

# Bay Area Housing Finance Authority

## Advisory Committee

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March 23, 2023

Agenda Item 6.a.

### Doorway Housing Portal

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#### Subject

Status Update of the Doorway Housing Portal

#### Background

Searching for an affordable home in the Bay Area can be a very difficult process. It is often based on long paper applications, is different for every property, and eligibility criteria and placement processes are often unclear.

The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) is launching the Doorway Housing Portal (DHP) with the goal of making affordable housing searching easier. Once successfully launched, housing seekers can use the portal to search for housing on their phone or computer and complete an application in less than 10 minutes. The portal will transform the housing search process across the region: in addition to saving time, housing seekers will be able to determine eligibility upfront, apply for multiple listings, and get up-to-date lottery, waitlist and placement information. DHP is based on the open-source code from the DAHLIA San Francisco Housing Portal, a proven approach to making it easier to find and apply for affordable housing.

The Doorway Housing Portal Will:

- Create a one-stop shop for housing seekers' needs
- Allow applicants to get up-to-date lottery and waitlist information
- Simplify the lease-up process for developers and property managers
- Provide important data about affordable housing demand, which will help create more housing resources

The portal also will grow the shared technology platform so regional partners can share costs, making it less expensive to operate, and create shared tools that cities and counties can use to help simplify the process of building and leasing affordable housing.

#### Development Roadmap

The Doorway Housing Portal will be iteratively developed over multiple releases over the next few years, per the following anticipated schedule. Note that DHP is actually two sites: one for housing seekers, and one for professional partners such as housing developers and property managers, in order for them to manage housing listings and applications.

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Period	Focus
Jan-June 2023	Housing Seeker - Core site development, housing listings, general information
July-Dec 2023	Housing Seeker - Application, lottery, automated chat enhancement Professional Partner - Account management, improved reporting
2024	Housing Seeker - Ownership units, housing counselor accounts, waitlist management Professional Partner - Placement/lease up functionality
2025	Professional Partner - Database functionality, enhanced reporting, regional housing inventory development, asset management functionality

DHP will also be rolled out across the nine-county Bay Area region in stages. The first group of jurisdictions to be integrated with the system are the City of San Jose, Marin County, San Mateo County, and Santa Clara County. Alameda County will participate by providing listings from its current housing portal before being fully integrated at a later date. The City and County of San Francisco will not directly participate initially, but DHP will link to the DAHLIA housing portal. The counties of Contra Costa, Napa, Solano and Sonoma are targeted for later inclusion.

### Sustainability

Doorway Housing Portal development is supported by the initial California Department of Housing and Community Development funding for BAHFA. In addition, Doorway is the recipient of a current 15-person, six-month product development fellowship from Google.org, which is considering additional project support.

Longer term, Doorway will generate revenue to cover housing portal costs. Participation fees, paid by housing developers and jurisdictions, will offer significant savings over independent portal operation and subscriber benefits such as expanded reporting and, in the near future, affordable housing unit tracking and management.

### Adoption

Jurisdiction and housing developer/property manager participation are key to the success of the platform as a robust resource for Bay Area housing seekers. Specifically, DHP needs such participation to ensure that affordable housing opportunities are listed, and that data from the placement of those units is shared with Doorway.

BAHFA can compel participation in Doorway for any development it funds directly, and BAHFA is working to create incentives to ensure broad participation of projects across the region.

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**Issues**

None

**Recommended Action**

Information

**Attachment**

A. Presentation

**Reviewed**



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