

Education Initiatives

The Oakland Housing Authority uses education as a tool to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and transform OHA communities. Through its Education Initiative, OHA supports goals of having children attend school on time every day, enroll in kindergarten, read at grade level by the third grade and graduate from high school with plans for college or a career.

Through a strategic partnership with the Mayor’s Office, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and OHA, the school district and OHA share demographic and attendance information on our common students. With an overlap of over 5,700 students, our programs direct resources toward “chronically absent” (missing 18 or more days of school per year) households, and increasing involvement by parents and caregivers in the children’s education.

Oakland Promise Plus is a pilot project launched in seven partner schools in partnership with **Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf**, that we hope to expand and take to scale. The program offers a direct link to the larger Oakland Promise initiative, plus adds comprehensive supportive services such as transportation assistance, food and clothing to eligible OHA families with children attending the partner schools and struggling with attendance. Families that “opt in” receive customized services and incentives to improve attendance while helping OHA explore the root causes and barriers affecting attendance and academic success.



OHA has also created the **Education Ambassador** program to address parental engagement and support the Oakland Promise initiative. The Education Ambassador program trains OHA residents to serve as role models, sources of information and trusted peers who promote academic achievement, attendance and parent engagement in our target schools. Ambassadors work in partnership with OHA staff and school principals to identify projects and tasks that contribute to the entire school community. These include attendance initiatives such as “You Must be Present to Win,” an incentive-based project awarding prizes to students who improve their attendance. As a tangential benefit, several ambassadors have been hired by OUSD as full-time employees, allowing these residents to fulfill their own personal goals of achieving employment and future self-sufficiency.

Summer Youth Employment

In the last four years OHA has funded 1,029 youth through the Summer Youth Employment program. Due to the incredible benefits of summer employment, OHA is committed to continuing this program annually. OHA dedicates funding this effort specifically for OHA youth. Prior to 2013 when we began providing direct funding for OHA youth, OHA coordinated several outreach events with the City, however, the final number of OHA youth enrolled in the program was disappointing. For example, Youth Employment Services, who offered 335 teens summer jobs in 2012, indicated that only 39 youth self-reported they were from an OHA family. By contrast, in 2013 we verified 291 of our resident youth were served in the Summer Youth Employment Program as a result of this funding.



Making Transitions Work | 2018 Initiatives



The Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) uses Making Transitions Work (MTW) flexibility for innovative solutions that reduce costs, improve efficiencies, increase housing choice, and assist families—especially those with children—while they are working to attain economic self-sufficiency. With the funding flexibility or “fungibility” that MTW provides, OHA responds creatively and quickly to local market conditions and community needs to develop local housing programs that remove barriers to housing for over 16,000 families in Oakland.



**Oakland Housing
Authority**

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Initiatives

Owner Incentives

Using recently approved MTW activities, OHA is currently implementing two owner incentives: Vacancy Loss and Pre-Qualifying inspections.

Vacancy Loss Payment for up to two months of Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) will be offered to existing HCV owners if they re-rent a unit previously occupied by an HCV tenant to another HCV participant within two months of contract cancellation. Based on average HAP amounts, total average annual costs for OHA to implement vacancy loss payments will range from \$208,280 to \$832,300 for vacancy periods of 15 days to 60 days.

Pre-Qualifying Unit Inspections Pre-qualifying unit inspections will be offered to all HCV program owners to expedite the lease-up process and minimize delays or losses due to inspections. Inspections will not be linked to a participant. Once a unit has passed, the owners will have up to 60 days to find a tenant for the unit. No additional costs are anticipated. Leased Housing successfully piloted this initiative with the OAHPI property portfolio and will expand it to the entire MTW voucher program.

A third proposed incentive is a **Small Loan Program** to property owners who are participating in the HCV program and need to make property repairs in order to pass the required Housing Quality Standards inspection. The amount of the small loan (under \$2,500) will then be deducted from the first six HAP payments that OHA provides to the owner.



MTW Project-Based Voucher (PBV) for Existing Housing

The OHA issued RFQ #16-008 to invite qualified owners, property managers, and developers servicing residents within the City of Oakland to solicit proposals for the award of PBV rental assistance for existing units. There are a total of 636 PBVs in 20 projects which received a conditional award through the RFQ.



Program Compliance Team

Program Compliance team is focused on the analysis, prevention or remedial action, if necessary, to prevent or correct program noncompliance by participants and owners. Program Compliance staff works with all the Leased Housing teams as well as the Oakland Housing Authority Police Department and the Executive Office. In September 2017 alone, the team conducted 33 client interactive meetings, resolved 35 late rent notices, and processed 11 proposed termination notices. Additionally the team resolved 35 police reports and has calculated year to date \$194,142 in over subsidy for repayment.

Building Bridges Local Housing Initiatives

Building Bridges

Through a partnership with the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA), and in an effort to link the special needs populations it serves to stable housing resources, OHA will provide the housing assistance component for two pilot programs that serve foster youth/adults participating in the THP+ program and CalWORKs families participating in the SSA's short-term housing assistance program. **Building Bridges THP+** is a short-term program designed to extend the runway of assistance and help create a path to economic stability for people exiting the foster care system. OHA utilized the County of Alameda's 2017 RFP as the competitive selection process to award housing assistance funding to service providers. The award of funding will result in a contract to provide rental housing assistance for low-income THP+ participants for up to five years, with the subsidy phasing down in years four and five.



Alleviating homelessness and providing support and services to parents will lead to stable employment, and ultimately self-sufficiency for families enrolled in the program. **Building Bridges CalWORKs** partners with SSA to serve families enrolled in SSA's employment and cash benefit programs and are in need of stable housing. The current CalWORKs housing assistance program provides housing search assistance, security deposit assistance and rental subsidy assistance for up to 6 months. OHA will leverage these resources by providing a shallow housing subsidy for up to an additional two years for formerly homeless CalWORKs clients who are employable and actively engaged in a plan to achieve self-sufficiency. SSA will provide wrap around case management services to address employment barriers and assist with access to other needed community resources. Based on funding availability, families who successfully complete the CalWORKs program and maintain their housing may be referred for eligibility screening for an HCV.

In 2016, OHA issued RFQ #16-011 to solicit proposals from qualified owners, property managers, and developers in Oakland for securing operating subsidies to be attached to existing service enriched single-room occupancy (SRO) units, shared housing and transitional housing units set aside for veterans, emancipated youth, or other special needs populations. There are a total of 289 units which received an award through the **Building Bridges SRO Program**.

Sponsor-Based Housing

In 2010 OHA adopted the Sponsor Based Housing Assistance Program (SBHAP) to serve low-income clients who otherwise might not qualify or be successful in either the public housing or HCV programs. The goal of this MTW initiative is to assist a population of hard-to-house clients with special needs by leveraging additional funding and program expertise in the community. In order to meet these goal OHA established a partnership with the City of Oakland's Department of Human Services and the Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Strategy to end homelessness. The City of Oakland currently leverages social services funding of roughly \$1,000,000 with OHA funds to administer the program using seven providers. The program supports 100 adults who are chronically homeless or exiting San Quentin State Prison. It also provides housing placement and ongoing services for the 25 emancipated foster youth exiting the juvenile justice system.

