

MAKING EQUITY REAL: ANTI-DISPLACEMENT STRATEGIES

WHY EQUITY

Equity is not just a commitment – it is a practice. Equity is transforming the behaviors, institutions, and systems that disproportionately harm marginalized communities.

Due to a history of discriminatory government practices, communities of color have borne the brunt of generational disparities in socioeconomic and health outcomes, as well as in ownership over the decisions that impact them. Equity means increasing access to power, redistributing and providing additional resources, and eliminating barriers to opportunity, in order to empower marginalized communities to thrive and reach full potential.

THE PROBLEM

California is experiencing a housing affordability crisis that has led to unprecedented levels of homelessness. Rapid job growth, insufficient supply of housing units, and a lack of policies designed to protect renters have all contributed to the housing shortage. The worst impacts of the crisis fall upon low-income households of color, who are more likely to rent, be evicted, or experience homelessness.ⁱ Therefore, projects should include anti-displacement strategies that address the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on low-income households of color.

Improvements in transit infrastructure and urban greening are associated with gentrification and displacement in the surrounding neighborhood.ⁱⁱ Gentrification and neighborhood change are complicated and often painful processes that can impact community cohesion and access to resources, in addition to affordability. Communities that benefit from AHSC projects are extremely vulnerable to these forces, especially since many are in disadvantaged communities. Therefore, equity and strategies to prevent the displacement of both residents and business must be incorporated into an AHSC application. Specifically, AHSC requires that the applicants identify strategies that prevent the displacement of local community residents and locally-owned businesses from the area surrounding the project.

This handout provides a framework for how to select anti-displacement strategies that take into consideration the historical context of a community, existing patterns of neighborhood change, and projected economic and demographic shifts.

PLANNING FOR EQUITY

Below are some guidelines for putting an equity lens on the work you do as a developer, transit agency, or public agency during the planning phase of a project.

- Explicitly state a commitment to equity in the goals, vision, and values of the project – upfront, while you are planning for it. Beyond the individual affordable housing or sustainable transportation improvements, you should also aim to address other interconnected injustices that historically marginalized people and communities face.
- Outline equity goals and metrics at the beginning to use as a roadmap for implementation
- Don't think only about the residents of the development or the people who will be using the new services or infrastructure. Also think about the impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and build in tools and strategies to mitigate any negative impacts of the project.

- Prioritize strategies that offer shared, direct, and multiple benefits to communities. Communities facing significant displacement pressures often face other economic or environmental pressures as well. Low-income communities of color are more likely to be at the frontlines of pollution and climate change impacts, have poorer health outcomes, and have longer commutes. Your application should consider impacts beyond the physical scope of your housing and transportation elements, and should consider health, economic and quality-of-life benefits.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Take a collaborative approach. Create partnerships with other stakeholders such as developers, local jurisdictions, school districts, public agencies, and local organizations representing low-income people of color.

THE PROCESS

To connect equity with the selection of anti-displacement strategies, think back to the equity goals, vision, and values outlined in the planning phase above. The guiding question should be: Which anti-displacement strategies clearly connect to those goals? Be mindful that anti-displacement programs are not one-size-fits-all. More importantly, to be equitable and meaningful, go beyond selecting the anti-displacement strategies that are “low-hanging fruit” and, instead, implement the strategies that reflect the actual community-identified needs and address the project’s equity goals.

As part of creating an anti-displacement strategy, you should conduct a needs assessment that identifies displacement pressures and community needs. Every neighborhood is different, so a strategy that works in one project may not be appropriate for another. The goal of a needs assessment is to make sure that the anti-displacement strategies clearly address the actual needs of the neighborhood. The needs assessment should:

- Look at the historical context of the neighborhood
- Identify groups that will be impacted or harmed by the project
- Consider site geography and current displacement pressures in the community
- Meaningfully engage the community
- Identify potential issues regarding accessibility
- Target groups who have suffered historic harm or are most vulnerable to displacement

The table below contains some guiding questions that will be helpful in designing your needs assessment. This needs assessment can be part of the community engagement process for the AHSC application. Start early and work with community-based organizations.

Questions to Consider in Your Needs Assessment	
<i>Historical Context and Need</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically, who has been most impacted by development and displacement in this community? • Which groups are currently most vulnerable to displacement? • How have impacted groups been engaged in the past? • What kinds of anti-displacement policies already exist in your local jurisdiction, and how do your strategies build on those?
<i>Identifying Vulnerable Populations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which group(s) will benefit from your project? • Are there groups who may be negatively impacted by the project? • How have you identified these communities? (e.g., local census data, existing plans, community health needs assessments, CalEnviroScreen 3.0, displacement maps, local business survey, etc.)

<p><i>Geography</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there special considerations you need to make based on the specific location of the project? Does the site itself raise any equity concerns? How will you mitigate them? • What are the displacement pressures in the neighborhood where your project is located? What about in the city as a whole? Or the region? Depending on the demographics, geography, and community characteristics, your project might be facing different displacement pressures than you assume.
<p><i>Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits of the proposed program or policy broadly accessible to households throughout the community, particularly communities of color, low-income populations, Tribal and indigenous communities and immigrant communities? • Are the strategies accessible to community members with different cultural backgrounds, languages, or education levels?
<p><i>Community Engagement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you plan to engage community members in the planning and implementation of anti-displacement strategies at your project? • How will you engage local businesses in your strategy? • Are you sharing as much decision-making power as feasible? • Where will you advertise the needs assessment and the new project to make sure local residents are engaged? • How have you considered neighborhood demographics, languages spoken, income levels, and other cultural considerations for outreach and marketing? • How will you use the needs assessment to inform the implementation of your strategy?
<p><i>Targeting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your strategy tailored to the community where the project is located? • How does your strategy target specific groups within the community who have suffered historic harm, or are more vulnerable to displacement? • How does the strategy respond to the needs of the groups who will be impacted by it? Be specific.

SELECTING ANTI-DISPLACEMENT STRATEGIES FOR AN AHSC APPLICATION

The list below contains eligible anti-displacement strategies for AHSC projects. The list of strategies is from the Round 4 AHSC application so please make sure to check the application at the time you are submitting. Some strategies will be implemented by the project developer, while others will be implemented by the local jurisdiction or agency. The strongest anti-displacement strategies will come from projects that have an explicit commitment to equity and a deep understanding of the community context.

For each of these, it is important that multiple stakeholders, including local community members, collaborate on the design and implementation of the strategy to ensure that it addresses the community-identified needs. You will have to provide documentation that supports the selection of the strategy, stating who the responsible party will be for each strategy and describing the strategy. For the business anti-displacement strategy, you will have to state if the strategy already exists or is being implemented as part of the AHSC application. You will get an extra point if you identify at least one new business anti-displacement strategy that will be implemented by the project.

Residential Anti-Displacement Strategies	
Strategy	Typically Implemented By:
Just cause eviction or tenant anti-harassment policies	Developer or Jurisdiction
Density bonus ordinances that expand on state requirements	Jurisdiction
Multi-lingual tenant legal counseling program	Developer or Jurisdiction
Source of income non-discrimination policies	Developer or Jurisdiction
Condominium conversion restrictions	Jurisdiction
Land banking programs	Jurisdiction
Rent review board and/or mediation	Jurisdiction
Affirmative marketing strategies or plans targeting a Disadvantaged Community or Low-Income Community	Developer or Jurisdiction
Providing the sale of discounted transit passes available for low-income individuals who live in the Project Area (not restricted to residents of the AHD)	Developer or Jurisdiction
Inclusionary zoning ordinances	Jurisdiction
Job-housing linkage fee or affordable housing linkage fee	Jurisdiction
First right of return ordinance	Jurisdiction
Policies to preserve SRO and/or mobile home parks	Jurisdiction
Required and/or incentives for contributions to local community land trusts	Developer or Jurisdiction
Community benefit zoning and/or other land value recapture strategy	Jurisdiction
Foreclosure assistance	Jurisdiction
Residency Preference Plan prioritizing occupancy for Disadvantaged Community or Low-Income Community residents	Developer or Jurisdiction

Business Anti-Displacement Strategies
Implementation of an overlay zone to protect and assist small businesses
Creation and maintenance of a small business alliance
Formal program to ensure that some fraction of a jurisdictions purchases of goods and services come from local businesses
Establishment of a small business advocate office and single point of contact for every small business owner
Increased visibility of the jurisdictions small business assistance programs
Prioritization of Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) for public contracting

CONCLUSION

Investing time and effort into researching, selecting, and implementing the right anti-displacement strategies will make your project have a much greater impact on poverty in marginalized communities. It is critical to set equity goals early in the process, and choose strategies that tie back to these goals. Being intentional and thoughtful about the real benefits of your anti-displacement plan will make your project more competitive, and overall, ensure that it is truly addressing the challenges faced in historically marginalized communities.

ⁱ UC Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project and the California Housing Partnership. (2019). *Rising Housing Costs and Re-segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area*. Retrieved from https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/bay_area_re-segregation_rising_housing_costs_report_2019.pdf on August 26, 2019.

ⁱⁱ Zuk, M., Bierbaum, A. H., Chapple, K., Gorska, K., & Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2018). Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 33(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412217716439>; Maantay, J. A., & Maroko, A. R. (2018). Brownfields to Greenfields: Environmental Justice Versus Environmental Gentrification. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 15(10), 2233. doi:10.3390/ijerph15102233

ⁱⁱⁱ Governor's Office of Planning and Research. (2018). *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies*. Retrieved from http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20180313-Building_a_Resilient_CA.pdf on April 30, 2019; *Advancing Climate Justice in California: Guiding Principles and Recommendations for Policy and Funding Decisions*. Retrieved from <http://www.healthyworldforall.org/en/pdf/AdvancingClimateJusticeInCaliforniaWithoutAppendix.pdf> on May 1, 2019.