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New Report Advances Community-Based Solutions to Bay Area's Housing Crisis

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The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the wealthiest metropolitan regions in the world and should be able to provide stable, decent, and affordable housing for all of its residents. Instead, a continued reliance on the for-profit market has thrown the region into an acute housing affordability crisis. But it does not have to be this way.

[Urban Habitat](#) and the [East Bay Community Law Center](#) have released a new report, [*Rooted in Home: Community-Based Alternatives to the Housing Crisis*](#), which highlights examples of responses and long-term solutions to the housing crisis—rooted in permanent affordability and democratic community control.

In the report, we argue that we must treat housing as a human right, not as a commodity to be bought and sold on the market. In other words, we must replace the market economy with a moral economy that is organized around what people need.

Drawing on real-world alternatives from the Bay Area, the report recommends the following approaches to building just alternatives to our current system:

- Cities should decriminalize homelessness and informal settlements. Cities should work constructively with unhoused residents to provide sanitation and supportive services, in addition to developing permanently affordable housing in the long term.
- Cities should look to community land trusts and cooperatives as tested models for creating permanently affordable housing that are replicable and scalable across the Bay Area.
- Cities and other public entities should use their public land to host pilots or expansions of the models we highlight in the report.
- Cities should also enact a first-right-of-refusal policy to help level the playing field for low- and moderate-income tenants, community land trusts, and cooperatives trying to purchase property and maintain permanent affordability.

- Cities and other government scales should use progressive taxation to build a scaled-up social housing system in which housing is not owned and operated to make a profit, and provides security of tenure for residents.

Californians overwhelmingly support the development of affordable housing. The recent passage of state Propositions 1 and 2 clearly demonstrate that. Now, we call on policy makers and advocates to use the funding generated by these victories to support the development of permanently affordable housing for all who need it.

The report is available in print and online beginning Thursday, November 15. Full press event to come January 2019.

Urban Habitat is a regional policy advocacy organization working to advance equitable policies to create a just and connected Bay Area for low-income communities and communities of color.

The East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC) is the largest provider of free legal services in the East Bay. EBCLC's [Community Economic Justice clinic \(CEJ\)](#) advances people-oriented economic development and empowers low-income communities of color to build long-term solutions to poverty.