

ORANGE COUNTY JUSTICE UNITED ISSUE BRIEF

Campaign to Increase Teacher Diversity and Bi-Lingual Staff at Orange County Schools

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2017 Justice United institutions engaged close to 600 members to identify the top pressures facing their families and communities. In September 2017 leaders voted to prioritize three top concerns for research and action: access to jobs for northern Orange residents, resources for immigrant youth, and the need for more affordable housing -faster- for extremely low income residents.

Justice United's Jobs and Immigration Research Action Teams identified Orange County Schools as an arena in which their interests converged. OCS is the largest employer serving rural Orange County, and a key institution that shapes the lives of over 7,400 young people, 23% of whom are Latino. After further research, two issues came to the forefront: a racial hiring disparity that has resulted in a 10 year low for African American teachers, and a lack of front office, bi-lingual staff in 9 of 12 schools despite the large Latino population.

In February, 2018 the Jobs and Immigration Teams proposed and won support for a public action to win commitments from candidates for the Orange County Board of Education to address these issues.

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

April 2018

Candidates Pledge Results

Candidates for Board of Education meet with 253 Justice United leaders and pledge to increase teacher diversity and bi-lingual staff within Orange County Schools



November 2018

Fall Assembly Canceled!

JU unable to secure commitments from Board Chair Brenda Stephens and Superintendent Wirt to attend fall accountability session and report on hiring strategies. JU leaders learn that some Board of Education members now consider JU a "special interest group" to which the Board cannot be held accountable.

February 2019



JU Delivers Progress Report Card

In response, 35 JU leaders attend Board of Ed. meeting to deliver an "incomplete" on their commitments from the spring. Our proposal: let's work together!

Board Briefs JU Leaders on New Hiring Initiatives

Chair Brenda Stephens, Vice Chair Sarah Smylie, and Superintendent Wirt honor our call for collaboration and attend JU leaders meeting to report on new hiring strategies to meet diversity and bi-lingual staff goals. JU commits to support related per pupil funding increase. to pay for these initiatives.



April 2019

May 9, 2019

Leaders Rally to Protect Initiatives

Faced with uncertainty in the aftermath of the unexpected resignation of Superintendent Wirt, Vice Chair Smylie, and the ouster of Chair Stephens, over 170 JU leaders rally to protect new hiring initiatives. Leaders call for meeting with new Chair Will Atherton.



May 14, 2019



JU Leaders Urge BOCC to Fund New Hiring Initiatives

Close to 50 JU leaders attend Board of County Commissioners Meeting to support per pupil funding increase for new hiring initiatives. Later, top JU leaders meet with new Board Chair Will Atherton to underscore the importance of prioritizing funding for diversity hiring and equity initiatives.

June 2019: Success!

Leaders Celebrate Progress

JU leaders recognize the Board of Education's support for key diversity hiring and equity initiatives, including investments in the Grow Your Own (TA to teacher pipeline): over \$80,000 in scholarships for teacher assistants pursuing certification, and 5 paid TA workdays. TA's are far more diverse than teachers - this investment will help yield more teachers of color in the future.

The final OCS budget will be delayed until the passage of the state budget. In the meantime OCS will operate based on the prior fiscal year's funding level.

**POWER IS THE
ABILITY TO ACT,
CONSISTENTLY AND
PERSISTENTLY**

ORANGE COUNTY JUSTICE UNITED ISSUE BRIEF

Campaign to Provide More Affordable Housing, Faster

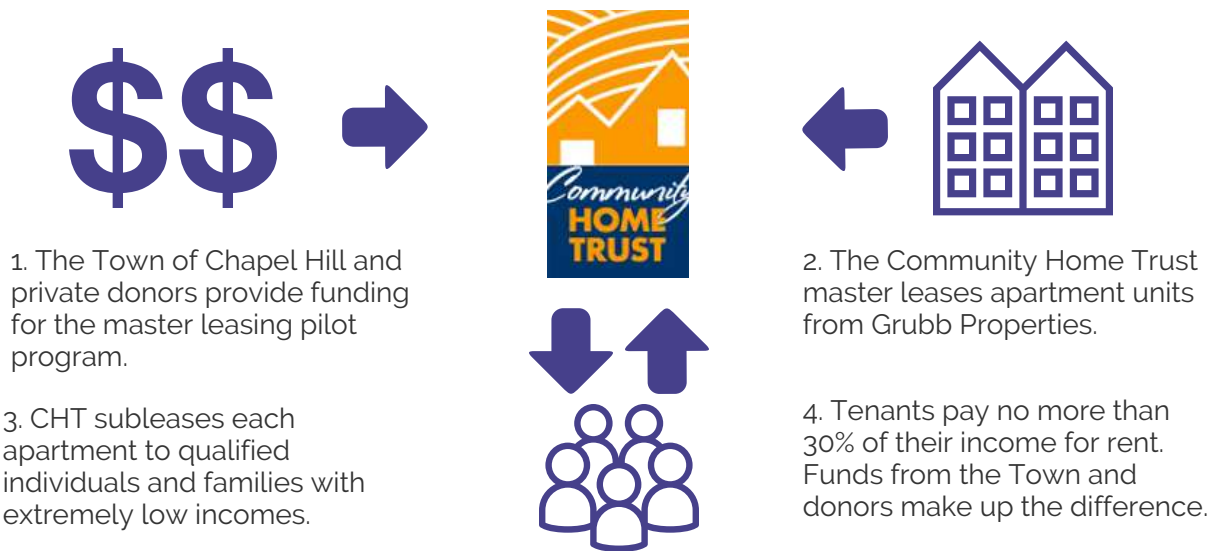
BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2017 Justice United institutions engaged close to 600 members to identify the top pressures facing their families and communities. In September 2017 leaders voted to prioritize three top concerns for research and action: access to jobs for northern Orange residents, resources for immigrant youth, and the need for more affordable housing -faster- for extremely low income residents.

Justice United's Affordable Housing Research Action Team identified an urgent need for more housing for residents with extremely low incomes and other barriers to housing, including bad credit and criminal backgrounds. These barriers are in part responsible for a 13% increase in homelessness in Orange County since 2010, where there are zero housing units on the private market that are affordable to residents earning less than 30% of the area median income.

To address this issue the Team worked alongside the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce and non-profit housing providers to develop a plan to master lease existing apartment units and sublet those units at an affordable rate to qualified tenants. The Team identified three benchmarks for success: 1) finding a landlord willing to participate; 2) partnering with a non-profit housing provider to administer the programs, and 3) winning sufficient funding.

HOW IT WORKS



CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

April 2018

Clay Grubb Pledges Participation

Clay Grubb, CEO of Grubb Properties, meets publicly with 253 Justice United leaders and pledges to make up to 10 apartment units available for the pilot master leasing program at Glen Lennox development in Chapel Hill.



Summer / Fall 2018

Meetings with Town Council

The JU Affordable Housing Team organize a series of meetings with Chapel Hill Town Council members to brief them on the master leasing concept and to lay the foundation for a funding request from the Town of Chapel Hill in the spring of 2019.

Anonymous Donor Invests in Master Leasing

Justice United receives major gift from anonymous donor, kicking off our effort to fund the pilot master leasing program.

November 2018

Community Home Trust Commits to Administer Program

The Community Home Trust, a well regarded affordable housing provider in Chapel Hill / Carrboro, commits to administer the pilot master leasing program. The Interfaith Council also commits to provide up to four hours of case management per month for master leasing tenants.

February 2019

Town of Chapel Hill Funds Master Leasing

Over 30 Justice United leaders turn out to successfully urge the Chapel Hill Town Council Meeting to support a funding request for the master leasing program. JU and partners have now raised enough funds to ensure two years of subsidy for five households.

April 2019: Success!

Five Families and Individuals Move into Housing

By the end of April five families and individuals with extremely low incomes move into master leased units. The first year of the pilot program successfully addresses barriers to housing including low income and bad credit. Opportunities exist to address the additional barrier of criminal background screening in the future.



Learn more at ocjusticeunited.org