

**EQUITY IN PLACE** is a Twin Cities-based coalition centering the expertise and power of people of color to uproot policies that create racial inequity – and ensure our communities have choice, agency and self-determination in where they live and what their neighborhoods look like.

From the vibrant urban centers of the Twin Cities to increasingly diverse communities across Greater Minnesota, we all want the freedom and power to shape our own lives. We know that our communities are stronger and more vibrant when we can connect with our neighbors and make sure everyone has what they need to thrive on their own terms.

But for too long, corporate developers, predatory landlords and the lawmakers that support them have denied renters the fundamental right to choose where they live and come together to make sure their housing is safe, dignified and reliable – all to hoard ever-larger profits for themselves. For generations, they've used money they've extracted from our families to rig the rules against the nearly 30% of Minnesota residents who rent their homes.

Together, we've taken important steps to return rightful power and agency to the more than 620,000 renter households across the state. During the 2023 legislative session, legislative leaders passed essential tenant protections – but it's not enough. This year, we need lawmakers to continue that momentum and ensure critical bills, like tenant right to organize and rent stabilization for low-income housing, get across the finish line.

**Across Minnesota, renters are rising up, organizing with their neighbors, to hold their landlords – and their lawmakers – accountable. Now is the time to act.**

## 2024 Policy Priorities



Tenant right to organize

Just Cause eviction protections

Source of income protection

Rent stabilization in low-income housing



# Statewide Tenant Right to Organize

## Why do we need it?

From Rochester to Coon Rapids, from Brooklyn Center to the West Side of Saint Paul, renters are coming together to identify common concerns – and demand dignity, fairness and affordability in their housing. Because tenants are directly experiencing the challenges every day, they have the **best solutions to solving Minnesota's housing crisis**.

But many corporate and predatory landlords are pushing back, retaliating against residents who are exercising their fundamental right to have a voice in their living conditions and to call out illegal and unsafe practices. We can change that with a proven policy called right to organize.

**This bill [HF 2704 / SF 3201] would provide guarantees to tenants, non-resident organizers, and advocates to defend renters' rights to dignified, well-maintained housing without facing retaliation and displacement.**

## What does it do?

This is not a new or uncommon policy. Minnesota already ensures a right to organize in manufactured home communities and federal law requires this right in many types of subsidized affordable housing.

**Based on our work with tenants across the state we are calling for a strong right to organize policy that provides residents the right to...**

- organize without obstruction, harassment, or retaliation from property owners or management. This behavior may look like (but is not limited to) rent increases, stoppage of repairs, decrease in communications from management, and notices to vacate.
- use common space or meeting facilities to organize
- meet without representatives or employees of the owner or management company present
- have a voice in residential community affairs
- receive organizing assistance from non-resident tenant advocates



## Community Voices: Katherine Banbury

For Katherine Banbury, a friendly knock on a neighbor's door could earn her an eviction notice. As an organizer for HOME Line and a renter at The Cambric apartment complex in Saint Paul, Banbury has played a role in mobilizing hundreds of fellow tenants across the city to elevate their shared experiences in Dominion-owned rental properties. From addressing deferred maintenance and unsafe conditions to discovering massive overcharges on utility bill collections, the MN Tenants' Coalition – created by residents from 17 Dominion buildings – has had significant benefits on the lives of thousands of local renters in low-income and senior affordable housing.

But the Plymouth-based corporation has responded with increased restrictions on the freedoms and rights of renters like Katherine to organize with their neighbors. For instance, after flyering and doorknocking resulted in 50 tenants regularly attending monthly meetings at the Cambric, Dominion cracked down, restricting promotion of the meeting to a single flyer in the corner of the mail room – and penalized Katherine with “strikes” on her record that could lead to eviction with even a single additional act of unsanctioned outreach. A statewide tenant right to organize law would protect renters like Katherine – and thousands of others across Minnesota who simply want to exercise their rights.



# Equity in Place Policy Priorities

## Just Cause eviction protections

[HF 4440] Just Cause requires that landlords can only evict renters and non-renew leases for specific reasons, preventing tenants from arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory evictions and non-renewals.

## Limiting rent increases in low-income rental housing

[HF 3550 / SF 3625] Developers of some affordable rental housing projects that are subsidized by state tax dollars have imposed unfair rent increases on low and fixed income residents. This bill would cap rent increases across these properties at 5% annually and ensure units are affordable and people can stay in their housing.

## Source of income protection

*Championed by EIP member Housing Justice Center*

[HF 3640 / SF 3780] Right now, landlords can pick and choose tenants based on how they pay their rent. This means that many rent assistance voucher holders struggle to find homes that will accept them, and low-wealth families are denied safe, stable and affordable homes in their chosen locations.

# Equity in Place Supports...

## Minnesota Landlord-Tenant Law Modernization

*Championed by EIP Member HOME Line*

[HF 3591/ SF 3492] Landlord-tenant law should be clarified, modernized, and made more equitable in order to reduce the power imbalance between tenants and landlords.

## Good Neighbor Bill

*Championed by EIP member CloseKnit*

[SF 4615] A good neighbor exemption provides a grace period for a host who is in lease violation due to hosting a youth who would otherwise face homelessness to negotiate a solution without the property owner immediately starting the eviction process.

## Expanding Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) Bill

*Championed by EIP ally COPAL*

[HF 3843 / SF 3769] In Minnesota, community members who are undocumented immigrants are forced to live with health, housing, and financial insecurity because they cannot participate freely or fully in our economy. Expanding ITIN would give families the basic right to apply for rental housing,



## Equity in Place Member Organizations

African Career, Education, and Resource Inc (ACER), The Alliance, Center for Urban & Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota, CloseKnit, Community Stabilization Project, Harrison Neighborhood Association, HOME Line, Hope Community, Housing Justice Center, Jewish Community Action, Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, MN STEP (Standing Together to End Poverty), Minnesota Youth Collective, Native American Community Development Institute, New American Development Center, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza, Urban Homeworks, West Side Community Organization

Learn more about Equity in Place at [thealliancetc.org/equity-in-place](https://thealliancetc.org/equity-in-place)