

# STEMMING THE TIDE OF GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE MISSION



MISSION PROMISE  
COMUNIDAD PROMESA DE LA MISSION  
NEIGHBORHOOD

## The Community in Context

San Francisco's Mission District is categorized as a neighborhood in a state of advanced gentrification and displacement [1]. Since World War II, when the strength and support of social and community networks began to draw new arrivals in greater numbers, the Mission has flourished as a hub for Latino arts, culture and food — a welcoming place for immigrants from Latin America and around the world. Mission Latino families and households have become part of the backbone of San Francisco's diversity and workforce that is behind the cultural and economic growth of the city [2]. In the last five years that has changed, with residents and longtime businesses struggling to maintain the Mission as the heart of San Francisco's Latino community, as dynamic market forces, driven by the thriving regional technology economy, have dramatically accelerated the attractiveness of the Mission for high-income households and the businesses catering to them.

As a result, the Mission has seen a dramatic loss of Latinos over the past 15 years, despite the proportion of Latinos having increased throughout California and the Bay Area. With rising land values and housing prices, speculative real estate activity has pushed out and priced out many families, particularly Latino and lower-income households. Based on the 2014 Housing Assessment conducted by the Mission Promise Neighborhood, the Mission is no longer majority Latino and is only affordable for those earning more than \$75,000 annually. These changes especially impact historically disenfranchised communities — some of the most vulnerable [3] residents who have made the Mission a vibrant, flourishing and culturally rich community [4].

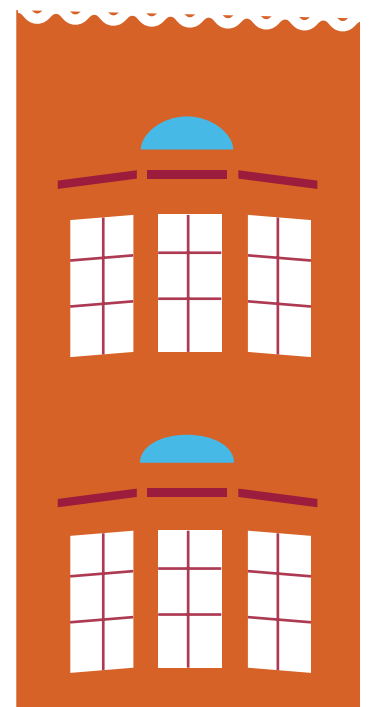
**The Mission lost 13 percent of low- and moderate-income families in just four years (2000-2013). By 2020, the neighborhood could be majority high-earner households.**

# 15%

reduction in long-term residents of the Mission (Mission Promise Neighborhood Survey, 2016).

# 2,400

low- and moderate-income households need to stay or be returned to the Mission by 2020 to return to 2010 levels of racial and economic diversity in the neighborhood.



This brief examines the continuing housing and displacement pressures on Mission residents, as well as the proactive responses necessary for equitable solutions and policies. Illustrated is the tenacity of Mission families, who survive despite great personal and economic pressures, and in the face of displacement. The impact of a paucity of unaffordable housing has implications not only on real estate: The impact can be seen on job opportunities and stability, social and community cohesion, access to key support services and educational outcomes for children.

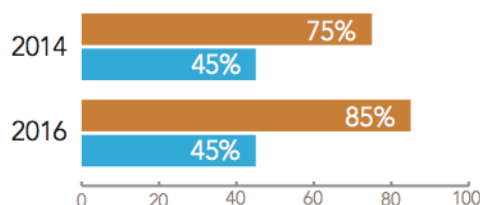
## Promise in the Face of Displacement

The work of the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) around affordable housing and community real estate is rooted in the holistic understanding of the Mission, and is particularly informed by the work of two major studies: MPN Neighborhood Housing Assessment [5] conducted in 2014; and the Mission Promise Neighborhood Survey, conducted both in 2014 and in 2016 [6]. These comprehensive studies illuminate the patterns that are leading to, and resulting from, the displacement of the Latino community from the Mission.

### Latino families are faced with severe cost-burdens of housing and rent

The 2014 assessment of Mission affordable housing found 70 percent of renters earning less than \$75,000 annually experienced a housing cost-burden.<sup>1</sup> In fact, \$75,000 per year appears to be a key income threshold for whether families are able to stay in the neighborhood. As the prevalence of Mission households earning over \$100,000 annually is increasing, incomes among Mission Latino families have not kept pace, and lower-income and Latino households have been priced out the community. In 2016, the median household income for Mission Latino families was \$54,000, which reflects only a modest increase from \$48,000 in 2014 (and \$44,000 among families with a child under 18). Mission Promise families reported an even lower income, averaging between \$15,000 and \$25,000 annually. This persistent wealth gap has resulted in a housing cost-burden that disproportionately impacts Latino families. The 2014 and 2016 Mission Promise Neighborhood Surveys both found that over 80 percent of families surveyed (90 percent of whom identified as Latino, and all with a child under age 24) experienced a moderate to severe housing cost-burden, compared to 45 percent of San Franciscans overall [7].

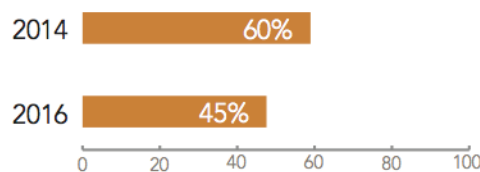
### Housing cost-burden has remained a larger concern for Mission Promise families, than San Francisco in general



### Most households rent, and many experience housing insecurity throughout the year

The proportion of renters among Mission Promise families has remained steady at over 90 percent from 2014 to 2016; however, in 2016, only 50 percent of renters reported having a formal rental agreement, the lack of which can contribute to housing insecurity and vulnerability, particularly in the face of displacement pressures. Forty percent of households reported going without at least one basic need in the past 12 months, with 40 percent of these families being unable to pay their rent or mortgage and 22 percent having to completely go without housing. While it is unclear how these families were able to cope, some have stayed with family and friends, while others have been pushed into shelters [8]; however, it is clear that this trend has remained steady among Mission Promise families since 2014, as housing pressures increase.

### Decrease in long-term residents in the Mission



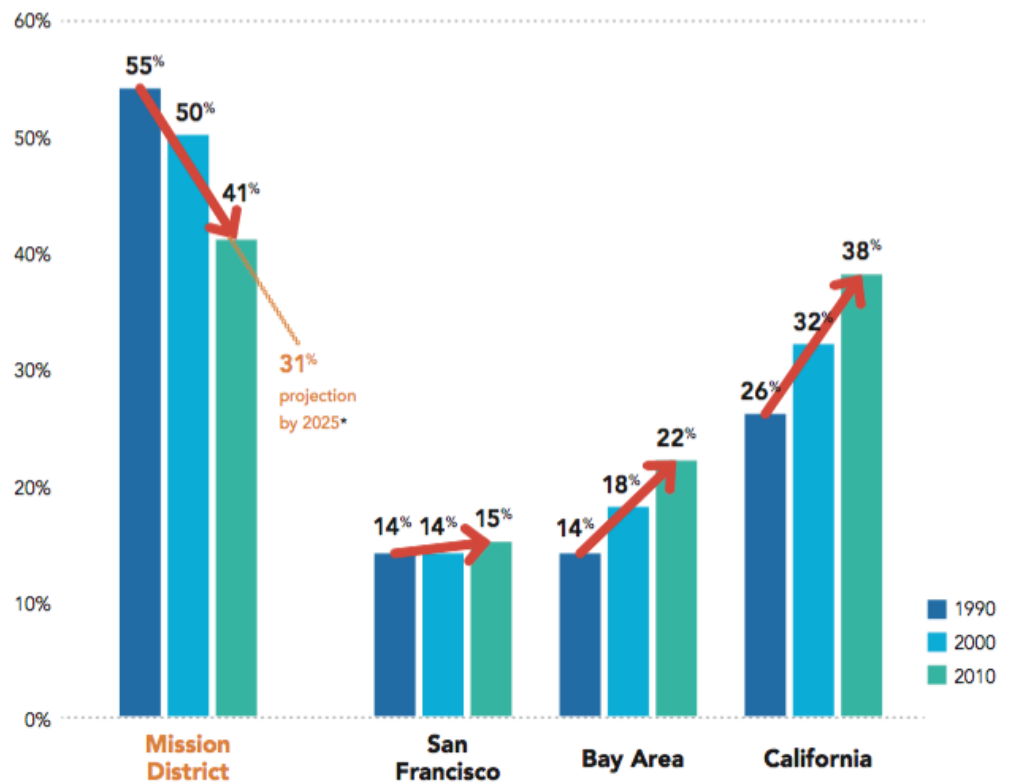
<sup>1</sup> The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a "cost-burden" as monthly housing costs that exceed 30 percent of monthly income and "severe a cost-burden" as monthly housing costs that exceed 50 percent of monthly income.

## Displacement pressures are a prominent concern for Mission families

Rising housing costs, coupled with the influx of high-income households in the Mission, have contributed to increased pressure among those Latino families trying to remain in the neighborhood. As a result, as of 2017 the Mission has seen a 25 percent reduction in Latino families and a 7 percent reduction of families with children since 2000 [9].

The mounting pressure is seen among Mission Promise Neighborhood respondents, with 40 percent saying they often worry about being forced to move because of increased rent or cost of living. Concern is highest among those who have an “other arrangement” besides renting or owning (62 percent) and lowest among those who own their own home (17 percent). Between 2014 and 2016, the neighborhood has seen a 15 percent decrease in long-term residents who have lived in the neighborhood for 10 years or more. Nine percent of households reported moving in the past 12 months, and almost one-quarter reported doing so more than one time.

### The proportion of Latinos is falling in the Mission, despite rising in the region



Data Source: Census Data for years 1990, 2000 and 2010, accessed through Social Explorer.

Bay Area is defined as: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Marin County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County.

\*Estimate: S.F. Budget & Legislative Analyst Report, October 2015.

## Despite displacement, the Mission continues to be a cultural and educational hub for Latinos

The Mission Promise Neighborhood Survey found that most MPN families are headed by parents born outside of the U.S., predominantly from Latin America. Respondents overwhelmingly reported that they prefer to conduct activities of daily life in the Mission, particularly grocery shopping and banking, and while preference is highest among residents of the Mission, most respondents preferred to conduct activities in the neighborhood regardless of where they currently live. Foreign-born or Spanish-speaking respondents were particularly likely to prefer the Mission for daily activities and needed services. Respondents identified the vibrancy of Latino cultural life in the Mission as the main attraction to the area, including the abundance of Latino-owned small businesses, arts, culture, and access to traditional food and ingredients. As a result, they reported preferring to do things such as shop, eat at restaurants, attend places of worship and shop for clothes in the Mission. In addition, the Mission is an educational hub for the Latino community, with predominantly Latino schools and academic supports that specialize in working with Latino and English-learner students. Despite the economic pressures to live elsewhere, and loss of Latino residents in the Mission, the neighborhood continues to play an important role in Latino cultural life.

## What's Working and Looking Ahead

MEDA's Community Real Estate (CRE) program was launched at the end of 2013 as an urgent response to the housing crisis in the Mission. MEDA's work in affordable housing seeks to stabilize and grow real estate opportunities for the Latino community in the Mission through key strategies and investments.

### Helping families to stay in place

- **Promote housing rights education and awareness and its overlap with immigrant rights:** MPN's community partners support families in fighting eviction and displacement by educating residents on tenants' rights. In response to the federal administration's policies on immigrants, partners have collaboratively begun discussing housing and immigrant rights, and the ways in which they are related, so that families are equipped with the tools they need to fight eviction and displacement.
- **Preserve homes off of the private market:** With financing from the City of San Francisco's Small Sites Program, MEDA has already stabilized the housing of 70 households (which includes 29 children under 18) and permanently took them off the private rental market. By 2020, we expect to stabilize 300 homes, representing 5 percent of the housing inventory of small buildings in the Mission.

### Promoting housing options for families

- **Increase access to secure housing:** Staff work with families who have either lost their housing or are living in an insecure housing situation (including being severely rent-burdened or overcrowded) to access resources for stable housing. From 2014 to 2016, 300 families were identified and referred to housing resources by our MPN family success coaches, with our early education and service partners. These 300 includes families that are homeless, according to the federal and district guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

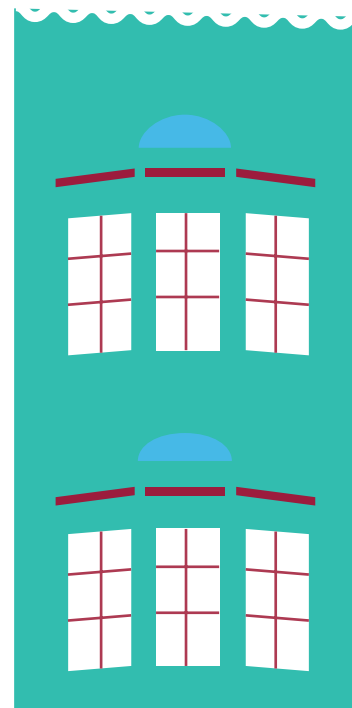
### Leading advocacy for affordable housing

- **Support policy advocacy for affordable housing that prioritizes Latinos and Mission residents:** MEDA continues to advocate for neighborhood affordable-housing policies that prioritize Latino households who are from — or have been displaced from — the Mission. This work must also be supported by outreach and promotion to raise awareness and prepare families and seniors to apply for affordable-housing opportunities as they become available.
- **Change land-use policy and regulations to increase affordable housing and reduce the pace of market-rate development:** Advocacy from

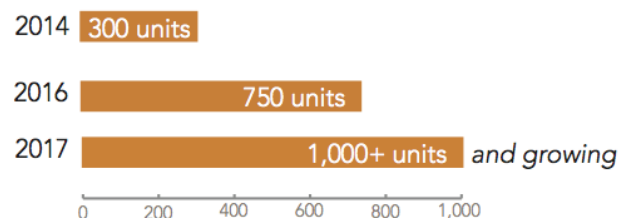
## Evaluation Methods



The MPN Survey is conducted every two years, and targets parents of children who live in or attend school in the Mission. The survey asks parents a variety of questions related to health, income and education.



### MEDA's advocacy and program efforts have started to change the affordable-housing landscape in the Mission



<sup>2</sup> SFUSD considers students living in shelters, single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels, transitional housing, the streets, cars, abandoned buildings or other inadequate conditions as homeless. San Francisco Unified School District, Enrollment Policies, [Residency Requirements](#). Accessed April 2017.

2014 to 2016 led the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development to more than double their investment in new family and senior apartments, to over 750 new units in the Mission. Through the Mission Action Plan 2020, MEDA and the City of San Francisco have focused on the mechanisms for households and small businesses to stay in the neighborhood. In 2017 and beyond, the work will begin to focus on the regulatory and financial mechanisms to accelerate affordable developments in the Mission.

### Timeline of rebuilding capacity for affordable housing

- 2000-2014 — Almost no affordable housing in the pipeline in the Mission  
Only 5 percent of City housing funds allocated to the Mission
- 2012 — MEDA wins Mission Promise Neighborhood grant
- 2013 — MEDA launches Community Real Estate program
- 2014 — MEDA takes over management of five public housing properties (RAD)
- 2015 — Launch of Mission Action Plan 2020 with MEDA and City  
MEDA starts development of two affordable housing new construction sites  
Proposition A passes, allocating \$310 million to affordable housing, with \$50 million earmarked to the Mission  
Mission Housing starts development of one additional affordable housing new construction site
- 2016 — MEDA starts landbanking for affordable housing  
MEDA buys first Small Sites Program property  
MEDA starts to integrate financial asset-building services to RAD residents

### Building capacity to develop affordable housing

- By June 2017, the pipeline of affordable housing preserved or built has reached half toward the target of retaining and replacing 2,400 households: Since MEDA's launch of CRE as a means to build capacity for affordable-housing production, the program has grown and now has 1,000 affordable units in the development pipeline. MPN advocacy efforts have also refocused Mission Housing, a local affordable-housing organization, to resume production of affordable units in the Mission, after a decade pause.
- Establish Neighborhood stabilization fund: MEDA is working to establish a fund to set aside buildings or land at today's prices for future development, as well as expanding creative financing and ownership options for low- and moderate-income families, such as purchasing buildings to help them stay in place and eliminate the risk of eviction.

### Approaching housing as the base for academic achievement and creative placekeeping

As a part of the Mission Promise Neighborhood, MEDA's CRE affordable-housing work goes beyond homes and housing as it works with families to access neighborhood resources for academic achievement and financial success. As seen in the Neighborhood Survey, families continue to come to the Mission for essential activities and services, regardless of where they live. By creating opportunities for affordable housing, developing affordable spaces for early childhood development, plus anchoring arts and cultural institutions and family-oriented small businesses, MEDA is working to maintain the Mission as a welcoming and safe neighborhood for Latino households and families.



## References

- [1] Zuk, M., & Chapple, K. (2015). Urban Displacement Project.
- [2] City and County of San Francisco Planning Department. "City Within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District." November 2007.
- [3] [New "Action Plan" Announced in Bid to Reverse Mission District Gentrification](#). Accessed June 2017.
- [4] Pogash, C. (2015). [Gentrification Spreads an Upheaval in San Francisco's Mission District](#), New York Times online.
- [5] Mission Promise Neighborhood & National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (2015). [An Assessment of Housing and Housing Affordability in the Mission Promise Neighborhood](#). Mission Promise Neighborhood and Mission Economic Development Agency.
- [6] Mission Promise Neighborhood (2017). [The Story of the Mission Promise Neighborhood Community: Results & Trends from the 2014 and 2016 MPN Neighborhood Survey](#). Mission Promise Neighborhood and Mission Economic Development Agency.
- [7] U. S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, One-Year Estimate (2015).
- [8] PD&R Edge (2014). [American Housing Survey Reveals Rise in Doubled-Up Households During Recession](#). Accessed April 2017.
- [9] U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2000, SF3 Sample Data, ACS 2009 & ACS 2013.

Relevant articles by MEDA:

[Embedding Early Care and Education Facilities into Family Housing](#)

[MEDA's Creative Strategies for Creative Placekeeping in the Mission](#)

[Community Organizing Busts Latinos' Myths Around Access to Stable, Affordable Housing](#)

## About Mission Promise Neighborhood

The Mission Promise Neighborhood is a citywide community partnership that was created to support kids and families living, working and attending school in the Mission District. It brings together schools, colleges, community organizations and community leaders to help kids graduate and families achieve financial stability

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