



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Sabrina B. Landreth  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Sara Bedford  
Human Services  
Department

**SUBJECT:** SUPPLEMENTAL - Oakland Unite  
Evaluation

**DATE:** February 3, 2020

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City Administrator Approval

Date:

2/5/20

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That City Council Receive An Informational Report by Mathematica Policy Research Of The Oakland Unite Services Funded Through The Safety And Services Act Of 2014 (Measure Z).**

## **REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL**

Following the Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) presentation and discussion on November 12, 2019, the Life Enrichment Committee directed staff to return with a supplemental report that includes:

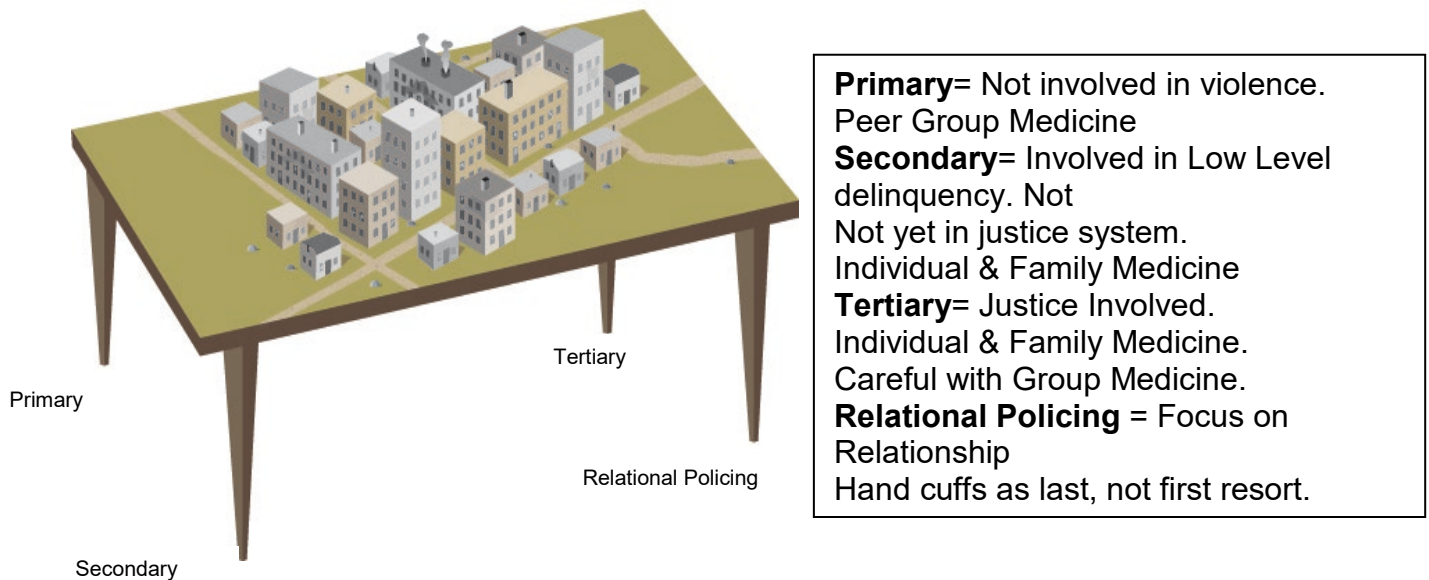
- 1) How the recommendation from Mathematica will drive a comprehensive work plan and investment strategies towards the 80 and 3 goal of reducing the number of homicides by 80 percent in 3 years that was considered by the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) Legislation; and
- 2) How an integration of a comprehensive violence reduction strategy might be considered.

This informational report provides an overview of how independent evaluation findings and community input informed the development of the Oakland Unite Spending Plan for fiscal year (FY) 2019-2021 (**Attachment A**). The Spending Plan outlines the City's current comprehensive work plan and investment strategies to impact violence in Oakland. Oakland Unite's strategic investments center on the belief that Oakland can move towards safety, healing, and growth through a shared safety approach by working in close partnership with people and communities at the center of violence.

Development of a new Spending Plan for 2021-2024 that provides a comprehensive violence reduction strategy will incorporate lessons learned from the recently completed and upcoming evaluation reports expected from Mathematica as well as the community input received by Oakland Unite through a listening campaign and the DVP planning process led by Urban Strategies Council. The new Spending Plan will be developed in close coordination with the Chief of Violence Prevention and will incorporate the public health place-based approach detailed in his December 2019 update and presented to the Life Enrichment Committee on January 28, 2020.

Life Enrichment Committee  
February 11, 2020

**Figure 1: The Public Health Place Based Prevention & Intervention Strategy**



The DVP's theory of change maintains that by saturating target communities with simultaneous effective primary, secondary, tertiary, and relational policing approaches, the 80 and 3 outcomes will be achieved (see **Figure 1**, above). Preliminary assessment of the Oakland Unite strategies finds that current strategies are comprised of solid, tertiary-level work that should be supported and expanded.

Incorporating the work of other City departments through closer coordination and collaboration to align investments in a place-based strategy is required to support the additional legs of the table shown in **Figure 1**. For example, Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (OPRYD) summer and year-round programs such as Town Camp provide primary-level group activities for youth and community members. In addition, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) administered by the Human Services Department (HSD) supports youth at both the primary and secondary risk levels. Closer inter-departmental coordination and a plan to shift resources to focus on neighborhoods most impacted by violence will have the greatest effect on violence reduction.

Relational policing is also key to the success of this approach. The DVP will offer policy guidance to aid the Oakland Police Department's (OPD) efforts to pilot the relational policing model as part of the place-based approach. The DVP update to the Life Enrichment Committee on February 25, 2020 will provide additional details on this approach.

*Independent Evaluation and Spending Oversight Required by Safety and Services Act*

Mathematica began evaluation activities in January 2017 and will continue through 2020 (Resolution No. 86487 C.M.S).<sup>1</sup> The evaluation plan includes the following components requested by the Safety and Services Oversight Commission (SSOC) and City Council:

- **Annual strategy-level report.** Each year, the strategy-level report assesses the effectiveness of a selection of Oakland Unite strategies.
- **Annual agency-level snapshots.** The agency-level evaluation summarizes descriptive findings for each Oakland Unite agency.
- **Comprehensive evaluation.** The comprehensive evaluation assesses the impact of youth and adult life coaching on individual delinquency, education, and employment outcomes over a four-year period.

**Table 1**, below, provides an overview of the reports that have been initiated or completed since implementation of the Safety and Services Act of 2014 began in 2016.

**Table 1 – Independent Evaluation Reports of Oakland Unite (2016 -2019)**

Year	Report Topic, Author	Findings	Funding Source
November 2017	Adult life coaching and employment & education support services, Mathematica	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. <sup>2</sup>	Measure Z
April 2018 and April 2019	Agency Profile Reports, Mathematica	Summaries of participant demographics, service provision, and program performance, broken down by grantee agency	Measure Z
July 2019	Youth life coaching and employment and education support services, Mathematica	Youth life coaching reduces school dropout and short-term arrests for violence. Youth employment reduces school dropout rates. <sup>3</sup>	Measure Z
October 2019	Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) response, Mathematica	In-depth analysis of the implementation of the CSE youth sub-strategy, including best practices. <sup>4</sup>	Measure Z

<sup>1</sup> The City's contract with the current independent evaluation partner, Mathematica, will end in 2020. A new request for qualifications (RFQ) to secure evaluation services for the next 4-year cycle (2021 to 2025) is tentatively scheduled for release in fall 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Gonzalez, N., Dawson-Andoh, E., Nicolai, N., Laco, J., Yanez, A., & Crissey, S. (2017). Evaluation of Oakland Unite: Year 1 Strategy Report. Mathematica Policy Research.

<sup>3</sup> Gonzalez, N., Laco, J., Yanez, A., Demers, A., & Crissey, S. (2019). Evaluation of Oakland Unite 2017-2018: Life Coaching and Employment and Education Support for Youth at Risk of Violence. Mathematica Policy Research.

<sup>4</sup> Gonzalez, N., Hu, M., Larkin, N., & Barber, M. (2019). Evaluation of Oakland Unite 2018-2019: Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth Intervention. Mathematica Policy Research.

Expected 2020	Gun violence response and coordination, Mathematica	Evaluation currently in design	Measure Z
Expected 2020	Healthy, Wealthy, Wise cognitive behavior groups, Mathematica	Evaluation in progress; Process and impact analyses will compare outcomes between individuals in adult life coaching and individuals who are dual enrolled in adult life coaching and cognitive behavior treatment	CalVIP <sup>5</sup>
Expected Dec. 2020	Comprehensive evaluation of youth and adult life coaching, Mathematica	Evaluation currently in design	Measure Z

Evaluation findings available before November 2018, input from community listening campaigns, and a review of best practices in the field informed the FY 2019-21 Oakland Unite Spending Plan, which was adopted by City Council in December 2018 (Resolution No. 87477 C.M.S.).

*Past Evaluation Findings and Implementation Shifts*

**Evaluation Findings:** As the evaluator for the Oakland Unite network, Mathematica looks closely at who is being served, what type of supports are provided, and what changes in participants’ lives. After Oakland Unite’s first two (2) years of implementation and evaluation of the strategies launched in 2016, the following outcomes were identified:

- 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 grant funds directed to stipends and wages, and from connection to resources like conflict mediation and job placement.
- The network serves people at high-risk of violence. People have experienced violence, contact with local law enforcement, and many youth are disconnected from education. Most participants are between 14-35 years-old, live in West, Central, and Deep-East Oakland, and the vast majority identify as African American (62 percent) and Latinx (19 percent).
- Agencies have shared values and shared practices. Oakland Unite grantees value hiring peer providers with similar lived experience as participants and agree that training and support – including livable salaries – for providers is necessary for program success. Life coaching providers use best practices such as shared assessments, smaller caseload ratios, longer service duration, and use of participant incentives.

<sup>5</sup> California Violence Intervention Program (CalVIP) is funding to address gun violence in California cities and is administered by the Bureau of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Oakland is in the second year of CalVIP funding.

- Incentives and stipends promote participation. Incentives of up to \$1,600 per participant/ per year are available for meeting goals set using a Life Map created with the support of a Life Coach. These monthly payments support progress and retention. Education and employment providers are encouraged to expand the use of incentives in their programs.

In addition, Oakland Unite works to align Oakland Unite investments to complement other violence reduction initiatives lead by system partners and local community groups. Oakland Unite also reviewed local and national best practice reports and used these lessons from the field to inform the plan.

*2018 Listening Campaign: Lessons from the Community*

A Community Listening Campaign took place in Summer 2018 to ensure that the most important information about what is needed in Oakland to reduce violence comes from the people and communities most impacted by violence. Oakland Unite worked with Be The Change Consulting, a local women of color-led business, to hold five 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 grantees. Additional listening sessions were held with the SSOC and established family violence survivor support groups.

Themes and recommendations from the listening campaign are summarized in **Table 2** below along with the shift in Oakland Unite’s investments made in response.

**Table 2 - Listening Campaign Themes and Spending Plan Shifts**

Theme from listening session	Spending Plan Action/Shift
1. Those that are closest to the problem are closest to the solution	<b>Center the voices of people who have experienced violence.</b> Prioritize models that build on the wisdom of people impacted directly by violence and develop new ways to partner more closely with community.
2. Urgent action is needed to reduce gun violence further	<b>Focus on gun violence.</b> Dedicate the bulk of funds to people and families at the center of gun violence to intervene in moments of crisis, prevent retaliation, and support healing.
3. Systems should help young people avoid deeper justice system involvement	<b>Prioritize diversion and reentry for youth.</b> Continue to support young people returning after incarceration and develop stronger pathways to avoid incarceration.
4. Services for women who experience violence should be expanded	<b>Increase funding that addresses the needs of women and girls.</b> People who experience family violence and youth/transition-age youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation need more support as they transition out of crisis.

5. There are deep needs for support around housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health, and jobs	<b>Continue to strengthen current investments with City/County agencies</b> while exploring new ways to streamline and increase access to services for participants referred by the Oakland Unite network.
6. People value service providers who share similar lived experiences	<b>Prioritize hiring of peer professionals with deep roots in Oakland</b> throughout the network of providers. Support opportunities for training and skill development and higher salaries including a recommended minimum salary.
7. People need support in their interactions with law enforcement and clarity about Oakland Unite’s relationship to law enforcement	<b>Develop and train law enforcement on protocols for working with the Oakland Unite network</b> that protect participants’ privacy and the credibility of direct service providers.
8. Community healing is necessary to reduce deep, ongoing experiences of violence	<b>Launch community healing strategy.</b> Seek community partners to host outreach events and healing activities. Support small grassroots organizations and individuals working to reduce violence in their own communities with mini-grants.

*Report from Urban Strategies Council Community Fellows*

To inform the development of the Department of Violence Prevention, Urban Strategies Council (USC) led a participatory planning process that engaged community fellows and a Steering Committee of community and City stakeholders (see **Table 3**, below). Steering Committee members and USC staff also participated in the listening sessions sponsored by Oakland Unite. Many common themes were identified including the desire for a balanced approach to violence intervention and prevention that prioritizes the people at the center of violence, both victims and perpetrators, while also meeting the needs of youth likely to become involved in violence. Both processes also lifted-up the need for trauma-informed/healing centered practices and more funding for grassroots resident-led ideas and innovations.

**Table 3 – Urban Strategies Council Recommendations**

<b>USC Recommendations (Highlights)</b>	<b>DVP Action/Shift</b>
Conduct DVP introductory meetings in neighborhoods	DVP Chief has met with a number of community stakeholder groups and opened lines of communication to solicit feedback and insight and will continue to engage community members in planning efforts.
Engage the DVP steering committee in the strategic planning	DVP Chief has established regular communication with the members of the DVP steering committee (including Violence Prevention Coalition, USC, Brotherhood of Elders Network, and leaders of gender-based violence prevention efforts) and has involved them in planning.

Share the research findings with OPD and public safety systems leaders and agencies	DVP Chief has set-up regular meetings with OPD Chief and has had introductory meetings with Probation Chief and District Attorney. Meetings with Oakland Unified School District and Public Health are being scheduled.
Identify people most impacted (victims and those engaged in the violence) to address gun violence	DVP plans to develop a tiered-risk assessment to strengthen its ability to assess and identify those who are at-risk for and/or engaged in violence at the primary, secondary, and/or tertiary risk levels. This approach would be comprehensive and involve multiple system partners.
Create a safe space for families of victims of gun violence to heal and feel heard	DVP Chief met with mothers/family members of homicide victims to solicit input on improving support to victims and families. DVP is exploring community awareness efforts on preventing gun violence through safe and welcoming community events.
Re-evaluate gun violence prevention programs	DVP Chief has begun evaluation of current gun violence prevention efforts underway in Oakland, including Oakland Unite funded strategies, non-Oakland Unite funded efforts, and Ceasefire, while also examining best practices and innovative strategies nationwide and globally.

*Overview of Current Oakland Unite Strategies*

**Table 4**, below, outlines the four strategic investment areas that form the foundation of the FY 2019-21 Spending Plan, along with associated goals and intended outcomes. In addition to drawing from community input and evaluation findings, these strategy areas are aligned with the City’s racial equity approach to violence reduction; services and outcomes will be disaggregated by race. By working to fulfill these goals, Oakland Unite also seeks to contribute to broader citywide reductions in racial disparities related to gun violence, family violence, and commercial sexual exploitation of young people. The current investment in tertiary level approaches will continue as the DVP coordinates inter-departmental efforts to strengthen a public health, place-based approach.

**Table 4 – Oakland Unite 2019-21 Spending Plan Strategy Areas**

Strategy Areas	Goal	Estimated Service Amount	Intended Outcomes
<b>Gun Violence Response</b> <i>~48% of funds</i>	Intervene in gun violence to save lives and support healing	1000 people at the center of gun violence and their loved ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay alive &amp; free</li> <li>• Meet basic needs</li> <li>• Strengthen socio-emotional skills</li> <li>• Increase job skills</li> <li>• Improve education &amp; career outcomes</li> </ul>

<b>Youth Diversion and Reentry</b> <i>~19% of funds</i>	Divert youth from involvement in violence and the justice system	250 youth involved or at risk of justice-system involvement and their loved ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate justice system contact</li> <li>Avoid violence</li> <li>Strengthen socio-emotional skills</li> <li>Improve education &amp; career outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Gender-Based Violence Response</b> <i>~15% of funds</i>	Help people experiencing family violence and commercial sexual exploitation find safety and access support	1000 survivors and their loved ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition out of danger</li> <li>Avoid re-injury and exploitation</li> <li>Access supports for long-term safety and healing</li> </ul>
<b>Community Healing</b> <i>~18% of funds</i>	Lift up the wisdom of people closest to violence and deepen their skills to promote community healing	1800 community members engaged and staff trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More safe spaces</li> <li>Deeper community involvement</li> <li>Stronger norms against or around anti-violence</li> <li>Stronger violence reduction network</li> </ul>

*Current evaluation findings and implementation shifts*

Results from current and future evaluations continue to inform program implementation. Effective recidivism-reducing, life coaching service delivery models include intensive case management, behavioral health services such as cognitive behavioral therapy, and, importantly, connections to prosocial peers and supportive adults. Evaluators suggest that building out appropriate behavioral health supports for high-risk participants is a critical next step for the City’s gun violence intervention efforts. Through Oakland’s California Violence Intervention Program (CalVIP), the City is piloting a peer-led cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program delivered by partner organization, Community & Youth Outreach.

Some examples of additional shifts based on the evaluation of Youth Life Coaching and Employment and Education Support Services (EESS) are included in **Table 5**, below

**Table 5 – Implementation Shifts in Response to Mathematica Report: Youth**

Insights from Mathematica	Implementation Shifts
Need for coordination between youth life coaching and employment/education providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Communities, combined bi-monthly meetings that include staff from both strategies, will begin in January 2020. Learning Community time will include practical training in skills such as motivational interviewing and opportunities to build trust among the providers to strengthen referral pathways.</li> <li>Program model encourages EESS providers to serve family members and loved ones that are also supporting life coached participants.</li> </ul>



High staff turnover due in part to low salaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Request For Proposals (RFP) for 2019-2021 services included a recommended salary floor of \$50,000 to bolster staff retention among providers.</li> </ul>
Job-related stress presents a challenge for agency staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in capacity building and trainings to address vicarious trauma and self-care as well as other skills that support provider staff in carrying out transformative work.</li> <li>Opportunities for certification as Life Coaches and Career Service Providers are made available to bolster professional skills.</li> </ul>
Room for improved collaboration between life coaching agencies and Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot with Probation to increase pre-release case planning and coordination with gang-involved youth leaving the Juvenile Justice Center is underway.</li> </ul>

Increased funding for Commercially Sexually Exploited (CSE) Youth services was included in the Oakland Unite Spending Plan for FY 2019-2021 to address some of the needs identified; examples of shifts based on the process evaluation of the CSE Youth strategy are included in **Table 6**, below.

**Table 6 – Implementation Shifts in Response to Mathematica Report: CSE**

Insights from Mathematica	Implementation Shifts
Need for a cohesive strategy across agencies and branches of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oakland Unite has increased coordination with Alameda County’s CSE efforts by acting as co-chair of AC United, a regional effort to coordinate and address CSE issues</li> </ul>
Housing continues to be a major need for CSE youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current CSE funding includes transitional housing for CSE youth</li> </ul>
Staff burnout impacts the stability of relationships with youth served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in capacity building and trainings to address vicarious trauma and self-care as well as other skills that support provider staff in carrying out transformative work</li> <li>Opportunities for certification as Life Coaches are made available to bolster professional skills</li> </ul>
Appropriate mental health services are needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSE providers coordinate with local mental health providers with expertise in serving CSE youth</li> </ul>
Continue to integrate CSE and other gender-based violence responses into broader violence prevention efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-training between the Gender-Based Violence strategy and other strategies in the network is taking place along with trainings that address the intersections between street violence and gender-based violence</li> </ul>

*Update on Oakland Unite Community Healing Mini-Grant Program*

Community members throughout Oakland were engaged to support and publicize the second cycle of the Oakland Unite Community Healing Mini-Grants program to provide mini-grants to individuals (up to \$5,000) and small, emerging organizations (up to \$10,000) for healing-centered, community-based activities; applications were released on January 6, 2020 and were due on February 3, 2020. Oakland Unite staff conducted five information sessions throughout Oakland, hosted by the Community Healing grantees.

The Community Healing Mini-Grant decision-making committees, community volunteers selected by the Oakland Unite Community Healing grantee agencies, convened on Saturday, February 8 to prepare for evaluation and scoring the next round of proposals. The community-led committees will select projects to recommend for award by their organization; with award announcement anticipated by March 13, 2020. Each committee will also develop feedback to the applicants who were not selected for them to incorporate in their applications for the next round of mini-grants.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report by Mathematica Policy Research Of The Oakland Unite Services Funded Through The Safety And Services Act Of 2014 (Measure Z).

For questions regarding this report, please contact Sara Bedford, Director Human Services Department (510) 238-6794 or Guillermo Cespedes, Chief of Violence Prevention at (510) 238-2916.

Respectfully submitted,



SARA BEDFORD  
Director, Human Services Department

Reviewed by:  
Tonya Gilmore, Assistant to the City  
Administrator  
City Administrator's Office

Peter Kim, Manager  
Oakland Unite  
Human Services Department

Guillermo Cespedes  
Chief of Violence Prevention  
Department of Violence Prevention

Prepared by:  
Jessie Warner, Planner  
Oakland Unite Division

Attachment (1):  
A: Oakland Unite Spending Plan 2019-2021