

# Executive Summary

Among the many negative consequences of California’s longstanding and deepening housing crisis is the toll it takes on people who work in public service jobs, especially the hundreds of thousands teachers and other employees working in California’s public school system. Among the 300,000 public school teachers in California, many cannot afford to live in the communities where they work, forcing them to commute long distances or pushing them out of the education system altogether. Attracting new teachers has also grown more challenging. Housing prices have climbed across the state, yet the majority of the nearly one thousand local educational agencies (LEAs) in California offer entry-level teacher salaries below the area median income.

Importantly, there are racial disparities embedded in these teacher staffing challenges. Teachers of color are already underrepresented among California’s public educators and they are more likely to experience housing cost burdens. Staffing challenges are even more acute in LEAs enrolling low-income and historically underserved students, where they have long suffered higher rates of both teacher turnover and teachers with substandard credentials. Thus, teacher recruitment and retention challenges are disproportionately impacting already disadvantaged students in California, working against efforts to close educational equity gaps.

As housing affordability challenges intertwine with staffing challenges, more and more LEAs are considering building workforce housing on land they own. The Teacher Housing Act of 2016 authorizes California LEAs to pursue affordable housing for employees and shifts the playing field on development finance. LEAs can now address employee housing by leveraging a range of programs and fiscal resources available to other housing developers. The Act establishes that housing stability for LEA employees is “critical to the overall success and stability of each school in California.” There are early indications that such efforts to build on LEA-owned land can

have positive impacts on teacher attraction and retention. Santa Clara Unified School District’s Casa del Maestro reduced its attrition rate by two-thirds for teachers supported by the housing development, compared with others in the same cohort, and waitlists demonstrate consistently high demand—80% of its tenants stay the full allowable rental term.

This report provides an extensive review of the need for public education workforce housing solutions, where and how such strategies can—and are being—implemented, and recommendations to advance housing solutions on LEA-owned land. Our analysis finds that:

## *Every County in California Has LEA Land Potentially Suited for Developing Workforce Housing*

As community landowners, LEAs have a unique advantage in the affordable housing development process. There are more than 150,000 acres of land owned by LEAs all across California. According to our analysis, there are 7,068 properties with potentially developable land of one acre or more, totaling 75,000 acres statewide. This is about the size of five Manhattans. More than half (61%) of these properties are located where beginning—and other lower salaried teachers—face housing affordability challenges. More than 40% of these properties are located in areas that are likely to be competitive for key affordable housing financing tools.

Every county in California has LEA-owned land that is potentially developable, so education workforce housing could help meet the housing needs of public education employees across the entire state. While our analysis reveals tremendous opportunity throughout California—especially in locales where LEA employees face housing affordability challenges—each property will require careful, on-the-ground assessment.