

# WHAT ARE GENTRIFICATION & DISPLACEMENT

## What is gentrification?

Gentrification is a process of neighborhood change that leads to an increase in the cost of living in a neighborhood. Most of the time, gentrification happens in neighborhoods that have been home to people of color or low income communities for a long time-- places where land is cheap, and it's easy to see that new development could lead to profit. Because #OurNeighborhoods have been the product of long term disinvestment, some people may see new investments in the community as a "good" thing: gentrification may come with new parks, improved roads, sanitation services, new businesses, or a subway station. But when gentrification happens, new development doesn't serve the existing community, instead it caters to a new demographic that is wealthier and often of a different racial background (though in AAPI neighborhoods, sometimes the gentrifiers can also be AAPI). Gentrification leads to an increase in the cost of living for everyone in a community, and it leads to the displacement of people from their homes, and small businesses from the neighborhoods that they helped to create. It can also lead to a loss in the cultural identity of a place and increased police presence (which disproportionately targets people of color).<sup>1</sup>

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*Would you like to learn more about gentrification?* We highly recommend this report, [Development without Displacement](#), by Causa Justa :: Just Cause, whose political analysis has informed our understanding of this issue.

## What are Gentrification & Displacement?

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### What is displacement?

Displacement occurs in neighborhoods as a result of gentrification. Displacement happens when landlords, speculators, or people from the real estate industry decide they can profit off of “flipping” homes— displacing low income residents, so that they can renovate apartments, or build new condos for wealthier residents. Displacement is sometimes “direct” meaning that people are displaced as a result of a new development happening in a community. Other times displacement is “secondary” meaning that it is as a result of an increase in rent in the neighborhood, the result of a landlord neglecting to do repairs, or harassment— which ultimately force residents out of their homes. It happens to businesses, when landlords decide that they can profit more from a chain store as a tenant than a “mom and pop” shop that has been in the community for decades.<sup>2</sup>

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Gentrification and displacement are fundamentally linked— as in our experience gentrification ultimately leads to the displacement of residents and small businesses from the communities they have long called home.

For Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, the issue of displacement is not new. Our Communities have been displaced by war, the colonial occupation of our homelands, and are now being impacted by natural disasters as a result of climate change. We see the economic displacement caused by gentrification as part of the ongoing struggle for land rights for people of color and other marginalized communities. To learn more about this history and for tools to teach it to others, visit the [Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit](#), “Colonialism, Imperialism, and Migration” (p. 196-203).

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<sup>2</sup> Urban Institute, “In the Face of Gentrification...”  
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/50791/411294-In-the-Face-of-Gentrification.PDF>