



COMPACT FOR THRIVING COMMUNITIES

A collective call to action to policymakers, advocates and practitioners supporting health, choice, and equity, instead of institutionalization

THE NEED

It is a time of reckoning in America. It is estimated that there are at least 1.1 million individuals and families facing the intersectional barriers of poverty, disability, and systemic racism, who cycle between the street and institutions for a lack of suitable alternatives in the community. The time is now to join together to disrupt the status quo and transform the public systems to better address their needs and enable them to thrive.

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

The confluence of two crises has put our history of systemic racism into the public spotlight. It is a moment we cannot let pass. The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Daniel Prude and too many others brought tens of thousands into the streets in protest against structural racism. At the same time headlines highlight the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and the most marginalized people, especially those residing in institutional settings like mental health and addiction treatment facilities, nursing homes, group homes, shelters, jails and prisons.

The well-being of our communities depends on protecting the health of people facing the intersectional barriers of poverty, disability, and systemic racism. The pandemic has made this clearer than ever before. We cannot secure public health when people cannot safely shelter in place and their only options are places where physical distancing is impossible, or the street.

The lack of community-based resources too often leads to forced institutionalization and unsafe living conditions. We must seize this opportunity to create housing and service alternatives that offer better options. With state and local budgets depleted, we must prioritize available resources to free individuals and families from overburdened, costly, and uncoordinated institutional and crisis response systems.

CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY

Centering racial equity is central to transforming these institutional systems. The CSH Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index (RDDI) was developed to better understand the racial disparities embedded in institutional systems. In nearly every system analyzed, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) are over-represented.

Addressing these disparities requires recalibrating expectations for system performance. When we prioritize health, choice, and equity we prioritize the opportunity to live in a thriving community; a place people choose to call home that offers the healthcare, food, jobs, schools, childcare, and recreation necessary for life-long success and well-being. *The cornerstone to thriving communities is safe, affordable housing with the supports people need to move from just surviving to thriving.*

[1] See <https://www.csh.org/supportive-housing-101/data/>

Realizing this vision means increased advocacy for public policies focused on:

- eliminating racial disparities in institutional systems;
- dismantling the collateral consequences and stigma they create; and
- investing in the housing and service infrastructure needed to create opportunity and thriving communities.

We acknowledge that some past efforts to address these issues have perpetuated norms of white-dominant culture which have only reinforced these disparities. Developing the approaches and solutions needed to undo the historical legacy and persistence of racism must center the voices of people with lived experience and expertise and be shaped by the voices of BIPOC leaders across the public, nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Together we can reimagine what's possible and develop new approaches to achieve our goals and live up to our aspirations.

CALL TO ACTION

The Compact for Thriving Communities is a call to action committed to:

- Transforming public sector institutional and crisis response systems through a collaborative public policy and advocacy effort.
- Prioritizing housing choice and equity to ensure everyone can thrive in the community they call home.
- Lifting-up and centering the voices of people with lived expertise in our advocacy efforts for the public sector resources required to address their needs, and in developing solutions that support their exceptional resilience.
- Working to rapidly create the affordable housing with supportive services needed by many of the thousands of people temporarily placed in hotel and motel rooms across the country in response to COVID-19.
- Advocating for the resources we need to provide the affordable housing and services more than 1.1 million individuals and families currently need but lack.

JOIN US: A NEW TIME, A NEW WAY FORWARD

Join the Compact for Thriving Communities to break down the inequalities and shape a new way forward for people that have been marginalized and left behind.

The long simmering affordable housing crisis, rooted in racist policies and business practices, is a public health emergency. Policy makers are grappling with critical needs including emergency assistance to renters, sustaining public housing, and stabilizing affordable housing. New reinvestment opportunities are emerging to move away from triage, crisis and institutionalization, and toward health, choice, equity, and community. Federal, state, and local policy responses to the pandemic can be shaped to lay the foundation for transformation.

The Compact for Thriving Communities advocates for federal policy that supports:

- Equal access to basic housing and service needs through a rental assistance entitlement for the lowest income households with linked services funding.
- Elimination of barriers to accessing housing resulting from the stigma and collateral consequences of involvement with justice, child welfare and other institutional systems.
- Reinvestment of funding from crisis response and institutional systems to expand housing options with services in community.
- Allocation of funding for housing and services sufficient to meet the needs of people facing the intersectional barriers of poverty, disability, and racism and discrimination.

The policy and advocacy priorities undertaken over the next year will be set collaboratively by the Compact partners. Together we can redefine our communities as places everyone can call home. Visit communitiesthriving.org to learn more.