



## News from: City of Oakland

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## City of Oakland Appoints Victoria Salinas as Oakland's First Chief Resilience Officer

### ***Appointment is Critical Component of Partnership With 100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered By The Rockefeller Foundation***

### ***Oakland was Selected from Almost 400 Applicants from around the World For 100RC Network***

*Oakland, CA* — Interim City Administrator Henry Gardner has appointed Victoria Salinas as Chief Resilience Officer (CRO), a new position created to lead city-wide resilience-building efforts to help Oakland prepare for, withstand and bounce back from catastrophic events and chronic stresses. As Chief Resilience Officer, Ms. Salinas will report directly to the City Administrator and oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive resilience strategy for Oakland.

Through our existing resilience work, Oakland has identified several initial priorities which will be examined as part of this process moving forward:

1. **Seismic disaster**, including for 24,000 multi-family, soft-story housing units
2. **Climate change**, especially rising seas, extreme heat and precipitation events
3. **Social vulnerability** of many Oakland residents
4. **Aging housing and public infrastructure and financing limitations**

Appointing a CRO is an essential element of Oakland's resilience-building partnership with [\*100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation\*](#). The 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) organization is part of a \$100M+ commitment by the Rockefeller Foundation to build urban resilience in 100 cities around the world. Oakland's engagement with 100 Resilient Cities kicked off in March with our Resilience Agenda Workshop, and under Ms. Salinas' leadership, the City is poised to take the next step in its resilience planning. The position will be fully funded by 100RC.

Ms. Salinas will be leading a 6-9 month effort to develop a roadmap to resilience for Oakland by bringing together stakeholders from across silos of government and community sectors. The City will receive personnel and technical support provided by 100RC, and utilize resilience-building tools from private, public, and NGO sector organizations that have partnered with 100RC.

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The CRO is an innovative feature of 100RC’s resilience-building program that is specifically designed to break down existing cross-sector and departmental barriers, account for pre-existing resilience plans, and create partnerships, alliances and financing mechanisms that will address the resilience vulnerabilities of all City residents, with a particular focus on low-income and vulnerable populations.

“I am excited to have Ms. Salinas come on board with her combination of international and local experience,” Oakland **Mayor Jean Quan** said. “Oakland is an innovative and dynamic city that has been engaging these issues for years. With our Chief Resilience Officer in place we will accelerate our work to become more sustainable and green while preparing ourselves for the major earthquake we know to expect. Today’s announcement means a safer Oakland and a safer Bay Area, and I thank all our staff and community leaders who’ve contributed to this work, as well as the 100 Resilient Cities and the Rockefeller Foundation.”

“In a rapidly urbanizing world, cities cannot afford to remain crisis-driven and reactive,” said **Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin**. “Cities like Oakland are at the forefront of fostering a resilience mindset that will be critical to proactively managing the inevitable challenges, shocks and stresses all cities will face.”

“By appointing their first Chief Resilience Officer, Oakland has placed itself on the cutting edge of cities worldwide,” said **Michael Berkowitz, President of 100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation**. “Victoria Salinas will lead a process to help Oakland prepare for the shocks and stresses it will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using best practices from across the globe. With Victoria’s appointment, Oakland will learn best practices from the world, and the world will learn best practices from Oakland.”

Acknowledging that shocks and stresses don’t follow jurisdictional boundaries and planning shouldn’t either, 100 Resilient Cities selected three cities in the Bay Area to work together collaboratively. Ms. Salinas will work closely with the CROs in San Francisco (Patrick Otellini) and Berkeley (Timothy Burroughs), to align and advance regional resilience priorities, in addition to developing the Oakland Resilience Action Plan. In work to-date over the past few months, the three cities have identified many common resilience priorities for the region, including but not limited to: energy assurance; drought and water management; economic resilience; vulnerable communities; urban wildfire interface; climate adaptation and earthquake preparedness.

### **Professional Biography of Victoria Salinas**

Victoria Inez Salinas is a Chilean-American and new Oakland resident who is committed to helping communities thrive in the face of adversity. For more than 10 years she has worked with cities large and small—in the United States, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe—to recover after large-scale disasters. Ms. Salinas enjoys bringing community members and technical experts together to plan and implement a better future.

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She has worked for the United States Government, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery at the World Bank, and the United Nations, to design and implement initiatives that empower communities to reduce risk and prepare for potential disasters.

For the last three years, Ms. Salinas has been at the frontlines of international efforts to help high-risk, low-income developing countries better understand risk, reduce their vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and adapt to climate change. At the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery she managed a \$12 million grant portfolio for Latin American and Caribbean countries that is assisting governments and communities deepen their understanding of risk, and build their capacity to effectively prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters.

In order to increase global commitment to making disaster and climate resilience integral to development planning, Ms. Salinas also helped organize the Sendai Dialogue in the tsunami-affected region of Japan, during which world leaders committed to take on this challenge. After disasters, she has worked alongside government officials to help assess the impacts and conduct recovery planning.

Ms. Salinas has also created opportunities for national and local governments to share their own lessons learned with counterparts from other countries. For example, her research in Haiti informed the development of the *Disaster Recovery Framework Guide*, which is aimed at helping governments around the world better manage recovery.

In addition to her international work, Ms. Salinas also has strong domestic experience. She joined FEMA in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina as a Presidential Management Fellow. As the Special Assistant to FEMA's Deputy Administrator for Gulf Coast Recovery, Ms. Salinas helped facilitate the resolution of difficult policy issues, bolster local governments' capacity to plan and implement recovery plans, and designed and ran a \$400 million recovery program that led to improved housing for thousands of displaced families. Later, as Deputy Branch Chief for Long-term Community Recovery, she helped build and deliver an interagency program that aids states and communities with redevelopment planning, coordination, and resource mobilization. After multiple disasters, she worked directly with governors, mayors, tribal elders, and state emergency management officials to conduct needs assessment, coordinate federal agencies involved in recovery and setup teams of experts in over 30 communities to facilitate local level participatory recovery planning. Ms. Salinas also helped lead the development of the US National Recovery Framework that now guides recovery in the US by facilitating a nation-wide dialogue on what was needed, and collaborating with White House officials to design and implement reforms.

Ms. Salinas brings experience with post-conflict recovery as a coordinator of United Nations peace-building projects, Strategic Planner for the State Department's Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization, and as a researcher for the World Bank's Post Conflict Unit. She has a Bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and Masters in Public Policy from Harvard University.

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## **About 100 Resilient Cities—Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation**

*100 Resilient Cities - Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation* (100RC) is dedicated to helping cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 100RC supports the adoption and incorporation of a view of resilience that includes not just the shocks – earthquakes, fires, floods, etc. – but also the *stresses* that weaken the fabric of a city on a day-to-day or cyclical basis. Examples of these stresses include high unemployment; an overtaxed or inefficient public transportation system; endemic violence; or chronic food and water shortages. By addressing both the shocks and the stresses, a city becomes more able to respond to adverse events, and is overall better able to deliver basic functions in both good times and bad, to all populations.

Cities in the 100RC network are provided with resources along four main pathways: 1) Financial resources and logistical guidance for establishing an innovative new position in city government, a Chief Resilience Officer, who will lead the city's resilience efforts; 2) Expert support for development of a robust resilience-building strategy; 3) Access to solutions, service providers, and partners from the private, public and NGO sectors who can help them develop and implement their resilience strategies; and 4) Membership in a global network of member cities who can learn from and help each other. Through these offerings, 100RC aims not only to help individual cities become more resilient, but to facilitate the creation of a global practice of resilience building.

100 Resilient Cities—Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation is financially supported by The Rockefeller Foundation and managed as a sponsored project by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA), an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides governance and operational infrastructure to its sponsored projects.

Learn more about 100RC at [www.100resilientcities.org](http://www.100resilientcities.org) and RPA at [www.rockpa.org](http://www.rockpa.org).

### **About The Rockefeller Foundation**

The Rockefeller Foundation aims to achieve equitable growth by expanding opportunity for more people in more places worldwide, and to build resilience by helping them prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. Throughout its 100 year history, The Rockefeller Foundation has enhanced the impact of innovative thinkers and actors working to change the world by providing the resources, networks, convening power, and technologies to move them from idea to impact. In today's dynamic and interconnected world, The Rockefeller Foundation has a unique ability to address the emerging challenges facing humankind through innovation, intervention and influence in order to shape agendas and inform decision making. For more information, please visit [www.rockefellerfoundation.org](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org)

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To watch a video of the press conference, please visit <https://vimeo.com/103290759>