

# Mickey Flacks Social Housing Fund



The Mickey Flacks Social Housing Fund (MFSHF) commemorates the life and legacy of community activist and esteemed friend of the FUND, Mickey Flacks. During her 50 years in Santa Barbara, Mickey devoted herself to the advancement of social justice and democracy. She understood access to affordable housing and tenants' rights as foundational to achieving the betterment of her beloved community and eloquently argued for social housing—housing developed for people's needs rather than for the market. In this spirit, The Fund for Santa Barbara is proud to carry on Mickey's commitment to housing equity by way of the Mickey Flacks Social Housing Fund.



## MISSION

**To invest in and strengthen organizations/groups advocating for and actively leading social housing justice campaigns in Santa Barbara County.**

The MFSHF will be used to support organizations/groups advocating for and actively leading social housing justice campaigns in Santa Barbara County. Considerations for funding include:

- Efforts to develop cooperative housing;
- Grassroots organizing for progressive housing policy;
- Efforts supporting tenant organization;
- Requests for seed money for innovative housing initiatives.

## FUNDING CATEGORIES

Organizations/groups may apply for grant support in at least one of the following funding categories:

### 1. Cooperative Housing

According to the National Association of Housing Cooperatives, “A housing cooperative is formed when people join on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Usually, they form a not-for-profit cooperative corporation. Each month they pay a fee to cover their share of the operating expenses. Personal income tax deductions, lower turnover rates, lower real estate tax assessments (in some local areas), controlled maintenance costs, and resident participation and control are some of the benefits of choosing cooperative homeownership.”

- Applicants to the MFSHF for cooperative housing projects would need to show how their efforts are moving toward the creation of new coop housing. This initiative was one of Mickey Flacks' top priorities as a housing advocate and affordability pioneer. Drawing on her own experiences with co-ops in New York City, Mickey believed such models could work in similarly high-cost areas such as Santa Barbara, particularly if there were tax incentives provided by local and state government agencies.

## 2. Grassroots Organizing for Progressive Housing Policy

This second initiative imagines new leadership that places affordability, environmental sustainability, public transportation, and urban density at the center of the work.

- Applicants focusing on grassroots organizing will need to demonstrate that their work is innovative and breaks new ground. This work would not get funding from elsewhere without the early support of the MFSHF. Such early funding gives the flexibility to take on politically risky ideas, much in the spirit of Mickey Flacks herself.

## 3. Tenant Organizing

This third initiative recognizes that Santa Barbara County has one of the least affordable rental housing markets in the United States. Mickey Flacks believed that an important way to keep private landlords from constantly raising rents was to organize tenants as a countervailing power. According to the Santa Barbara County Housing Trust Fund, the average wage for hourly workers in Santa Barbara is \$15.07. However, the hourly wage needed to meet market rate rents is \$25.85. Thus, 56% of renters spend over 30% of their income on rent, and 25% of renters spend over 50% of their income on rent. The Trust Fund states that Santa Barbara is the 3rd least affordable rental housing market in California.

- Applicants focusing on tenant organizing will demonstrate how their work will enable tenants to have a voice and power in their communities. Preference will be given to concrete strategies, tactical actions, and capacity building of a new movement of tenants.

## 4. Seed Money for Innovative Housing Initiatives

Each of the previous initiatives qualifies as innovative; however, there may be new ideas such as tiny homes, co-housing, mobile homes, or other innovative ideas that are worthy of funding for capacity building purposes.

- Applicants for this capacity building funding would need to demonstrate how their idea is bold, unique, and works toward establishing permanent affordability.

## PROCESS

This project will adhere to the guidelines and priorities of The FUND. Specifically, it gives preference to projects that address the root causes of social, economic, environmental, and political problems. The FUND provides seed grants to new grassroots projects; general support or project grants to small organizations; and targeted grants to larger, more established organizations.

**Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, subject to an initial screening by The FUND and funding availability.**

- To inquire about applying email [grants@fundforsantabarbara.org](mailto:grants@fundforsantabarbara.org) a brief paragraph about your project.
- Maximum request: \$5,000
- Length of funding: 12 months