

2026 Pittsburgh Housing Justice Summit
University of Pittsburgh Frick Fine Arts Building
Saturday March 28, 2026
Program

Schedule

9:00AM	Registration/tabling/ coffee <i>Music by Pittsburgh May Day Marching Band members</i>
9:30AM	Opening plenary: <i>From Racialized Displacement to Housing Justice</i> <i>Introduction and overview of day</i>
10:00-11:15AM	Workshops 1 (Aud, 202, 203, 204)
11:30AM-12:30PM	Keynote speaker-Dr. Jason Spicer <i>Alternatives to market solutions to the affordable housing needs</i> (Auditorium)
12:30-1:30PM	Lunch (Atrium) <i>*Check out poster presentations on urban renewal and racialized displacement & on policies to preserve existing affordable housing</i>
1:30-2:45PM	Workshops 2 (Aud, 202, 203, 204)
3:00-4:00 PM	Closing & Action steps: <i>Next steps towards building the city we need!</i> (Auditorium) <i>Music by Pittsburgh May Day Marching Band members</i>

2026 Workshops

Thematic track	Location	Workshop 1 10:00-11:15AM	Workshop 2 1:30-2:45PM
Tenant rights	Auditorium	Pittsburgh Advocacy for Tenant Rights	Promoting tenant and housing rights for students and future generations
Social housing alternatives	202	What is social housing & why do we need it?	Advancing real solutions: Bringing cooperative housing to Pittsburgh
Governance & policy strategy	203	Working with City Council for housing justice	Policy opportunities & challenges for housing justice
Movement building for housing justice	204	Housing, Health and Well-Being: Connecting housing rights and health advocacy	Broadening Movements for Housing Justice in this political moment

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Workshop Descriptions & Panelists

Workshop session 1: 10:00-11:15AM

Tenant Rights: (Auditorium)

Advocacy for Tenant Rights in Pittsburgh

How can tenants begin to push back against forces that are intensifying housing insecurity and displacement? This session discusses organizing efforts in Pittsburgh to build power and defend the rights of renters.

Co-facilitators: Brooke Christy & Grace Janczak

Panelists:

Brooke Christy, Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services;

Matt Rubin, One Pennsylvania

Social housing alternatives: (Room 202)

What is social housing & why do we need it?

Our current profit-driven approach to housing puts family stability and the health and safety of our housing stock at the mercy of cyclical market forces: during boom times, landlords increase rents and tenants are priced out of their homes; during bust times, landlords will often defer maintenance, and the housing stock deteriorates. Social and cooperative housing offer an alternative to this speculative reality and instead put control of housing in the hands of public entities and residents. How can we expand this model in Pittsburgh?

Organizer/Facilitator: **Colt Pierce**

Panelists:

Randall Taylor, Steel City Collaborative Housing & Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance

Jason Spicer, Baruch College at the City University of New York (CUNY) and Graduate School and University Center at CUNY

Governance & policy strategy: (Room 203)

Working with City Council for housing justice

As developers continue to turn housing into a source of profits, what are the strategies and visions of Council members who have defended housing justice in our city? How can our movements work to help them (and push them!) to advance real solutions to housing needs?

Facilitator: **Jackie Smith**, Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance and Pitt Sociology Department

Panelists: Pittsburgh City Council Members **Deb Gross**, **Barb Warwick**

Movement building for housing justice: (Room 204)

Housing, Health and Well-Being: Connecting housing rights and health advocacy

Advancing housing justice will take a broad and diverse movement to take on wealthy developers and challenge entrenched political interests. How can we build stronger connections across networks supporting health, education, and youth?

Facilitator: **Jackie Ellison**, University of Pittsburgh, Center for Innovative Research on Gender Health Equity, and University Human Rights Working Group

Panelists: **Gavin Rienne**-Postdoctoral Research Associate, Maternal and Child Health Center of Excellence in the School of Public Health; **Lindsay Fraser**, Women for a Healthy Environment

Workshop session 2 1:30-2:45PM

Tenant Rights: (Auditorium)

Promoting housing rights for students and future generations

High housing costs contribute to massive student loan debts and make housing even less affordable for students and graduates. How can we connect students and other tenants into a powerful movement for housing justice?

Co-facilitators: Grace Janczak & Sophie Lu (with Brooke Christy, Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services)

Panelists:

Andrea Boykowicz, Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC)

Marley Pinsky, Pitt Student Government Board

Josh Small, Emilia Morris, & Sarahbeth White, Renters First (Pitt)

Social housing alternatives: (Room 202)

Advancing real solutions: Bringing cooperative housing to Pittsburgh

Housing cooperatives are one effective tool for keeping housing affordable and accessible to everyone. How can we expand this option for Pittsburgh residents- especially those who are most housing insecure?

Facilitator: **Colt Pierce**, Pitt Urban Studies

Panelists: **LaKeisha Wolf, Randall Taylor, Alex Payton**- Steel City Collaborative Housing Association

Governance & policy strategy: (Room 203)

Policy opportunities & challenges for housing justice

Amid new threats to housing justice, how can Pittsburgh residents and our Housing Justice Table coalition work smarter to push back against private developers and demand that public resources better support the rights of everyone to decent and affordable housing? How can we work with county and city leaders to not just react against new threats but push forward real alternatives that bring permanently affordable housing to Pittsburgh families? How can we support progressive local policy makers as frontline defenders of our right to housing?

Facilitator: **Jackie Smith**, Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance & Pitt Sociology Department

Panelists

Dave Breingan, Executive Director, Lawrenceville United

Bob Damewood, Regional Housing Legal Services

Movement building for housing justice: (Room 204)

Building power for housing justice in this political moment

Advancing housing justice will take a broad and diverse movement to take on wealthy developers and challenge entrenched political interests. How can we build our advocacy networks and mobilize in a more powerful way?

Miracle Jones, Director of Advocacy and Policy, Visual Artist, 1Hood

Co-Facilitator: **Jackie Ellison**, University of Pittsburgh, Center for Innovative Research on Gender Health Equity, and University Human Rights Working Group