



AUGUST NEWSLETTER · ISSUE NO. 1

Introducing Home Is Here

News, data, and resources from the Home Is Here outreach and engagement effort at Alameda County Housing and Community Development

FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Thank you for joining us at the Housing Communications Summit. We know we can be stronger and reach farther together, and we heard loud and clear that we need to reach new parts of our community with critical information about the impact we are already having and the work that remains. We are excited to release these data and communications tools as part of Home Is Here. Common data and a common message will help us tell the story of housing in Alameda County, and let our partners and community members know that home is here.”

Michelle Starratt, Director, Alameda County Housing and Community Development

This Month: The Cost of Living Starts with the Cost of Housing

In August, Alameda County HCD is helping our community connect the cost of living with the cost of housing. High costs are top of mind for most of our neighbors, and while the impacts are uneven, they are widespread. The cost of groceries, the difficulty of filling open positions at sustainable wages, adult children living at home, seniors unable to downsize, and working families struggling to get by all trace back, in part, to the cost of housing. It is a critical driver of economic anxiety across our community.

HCD is committed to building the solutions and the consensus that can begin to address these issues. These touchstones can bridge the gap between information and understanding. The resources below provide a foundation for that work.

New Outreach and Engagement Resources

- ▲ **The Home Is Here microsite.** We launched the [Home Is Here microsite](#) to share resources, stories, and updates about affordable housing solutions across Alameda County.
- ▲ **The Home Is Here Messaging Guide.** A discussion guide to help the housing community align on the way we talk about housing, built on the Values, Problem, Solution, Action framework. [Download the guide.](#)
- ▲ **The Housing Needs Explorer.** An interactive data tool for exploring housing conditions in Alameda County, its 14 cities, and its unincorporated communities. Pull the numbers for your city before a council meeting, a grant application, or a public comment, and export them as a spreadsheet or a report. [Open the Explorer.](#)
- ▲ **Issue Brief No. 1 and blog post.** Our first issue brief walks through how to use the Explorer and highlights key findings from the updated Housing Needs Assessment. [Read the brief.](#)

17

geographies covered in the Housing Needs Explorer

379

census tracts available for neighborhood-level analysis

20+

federal, state, local, and academic data sources

Three Findings Worth Repeating

Issue Brief No. 1 highlights three findings from the Explorer that we hope partners will carry into their own conversations this month:

- ▲ **Homelessness is a housing problem.** Our region's high rate of homelessness follows from a sustained shortage of housing. High rents and low vacancy make it hard for at-risk residents to keep up with costs and hard to recover once housing is lost. Building more housing is the response that stabilizes rents and helps vulnerable people stay housed.
- ▲ **Most County residents are not homeowners.** 54.4% of homes in Alameda County are owner-occupied, but that measure counts homes, not people. By the Explorer's homeownership to population measure, 60% of adults in our County do not own their home. Housing policy that reflects the needs of the majority of our community should weight resources toward non-homeowners accordingly.
- ▲ **Building housing pays the County back.** Meeting our Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals means adding housing and generating recurring revenue for schools and local government without raising tax rates. The Explorer lets you model that value for any jurisdiction in the County.

Stories of Impact

Home Is Here shares the stories of Alameda County residents and their journeys toward finding housing, emphasizing where economic and social support and public resources play a vital role in preventing homelessness and providing a stable, secure foundation for communities.



Meet Sonya. A single mother of three, Sonya came through serious health and financial setbacks determined to find stable housing for her family. With support from Abode Services and Alameda County's affordable housing programs, she found a home where her family can thrive. In her words: *"It's a dream come true and a great relief."*

[\[Watch Sonya's story\]](#)

On the Podcast

Podcast host **Aaron Tiedemann**, Housing Specialist at HCD, talks with **Stephanie Hawke**, Associate Research Director of Land Use and Supply at the Turner Center, about how we ended up in this housing affordability crisis, why affordable housing is complicated to build, and how housing will get us out of it. [Listen to the episode](#)

In the News

- ▲ **Congress passes the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act.** This spring, both chambers passed the bipartisan Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act, the most significant federal housing package in decades. The act is designed to expand housing supply, reduce construction red tape, and modernize federal housing and community development programs.
- ▲ **Senate Bill 79 takes effect.** California's Abundant and Affordable Homes Near Transit Act took effect July 1, legalizing multi-story, multi-family housing within a half mile of qualifying transit stations statewide, including many of the transit corridors that serve Alameda County.
- ▲ **California stands up a new housing agency.** The California Housing and Homelessness Agency, a new cabinet-level agency consolidating the state's housing and homelessness programs, became active July 1.

Get Engaged

Home Is Here is about building our network for effective outreach and engagement. Here are three ways to plug in this month:



Join the network

We want to hear who you are and how you are connected to your community. Fill out the [network form](#) (and forward it to a friend) to help us understand how to support the people in our community telling the story of why housing matters.



Show up

HCD is ready to support you by attending or promoting events and meetings where the story of housing should be represented. Use the [event form](#) to suggest an event, and we will do our best to attend or refer a qualified storyteller to speak, listen, or participate.

Provide feedback. HCD is committed to providing useful, high-quality resources to our peers and community members. We welcome your feedback on any of these resources via [this form](#).

Looking Ahead

Each month through November carries one key message, building toward the 10-year anniversary of the Measure A1 housing bond. Planned themes:

SEPTEMBER	Cheaper, Faster, and Built to Last	The development simulator dashboard and the County's factory-built housing award.
OCTOBER	Home Is for the People Who Make This County Work	Homeownership and aging in place, with a focus on older adult communities.
NOVEMBER	Ten Years of Proof: Housing Is Public Infrastructure	The Measure A1 10-year anniversary and a look at what comes next.

Stronger and thriving communities start with a safe and secure place to call home.

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