



COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES IN
EAST PALO ALTO



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COMMUNITY GROUPS, FACEBOOK, AND THE CITIES OF EAST PALO ALTO AND MENLO PARK PARTNER TO CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Partnership involves \$20 million initial contribution from Facebook to address regional challenges

EAST PALO ALTO, MENLO PARK, CA, December 2, 2016 - Envision Transform Build- East Palo Alto (ETB), a coalition of community groups, today formed an unprecedented partnership with Facebook and the cities of East Palo Alto (EPA) and Menlo Park to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Bay Area.

The partnership will foster new ways to approach the acute regional housing crisis by stabilizing neighborhoods and stemming the tide of displacement. A Catalyst Housing Fund will be created to develop and preserve affordable housing in the area, an innovative model that can be expanded to address affordable housing problems throughout California. Facebook will make an initial contribution of \$20 million to the partnership, with \$18.5 million going to the housing fund. The partnership will also address other issues of community concern such as legal support for tenants and economic opportunities. Together, the partners will work to bring in other private and public sector organizations to contribute to the partnership and its initiatives. The founding community groups in this partnership are Youth United for Community Action (YUCA), Faith in Action Bay Area, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA), and Comité de Vecinos del Lado Oeste, East Palo Alto. ETB was assisted by the ACLU Foundation of Northern California, Public Advocates Inc., and the Law Office of Julian Gross.

“The fund is designed to quickly benefit those most in need,” said Doroteo Garcia of El Comité de Vecinos del Lado Oeste. “The money will be prioritized for homes that are affordable to very low income families and protect existing households from displacement.”

“Our organizations have been working for decades to ensure that the Bay Area remains a place where people of all races and incomes can find healthy homes and good jobs, so we approached Facebook to work on these issues with us,” said Tameeka Bennett of Youth United for Community Action. “This exciting partnership shows what can happen when the people who are most affected by the housing crisis are engaged in a serious collaboration with other stakeholders to craft creative solutions.”

“We’re creating a close partnership with local residents to solve the challenges the region is facing,” said Facebook Vice President for Public Policy and Communications Elliot Schrage. “We hope to build on today’s announcement and add other partners from the community, private sector and government to create viable regional solutions to the affordable housing crisis and the lack of economic opportunities for local residents.”

Silicon Valley faces a crisis in access to affordable housing. While half a million new jobs have been filled since 2010, Silicon Valley built just 26 percent of the new homes it needed for lower-income households between 2007 and 2014, a shortfall of nearly 22,000 homes. The situation is particularly acute for low-income and working-class communities, whose homes, livelihoods and neighborhoods are threatened by the combination of expanding tech companies, rising housing and transportation costs, declining economic opportunities and insufficient resources. These communities are also among the most economically, ethnically and racially diverse in the region.

In addition to affordable housing, tenant evictions are a primary source of local displacement. In the current environment, tenants urgently need greater support to ensure that laws are respected. Facebook will contribute \$500,000 for a tenant assistance fund to provide legal and rental assistance to low-income tenants threatened with displacement from evictions, unsafe living conditions and other forms of landlord abuse. Facebook will also contribute \$250,000 to Rebuilding Together Peninsula to support the building and upkeep of homes for low-income residents.

To help expand economic opportunities for local residents, Facebook will contribute \$625,000 toward job training for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) jobs. Facebook will also establish a dedicated full-time local community liaison who will be responsible for connecting local community members with open positions at Facebook.

“The City of East Palo Alto appreciates Facebook valuing the voice of the community by ensuring our seat at the table as we find solutions to issues facing EPA together,” said East Palo Alto Vice Mayor Larry Moody. “This partnership solidifies a long-term commitment to the people who live in the area and reinforces Facebook’s promise to be an active corporate citizen.”

The City of Menlo Park is also supportive of this collaboration, and will sit with Facebook, ETB, and East Palo Alto as members of a partnership committee.

“Menlo Park faces the same challenges as many of our neighboring communities in how to secure and grow our diverse residential neighborhoods with housing prices soaring, managing the onslaught of traffic impacts and how to deliver the best education we can to our children,” said Menlo Park Mayor, Rich Cline. “I think such challenges become opportunities if we find ways to unite our cities and community organizations and bring in bold policies all with a revenue model to help bring about real and positive change. Facebook is the ideal partner to rally our region into action.”

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Youth United for Community Action (YUCA), is a grassroots community organization created, led, and run by young people of color, majority from low-income communities, provides a safe space for young people to empower ourselves and work on environmental and social justice issues to establish positive systemic change through grassroots community organizing.

Faith in Action Bay Area, is a regional network of community and faith-based organizations that addresses key issues of healthcare access, education, safe neighborhoods, and affordable housing in local communities.

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) is a community-based organization that provides legal assistance to low-income individuals and families in East Palo Alto and the surrounding community. Their practice areas include housing, immigration, and economic advancement, and they provide legal assistance and advice to over 6,000 residents in need per year.

Comité de Vecinos del Lado Oeste, East Palo Alto is a committee of neighbors dedicated to tenants' rights, no displacement, and affordable housing.

Facebook: Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

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