

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE BAY'S FUTURE CHALLENGE GRANT: EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

Introduction

The Partnership for the Bay's Future is focused on advancing policy solutions and providing financial capital to protect, preserve, and produce housing to ensure the Bay Area remains a welcoming and vibrantly diverse region. Through its inaugural two-year Challenge Grant fellowship ("CG"), seven local governments, in partnership with community-based organizations ("CBOs"), received funding and the support of a fellow to advance housing protection and preservation solutions in the region.

Innovative Team Structure

The innovative structure of CG teams—the local government, community-based organization, and a dedicated fellow seated within the local government—is designed to center equity by bridging the gap between government-led housing policy efforts and local community needs through close collaboration, managed by the fellow.

Policy Pursuits

The Challenge Grant launched in March 2020—the same month the Bay Area enacted the country's first COVID-19 shelter-in-place order—and the newly acquainted CG team found themselves responding to a radically differently landscape of tenant and community organizing needs. Sites quickly pivoted to pass eviction moratoria and other COVID relief measures. As the pandemic dragged on, sites adapted by incorporating online organizing, education, and outreach strategies to their CG policy workplans, all while continuing to be responsive to immediate tenant needs. This absorbed sites' time and energy, delaying the timelines of several CG teams.

Each team's policy focus draws upon previous work conducted by government and community partners and fall into two main categories:

Preservation

CG teams pursued policies to preserve affordable homes such as the Opportunity to Purchase Act ("OPA"), an innovative policy aimed at offering tenants or qualified nonprofits (on behalf of tenants) the opportunity to purchase their residence—with certain restrictions—by receiving advance notice about the owner's intent to sell.

Tenant Protections

CG teams are pursuing enactments or amendments to a suite of tenant protection policies aimed at bolstering tenant rights. These include Just Cause Ordinances, Preference Policies, Relocation Assurances Ordinances, Minimum Lease Terms, and others.

A table of specific policies each site pursued and its status, as of March 2022, is included on page 3.

Challenge Grant Sites:

- ▶ Alameda County
Unincorporated Area
- ▶ Berkeley
- ▶ East Palo Alto
- ▶ Oakland
- ▶ Palo Alto
- ▶ Redwood City
- ▶ San Jose

“ When city staff sometimes push back, [the Fellow] takes the time to clarify and interpret our needs and be the bridge between us. [The Fellow] is genuinely trying to build something that is sustainable for the city with community perspective. ”

– **Community Partner**

Lessons Learned

Over the course of three learning cycles that included interviews with CG team members, document review, research, and site surveys, these lessons stand out.

Centering Equity

Explicit racial equity analysis is an important step in the policy development process.

Oakland started by conducting a comprehensive racial equity analysis of the Housing Department's policies and programs, which led the Housing Department to prioritize a similar analysis of the impacts of future housing policy efforts and the creation of a new racial equity team within the department. Similarly, Berkeley brought a racial equity lens to their policy process by providing innovative policy alternatives to the community's request for a race-specific preference. The policy recommendations intend to balance the need to address racial equity and historic injustice with limitations of Fair Housing law and other legal barriers.



By amplifying tenant voices, some sites are shifting power dynamics. The Palo Alto CG team approached their CG goal of reviewing and strengthening their tenant protection ordinances by gathering and presenting data about Palo Alto tenants' demographics and rent burden. This created an opportunity to solidify the Palo Alto Renters' Association (PARA) in 2020 to serve as a vehicle for tenant representation in current and future policymaking efforts. The CG provided space and resources that enabled PARA to identify leaders, hire staff, and set up a website. In Alameda County, the CBO RCD has invested resources in the grassroots group Eden Renters United to strengthen community engagement. Through these efforts, sites are building collective voice and action for communities, in particular communities of color, who are most often renters and rent burdened.

Expanding Inclusion

Respect and amplify the leadership of organizations with strong ties to the communities.

For many years, Berkeley activists had called for a housing preference policy. When the city and its CG partner, East Bay Community Law Center, began pursuing policies without further community involvement, the CG team soon received community pushback for "leading" the work many activists had been pursuing for years. The CG team responded to this by bringing on Healthy Black Families—a Black-led, Berkeley-based grassroots organization—as an equal partner in the CG work, leading to a more robust and responsive community input process.



Successful stakeholder engagement includes a strategy for reaching out to all interested parties early on and sustaining the engagement.

The East Palo Alto CG team reached out to the community early in the process through a series of community education and feedback sessions on their Opportunity to Purchase Act. When the CG team introduced its proposed ordinance to City Council, they encountered significant pushback from opponents and limited participation by local residents supporting the policy, causing City Council to hesitate. The CG team quickly mobilized to garner additional community support for the policy in the subsequent months.

Strengthening Collaboration

Learning and exchanges are essential to innovation. Four CG sites are currently pursuing versions of OPA policies for preserving affordable homes. These complex policies typically garner fierce opposition, are ripe for misinformation campaigns, and can potentially confuse elected officials and residents. The cohort framework enabled CG teams and sites to build off each other's policy research and experience with OPA while adapting policies to their specific context and environment. In San José, the City Council directed staff to research other locations where OPA has been implemented or is being considered. San José's fellow looked to the CG cohort as an opportunity to confer with cities like Berkeley and East Palo Alto, who have worked on OPA initiatives for years.



TABLE 1. CG TEAM POLICY PURSUITS AND STATUS

CG Team	Policy Pursuits	Status
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Proactive Rental Inspection program ▶ Rent Registry ▶ Expanded Just Cause eviction protections ▶ Fair Chance Housing Ordinance ▶ Rent Stabilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Proactive Rental Inspection Program has been presented to multiple Board of Supervisors' committees and is circulating through the public process. ▶ The Rent Registry draft ordinance is tentatively going to the Transportation and Planning Committee in May 2022. ▶ The Expanded Just Cause Eviction Protections and Fair Chance Housing Ordinances will go to the Unincorporated Services Committee meeting May 2022. ▶ The Rent Stabilization Ordinance is tentatively expected to move forward later this year.
CITY OF BERKELEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act ▶ Local Housing Preference Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ TOPA: Council held a working session in January 2022 and is now in mayor's hands to bring back to Council for a vote. ▶ Preference Policy: City staff drafting a policy based on Housing Advisory Committee recommendations. Staff anticipate bringing a policy proposal to Council in the fall 2022.
CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act / Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA/COPA) ▶ Measure V — Transient Occupancy Tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ TOPA/COPA: Policy discussed by city council throughout the fall. Ordinance to be put on hold and reconsidered in the fall 2022. ▶ Measure V: Went up for vote on the November 2020 ballot, did not pass
CITY OF OAKLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) ▶ Racial equity impact analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Racial equity impact analysis underway, with Fellow facilitating across all teams within the agency to identify key performance indicators that centers on the agency's work on equity ▶ Creation of racial equity team, comprised of staff from across all teams in agency. ▶ TOPA has been put on hold until a future date.
CITY OF PALO ALTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Strengthening renter protection ordinances (Tenant Relocation Assistance, Just Cause, Anti-Gouging) ▶ Drafting new renter protection ordinances (rent registry, security deposit limit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tenant relocation assistance ordinance amendment presented to and passed by Council in January 2022. ▶ Just Cause, Rent Registry, and Security Deposit Limit draft ordinances in progress. ▶ All other policies on hold until policies above are completed.
CITY OF REDWOOD CITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Anti-Displacement Strategy (ADS) ▶ Tenant protection policies ▶ Preservation of unsubsidized affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ADS: First draft of ADS published. Additional analysis and community engagement on ADS to be conducted. Updated ADS tentatively scheduled to go to Council in summer 2022. ▶ Tenant protection policies: Proposed in the ADS ▶ Preservation of unsubsidized affordable housing: Proposed in the ADS
CITY OF SAN JOSÉ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Citywide Residential Anti-Displacement Strategy ▶ Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Citywide Residential Anti-Displacement Strategy: Passed in September 2020 ▶ Specific city-led work on COPA is paused for the summer 2022 to focus on a city-wide Housing Element Plan (COPA is part of the plan). SOMOS Mayfair and their partners are continuing their community engagement and building momentum for COPA.