

OAKLAND CHALLENGE GRANT SUMMARY

Community-Based Partner	Fellow	Government Partners
<p>Lead Partner: Bay Area for All (BA4A) Preservation Table, which includes Alliance for Californians for Community Empowerment; Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Causa Justa :: Just Cause;; Oakland Community Land Trust; Public Advocates; Urban Habitat; the Great Communities Collaborative</p>	<p>Chris Norman</p>	<p>Shola Olatoye Director of Housing & Community Development, City of Oakland</p> <p>Darin Ranelletti Policy Director for Housing Security, City of Oakland</p>

CONTEXT

Oakland is facing a severe housing crisis resulting in high levels of displacement. Half of all Oakland residents, and 62% of African American tenants, are rent-burdened, meaning they spend over 30% of their income on rent.¹ Oakland lost 44,000 African American residents from 2000 to 2014, the largest decrease of any Bay Area city during that period. Since 2015, homelessness in Oakland has skyrocketed by 85 percent.²

POLICY JOURNEY

Prior to the Challenge Grant (**CG**), the City of Oakland engaged in the following housing equity activities:

- **A Roadmap Toward Equity: Housing Solutions for Oakland, California:** In 2015, the Oakland City Council approved this policy framework, which lays out strategies to 1) prevent the displacement of long-time residents, 2) build new, affordable housing, and 3) improve housing habitability and health while maintaining affordability.
- **Oakland at Home:** In 2016, the Oakland Housing Cabinet — convened by Mayor Libby Schaaf and comprised of City staff, housing policy experts, housing advocates, and the business sector — released Oakland at Home, an action plan to implement the policy framework of “A Roadmap Toward Equity.” One recommendation from this plan called for protecting 17,000 low-income households from displacement and producing 17,000 housing units at all income levels by 2024.

The Oakland CG team initially decided to focus on the following objectives:

- Conduct a **racial equity impact analysis** of Oakland’s existing housing programs and funding streams to identify opportunities for improvements in tenant protections and preservation of existing unprotected housing stock.
- Design and implement **improvements to tenant protection and housing preservation programs** to advance racial equity, which could involve enhancing administrative implementation of existing policies and/or adopting new or revised policy legislation. Policies to be considered will be prioritized based on the outcome of the racial equity impact analysis and on Fellow and City staff capacity.

¹ San Francisco Foundation (2019). Oakland CG Summary Sheet, n.d.

² San Francisco Foundation (2019). Oakland CG Summary Sheet, n.d.

During the CG, the Oakland CG team added the objective of pursuing a **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)**, which built on the racial equity analysis conducted by the Fellow.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Fellow has been in ongoing communication with community partners through the BA4A Community-Led Preservation Table about the results from the racial equity analysis, which will be presented to the community for feedback and input. Engaging with the community has led the Fellow to work closely with the Oakland TOPA Coalition, a subgroup consisting of six grassroots and policy organizations representing the city's diverse community.

To keep the Coalition continuously engaged, the Fellow has shared and requested feedback on the different versions of the TOPA policy drafted by Oakland City Councilmembers Nikki Fortunato Bas and Carroll Fife.

POLICY JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Successes

- Building on the racial equity analysis conducted by the Fellow, the City of Oakland has tapped the Fellow to lead the City's racial equity focused team, which represents a meaningful opportunity to influence structurally how the Housing & Community Development Department (**HCD**) functions and how they address racial equity through their policies and programs.

Challenges

- Early in the CG, the CG team encountered a major difficulty with the sudden departure of the original Fellow. The absence of a dedicated person focused on CG objectives disrupted the progress toward Fellowship objectives. However, the new Fellow joined in summer 2021 and quickly jumped into the work. As a result, the Oakland CG Fellowship has been extended to allow sufficient time for the Oakland CG team to pursue its policy goals.

STATUS OF POLICY PRIORITIES (AS OF MARCH 2022)

- A racial equity impact analysis is underway, with the Fellow facilitating across all teams within the agency to identify key performance indicators that centers on the agency's work on equity.
- Creation of a racial equity team comprised of staff from across all teams in agency.
- TOPA has been put on hold as Councilmember Fife has indicated she will bring this legislation to the City Council at a future date. Oakland HCD has prioritized the racial equity work that will be foundational to initiatives like TOPA/COPA.