

PHFA Kathy A Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship

2024 Fellows

Issue and Significance

As an architectural designer focus on local environment and communities, I am deeply concerned about the significant issue of gentrification in Philadelphia's Chinatown. While the influx of new immigrants has undoubtedly contributed to the area's economic growth, it has also led to rising housing costs, posing a substantial burden on low-income residents.

Additionally, the diverse mix of races in the Chinatown community necessitates the creation of a harmonious co-living environment. To address these challenges, my self-directed research project for the Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship aims to explore and propose innovative solutions to foster an inclusive community that preserves cultural heritage while tackling the issue of gentrification.

The central thesis of my project is to examine and propose sustainable solutions to address the gentrification problem in Philadelphia's Chinatown, while concurrently fostering a community where individuals from diverse racial backgrounds can co-exist harmoniously. My research will delve into the underlying causes of gentrification in the area, seeking a comprehensive understanding of the economic, social, and cultural factors at play. By doing so, I aim to identify opportunities for implementing policies and programs that will support low-income residents and preserve the essence of Chinatown's cultural identity.

Project Overview:

Understanding Gentrification in Philadelphia's Chinatown: The first phase of my research will involve conducting an in-depth analysis of gentrification trends in Philadelphia's Chinatown. I will investigate the impacts of increased housing prices on low-income residents and explore how the rapid changes in the area are affecting the local community.

Community Engagement and Needs Assessment: To ensure the inclusivity and relevance of my research, I will actively engage with the residents of Chinatown. Through interviews, surveys, and community meetings, I will seek their input, understand their needs, and identify their concerns related to gentrification and harmonious co-living.

Exploring Policy and Urban Planning Interventions: Drawing on my findings from the first two phases, I will explore various policy and urban planning interventions that have been implemented in other cities facing similar challenges. I will assess their effectiveness and adaptability to the unique context of Philadelphia's Chinatown.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage: As an integral part of this research, I will also focus on strategies for preserving the cultural heritage of Chinatown. My project will emphasize the significance of maintaining cultural landmarks and traditions that contribute to the community's identity.

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Complementing the Field: My project seeks to complement, challenge, and expand issues in the housing and community development field by addressing the gentrification problem in a specific context while also emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusive communities. By focusing on Chinatown's unique challenges and opportunities, my research will offer insights that can be applied to other urban neighborhoods experiencing gentrification and cultural diversification. Through my work, I aspire to contribute to the development of new perspectives and approaches that can be applied to significant unmet housing and community development needs across Pennsylvania.

Conclusion: In conclusion, my proposed research project for the Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship aims to create a tangible impact on the gentrification problem in Philadelphia's Chinatown. By understanding the economic and social dynamics driving gentrification and actively engaging with the community, I intend to propose actionable solutions that promote harmonious co-living and cultural preservation. Ultimately, I hope that my work will contribute to the cultivation of new leaders in housing and community development who are equipped to address complex challenges with innovative and inclusive strategies.

Methods and Work Plan

My research project on addressing gentrification in Philadelphia's Chinatown and fostering harmonious co-living will employ a multi-faceted approach that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. To begin, I will conduct extensive literature reviews and data analysis to understand the current state of gentrification in Chinatown and its impact on the community. Additionally, I will actively engage with residents, community leaders, and local stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, and surveys to assess their needs, concerns, and aspirations. This community-based approach will ensure that my research is informed by the voices and perspectives of those directly affected by gentrification.

The project is currently in its preliminary stages, with a well-defined thesis and research questions. Over the year of the stipend, I will dedicate significant time and effort to conducting in-depth research, analyzing data, and developing practical solutions. As I will be graduating in May, I plan to work on this project concurrently with my degree project, effectively managing my time to ensure the successful completion of both endeavors.

Work Plan:

August - September: Conduct Preliminary Research and Literature Review. During this phase, I will immerse myself in existing studies on gentrification, community development, and cultural preservation to establish a strong foundation for my research. I will also identify critical academic and policy sources and begin collecting relevant data on gentrification trends and housing affordability in Chinatown.

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October- November: Community Engagement and Needs Assessment I will spend the initial months of the Fellowship actively engaging with the Chinatown community. Through interviews, surveys, and focus groups, I will understand the perspectives and needs of the residents, gaining insight into their experiences with gentrification and their vision for harmonious co-living. This community-based approach will inform the subsequent phases of my research.

November - December: Data Analysis and Policy Exploration During this period, I will analyze the data collected from the community engagement phase, identifying recurring themes and patterns. Simultaneously, I will explore urban planning policies and interventions implemented in other cities facing similar challenges, assessing their applicability and potential for adaptation in Philadelphia's Chinatown.

January - March: Proposal Development and Cultural Preservation Strategies At this stage, I will synthesize my findings and begin crafting actionable proposals to address gentrification and enhance co-living in Chinatown. The proposals will incorporate both policy recommendations and strategies for preserving the community's cultural heritage, fostering inclusivity, and sustainable growth.

April - May: Finalizing Recommendations and Project Report In the last months of the Fellowship, I will finalize my research, complete the project report, and prepare presentations summarizing the essential findings and proposed solutions. I will also seek opportunities to disseminate my research and recommendations through conferences and community events.

Project Location and Additional Materials/Technology:

The research will primarily be conducted in Philadelphia's Chinatown, where I will be based during the Fellowship. I will actively engage with community members in local gathering places, community centers, and residential areas to ensure inclusive participation. Additional materials such as surveys, consent forms, and research instruments will be utilized during the community engagement phase. Moreover, I will use digital tools and data analysis software to effectively process and interpret research data, enabling comprehensive insights into the complex issue of gentrification.

By dedicating ample time and effort to this research project alongside my degree project, I am confident in accomplishing meaningful progress and making significant contributions to housing policy and community development.

Final Project and Dissemination

The expectation of Final Project & Dissemination: The final project for the Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellowship is to address the pressing issue of gentrification in Philadelphia's Chinatown while promoting harmonious co-living in the diverse community. The primary audience for this research includes policymakers, urban planners, community leaders, housing

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advocates, and stakeholders invested in equitable community development. The anticipated results of the project encompass evidence-based policy recommendations to combat gentrification, sustainable urban planning strategies that prioritize inclusivity, and proposals for inclusive community development initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity and preserve the community's heritage.

To ensure the impactful dissemination of the project findings, a multi-faceted approach will be adopted. Firstly, a comprehensive policy report will be crafted, providing a detailed analysis of the research methodology, key findings, and actionable recommendations. This report will be shared with local and state policymakers, housing authorities, and community organizations involved in urban development decision-making processes.

In addition, the project findings will be presented at relevant academic conferences and professional forums within the housing and community development fields. This dissemination approach aims to engage with experts and professionals who can further contribute to developing and implementing sustainable housing policies and inclusive community initiatives.

Community workshops will be organized to involve the Chinatown community directly, providing a platform for residents to interact with the research and share their perspectives. The workshops will foster an inclusive environment where the voices of the community are heard, empowering them to actively participate in shaping the future of their neighborhood.

Lastly, the project findings will be accessible to a broader audience through online platforms, such as academic journals, institutional websites, and social media channels. This approach will enable wider dissemination of knowledge, potentially inspiring similar initiatives in other urban contexts facing similar challenges.

The chosen means of dissemination are appropriate as they encompass diverse platforms, catering to the needs of different stakeholders. By engaging policymakers, professionals, community members, and a global audience, the project aims to maximize its impact, contributing to the Fellowship's mission of cultivating new leaders and driving positive change in housing policy and community development efforts.