



Path to Success

Housing California Annual Report 2021



Overview

“Housing California is a backbone to the movement for housing affordability in California and has demonstrated their ability to strategically connect, catalyze, and provide leadership to the locally directed, regionally organized statewide homelessness and housing affordability alliance advancing the bold state policies we need.”

*Leslie Payne, Initiative Director,
James Irvine Foundation*



Like a beacon in the fog, in 2021, Housing California brought together affordable housing and homelessness partners, affordable housing residents and multi-sector partners to advance bold systems change solutions. Those solutions are intended to create a California with homes, health and wealth for all in thriving, sustainable communities, particularly for California’s BIPOC and lowest income communities. We amplified the voices of our Residents United Network (RUN) leaders who spoke from their lived experience and whose insights guided our actions throughout the year. By strengthening our multi-sector coalitions, building critical relationships and coalescing support through unified advocacy pushes, we persuaded state leaders to make the historic investments and pass game-changing legislation needed to create a better future for all Californians. Recognized as a convener and thought leader within the housing and homelessness ecosystem, we were humbled this year when we were awarded Housing Advocate of the Year by the Sacramento Housing Alliance and as Champion of Supportive Housing by the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

As we reach toward our north star of a California with homes, health and wealth for all in thriving, sustainable communities, we continue to advance our three strategic directions: (1) shaping the narrative on affordable housing and homelessness, (2) shifting and building power for greater collective impact and (3) changing policy to transform our state through the accomplishments outlined below:

A Roadmap Home to a Better California

In 2021, we launched one of Housing California's biggest undertakings, the Roadmap Home 2030 (Roadmap Home). An initiative co-founded with the California Housing Partnership and developed in collaboration with the California Budget Center, the Roadmap Home represents the priorities and commitment of more than 40 multi-sector partners and organizations with a proven record of creating affordable housing, fighting homelessness and advancing tenants' rights, all accomplished through a racial justice lens. Housing California developed and released the Roadmap Home and launched its advocacy campaign in March 2021.



**Roadmap
Home 2030**

At its core, the Roadmap Home is a 10-year plan to create 1.2 million new affordable homes for low-income Californians, protect 1 million low-income renter households from losing their homes, end homelessness for the more than 160,000 Californians who are unhoused every night and advance racial equity in housing. To get there, we developed a comprehensive package of 57 evidence-based statewide and federal policy solutions that may be enacted by our elected leaders. We have clear, measurable goals and goalposts and a unified mission: homes, health and prosperity for all Californians in thriving, sustainable communities. Our development process included conducting extensive research, centering racial equity with support from Race Forward and an equity taskforce and building momentum to amplify our shared power for greater impact.

Prior to launch, the Roadmap Home campaign built a team of over 2,250 public advocates, of whom more than 1,000 attended our public campaign launch event in March. Today, we have over 13,500 digital followers and supporters, as well as public endorsements from 45 mission-aligned organizations from across California. In year one of the Roadmap Home, more than 20 Roadmap Home-endorsed bills progressed to the California Legislature's floor, of which seven were passed by the legislature, and four of those were signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom. The Roadmap Home coalition also advocated tirelessly for substantial state budget investments in housing and homelessness, which helped set the table and amplify public support for the Governor's historic \$12 billion investment package. These efforts were buoyed by our supporters, who took over 4,500 digital actions developed by the Roadmap Home team, as well as hundreds alongside our coalition of partners.



Housing California is advancing to year two of the Roadmap Home campaign with the support of RUN leaders with lived expertise in housing instability and homelessness; affordable housing, homelessness and tenants' rights advocates and professionals; and key disability rights, racial justice and multi-sector partners. Learn more and get involved at Roadmaphome2030.org.

Shaping the Narrative

Throughout the year, Housing California successfully advanced a compelling narrative that shared a vision for a better future for all Californians, reframed housing and homelessness challenges as solvable, systemic issues, promoted evidence-based solutions in our Roadmap Home campaign, and inspired supporters to urge state leaders to endorse and move our policy priorities.

EARNED MEDIA: Housing California's renown as the statewide "go-to" homelessness and housing affordability organization grew as more journalists from influential publications, like U.S. News and World Report, The New York Times and Fast Company, as well as local outlets from throughout the state, sought our legislative insight and analysis. In addition, legislative champions and coalition partners included statements from Housing California in their media releases, which further elevated our organization in the public discourse. We successfully secured over 25 media placements in print, radio and television as we took every chance to advance the Roadmap Home, our policy priorities and exert narrative influence.



OWNED MEDIA: We completed a soft launch of our new website. Visitors may now learn easily and quickly about our mission, explore our policy priorities, catch up on coalition efforts and take action to advance game-changing initiatives. Throughout the legislative year, we activated our base of supporters via email and social media messaging, often amplified by partners and advocates, through which followers signed petitions, contacted electeds and expressed public support for our policy priorities.

PRESENTATIONS AT CONVENINGS: Our team was invited to present over 35 times on the Roadmap Home at regional, statewide and national convenings, while also promoting Housing California's work and policy priorities at industry-specific or partner gatherings. Notable moments included a Roadmap Home presentation during the National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) HoUSed campaign launch, the American Planning Association - California Chapter Annual Conference and the Southern California Association of Governments' housing convening.

MANAGING PUBLIC DISCOURSE: Through the Roadmap Home campaign, we collaborated with our multi-sector partners and allies to reframe California's homelessness and housing affordability challenges to make the case for evidence-based policies that provide a long-term approach with short term benchmarks. Our new housing narrative centered around people and leveraged value-based messaging to advance equity-centered solutions and advocate for structural and systemic reforms to eliminate artificial barriers to prosperity that disproportionately have affected communities of color.

RESULTS: The narrative seed that we planted thrived as our coalition welcomed more partners and co-conspirators who recognized the potential and value of Housing California's collaborative strength and Roadmap Home's guidance. As more allies sang from the same hymnal and public support grew for our vision, values and framework of policy solutions, our efforts helped to secure historic state budget investments, pass critical legislation and reach significant milestones in the state capitol.

Building and Shifting Power

Throughout 2021, Housing California focused on widening its tent of diverse, multi-sector allies and advocates and lifting up their voices of lived experience in spaces that we know may influence and impact policy affecting homelessness and affordable housing. Residents United Network (RUN) reached new milestones in 2021. RUN built its base of members, connected members with narrative training and continued to invite all members to share their ideas and speak truth to power. RUN is such a valuable part of Housing California precisely because RUN members guide Housing California decision-making throughout the year, particularly involving legislative priorities, and add valued lived experience to the conversation internally and with policymakers helping to ensure that people closest to the problem also help craft the solution. In solidarity, we flexed our collective might at pivotal moments to persuade and inform state leaders as we moved them towards solutions that we know will create homes, health and wealth for all. These include:



RESIDENTS UNITED NETWORK (RUN) LEADERSHIP: RUN members served as an essential part of the advocacy on two priority bills (AB 71, AB 328). Housing California and RUN held massively successful virtual Lobby Days where 120 leaders from across California participated in more than 70 virtual meetings with legislators. Resident leaders also testified en masse at hearings and emailed and called legislators throughout the legislative session. In September and October, RUN held 10 regional convenings, better known as “There Ought To Be A Law,” where RUN leaders shared a record-breaking 281 ideas for state laws that would advance housing justice. During Community Care calls, leaders narrowed that list to 13 ideas that turned into a survey. Then, at the Annual Summit in November, 63 of RUN’s most engaged leaders decided on four of those ideas to support in 2022. In addition, five RUN senior leaders spent several months reimagining the partnership between RUN and the broader organization.



2021 “UNCONFERENCE”: Housing California brought together 1,200+ multi-sector leaders during our virtual UnConference to explore how affordable housing, homelessness and multi-sector leaders may come together to reimagine the California dream and create a state with homes, health and wealth for all in thriving, sustainable communities as we collectively implement the recently launched Roadmap Home. Our speaking program boasted prominent state and national leaders and thinkers.



HOUSED CAMPAIGN: Housing California serves as the California statewide partner on the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s federal HoUSed campaign, which aligns well with the Roadmap Home’s goals and framework. In this role, Housing California worked with partners throughout the state to advance anti-racist policies and achieve the large-scale, sustained investments and reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home, and to press the message that housing is an essential part of a robust economic recovery.

COMMUNITY VACCINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Housing California served on the Governor’s Community Vaccine Advisory Committee as the only member with the responsibility to advocate for equitable inclusion of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability as part of an 80-member task force. As a result of our advocacy, the guidelines prioritized people living in congregant settings, people living unsheltered and staff living and working in affordable housing in the priority list for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

CALIFORNIA 100 COMMISSION: Housing California’s Executive Director, Lisa Hershey, was invited to serve on the California 100 Commission - an initiative focused on identifying and uplifting transformative ideas, people and projects that accelerate progress towards a shared vision of the future. The Commission is helping to advance a vision and strategy for California’s next century by providing strategic feedback and hosting listening sessions across the state.

Changing Policy

Despite unprecedented challenges for the communities that we serve, along with a legislative process that featured a record number of bills introduced and COVID-19/remote work disrupting the 2021 session, we were able to achieve significant and landmark wins. In particular, 2021 provided historic and continued investments in affordable housing and ending homelessness. We worked through the state legislative process, the Newsom administration and in Washington, D.C. to seek bold advances that address affordable housing and homelessness to match the scale of the need.



STATE BUDGET ADVOCACY: Housing California advocated aggressively for, and won, a historic \$12 billion in the 2020-2021 state budget, dedicated to combating homelessness and providing affordable housing resources. As part of this investment, and for the first time, California will commit multi-year funding (\$2 billion/2 years) to address homelessness, with the first ever commitment of intent to fund that program in a sustainable manner. An ongoing revenue source for local homelessness services and housing was one of the Roadmap Home's 2021 priorities. Thus, we co-led the Bring California Home coalition and worked closely with Assemblywoman Luz Rivas to secure the continued funding. Our advocacy also helped secure an expansion of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit by \$500 million, as well as funding for Homekey and \$1.75 billion to address the state's backlog of projects in development. Learn more about the 2020-2021 state budget [here](#).



BILLS, BILLS, BILLS: Housing California sponsored six bills, supported 26 bills and opposed 12 bills in the 2021 legislative cycle. While the state did not fully adopt our bold legislative agenda to provide every Californian with a stable, affordable place to call home, we were glad to see several bills signed by the Governor to combat homelessness, including Housing California's sponsored bill, AB 816 (Chiu, which will prioritize federal resources in the national Housing Trust Fund to address homelessness). We were also happy with the passage of SJR-6 Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (Wiener), a bipartisan resolution calling on Congress to enact the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act. Other bills that Housing California supported, and that were signed into law, will improve statewide and local systems, including AB 1043 (Bryan) and AB 1220 (Rivas). Another three bills supported by Housing California will increase accountability and enforcement of land use laws and practices and augment accountability by closing loopholes, such as AB 1304 (Santiago), AB 721 (Bloom) and AB 215 (Chiu). Our other sponsored bills were converted to two-year bills that may be acted upon in January 2022.

WORKING WITH THE NEWSOM ADMINISTRATION: Housing California advocated for Project Roomkey/Homekey and worked closely with the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Governor's office to make them a reality. In particular, we pushed strongly for Project Homekey to create new units of housing and allocate the funding for them - totaling \$2.75 billion over two years in the 2021-22 budget. As of June, Homekey has created an additional 6,000 homes, with an expansion announced in September that is expected to add another 1,000 homes. After pushing policymakers for years to take an evidence-based "housing first" approach to address homelessness, we are encouraged that this view has begun to take hold through initiatives like Project Homekey, rental assistance and permanent supportive housing outside of Project Homekey. Similarly, Housing California had been advocating for the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) to create a statewide Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS), which it launched in 2020. We are thrilled to partner with HCFC in making this a reality.

FEDERAL POLICY: We advocated for the successful enactment of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which includes \$21.6 billion in emergency rent assistance, \$5 billion for Housing Choice Vouchers for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, \$750 million for tribal housing needs, \$139 million for rural housing programs and \$5 billion for homelessness interventions and long-term support services. The ARPA bill also includes \$10 billion for homeowner assistance and \$120 million for housing counseling. As of this writing, our collaborative advocacy efforts around the Build Back Better Act that targeted influential legislators led to the retention of key expansions to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, as well as \$65 billion for the preservation of public housing, \$25 billion for rental assistance and \$15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund.

Moving Forward

As California continues its recovery from the pandemic, economic instability and natural disasters, we must rebuild our state so that everyone, especially Black and brown Californians and people who suffer the most from systemic barriers to economic prosperity and housing stability, may realize a bright future for themselves and their families. Building a healthy and economically prosperous future begins with having a safe, stable, affordable place to call home. We are fortunate to enjoy heightened attention from our target audiences and the media on affordable housing and homelessness—perhaps higher than ever. And while we leveraged this attention combined with our strategic advocacy to help secure some big wins in 2021, we know that more is needed to manifest racial and housing justice in our state. Moving forward, we will continue to take advantage of the attention, the momentum, and the political space for bold, transformative action based on proven solutions. Doing so will move the field closer to our shared vision of a California with homes, health and wealth for all in thriving, sustainable communities.

