



Keep Oakland HOUSED

Executive Summary

Launched in 2018, Keep Oakland Housed (KOH) is a three-year pilot program designed to disrupt the trends of increased homelessness and displacement in Oakland, CA. Operated through a collaborative of three Oakland-based nonprofit organizations: Bay Area Community Services (BACS), Catholic Charities East Bay (CCEB), and East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC), the KOH program model offers strategic solutions to mitigate patterns of racial re-segregation through one-time emergency financial assistance and legal assistance to low-income Oakland residents. This Mid-Project Report provides an update on: KOH's implementation during year two of the program; the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery; and progress towards impact areas.

KOH 2.0 Implementation

The second year of KOH introduced changes to the KOH program model. The amended program model, internally referenced as “KOH 2.0”, was designed to be responsive to emerging priorities and concerns as well as the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program Shifts

In order to serve Oaklanders at greatest risk of becoming homeless, KOH 2.0 shifted eligibility from lease-holders with incomes less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) to include non-leaseholders with income less than 30% Area Media Income (AMI). The eligibility criteria expanded when KOH received resources specific for COVID-19 relief as well as CARES Act funding.

In addition, the collaborative implemented prioritization tools to prioritize individuals and families most likely to become homeless. To date, BACS and CCEB have been able to serve all eligible clients and did so in the order their applications were received. This practice continued into KOH 2.0; thus, the data collected through the prioritization tools was not a decision point for whether or not to serve a client. In the event that BACS and CCEB received more applications from eligible individuals and families in 2021, they may utilize the tool to determine which potential clients should be prioritized to receive services, and in which order. EBCLC, on the other hand, experienced times when the demand for KOH legal services exceeded staff capacity. Their approach to prioritizing clients was to review all new cases each week and prioritize those most at-risk of homelessness.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and county shelter-in-place orders inevitably resulted in a significant increase in the number of calls for services, which impacted KOH 2.0 implementation in the following ways:

- The economic impacts of COVID-19 influenced the composition of BACS clients as well as the type of Housing Problem Solving (HPS) services provided, resulting in BACS serving more individuals with higher incomes [previous to the economic shocks brought on by the pandemic]. Notably, BACS served more individuals with income levels higher than their usual clientele reflecting the economic crisis that many Oaklanders with relatively higher incomes experienced due to COVID-19.

- Shelter-in-place orders prompted a transition to virtual applications and intake processes, thus eliminating paper files.
- This shift to virtual applications and intake processes resulted in increased flexibility in the types of documentation required to determine eligibility. The collaborative partners adapted by accepting a variety of eligibility documentation, such as medical expenses as proof of economic burden due to illness, loss of childcare, or inability to pay for childcare, verbal consent, among others.
- The COVID-19 eviction moratorium increased the amount of complex legal issues related to evictions, including an increase in calls from individuals with COVID-19- related conflicts about benefits, records expungements, as well as increased intimidation from landlords.

Year 2 Progress on KOH Impact Areas

Building on momentum from KOH's first year, the collaborative has continued to exceed the number of clients they set out to serve. This is due in part to increasing demand for services at the onset of COVID-19.

Clients Served in Year Two by Service Area (July 2018–June 2020)¹



There are four main impact areas outlined in the KOH logic model to track the initiative's progress, described below.

Impact Area 1: Reduce number of Oakland tenants who lose housing through eviction.

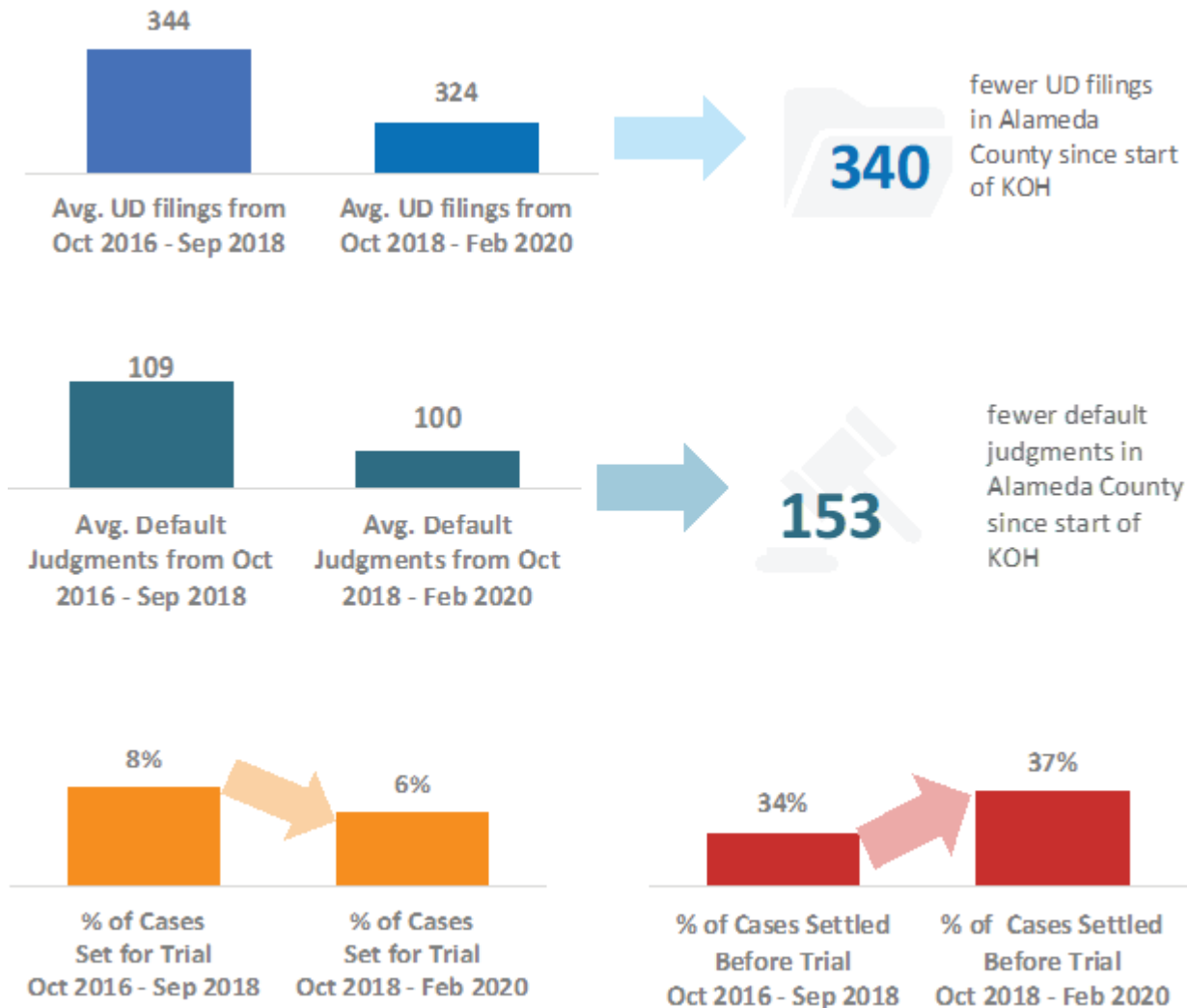
This outcome area focuses on the KOH legal services provided by EBCLC, which includes general legal advice, eviction defense, and general housing services.

- EBCLC served 1,679 clients over the course of KOH's two years, representing 764 more clients since year one.
- EBCLC helped 274 Oakland residents reach settlements that were favored by the client, an increase of 140 more clients since year one.

KOH is making progress in its efforts to preserve tenancy and reduce the number of landlords repeatedly evicting or displacing tenants. As described below, Alameda County Court data shows that Oakland tenants have faced fewer unlawful detainer (UD) filings, court cases, and default judgements in the time period since KOH was publicly launched.

¹ This data reflects a soft launch in July 2018, with a public launch of KOH in October 2018. This report reflects data through June 30, 2020. Please note that the number of households served exceeds goal when measured through the second anniversary of the public launch in October 2020.

Changes in Outcomes from Baseline to Year Two

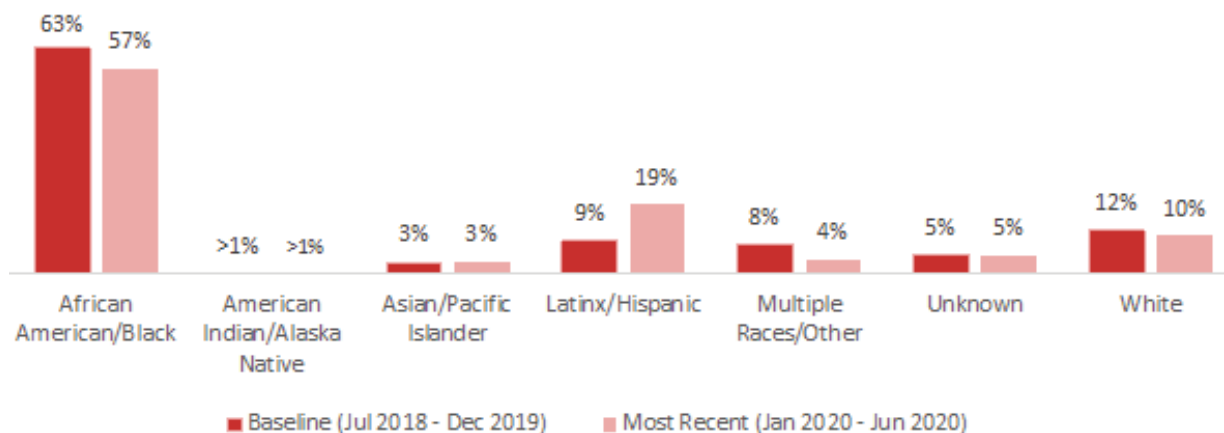


Impact Area 2: Address gentrification and racial disparities of displacement through targeted services to low-income communities of color.

Data at the regional level shows that African Americans represent a disproportionate number of homeless people in Oakland and Alameda County, and that other people of color are at high-risk of future displacement. Additionally, African American, Latinx, and renters from two or more races are almost twice as likely as White or Asian renters to be behind on rent payments. For this reason, KOH is focused on addressing gentrification and the racial disparities of displacement by targeting services towards low-income communities of color, by making all services free, and by actively referring clients to other services as needed.

This impact area also seeks to reach low-income communities of color. Since the launch of the initiative, African Americans have made up a clear majority of KOH clients. Much fewer KOH clients have been White, Latinx/Hispanic, or of multiple races/other. Even fewer have been Asian/Pacific Islander and less than 1% have been Native American. However, the most recent data—from January 2020 through June 2020, which included COVID-19 related clients—saw an increase in Hispanic/Latinx populations.

KOH Client Race/Ethnicity



In summary, KOH is making progress towards this impact area in the following ways:

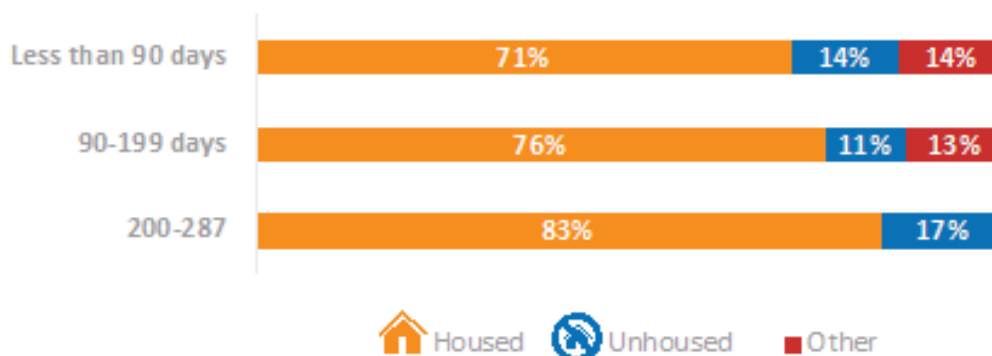
- The collaborative has leveraged work with subcontractors such as the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC), the Unity Council, and Roots Community Health Center to better represent and serve target communities through a neighborhood-based approach in Chinatown, the Fruitvale, and Deep East Oakland.
- KOH continued to successfully serve the African American population and has reached more of the Latinx population as well.
- Investments in Asian language services have not yet resulted in an increase of Asian/Pacific Islander clients

Impact Area 3: By 2020, the number of people made homeless because of losing housing in Oakland will be reduced.

The continued high number of clients serviced through KOH to date is evidence that KOH is making progress towards this impact area. By expanding from an exclusively upstream, eviction prevention model to include non-leaseholders through a more downstream, housing problem solving model, KOH is targeting those closer to the door to homelessness.

To assess whether KOH is reducing the homeless population in Oakland, the evaluation team is tracking post-KOH housing status. The evaluation relied on texting follow-up data to assess participants' housing status. As shown below, nearly three quarters of KOH clients reported being housed at the time of data collection.

Texting Follow-Up KOH Client Housing Status



Qualitative data from Photovoice participants confirmed that KOH services helped them stay housed. However, the participants suggested that there is a clear need to provide additional financial support to ensure Oaklanders stay consistently housed. Other themes from the qualitative data are as follows:

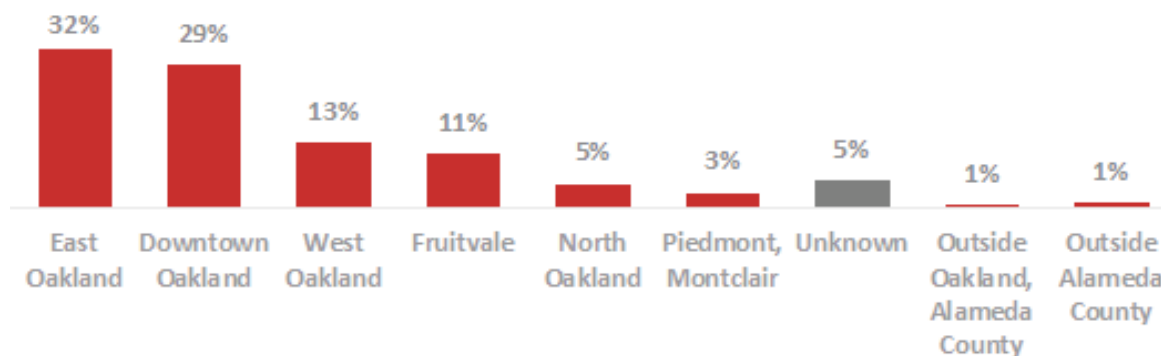
- KOH has supported its clients with staying housed and mitigating the downward spiral into homelessness.
- While one-time emergency financial assistance has been helpful, Photovoice participants shared that KOH clients often need more than one-time funds to remain sustainably housed.
- There is excitement and optimism that KOH is making inroads in preventing homelessness through support from foundations, the City of Oakland, and the CARES Act funding.

Impact Area 4: Awareness of housing issues and KOH services will be accessible to all corners of the community.

Encampments and the increase in homeless individuals have heightened the visibility of housing insecurity as a growing challenge in Oakland. However, there is no consensus among city leaders and collaborative partners on the most effective strategies to raise awareness about the housing challenges facing Oakland as well potential solutions.

The KOH program appears to be reaching clients throughout Oakland, serving clients from 21 out of the 29 zip codes in Oakland.

Neighborhood Distribution of KOH Clients (July 2018– June 2020)



The clients' age distribution did not change drastically between year one and year two, highlighting a need for targeted outreach to seniors, transitional age youth, and families with children. Additionally, KOH has made progress providing services in multiple languages, but qualitative data suggests that more work could be done to engage populations that speak languages other than English. Other findings are as follows:

- The collaborative is continuing to serve clients from a majority of Oakland zip codes as well as those from zip codes with the greatest need.
- There is a continued room for growth in multi-lingual outreach.
- Older adults and clients with disabilities have unique barriers to accessing services suggesting perhaps an increased focus on these populations going forward.

Key Takeaways

Community feedback has proven integral to KOH's ability to be responsive to community priorities and to effectively deliver services. Participants in focus groups identified a need for increased communication to prospective clients about the program, including updated guidelines, program changes, and eligibility. Community outreach should be continued, especially to target populations for services such as workshops and other relevant education programs. Furthermore, there is ongoing need for financial assistance, access to non-predatory financial loans, and pathways to homeownership. A full list of community recommendations and ongoing community needs are included in the full mid-project report.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and imminent end to Alameda County's eviction moratorium, KOH's program and service delivery model will naturally need to evolve to meet the needs of residents. Despite the necessary shifts, KOH has continued to make progress towards its goal of protecting Oakland residents from homelessness and ensuring the community remains housed.

For residents requiring expedited service about an eviction notice:

[East Bay Community Law Center](#)
510-548-4040

For people experiencing a housing crisis (with a lease):

[Catholic Charities East Bay](#)
510-768-3100

For people at high risk of immediate homelessness (no lease):

[Bay Area Community Services](#)
510-238-5091