

**CALIFORNIA'S OPPORTUNITY**

**for**

**Low Rent Housing**

**and**

**Slum Clearance**

*A Guide to Action*

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**Published by**

**THE CALIFORNIA HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

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**THIS**



**OR THIS**



**The Housing Act of 1949** was signed by the President and became law on July 15, 1949. This Act gives every city and county the opportunity to get started in the direction of the complete elimination of slums, blighted areas and bad housing. It also provides financing for the construction of low-rent public housing for low-income families.

**Your city** can use this Act and insure the fact of decent housing and better living for all.

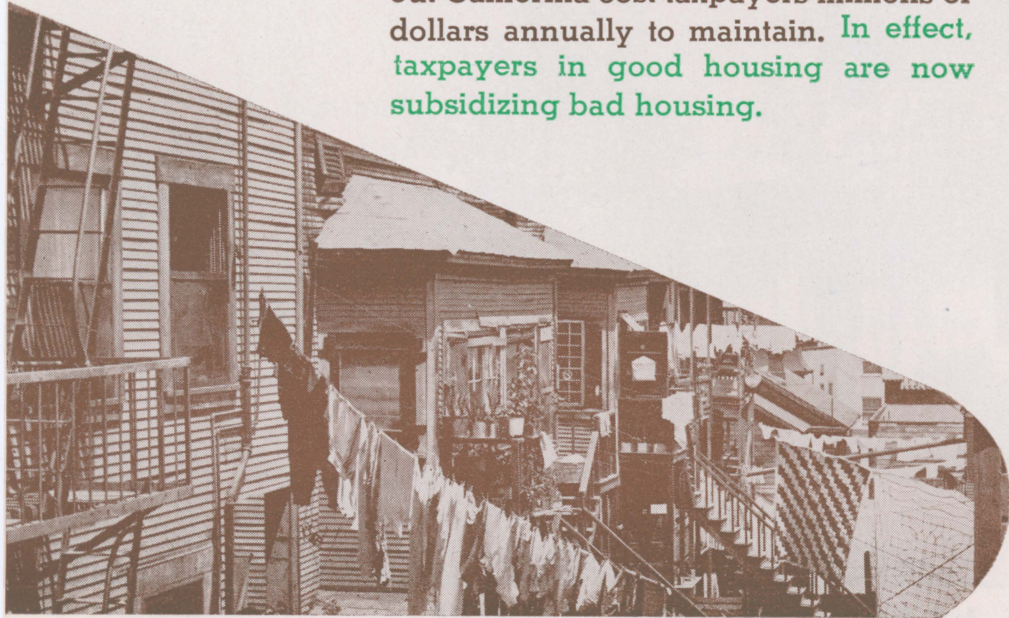


**IT'S UP TO YOU**

## CAUSE AND EFFECT OF...

When a family's income is not high enough to afford decent housing on the private market—the family has to compromise on living standards in order to get shelter—often this means living in cramped, badly ventilated, unsanitary bad housing—or it may mean sharing living space with friends or relatives. Bad housing exists today because shelter is a necessity—and not all families can pay the price of decent shelter.

Many cities have studied the effects of bad housing—these effects can be measured in terms of human lives—and tax dollars. Bad housing conditions breed disease and frustrate normal family life. Children are forced to seek their recreation outside of the home—with resulting increased juvenile crime. Bad housing neighborhoods throughout California cost taxpayers millions of dollars annually to maintain. **In effect, taxpayers in good housing are now subsidizing bad housing.**



## Bad Housing In ...

According to the 1940 U. S. Census, just under 20% of all of the houses in the state were either in need of major repairs or lacked private bathing facilities. One out of every five houses was substandard!! Eureka, Redwood City, Fresno, Hawthorne, San Diego and every other city had then and has now its share of substandard housing.

## California's Counties,

Things haven't improved since 1940. Outside city limits where there are practically no building restrictions, thousands of families have sought to lick the high cost of housing by building their own houses. In Contra Costa County a recent survey found that of all new housing built outside of city limits since 1940, one-third was substandard when constructed.

## It's Small Cities,

In Oxnard the effects of bad housing have been measured: 31% of the city's housing is substandard—in these substandard neighborhoods can be found 63% of the city's juvenile police cases and 83% of the city's tuberculosis cases—these social results of bad housing cost all of the taxpayers money, and yet this substandard one-third pays only 15% of the total city's taxes.

## It's Big Cities.

A recent study in San Francisco compared a good housing area with a bad housing area—the Marina District during 1945-46 and 1946-47 paid into the city treasury \$555,583 in taxes. The city spent only \$86,659 in municipal services for the area. Needless to say this was the good housing area. In the Geary-Fillmore District (bad housing) the city took in \$368,020 and paid out \$741,315. All over the state too many tax dollars are being used to support bad housing areas.

**SOMETHING CAN BE DONE** ▶▶▶▶

# THE HOUSING ACT OF 1949 PROVIDES THE TOOLS

## Policy Declaration

To begin with, the Congress clearly states it to be the policy of the United States that "the general welfare and security of the nation and the health and living standards of its people require—the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing." The Act sets up, for the first time, a clear national objective of "the realization of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." It is to accomplish these aims that this law was passed. It provides federal financial aid in areas where private endeavor can not operate profitably and at the same time maintain reasonably high standards.

## Low Rent Housing

This section is aimed at providing decent housing for families which, because of their low incomes, are forced to live under bad housing conditions. It is not new legislation but an extension and improvement of the United States Housing Act of 1937. The federal government will make loans for the construction of low-rent public housing and provide annual subsidies to insure low-rentals. All public housing will be built and operated by local Housing Authorities. Rents will be approximately 20% of family income. Local contributions to these developments is in the form of tax exemption. However, tax payments of up to 10% of the rents can be made. To insure that there is no competition with private housing, incomes of families admitted to public housing must be at least 20% below the income required to obtain the lowest cost decent private housing which is available in good supply.

## Slum Clearance

For the purpose of buying and clearing slum and blighted land, the federal government will make repayable loans to local communities to assist them with this job. Federal grants are provided to bring down the resale price of cleared land when this is necessary to make it economical

for redevelopment. In California, local Redevelopment Agencies will operate this program. Although federal assistance is limited to blighted areas consisting primarily of residential slums, redeveloped land can be used for private or public housing, or for any other purpose that fits into the city's master plan.

When federal grants are required, the local community must put up at least one-third of the total amount necessary to make the resale price of the land economical. This may be done in cash or through the provision of public facilities such as parks and schools, needed to support the area after redevelopment.

The Act requires assurance of adequate housing for families displaced by slum clearance projects. This housing must be within the financial mean of the families displaced.

## Farm Housing

Loans may be made to farmers to provide decent farm housing. Short-term annual contributions plus a long-term loan may be made to marginal farms which can be brought up to a self sustaining basis. This section of the Act is to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Farm Home Administration and committees of local farmers. County Farm Advisors will have information.

## Research

Research to promote reduction in housing costs, to stimulate housing construction and to aid in leveling out building industry construction cycles is to be conducted by the Housing and Home Finance Administrator in Washington or in cooperation with industry, labor, state or local governments, educational institutions and other non-profit organizations. Local governments will be encouraged to make studies of their own housing needs as related to community development and land use.

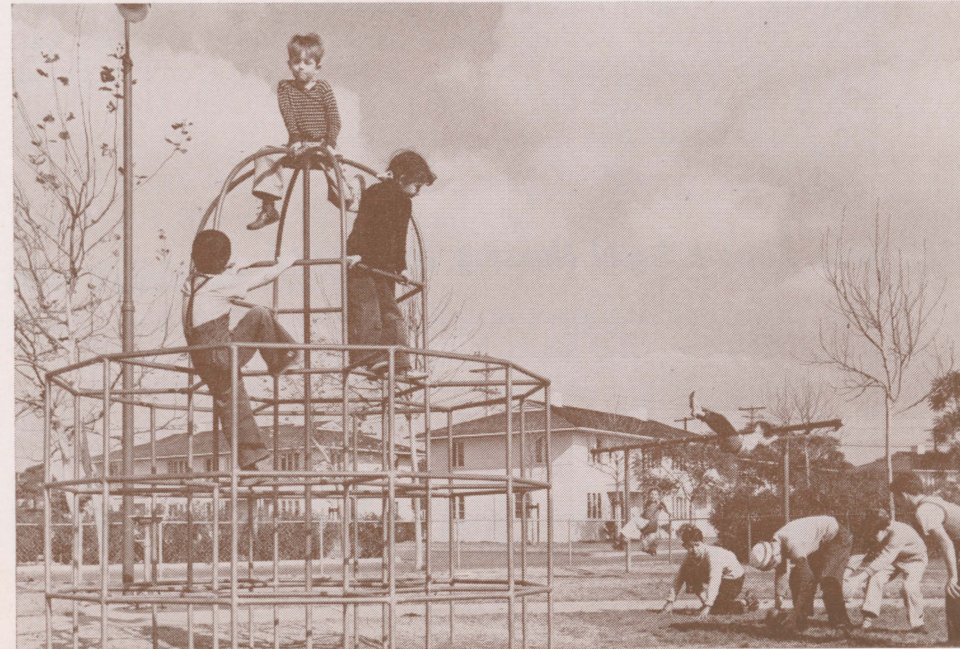
**IT'S A REAL CHALLENGE** ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



Shall we continue to condemn families to slum living because of the high price of adequate housing, or . . .

## IT'S UP TO YOU

Shall we put men and capital to work, government and private enterprise, to achieve decent living for all.



# ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS...

## ***This Is a Local Program***

The passage of the National Housing Act of 1949 does not in itself build any houses or clear any slums. Actual construction and clearance is up to cities and counties. Localities initiate this program and carry it out. The federal government helps in the financing.

## ***What Comes First?***

First you must have in your city or your county a Housing Authority to build low-rent public housing and a Redevelopment Agency to clear blighted areas. Today there are over fifty Housing Authorities in California and two Redevelopment Agencies (San Francisco and Los Angeles).

## ***Suppose We Don't Have a Housing Authority Now?***

That's simple, organize one. All you need is a resolution from your local governing body . . . then five commissioners are appointed by the mayor or the supervisors and the Authority is ready to operate. Funds advanced by local governing bodies for organizational purposes can be repaid out of loans from the federal government. Housing Authorities are organized under the California Housing Authorities Law, as amended, passed by the California Legislature in 1938.

## ***Who Runs a Local Housing Authority?***

The five commissioners appointed to serve as the "board of directors" of the local Housing Authority serve in the public interest and without pay. These commissioners are the policy making group, they hire the staff, approve expenditures and determine the extent of a local public housing program. Of course, it goes without saying that commissioners should be favorable to public housing or they have no place on such a board.

## ***How Does a Development Program Get Started?***

Your city Planning Commission must start this out. Under the Community Redevelopment Law passed by the California Legislature in 1945, the Planning Commission must first determine the extent of blighted areas in the city, and recommend a redevelopment program to the local governing body. Then the Redevelopment Agency created by resolution of your City Council or Board of Supervisors, can go ahead. All redevelopment must be in conformance with the locality's master plan. If your city has no master plan this is the number one step.

## ***How About War and Vets Temporary Housing?***

There are approximately 90,000 units of this type of temporary housing in California now. Housing built under the Housing Act of 1949 will be standard permanent construction and should not be confused with temporary housing. Under present law temporary housing must be vacated by January, 1950—unless extension is granted. Construction of new permanent low-rent housing will help to relieve the crisis that is bound to develop when temporary housing must be removed.

## ***How Many Low-Rent Units Can Be Built?***

The Housing Act provides for a six year program of 810,000 units for the entire United States. No state can have more than 10% of this total. California, if housing authorities act and clearly demonstrate need, can have as many as 81,000 units over the next six years. As a matter of fact, due to the tremendous numbers of people that have come to California since 1940, this state is clearly justified in asking for the full 10% allowable.

## ***Who Builds the Houses?***

Remember this is a local program. The local Housing Authority plans, builds and operates the housing, using private architects; private builders and to a large extent private money, borrowed through normal private channels.

**NOW FOR ACTION** ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

# THINGS TO DO...

## **Your Support Is Needed**

There probably will be opposition to these programs in your city. It took six years to get this legislation through Congress, primarily because the opposition was well organized. The only answer locally is for those in favor of these programs to be well organized and ready to go when support is needed.

## **Who Will Help?**

This bill had more support than any legislation recently enacted. It was non-partisan, sponsored by eleven Republicans and eleven Democrats in the Senate. The American Legion, the League of Women Voters, the American Federation of Labor, the CIO and railway unions, the NAACP and other racial minority organizations, Protestant churches, the National Catholic Welfare Council, the United States Conference of Mayors—these and many more groups gave their support. Local support will come from people in these groups and other thinking people.

## **Form a Housing Council**

Call together representatives from as many friendly groups as you can and form an organization to put over these programs in your city. Such a council will serve to pool knowledge and effort. Be sure that all possible support is enlisted and that the Chairman of your group can speak before the city council with authority. Know that he will be backed up by other groups in favor of better housing conditions.

## **Call on Your Housing Authority**

Find out what plans the Authority has. Maybe they have no plans. In any event, they will be glad to know of your interest—and they might take even more interest in a housing program if they know that they have community backing.

Slum tours can be eye-openers. Get out and see the facts of bad housing in your city. Be careful not to invade the privacy of those living in the areas you visit.



## **Find Out the Facts**

In addition to slum tours, call on the Health Officer, Fire Chief, Building and Sanitary Inspector—find out what they think of bad housing areas in your city. Look up the U. S. Census figures on bad housing. Your city or county library will help on this.

## **Sound Out Your City Council**

Find out what the vote is liable to be on slum clearance and public housing. Of course, councilmen and supervisors don't vote on issues in a vacuum. They want to be sure that the proposition is sound and, just as important, who is for it and who is against it. Before a Housing Authority can get an advance loan from the federal government to make a housing survey and draw up plans, the local governing body must vote approval.

## **Remember the Press**

Slum clearance and public housing are liable to be one of the biggest news stories in your city in many months. After all, this program is designed to lift the face of the city and to lower its tax rate. Meet the editors and reporters of your papers. Keep them well informed as you go along.

**IT'S UP TO YOU**

This is a directory of housing authorities in California, together with the name of the Executive Director of each authority and the number of housing units each is now operating. Remember the war and vets housing is almost all temporary and must be eventually torn down. The low-rent housing now in operation was built under the provisions of the United States Housing Act of 1937. Look down the list and see if your city or county has a housing authority. This will tell you where to start.

### COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Locality	Executive Director	Vets & War Housing	Low Rent Housing
Butte	Edwin A. Daniels	101	0
Contra Costa	Sigmund Mahler	2093	218
Fresno	Hugo F. Allardt	427	0
Glenn	Daniel O. Paul	20	0
Imperial	William A. White	102	0
Inyo	David S. Bromley	191	0
Kern	Fred E. Widmer	863	110
Kings	George F. Collins	58	0
Lake	Mrs. W. F. Rood	52	0
Los Angeles	Melville Dozier	1156	1541
Madera	Raymond McKinley	50	0
Marin	Bert Klahn	2594	0
Mendocino	Roy C. Jordan	108	0
Merced	J. F. Collins	270	0
Modoc	Dr. F. Conwell	50	0
Monterey	Mrs. Eleanor Walters	461	0
Riverside	George W. Scott	1230	0
Sacramento	William M. Desmond	330	168
San Bernardino	George L. Black	1759	320
San Joaquin	Karl C. Brueck	1824	0
San Luis Obispo	George E. Stephan	390	0
San Mateo	Frank A. Bloom	640	0
Santa Barbara	Fred I. Lawrence	765	40
Siskiyou	A. G. McFarlane	24	0
Sonoma	Herbert Linthwaite	360	0
Sutter	Uloyd I. Huse	56	0
Tulare	Ferris R. Sherman	375	0

### CITY HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Locality	Executive Director	Vets & War Housing	Low Rent Housing
Alameda	David B. Christy	4910	0
Alturas	C. Elmer Wurth	24	0
Benecia	A. N. LeFevre	724	0
Calexico	H. W. Going	51	0
Corning	Roland A. Wilkerson	30	0
Davis	Robert M. Cole	28	0
Dixon	Henry A. Cagle	20	0
Dunsmuir	Elizabeth A. Cavin	82	0
El Centro	E. A. Nance	180	0
Eureka	James M. Hiler	340	0
Fresno	Hugo F. Allardt	477	216
Hayward	Arthur R. Costello	49	0
Holtville	Mrs. Willie M. Sharp	83	0
Imperial	Charles Owen	20	0
Los Angeles	Howard L. Holtzendorff	8685	3468
Marysville	Wallace Fetrow	341	0
Napa	Galen F. Maher	399	0
Needles	George L. Black	192	0
Oakland	Edmund Horwinski	2711	922
Orland	H. W. Hosking	20	0
Oxnard	George R. Wallace	1632	0
Palm Springs	Louise Peel	125	0
Paso Robles	George E. Stephan	150	0
Pleasanton	Walter T. Nilson	356	0
Red Bluff	Richard P. Jansen	32	0
Richmond	R. S. Elliott	16,407	200
Riverbank	L. A. Philbrick	214	0
Sacramento	William M. Desmond	340	310
San Francisco	John W. Beard	7635	1741
So. San Francisco	J. W. Riccomi	1048	40
Tulelake	Harry M. Lynch	65	0
Upland	O. S. Roen	200	100
Vallejo	James D. Richardson	7538	0
Westmorland	John Fernandez Jr.	20	0
Willows	Allan F. Daily Jr.	20	0
Woodland	Marvin Fratis	32	0
Yreka	Johnnie Hite	40	0

**FOR HELP AND INFORMATION** ➡ ➡ ➡

# California Housing Association

BETTER HOUSING AND BETTER COMMUNITIES FOR BETTER CITIZENSHIP

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101 POST STREET - SAN FRANCISCO 8, CALIF.

THE CALIFORNIA HOUSING ASSOCIATION IS AN ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM ALL OVER CALIFORNIA AND FROM MANY VARIED GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS. ITS INTEREST IS IN THE ELIMINATION OF SLUM LIVING AS A WAY OF LIFE IN AMERICA; AND IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DECENT HOUSING WITHIN THE MEANS OF ALL PEOPLE.

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