

Bay Area Housing Finance Authority

Advisory Committee

March 27, 2025

Agenda Item 7.a

Doorway Housing Platform

Subject:

Progress update on the Doorway platform and related affordable housing placement work

Through the release of key new features and processes, and the integration of other Bay Area housing portals, Doorway has grown significantly since its launch in June 2023. Staff will share these developments with the Committee and discuss the program sustainability needs and the roadmap for continued growth.

Background:

On June 29, 2023, BAHFA launched the Doorway affordable housing placement platform, which consists of two websites. The Doorway Housing Portal provides a comprehensive, user-friendly site that allows housing seekers to find and apply for housing opportunities from a phone or personal computer. The Doorway Partner Portal, for jurisdictions and professional partners (developers and property managers), helps make the lease-up process significantly simpler. Together, the two sites provide critical data about who searches for what kinds of affordable housing throughout the Bay Area, enabling policy makers to better assist their constituents.

A regional affordable housing platform provides significant value to housing seekers, jurisdictions, and our professional partners. Housing seekers - often households that live in one city and work in another - benefit from having everything in one place ("one-stop shop"). Jurisdictions benefit from reduced staffing and costs, and developers/property managers greatly appreciate standardized processes across the region.

The Doorway platform was launched through a contract with Exygy, a software development consultant, and the support of a pro bono Google.org fellowship that provided more than a dozen full-time Google staffers January-June 2023. Starting in July 2023, with funding assistance from a \$2.5 million grant from Google.org, BAHFA expanded the consultant's work scope to further develop Doorway.

Progress Update:

In the last year, the Doorway platform has added account, application, and lottery functionality for housing seekers, jurisdictions, and professional partners. These new key features, along with some additional enhancements, have brought the platform's functionality to a place where it can fill the role of a regional one-stop shop for affordable housing.

That milestone was underscored with the integration last October of the former San Mateo County Housing Portal. Doorway now handles all San Mateo County listings, applications, and users. BAHFA is excited to announce that the Alameda County Housing Portal will be similarly integrated with Doorway later this spring. Housing seekers typically subscribe to email announcements that are sent when a new housing opportunity is posted. With the onboarding of

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thousands of subscribers from the two noted portals, Doorway's regional presence is growing significantly.

Doorway's role has also grown in regional affordable housing collaboration. The Doorway project has become a general regional resource for affordable housing placement across the Bay Area. Doorway discussions with external partners, including local government staff and property managers, have generated ideas about how to standardize and streamline regional practices on subjects such as application questions to demographic data collection to lottery and waitlist management.

Planning for Doorway's Future

Having successfully demonstrated regional value-add for jurisdictions, property partners, and housing seekers, Doorway has transitioned from a BAHFA pilot to an ongoing product.

Given the postponement of the regional ballot measure, however, growth must be balanced with the current resource constraints. The near-term focus is on perfecting the core product; further enhancements have been identified but have been pushed to the future.

Like other BAHFA activities, new resources are needed to continue the Doorway platform and related affordable housing placement work. The forthcoming BAHFA Strategic Planning process will include a Doorway sustainability plan, likely to involve a combination of fundraising and targeted partner fees. Note that Doorway is intended to remain free for housing seekers.

Issues:

None

Recommended Action:

Informational

Attachment:

- A. Presentation

Reviewed:



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