Funding a Housing Transformation

This series of articles, sponsored by the funder collaborative Funders for Housing and Opportunity, shares ideas, observations, and lessons from housing-justice efforts, including how and why the work will move forward only if it is systemic, is anti-racist, and bridges sectors. The collection looks at key elements for achieving housing justice through systems-level change, including policy, advocacy, and organizing; narrative change; and elevating what works.

The MacKenzie Scott Effect

For decades, nonprofit leaders and advocates have argued that nonprofit organizations need more unrestricted resources, in the form of general operating support, to do their best work. So, for Phil Buchanan and Ellie Buteau’s colleagues at the Center for Effective Philanthropy, MacKenzie Scott’s unprecedented giving represents, among other things, a “fascinating natural experiment” in seeing what such funding can do. “In addition to impacting the recipient organizations, the grants were transformational for leaders,” the authors write. “It affected them personally and professionally—profoundly shifting their mindsets.”

ESG vs. Impact

If you find yourself using the terms ESG (environmental, social, and governance) investing and impact investing interchangeably, you’re not alone. Some of the smartest and most sophisticated educators and investors in the world have trouble differentiating between the two, writes SSIR contributor Jaclyn Foroughi. It’s important to distinguish the pair of concepts, though, because “understanding the difference not only facilitates better-informed conversations but helps channel funds appropriately.”

A Social Venture Checklist

“Why We Didn’t Fund Your Scaling Plan”

share seven questions you should ask before submitting your next funding application.

An Empty Symbol?

In discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the table is frequently used as a symbol of inclusion. People talk about extending the table, adding more seats to the table, or making space at the table. “Whether by design or default,” writes Decolonize Design founder Aida Mariam Davis in a powerful personal reflection, “the table is accepted as a place to ameliorate issues of marginalization, exclusion, neglect, discrimination, and other harms.” But what if visibility and representation at the table does not necessarily translate into power or influence?

70%
The portion of renters in the United States with an income below $30,000 a year who pay more than a third of their income for housing.

41%
The portion of Black households in the United States that are homeowners, compared with more than 73 percent of white households.

20%
The estimated share of emissions in the United States that comes from energy used in homes.