

Meet Our Senior Leaders



Sierra Atilano

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Q Tell us a little about yourself. Why have you chosen a career in affordable housing?

Affordable housing has always been a passion of mine. I grew up in affordable housing, with my parents and two brothers, and it was a great experience. We lived in a project-based Section 8 community, but I never knew my family was low-income. We lived in a nice neighborhood. I felt safe, I could walk to school every day, and people would look out for each other.

I try to create the same sense of community in the affordable housing that we develop at BRIDGE.

Q In your view, what does success at BRIDGE look like?

Our goal is to maximize our team and our platform in order to build more affordable housing at scale, efficiently and effectively. That can mean building larger communities, and it means extending beyond traditional affordable housing development that relies on Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

One example of a more streamlined approach is our acquisition last year of the property now known as Gatewood, in Daly City. This had been naturally occurring affordable housing, but we’ve since added deed restrictions to half of its 195 units. That has created new designated, long-term affordable housing in a community that needs it.

Q BRIDGE is focused on growing in Southern California, specifically in the Greater LA area. Why is that a priority?

We’re focused on Greater L.A. and L.A. County because there is a severe lack of affordable housing here. We’re trying to have a major impact in the L.A. area, just as we’ve had in the Bay Area. That’s one reason we’re so excited about the ongoing Jordan Downs redevelopment project in Watts, the Evermont project in South LA, and the Wellspring project in Long Beach, among others.

These areas urgently need more housing stock, and we can make a meaningful difference.

Q What advice do you have for other women who hope to reach the same professional heights?

It’s been a long journey. Early in my career I was often the only woman in a meeting. I can’t tell you how much joy it brings me to be with so many other women in meetings today, or to hire women for jobs in construction or other fields that almost always went to men in the past.

When women ask for advice I tell them to stand up for what they believe in and not to give up. It’s important to be vocal, but you also need to know when to listen. By listening, I’ve been able to learn not only my role, but the role above me, next to me and below me. That helped me be a utility player on our team, so that whenever a need arose, people knew they could count on me to deliver.