

# Building a Healthy Housing Ecosystem

## Lessons from the California Eviction Prevention Project

In the Bay Area, California, the community-designed California Eviction Prevention Project (CEPP) helped proactively prevent evictions by ensuring thousands of more residents learned about housing rights and resources from community members they know and trust.

### Why Focus on Housing?

Access to safe, affordable housing is a key determinant of health. But rising rents and stagnant wages — combined with the legacy of racial discrimination in housing practices and the devastating effects of COVID-19 — have worsened the housing crisis, disproportionately impacting communities of color across the U.S.

While California's housing crisis reached epic proportions before 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to fast-track a collaborative solution to serve Bay Area tenants facing displacement that was led by the BIPOC community members most impacted.

*Those managing homelessness and crisis need to know their rights. They need to be empowered in self-agency and the ability to thrive in their livelihoods. In the Bay Area, access to affordable housing was an ongoing issue prior to COVID and the uptick in evictions, but now we are in an entirely new working system that still isn't working for the people. Things still need to change.*

Jo Bruno, Housing Advocate,  
Community Advisor & Resident of  
Contra Costa County



### Our Strategy: Working Together to Prevent Evictions

Health Leads, Tenants Together, and Bay Area 211 service providers United Way Bay Area, Eden I&R and Contra Costa Crisis Center came together to develop the California Eviction Prevention Project (CEPP), focused on building new “connective tissue” to coordinate previously siloed resources like tenant counseling, rental assistance, legal aid, and more. Emerging from the Housing is Health network — a community-designed, multi-sector collaborative established in 2019 to ensure all Bay Area residents have access to affordable housing — CEPP has made it easier for residents to know about and access housing resources that can prevent evictions.

Over the past three years, CEPP has tested new policies, protocols, and approaches to sharing housing rights and resources information with community members to prevent evictions, including:

- Partnering with local 211 call centers, Tenants Together, and community organizations to expand eviction prevention efforts.
- Developing screening tools and trained 211 call operators to proactively identify at-risk tenants.
- Creating a regional network to share resources and advocate for policy changes.

hello



### Why Health Leads?

CEPP's success is thanks to its community-centered approach that connected and amplified existing knowledge and resources. As CEPP's backbone organization, Health Leads leveraged deep expertise in community engagement and trusted ties with Bay Area community-based organizations to ensure that the project's efforts were at the direction of those we aim to support – and that they are authentically engaged, equitably compensated, and had decision-making power.

### What Changed for Bay Area Communities?

Resource navigators have strengthened connections to local service providers and more Bay Area residents were able to hear about their housing rights and resources



14

Live trainings on tenants rights

91%

of training attendees felt more confident in navigating their housing rights

110,262

completed at-risk-of-eviction screenings, using CEPP screening tool.

### What Did We Learn?

- **Early intervention works:** Proactively screening for eviction risk helps tenants before they face crisis.
- **Stronger coordination is needed:** Data-sharing between organizations must be improved to track long-term impact.
- **Sustained investment is critical:** Many housing support services remain overburdened and underfunded.

*A lot of efforts to address homelessness have good intentions, but don't consider on-the-ground perspectives. I take so much pride in being able to bring my voice as a disabled person on a limited income to Housing is Health's work, helping inform the solutions that can make a real difference in my community.*

Patrick McKenna, Bay Area resident & Community Advisory Group Member



Bay Area community members setting housing priorities together in 2018



### Call to Action

Housing is a human right, yet too many still face eviction and housing insecurity. The lessons from CEPP show that early intervention, strong tenant protections, and coordinated advocacy make a real impact—but this work cannot stop here.

Contact Sylvia Koodrich if you're interested in learning more about partnering with Health Leads. [skoodrich@healthleadsusa.org](mailto:skoodrich@healthleadsusa.org)