**REPORTS ON DISCRIMINATION, SEGREGATION AND THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING**

QUESTIONNAIRE

**BASIC INFORMATION**

1. Name of Individual, Organization, Institution, Agency or State:

**Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)**

Type of Entity\*

☐ National Government or federal governmental ministry/agency

☐ Inter-governmental organization or UN agency

☐ Local or regional government, agency, representative or mayor

☐ Association, tenant union or housing cooperative

☐ NGO network, umbrella organization

**X Community-based NGO**

☐ Academia

☐ Foundation

☐ National human rights organization, ombudsperson

☐ Real estate, urban planning or construction

☐ Real estate investor or investment fund

☐ Trade Union

☐ Other:

2. Categorization of your Work

Please select one or more responses, as appropriate.

☐Public administration

**X Advocacy**

☐Funding

☐Legal Assistance

☐Networking

**X Policy**

**X Research**

☐Technical Assistance

☐Training

☐N/A

**X Other: Tenant Organizing**

3. City/Town: **Los Angeles**

4. State/Province: **California**

5. Country (please indicate your region or “international” if focus the work of your organization covers multiple countries); **Los Angeles County, CA, United States of America**

Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization in South Los Angeles that builds community power and leadership for economic justice. Founded in 1996, SAJE focuses on tenant rights, healthy housing, and equitable development. SAJE runs a regular tenant clinic, helps connect local residents to jobs, organizes for tenant rights, and fights for community benefits from future development through private agreements and public policies. We believe that everyone, regardless of income or connections, should have a voice in creating the policies that shape our city, and that the fate of city neighborhoods should be decided by those who dwell there in a manner that is fair, replicable, and sustainable.

**HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

7. W**hat specific forms of de facto or legal discrimination or barriers towards equal enjoyment of the right to adequate housing do the following groups face in your country** (please provide evidence with examples, studies, reports and relevant statistical information): See all below.

* People of African Descent,
* **Racial, caste, ethnic, religious groups/minorities or other groups**
* **Migrants,** immigrants**, refugees, internally displaced persons**
* Women, children or older persons
* Indigenous peoples
* Persons with disabilities
* LGBTQ persons
* **Low income persons, including people living in poverty**
* Residents of informal settlements; persons experiencing homelessness
* Other social groups, please specify: **low income renters**
* SAJE works with above bolded groups in Los Angeles County that experience barriers to adequate housing.
* We use the neighbourhood names “South Central Los Angeles” and “South Los Angeles” interchangeably. The latter is the re-branding of the former. Renaming and rebranding neighborhoods is a practice in and of itself that can facilitate housing segregation and discrimination. In the United States, the practice is often used to promote the gentrification of an area, which, as we describe below, typically results in the harassment, displacement and exclusion of communities of color.
* By working with low income renters and communities of color, we inevitably work with women, children, older persons, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ communities because low income renters can represent all of these intersectional identities.
* These groups experience both de facto and legal discrimination towards equal enjoyment of the right to adequate housing.
	+ As an organization, we often work with tenants whose landlords seek to evict simply because the current tenant is poor or working class, often paying below market rents due to rent stabilization laws. Income and wealth inequality that is pervasive throughout Los Angeles and the United States and spans many generations means that the majority of poor and working class renters are also people of color. Due to vacancy decontrol and Los Angeles’ “hot” rental market, landlords have perverse incentives to evict tenants paying rents below market rate in order to replace low-income tenants with higher paying, often White/Caucasion, tenants. This is a form of gentrification that occurs through both legal and illegal means every day in Los Angeles.
	+ Recent data shows that 63% of households in South LA spent 30% or more of their income on housing, more than other service planning areas in Los Angeles County and virtually unchanged from the years of the Great Recession. Rent increases have also occurred more sharply in South LA than Los Angeles in general. As a result, in 2015, one in ten South LA adults experienced housing instability. In LA City Council District 9, which includes the Figueroa Corridor where gentrification facilitated by the University of Southern California and other private developers has been taking place, homelessness increased by 44% in 2016 (the largest increase among the 15 council districts in the city that year) and by another 11% in 2017.
	+ See report: [*South Central Rooted*](https://southlaisthefuture.org/scrooted-report-summary/#Homelessness)*: A blueprint to dismantle multi-generational inequity and restore community health in South Central Los Angeles*, found at <https://southlaisthefuture.org/south-central-rooted/>
* Moreover, SAJE works in a Los Angeles communities shaped by a long history of legal housing discrimination in the form of legal discrimination through red lining and illegal discrimination through predatory lending, landlord harassment, and eviction.
	+ With its racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, South Los Angeles was a target for redlining in the late 1930s. The term redlining originates from maps created by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) that were used to assess the mortgage lending risk in certain neighborhoods; the maps were graded A to D, or green, blue, yellow, and red, depending largely upon the racial, ethnic, and class composition of an area. The majority of South LA was colored yellow or red because of the presence of, or anticipated presence of, African Americans ([Nelson, et al., n.d.](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=11/33.943/-118.276&city=los-angeles-ca&area=C125&adimage=3/30/-120)). Because these neighborhoods were deemed to be higher lending risks, it was more difficult for residents to get mortgage loans, which made home ownership more difficult to attain. In addition to the difficulty of qualifying for loans to purchase new homes, it was difficult to qualify for loans to rehabilitate existing homes. In South Los Angeles and many other neighborhoods across the country, the HOLC maps, and their subsequent use for lending decisions by the Federal Housing Administration and private investors, had the lasting effects of spatially codifying racial discrimination, contributing widely to the segregation of cities, and systematically removing access to the wealth-building tool of homeownership ([Reft, 2017](https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/segregation-in-the-city-of-angels-a-1939-map-of-housing-inequality-in-l-a)). South LA’s communities of color would continue to see public and private disinvestment for decades to come.
	+ Decades of disinvestment, coupled with biased policing and continued segregation, came to a head in South Los Angeles in 1965 with the Watts Rebellion. In nearby East Los Angeles, similar sentiments of discontent were expressed in 1968 during the Chicano Walkouts. A recent report, “South Los Angeles Since the Sixties,” suggests that these protests, and protests in cities across the nation, were sparked in part because the policy wins of the Civil Rights movement had not produced tangible changes in their communities. However, we also know that because of the disinvestments, such as redlining, these problems had existed for decades and the policy wins of the ‘60s had years of economic and social injustice to address. Civil unrest was sparked again in South Los Angeles in 1992 after the police officers who were charged with the beating of Rodney King were acquitted. After 1992, a new way of community-based organizations formed in South LA, including SAJE in 1996 ([Ong, 2018](http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/news/SLA_Since_The_60s_FullRpt.pdf)).
* Today, we see the manifestation of these historical legacies in current land use processes and the further exploitation by speculative investors.
	+ After decades of disinvestment, developers became interested in buying and redeveloping property in the past couple decades, especially in the Figueroa Corridor spanning from Downtown Los Angeles to the University of Southern California (USC) in South Central LA. A report titled “Redefining Redevelopment[[1]](#footnote-1),” co-authored by SAJE’s founding Executive Director, Gilda Haas, notes that much of the public and private investment happened around the expansion of the USC campus and the development of the Staples Center. In their community benefits agreement with the LA Arena Land Company, SAJE successfully negotiated with the developers to gain benefits for community members from the local investment. However, the report also notes that a challenge for the community “is to generate effective ways to manage the tension between the investment that produces needed jobs and the very real and immediate threat that this same investment will ultimately gentrify the area and displace local residents” (Haas & Gibbons, 2002). While investment and redevelopment can bring needed resources to the area, results matter—that is, if it puts community members at risk of displacement, the problem of disinvestment ultimately continues.
	+ Today there is an explicit conflict between speculative landowners from around the world operating in Los Angeles and the needs of local communities. The varying scale of the interests involved present a challenge for community organizing groups and policymakers alike. The international private equity firm, Blackstone Group, provides one example. In the years after the 2008 recession in the U.S., large private equity firms, like Blackstone Group, bought up foreclosed single-family homes to turn them into rental properties. They bundled, securitized, and sold these as “single-family rental bonds” much in the same way that subprime mortgages were in the previous decade.
	+ The Los Angeles rental housing market is dominated by corporate landlords whose business practices rely on the mistreatment of low income tenants. Corporate landlords are private actors that treat housing as a means to make profit at the expense of renters. Their mistreatment of tenants includes letting tenants live in slum housing conditions, actively harassing tenants verbally and physically, threatening tenants, issuing phony eviction notices, and more. Corporate landlords are individuals that hide behind business entities such as LLCs and Incs, to protect themselves from liability for tenant mistreatment and to evade taxes. SAJE produced the [Beyond Wall Street Landlords](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final_A-Just-Recovery-Series_Beyond_Wall_Street.pdf) report in 2021, which looks at the corporate landlord business model in L.A. and demonstrates that corporate landlordism is expanding in Los Angeles.

In addition to above, South Los Angeles tenants experience barriers to accessing affordable housing due to eviction records, criminal records, and documentation status. Moreover, South Los Angeles tenants disproportionately experience slum housing conditions, landlord harassment and evictions, barriers to legal representation and the ability to enforce tenant rights, and structural and systemic bias towards white property owning individuals and businesses. The reports and questionnaire responses below expound upon these forms of legal and de facto discrimination.

SAJE Reports:

* [*Healthy LA Cancel Rent Data Brief,*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20210105_Cancel-Rent-Data-Brief_FINAL.docx-2.pdf) *2021*
* [*The Just Recovery Series: Beyond Wall Street Landlords, 202*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final_A-Just-Recovery-Series_Beyond_Wall_Street.pdf)1
* [The Just Recovery Series: *Los Angeles Housing Crisis in the Wake of COVID-19 Global Pandemic, 2020*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/RBG_The-Los-Angeles-Housing-Crisis-in-the-Wake-of-the-COVID-19-Global-Pandemic.pdf)
* [*The Vacancy Report: How Los Angeles Leaves Homes Empty and People Unhoused, 2020*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf)
* [*Transit For All: Achieving Equity in Transit Oriented Development*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ACT-LA-Transit-for-All-Achieving-Equity-in-Transit-Oriented-Development.pdf)
* [*Renting From Wall Street, 2014*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SAJE_RentingfromWallstreet_2014.pdf)
* [*The Rise of Corporate Landlords, 2013*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RTC.DF_.report.FINALPROOF-July2_2013.pdf)
* [*Shame of the City, 2007*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Shame-of-the-City.pdf)
* [*Shame of the City 2, LA’s Hidden Health Crisis*](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Slum-Housing_Shame-of-the-City_Healthy-Neighborhoods-Same-Neighbors-Collaborative.pdf)

Other Reports:

* Report & Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black Homelessness[[2]](#footnote-2)
* [Systemic Racial Inequality and the COVID-19 Homeowner Crisis](https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/documents/areas/ctr/ziman/Systemic-Racial-Inequality-and-COVID-19-Homeowner-Crisis_Wong_Ong_Gonzalez.pdf)[[3]](#footnote-3)
* [Racial and Gender Disparities among Evicted Americans](https://sociologicalscience.com/download/vol-7/december/SocSci_v7_649to662.pdf)[[4]](#footnote-4)
* [Discrimination in Evictions: Empirical Evidence and Legal Challenges](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/greenberg_et_al._.pdf)[[5]](#footnote-5)

**8. Discrimination in housing can affect various dimensions of the right to adequate housing and other human rights. Could you provide more details regarding the specific areas in which housing discrimination is experienced? Below are examples of various forms of discrimination that can be experienced in relation to different dimensions of the right to adequate housing:**

*Accessibility*

* **Discrimination in relation to access to land, including water and natural resources essential for habitation;**
	+ Historic and contemporary land use, zoning, and housing development policies and practices concentrate low income communities of color in disproportionately resource scarce and polluted urban areas in Los Angeles. These neighborhoods have long been devoid of grocery stores, parks and other green spaces relative to other neighborhoods around the City, often experience extreme levels of air, noise, and ground pollution and are more at risk of contaminated water due to lead pipes or toxic soils.
	+ “Home to seven of the ten most ozone-polluted cities in the country, 84% of California's residents live in areas of poor air quality. And while all Angelenos suffer the impacts of this unhealthy air, low-income communities, especially communities of color, are especially vulnerable.

The CalEnviroScreen Tool identified the South LA and Southeast LA Community Plan Areas as among the top 10% of communities in the state of California that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. The primary causes of this vulnerability is the disproportionate proximity of these communities to high-density freeways and highways and to pollution-emitting factories and industries. These uses expose community residents to multi-source air toxins and fine particulate matter from gasoline and diesel-powered motor vehicles. The health costs of this exposure are severe, ranging from reproductive issues and low birth weight to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses. The Union of Concerned Scientists reached the horrifying conclusion that “70 percent of the cancer risk from the air we breathe is attributable to diesel particulate matter.” ([Peoples Plan](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UNIDAD-SAJE-peoples-plan-report-FINAL.pdf), United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD)). Deeply ingrained discriminatory housing policy and land use planning and development practices reduced housing opportunities for communities of color and have situated the most harmful polluting sources in, or adjacent to, their neighborhoods.

* One primary harassment tactic employed by landlords includes shutting off a tenant’s access to water, heat, and air.
* **Discrimination in relation to housing for rental or for acquisition or in accessing public or social housing;**
	+ There are both de facto and de jure discrimination in relation to renting or accessing public housing.
	+ First, a form of de facto discrimination that originates from a de jure source is the definition of “affordable” set by the Federal Government and the State. Income limits for affordable housing are based upon the formal for Area Median Income (AMI) of a county. Los Angeles County encompasses a vast geography including extremely low income communities and extremely wealthy communities. By relying on a median calculation the formula to determine affordability levels erases the deep poverty experienced in low income communities and skews the affordability requirements to higher income brackets. As a result, less housing is developed specifically to meet the needs of deeply impoverished communities--further entrenching the experience of housing precarity for these communities[[6]](#footnote-6). The AMI formula forces local jurisdictions to find creative policy solutions around the limitations and has the result of stoking – rather than mollifying - the tensions created by the political and financial influence over policymakers by wealthy investors and developers.
	+ Second, in the private rental market, landlords frequently discriminate against tenants based upon their credit history, eviction record, or criminal record. In Los Angeles County, advocates successfully won the right for tenants to fight in court to have their eviction case sealed, so that it cannot act as a barrier to future housing. However, many more tenants who do not get the chance to fight their case in court or have an attorney to assist them, do not seal their cases. This trend underpins the need for policies to codify the right to counsel for tenants facing eviction.
	+ Finally, private rental housing, public housing and section 8 housing are legally allowed to discriminate against people with criminal justice records. Criminal background checks are often used as screening criteria for rental housing to determine qualified applicants. For those with a criminal history, these screenings have become a barrier to obtaining housing. Many formerly incarcerated individuals, who have paid their debt to society, face continued penalties outside of the courts by being excluded from much of the housing market ([HRC)](https://www.thehousingcenter.org/brochures/criminal-history/). While the Federal Housing and Urban Development Departement (HUD) released updated Fair Housing guidelines in 2016 prohibiting landlords from blanket discrimination based upon criminal backgrounds, advising instead that landlords look at each case individually, in practice criminal justice involvement acts as a concrete barrier to adequate housing. This disproportionately impacts communities of color who have been systematically targeted by law enforcement and disproportionately impacted by a long history in the US of criminalizing poverty and over criminalizing low income communities of color.[[7]](#footnote-7) Some efforts at the local level have secured wins to “ban the box” and prevent discrimination based on incarceration history.
	+ In another law suit *Martinez v. Optimus Properties LLC,* SAJE was the defendant alleging widespread housing discrimination in L.A.’s Koreatown neighborhood. The suit asserted that a Los Angeles based real estate investment firm targeted Spanish-speaking tenants, tenants with mental disabilities, and families with children — blanketing them with unmerited eviction notices, leaving their units in disrepair, and verbally attacking their disabilities and national origin – in a concerted effort to remove them from six apartment buildings in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. The complaint alleged that after the defendants illegally pushed out tenants that they deemed undesirable, they would renovate the vacated units in order to rent to younger, English-speaking tenants – a process that they called their “Koreatown strategy.” SAJE won the case. See: <http://www.publiccounsel.org/stories?id=0263>
* **Access to emergency and/or transitional housing after disaster, conflict related displacement or in case of homelessness, family or domestic violence;**
* **Accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities or older persons, including access to housing for independent living or to care homes;**
* **Data collection or requirements to furnish certain certifications resulting in the exclusion of particular persons from accessing housing;**
	+ Requirement of documentation / financial storytelling that is the province of one dominant group it discriminates against other groups. For example, the use of credit scores in order to secure rental housing privileges more economically and racially privileged groups in Los Angeles.
* **Access to affordable units.**
	+ Speculative finance is keeping much-needed housing units from the market, which is increasing overall rents in Los Angeles and limiting opportunities for low income renters to find housing they can afford. Los Angeles County is experiencing an affordable housing crisis and a homelessness crisis. There, over [66,000](https://www.google.com/search?q=count+of+LA+homelessness+LAHSA&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS822US822&sxsrf=ALeKk01dqyQOaiXXcJq9V7bAN3Cc8d4n_A%3A1617923317033&ei=9YxvYPrEAbOF9PwP38WjiA4&oq=count+of+LA+homelessness+LAHSA&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyCAghEBYQHRAeOgcIABBHELADOgcIIxCuAhAnOgUIIRCgAToFCCEQqwJQ2BBY5xZg8hhoAXACeACAAYMBiAHoBJIBAzUuMpgBAKABAaoBB2d3cy13aXrIAQjAAQE&sclient=gws-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwi6k9eE4u_vAhWzAp0JHd_iCOEQ4dUDCA0&uact=5) unhoused people in the County of L.A. The county needs over 500,000 affordable homes to meet the needs of the population, according to the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing’s [*Housing Emergency Update*](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58793de5f7e0abe551062b38/t/5ce2fc70af9ae10001c74987/1558379634095/Los%2BAngeles%2BHNR%2B2019.pdf) report. Yet, in Los Angeles alone, according to SAJE’s [Vacancy Report](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf), over 93,000 units sit vacant. Speculative finance, a practice in which investors purchase property with the hopes of reselling it at a higher price in the future, is keeping homes empty and people unhoused.
	+ Most housing construction in Los Angeles is geared to high income earners, which leaves low-income families out of the housing market[[8]](#footnote-8).

*Habitability*

* Discrimination in relation to housing conditions, overcrowding or housing maintenance;
	+ Slum housing in Los Angeles is disproportionately in South Los Angeles, a region that is predominantly Latino and African American, and low-income. Forty-one percent of the worst habitability cases in Los Angeles are in this region[[9]](#footnote-9). Low-income households are disproportionately impacted because they are without the financial means to find new, habitable housing or fix the habitability issues themselves. Two reports produced by SAJE, [Shame of the City: Slum Housing and the Critical Threat to the Health of L.A. Children and Families](https://www.wellchild.org/shameofthecity.pdf) and [Shame of the City - The Sequel: Slum Housing: LA’s Hidden Health Crisis](https://www.wellchild.org/slumhousing_sequel_paper.pdf) illustrates the kind of slum conditions experienced by low-income tenants.
* Exposure to health risks within the home, including lack of ventilation, heating or insulation, exposure to fire or housing collapse risk, unhealthy building materials, or other unhealthy housing covered by the WHO Guidelines on housing and health;
	+ Low-income tenants occupy the most pollution-burdened housing in the city. In L.A. the multi-family housing stock built before 1978 is pollution burdened and not subject to new building and energy standards established after 1978. Sixty-one percent of these buildings are occupied by low-income tenants[[10]](#footnote-10).
* Exposure to other risks which render housing uninhabitable, including sexual or gender-based violence, interference with privacy and physical security in the home and neighbourhood;
	+ Historic South Central was identified as the most overcrowded neighbourhood in the United States. That brings with it numerous detrimental health consequences, both physical and mental. As it relates to gender-based violence, overcrowded housing can exacerbate domestic violence as confined quarters raise gender-based tensions in the home.
* Discrimination in relation to housing renovation or permission of housing extension;
	+ SAJE has observed that new owners of older multi-family buildings, which are increasingly corporate landlords, will aggressively try to replace long-standing low-income tenants with higher-earning tenants. They will refuse to make repairs and renovations for lower-income tenants whose rents are covered under rent control/rent stabilization and use various means to push out or evict the tenant. They will then renovate vacant units to be occupied by higher-earning tenants[[11]](#footnote-11).
* Discrimination in relation to getting code violations inside homes fixed
	+ The L.A. County code enforcement protocol (active in 2021) requires that law enforcement is taken to some housing inspections. The presence of law enforcement is harmful to tenants in minority communities due to a history of over-policing and the possibility of past negative experiences of law enforcement officers bringing negative attitudes, bias, and stereotypes to these communities that impact the fairness of their actions and their decisions. This makes tenants less likely to be willing to file code violations for slum conditions, and leaves them living in conditions that impact their health and safety.
		- Lourdes is a resident of Compton and hasn’t had hot water in over three years. The landlord has refused to give her hot water. “I have a child who is disabled, who requires hot water. She has Muscular Dystrophy level three which makes it more severe and more aggressive, so they have to treat her with chemotherapy. She needs hot water in order to progress with her treatment. We don't have hot water. I have informed the landlord. The Department of Social Security has also informed the landlord because they needed to know whether the child lives and he refuses to take care of the hot water needs.” Her home has numerous other habitability problems in addition to no hot water. The windows are falling off their sills. In order to open a window, she has to remove it from the frame and place it on the floor. The walls have cracks and holes. Rodents and animals enter through them. They have an unbelievable amount of roaches inside the home. “The children wake up in the middle of night, and they pull them out of their hair. And they kill them with their fingers because they want them off their hair. So they're crying. Because they want those animals off their hair.” The roaches trigger her child’s asthma. “I have a child who's asthmatic. He's on the nebulizer pretty much every day... I don't feel it's fair that my son has to be medicated because the landlord refuses to take care of the serious roach infestation.” The electricity doesn’t work and they can't use the lighting because once the light bulb set a wall on fire because the electricity doesn't work. There are only two electrical outlets in her home that work and they have to plug in lamps to get lighting. “We hope and pray that those don't go out because then we won't have anywhere to connect our lamps.” Lourdes has documented the issues and filed complaints with code enforcement agencies, and hasn’t been able to get the issues resolved.

*Affordability*

* **Discrimination in relation to access to public benefits related to housing;**
	+ See: Kurwa, R. (2020). The New *Man in the House* Rules: How the Regulation of Housing Vouchers Turns Personal Bonds Into Eviction Liabilities. *Housing Policy Debate*, *30*(6), 926–949.<https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2020.1778056>
		- “Whereas federal aid to the poor has traditionally focused on support for families, a central contradiction in these policies is the degree to which the state employs anti family modes of regulation and punishment, a finding consistent across welfare, health, and child services. I extend this analysis to Housing Choice Vouchers, the nation’s largest rental assistance pro- gram. Interviews with voucher renters show how, like welfare’s early *man in the house* rules, the public–private regulation of the program turns personal bonds into eviction liabilities. I trace these vulnerabilities to two rules: one banning unauthorized tenants from residing in the home, and another banning drug- and crime-related activity. After documenting how the enforcement of these rules forces tenants to choose between family and housing, I suggest that these dynamics illustrate similarities between the punitive regulation of housing and other safety net programs.”
* **Lack of equal access to affordable housing;**
* **Discrimination in public and private housing financing;**
* **Discrimination related to housing and service costs, housing related fees, litigation or taxation;**
	+ See: Kurwa, R. (2015). Deconcentration without Integration: Examining the Social Outcomes of Housing Choice Voucher Movement in Los Angeles County. *City & Community*, *14*(4), 364–391.<https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12134>
		- “This article reports on the social experiences of tenants moving from low-income neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles to a racially mixed, lower poverty suburb—the Antelope Valley—using Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. Voucher tenants experience significant social exclusion and aggressive oversight. Local res- idents use racial shorthand to label their black neighbors as voucher holders and apply additional scrutiny to their activity. They aggressively report voucher tenants to the housing authority and police, instigating inspections that threaten tenants’ voucher status. Tenants react to these circumstances by withdrawing from their com- munities in order to avoid scrutiny and protect their status in the program. These findings illustrate that the social difficulties documented in mixed-income devel- opments may also exist in voucher programs, highlight the ways in which neigh- borhood effects may be extended to include social experiences, and suggest the limits of the voucher program to translate geographic mobility into socioeconomic progress”

*Security of tenure* - SEE ABOVE

* Discrimination in relation to ownership or inheritance of housing and land and related natural resources including water including on the basis of a distinction between formal and informal tenure arrangements;
* Discrimination in relation to evictions, resettlement and compensation for loss or damage of housing, land or livelihoods;
* Differential treatment in land or title registration, permission of housing construction;

*Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure*

* **Discrimination in relation to access to work, schooling, health care or public benefits based on the residential address or related to a lack of an official address;**
* **Public transportation services and transportation costs;**
* **Provision of water, sanitation, energy, waste collection and other utility services; their quality or cost, including interruptions/blackouts including policies relating to disconnection from utility services;**
* **spatial disparities in access to health care, education, child care, cultural and recreational facilities;**
	+ SEE: [The Peoples Plan](http://www.unidad-la.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/peoples-plan-report-FINAL.pdf)[[12]](#footnote-12) on access to green space and full service grocery stores.
	+ SEE recent closure of grocery store in South Los Angeles
		- According to a 2010 report by research group PolicyLink, low-income neighborhoods have half as many supermarkets as wealthy ones and only 8% of African Americans live in a census tract with a supermarket compared with 31% of whites. In many communities, the lack of access to nutritious food contributes to serious public health problems such as diabetes and obesity.
		- <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-03-10/ralphs-food-4-less-locations-close-los-angeles-hazard-pay>
		- According to a 2010 report by research group PolicyLink, low-income neighborhoods have half as many supermarkets as wealthy ones and only 8% of African Americans live in a census tract with a supermarket compared with 31% of whites. In many communities, the lack of access to nutritious food contributes to serious public health problems such as diabetes and obesity.

*Location*

* Discrimination in relation to freedom of choice of the place of residency within the country, within a particular region or location;
* Discrimination based on place of residence or address, such as exclusion from invitation to job interviews or access to credit;
* Exposure to environmental health risks, such as external air quality, flooding, toxic ground exposure; noise; risk of landslides etc.;
* Living quality and physical security in the neighbourhood, including geographical disparities in policing and law enforcement;
* SEE: [Assessing Health and Equity Impacts of the Proposed Reef Development Project in South Central Los Angeles](http://www.unidad-la.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/4-Health-Impact-Report_Reef_October-2015.pdf)
* SEE: South LA is the future: <https://southlaisthefuture.org/south-central-rooted/>

*Cultural adequacy*

* Discrimination in relation to the recognition of culturally adequate dwellings as housing as well as equal access to public space;
* Prohibition of accessing, maintaining or constructing culturally adequate housing;
* Lack of recognition of mobile forms of residency.

**9. Are there any particular current laws, policies or practices in your country, region or town/community that contribute to or exacerbate discrimination in relation to the right to adequate housing?**

* The lack of strong tenant rights/protections exacerbate discrimination in relation to the right to adequate housing.
* For example, the lack of a Tenant Anti-Harassment Law in Los Angeles means that landlords can harass tenants with impunity.
	+ Landlords often resort to harassment tactics including but not limited to, shutting off utilities; sending multiple illegal eviction notices; taking away parking, access to common spaces, laundry, etc; refusing habitability repairs; physically and verbally abusing the tenant; threatening to report the tenant to immigration authorities; and physical or sexual violence.
* The lack of equal access to legal representation in eviction proceedings means that tenants with a lawful right to stay housed are evicted simply because they did not have the resources and/or did not know how to navigate the unlawful detainer court process.
	+ When faced with eviction, 90% of tenants in Los Angeles do not have legal representation during eviction proceedings, whereas 90% of landlords do. The presence of an attorney increases a family’s chance of winning their case by over 70%. Tenants without a lawyer almost always lose their cases, since cases move rapidly and are difficult to navigate without proper legal knowledge ([RTC](https://rtcla.org/who-we-are/)).
	+ See:<https://scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu/hlr/vol20/iss3/2/?utm_source=scholarlycommons.law.hofstra.edu%2Fhlr%2Fvol20%2Fiss3%2F2&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages>
	+ See: Sandefur, R. L. (n.d.). *The Impact of Counsel: An Analysis of Empirical Evidence*.
	+ See: Collinson, R., & Reed, D. (n.d.). *The Effects of Evictions on Low-Income Households*.
	+ See: Stout. (2019). *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Providing a Right to Counsel to Tenants in Eviction Proceedings* (p. 77).

The Ellis Act contributes to discrimination against low income tenants and perpetuates gentrification and displacement.

* The Ellis Act is a CA state law that allows a landlord to take a unit off the real estate market and file what is called a “no fault” eviction of the current tenants.. In doing so a landlord must submit a formal Ellis Act application to HCID informing them of the number of units being taken off the market, as well as the present a signed form which includes the current tenants in the said unit’s information. Tenants have 30 days to vacant a unit from the day an application is submitted. 60 days can be granted to elderly/disabled tenants who have occupied for more than a year from the date in which an application is submitted. If a landlord opts to ultimately not remove a unit from the market after submitting a document to HCID and after a tenant has vacated a property, and it’s been less than 2 years since removing a unit from the market; HCID requires a landlord to first reach out to that said tenant to return to said unit at original rental price. Under Ellis Act landlords have the ability convert low-income units in market rate units if they wait a minimum of 5 years from the date in which they submitted an application for a unit.
* “Since 2001, more than 26,000 rent-stabilized units have been removed from the market through Ellis Act evictions” ([Vacancy Report](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf))
* “5 In Los Angeles, buildings that have been cleared of tenants through an Ellis Act eviction and are yet to be demolished or redeveloped are an example of this type of non-market vacancy. In other cases, flippers and other speculative buyers can receive higher sale prices for properties that they “deliver empty” (that is, cleared of tenants through eviction, harassment, and/or non-renewal) to developers seeking to rehabilitate and re-rent, or redevelop, a site. Many buildings are left partially or mostly vacant for months or years while the landlord tries to drive out the last tenants. These types of non-market vacancy can be particularly damaging, because many of the properties that fall into this category play no part in housing people, serving only to build or store wealth for their owners.” ([Vacancy Report](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf))
* “The mass eviction of tenants in properties bought by speculative developers is a clear abuse of the intended purpose of an already 44. See Los Angeles’ Right to Counsel Coalition. www.rtcla.org. 45. Reyes, E. A. (2019, May 14). “L.A. Set Up a System to Protect Renters. What Happens When It’s Used Against Them?” Los Angeles Times. https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-tenant-habitability-plan-rent-stabilized-housing-landlord-evict-20190514- story.html. 46. Coalition for Economic Survival & Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. (2020). Ellis Act Evictions. https://www. antievictionmappingproject.net/ellis.html. 47. Ibid. 48. Said, C. (2018, Jan. 14). Airbnb Loses Thousands of Hosts in SF as Registration Rules Kick In. San Francisco Chronicle. https://www. sfchronicle.com/business/article/Airbnb-loses-thousands-of-hosts-in-SF-as-12496624.php. problematic law. Some of these buildings—now “out of business”—are also showing up for rent as illegal vacation rentals on Airbnb and VRBO, although Los Angeles’ new restrictions on short-term rentals may help end this.48 And although there are penalties for re-renting units that have been subject to an Ellis Act eviction within five years, some property owners may just choose to wait it out and leave units vacant instead of providing inexpensive housing for someone who may otherwise become unhoused.” ([Vacancy Report](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf))
* From 2016-2019, over 75% of all Ellis Act filings in Los Angeles occurred within 5 years of the owner buying the property, and almost 45% occurred within 1 year. Over 50% of filers were LLCs, and 55% were large landlords. Both landlord size and entity type significantly affected the time between purchase and filing (time to file). (SAJE original analysis. Not yet published)
* The research indicates that the vast majority of Ellis Filings 2016-2019 were not consistent with the stated intent of the law to let individuals exit the rental business. Corporate landlords make up the bulk of filers, as do larger landlords. (SAJE original analysis. Not yet published)

**10. Can you explain exemptions in national law that allow (certain) public, private or religious housing providers to give preferential or exclusive access to housing to members of a particular group, for example based on membership, employment contract, public service, age, disability, civil status, sex, gender, religion, income or other criteria?**

* There are exemptions in national law that allow housing providers to give preferential or exclusive access to housing to members that are: students (university dorms/student housing), veterans, special populations” such as people who experienced homelessness with high needs, people with disabilities, and the elderly, section 8 eligible tenants, and people who meet income criteria for affordable housing.

**11. In case there may be differential treatment of particular groups in relation to housing, please explain why such treatment could be justifiable according to international human rights standards - for example positive measures benefiting a particular group to overcome systematic discrimination or disadvantage-or if it would amount to discrimination?**

* These exemptions exist in order to ensure access to affordable housing for groups that may not be able to do so in the private real estate market due to cost or who may experience discrimination based upon their social identity, disability, or income.

**SPATIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION**

12. What forms of spatial segregation along racial, caste, ethnicity, religion, nationality, migration status, heritage, economic status/income or other social grounds can be observed in urban and urban-rural contexts in your country?

The city of Los Angeles has a history of racial segregation by means of redlining, the practice in which people of color were not able to secure loans for a home because the lending institutions deemed the location of the home as hazardous to insure based solely on the racial composition of the neighbourhood. White upper-class neighborhoods were deemed desirable, whereas neighborhoods comprised of Blacks and other people of color were deemed the least desirable. In addition to redlining, there are also practices such as “racial covenants'' which specifically indicated that a person of color could not purchase a property based on the color of their skin or ethnicity, therefore excluding most people of color from purchasing land except in areas that were deemed for people of color. Together, redlining and racial covenants led to widespread segregation in Los Angeles and in areas around the country, and also contributed to severe wealth gaps experienced between people of color and Whites to this day. While the particular laws facilitating these practices have largely been removed (though not all), their effects can still be observed in the way that populations in the city of Los Angeles are dispersed and are upheld by other laws and practices. For instance, the wealth disparities across Black and White neighborhoods often translates into fewer resources in Black communities because the lower tax base generates less revenue for the public school system.

Additional spatial segregation that we have identified include the factor that a majority of Los Angeles residents are renters and their housing or access to housing is controlled by a landlord, management property or an entity that determines their eligibility to be able to live in that specific housing unit. While rental applications in Los Angeles cannot include factors that explicitly discriminate based on sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, immigration status among other factors, the applications are often still structured in a way that allows for discrimination through proxies such as credit score, employment status and history, past eviction history and criminal background - all of which are negatively skewed for people of color due to systemic racism across society. These factors are detrimental in excluding tenants of certain backgrounds. For example, a landlord cannot ask for immigration status, but they can run a credit check if a potential tenant does not have a social security number they are less likely to have a credit score. It is not mandatory to require a credit score or the other factors in applying but these are practices that a landlord may use that often are the barriers that prevent people of color from moving into wealthier areas of a city. As a result, tenants of color may choose to move to areas where they know that a landlord might not require a social security number or credit score and will simply accept tenants who are able to prove they can pay the rent.

Other spatial segregation can be observed by landlords who refuse to accept “Section 8 Vouchers” even though it is illegal to deny an application based on section 8. The Section 8 program is financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide rent subsidies in the form of housing assistance payments (HAP) to private Landlords on behalf of extremely low, very low-income individuals/families, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (HACLA.Org). In the state of California [SB 329](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB329) prohibits discimination from landlords on tenants who are using vouchers to pay their rent, however they still use this is a basis to prevent low income tenants from being able to live in specific neighborhoods. It is not uncommon for listings to have wording that includes “No Section 8”, and unfortunately even though this new state law became effective in 2019, there is not enough enforcement in place to prevent landlords from excluding tenants who are receiving section 8.

13. What impacts do these forms of spatial and residential segregation have on affected communities? Please point to indicators such as rates of poverty, unemployment and under-employment; prevalence rates of malnutrition; disparities in access to services and facilities (such as access to schooling, health care or other public benefits); disparities in access to infrastructure (lack of and/or poor quality provision of water, sanitation, transportation, energy, waste collection and other utility services); rates of exposure to environmental health risks (poor air quality, flooding, toxic ground exposure, etc).

A major impact that forms of redlining and zoning have caused are among inequalities in health and education.

Redlining and bad zoning practices have caused lower income neighborhoods of color to be surrounded by toxic sites such as oil wells, recycling plants and freeways. Major freeways that connect suburbs of Los Angeles to downtown Los Angeles were originally built on top of communities of color, displacing thousands, and have since polluted the remaining low income neighborhoods. Living next to a freeway has detrimental health impacts. Research findings indicate high levels of air pollution near freeways can cause high blood pressure and [gestational diabetes](https://www.keckmedicine.org/are-you-at-risk-for-diabetes-if-youre-under-50/) in pregnant women, leads to cognitive health problems in their unborn babies, causes heart disease and can lead to heart attacks. [[13]](#footnote-13)

14. Have any particular historical or current laws, policies or practices in your country, region or town/community caused or exacerbated segregation?

See Question 12

15. In your view, what factors (current or historical) are the principal *drivers* of spatial and residential segregation in urban and urban-rural contexts in your country?

See question 12

16. Are there examples in your country of where spatial and residential clustering has been a result of voluntary choices of residence by members of particular groups?

Los Angeles is a city of immigrants. Many immigrant families often move to areas where their social network informs them of locations to live that are nearby other immigrants from their hometown or that remind them of home, as well as they have access to resources in their language. In Los Angeles there are various “ethnic neighborhoods” such as The El Salvador Corridor, Koreatown, Chinatown, Little Bangladesh.

17. The preservation of cultural identity, the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples and the protection of minority rights are examples of grounds for which groups may choose to live separately. Can you comment on how these forms spatial/territorial separation are evidenced in your country, if these communities they are subject to discrimination and suffer adverse consequences from spatial segregation such as through disparities in access to services, infrastructure, living conditions, etc.?

Click here to enter text.

18. In your view, are certain forms of observed residential separation/voluntary clustering compatible with human rights law and if so why? (for example to protect rights of minorities or to respect the freedom of choice of individuals to decide with whom to live together).

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19. Are there any laws or policies requiring certain individuals (and their families) to live in particular housing provided to them or in a particular geographical area (e.g. asylum seekers, migrants, IDPs, refugees, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other minorities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, public service and military personnel)?

There are no laws that require certain individuals to live in particular housing, however the accessibility of low income housing including public housing, affordable housing and housing that is eligible for rent control in the city of Los Angeles has not been equitably distributed around the city.

20. In your view, what are the principal *barriers* to diminishing spatial, including residential segregation?

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**MEASURES AND GOOD PRACTICES TO CURB DISCRIMINATION AND REDUCE SEGREGATION**

21. What laws, policies or measures exist at national or local level to prevent or prohibit discrimination in relation to the right to adequate housing?

The federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) makes it illegal to discriminate in the sale of, rental of, seeking of mortgage assistance or any other housing related activities. Specifically, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability.[[14]](#footnote-14) Beyond prohibiting discrimination, the FHA has another prong-Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. This mandates that all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs – and any entities receiving HUD funds – cannot discriminate in the disbursement of these funds.[[15]](#footnote-15) The HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) oversees and enforces the FHA. HUD investigates complaints and based on the situation either recommends a voluntary agreement between parties or legal action[[16]](#footnote-16). At the local level, The Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID) receives and addresses these complaints (see Question 25).

Programs that provide access to legal counsel are critical for ensuring rights are upheld and exercised for people historically discriminated against. For this reason, the strongest programs are rights to counsel codified into law and guaranteed for anyone facing housing discrimination, harassment as a tenant or eviction.

At the local level, SAJE operates a weekly Tenant Action Clinic (TAC) during which tenants meet one on one with a staff member trained in supporting tenants with various issues. We work with tenants and legal service volunteers to connect residents with the legal information and resources they need to enforce their tenant rights. SAJE promotes a self-help model, meaning tenants receive the tools and the support they need to address their situations. During the TAC intake process, we also identify tenant leaders who we then support in developing their leadership skills. See Question 24 for more on our leadership development. Over the decades, SAJE members have succeeded in taking many notorious slumlords to court and more importantly ensuring that their rights are protected. We advocate for innovative and enthusiastic enforcement of tenant protection policies.

22. Have your State, regional or local Government adopted any positive measures, such as measures of affirmative action, to reduce discrimination, segregation or structural inequality in relation to housing? To what extent have such initiatives been successful to address housing discrimination and segregation?

State

The California state legislature has recently passed some legislation in response to the overwhelming lack of affordable housing. The majority of this legislation is centered on development as the solution, as opposed to preservation/acquisition or strengthening renter protections. The primary mode of building multi-family housing in the US is through private for-profit development of units offered at market rate rents. A secondary industry has been created specifically for affordable housing (offering rents below market rate for qualifying families) development which often suffers the same discriminatory patterns as market rate housing. In many cases, land use legislation that allows developers to build at higher density than granted by existing zoning codes can act as a means of creating more affordable housing units, which is in some ways a proxy for combatting discrimination and segregation. Some of the recent land-use specific legislation which has a more direct tie to eliminating segregation and discrimination is discussed here. There have been a multitude of other policies that focus on streamlining development and creating funding sources as well.

 A frequently discussed and implemented policy for reducing discrimination and segregation is inclusionary housing. Inclusionary housing policies work in a number of ways to either require or incentivize developers to build affordable housing in their projects. In some cases there are requirements applied to all new units built in an entire jurisdiction, while in others it is required only under certain circumstances.

The efficacy of inclusionary can vary greatly depending on what types of incentives are offered, how many affordable units are being required, and what other policies exist to work in tandem. In many cases, it is offered alone or touted highly as a solution for building affordable housing but it alone cannot create a sufficient supply to significantly offset discrimination or segregation.

Policies such as the California state density bonus have been in place since the 1970s to allow for developers to build 35% more units if a certain percentage of the units are affordable[[17]](#footnote-17). In 2019, this was increased up to 80% if the building is 100% affordable. There are additional incentives available for buildings near public transportation[[18]](#footnote-18).

In order to create more density, upzoning is another increasingly popular policy that attempts to combat discrimination and segregation. Upzoning refers to increasing the allowable density in specific areas. Similar to inclusionary, upzoning can be effective if it is paired with other policies that will ensure equitable development practices. There have been several state bills in the last few years that have attempted to put blanket up-zones that have been thwarted by activists and local governments due to the lack of protections against displacement, especially in communities of color.

At the state and local levels there are no effective tracking systems of how many units have been produced through these measures, however most of these policies are utilized frequently by affordable housing developers who intend to build 100% affordable housing rather than developers who build market rate. For market rate developers, even with incentives, constructing units that won't bring in market rates rents can sometimes become cost-prohibitive. A recent survey found that in California, local municipal inclusionary policies tend to be more stringent than at state level. [[19]](#footnote-19) Reporting and tracking on how much units are actually produced is not uniform across smaller jurisdictions either. Below we talk about one specific inclusionary policy in the city of LA.

Local

At the local level, the ACT-LA Coalition, introduced and successfully passed a landmark legislation called Measure JJJ in 2016. This closed loopholes in the land use process that developers had long used to avoid building affordable housing and ensured that most new developments would require affordable housing. Measure JJJ also created the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program which offers higher density to buildings near transit with affordable housing in exchange for union wages on construction projects and affordable housing if developers. The TOC program has contributed to a 106% increase in approved units since 2017 and is responsible for the approval of over 4,000 new units of affordable housing.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Another version of inclusionary housing was introduced in LA called the linkage fee. This requires developers to pay a fee based on the square footage of their proposed building which goes into a fund for preserving and creating more affordable housing.

SAJE has and continues to advocate for the inclusion of either 100% or some percentage of affordable housing in major developments. This includes often advocating for inclusionary housing and pushing for affordable housing when policymakers have made decisions to use the land for purposes that will not benefit low-income communities of color in South LA. Examples of this include the Former Bethune Library Site, a vacant lot that SAJE and the UNIDAD coalition are promoting as a much-needed site for affordable housing, in direct contradiction to the government plan to develop the site into a hotel.

SAJE has been successful in advocating for many policies that are tenant centered in coordination with some development centered advocacy. A recent policy that SAJE and our partners in the Right to Counsel Coalition actively campaigned for was Stay Housed LA, a LA County wide program that provides legal aid, outreach and education workshops for tenants experiencing housing insecurity or instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the city and the national government put a ban on evictions in the early phases of the pandemic, the threat of evictions and harassment from landlords continues to occur. This was an effort resulting from years of organizing with the Right to Counsel Coalition. Though this is not a permanent program yet, the goal is to codify the right to counsel as well as create a permanent funding stream for eviction prevention and defense programming.

Along with many partners, SAJE has been developing an anti-harassment ordinance that will address forms of discrimination that are common among low-income renters in LA (See questions 7, 8, and 9). The ordinance defines what constitutes harassment of a tenant by a landlord and creates grounds for taking civil or criminal legal action. Penalties include fines for harm caused and services withheld or potential for jail time. After four years of organizing and advocacy, the ordinance is currently in the process of approval through the city council. Though avenues exist for tenants to claim discrimination through federal Fair Housing (see Question 25), the narrower federal definition of discrimination does not cover many harassment situations. The passing of this ordinance will provide tenants with a legal framework for relief from landlord harassment. Both the codified right to counsel and the anti-harassment ordinance are necessary to provide tenants with substantial protections.

Another step against discrimination and segregation at the local level is the community land trust pilot program created by LA County. Community land trusts are a tool to combat discrimination and segregation by allowing communities that have been historically unable to own property to gain back control of land and housing. In the community land trust model most prevalent in LA, a community led organization owns land in perpetuity, greatly reducing the costs of housing and ensuring that the prices stay affordable. Fourteen million dollars was awarded to a coalition of land trusts in the county for the acquisition of sites to preserve or produce community-controlled affordable housing. In addition the county has created a process to funnel foreclosed homes to the land trusts. In California and in LA, the community land trust model has greatly increased in popularity in recent years.

23. Have any particular laws, policies or measures been implemented to limit or reduce residential segregation? To what extent have such policies raised human rights concerns?

See Question 22

24. What is the role of the media, as well as other non- governmental organizations, of religious and governmental institutions, in fostering a climate that reduces or exacerbates discrimination in relation to housing and segregation?

SAJE is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that actively works with many other non-profit organizations around housing and economic development issues, particularly in South Los Angeles. SAJE is part of and co-leads many coalitions that are reducing housing discrimination and segregation. SAJE has a robust leadership development program with defined levels of engagement that leads residents on a path from being helped by SAJE, to advocate for themselves, to leading the organizing and advocacy for their communities. Our overarching goal is to train people to organize and advocate for themselves, their families, and their communities. Our organizers and outreach specialists work in tandem with our research and policy team to support leadership development and policy change goals.

SAJE leads and participates in various coalitions made up of non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer groups, and public interest law groups. These include the United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD), the Alliance for Community Transit (ACT-LA), the Healthy LA Coalition and the Right to Counsel coalition. For example, the UNIDAD coalition, which advocates for equitable development in South Los Angeles, includes several faith-based groups including St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, which has served the community for over 100 years. In addition, the ACT-LA coalition includes membership from LA VOICE, which organizes with many faith leaders across numerous faith institutions.

The role of media is significant in our areas of work and in particular media that is targeted towards the community we aim to work with, support and empower. Different types of media play different roles. For instance, the Spanish language media can often reach community members that would otherwise not be aware or engaged in our work even though they might be interested in learning of it. It is often the Spanish language media that are first to cover tenants’ rights and other housing issues. We work with this media to spread awareness of tenant stories and inform the community about their rights and how to seek out resources.

English language media serves the dual purpose of both elevating issues in support of tenants while also speaking to influential audiences, such as policymakers. There have been specific campaigns related to equitable development in housing in South Los Angeles where we have decided to focus our attention on English Language radio media because we knew that the key decision makers listen frequently. Helping media outlets create stories that raise important issues, challenges and solutions is essential for creating an enabling environment for policy change.

For many years now, social media has been critically important for reaching mass audiences and directly communicating with decision makers. During the covid-19 pandemic it has become even more critical for reaching people. In Los Angeles, when the stay at home orders began, we were not able to do our usual door knocking or community outreach. We therefore had to adjust to rely more on social media to engage the most vulnerable and impacted tenants, who were often left without jobs, who had to stop work due to covid and who were far behind on rent. SAJE began to host weekly Facebook Live videos in English and Spanish and cross post across all our social media platforms. During this time, our videos informing tenants of their housing rights, encouraging them to join our campaigns and our virtual meetings have garnered hundreds of thousands of views.

Another way SAJE influences the climate around reducing discrimination and segregation is through our popular education sessions for our membership base called Escuelitas. These are education sessions that use a variety of interactive activities and cover topics such as Neoliberalism, Decommodified Housing, Race and Ethnicity, and Community Organizing. These are collective learning sessions where the members lived experience is the foundation for learning. We also host popular education specifically on urban planning and land use called the Peoples Planning School. During election season, we also produce a voter guide for residents.

Through the decades, SAJE has become well known for developing novel models for equitable development and urban land use. Our research team dissects established systems to uncover the way policy affects the daily lives of Los Angeles residents. We are rethinking urban policy to ensure community development includes our whole community from conceptualization to completion. In the process, we’re finding solutions to fight displacement. SAJE has produced a number of research reports on issues that affect our members and low-income renters in Los Angeles (See question 7).

We have also created tools that we and other tenant groups can use to do research on actors affecting the community, such as investors, developers and landlords. These tools help communities be more aware of corporate ownership patterns in their neighbourhood and facilitates strategies to stop displacement and expand community ownership of land. The Organizers’ Warning Notification and Information for Tenants! (OWN-IT!) system is an online mapping platform that SAJE built and trains other organizations to use. OWN-IT can be used to research information on a specific building, its owner and other aspects about the neighborhood.

SAJE is also focused on the larger picture work of how to combat the ongoing systemic forces that keep segregation and discrmination plaguing our city. Through our decommodified housing initiative, we are working towards a long-term plan that will dismantle the dominance of the for-profit housing system and ensure more just and equitable housing opportunities for poor, working class people of color in Los Angeles. This will include a combination of communications and narrative shifting strategies, policy advocacy, organizing and basebuilding work.

One of the primary efforts to decommodify housing is through social housing. In response to a recent order for the city to research social housing models, SAJE and our coalition partners have done research on public housing models globally and plan to do advocacy work to put forth our own vision for social housing. Our model for social housing encompasses the following:

1. Inalienable Social Ownership: land must always be owned by the public or community-based non-profits (including land trusts and cooperatives), forever protected from privatization and the speculative market. Assets cannot be transferred out of social ownership or re-commodified, and management cannot be profit-driven.

2. Democratic Community Control: social housing must always be managed by residents and democratically-accountable entities. Decisions about how to develop new and renovate existing social housing must be made through democratic, community-driven processes. Resident bodies must directly and meaningfully be involved in making decisions that affect the operation and management of their homes.

3. Affordability + Economic Integration: rent must be based on ability to pay, with up to 100% subsidy for poor residents. Permanently affordable mix of units for renters of all incomes in each building, forever free of segregation by income or race, with priority given to residents with the highest need. Social services will be offered to those who need them.

4. Secure Homes: beautiful, sustainable, resilient construction with ample community spaces, gardens and publicly-accessible parks. Housing must be situated according to geographic criteria such as proximity to transit, job centers, urban infill, and proximity to existing communities. Must include permanently-guaranteed, annually evaluated maintenance budgets to keep buildings safe and healthy. No tenancy or ownership interest of any resident shall be terminated without just cause, and no resident shall be evicted or otherwise forced to move from a housing unit without due process of law.

25. Which institutional mechanisms exist to report, redress and monitor cases of discrimination or segregation in relation to the right to adequate housing and how effective have they been to address discrimination?

In the city of LA,The Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID) partners with a local non-profit organization called the Housing Rights Center to investigate and remedy discrimination complaints, provide counseling and training on housing rights. A coalition of organizations including SAJE and other partners such as Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, and The LA Tenants Union also provide avenues for tenants experiencing discrimination from their landlord to received guidance and support for addressing these issues. SAJE and our partner organizations organize tenants and provide them with resources to prevent discrimination.

As mentioned in Question 21, SAJE operates the Tenant Action Clinic. On average, between 450 and 500 tenants come to SAJE’s TAC each year. This number decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic and the transferring of the clinic to phone and video platforms. The vast majority, 90%, of tenants live in South Los Angeles and Council Districts 8, 9, and 10.

The Stay Housed LA program is comprised of over twenty-five community-based organizations and legal services providers who work together to provide tenants facing harassment and/or eviction with eviction prevention and eviction defense services. Harassment and eviction are tools used by many landlords to push out low-income tenants of color.

26. In your view, what are the principal barriers to seek justice for discrimination/segregation in relation to the right to adequate housing?

One of the primary barriers is the financialization and commodification of housing that has turned housing into a means for wealth and profit rather than as a basic necessity. This has created a powerful real estate industry that puts landlords interests first over the needs of tenants. Due to the power of the real estate industry, there is a lack of political will for changing policies or funding for alternate models of housing. The centrality of private property rights enshrined in the US Constitution and enhanced through various federal, state and local policy limits communities’ powers to advance community-controlled and/or social housing.

The US also places cultural importance on home ownership which is another factor in the lack of political support for tenants rights. Home owners have created strong political forces in the city of LA and can block affordable housing projects and policies.

Many of our housing policies that shaped our cities such as redlining and covenants are rooted in racism and xenophobia that are deeply ingrained in American society.

27. Can you specify how individuals and groups subject to structural discrimination or experiencing segregation can submit complaints to administrative, non-judicial or judicial bodies to seek relief? Please share any leading cases that have been decided by your courts or other agencies in this respect.

See Questions 7, 8, and 25

**DATA ON DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING AND SPATIAL/RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION**

28. Is any data on housing disparities, housing discrimination and spatial segregation collected and publicly available? If so where can it be accessed? Are there any practical or legal barriers to collect and share such information in your country?

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing collects data on number of housing discrimination complaints filed. You can request this data through their website by submitting a California Public Records Act (CPRA) request. Pursuant to the California Public Records Act, individuals can request any records “written and recorded” from a local or state agency that concerns the public.

Los Angeles’ local housing department, the Housing and Community Investment Department, collects the following data:

* Eviction of tenants via the Ellis Act (see answer to question 9 for definition of Ellis Act).

How to access: request via CPRA request or use their online dashboard: <https://hcidla2.lacity.org/ellis>

* Displacement of tenants via Cash-for-Keys. (see answer to question 9 for definition of cash-for-keys)

How to access: CPRA request

* Complaints for code violations / habitability issues in homes

How to access: CPRA request or online dashboard: <https://hcidla2.lacity.org/code>

* Rent-stabilized units

 How to access: CPRA request or online dashboard:<https://hcidla2.lacity.org/rso>

* Permanent supportive housing units constructed using HHH funding
	+ Access using online dashboard: <https://hcidla2.lacity.org/housing/hhh-progress>

Filing CPRA requests through HCID present barriers. Requests are supposed to be completed within ten days, however, it usually takes much longer for requests to be completed. Furthermore, sometimes the data provided is inaccurate or inconsistent with data provided in response to identical public records requests.

29. Can you kindly share any studies or surveys by local, regional or national Governments or by other institutions to understand better housing disparities, housing discrimination and spatial segregation and how it can be addressed (e.g. title and link, or kindly submit document).

See SAJE reports listed under Question 7 and reports cited throughout this document. Additionally, here are a few more:

The Los Angeles Housing Element 2021-2029: <https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/housing-element>

“[The Housing Element is one of the nine state-mandated elements of the](https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/housing-element-update) [General Plan](https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/general-plan-updates). The Housing Element of the General Plan identifies the City’s housing conditions and needs, establishes the goals, objectives, and policies that are the foundation of the City’s housing strategy, and provides an array of programs to create sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods across the City.”

Pacific Urbanism’s “Affordable Housing 2020: A Longitudinal Inventory of Subsidized Low Income Housing in Los Angeles County” shows the allocation of affordable housing in Los Angeles. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/598dea7af14aa1a306a5498e/t/60381e77a67d5436cb064de5/1614290579387/21+0225+Affordable+Housing+2020.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/598dea7af14aa1a306a5498e/t/60381e77a67d5436cb064de5/1614290579387/21%2B0225%2BAffordable%2BHousing%2B2020.pdf)

California Housing Partnership “Los Angeles County’s Housing Emergency Update”:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58793de5f7e0abe551062b38/t/5ce2fc70af9ae10001c74987/1558379634095/Los+Angeles+HNR+2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58793de5f7e0abe551062b38/t/5ce2fc70af9ae10001c74987/1558379634095/Los%2BAngeles%2BHNR%2B2019.pdf)

Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing Local Housing Wage Report (showing how much a Los Angeles resident needs to earn to be able to afford average rents): [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58793de5f7e0abe551062b38/t/60417d2bf7a842588caa83cb/1614904619943/Local+Wage+Los+Angeles+County+2021.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58793de5f7e0abe551062b38/t/60417d2bf7a842588caa83cb/1614904619943/Local%2BWage%2BLos%2BAngeles%2BCounty%2B2021.pdf)

University of Southern California’s “How Do Renter’s Cope with Unaffordability?” Documents rent burden and the deep economic vulnerability of tenants in Los Angeles. <https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/USC-PRICE_Rent-BurdenReport_12.14.pdf>

30. Can you provide information and statistics related to complaints related to housing discrimination, how they have been investigated and settled, and information on cases in which private or public actors have been compelled successfully to end such discrimination or been fined or sanctioned for non-compliance?

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The Department of Fair Employment and Housing Annual Report 2019 (its most recent):

<https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2020/10/DFEH_2019AnnualReport.pdf>



The report provides statistics on number of complaints filed with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, complaint bases, the complaint process, and more.

There were 934 complaints filed for housing discrimination in California with DFEH in 2019. See table for bases of complaints.

Optimus v. Martinez Lawsuit: <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-optimus-settlement-20181022-story.html>

Housing Disrmination Lawsuit against landlord Donald Sterling for discriminating against African-Americans: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-obtains-record-2725-million-settlement-housing-discrimination-lawsuit>

1. Haas, G. & Gibbons, A. 2002. [*Redefining Development: Participatory Research for Equity in the Los Angeles Figueroa Corridor*](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331590668_Redefining_Redevelopment_Participatory_Research_for_Equity_in_the_Los_Angeles_Figueroa_Corridor)*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2823-report-and-recommendations-of-the-ad-hoc-committee-on-black-people-experiencing-homelessness [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://knowledge.luskin.ucla.edu/2020/08/27/systemic-racial-inequality-and-the-covid-19-homeowner-crisis/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://evictionlab.org/demographics-of-eviction/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/greenberg\_et\_al.\_.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://citylimits.org/2016/02/17/the-secret-history-of-ami/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hernández, K. (2017). *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Retrieved April 8, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469631196\_hernandez [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. SAJE’s [Vacancy Report](https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This data was pulled from the City of Los Angeles’ local housing department, the Housing and Community Investment Department in February of 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Energy Efficiency For All’s report, [Advancing a Green New Deal for Los Angeles Renters](https://www.energyefficiencyforall.org/resources/advancing-a-green-new-deal-for-los-angeles-renters/) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martinez v Optimus Lawsuit [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.unidad-la.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/peoples-plan-report-FINAL.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.keckmedicine.org/how-the-air-quality-of-where-you-live-affects-your-health/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. https://www.hud.gov/program\_offices/fair\_housing\_equal\_opp [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. https://nationalfairhousing.org/affirmatively-furthering-fair-housing/ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. https://www.hud.gov/program\_offices/fair\_housing\_equal\_opp/complaint-process [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=65915> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\_id=201920200AB1763 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. https://groundedsolutions.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Inclusionary\_Housing\_US\_v1\_0.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. https://planning.lacity.org/resources/housing-reports [↑](#footnote-ref-20)