

# STRUCTURAL RACISM IN SAN FRANCISCO FACTS, FIGURES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

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## Introduction

Black residents of San Francisco are experiencing disproportionate impacts of COVID-19, income inequality, and high rates of homelessness and displacement associated with gentrification and rising housing costs. The median household income for white San Francisco residents increased by 14% from 2011 to 2015 while household income decreased by 5% for Black residents.<sup>2</sup> Beyond pointing out the history and impacts of structural racism in San Francisco, this city profile highlights the efforts of community activists, grassroots organizations and city government to disrupt the legacy of unjust urban policies and decision-making. In this brief we also offer working principles for Black-centered urban racial equity. Though not intended to be a comprehensive source of information, this brief highlights key facts, figures and opportunities to advance racial equity in San Francisco.

CURE developed this brief as part of a series of city profiles on structural inequities in major cities. The briefs were originally created as part of an internal process intended to ground ourselves in local history and current efforts to achieve racial justice in cities where our client

<sup>1</sup>Suggested Citation for this Brief: Brink-Johnson, A and Lubin, J. "Structural Racism in San Francisco." *Center for Urban and Racial Equity*. August 2020.

partners are located. With heightened interest in these issues, CURE is releasing these briefs as resources for organizers, nonprofit organizations, city government officials and others who are coordinating efforts to reckon with the history of racism and anti-Blackness that continues to shape city planning, economic development, housing and policing strategies. Residents most impacted by these systems are already leading the change and leading the process of reimagining San Francisco as a place where Black Lives Matter. We hope this brief provides a useful source of information for building understanding and supporting the deep and sustained work needed to build healthy, just, and sustainable cities and communities.

## The Changing Color of San Francisco

According to 2018 Census data, San Francisco is currently approximately 53% white, 36% Asian American, and 15% Latinx. Only about 6% of the city's population is Black.<sup>3</sup> Fifty four percent of low-income households of color in San Francisco are either in neighborhoods that are currently gentrifying or at risk of gentrification. Two-thirds (66%) of low-income Black households in the Bay Area are experiencing gentrification or facing the risk of gentrification. Fifty-five percent of the region's low-income Latinx households and 50% of the Bay Area's low-income Native American households are experiencing gentrification or facing the risk of gentrification.<sup>4</sup>

Many long-term San Francisco residents find themselves priced out of neighborhoods, often by highly paid, mostly white Silicon Valley tech workers employed by companies like Facebook and Google that drive rents and home prices higher.<sup>5</sup> A new study by BuildZoom found that most of San Francisco's newcomers arrive with significant disposable income. According to the study, people who moved to San Francisco between 2005 and 2016 made \$12,640 more annually than those who left the city in the same time period. This figure accelerated from 2010 to 2016, when newcomers made about \$18,700 more than former residents.<sup>6</sup> Between 2000 and 2015 increased rental prices led to San Francisco losing nearly 3,000 low-income Black families.<sup>7</sup>

Looking at census tract-level increases in the median rent in the Bay Area, researchers at the University of California, Berkeley found

**Structural racism** refers to a system in which public policies and societal and institutional practices and norms work together to consistently produce disadvantages and inequities experienced among Black people and racially oppressed groups.

**Gentrification** is a profit-driven racial and class reconfiguration of urban, working-class and communities of color that have suffered from a history of disinvestment and abandonment...Gentrification is driven by private developers, landlords, businesses, and corporations, and supported by the government through policies that facilitate the process of displacement.

These policies often take the form of rezoning, subsidies, and other strategies that make development of expensive housing easier. This new housing is often designed to court new, wealthier and mostly white people moving into neighborhoods. Displacing a group of people in favor of newcomers dilutes the political power of working-class communities and communities of color by breaking up families, communities, and voting blocs. (Adapted from Development Without Displacement by Causa Justa: Just Cause)

that as rent increased, there was a decline in the number of low-income households of color in the area. However as rent increased, there was no statistically significant impact on the number of low-income white households in the area. This suggests that households of color are particularly vulnerable to rapid rent increases and that beyond income, race plays a large role in the displacement of households in the Bay Area.<sup>8</sup> (Census tracts are small (approx. 4,000 residents) and relatively permanent subdivisions of a county.<sup>9</sup>)

## Poverty and Economic Inequality

In 2016, the median white household income was \$106,919 compared to \$46,571 for Black households.<sup>10</sup> According to a 2018 report from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, a San Francisco metro area family of four bringing in \$117,400 a year would qualify as low-income. A single adult making \$82,000 each year would also qualify as low-income.<sup>11</sup> This is the highest figure anywhere in the country.<sup>12</sup>

An estimated 10% of San Francisco residents were in poverty in 2018. Poverty rates varied greatly, with Black residents experiencing poverty at nearly three times the average rate for the city.<sup>13</sup>

The high school graduation rate for Black San Francisco students rose to more than 89% in 2019.<sup>14</sup> Promoting high school completion can be an important anti-poverty strategy; however, increasing high school graduation rates especially for Black residents should be pursued along with efforts to combat racial discrimination in hiring practices and strategies that ensure fair access to employment opportunities, and jobs that pay a livable wage and provide paid sick leave for workers.

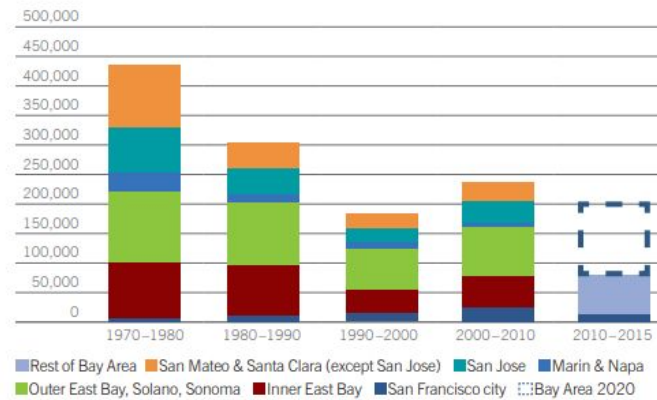
## Declining Housing Affordability, Rising Evictions

Around 44,000 new housing units have been proposed in the city. More than 15,000 are still seeking initial approval from the city's Planning Department. Another 29,000 have received approval but have not yet moved into the construction phase. Of the new housing units that the city anticipates completing over the next six years, only 22 percent are projected to be affordable housing.<sup>15</sup>

Between 2010 and 2018, the median market rate rent for a 2-bedroom unit increased 48% to \$4,725. It would take 6 full-time minimum wage jobs to afford this type of apartment. Historically San Francisco has exceeded the allocations for building above moderate-income housing, but has built significantly less than the allocation for moderate and low-income residents.<sup>16</sup>

The overall housing production decline in the Bay Area from 1970 to 2015 is depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Housing Production in the Bay Area, 1970-2015



(San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership, 2019)<sup>17</sup>

According to data from the Bay Area Equity Atlas, a partnership between PolicyLink, the San Francisco Foundation and University of Southern California, the percent of rent-burdened residents increased from 41% to 50% percent in the nine-county Bay Area between 2000 and 2015.<sup>18</sup> Rent-burdened households are those that spend more than 30% of their total income on housing needs. Rent-burden is felt particularly hard by Black women, with 66% of Black women being rent-burdened in the Bay Area in 2015.<sup>19</sup> Enterprise Community Partners and the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University have projected that, without a major policy intervention, the difference between cost-burden rates of white renters and renters of color will only widen in San Francisco and other American cities.<sup>20</sup>

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project plotted all evictions in the city between 1994 and 2019. There were large numbers of Ellis Act evictions.<sup>21</sup> Ellis Act evictions are when landlords evict tenants as part of leaving the rental market and are often used to change the use of a building.<sup>22</sup> According to a 2013 report from the city's Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, Ellis Act evictions increased 170 percent between 2010 and 2013.<sup>23</sup> According to a 2013 survey of direct legal and tenant aid organizations, Black residents were disproportionately represented by these organizations, making up 28% of the client population while only comprising 6% of the city population according to 2012 Census data.<sup>24</sup> A 2012 report from San Francisco's Eviction Defense Collective noted that 82% of the collective's clients had to leave their homes after an eviction lawsuit. Thirty five percent (35%) had to leave San Francisco after being evicted and 15% were using a post office box as an address or had become homeless.<sup>25</sup> Black and Latinx women face higher rates of eviction in San Francisco and Oakland.<sup>26</sup>



Activists associated with Moms for Housing, a group of Black women, have drawn national media attention for their occupation of a vacant home in Oakland. They were instrumental in the 2019 defeat of a statewide zoning bill that would have encouraged developers to build more luxury developments.<sup>27</sup>

In 2017 in the San Francisco metropolitan area the homeownership rate was 47.4% percent for white households and only 21.7% for Black households.<sup>28</sup> A 2018 study by Zillow found that Black San Francisco and Oakland residents have the fewest affordable options for buying a home compared to anywhere else in the country. The analysis found that the average Black resident could afford only 5% of the region's homes in 2017. The analysis also notes that the homeownership gap between white and Black residents has widened in the Bay Area since the 1900s.<sup>29</sup>

## Historical Snapshot

The Bay Area was the home of Costanoan, Coast Miwok, Yokut, and Wintun Indigenous groups. There were approximately 7,000 Indigenous people living in the region prior to Spanish settlement in the 1770s.<sup>33 34</sup> Thousands of Indigenous people would be killed by white settlers including more than 400 Indigenous people murdered by the U.S. Cavalry near Clear Lake in 1850.<sup>35</sup>

In describing the history of exclusionary housing in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Othering and Belonging Institute notes “the rampant displacement seen today in the San Francisco Bay Area is built upon a history of exclusion and dispossession, centered on race, and driven by the logic of capitalism. This history established massive inequities in who owned land, who had access to financing, and who held political power, all of which determined—and still remain at the root of deciding—who can call the Bay Area home.”<sup>36</sup>



Black miner in San Francisco<sup>30</sup>

Although the Gold Rush of 1849 brought many new residents including 4,000 free Black people throughout the 1840s and 1850s, white residents and politicians fought hard to ensure that free Black people would be prohibited from immigrating to or living in California.<sup>37</sup> Though California would eventually enter the Union as a free state with no legal barriers to entry, free Black people were often still driven out of town by white residents. Many white miners feared

that groups of Black miners would pool their wealth and wield more influence than white miners.<sup>38</sup>

As San Francisco's economy slowed in the years after the Gold Rush, anti-Black and anti-Asian sentiment among white residents would shape racially discriminatory policies in the following decades. White workers targeted Chinese immigrants who they saw as the reason behind their inability to find work. White labor groups used local laws to try and create a difficult environment for Chinese immigrants to force them to return to China. This included the Cubic Air Ordinance, which required 500 cubic feet of space for every person residing in a lodging. Chinese immigrants were targeted as part of enforcement of the ordinance with thousands of Chinese immigrants being jailed from 1873 to 1886. White groups would also successfully fight to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which restricted Chinese Immigration to the United States.<sup>39</sup> After a major earthquake in 1906, many of the city's new zoning laws blocked people of color from opening businesses including Japanese residents in the city's Fillmore District.<sup>40</sup>

Redlining was a process in which the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal government agency, gave neighborhoods ratings to guide economic investment. Red or "hazardous" neighborhoods were the riskiest for investment. It was very difficult for residents in redlined neighborhoods to receive loans for homeownership or property maintenance. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of San Francisco's redlined neighborhoods are low-income neighborhoods undergoing gentrification today.<sup>41</sup> San Francisco's redlined neighborhoods were in the predominantly Black Western Addition neighborhood and other communities of color including the Haight, Chinatown, and the Mission.<sup>42</sup>

The Fillmore District became Black San Francisco's cultural and economic heart. It became known as the "Harlem of the West," as all of the era's major artists performed in the neighborhood's venues. The list includes Count Basie, Etta James, Thelonious Monk, and Duke Ellington. But the Fillmore began changing after the war ended as federal redevelopment projects demolished many of the neighborhood's homes and businesses. Many residents relocated to Bayview and Hunters Point.<sup>43</sup>



Melrose record shop at 1226 Fillmore Street<sup>31</sup>

In 1945, the city's new Master Plan, in an attempt to improve public transit, parks, and major roadways, targeted residents in the Western Addition, SOMA, Mission, Chinatown, and Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhoods. The city bought out many homeowners at very low values and displaced many more people under eminent domain rules. These actions had a particularly strong effect on the city's Black population especially in the Western Addition neighborhood where 883 businesses and 4,729 households were forced out.<sup>44</sup>

The 1960s brought a great deal of student organizing including the University of California, Berkeley's chapter of CORE (Congress On Racial Equality). CORE partnered with local Black-led organizations to form the Ad Hoc Committee To End Racial Discrimination which organized a number of protests with the goal of ending racism in hiring among the area's local businesses.<sup>45</sup> The Bay Area was also home to some of the first collective actions by the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, founded by Merritt College students Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale as a result of rampant police brutality.<sup>46</sup>

San Francisco's city government decided to remove many of the industries that were in the city center to make room for high-rise apartments and office buildings.<sup>47</sup> This process of deindustrialization hurt Black residents in San Francisco. For example, Black men on average worked 42 weeks a year in 1970, but that number would shrink to 33 weeks by 2000.<sup>48</sup> Many working class Black San Franciscans were displaced to Oakland in the 1980s and proceeding decades. Recently however Oakland has become a city with some of the highest rents anywhere in the country.<sup>49</sup> Oakland has seen its Black population fall from around 50% in 1980 to 28% in 2010. Many former Bay Area residents have been forced to suburbs or to cheaper central California towns. Other residents and families have moved to the southern United States.<sup>50</sup>

Research by the University of California has examined how deindustrialization since the 1980s have helped to create a demographic shift in the region.<sup>51</sup> Movement away from a manufacturing and other industry based economy to one focused on technology has priced out many long term Black residents of San Francisco in favor of new, financially well-off white and Asian residents. The Black population in San Francisco peaked in 1990 with around 500,000 residents. Today, approximately 49,000 Black residents call San Francisco home.<sup>52</sup>

In 2012 London Breed, won a seat on the Board of Supervisors and became president of the board in 2015. She was appointed acting mayor after Mayor Ed Lee died in office in 2017. The city's Board of Supervisors later removed her from the acting mayor role, noting that her roles as board president and acting mayor gave her too much power as a mayoral candidate. The removal of Breed as acting mayor drew criticism from the city's Black residents after she was replaced with a white acting mayor. In 2018, London Breed would be elected mayor becoming the first Black woman to hold the position in San Francisco.<sup>53</sup>

## Health and Health Insurance Coverage

Despite the San Francisco Health Care Security Ordinance being one of the nation's first and only local laws designed to promote universal health care and near 100% coverage of residents, there remains stark racial inequities in health outcomes due to geographic, environmental, and other factors.<sup>54,55</sup> Black infants were five times more likely to die before their first birthday than white infants, according to data from the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Black San Francisco residents experience many other racial health inequities. The asthma prevalence rate among Black adults was 13.9% in contrast to a prevalence rate of 5% for white adults. Rates of asthma hospitalizations among Black residents are almost 9 times higher than white residents. All of the above factors contribute to Black residents having the shortest life expectancy among all racial and ethnic groups in San Francisco. Life expectancy for Black residents is 72 years, nearly 10 years less than white, Asian, and Latinx people who can all expect to live into their 80s.<sup>56</sup>

A 2019 study by the University of California found that current asthma-related emergency room visits are directly associated with historically redlined neighborhoods.<sup>57</sup> Redlining has also led to poor mental health and persistent poverty.<sup>58</sup> The 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment focuses on overall poverty and racial inequities as the two foundational issues affecting health in the city. These elements influence five areas the CHNA identifies as heavily impacting health and disease in San Francisco: social, emotional and behavioral health; food insecurity, healthy eating and active living; housing security and homelessness; and safety from violence and trauma.<sup>59</sup> In addition to the structural changes needed to address these five areas impacting health, increased cultural humility in the health care system can help reduce provider bias and improve health care access and patient satisfaction.<sup>60</sup>

## Hunger and Food Insecurity

Families that are food insecure lack the financial means to comfortably feed their household. Approximately, 20–30% of Black and Latinx women in the city who are pregnant women are food insecure.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the financial resources needed to access healthy foods, families need convenient access to food outlets such as grocery stores.

The USDA has designated Oceanview, Merced, Ingleside, Visitation Valley, Bayview Hunters Point and Treasure Island as neighborhoods with low food access.<sup>62</sup> Black residents comprise the largest racial group in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood, representing about 30% of the areas population.<sup>63,64</sup> This inequitable access to healthy food contribute to racial inequities in diet-related diseases such as diabetes. Black and Latinx residents of San Francisco are at higher risk for diabetes, with hospitalizations due to diabetes roughly 40 per 10,000 Blacks residents and 13 per 10,000 Latinx residents while 6 per 10,000 for white residents.<sup>65</sup>



## Homelessness

The 2017 San Francisco Homeless Count & Survey Comprehensive Report noted that the size of the Black homeless population in San Francisco is highly disproportionate to the number of Black people in the city. According to the report, Black residents are approximately 34% of the homeless population, despite making up less than 6% of the general population.<sup>66</sup> The 2018 Demographic Data Project by the National Alliance to End Homelessness found that out of every 10,000 Black people in San Francisco County, on average 591 were homeless compared to just 56 out of every 10,000 white San Franciscan on average.<sup>67</sup> Youth of color and especially Black youth are overrepresented in the youth homeless population. Youth who identify as LGBTQ, are also overrepresented at 46%.<sup>68</sup> Mass incarceration, being legally barred from public housing, a lack of historical wealth, and limited access to credit all further exacerbate the racial inequities and contribute to higher rates of homelessness.<sup>69</sup>

## Criminal Justice and Police Violence

Between 2008 and 2014, Black people accounted for 41% of those arrested, 43% of those booked into jail, and 39% of new convictions despite only accounting for approximately 6% of the population in San Francisco County.<sup>70</sup> Between 2013 and 2014, thirty seven people were arrested in the city's Tenderloin neighborhood as part of a sting operation intended to arrest dealers selling drugs near schools. All 37 people arrested were Black. The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California helped to bring a lawsuit against the city on behalf of seven of the defendants. In February 2020, the city agreed to pay \$225,000 to settle the case.<sup>71</sup> This inequity continued beyond 2014 and with more than 25% of the stops by the San Francisco Police Department in the second half of 2018 involving Black people.<sup>72</sup>

San Francisco has a long history of police violence against Black people. This includes the fatal shooting of Jessica Williams in 2016. Police officers tried to apprehend Williams after seeing her in a parked car they believed to be stolen. Williams was startled and attempted to drive away. She made it about 100 feet before crashing into a parked utility truck. The car Williams was driving became wedged underneath the truck. While trying to dislodge the vehicle, Williams was shot and killed by one of the police officers.<sup>73</sup>

In 2020, thousands of activists and residents marched along the city's Market Street, towards City Hall, along the I-80 freeway, and at Embarcadero Plaza among other protest events and marches.<sup>74</sup> Many activists and residents were calling on the city to defund its police department. In response to local and nationwide protests following the killing of George Floyd, San Francisco mayor London Breed announced that police officers would be replaced with trained, unarmed professionals on 'noncriminal' 911 calls including those involving mental health, the homeless, school discipline and neighbor disputes.<sup>75</sup> In July 2020, the mayor unveiled plans to redistribute \$120 million from the police and sheriff departments to efforts

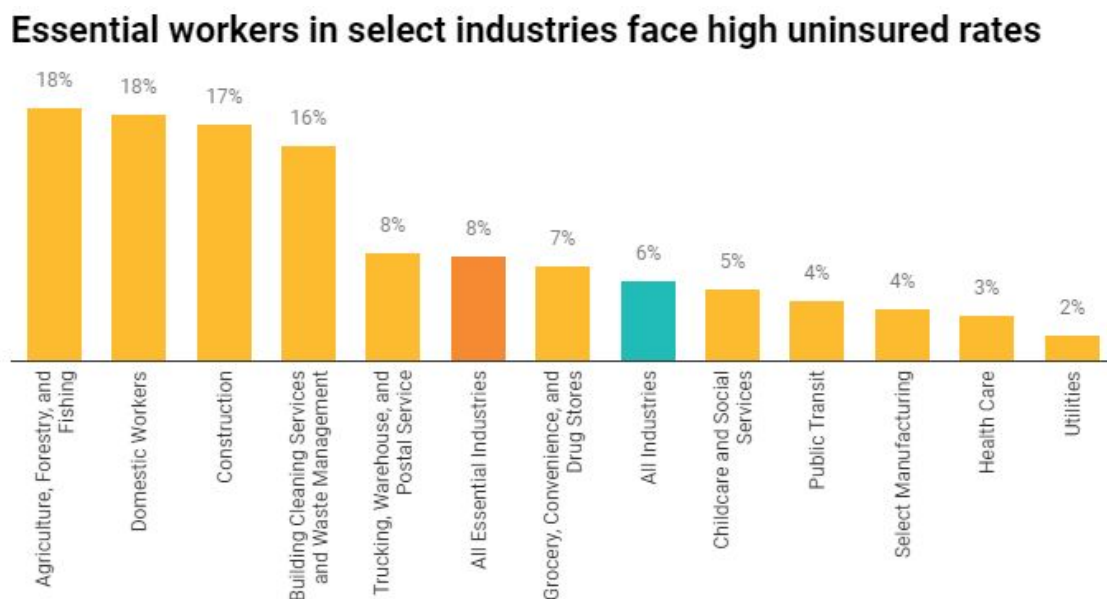
that address racial inequities faced by the city's Black community in the areas of housing, health, economic opportunity and education.<sup>76</sup>

## COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact across communities of color in San Francisco. Eighty percent of patients admitted to San Francisco General Hospital are Latinx. This is almost three times the normal percentage for hospital visits from Latinx community members at the hospital.<sup>77</sup> As of May 2020, all of the deaths in the city's Bayview and Hunters Point neighborhood were among Black residents.<sup>78</sup> A study published by the Asian American Research Center on Health found that of the 31 deaths in the city and county of San Francisco as of May 5th, 16 or 52% were among Asian Americans.<sup>79</sup>

Based on *A Profile of Frontline Workers* from the Bay Area Equity Atlas, of the estimated 1.1 million essential workers in the region, 66% are people of color. According to the analysis, Latinx people make up 31% of frontline workers in the city and Black people are overrepresented in essential industries of public transportation (23%); trucking, warehouse, and postal services (11%); and childcare and social services (10%).<sup>80</sup> Their analysis also revealed that while health insurance rates are generally high in the city, there is great variation amongst essential workers by industry. The uninsured rates of essential workers by industry is depicted in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Essential Worker Uninsured Rates by Industry**



(Bay Area Equity Atlas, 2020) <sup>81</sup>

The Latinx and Asian communities in San Francisco are more likely to live in dense housing environments and with multiple generations sharing the same home.<sup>2,3</sup> Residents in more densely populated areas are considered to be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Similarly, living in multi-generational housing may increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19 especially for seniors.

## The Path Forward: Promising Policies and Strategies

Racial equity and justice advocates are building upon the Bay Area's long history of Black organizing and grassroots activism. As in many cities across the country, there's a powerful movement afoot to dismantle structural racism and resist the forces of inequitable urban development. This movement seeks housing and tenants' rights, community-led urban development, jobs that pay a livable wage, and reallocation of funds from police to services and programs that support health, safety and sustainability in Black communities and lower income communities of color. Some recent efforts in San Francisco to advance racial equity are highlighted below.

### *General*

In 2019, the city of San Francisco created the Office of Racial Equity. The agency was given a budget of \$1 million over two years. The Office focuses on establishing plans to address racial inequities and analyzing the impact of the city's policies improving outcomes for communities of color.<sup>84</sup> The Office helped to create a Citywide Racial Equity Team and has partnered with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).<sup>85</sup>

In 2016, the San Francisco Foundation awarded grants totaling \$5.3 million to organizations working to advance racial equity and economic inclusion in San Francisco and the surrounding area. The foundation awarded grant funding with the goal of ensuring people have jobs that pay a living wage, that residents can live in a home they can afford, and where people have easy access to public transportation.<sup>86</sup>

### *Housing Justice*

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<sup>2</sup> Bharath, Deepa. "UCLA Report Says Minorities Disproportionately Affected by Coronavirus." Orange County Register. May 21, 2020. Accessed July 27, 2020. <https://www.ocregister.com/2020/05/21/ucla-report-says-minorities-disproportionately-affected-by-coronavirus/>.

<sup>3</sup> Hayes-Bautista, David E., and Paul Hsu. "The COVID-19 Case Rate and California's Diversity: Patterns in Coronavirus Exposure." UCLA Health. May 21, 2020. Accessed July 28, 2020. <https://www.uclahealth.org/ceslac/workfiles/Research/COVID19/The-COVID-19-Case-Rate-and-Californias-Diversity-Patterns-in-Coronavirus-Exposure.pdf>.

The Great Communities Collaborative, has recently partnered with the region's transportation agency to launch a \$40 million fund that will support land acquisition for 1,100 to 3,800 new affordable homes near rail or bus stops.<sup>87</sup> In 2020, the San Francisco Planning Commission approved a resolution aimed at centering racial and social equity in its work, including developing strategies to counter structural racism in collaboration with communities of color. It instructed staff to alter hiring practices to better reflect the city's demographics. The resolution helped to establish metrics to track accountability and apologized for past housing policies like redlining and the removal of Black residents from the Western Addition neighborhood during urban renewal.<sup>88</sup>

In November 2015, voters passed a \$350 million housing bond. Additionally, Public-private partnerships such as the San Francisco Housing Accelerator Fund focuses on market-paced anti-displacement strategies and new affordable housing production.

In order to better attract and retain teachers, San Francisco has funded the first educator housing development on school district property, and the San Francisco Unified School District has identified three additional parcels as future sites for employee housing.<sup>89</sup>

The coalition *United to Save the Mission*, a wide array of organizations and individuals including the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, the Redstone Labor Temple, Our Mission NO Eviction, the youth empowerment group HOMEY, and local business Factory 1, and others provides support for commercial and residential tenants facing eviction and negotiates with new developers for affordable housing units. The coalition drafts commercial MOUs, helps incoming businesses provide local jobs, and provides other services that meet the needs of the predominantly Latinx community in the neighborhood.<sup>90</sup>

India Basin Shoreline Park<sup>91</sup> is a redevelopment in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood. The redevelopment is renovating an underutilized park, abandoned boatyard, and brownfield site. As part of the redevelopment, planners engaged in 152 total outreach meetings and developed a Community Benefits Development Agreement. The redevelopment project also has an Equitable Development Plan which focuses on the values of housing-to-park connectedness and community access, environmental justice, and preserving history, art and culture.<sup>92</sup>

Over 100 activists and volunteers and activists, many part of Faith in Action Bay Area occupied the mayor's office in December 2019 to demand a subsidy program for senior residents to pay just 30% of their income in rent.<sup>93</sup> In June 2020, the city settled a lawsuit brought by residents of the Tenderloin neighborhood and UC Hastings School of Law agreeing to help place 70% of the people experiencing homelessness in the neighborhood into vacant hotel rooms or sanctioned encampment sites.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, activists with the group Reclaim SF have put

pressure on the city to build solutions to the affordable housing crisis in San Francisco by occupying vacant homes in the Castro neighborhood.<sup>95</sup>

### *Health Equity*

San Francisco's Department of Public Health developed the Healthy Development Measurement Tool along with leaders from diverse moderate and lower income neighborhoods. The tool is used to project the health consequences of redevelopment proposals. Similarly, the Department of Public Health developed the Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment (ENCHIA) as part of an 18-month process to assess the health benefits and burdens of development in neighborhoods such as the Mission, South of Market, and Potrero Hill. ENCHIA was developed in conjunction with a diverse set of community stakeholders.<sup>96</sup>

San Francisco began offering free COVID-19 testing and free rides for essential workers in 2020.<sup>97,98</sup> City officials also announced a Field Care Clinic, in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood. The Field Care Clinic provides patients with primary care, urgent care and screening for COVID-19.<sup>99</sup> Black residents make up the largest demographic in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood.<sup>100</sup>

The city has one of the first and oldest universal health care ordinances which guarantees health coverage to all city residents, ages 18 and older, including undocumented residents who make under 500% of the federal poverty line or \$60,300 for a single person and don't have other health coverage options.<sup>101</sup> The California Governor has considered enacting similar universal health care legislation at the statewide level in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fall 2019, San Francisco began considering a free mental health care and substance ordinance. The universal mental health care system, which would be called *Mental Health SF*, would be the first of its kind in the nation if enacted. It would include a 24/7 treatment center for any city resident in need of help, whether that is counseling for anxiety or emergency care to treat a psychotic episode.<sup>102</sup>

### *Criminal Justice*

In 2020, San Francisco directed \$120 million away from law enforcement agencies within the city including police. More than 50% of the \$120 will be directed towards mental health services and additional programs focused on the city's Black homeless people. Approximately 35% will be spent on addressing inequities in education as well as investing in youth services and job training programs. Roughly 5% of the funding will be used toward



redirecting police calls from non-criminal activity to trained, unarmed professionals.<sup>103</sup>

### *Transportation Equity*

In 2019, activists associated with groups such as South of Market Community Action Network, United to Save the Mission, Senior and Disability Action, the SF Taxi Workers Alliance and Mission Neighborhood Centers met to demand a more equitable transportation system including free municipal railway, better service, better accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities, no private shuttles in public bus lanes, higher pay for transit workers, and affordable housing near transit stations.<sup>104</sup>

### *Working Principles for Black-Centered Urban Racial Equity*

There is still much work to be done to dismantle the legacy of structural racism in San Francisco. This includes confronting the legacy of anti-Black racism and the role it has played in shaping the city. It also requires sustained and targeted investment in Black residents, communities, organizations, businesses and institutions. Critical to fostering the condition for racial equity in the city is ending the over-policing and treatment of Black residents as criminals, while reimagining what's needed to achieve public safety and community wellness.

- **Confront anti-Black racism** and continually interrogate the role it plays in shaping every aspect of urban life including city and regional planning, neighborhood boundaries, exposure to environmental hazards and access to health care, jobs, transportation, healthy food options, parks and recreational facilities.
- **Prevent gentrification and displacement** by rejecting hypergrowth market-oriented “creative class” city planning strategies. Embrace resident-led community development practices, racial equity impact assessments and equitable development strategies that preserve affordable housing and prioritize job creation and social supports for Black residents.
- **Defund policing** by ending the over policing and criminalizing of Black people and reimagining what is needed for public safety. Participatory budgeting can be used to reallocate funds to support housing, health care, workforce development, jobs and social services that foster safety, economic security and community wellness.
- **Listen to and invest in local Black-led organizations, businesses and institutions** already engaged in efforts to foster racially equitable policies, systems, neighborhoods and communities. Shift power by practicing equitable partnerships and grantmaking that center on trust, mutual accountability, transparency and respect for the wisdom, experience, and skills present in Black communities.

- **Think and plan intersectionally** by developing an analysis of how race intersects with class, gender, sexuality, immigration status and ability. Understanding the ways that various forms of exclusion work together to increase vulnerability contributes to a fuller analysis of racial inequities and better targeted strategies to address them.
- **Commit to sustained and targeted investment in community economic development** strategies that support well-paying jobs, quality, affordable housing and educational and entrepreneurship opportunities for Black residents.

Community organizers, city governments, philanthropic organizations and businesses can leverage this moment to amplify calls for policies, programs, and systemic changes that support racial equity. City governments must fully honor these demands by listening to and working in partnership with residents to develop, fund and implement policies and programs that build and support a vision for a racially equitable New Orleans.

## Resources and Community-Based Organizations

- [Anti Police-Terror Project](#) is a Black-led, multi-racial, intergenerational coalition that seeks to build a replicable and sustainable model to eradicate police terror in communities of color.
- [Causa Justa: Just Cause](#) is a multi-racial, grassroots organization building community leadership to achieve justice for low-income San Francisco and Oakland residents.
- [Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco](#) has fought for tenants rights since 1979, when a group of seniors at Old St. Mary's Church came together to organize against condo conversions displacing the elderly.
- [Moms 4 Housing](#) is a collective of homeless and marginally housed mothers.
- [Reclaim SF](#) describes themselves as a "group of housed and unhoused community members who are tired of waiting for the city to address the very immediate need for housing."

## Endnotes

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