



Education Workforce Housing in California: Developing the 21st-Century Campus

*Collaborative research report and handbook guide California school districts
in building affordable housing for their employees*

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SACRAMENTO, CALIF – Every county in California has public land that may be ideal to build housing for teachers and school staff, according to a report released today by [cityLAB at the University of California, Los Angeles](#), the [Center for Cities + Schools at UC, Berkeley](#) and the [Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC, Berkeley](#). *Education Workforce Housing in California: Developing the 21st-Century Campus* provides a comprehensive overview of the potential for land owned by school districts to be designed and developed for teachers and other employees. This research effort, developed in collaboration with the [California School Boards Association \(CSBA\)](#) and funded by the [Chan Zuckerberg Initiative \(CZI\)](#), inventories tens of thousands of potential sites, shows a range of housing design strategies, and lays out a roadmap for school districts interested in exploring this transformative opportunity to enable more teachers and staff to live in the communities that they serve. The report also makes important recommendations for state policy reforms to encourage education workforce housing. The report is accompanied by an illustrated [Handbook](#) that provides a how-to guide for school boards, administrators and community members to advocate for and advance the development of education workforce housing on underutilized schools lands in communities across California.

California's deepening housing crisis threatens the quality of K-12 education, leading to worsening outcomes for students, high rates of teacher turnover and acute staffing shortages. These costs are disproportionately borne by students in low-income schools struggling to produce high-quality outcomes for all students. Public school employees — especially teachers — struggle to live in the communities where they work and school districts face growing challenges in recruiting and retaining staff, creating instability that exacerbates opportunity and achievement gaps.

“Teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement of any on-campus factor, and support staff are essential to the proper functioning of schools,” said CSBA President Dr. Susan Heredia. “So, it’s essential that we pursue high-leverage measures to attract and retain an education workforce that can prepare our students for the challenges of college, career and community in the 21st century.”

As housing affordability, staffing challenges, and academic excellence more tightly intertwine, a growing number of school districts are considering building workforce housing on underutilized school lands.



Four such residential developments have been built in California to date, all with tenant waiting lists, with nearly 50 more districts pursuing projects, and eight districts putting workforce housing measures before local voters since 2018. “This study shows that schools and housing are an excellent match, and by partnering with communities, great design solutions for different districts can lift up schools, neighborhoods and the education workforce who will live there,” said Dana Cuff, director of cityLAB.

This report makes the important case for education workforce housing as a tool that can positively impact education equity and housing affordability. “The state’s growing teacher shortages have a disproportionate impact on already disadvantaged students. Addressing the housing affordability challenges that so many teachers face is an important step in both attracting and retaining teachers and improving outcomes for California’s students,” said Elizabeth Kneebone, the Turner Center’s research director.

Statewide, there are nearly 151,500 acres of land owned by California local educational agencies. Of this land, there are 7,068 properties with potentially developable land of one acre or more, totaling 75,000 acres statewide. More than half (61 percent) of these properties are located where entry-level teachers face housing affordability challenges. “School districts have a unique advantage in developing housing because they already own land in the communities they serve. The key is to look at where there might be opportunities to develop underutilized land or otherwise reconfigure uses on their properties. It’s about getting strategic and getting creative,” said Jeff Vincent, Center for Cities + Schools’ co-founder.

Policy change at the state level, particularly the Teacher Housing Act of 2016, better enables school districts to pursue affordable housing for employees and to leverage a range of programs and fiscal resources available to other housing developers. Leaders and policymakers must take additional steps to streamline and simplify the process for building housing on school lands. “The passage of the Teacher Housing Act in 2016 allows California school districts to access existing affordable housing financing tools, which are essential to making sure projects pencil out,” said David Garcia, the Turner Center’s policy director. “State policymakers can build on this progress through policy change and capacity-building tools to encourage education workforce housing.”

"Improving access to safe, affordable housing is the key to building vibrant, inclusive communities across California," said Ruby Bolaria Shifrin, director of Housing Affordability at CZI. "CZI is honored to have supported this research effort, which offers the tools, resources and guidance LEAs need to accelerate the development of education workforce housing on underutilized school lands."

The report, *Education Workforce Housing in California: Developing the 21st Century Campus*, and the companion *Handbook* can be found on [CSBA’s Government and Policy Resources online hub](#).



About cityLAB at UCLA: cityLAB, founded in 2006, is a multidisciplinary center in UCLA's Architecture and Urban Design Department focused on leveraging design for spatial justice and to address contemporary urban concerns. Specifically, cityLAB explores the challenges facing the 21st-century metropolis, expanding the possibilities for our cities to grow more equitably, livably, sustainably and beautifully, with affordable housing at the center of its efforts. For more information visit: <https://cityLAB.UCLA.edu/>

About the Center for Cities + Schools at UC Berkeley: CC+S works to identify and advance policies and practices that create opportunity-rich places where young people can be successful in and out of school. We conduct high-quality, non-partisan policy research, engage youth in urban planning, and cultivate collaboration between city and school leaders to strengthen all communities. For more information visit: <https://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu>

About the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley: The Turner Center formulates bold strategies to house families from all walks of life in vibrant, sustainable and affordable homes and communities. Our focus is on generating constructive, practical strategies for public policy makers and innovative tools for private sector partners to achieve better results for families and communities. For more information visit: www.turnercenter.berkeley.edu

About the California School Boards Association: CSBA is a nonprofit association representing nearly every PreK-12 school district and county office of education in the state of California. CSBA unites school governing boards and administrators from more than 1,000 local educational agencies to strengthen public schools and improve outcomes for the state's 6 million school-age children. CSBA provides policy resources, training and professional development and business services, while also representing the interests of public schools through political, legislative, legal, community and media advocacy. For more information visit: <https://www.csba.org/>

About CZI: The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative was founded in 2015 to help solve some of society's toughest challenges — from eradicating disease and improving education, to addressing the needs of our local communities. Our mission is to build a more inclusive, just, and healthy future for everyone. For more information visit: chanzuckerberg.com