



To: CommonBond Communities Board of Directors

From: Karen Law and Deidre Schmidt

Re: Adopting the SAHF¹ (Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future) Racial Equity Pledge

As an organization we need to be intentional and explicit in our pursuit of racial equity.² We believe that taking an anti-racist stance is important given the history and lingering dynamics in our country and specifically in the housing industry. Attention and active work will be required to undo damage and/ or to counter stubborn behavior, blind spots, etc. The Board of Directors has a unique responsibility in this work.

Thank you for stepping into that responsibility by continuing to look for board members who have a racialized identity, engaging in personal learning and prioritizing time in meetings to expand the board's understanding of the history, current environment and methods to advance racial equity. There is room for all of us to grow as individuals as well as push the organization forward.

We previously shared SAHF's pledge on racial equity which staff have committed to; working with other SAHF members to learn and evolve. CommonBond was instrumental in conversations within this peer group which defined the framework and made a call for the pledge. SAHF is now asking for each member organization's boards to take formal action in support of this work. They are not dictating specific language, but for ease, we have drafted the language below as a potential resolution that could be voted on or amended.

Whereas CommonBond was founded as an effort to achieve social justice, has renewed its focus on racial equity, and has adopted an equity vision statement that asserts the need to be actively anti-racist, the CommonBond Board of Directors hereby resolves to support CommonBond's adoption of the attached Pledge to work with other industry leaders in the coalition SAHF to learn together and further the practical application of these ideals, measure and monitor our progress as individual organizations and as a collective in the hopes of also influencing the broader affordable housing industry.

At the board meeting tomorrow, we will break into small groups to have discussion that might help the board feel ready to take such action. We ask you to reflect on two questions in anticipation of this conversation:

- 1) How might you wish to govern differently as a result of adopting the Pledge?
- 2) How would you respond to a supporter of CommonBond who suggests that by adopting such a pledge CommonBond has strayed from its mission?

¹ SAHF is a member organization comprised of 13 of the largest non-profit, multi-state housing and services organizations in the United States. Collectively SAHF members own, manage and provide services in 147,500 units in 49 states. [Click here](#) for more information.

² Racial Equity can have different definitions. Here are two definitions of equity that we think are helpful.

- Equity Ensures that outcomes in the conditions of well-being are improved for marginalized groups, lifting outcomes for all.
- Racial equity is achieved when race is no longer a predictor of outcomes for individuals.