

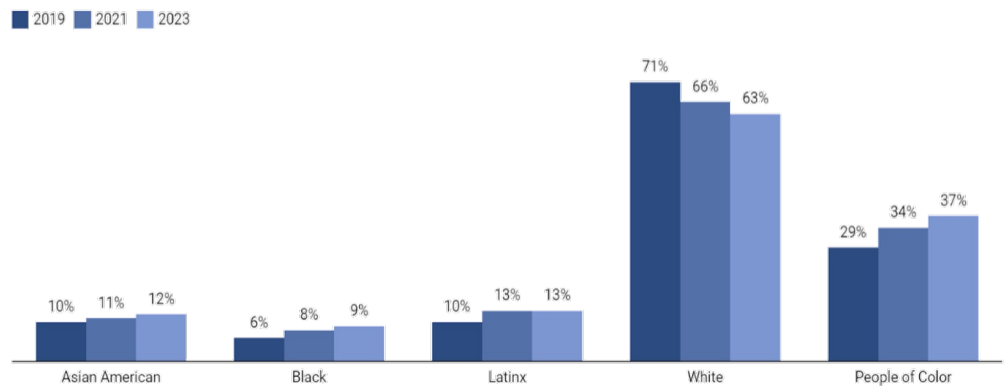
# Bay Area Elected Officials Still Don't Reflect the Region's Diversity

More people of color are being elected in the Bay Area. Yet most of the top elected positions remain held by white people. While diversity in elected office doesn't automatically lead to equitable policies, it helps ensure that people from underrepresented and excluded communities are positioned to lead and shape the systems and policies that affect their lives. To strengthen our democracy, our elected officials must reflect the diverse experiences of the communities they serve and govern to advance the region's collective well-being.

Between 2021 and 2023, the region's share of elected officials of color increased from 34% to 37%.

Despite the steady increase, people of color make up 62% of the region's population and remain underrepresented in local elected positions.

Across the Bay Area, the share of electeds who are people of color has steadily increased over the last few years.



Note: Year reflects the year of data collection. For more information, view the [methodology](#).  
Source: Bay Area Equity Atlas data collection; GovBuddy

## 9%

of the region's elected officials identify as Black

## 69%

of Bay Area cities don't have a Black elected official

## 14%

of the region's elected officials identify as Latinx

## 23%

of the region's population is Latinx

The share of Asian American elected officials increased slightly. But **underrepresentation persists across all Asian ancestry groups**, especially for Chinese Americans.

In 2023, a Pacific Islander official was elected to a top office in the City of Belmont — the first occurrence since data collection started in 2017.

# Decision-making and Representation in Action: A Closer Look at Landlord Elected Officials and Tenant Protection Legislation in the Bay Area

Produced in partnership with Bay Rising and Urban Habitat

Elected officials in cities and counties across the Bay Area play an important role in shaping and passing housing policies that address local priorities. To explore the relationship between real estate interests held by local elected officials and their voting patterns on housing legislation, we reviewed statements of economic interest forms for electeds in a sample of 20 cities and the region's nine counties.

Based on a sample of 208 elected officials from these geographies, we found that:

**25%**

reported real estate interests

**13%**

received rental income

**Five elected officials** with property interests **owned more than a third** of all property interests reported.

## The Bay Area can only thrive if its elected officials reflect the lived experiences of all residents and govern to advance the region's collective well-being. To address the underrepresentation of historically marginalized communities in elected office:

- 1) Bay Area city and county governments should **pass structural reforms**, including public campaign financing and campaign finance reform, to curtail corporate contributions, secret Super PACs, and "pay-to-play" politics.
- 2) Local and national philanthropies should **fund equity-oriented leadership development programs**.
- 3) Funders and political leaders should also **invest in training for candidates from underrepresented communities** to run electoral campaigns and **provide them with support while they are in office**.
- 4) Policymakers and funders should **support voting reforms and civic engagement efforts** that increase voter registration and turnout among underrepresented communities, especially in local elections.
- 5) Funders must **intentionally invest resources that support lobbying** to shift the political landscape toward inclusive governance.

The **Bay Area Equity Atlas** is a partnership between the San Francisco Foundation, PolicyLink, and the USC Equity Research Institute (ERI). [bayareaequityatlas.org](http://bayareaequityatlas.org)

This project would not have been possible without the collaboration and thought partnership of Bay Rising and Urban Habitat.

**Bay Rising** is a growing alliance of Bay Area community-led organizations building power across the region to win community-driven governance centered on racial, economic, and environmental justice. [bayrising.org](http://bayrising.org)

**Urban Habitat** democratizes power and advances equitable policies to create a just and connected Bay Area for low-income communities of color. [urbanhabitat.org](http://urbanhabitat.org)

Sources and Notes: Racial/ethnic and gender information was collected for the mayors and councilmembers of the region's 101 municipalities as well as the county supervisors and district attorneys in the region's nine counties who held office from 2019 to 2023. To access a more thorough methodology of the indicator, visit [bayareaequityatlas.org/about/methods/power#electeds](http://bayareaequityatlas.org/about/methods/power#electeds).

To view the full analysis, visit [bayareaequityatlas.org/electeds2023](http://bayareaequityatlas.org/electeds2023).