



News from: **Office of Mayor Libby Schaaf**

MEDIA ADVISORY:

November 16, 2020

Mayor Schaaf Announces New Affordable Housing Pilot to Recruit and Retain Teachers in Oakland

Oakland, Ca.— Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, OUSD Superintendent Kyla Johnson-Trammel, and non-profit Community Development Finance announced an innovative new pilot program that will provide affordable housing options for teachers and help keep educators rooted in Oakland.

The pilot program offers ‘teacher-residents’ — graduate students training with mentor teachers while completing their teaching credential — the option of subsidized housing at the Paloma Apartments in Oakland’s Laurel District and provides new teachers stipends while also offering free financial advising services, including small interest-free loans.

It’s believed to be the only program of its kind in the Bay Area, and possibly the U.S., to provide subsidies to both working teachers and future teachers through stipends and reduced-price housing.

“Our teachers are at the heart of our community connections in Oakland,” Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf said. “To thrive and excel in the classroom, we must ensure our teachers feel housing security outside of it. I’m proud to bring together housing and educational leaders for the shared goal of creating more affordable housing for our teachers.”

Recruiting and retaining teachers in Oakland, especially teachers of color, and ensuring housing security is a top priority for the city and district, where over 85% of the students are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). High retention and diversity reinforce community bonds among teachers and the children and families they serve and has been shown to lead to increased outcomes for all students. The pilot program currently serves 12 teachers, 11 of whom are BIPOC and 50% of whom are Bay Area born or raised.

Teachers of color in particular matter for our students: Research shows¹ that not only do students of all races have more positive perceptions of their Black and Latinx teachers than they do of their white teachers, but they’re also more likely to graduate high school and more likely to feel cared for, engaged in school work, and confident. Recent studies also show that [\(link to study\)](#):

Media Contacts:

Justin Berton
Communications Director
510-238-7072
jberton@oaklandca.gov

- Two-thirds of Oakland teachers are housing-impacted (spending > 30% of salary on housing)
- 40% of Oakland teachers spend 30-50% of income on housing; 61% of teachers of color spend over 30% of their income on housing
- 40% of teachers plan to leave the Bay Area within the next 5 years due to the cost of living

“As everyone knows, the Bay Area is one of the most expensive places in the country to live,” said Superintendent Kyla Johnson-Trammell. “It is critical that we help our educators grow roots here in Oakland. We are thrilled that this new affordable housing program will mean they can worry far less about housing, and instead focus all their attention on their students. We want to bring more teachers of color to Oakland, and we want all of our outstanding educators to stay here as long as possible.”

Ensuring Oakland teachers can stay housed in Oakland also addresses the impact of disparities on teachers of color, who are more likely to experience housing insecurity than Caucasian teachers. Along with keeping more teachers of color housing secure in Oakland, the pilot’s creators also hope to work with state legislators to draft legislation and policies that will increase teacher-residents’ pay and increase affordable housing options for all educators.

Oakland teacher Malik Stead, a graduate student completing his teaching credential in science and currently at Roosevelt Middle School, said “I grew up in a lower-income family, and it has been a struggle for me to find affordable housing in the Bay Area. I look at teaching as a social justice issue and see teaching as my way to address social justice. This pilot provided the opportunity to have my own space and allows me to become a better teacher because all of my emotional and physical needs are met.”

Rishi Khosla, a partner at property manager 2B Living who led leasing efforts on behalf of the developer at the 59-unit Paloma Apartments said, “Educators enduring hours-long commutes to teach our community’s most vulnerable kids is unacceptable. These teachers are saints, and we in the real estate industry need to do more for them. It has been a privilege to work alongside Mayor Schaaf’s team to help launch this program, and we look forward to collaborating to expand the pilot and give these students access to the opportunities and paths they deserve.”

Community Development Finance’s Founder and CEO Dan Leisbohn, said, “CDF is heartened to see the response to the pressing need for young teachers of color to remain in the profession and in Oakland. We look forward to seeing

many more graduates of this program in the future as it is an effective way to assist them in reaching their goals.”

The pilot program is made possible by \$150,000 donations through the Community Development Finance nonprofit, and Pritzker Foundation, the Hellman Foundation, The California Endowment, and other philanthropic champions. The goal is to expand the program to recruit and retain more than 100 teachers in the next nine years.

Community members and organizations who wish to contribute to the fundraising efforts to support the program can visit the [CDF's donation page](#) and write “teacher housing” for the tribute or organization gift, or directly contact David Silver, the Mayor’s Director of Education, at DSilver@oaklandca.gov, to donate or become a partner.

Press Conference Links: [Part 1](#) – [Part 2](#)

¹Cherng, H.-Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 45(7), 407–420. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16671718>

###

