

All of the Metropolitan Equity team's IOLTA-funded policy advocacy work focuses on promoting Public Advocates' mission to serve the 6,836,000 Californians with extremely low incomes. (An extremely low income household is one that earns 30% or less of the HUD Area Median Income — i.e., less than \$23,250 for a family of four in 2018. By comparison, 125% of the poverty threshold for a four-person household in 2018 is \$31,375). Throughout California, extremely low-income residents and families are impacted first and worst by the shortage of affordable housing, the pressures of gentrification and displacement, inequitable public investments in their communities, and the lack of access to reliable public transportation. The needs of extremely low income residents, families and communities are routinely excluded from policy discussions relating to affordable housing, displacement, public investment and transportation services. We bring the needs of those specific communities and populations to the fore in our IOLTA-funded advocacy. For example, in 2015, of 1,480,830 California renter households with extremely low incomes, 1,196,680 were rent-burdened (paying more than 30% of their income on rent) and 1,027,440 severely rent-burdened (paying more than 50% of their income on rent). These rent burdened families are at the greatest risk of displacement, a central focus of our policy and budget advocacy. We advocate to protect these indigent cost-burdened renters from displacement through policies that protect them from rent increases and unjust evictions; and we advocate for zoning, land and funding to build housing targeted at extremely low income families, the most politically unpopular and financially challenging stratum of affordable housing. The same is true in our IOLTA-funded work to provide affordable and reliable bus service to indigent residents, and to ensure that public investments meet their specific needs while protecting them from the displacement that investment and development often causes to these vulnerable families.