



## Parish Process Timeline

This Parish Process has been designed to help your community follow Bishop Cummins' call to address the housing crisis in our midst. There are four steps to this process:

**Step One: Form a committee to look over the material.** *(Suggestion for team members—those in need of housing, those in real estate, banking, local businesses, non-profit agencies, social justice and housing advocates, a diversity of ages and groups.)*

- ❖ Adapt to your parish
- ❖ Compile the information from the survey
- ❖ Present this information to those participating in the process

### Step Two: Gather Data.

- ❖ Assign committee members to conduct and compile the Worship Survey
- ❖ Assign committee members to conduct and compile the Community Survey

### Step Three: Reflect on the Data in the light of Faith

- ❖ Schedule times and places for each session
- ❖ Choose facilitators, set up/take down materials
- ❖ Conduct the sessions

### Step Four: Feedback provided in the spring

From time to time during this process, the staff of the Housing Initiative will be asking parishes for feedback. We will ask about your progress, and hope to share the ideas and strategies you develop with other parishes. At the end of the process, we will ask for an evaluation: How has the process worked in your parish? How has it been helpful? Do you have any suggestions? What are any concrete results?



## Role of the Large Group Facilitator

### GENERAL ROLE:

- The facilitator(s) convene the group, and keep the process moving on time, and on task.
- The facilitator(s) set a tone of openness and respect for others; these sessions are sacred opportunities for reflection, listening, and learning- not for judgment or debate. Facilitators will be working with the housing contacts and parish housing team. They need to be people who are experienced leading groups.

### EACH WEEK:

- Read over the process to prepare for the session, and anticipate how much time is needed for each section of the process. Be sure the setup and environment are done. Contact any people that need to be there to speak or lead small groups. Hospitality may also be provided as a part of each gathering if desired. Nametags also are helpful.
- Start the session with a welcome and opening prayer which the group prays together (see page 15 of this section). End with closing prayer (page 16 of this section)
- Remind the groups of any logistics- bathrooms, etc. and also what time the session will end.
- Describe how this session relates to the whole process. This brief introduction assists people just joining the group for the first time, and reminds everyone of where we have come from and why.

### EXAMPLES:

**WEEK ONE (*What are our Personal Experiences of Housing?*):** Today we are continuing our response to the bishop's letter on the housing crisis. As a parish we have already read the letter, and had the parish survey at all the masses. Today we are starting a four week process that will lead our community to learn more about the housing crisis and then, to imagine some ways we will take action for positive change. It's exciting to be part of this, Catholics around the diocese are also involved in these prayerful reflections. Thank you for giving your time to be here... The session today is a first step- a chance for each of us to get in touch with our memories, experiences, and feelings about housing, and to share that with others.



**WEEK TWO (*Why is there a Housing Crisis?*):** Examine our experience as a parish based upon information from our parish survey. We'll also examine some of the more complex issues that create the housing crisis.

- *The person facilitating this discussion needs to work closely with the group that did the parish survey and collected the data at church. The group has collected data in three ways—first, you shared your own experience of housing; second, a group collected parish information in the worship survey; third, you gathered more factual information about the social, political, economic, and religious context in which we need to address the housing crisis. This session is divided into two parts:*

*A.) The first part of this session, the “survey group” will report their findings to the large group. This group can make this report in any way they determine.*

*B.) The second part of this session, the group will be asked to analyze the data. It may be easier to divide the group into smaller groups, depending on the number of people present.*

**WEEK THREE (*How Can Our Faith Guide Us?*):** A chance to look at the housing crisis from our faith perspective.

**WEEK FOUR (*What Faith Based Actions Will We Take?*):** Look for actions that we can take as individuals and as a community. The process builds upon itself - we hope you can attend each week to be part of each discussion.

- Preview the schedule identifying when and if they will go into small groups and who those small group leaders will be. Small group leaders need to be good listeners, and remind people of the ground rules on page of this section
- Facilitators should take people through the process, keeping time, bringing people back from their discussions, and insuring that notes and reporting are collected. Facilitators need to insure that people don't dominate discussions. Questions can be referred to the appropriate people in the room, or recorded and referred to diocesan staff or housing consultants. Keep track of questions- some questions may be more technical and require an expert. Don't let people get off track and into debates.
- At the end of the session, close graciously, thanking people again, inviting them to do homework if appropriate, and to return next week. The group says the closing prayer together.



**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Someone needs to develop the strategy for getting people to attend the events, reserving rooms, arranging chair set ups, bulletin and pulpit announcements
- Someone needs to extend personal invitations to a wide variety of people:

Those who work in housing: real estate agents, builders, developers, Those with experience in mortgage and finance.

Renters, homeowners, landlords

People who are having housing problems, including some who have moved away, the elderly, young couples, singles, teachers, church workers, immigrants .

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All these voices will add to the depth of this process.

- Keep track of your outcomes and feel free to pass ideas and questions to Maurine Behrend, our Catholic Housing Initiative consultant, or any member of our Oversight Committee. For contact information, see page 3 of the Introductory Material, or call: (510)768-3164



## **Parish Process: Session One** **What are Our Personal Experiences of Housing?**

Time: 1.5 hours

### **Purpose:**

- To enable each person to share his/her “story” and experience about housing
- To understand the different experiences we each have about housing
- To establish trust within the group and respect for the different experiences that shape how we see life.

### **Setting:** *(Establish a safe environment for sharing and listening)*

- Long tables arranged in rows, square or circle with chairs
- Podium and table with a candle.

### **Materials:**

- Candle or other materials for environment.
- Drawing materials: paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Extra handouts, pens/ nametags

### **Welcome and Introduction of the Whole Process and Today's Schedule**

#### **Opening Prayer**

#### **Questions for Reflection and Sharing:**

##### **In the Large Group Circle**

- Think back to your childhood and your home(s). What images come to mind? Where did you grow up? Picture your home(s). What kind of neighborhood was it in? What did it look like?
- Draw a picture of your childhood home on a blank sheet of paper. What memories and feelings are attached to this home? *(Everyone is capable of doing this - don't worry about your artistic abilities.)*
- Now think of your current situation of housing. How does it differ from your childhood?
- Imagine a child (your own children or grandchildren or anonymous children in different parts of your community.). Where do they live? In what kind of home? How do you feel about their living situation? Is it different from your childhood? Is it different from your current situation? Does it seem healthy or unhealthy (just, fair, privileged, marginalized...) to you? Imagine how the children feel about it. Write down any responses.



**In Small Groups (4 people)**

- Take a few minutes to share any reflections with the group. Share only what you are comfortable sharing. You may focus on the differences between your past and present experiences of housing. Be sure each person has time to speak if they want. (Review small group courtesy in Appendix)
- The facilitator will ask each person to think for a few minutes about what they have learned during this session. What does this tell you about housing in your community? Please write down any reflections.

**Closing Prayer**

**Preview of Next Week**

**Thank you for coming!**



## **Session Two**

### **Why is There a Housing Crisis?**

Time: 2 hours

#### **Purpose:**

- To review the data gathered in the parish survey
- To learn about the housing crisis in our wider community
- To analyze this data in order to understand the immediate and structural causes of the housing crisis.

**Setting:** The room should be set up so the data can be presented easily to the group.

#### **Materials:**

- Equipment for presentation of data - an overhead projector, computer projector, newsprint, and/or handouts.
- Reports on Worship and Community Surveys
- Charts for each small group
- Pens, nametags

### **Welcome and Introduction**

#### **Opening Prayer**

#### **Part I: Report of the Survey Group - Large Group**

- Results of Worship Survey on Housing (Page of Parish Process)
- Results of Community Survey on Housing, Part I (Page of Parish Process)
- Results of Community Survey on Housing, Part II (Page of Parish Process)

#### **Part II: Analyzing the Data- Small Groups**

**A recorder should take notes of the work of each small group**

- In the second part of this session, the group will be asked to analyze the data gathered from three sources:
  - First, you shared your own experience of housing
  - Second, a group collected information from the parish in the worship survey; and
  - Third, you gathered more factual information about the social, political, economic and religious context in which we need to address the housing crisis
- Using the following chart, analyze the data you have gathered according to the following<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Can be reproduced on newsprint or overhead paper



- List both “General” and “Housing” problems that surfaced in the data. *In the chart, “Common” refers to ideas that are shared with others. “Different” refers to ideas held by individuals*
- Analyze the data by identifying the causes of the problem

Problems		Immediate Visible Causes	Profound Structural Causes
General -Social -Political -Economic -Etc.	Common		
	Different		
Housing	Common		
	Different		

- As a group, examine the information you have analyzed above and see if you can develop a priority list, distinguishing between immediate causes and profound structural causes.
- As a group write two complex sentences (*Note: This can also be done as homework in preparation for the next meeting*)
  1. What do you consider to be the principal causes of the housing problems faced by the community in your area?
  2. What do you consider to be the principal strengths of the community to address the housing problems in your area?
- Turn in your notes to the facilitator.

**Closing Prayer**

**Preview of Next Week**

**Thanks for coming!!**



**Session Three**  
**How Can Our Faith Guide Us?**  
**Time: 1 1/2 hours**

**Purpose:**

- To search for a communal response to the housing crisis drawing upon the resources of our faith
- To explore the relationship between our lived experience and our faith tradition
- To invite the action of God in our lives and in the life of our community.

**Setting:**

The environment supports the sacred nature of this faith sharing session. For example, chairs in a circle with a candle or some kind of small altar in the middle, with Scripture, and symbols related to housing.

**Materials:**

- Bible, a candle, a cloth for the table/altar area
- Newsprint, paper, and pens

**Welcome and Introduction**

**Opening Prayer**

**In the Large Group Circle:**

- **Recall** the two statements made at the last session, the principle causes of the housing problem in your area and the strengths of your community to address this problem. If possible have the statements present and read them in the large group.
- **Reflect and take notes on the following questions:**
  1. Given our experience of the housing crisis, what passages or images from Scripture come to mind?
  2. Are there words from our religious tradition that name the experiences we've described?
  3. Do any teachings of the Church seem particularly relevant in this situation?
  4. What are some of the religious questions that occur to you?
  5. What religious values do you bring to judging this situation?
  6. Is there a place or a situation in the Gospel where Jesus's response gives you insight into how you and the community might respond to the housing crisis?



**In Small groups (4 people)**

- Take some time to hear from each person what reflections they would like to share from the questions above. Be sure each person has time to share.
- Formulate a judgment about the housing situation in your community using principles from your faith (Church teachings, scripture).

For example:

We judge the situation in our community around the issue of housing to be . . .

Our faith tells us that we are called to . . .

Responsible stewardship demands...

- Record that statement for the group.

**Closing Prayer**

**Preview of Next Week**

**Thank you for coming!**



## **Session 4**

### **What Faith Based Actions Will We Take?**

Time: 2 hours

#### **Purpose:**

- To "build on" our ideas and beliefs and develop action steps which will create positive changes within our community.

**Setting:** Tables for each small group with chairs around

#### **Materials:**

- Newsprint and writing utensils for each group
- Judgment statements from last session (collected and copied for each group)
- List of Possible Parish Actions from the Tool Kit

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

#### **Opening Prayer**

**Brainstorming Responses in Small Groups:** (This can be done in one large group)

- Read out loud the judgment statements from the previous session
- List on newsprint the many possible ways in which you might be able to respond to the housing situation; trying not to exclude or discuss any reasonable options.
- Review the "Opportunities for Action" for your geographic area in Section 5 of *Tools for Reflection and Action*
- Examine the list of opportunities and remove any which do not seem like they have any probability of success or are clearly beyond the capability of your group.

#### **Choosing Options in the Large Group**

- Post your group's ideas on the wall for the whole group to review.
  - Take 15 minutes in prayerful silence to review all the ideas posted by the whole group.
  - Each individual should choose their favorite three ideas and write pros and cons for each idea.
  - Consider how the options chosen respond to the judgment statement your group developed in the last session.



- The facilitator should poll the people attending and ask for their top choices for action, and keep track of the numbers. Totals will reflect the interests of the whole group. Choose a maximum of three action steps that you might take as a parish.
- Attempt to come to a consensus on these action steps, considering interest, and pros and cons.
- Determine what steps need to be taken to realize these top action steps, who will be responsible for this action step, and the timetable for reporting back to the large group. Keep written records of all your decisions. Decide who will convene the next meeting.
- Share your action steps with the Catholic Housing Initiative- your work will inspire others!

### **Closing Prayer**

**Thank you to everyone who participated in this process.**



## **Ground Rules for Useful Dialogue**

Be as honest as you can.

Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.

Be open to changing your mind.



When disagreement occurs, keep talking.

Give up put downs and personal attacks.



Speak your mind freely, but do not monopolize.

Allow the opportunity for everyone to speak.

Be prepared to agree to disagree, and then move on.



Observe confidentiality within the group.

Ask participants if they wish to add anything.

Observe amnesty.



## **Opening Prayer**

**Holy Spirit,  
Be with us now in your wisdom and guidance.  
Be with our community,  
As we try to understand the reality of housing in our area.**

**Where there are people without a home, let us share our bounty.  
Where there are people who cannot afford to live where they labor,  
Let us witness their struggle and admire their strength.  
Where there is a single parent, an elderly person, an immigrant,  
Or a person with a disability, who cannot afford housing,  
Let us be advocates of dignity and justice.**



**Open our eyes and our hearts.  
Lead us to do your will:  
To act in kindness,  
To reflect with integrity, and  
To be agents of change.**

**Fill us with your love  
As you renew the face of the earth.**



## **Closing Prayer**

God of Compassion,  
We thank you for presence among us  
in the wisdom, commitment, and love of all gathered here.  
In this moment of grace,  
help us plant seeds of change,  
and take action that will help those who suffer among us.  
Give us the strength and creativity to work together,  
trusting in your goodness and justice.

We pray in confidence through Christ our Lord.  
Amen



## **Closing Prayer**

*(for Interfaith Settings)*

God of Compassion,  
We thank you for presence among us  
in the wisdom, commitment, and love of all gathered here.  
In this moment of grace,  
help us plant seeds of change,  
and take action that will help those who suffer among us.  
Give us the strength and creativity to work together,  
trusting in your goodness and justice.

Amen



**Weekend Worship Survey on Housing**

*In response to Bishop Cummins' invitation to study and act on the housing crisis in the East Bay, each participating parish is identifying housing issues in their community. This results of this survey will be compiled and combined with more local housing data as we discern our parish response to the crisis.*

*If you wish to help in this process, see the bulletin, or stop by our table after mass today.*

Please turn in one survey per household

1. City in which you live: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of people in your household \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you lived at your current address? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Check which applies to the household in which you live:  
 Owner Occupied \_\_\_\_\_ Renter Occupied \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you aware of friends or family members who have left our area because of the high cost of housing? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. Does anyone in your household have a housing need? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 If yes, check those that apply:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ Overpaying for housing (*example: housing costs greater than 1/3 of income*)
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ Overcrowding (*example: more than 2 people per bedroom plus one*)
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ Unable to find rental housing
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ Unable to purchase housing
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ Recent rent increase
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_ 30 day notice to terminate rental agreement
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_ Change in income which affects ability to pay housing costs
  - h. \_\_\_\_\_ Other need: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please write any comments, questions, or concerns about housing below:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation*



## **Community Survey on Housing Part I**

The best way to gather information on your community is to find people who know the answers and contact them. Consider asking those who have lived in your community for a long time, those interested in politics or direct service to those in need, those with particular expertise in real estate or development, or staff members in your city or county housing and development departments.

The following information is also available to read and print on-line or in your city and county offices. Here is how to find it:

### **1. To review your city or county's General Plan:**

Some cities and counties have their General Plan available on their web site, but all cities and counties have copies available for the public to use or purchase. Here are some typical categories in a city or county's General Plan:

- Introduction
- Economic Development
- Growth Management
- Land Use
- Traffic and Circulation
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Facilities (including Educational) and Utilities
- Open Space and Conservation
- Safety
- Noise
- Housing

Note: The census data in your city's General Plan may be from the 1990 census

### **2. To find 2000 census data for your area:**

Start with the Association of Bay Area Governments,  
[www.census.abag.ca.gov/cities/cities.htm](http://www.census.abag.ca.gov/cities/cities.htm), then click on the name of your city  
The ABAG site has links to further US Census 2000 information

### **3. To find 2000 census data for your parish boundaries:**

Go to [www.oakdiocese.org](http://www.oakdiocese.org)  
Click on your county, then your parish, then "First Voice"  
Scroll down the screen to get raw data as well as your parish rating in each category



## **Community Survey on Housing Part II**

### **A. Physical and Demographic Factors:**

1. Define and describe the area of your parish community and neighborhood.
2. What is the population?
3. What is the housing pattern in the area: private ownership, rentals, subsidized housing, mobile homes, etc.?
4. Are there physical or geographic factors that affect housing in your community (lack of available land, climate, topography, environmental concerns)?
5. What are the available resources in the community, such as hospitals, schools, libraries, and parks?

### **B. Economic Data**

1. What is the general economic profile of your parish community?
2. How does the economy affect housing in the area?
3. Are any parts of the community considered depressed or oppressed? If so, what influences or contributes to this situation?
4. What are the overall percentages of unemployment, employment and underemployment (specific to race, gender, age group, etc.)?
5. How does religion, education, the media, etc. influence the economic system of the area?

### **C. Political Factors**

1. How would you describe the political profile of your community?
2. How does the general population participate in the political process? How do women and ethnic minorities participate politically?
3. Have local politicians supported or hindered fair-housing in the community?
4. How do other groups with political involvement (unions, churches, etc.) affect the issue of fair-housing?

### **D. Educational Data**

1. Does education (of individuals or groups) affect the outcome of acquiring housing in your community?
2. Do the educational institutions (particularly higher learning) impact housing (in terms of support, providing housing, education for housing, etc.)?

### **E. Religion/Church Factors**

1. What is the religious make-up of your community?
2. Does or how does the religious identity of the community affect the issue of housing?
3. How important are the religions as cultural and political forces?



**Community Survey on Housing  
Part II  
Continued**

**F. Social and Cultural Factors**

1. Are there ethnic/racial divisions in your community?
2. Are there class divisions?
3. Are there many cultures represented in your community? Are particular cultures more dominant or marginalized?
4. What cultural and societal values influence housing issues in the community or influence the idea of “home?”
5. Does gender, religion, ethnicity or class influence the housing available to members of the community?
6. What roles do education, media and religion play in influencing the current housing situations?
7. Does the type of employment for individuals affect their housing?
8. Are service workers (such as teachers, house-cleaners, gardeners, electricians, etc.) able to live in the same area where they are employed?



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*If you wish to help in this process, see the bulletin, or stop by our table after mass today.*

Please turn in one survey per household

8. City in which you live: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Number of people in your household \_\_\_\_\_

10. How long have you lived at your current address? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Check which applies to the household in which you live:

Owner Occupied \_\_\_\_\_

Renter Occupied \_\_\_\_\_

12. Are you aware of friends or family members who have left our area because of the high cost of housing? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

13. Does anyone in your household have a housing need? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, check those that apply:

i. \_\_\_\_\_ Overpaying for housing (*example: housing costs greater than 1/3 of income*)

j. \_\_\_\_\_ Overcrowding (*example: more than 2 people per bedroom plus one*)

k. \_\_\_\_\_ Unable to find rental housing

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o. \_\_\_\_\_ Change in income which affects ability to pay housing costs

p. \_\_\_\_\_ Other need: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please write any comments, questions, or concerns about housing below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation



*Catholic Housing Initiative of the East Bay*