

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Amanda Andere, MPA, Chief Executive Officer of Funders Together to End Homelessness.

AMANDA ANDERE:

We come to our work as housing justice is racial justice, knowing that the crux of injustice and housing started from racialized capitalism and from a lot of deep inequitable laws and policies, and the philanthropy community for a long time has been thinking about ending homelessness or ending housing insecurity in, I would say, a lot of ways that think about the system. I know you know very well, Miguel, working in LA and we obviously do a lot of work there. We have started to finally see this as not an individual problem but a structural problem. Whereas I think, for a long time, people put housing over here and put homelessness over here, and I've done a lot of convincing of philanthropy that if they're working on housing, they're working on homelessness because homelessness is a part of a structural issue. It's not an individual failure.

At the same time when we see homelessness so visible and sometimes invisible in a lot of places, the solution to homelessness becomes political and it's about ending what we see rather than addressing the root causes. So for us, we see progress and people understanding two things, the structural issue of homelessness, and that if we're thinking about real housing justice, we can't just end someone's homelessness. We have to give people agency and power of where and how they live and so that, as I said in the beginning, that doesn't mean that we move people to the next most affordable place, especially if that place is void of community and the supports and the structure that would make it inclusive for a person's need, but that's been how we've addressed homelessness because of our housing crisis. So for us, housing justice means going upstream and preventing homelessness and housing insecurity in the first place as well as thinking about as we end people's homelessness and housing insecurity, where do they have agency and power over where and how they live?

And for philanthropy, that has meant — as Dessa said so eloquently and really, just, you had me snapping — is creating a movement where we're not just thinking about housing justice, we're thinking about, what are the many intersections that will get us to housing justice? And that means being inclusive in our activism and not putting housing or one issue over there, that it's the center of our work — but that's not how we fund often, right? We - as funders, we ask people to not work in silos, but we fund in silos and so we've been really organizing philanthropy to be thinking about housing justice from a standpoint of being inclusive, being an organizing tool and to funding organizing and advocacy in order to think about a values-based proposition with housing rather than this transactional and decommodifying housing and decoupling it from markets, but saying, "What do we need in our community to house everyone but particularly marginalized communities?"

NARRATOR:

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