MEASURE A1: ALAMEDA COUNTY INVESTS IN HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

Over 73% of voters passed Measure A-1, the Alameda County Affordable Housing Bond, in November 2016. This $580 million bond will create and protect affordable housing options for people throughout Alameda County.

The bond programs will meet a spectrum of housing needs, from rental housing for the lowest-income people to homeownership programs. The homeownership programs include a Down Payment Assistance Loan Program ($50 million) to assist middle-income homebuyers in Alameda County; a Homeownership Housing Development Program ($25 million) to finance long-term affordable homeownership for low-income, first-time homebuyers; and a Housing Preservation Loan Program ($45 million) to help seniors, people with disabilities and low-income homeowners remain safely in their homes.

However, the majority of the bond program focuses on two rental housing programs: an Innovation and Opportunity Fund ($35 million) to support pre-approved developers to quickly capture market opportunities to preserve and expand affordable rental housing and/or prevent tenant displacement; and the Rental Housing Development Fund ($425 million) to create and preserve affordable rental housing for vulnerable populations. The Rental Housing Development Fund allocates funds for projects in each city in the county, as well as four regional pools.

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The bond programs were developed with great attention to community input, with town halls and public hearings held across the county. The County HCD Department will continue to integrate community input during the implementation process.

HCD will work on several related initiatives, including linking bond programs with related job training, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities for the bond's target populations and creating a streamlined and simplified process to find and apply for affordable rental housing.

For more information on the bond, visit http://www.acgov.org/cda/hcd/bond.htm. To receive emails with up-to-date information on the bond, sign up on the County’s Housing Bond listserv: http://www.acgov.org/cda/hcd/esubscribe.htm.

By Jennifer Pearce, Alameda County
In 2016, two East Bay ballot measures emerged that would shape EBHO resident leaders’ work for the remainder of the year. First, in response to community pressure around the housing crisis, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors brought forth a $580 million Affordable Housing Bond (Measure A1). Second, the Oakland City Council put the Protect Oakland Renters (POR) initiative (Measure JJ) on the ballot.

EBHO’s Resident and Community Organizing Program (RCOP) Committee immediately recognized the value of these measures. The committee quickly organized a Bond and POR Subcommittee to support their passage; even before the bond had an official name, resident leaders were presenting to resident groups and recruiting people to join planning meetings. In June, they began meeting bi-weekly to strategize and train speakers. Subcommittee members developed a presentation for affordable housing residents that emphasized that while these measures were not the ultimate solution to the crisis, they would make a positive impact. In August, resident leaders organized a rally in front of City Hall that turned out over 60 people. The Bond and POR Subcommittee did everything from designing the program to assembling a giant A1 Sauce Bottle costume. The event generated good energy before vote-by-mail ballots went out, and Supervisor Keith Carson spoke.

**Measures Pass with Big Support**

In November, both measures passed with overwhelming support—72% for A1 and 75% for Measure JJ. RCOP could not have done this without many partnerships, particularly with developer members who opened their doors to us and helped coordinate many of the presentations. A special thanks goes out to SAHA for arranging the most presentations (almost 20!) and being supportive along the way. Also, thanks to The San Francisco Foundation for supporting resident stipends and organizing. EBHO appreciates the affordable housing community’s commitment to increase voter engagement, and we look forward to future collaborations!

By Najla Gomez and Adlemy Garcia, EBHO

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**Presentations to Community Groups**

The Bond and POR Subcommittee ultimately gave over 50 presentations to affordable housing communities and community groups. In the presentations, resident leaders spoke about the urgent need for tenant protections in the short term, and for more subsidized units in the long term. Over 700 individuals attended RCOP-led workshops over the course of three months. Resident leaders also conducted individual outreach in their neighborhoods and reached a broader audience through National Night Out events and Alameda County’s Healthy Living Festival. On October 4th, resident leaders organized a rally in front of City Hall that turned out over 60 people. The Bond and POR Subcommittee did everything from designing the program to assembling a giant A1 Sauce Bottle costume. The event generated good energy before vote-by-mail ballots went out, and Supervisor Keith Carson spoke.

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**In November 2016, both measures passed with overwhelming support.**