OAKLAND UNITE SPENDING PLAN 2019-2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oakland Unite is proud to present its proposed 2019-2021 Spending Plan.

To develop the framework and recommendations in this plan, residents living at the center of violence shared insights about what they need, and where existing supports fall short. Local and national experts also shared knowledge about effective models. Oakland Unite engaged deeply with this information, building on years of local experience and evaluation, and recommends the following investments to address trauma, support healing, and reduce violence.

Oakland needs to focus on gun violence. We know that young adults in Oakland Unite programs are less likely to be arrested for violence. And through coordinated City and community effort, homicides are lower than in past years. This is good; but it is not enough. There is more work to be done. Oakland must continue to act with urgency to reduce violence, save lives and strengthen communities. Half of available funds will support interventions that serve people and families at the center of gun violence.

The City also needs strategies that help young people steer clear of violence. Community members and system leaders value programs that divert youth from arrest or prosecution, and help them transition home after incarceration. These interventions must include family members, community-based coaching, and school and career supports. Funding diversion and reentry efforts will support youth to achieve their goals and avoid harm.

Ending the cycle of violence means addressing violence against women and girls. We heard repeatedly the need for a more intersectional approach to violence. Oakland Unite recommends increasing current funding to serve survivors of domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation, and more intentionally engaging with women, girls, and people who identify as LGBTQI.

Oakland must support community leadership to promote healing. Where violence occurs most frequently, residents don't necessarily feel the impact of citywide reductions. Community members want spaces to connect and resources to lead further violence reduction efforts. Oakland Unite will launch a community healing strategy that supports grassroots neighborhood efforts to reduce violence and heal trauma.

Oakland Unite aims to bring together a network of community providers and system partners who strive together to support people at the center of violence.

This network relies on skilled workers with a personal understanding of trauma, who meet people where they are and form strong relationships. But Oakland Unite and its network of service providers cannot achieve safety and healing alone. The recent creation of a Department of Violence Prevention presents an important opportunity to re-articulate and improve how Oakland works to eliminate violence. This spending plan offers a framework to build upon, fueled by a community-centered vision of healing and transformation. When people and families most affected by violence are supported through crisis and have access to opportunity, they can lead the way to ending the cycle of violence in our communities.

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INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS SAFETY AND HEALING IN OAKLAND

When it comes to promoting safety and healing in Oakland, residents have supported a shared approach: one that strengthens people and communities at the center of violence through a combination of intensive services and focused policing practices. In 2014, Oakland voters passed Measure Z, the Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act (Safety and Services Act). The Act built on the lessons learned from the previous Measure Y, the Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, to bolster a shared safety approach for the City. The Safety and Services Act raises over $27 million annually – out of this, $2 million is set aside to improve fire response services, $14.8 million goes to the police department for specific violence reduction efforts, and $9.8 million goes toward community-based violence intervention programs. The Act establishes a Safety and Services Oversight Commission (SSOC) to ensure proper spending of the funds and evaluation. Collectively, these funds represent a major investment by Oakland residents in strategies to promote safety and healing in the City.

OAKLAND UNITE

Oakland Unite is the division in the City of Oakland Human Services Department charged with implementing violence intervention programs. Oakland Unite provides direct services and funding to community-based organizations to serve people and families at the center of violence. Oakland Unite focuses on the three forms of violence named in the Safety and Services Act: gun violence, family/domestic violence, and commercial sexual exploitation. In the four years since the Act was passed, Oakland Unite programs have provided intensive interventions to over 3,000 people each year and reached thousands more through community events.

Every two-to-three years, Oakland Unite prepares a spending plan to outline the strategies and services recommended for the next funding cycle. Recommendations are based on community input and local and national evidence about what works to reduce violence.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

Community approaches to violence intervention start with people at the center of serious violence and extend outwards to their loved ones and the broader community. When experiencing trauma, people and communities often move through phases in which they first react, seek to recover, and then work to rebuild.[1] Oakland Unite aims to bring together a network of community providers and system partners to support people as they move through these stages. The network relies on skilled workers with a personal understanding of trauma, who meet people where they are and form strong relationships.

Oakland Unite's *Framework for Safety and Healing*, shown on the following page, offers a public health approach to violence reduction that begins by engaging people experiencing serious violence to help them find safety, and supports them as they heal and grow.

MISSION

Bring together and fund community-driven support for people at the center of violence in Oakland to seek safety, healing, and growth through transformative relationships and opportunities.

VISION

People at the center of violence are safe and have access to opportunity. They lead the way to ending the cycle of violence in our community.

OAKLAND UNITE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFETY AND HEALING

PEOPLE AT CENTER	ENGAGEMENT & SAFETY	HEALING & GROWTH
People at the center of gun violence and their loved ones	When someone is killed, their loved ones get grief support including funeral planning and help accessing victim assistance funds. When a shooting or serious injury occurs, victims are met at hospital bedside and connected to resources including conflict mediation when needed. Street-credible violence interrupters work with groups/gangs to mediate conflicts. Life coaching helps people involved in gun violence address safety concerns and work towards their personal goals.	Victims of violence are offered longer-term healing and mental health services, and links to other needed resources. Interrupters help people involved in groups/gangs identify alternatives to violence, and connect them to life coaches for support when ready. Life coaching is based on transformative relationships and includes mentoring, systems advocacy, and connection to job supports, housing or other resources.
Young people involved or at risk of justice-system involvement and their loved ones	Youth get support to move away from violence and out of the justice-system, such as help reentering school and the community after incarceration. Diversion programs use restorative techniques to help youth repair harm instead of facing charges.	Life coaching supports young people to navigate their situation and strengthen socio-emotional skills. Education and career exploration programs help young people work towards their future.
Survivors of family violence or commercial sexual exploitation and their loved ones	Survivors have access to 24-hour support to find a way out of immediate danger. Interventions involve crisis response hotlines, drop-in "safe space" centers, and reaching out to people identified by law enforcement. Emergency housing helps people stay safe in the short-term.	Longer-term support includes transitional housing, legal assistance, healing, coaching and mental health supports. Providers bring specialized experience of working with family violence survivors and commercially sexually exploited young people.
Communities that experience most of the serious violence in Oakland	Activities and events such as vigils, healing circles, and support groups offer people a way to connect with one another after violence occurs.	Block parties, barbeques or parks events led by community members provide safe spaces to gather, celebrate, and transform norms around violence.

VALUES-BASED INVESTING

To fulfill its mission, Oakland Unite holds the following values in mind:

EQUITY

People who have experienced violence must be at the center.
To Oakland Unite, equity means that people and communities most impacted by violence receive the most resources and organizations based in those communities are prioritized. This also means valuing service providers who have similar life experiences as the people they serve.

COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

We are stronger together.
Government and community-based service systems must work hand in hand with community members most affected by trauma and violence. Funding streams and service systems should be aligned with one another to have the greatest impact.

INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

All people have the power to heal.
Oakland is full of strong, resilient people. Support at the right time can help people at the center of violence move through pain and create solutions for themselves and their loved ones. Stronger, healthier individuals build stronger, healthier communities.

ACTION

Learn and do; repeat.
Oakland must continue to act with urgency to reduce violence, save lives, and support communities. Action should be guided by ongoing learning about what works, which requires looking carefully at outcomes and listening to participants' own reflections. The challenges are persistent and dynamic; the solutions must be even more so.

SYSTEM APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Oakland Unite and its network of service providers cannot achieve safety and healing alone. Disparities in wealth, health, education, and housing are all forms of structural violence – and they perpetuate the cycle of individual violence.[2] The City of Oakland has embraced an explicit equity narrative that highlights the need to change its own systems and institutions that contribute to inequitable outcomes.[3]

Oakland Unite's success relies on larger efforts to undo root causes of violence and must help drive those efforts forward. The people most affected by unequal systems have the most insight into how they function. By working in partnership with people and communities at the center of violence, Oakland Unite seeks to identify solutions that improve public systems, reduce disparities, and decrease violence in all its forms. [4]

DEVELOPING THE 2019-2021 SPENDING PLAN

The framework and strategy recommendations in this report were informed by a community listening campaign, review of local and national lessons from the field, and emerging themes from a citywide participatory planning process focused on violence prevention. Most importantly, recommendations are directly informed by the people and neighborhoods most impacted by violence.

COMMUNITY LISTENING CAMPAIGN

Oakland Unite worked with Be The Change Consulting, a local women-of-color led business, to hold five community listening sessions with: young adults at highest risk for gun violence, families of homicide victims, young people impacted by commercial sexual exploitation, community advocacy groups and faith leaders, and Oakland Unite service providers. Additional listening sessions were held with established family violence survivor support groups and the Safety and Services Oversight Commission. Altogether, over 100 people participated in conversations about Oakland's current violence intervention strategies to explore what's working, what can be improved, and to answer specific questions such as how community members can play a greater role.

LISTENING CAMPAIGN THEMES

Those that are closest to the problem are closest to the solution; strategies should uplift the wisdom of the community, individuals with lived experience, and grassroots, community organizations.

Urgent action is needed to further reduce gun violence, sustain existing reductions, and for the community to actually feel safer.

Preventative diversion programs should help young people avoid deeper involvement in violence and the justice system.

Services for women who experience violence should be expanded, and less disconnected from service offerings for men.

Closer coordination with other local and regional service systems is critical to meet needs related to housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health, family support and jobs.

Service providers with personal understanding of violence are trusted and help demonstrate opportunities for growth and transformation.

People need support and advocacy when interacting with law enforcement. There must be clear boundaries between Oakland Unite and law enforcement.

Reducing violence requires more than immediate response; community healing is necessary to address ongoing experiences of loss and trauma.

WHAT'S WORKING: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Oakland has had significant reductions in gun violence in recent years -- though much work remains to be done. Oakland Unite works with an independent evaluator, Mathematica Policy Research, to better understand what services and strategies are most effective for people affected by different forms of violence. In the two years since launching new strategies, Oakland Unite learned that:

People are better off. Adults who received life coaching or employment and education support services had fewer short-term arrests for a violent offense, relative to a comparison group of similar individuals. Participants across strategies benefited from direct use of grant funds for incentive stipends and wages, and from connection to resources like conflict mediation and job placement.[5]

The Oakland Unite network serves people at high-risk of violence. Program participants have experienced violence, contact with local law enforcement, and are often disconnected from education. Most people are between 14-35 years-old, live in West, Central, and Deep-East Oakland, and the majority identify as African American (61%) and Latino/a (20%). Programs focused on gun and gang violence serve mostly men and boys, while programs focused on sex trafficking and family violence primarily serve women and girls.[6]

Agencies have shared values and shared practices. Oakland Unite grantees value hiring peer providers with similar lived experience and agree that training and support – including livable salaries – for providers is necessary for program success. Oakland Unite coordination has increased use of best practices such as small caseload ratios, longer service duration, case planning, and incentives.

DEPARTMENT OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEARNING PROCESS

On June 20, 2017, Oakland City Council created a new Department of Violence Prevention (DVP). The mission of the DVP is to dramatically reduce violent crime and serve communities impacted by violence to end the cycle of trauma. To inform the development of the DVP, Urban Strategies Council (USC) is leading a participatory planning process informed by a Steering Committee of community and City stakeholders. Oakland Unite staff is engaged with their community-led process, and USC and Steering Committee members also attended Oakland Unite listening sessions.

Through ongoing dialogue to share what was learned in each process, common themes were identified. Central among these was the desire for a balanced approach to intervention and prevention that prioritizes the people at the center of violence, both victims and perpetrators, while also meeting the needs of youth at-risk of becoming involved in violence. In addition, both processes lifted-up the need for integration of trauma-informed/healing-centered principles in systems and practices, and more funding for grassroots, resident-led ideas and innovations.

OVERVIEW OF 2019-2021 STRATEGIES

Oakland Unite's recommendations for strategic investments in the 2019-2021 funding cycle center on the belief that Oakland can move towards safety, healing, and growth by working in close partnership with people and communities at the center of violence.

GUN VIOLENCE RESPONSE 48% (~4.5 MILLION)

INLUDES:

Gun violence response and coordination

Violence interruption

Adult life coaching

Adult employment and education

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESPONSE 16% (~1.5 MILLION)

INCLUDES:

Commercial sexual exploitation response

Family violence response

YOUTH DIVERSION & REENTRY 19% (~$1.8 MILLION)

INCLUDES:

Youth diversion

Youth life coaching and reentry coordination

Youth education and employment

COMMUNITY HEALING 17% (~1.6 MILLION)

INCLUDES:

Community outreach and engagement

Grassroots mini-grants for healing centered activities

Trauma informed training for the provider network

*allocations will be finalized based on actual revenue funds available

HIGHLIGHTS AND SHIFTS

1

Focus on gun violence. Half of funds are dedicated to individuals and families at the center of gun violence. This will include an increase in homicide and shooting response funding, and additional emphasis on violence interruption. Women and girls who are connected to incidents of gun violence will be more intentionally integrated into life coaching and employment services.

2

Prioritize diversion and reentry for youth. Services will help youth avoid deeper system involvement through partnership with the juvenile justice system. For youth at high-risk for violence or returning to Oakland after incarceration, continue to provide community-based life coaching with educational and career exploration supports.

3

Increase funding for services that respond to gender-based violence. Emphasize crisis response and safety planning, in addition to transitional housing and wraparound supports, such as counseling, for people who experience family violence and youth/transition-age youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation.

4

Launch a community healing strategy. Fund community partners to host outreach events and healing activities that transform community norms around violence. Develop a mini-grant program to support small grassroots organizations and individuals working to reduce violence in their own neighborhoods.

5

Support provider success. Fund fewer grants for larger amounts, with increases in indirect cost allowances and emphasis on higher salaries for direct service staff. Continue to provide coordination and training to enhance peer professionals' ability to support growth and transformation in program participants.

STRATEGY AREA

GUN VIOLENCE RESPONSE

800 ESTIMATED SERVED

9-10 ESTIMATED GRANTS

48 % OF FUNDS

AIM & SUMMARY

This strategy aims to intervene in the cycle of gun violence to save lives and support healing. It will ensure that people who are shot, and family members of homicide victims get support. The strategy will build a system of support for people involved in gun violence, particularly people connected with groups and gangs. It will help them mediate their conflicts, and offer coaching and resources as they move towards positive goals. Central partners in this strategy include Highland Hospital, Oakland Police Department, Workforce Development Board, Probation, and state criminal justice agencies.

SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING

Shooting and homicide response starts with community-based responders who meet people where they are – be it at the hospital or in their homes – and walk with them as they navigate crisis. Families and individuals will be connected to immediate resources and longer-term mental healthcare and healing supports. Programs may advocate with law enforcement on participants' behalf.

Violence interruption that is designed to interrupt conflicts between groups and individuals, with a focus on reducing retaliatory violence whenever possible. Interrupters rely on their community credibility and knowledge of Oakland street violence to form relationships that allow them to intervene in volatile situations. Emergency, temporary relocation is available for those in immediate danger.

Life coaching is centered on transformative relationships between people involved in gun violence and trained peer professionals with similar life experiences. Life coaches provide advocacy, systems navigation, family engagement, connection to resources such as housing and mental health, and socio-emotional skill development. Financial incentives reinforce positive lifestyle changes.

Employment programming that meets participants' immediate needs and enhances their long-term job prospects through the development of skills and education. Programs should emphasize paid work experience, certifications or educational advancement, as well as job placement and retention.

Coordination by City of Oakland staff will ensure strong communication between community-based providers to better serve participants in need of cross strategy support. City staff will also maintain one-way communication to providers about violent incidents, while protecting participants' privacy and service providers' credibility.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

This strategy serves youth, adults, and families at the center of gun violence. As such, it primarily (though not exclusively) focuses on young men of color between the ages of 18-35 and their loved ones.

Referrals will come through local hospitals, community partners, and law enforcement.

People involved in gun violence will be identified by data-driven risk factors such as prior violent injury, prior arrest, and gang/group involvement.

Services should address the cultural or linguistic needs of specific subgroups.

RATIONALE

Oakland has a long-term, serious epidemic of gun violence. Despite recent reductions in shootings and homicides, far too many people lose their lives and are injured by gun violence each year. Dedicated focus is needed to seriously halt the spread of gun violence. Most homicides in Oakland (57-72%) involve group members as suspects, victims, or both. The majority of people involved in gun violence are African American and Latino men between ages 18-34 who have been involved in the criminal justice system. Many have been injured before and previous violent injury is a strong risk factor for future injury.[7]

When people involved in gun violence are communicated with directly, have the chance to form meaningful positive relationships and connect to longer-term supports, gun violence goes down: cities such as Richmond, Stockton, New Orleans, and Boston have seen homicide reductions of between 30%-80%.[8,9] Recent gun violence reductions in Oakland have been linked in part to the Ceasefire strategy, which, like other models, emphasizes a shared focus on young men at the center of gun violence.[10] Oakland Unite's role in the strategy is to advocate for and serve these young men through coaching and resources that help them stay alive and free.

When the worst has happened and a family has lost someone to gun violence, offering coordinated support is both the right thing to do and necessary to reduce violence. Shootings and homicide can lead rapidly to retaliation, with brief windows of opportunity where trained, credible interrupters can intervene.[11] A strong response following crisis incidents supports the development of relationships, prevents retaliation, and helps people move through grief and towards healing.[12,13]

Intervention and interruption by themselves are not enough – people at the center of gun violence need longer-term support to repair and rebuild their lives. Life coaches who share similar experiences can build trust with people involved in gun violence, and use techniques such as coaching and motivational interviewing paired with financial incentives to help move people toward their goals.[14] Support finding a job is often at the top of the list of goals, and includes job coaching, readiness classes, retention incentives, and subsidized employment. Participating in Oakland Unite adult life coaching and employment programs decreased arrests for a violent crime in the six months after enrollment.[15]

In response to community input, this strategy will intentionally leverage mental health and substance abuse resources, family support services, and housing options through local and regional partnerships. Services will also be extended to women and girls at the center of violence along with a more intentional focus on strengthening family structures.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Participants and families feel supported during crisis and their basic needs are met

Participants and families transition out of immediate danger

Participants and families avoid violent injury/re-injury

Participants reduce risk behaviors related to violence (e.g. carrying a weapon)

Participants and families begin to heal from trauma

Participants reduce or cease contact with the justice system

Participants and families have healthy relationships with each other

Participants strengthen their socio-emotional skills (e.g. resilience)

Participants are employed and prepared to pursue longer-term goals

STRATEGY AREA

YOUTH DIVERSION & REENTRY

280 ESTIMATED SERVED

5-6 ESTIMATED GRANTS

19 % OF FUNDS

AIM & SUMMARY

This strategy aims to help youth move away from deeper involvement in violence and the juvenile justice system through coordinated interventions. Programs will divert youth from arrest or prosecution, and help them transition back to school and community after incarceration through life coaching and education and career exploration. Central partners in this strategy include Oakland Unified School District, Alameda County Office of Education, Alameda County District Attorney's Office, Oakland Police Department, Alameda County Probation Department, and Alameda County Health Care Services Agency.

SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING

Diversion programming that uses restorative justice practices with youth who have been arrested, but not sentenced, with the goal of having charges dropped, or that provides OPD with an alternative option for youth facing arrest.

Life coaching and reentry services for youth transitioning from the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center. Services include rapid school placement support, health care services, and referrals to community-based life coaching. Life coaching is centered on transformative relationships and provides advocacy, systems navigation, family engagement, incentives, and socio-emotional skill development.

Education and career exploration services that improve young people's education outcomes and career readiness. Programs must support academic achievement and offer a range of work opportunities afterschool and in the summer.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

This strategy serves Oakland youth ages 14 to 18 who are identified as at high-risk for violence or system-involvement.

Referrals will come through schools, community partners, or the juvenile justice system.

Data-driven risk factors include chronic absenteeism, violent injury, arrest, gang/ group involvement or exploitation.

Services will be available to multi-lingual youth and for young women and girls as well as young men and boys of color.

RATIONALE

An African American youth was 112 times more likely to be arrested on felony charges than a White juvenile in Oakland in 2017, a disparity called out as "the most extreme" among the indicators compiled in Oakland's recent Equity Indicator's Report.[16] As of October 2018, 275 Oakland youth were on probation, with African American and Latino youth representing the greatest percentage.[17] Community members and City and County leaders share the goal of reducing contact between young people and the juvenile justice system. Probation has reduced the number of young people held in detention, and the District Attorney's office has engaged in a successful diversion program for youth supported by Oakland Unite.[18]

Early intervention and diversion help young people avoid deeper system involvement -- restorative techniques are used to help youth repair harm and successful completion results in charges being dropped.[19] Participants in Oakland Unite's community listening sessions also expressed a need to offer life coaching and other services to youth who have not been arrested, but who are clearly in need of support.

For youth already involved in the juvenile justice system, local evaluation of Oakland Unite programs has shown that youth have better outcomes when they get wrap-around life coaching and support reconnecting to school.[20] Coordination by Oakland Unite ensures a more seamless transition for youth from detention back to the community, and creates a space for providers to problem-solve and share resources.[21] Participating in career exploration and employment programs has been shown to significantly reduce violent arrests for youth by 33%-42%, and to increase education completion and college or training program enrollment.[22,23]

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Diverted youth have charges dropped and no further justice system contact

Youth successfully complete probation without re-arrest

Youth have increased awareness of educational and job/career options

Youth avoid violent injury

Youth transitioning from incarceration are connected to school within 48 hours

Youth increase socio-emotional skills (e.g. resilience)

Youth have improved educational outcomes

Youth have caring relationships with positive adults and peers

STRATEGY AREA

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESPONSE SERVICES

1200	ESTIMATED SERVED
3-4	ESTIMATED GRANTS
15	% OF FUNDS

AIM & SUMMARY

This strategy directs funding towards interventions that support people experiencing family/domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). It aims to help survivors meet their immediate safety needs and provides resources that aid them in their journey towards healing and stability. Central partners in this strategy include the District Attorney's Office and Family Justice Center, the Oakland Police Department, Probation, and Alameda County Healthcare Services Agency.

SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING

Outreach and crisis response that connects people experiencing gender-based violence to support as they transition out of immediate danger. This may include crisis response hotlines, drop-in centers, outreach following incidents of violence, and emergency housing that provides a temporary safe place for survivors to stabilize and access resources.

Wraparound supports such as legal advocacy, systems navigation, coaching, family support, mental health services, and other resources that support healing, stability, and socio-emotional strength.

Training by community-based experts in family and sexual violence to the Oakland Unite network or to law enforcement agencies will strengthen capacity to identify and respond to gender-based violence.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

This strategy serves youth, adults, and families affected by family violence, dating violence, and/or commercial sexual exploitation. As such, it primarily (though not exclusively) focuses on women, girls, and people who identify as LGBTQI.

Referrals will come through hotlines, drop-in centers, community partners, or from law enforcement.

Youth up to age 25 experiencing CSE will be prioritized. Family violence support addresses the needs of the whole family.

Services should address the cultural or linguistic needs of specific subgroups.

RATIONALE

One in three California women report experiencing domestic violence at some point in their lifetimes, and among African American women the self-reported rate increases to 42%.[24] From January 2016-June 2017, there were 17 homicides related to domestic violence in Oakland.[25] In 2017, 3,070 calls were made to OPD for family violence – and only a quarter of all physical assaults by an intimate partner are reported to the police.[26,27] Oakland accounts for over 50% of emergency department domestic assault visits in Alameda County.[28] Oakland is also known as a hub for commercial sexual exploitation of children. Between 2011 and 2016, OPD intervened in youth CSE 273 times, an average of 45 per year.[29]

Gender-based violence has serious immediate and long-term consequences for individuals, families, and communities in Oakland. Women and children who experience family violence are at higher risk for long-term health challenges.[30,31] Gender-based violence also intersects with violence in the streets – children who experience family violence are more likely to participate in multiple forms of violence as adults.[32]

Strategies to help survivors of family violence typically include opportunities for people to access confidential support through services such as 24-hour hotlines. Family violence intervention specialists help people move out of immediate danger through safety plans, legal support, and emergency housing. Longer-term supports such as mental health services, access to social and family supports, and links to employment resources and housing are also critical components of serving survivors of family violence.[33]

Interventions that serve young people impacted by CSE similarly require safety planning and relationship-building to foster trust. Best practices include having CSE survivors involved in program development and implementation.[34] CSE survivors often relapse to exploitation before they permanently leave their exploiters, and interventions must take this cycle into account. Long-term services and supports are essential in addressing the needs of CSE young people and their families or caregivers.[35]

In Oakland Unite's community listening sessions, people expressed that the needs of women and girls were not fully addressed by existing services. In response, Oakland Unite seeks to increase funding for this strategy, while also emphasizing the needs of women and girls in each strategy.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Survivors transition out of immediate danger

Survivors access resources to increase longer-term safety (e.g. protection orders)

Survivors are not re-injured and/or exploited

Survivors feel safe and have a positive outlook on their lives

Survivors develop healthy relationships with positive adults and peers

Survivors access tools and knowledge that help them begin to heal from trauma

STRATEGY AREA

COMMUNITY HEALING

1800 ESTIMATED SERVED

2-3 ESTIMATED GRANTS

18 % OF FUNDS

AIM & SUMMARY

This strategy aims to lift up the wisdom of people closest to violence and deepen their skills to promote healing through community-led outreach activities and events. A grassroots mini-grant program will be launched to support innovative community-based violence reduction projects. The strategy also supports the development of a trauma-informed network of peer professionals through ongoing training and learning opportunities.

SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING

Community outreach led by people from neighborhoods most affected by violence. Outreach may take the form of resident engagement, healing circles, vigils, summer parks programs, or other events intended to promote peace. Outreach providers will serve as ambassadors for the violence prevention network.

Grassroots mini-grants that support the violence reduction efforts of smaller organizations and individuals who have experienced violence. Grants will range in size and in focus area, but may include community-building and education, peer support for survivors of violence, leadership development, or other activities to change norms around violence.

Strengthening the Oakland Unite network through tailored training opportunities and learning communities for frontline staff working to help people heal from violence. Training may include life coaching, conflict mediation, gender responsive approaches, cognitive behavioral techniques, and trauma-informed practices. Training will include certifications and take place in cross-agency cohorts.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Community outreach and grassroots mini-grants will be focused on neighborhoods in West, Central, and Deep East Oakland that are most affected by multiple forms of violence.

Training efforts will focus on direct service staff, including grassroots mini-grant recipients, working for funded violence intervention programs. By design, these individuals often have lived experiences of violence and share characteristics with their participants.

RATIONALE

Participants in the Oakland Unite listening campaign stated that community healing and restoration is necessary for violence reduction. In neighborhoods where violence occurs most frequently, residents don't necessarily feel the impact of citywide reductions. Community members want spaces to connect, heal, and lead further violence reduction efforts in sustainable ways.

When community members strengthen connections with one another, they strengthen their collective resilience and change norms around violence. This process is supported by the creation of safe parks, thriving arts and culture spaces, and healing circles, marches and vigils.[36] To reclaim shared spaces and foster community among residents in neighborhoods at the center of violence, Oakland Unite has hosted free, family-friendly summer events in parks in Oakland on Friday nights since 2011. A 2015 study found that crime in the areas in and around the event was reduced during the weeks the events take place.[37] This strategy seeks community partners to run similar community events and activities to promote community building and collective healing.

Outreach and engagement by community leaders to their own networks are another way to strengthen community connections and change norms around violence. Community members who participated in the Oakland Unite listening campaign had many ideas – some of which they were already putting into practice – about ways to reduce violence and support healing in their neighborhood. Community outreach that engages with, supports, and builds links between these innovative, grassroots approaches creates a stronger citywide violence prevention network.

In addition to community-based efforts, training in healing strategies and trauma-informed practices is needed for the Oakland Unite network of peer providers, who are rooted in Oakland and have often experienced violence themselves, to be ready to support and serve others. Direct service staff participation in skill development and healing circles to process vicarious trauma they may experience through their jobs enables staff to provide better services for their participants.[38]

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Communities have safe spaces to gather, heal and stand against violence

Community members are more involved in reducing violence

People working to reduce violence are connected in positive ways

Communities establish stronger shared norms against all forms of violence

Community leaders are supported in their efforts to heal their own communities

Providers have strong skills that enhance their work and support their growth

APPENDIX A: PARTNERS CONSULTED

Community and Public Partners

Akonadi Foundation
Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
Alameda County District Attorney's Office
Alameda County Health Services- Highland Hospital
Alameda County Office of Education
Alameda County Probation Department
Alameda County Public Defender's Office
Alameda County Public Health Department
Alameda County Superior Court
Alameda County Violence Prevention Initiative
AC United Against Trafficking
Asian Prisoner Support Committee
Be The Change Consulting
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
Bright Research Group
Brotherhood of Elders Network
CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CA Board of State and Community Corrections
California Partnership for Safe Communities
Californians for Safety and Justice- Alliance for Safety and Justice
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice
Department of Violence Prevention Coalition
East Bay Community Foundation
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Gifford Law Center
Joint Powers Authority, Safety Impact Table
Mathematica Policy Research
Oakland Community Organizations
Oakland Unified School District
PICO California
Prevention Institute
Urban Strategies Council

City of Oakland

Department of Race and Equity
Oakland Fund for Children and Youth
Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development
Oakland Police Department
Oakland ReCAST (Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma)
Safety and Services Oversight Commission (SSOC)
Workforce Development Board

Expertise from Outside of Oakland

Advance Peace, Richmond, CA
Chicago CRED, Chicago, IL
City of Los Angeles, Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development
City of Milwaukee, Health Department Office of Violence Prevention
City of Richmond, Office of Neighborhood Safety
City of Sacramento, Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Force
City of San Francisco, Department of Children Youth and Families
Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.
Urban Peace Institute, Los Angeles, CA

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ABOUT OAKLAND UNITE

Oakland Unite is the division in the City of Oakland Human Services Department charged with implementing violence intervention programs. With proceeds from the 2014 Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act as well as leveraged funds, Oakland Unite provides direct services and funding to community-based organizations to serve people and families at the center of violence. In the four years since the Act was passed, Oakland Unite programs have provided intensive interventions to over 3,000 people each year and reached thousands more through community events.

ABOUT THE SAFETY AND SERVICES OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

The Safety and Services Oversight Commission is a body established by the 2014 Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Act to ensure the proper revenue collection, spending and implementation of the programs mandated by the Act. Members must live in Oakland and are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. The Commission's duties include reviewing spending plans for funds received through the Act, overseeing the evaluation of efforts funded by the Act, and making recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the spending plans prior to Council approval. As part of the 2019-2021 Oakland Unite spending plan development process, Commission members reviewed evaluations of existing services, took part in a planning retreat, and gave input on how themes articulated by community members informed strategy direction.

Design by: Eva Silverman at Pushcart Design (pushcartdesign.com)

OAKLAND UNITE

CITY OF OAKLAND
HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Helping our City grow strong!