



**NATIONAL
HOUSING CRISIS
TASK FORCE**

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION PRO-HOUSING PLAYBOOK

How Community Foundations can Build and Support Pro-Housing Coalitions

Appendix: Detailed Implementation Guidance

May 2026



The Process | 5 Stages for Convening Pro-Housing Action



Stage 1 Map the Housing Ecosystem

- Who are the key housing ecosystem stakeholders?
- What housing organizations has the CF worked with?
- What issues/areas are not covered by an initiative?



Stage 2 Define the Housing Issue

- What are the housing trends across the locality?
- What events have generated interest/energy in housing?
- What lever can the CF pull to amplify appetite for change?



Stage 3 Identify Your Partners

- Who are collaborative champions and stewards?
- Are people with lived experience in the room?
- What role should the CF play?



Stage 4 Build the Housing Agenda

- What is the clear and actionable “north star”?
- How can a shared vocabulary and problem definitions be developed?
- Does every member know their role in collaboration?



Stage 5 Engage from Multiple Angles

- How can the coalition sustain momentum?
- Should the coalition expand to additional counties?
- How else can the CF support policy awareness?



Stage 1 | Map the Housing Ecosystem

Guiding Questions

Before entering the housing ecosystem, and especially if the CF has not previously funded or counseled local housing nonprofits/initiatives, landscape mapping is imperative. CFs can use tools like the [Funders Collaborative Hub's Landscape Mapper](#) and [Engagement Pack](#) to answer the following questions:

- 1. Who are the key stakeholders in the housing ecosystem?**
- 2. What grassroots nonprofits or organizations exist, and what problems are they trying to solve?**
- 3. Is there an existing housing coalition, convening space, or cross-sector partnership? Are they active, well-funded, and unified?**
- 4. What housing organizations does the CF already fund or has previously worked with?**
- 5. How have past partnerships – public, private, and philanthropic – went for the CF? Was trust built between those partners and the CF, and how would you describe the CF's overall reputation?**
- 6. What areas in the housing ecosystem are not covered by an organization or initiative? Who could step into this space, and who could the CF collaborate with to meet this gap?**
- 7. What delivery organizations hold trust and reputational credibility in the locality?**
- 8. How will the CF reach actors, including people with the lived experience of displacement, with whom we have no current relationship?**
- 9. What kind of expertise is required for us to understand housing affordability? Are there organizations with learned, lived, and practical experience?**



Stage 1 |

Landscape Mapping (Adapted from [the Funders Collaborative Hub](#))

Name/Organization	Why Involve Them?	Core Partner (Y/N)?
<i>Outside My Network</i>		
<i>Inside My Network</i>		

Who are the potential partners, both inside and outside your network, that are working on housing affordability in your locality?

Brainstorm and write them down. Explain why you should involve them and whether they should be a core partner in your collaborative.



Stage 1 |

Consider the Institutional History

Community Foundation Reputation

CFs must understand their institutional and community reputations to clarify their role within a pro-housing agenda-setting effort. While CFs have strong philanthropic networks and convening powers, the key question to consider is **how actors – public, private, grassroots, and philanthropic – view the CF**. As CFs can potentially be seen as politically non-neutral actors or have an “ivory tower” reputation (given their grantmaking powers), internal staff must critically evaluate their positioning.

1. How do community groups/organizations perceive the CF?
2. Has the CF grappled with historical institutional choices that created trust issues? Has the CF considered internal reforms to correct that culture, if it exists?
3. How have past partnerships (highlighted through the landscape mapping exercise) gone? Were they effective, and did the CF build trust?
4. How will the CF navigate creating this coalition while maintaining influence over funding decisions?
5. Does an organization or coalition of affordable housing actors exist where the CF can provide support and/or a financial backbone?
6. Does the CF have any explicit political ties which may influence the organization's perception?
7. Is the CF willing and able to disagree with political actors if/when the moment arises?



Stage 2 | Define the Housing Issue

Guiding Questions

Community Foundations must understand their **enabling environment** – the laws, structures, resources, processes, and political/public will – that allows for or prevents change in the housing ecosystem. By recognizing **galvanizing issues** and moments, in which which political actors and the public are motivated to support system change, CFs can capitalize on these opportunities.

1. What are the housing trends across my locality?
2. Where does public opinion stand on issues related to housing affordability? Are citizens activated by the housing challenges, or are they unaware of the issue's severity?
3. What (if any) was the most recent galvanizing issue? Was there an election, a natural disaster, a failed housing development project, or some other event that brought attention to housing issues?
4. Are organizers creating outside pressure for any particular housing policies? What response (if any) are they receiving?
5. With which actors can the CF leverage their relationships to amplify public willpower necessary for change in the housing ecosystem? (e.g., relationships with elected officials, business leaders, etc).



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Skip if your collaboration is narrowly scoped or timed.

Stage 3 | Identify Your Partners

Guiding Questions

Community Foundations must create early and potentially unlikely alliances with influential actors who can (1) bring credibility and (2) bring additional partners to the table (through their reputation/importance in the housing ecosystem).

- 1. What individuals/organizations will “throw stones” from the outside if they are not at the table?**
- 2. Which community-focused organizations have worked in the housing ecosystem and developed a consistent and credible track record?**
- 3. What are potentially unlikely coalitions that can be leveraged through this effort?**
- 4. Who beyond traditional housing advocates can find a place at this table?**
- 5. For private philanthropic foundations, have they made any major investments, developments, or promised neighborhood revitalization through affordable housing? Can this be leveraged?**
- 6. How can you convince corporations that displacement and unaffordability are issues they should care about? Who is an entity/individual with the influence to speak to those groups?**
- 7. What community advocacy organizations are/are not in the room? Does the community have a sufficient voice and are there people with the lived experience in the room?**



Stage 4 | The Facilitative Process

Guiding Questions

- 1. Does an executive committee need to be created to drive the facilitative process and make the ultimate decisions on what goes in and stays out of the final report? If yes, who should be on the committee?**
- 2. Are we speaking the same language? What do we mean by “displacement”? “Gentrification”? “Affordable”? “Development”?**
- 3. Are all voices in the room being taken seriously? Are all types of experience and expertise valued?**
- 4. Am I okay if this process brings about recommendations that I may not fully agree with?**
- 5. What are the guardrails/non-negotiables that will stop progress? Should they be avoided?**
- 6. Could a site visit to another city allow partners to understand housing issues and provide opportunities for greater connection?**



Stage 5 | Engage from Multiple Angles

Guiding Questions

Provided below are additional questions to consider when considering expansion.

- 1. Is the urban core big enough to influence housing policy in a sufficient way, or do you need additional buy-in from collar counties?**
- 2. Are there any potential state-level entities who can offer additional support to your efforts?**
- 3. What organizations already exist, and what problems are they trying to address? Can you partner with them?**
- 4. What should the state legislature's housing priorities look like? Is there any organization building out these recommendations?**
- 5. How does the state legislature view voices from your locality? Who are the partners that the coalition can align with to solve this challenge?**



Implementation Tip I

Beware of Collaboration Traps ([From the Tamarack Institute](#))

Scarcity

Too few resources are available to support vibrant exploration of new ideas, so few or none take root. No new ideas lead to outcomes or garner the support.

- The ideas are not compelling.
- Underdeveloped decision-making processes/criteria.
- Members disagree on options.
- Insufficient credibility.

Charisma/Parasitic

People seem unable to sustain or grow their work without the original founder, host, or primary funder. They are “parasitic” on the host(s) that gave it birth.

- Over-reliance on key members of the group.
- Dependence on start-up pool of resources.
- Approach only works well at a certain scale/context.

Rigidity

People are unable or unwilling to change or dismantle an approach that no longer fits the evolving context in which they operate. They resist new ideas.

- Psyche of immediate return.
- Fear of uncertainty.
- Self-interest.
- Lack of clear exit rules.
- Concern about perception of failure.

Chronic Disaster

People find themselves ‘spinning’ and unable to get traction on a compelling new vision, values, and intent for moving forward.

- Inability to let go of the past.
- Weak trust amongst members.
- Difficulty in agreeing on shared vision and values.
- Volatile environment.



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Thank You