Ogunrinde (Urban Homeworks) and Regan Reeck (HOME Line) about the lessons learned from the TOPA campaign thus far and how organizers are advancing the next stage of this critical work to build a movement for housing equity in Minneapolis.

How do we shift from executing a campaign to building a movement?

Shared Values

The organizations around the table at HJL work in different geographies with different communities but share fundamental values that housing is a human right, that BIPOC communities have been intentionally denied access to owning their homes and that increasing ownership will build wealth, wellbeing and rootedness for BIPOC communities.

Led by Community

HJL is firmly committed to the proactive steps necessary to honor the previous and ongoing leadership of community members, compensate them both short- and long-term for their expertise and only move ideas and policies that have the explicit buy-in of directly impacted communities.

Shifting Power

HJL works to uproot unjust policies and advance systemic change, while also focusing on building new formations — from tenants unions to housing cooperatives — that reject the notion that we need external actors to manage our housing and instead foster power, autonomy and belonging in our communities.



Activating Solutions

While holding elected officials accountable and calling out illegitimate processes, HJL thinks beyond political barriers and recognizes that community has the power to identify and implement solutions for ourselves — even when governments and institutions are unwilling to do what is right.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OVER CORPORATE CONTROL

According to recent research by the Urban Institute, the Twin Cities real-estate market has been transformed by the rise of single-family rental (SFR) units: stand-alone homes that, rather than being owned by their residents, are rented out (often by large corporate investors). The area's rise in SFRs over the past 15 years has coincided with declining homeownership among residents, a widening Black-white homeownership gap, and a growing number of corporate landlords.

The Urban Institute found that the rise of SFR units has been concentrated in just a few neighborhoods in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties: Brooklyn Center, Como, North Minneapolis, Roseville, and central St. Paul. These are some of the Twin Cities' most socioeconomically diverse areas, with larger shares of low-income residents and residents of color than the region's average. The share of all housing units in these neighborhoods that are SFRs increased more than 10 percentage points from 2005 to 2020.

According to a recent report from Inquilinx Por Justicia, just two of these corporate landlords have extracted millions from local families. "Instead of homeowners making mortgage payments that build equity and provide stability for themselves and their families, tenants of Progress Residential and Front Yard Residential have been making rent payments. Through collection of monthly rents, Progress and Front Yard have extracted an estimated total of \$23.2 million in wealth in Hennepin County, including \$16.7 million in North Minneapolis."



Progress Residential has extracted more than \$40 million from families in North Minneapolis alone.



To combat corporate control, we need more community ownership, like the Sky Without Limits cooperative

This is why we need policies that limit corporate extraction and encourage and support community and tenant ownership of single and multi-family housing!



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS OVER POLITICAL INACTION

In 2022, Linda Taylor, an elder and longtime resident of the Powderhorn neighborhood, was facing displacement by her landlord but community solidarity stopped her eviction by amplifying the injustice and raising the money so Miss Linda could purchase the home she'd lived in for 18 years. [Learn more about the effort at savelindahome.wordpress.com.](https://savelindahome.wordpress.com)

Learn more about the **Housing Justice League** at website.org

Learn more about the **Actualizing Equity event series** at thealliancetc.org/actualizing-equity