

THE KENNEDY COMMISSION

**Expanding Housing Opportunities
Throughout Orange County**

2007 Annual Campaign



**The Kennedy Commission
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Introduction: Orange County's Housing Crisis

The need for additional housing opportunities in Orange County is dramatic. Consider these facts:

- In 2005, Orange County was named by the National Low Income Housing Coalition as one of the least affordable communities in the country, just behind San Francisco and Marin County (“Out of Reach”, December 2005).
- While Orange County is experiencing a shortage of quality housing opportunities at all levels, the barriers to housing are greatest for the County’s poorest working families: those families earning minimum wage (about \$20,000 annually).
- According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a household should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing. This means that families earning minimum wage (about \$20,000 annually) should be paying no more than \$500 per month on housing—yet the median rent for an Orange County apartment is \$1,300!
- A minimum wage earner must work 159 hours a week to afford the median priced apartment in Orange County.

Unfortunately, the need for housing in Orange County exceeds the amount of housing being built, particularly for the working poor. Even when affordable housing units are developed, most have extensive waiting lists, with wait times ranging from several months to several years.

Although there are a number of Orange County based organizations addressing the housing shortage, their efforts are often impeded by a variety of factors. That’s where the Kennedy Commission comes in.

The Kennedy Commission is a collaborative of community leaders advocating for the production of housing for Orange County families earning less than \$20,000 annually. Originally convened in 1995 as an all-volunteer organization, the Kennedy Commission was named in memory of Orange County resident Ralph Kennedy, a pioneer of affordable housing and human rights advocacy.

Formally incorporated in 1999, the Kennedy Commission develops just solutions to housing needs, affirms the dignity of families with low and extremely low incomes, and unites communities across Orange County to support affordable housing development. **In short, the Kennedy Commission helps create an environment which encourages the development of housing opportunities throughout Orange County.**



Our Goals, Programs and Services

The Kennedy Commission accomplishes our mission of creating housing opportunities by:

- Engaging our members by providing a range of professional education and collaborative programs
- Engaging government and the voting public by impacting housing policy and conducting voter education programs
- Engaging the community by encouraging involvement by those most impacted by the housing shortage

Specific programs and recent accomplishments include:

Professional Education and Collaboration: Engaging Members of the Housing and Social Service Community

- The Kennedy Commission is a “one-stop shop” for professionals engaged in the creation of affordable housing, including not-for-profit organizations (such as homeless service providers), developers, and the banking community.
- We keep our members informed of housing news through regular e-newsletters, which are distributed to approximately 500 professionals on a monthly basis.
- We also distribute e-bulletins whenever a key development has occurred in the industry.
- Monthly meetings on various housing topics are also provided free of charge to our membership. An average of 50 professionals and community leaders attend these meetings each month.
- We also provide regular networking opportunities for all members.

Policy Research, Development and Advocacy: Engaging Government and the Voting Public

- The Kennedy Commission works to impact policy that will create additional housing opportunities. We do this by working with local government to facilitate new ordinances and revise current zoning regulations.
- Our work in this area has resulted in the production or approval of more than 3,500 affordable housing units that would not have been possible without the Commission’s leadership. Specific successes include:
 - Approval and/or production of 300 units for extremely low-income households under the Orange County Department of Housing and Community Development’s funding program
 - Approval of 1,875 units in a future master planned community in the City of Irvine
 - Approval of 750 units in Rancho Mission Viejo

- Regional coordination of the 2002 Statewide Housing Bond (Proposition 46), which will result in approximately 775 housing units in the near future
- The approval of two zoning ordinances that designate hundreds of acres as future housing sites

- The Kennedy Commission also educates local voters about the housing crisis, particularly in advance of local elections. A recent effort, conducted in collaboration with a faith-based organization, reached approximately 6,000 voters.
- Currently, the Kennedy Commission is marshalling its resources to support the passage of Proposition 1C, which will use existing state resources to provide emergency shelters for battered women and homeless families, create housing opportunities for seniors and working families, and develop homes for former foster youth.

Community Involvement: Engaging Citizens Who Benefit from our Mission

- One of the Kennedy Commission's core values is that those most impacted by the housing crisis must be involved in the process. Our Community Involvement programs work to do precisely that.
- The Kennedy Commission has been uniquely successful in forming connections and establishing relationships with low wage workers and their employers. Two such partnerships are with St. Joseph Hospital in Orange and Mission Hospital Regional Medical Center in Mission Viejo.
- One of our newest community engagement programs is the Community Building-Financial Fitness (CB-FF) Program, which improves the financial fitness of low wage community members while increasing their participation in the civic decision-making process.
- The Kennedy Commission also sponsors a "housing hotline" which community members can call for information about affordable housing opportunities.



Leadership

The Kennedy Commission is governed by an 11-member board of directors representing a broad spectrum of interested parties, including housing and homeless advocates, large employers, health care agencies, human rights advocates, religious leaders and involved citizens. Each board member serves on a committee (including Public Policy, Fundraising, and Education/Outreach) and/or a community working group that advocates for housing opportunities in specific communities throughout the county.

The Kennedy Commission is managed on a day-to-day basis by Executive Director Scott Darrell, who has served as the Commission's Executive Director since January 2002. In addition to a Master's degree in Community Planning, Mr. Darrell has more than 15 years of experience in affordable housing advocacy, development and management. Mr. Darrell is responsible for all administrative, fundraising, education and advocacy programs of the Commission.



Why Should You Support The Kennedy Commission?

Food, clothing and shelter—they're the basics. But when your county of residence is among the most expensive in the country, the options for affordable shelter are minimal, particularly if you're among those earning less than \$10 an hour.

In such an affluent county, it's difficult to realize that there are individuals who earn a salary at or just above the minimum wage. Yet these are people we all encounter every day—our child's preschool teacher, a grocery store clerk, a bank teller—each earning their living by serving our community.

Restaurant servers, housekeepers, sales associates, and cooks are among those with incomes of less than \$18,000—just 26% of Orange County's median income of \$68,200. Others typically earning just 50% of the County's median income are those working as receptionists, child care providers and gardeners. In addition, senior citizens and persons with disabilities or special needs are often in need of housing opportunities.

Your contribution to the Kennedy Commission's 2007 Annual Campaign will help create an environment which will result in the development of additional housing opportunities throughout the county. Your gift, when combined with others, will help support professional education for those working in the affordable housing industry, will help pass ordinances which facilitate the development of housing opportunities, and will provide funding for public advocacy efforts.

The Kennedy Commission tackles the root of the housing crisis by helping create an environment which encourages the development of housing opportunities. But to expand our reach, we must **expand our programs**. And, expanding our programs requires a financial investment—an investment which must be funded entirely by charitable contributions.

Each fall, the Kennedy Commission conducts an Annual Campaign to provide businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and individuals an opportunity to support our mission. This year's campaign goal is \$70,000.

Please partner with us to create an environment which encourages the development of additional housing opportunities throughout Orange County. Please consider your personal, business or organizational commitment to the Kennedy Commission's 2007 Annual Campaign today.

*Imagine an Orange County where **all** our neighbors have a safe and affordable place to live. You can help make this dream a reality by supporting the work of the Kennedy Commission.*

The Kennedy Commission
Quick Facts



Orange County's Housing Crisis

- Orange County, California has some of the least affordable housing in the entire country.
- According to HUD, a household should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing. This means that families earning minimum wage (about \$20,000 annually) should be paying no more than \$500 per month on housing—yet the median rent on an Orange County apartment is \$1,300!
- A minimum wage earner must work 159 hours a week to afford the median priced apartment in Orange County.

Addressing Orange County's Housing Crisis—the Work of the Kennedy Commission

- Formed in 1999 in honor of affordable housing pioneer Ralph Kennedy, the Kennedy Commission works to create an environment which encourages the development of housing opportunities throughout Orange County.
- The Kennedy Commission accomplishes its mission of creating housing opportunities by sponsoring the following programs:
 1. Professional education and collaboration. The Kennedy Commission serves as a “one-stop shop” for professionals involved in creating housing opportunities. We keep our members informed of key developments in the affordable housing industry through e-mail updates and monthly meetings, among other programs.
 2. Policy research, development and advocacy. The Kennedy Commission works to impact policy that will create additional housing opportunities in communities throughout Orange County. Our work in this area has resulted in the production or approval of more than 3,500 affordable housing units—housing that would not have been possible without the Commission's leadership. The commission also educates local voters about the housing crisis.
 3. Community involvement. The Kennedy Commission involves those that are most impacted by the housing crisis in its work. We also sponsor a “housing hotline” which community members can call for information about affordable housing opportunities.

How You Can Help

- 100% of the Kennedy Commission's budget is funded by charitable contributions. About 77% of our funding comes from grants, with the remainder from our Annual Campaign and other fund-raising programs.
- Approximately 80 cents of each dollar contributed supports our programs and services.
- Our annual donors are encouraged to consider a gift at one of the following membership levels:
 - Individuals: \$25 or more
 - Government agencies: \$200 or more
 - Non-profit agencies with budgets under \$300,000 annually: \$200 or more
 - For-profit and non-profit agencies with budgets over \$300,000 annually: \$1,000 or more