

CITY OF OAKLAND

# AGENDA REPORT


**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Emily Weinstein  
Director, Department of  
Housing & Community  
Development

**SUBJECT:** BACS Homelessness Prevention  
Contracting and Spending  
Authorization

**DATE:** October 9, 2024

City Administrator Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (Oct 11, 2024 09:00 PDT)

Date: Oct 11, 2024

## RECOMMENDATION

**RESOLUTION 1) AWARDING A GRANT TO BAY AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. TO ADMINISTER THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000.00) PER YEAR CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED FOUR MILLION DOLLARS (\$4,000,000.00); AND 2) AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM FROM JULY 1, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 WITH AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE GRANT**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bay Area Community Services, Inc. (BACS) administers the Homelessness Prevention Pilot Program (HPP). HPP was launched in 2023 as a data-driven approach to reduce the flow of residents – especially Black men – into homelessness. According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, on a given night in Oakland, 5,490 people are experiencing homelessness and 67% are living outside or in vehicles. HPP provides evidence-based, targeted prevention services to those most at-risk of experiencing homelessness including emergency financial assistance, case management, and supportive services. An evaluation by Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania highlights the effectiveness of the program, including the successful ability to efficiently reach the target population.

The FY 24-25 Midcycle Budget allocated \$2 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (Fund 1870) to continue providing these services. The proposed resolution would authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with BACS to continue to administer the HPP through June 30, 2026.

City Council  
October 15, 2024

## **REASON FOR URGENCY**

BACS and its program partners provide critical homelessness prevention services to those households most at-risk of experiencing homelessness. HPP uses an evidence-based, equity-driven approach and prioritizes applications based on risk factors such as prior experience of homelessness, criminal justice system involvement, and home zip code to reach households most at risk of experiencing homelessness, especially Black men. BACS has expended all prior contracted funds appropriated in FY23-24. Due to the current homelessness crisis in Oakland, it is critical to continue to provide these services with as little delay as possible. Currently, there are over 300 applications from highly vulnerable households waiting to be reviewed and processed to receive homelessness prevention services.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The initial \$2.3 million funding for BACS to launch HPP was provided through \$1.6 million of CDBG funds, approved as part of the Annual Action Plan and \$750,000 in General Purpose Funds per the City of Oakland FY 2022-23 Mid Cycle Budget (authorizing [Resolution No. 89283](#) CMS and [89377](#) CMS). Following a competitive procurement (Request for Proposals), BACS and its program partners were selected to administer the Homelessness Prevention Pilot Program. Program partners include the following community-embedded organizations:

- East Oakland Collective
- The Unity Council
- Eviction Defense Center
- Black Cultural Zone
- East Bay Community Law Center
- 211

These trusted organizations conduct outreach and leverage their networks and community relationships to reach those most at risk of becoming homeless. These community partners play a critical role not only in reaching highly vulnerable households but providing one-on-one support and assistance to complete applications and gather required documentation.

On July 2, 2024, the City Council approved the FY24-25 budget which included \$2 million in Affordable Housing Trust Funds for BACS to continue to provide homelessness prevention services (authorizing [resolution 90326 CMS](#)).

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

This is an administrative action to enter into a grant agreement to continue providing highly effective homelessness prevention services. **Funding was allocated in the City's FY23-24 Midcycle Budget.** If contracting and spending authority is not provided by the Resolution, the City will be unable to enter into a new grant agreement with BACS and they will cease providing homelessness prevention services and more Oakland residents would lose their housing. BACS, and their network of community partners, were selected to administer HPP through a competitive procurement (Request for Proposals) and has demonstrated their ability to successfully reach the target population and prevent homelessness by providing emergency financial assistance and wraparound services.

Since launching the HPP in September 2023, BACS has served 307 Oakland households that were on the brink of homelessness. **84% of households served say without the assistance, they would have lost their housing.** An evaluation conducted by Stanford University showed 91% of those assisted maintained their housing.

Once an application is submitted, BACS uses an evidence-based prioritization system to assign points based on known risk factors such as:

- zip code,
- prior experience of homelessness,
- criminal justice system history, and
- leaseholder status

**Applications are not processed on a first come, first served basis** but by the calculated risk of homelessness. The Stanford University evaluation has shown this targeting and prioritization works; **HPP is serving those at greatest risk of losing their housing.**

In FY2023-2024, BACS served 307 households with City of Oakland funding. Of these, **75% were Black or African American.** Racially disaggregated data from the 2022 Point in Time count shows 59% of the unhoused population is Black or African American, compared to just 21% of the general Oakland population. Racial disparities were not present for any other race. The zip codes with the most applications received are 94605, 94601, 94606, 94621, 94603, and 94612.

In FY2023-2024, in addition to the City of Oakland funds, philanthropic funding was leveraged to serve an additional 900 households. These households were highly vulnerable and in precarious housing situations, but the City funds were used exclusively for the most at-risk households.

The recommended Council Action will advance the City's Housing, Economic, and Cultural Security Priority by continuing to provide critical homelessness prevention services to keep Oakland residents housed.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed resolution will authorize a two-year grant agreement from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026 for a not to exceed amount of \$2 million per year. Funding for year one of the grant was included in the FY24-25 Midcycle Budget in Affordable Housing Trust Fund (1870), Homelessness Prevention Pilot Project (1007395). Funding for year two of the grant agreement is contingent on funding availability and approval of the FY 25-27 Biennial Budget.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

Prior to the launch of the Homelessness Prevention Pilot (HPP) program, Oakland HCD initiated an interdepartmental working group in Summer 2022 consisting of the Human Services Department, the Department of Race and Equity, the City Administrator's Office, and the Mayor's Office to more intentionally explore the City's approach to addressing housing

(in)stability. The team quickly learned that City's the primary focus had been eviction defense, but that there had not been intentional, data-driven targeting to address racial disparities.

In response, Oakland HCD partnered with academic research teams at Stanford University's Changing Cities Research Lab and the Housing Initiative at Penn via the University of Pennsylvania to explore the causes of housing instability more deeply. Namely, the academic research team conducted eighty (80) interviews with very-and extremely-low income residents (those who earn between 0-50% and 0-30% of the Area Median Income, respectively) to better understand the barriers they face in accessing and maintaining housing. About one-third of the residents interviewed did not hold a formal rental lease, meaning they were housed – but were informally/unstably living with family members or friends. The final interview sample consisted of the following participant demographics:

- 21 Black
- 22 Asian & Pacific Islander
- 21 Latinx/Hispanic
- 16 White

Respondents came from all major neighborhoods including West and Deep East Oakland, Fruitvale, Downtown & Central Oakland/Chinatown, and the Elmhurst areas. Each interview lasted between 1-1.5 hours and were conducted in English, Spanish, Cantonese, or Mandarin. All participants were compensated with \$40 gift cards and were recruited through flyers and in-person conversations at BART stations, public libraries, food banks, grocery stores, community organizations, religious institutions, and more. In the interviews, renters were asked about their rental histories, living arrangements, housing conditions, finances, and more. About six months after the first interview, participants were contacted to engage in a follow-up survey to gauge how their experiences changed over time. More detailed information and high-level results from the interviews may be reviewed in the Changing Cities Research Lab's 2023 report, "[The State of Housing Insecurity in Oakland.](#)"

The interviews not only identified a number of issues the residents faced, but also illuminated a set of solutions and interventions that, in their opinions, would have helped them stay housed and stable. These learnings, along with data and lessons learned from previous City of Oakland initiatives such as Keep Oakland Housed, Oakland Housing Secure, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), lifted up best practices to combat housing insecurity and stem the flow of residents into homelessness. With this knowledge, Oakland HCD worked closely with its academic and industry partners (including All Home) to co-design an evidence-based, highly targeted program to reach those most at risk of losing their housing (Black men with former experiences being unhoused, experience in the criminal justice system, and other critical factors) and released the program RFP in Fall 2022.

### **COORDINATION**

This report was completed in coordination with the City Attorney's Office and Finance Department.

### **PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

In the first year of HPP, 307 households most at risk of experiencing homelessness were served. 84% of those assisted said that without the support of the program, they would have lost their housing. Stanford University is leading a formal program evaluation, and the initial results show that BACS and their community partners, are effectively and efficiently reaching the target

population and providing critical financial assistance and services to prevent Oakland's most vulnerable households from experiencing homelessness.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** HPP provides emergency financial assistance, along with wraparound supports, to keep people housed.

**Environmental:** There are no environmental impacts of this action.

**Race & Equity:** Black Oakland residents are disproportionately experiencing homelessness. HPP prioritizes those most at risk of imminent homelessness including Black men, with criminal justice system involvement, from zip codes with high levels of housing instability and provides stabilizing services to keep them housed.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION 1) AWARDING A GRANT TO BAY AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. TO ADMINISTER THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000.00) PER YEAR CONTINGENT UPON FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED FOUR MILLION DOLLARS (\$4,000,000.00); AND 2) AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM FROM JULY 1, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 WITH AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE GRANT**

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kelly Hoffman, Project Manager, at 510-220-2134.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Weinstein  
Emily Weinstein (Oct 9, 2024 07:07 PDT)

Emily Weinstein  
Director, Housing & Community Development  
Department

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