



# **City of Oakland Resiliency in Communities after Stress and Trauma (ReCAST)**

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS AND RESOURCES ASSESSMENT**



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## **Community Needs and Resources Assessment (CNRA)**

Resource Development Associates

This report was developed by Resource Development Associates under contract with Oakland Human Services Department.

Resource Development Associates, 2022.





# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction &amp; Background of ReCAST</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Purpose and Goals of CNRA</i>	2
<i>Community &amp; Department Partners</i>	4
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Mixed Methods Data Review</i>	6
<b>Community Background</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Community Needs, Resources, &amp; Gaps</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Behavioral Health</i>	11
Community Needs	11
COVID-19 Impact	11
Resources & Identified Gaps	12
<i>Health &amp; Healthcare</i>	14
Community Needs	14
COVID-19 Impact	14
Resources & Identified Gaps	15
<i>Education &amp; Youth</i>	15
Community Needs	15
COVID-19 Impact	17
Resources & Identified Gaps	17
<i>Poverty &amp; Income</i>	18
Community Needs	18

COVID-19 Impact	19
Resources & Identified Gaps	20
<i>Housing Affordability &amp; Displacement</i>	20
Community Needs	20
Resources & Identified Gaps	23
<i>Violence &amp; Criminal Justice Involvement</i>	24
Community Needs	24
COVID-19 Impact	25
Resources & Identified Gaps	26
<b>Summary of Findings and Conclusions</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>31</b>

# Introduction & Background of ReCAST

Oakland Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) promotes **resiliency, healing, belonging, joy, and equity** for Oakland’s high-risk youth and families most affected by the interrelated challenges of violence, civil unrest, and trauma. A multi-sector coalition works together to improve behavioral health and reduce trauma among the highest-risk youth and families, empower residents, and improve community-police relations.

Populations of focus for Oakland ReCAST include residents of low-income, high-stress neighborhoods in East and West Oakland; children attending high-stress schools; victims of violence; Black children and youth; as well as other vulnerable populations.

Through a multi-sector, participatory approach aligned to the work of Oakland Thrives, the Oakland ReCAST initiative builds upon existing local efforts and the work accomplished through the City’s 2016–2021 ReCAST grant to promote resiliency, healing, belonging, joy, and equity among Oakland residents most affected by trauma and unrest. All ReCAST activities are aligned to two primary strategies. **First**, Oakland ReCAST provides culturally appropriate, evidence-based, and community-designed and driven interventions for high-risk youth and families impacted by civil unrest, violence, and COVID-19. This approach recognizes that violence and civil unrest fueled by systemic racism have an intergenerational impact that can be disrupted by providing and promoting nurturing and healing relationships; that high-risk youth and families who receive community-driven trauma and resilience supports have increased likelihood of improving their behavioral health, creating more resilient communities, and reducing incidents of violence; and that the impacts of stress and trauma can be healed and prevented by connecting youth and families to evidence-based, culturally appropriate services. **Second**, Oakland ReCAST works to strengthen, heal, and reimagine the systems that community members seek when in distress through training, capacity building, coaching, and fostering cross-system collaboration and coordination. This approach recognizes that these systems often perpetuate systemic racism through toxic practices, policies, and procedures; that they risk retraumatizing residents most affected by violence and civil unrest when services are not provided through a trauma-informed lens; and that a lack of coordination across systems limits community access to resources that mitigate inequities.

## Purpose and Goals of CNRA

In order to implement a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the evaluation of the implementation of Oakland ReCAST, Oakland Human Services Department is conducting this community needs and resources assessment (CNRA) to identify community needs and resources and to inform prioritization of target areas for the strategic navigation plan and evaluation of ReCAST efforts. The 2017 CNRA employed a collaborative approach which actively engaged important stakeholders from every level of the community. Findings from this assessment helped to inform and direct the current CNRA.

This community needs and resources assessment uses secondary data (e.g. data and needs assessments conducted by partner HSD divisions and some partner agencies in Oakland, strategic plans and local data) to promote a common understanding of the City of Oakland’s trauma-related needs, the existing resources available to address those needs, and any remaining gaps in services within Oakland related to these need areas.

The primary goals of this community needs and resources assessment are to:

- Develop an understanding of the current community context, needs, and resources in the City of Oakland following the first round of ReCAST activities;
- Provide an understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the residents of the city of Oakland and assess its impact on existing trauma-related needs;
- Provide a basis for the development of HSD’s strategic navigation and evaluation plan.

All ReCAST activities are driven by a trauma-informed approach. Trauma can be defined as the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that impacts and often overwhelms an individual’s ability to function and cope with daily life, often causing feelings of helplessness and other negative emotional and physical consequences.<sup>1</sup> While the findings from the 2017 CNRA focused on violence-based trauma, the current CNRA adds an additional assessment of community needs and resources around other forms of trauma and their indicators which include areas such as poverty, education, homelessness and housing stability, unemployment, physical and behavioral health, food security as well as criminal justice related issues. Many of these factors are highlighted in the Oakland Community Stressors Index<sup>2</sup> and the needs and resources related to these issues were central to the data collection that supported this CNRA. These trauma indicators serve as the organizing issues of this CRNA and frame the understanding of community needs and resource gaps. In addition, the equity implications of each of these trauma stressors were investigated using the 2018 Oakland Equity Indicators report.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> What Is Trauma? - Definition, Symptoms, Responses, Types & Therapy. (n.d.). *Unyte Integrated Listening*. Retrieved from <https://integratedlistening.com/what-is-trauma/>.

<sup>2</sup> The Oakland Community Stressors Index is a map of Oakland neighborhoods that provides a snapshot of statistics related to trauma indicators. Community stressors are defined as experience of chronic stress, violence, and trauma that has serious negative consequences on individuals and communities. Stressors include (among other things) crime rates, education factors (e.g. chronic absenteeism, highschool dropout rates, suspensions, etc.) food security issues (e.g. food stamp recipients, food availability), affordable housing, levels of homelessness, and unemployment.

<sup>3</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

# Community & Department Partners

In order to create sustainable change, Oakland ReCAST intends to build upon existing resources and assets in the City of Oakland. The existing resources consist of multiple systems structured to involve community members and ensure their voice in decision-making. Oakland ReCAST will build primarily upon two HSD programs and the Department Of Violence prevention that serve Oakland's most marginalized, at-risk populations in need of trauma-informed behavioral health supports, together reaching over 50,000 young people and families through a network of local service providers.

## **Human Services Division**

### **Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY)**

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) provides strategic funding to support Oakland's children and youth from birth to 20 years of age to become healthy, happy, educated, engaged, powerful and loved community members. They leverage their efforts with partners for greater collective impact towards social and economic equity, build the capacity of community agencies to work together to fully develop each child's potential, achieve positive outcomes, and promote the positive contributions of children and youth to Oakland's greatness. OFCY funds programs providing child and youth development activities year-round and in summer months through a variety of school and community-based partners for youth and children aged 0-20. OFCY also funds mental health consultants to support the Head Start children and their families.

### **Head Start and Early Head Start**

HSD operates both Head Start and Early Head Start programs at multiple locations throughout the City of Oakland. In addition to childcare and preschool programs Head Start family advocates identify family needs and help them navigate resources in the community. Head Start provides comprehensive early care, education, and family support services to over 1,200 low-income families with children aged 0-5, in neighborhoods throughout the city. Licensed mental health consultants work with teachers and parents providing strategies and tools to support young children experiencing the effects of trauma.

Other division partners include:

Community Homelessness Services

Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP)

Aging & Adult Services

## Children & Youth Services

### **Department Partners**

#### City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention

The Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) is a primary partner of this ReCAST grant and provides a network of intensive services to youth and young adults, age 14 to 35, at highest risk of violence with the goals of 1) reducing violence in Oakland among young people, and 2) creating a well-integrated violence intervention system, with strong links among social services, school district, police, workforce development, and criminal justice agencies. Though DVP targets intensive case management and employment services to residents aged 14-35, the Crisis Response strategy, which serves individuals, their families and others immediately impacted by gun violence, and the Family Violence strategy do not limit services to a specific age range.

Other partners include:

City of Oakland City Administrator

Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

Oakland Public Library

Department of Transportation

City of Oakland Race & Equity Department

City of Oakland Mayor's Office

City of Oakland Police Department

City of Oakland Youth Advisory Commission

Oakland City Council

### **Community Partners**

In addition, Oakland ReCAST is working to leverage existing resources available in the City of Oakland (the City). A network of government agencies, community organizations, parents, faith leaders, youth, and law enforcement officers are working to provide culturally relevant, trauma-informed violence prevention and behavioral health services to Oakland's high-risk populations. These partners are listed in the network and participating in the Oakland ReCAST initiative.

AE Creative

Alameda County Behavioral Health Services



Alameda County Center for Healthy Schools and Communities

Alliance for Ecotherapy & Social Justice

Black Cultural Zone

Collective Healing Initiative at Ceasefire (Oakland Police Department)

East Bay Agency for Children / Trauma Transformed

Nubian Consult

Oakland Unified School District

Oakland Thrives

Planting Justice

Prevention Institute

Resource Development Associates

Through The Looking Glass

Youth Leadership Institute

## Methodology

### Mixed Methods Data Review

Resource Development Associates (RDA), a partner in the current Oakland ReCAST grant, identified needs, existing resources and gaps in service for Oakland’s highly stressed residents through a comprehensive review of existing community needs assessments, strategic plans, and local data. This methodology was selected in order to align the CNRA approach with the trauma-informed principle of “Collaboration and Mutuality,” which emphasizes the importance of recognizing power differentials while maximizing collaboration. Oakland community members and local service providers have participated in numerous needs assessments and planning activities over the last several years. These various data sources (listed below) incorporated both qualitative data (e.g. narrative reports of experiences) and quantitative data (e.g. statistics related to issues of interest). In addition, 2020 saw the beginning of a global pandemic that significantly impacted how communities operated, the needs and trauma experienced by Oakland’s residents, and the availability of community resources. Rather than ask these stakeholders to share insights already captured in other documents, this secondary data collection approach respects the time and energy already invested in these efforts by leveraging these documents through an extensive qualitative review. Across the data sources used

in the CNRA, community voices were incorporated through surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions. Every effort was made to include representatives of communities across Oakland, particularly those in areas with high levels of stressors present and those areas where many residents were members of ReCASTS's target population groups. This methodology is intended to both reduce stakeholder fatigue and ensure meaningful alignment with current and planned partner efforts.

RDA analyzed the following documents to conduct this CNRA:

- Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP) Oakland and Alameda County Community Needs Assessment (2020-2021)
  - AC-OCAP Strategic Plan (2020-2025)
  - AC-OCAP Alameda County and Oakland Data Profile (2021)
- Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis (2021)
- Oakland Department of Violence Prevention Community Engagement Session Results (2021)
  - Oakland Department of Violence Prevention Strategic Spending Plan (2022-2024)
- Oakland Head Start Community Needs Assessment (2020)
- Oakland ReCAST CNRA (2017)
- Additional reports related to Oakland violence prevention efforts: *Oakland Unite 2016-2020 Comprehensive Evaluation* (2021), Urban Strategies Council's *Rethinking Violence Prevention in Oakland, CA "From the Voices of the People Most Impacted"* (2019), Youth ALIVES!'s *Healing to Scale in Oakland: Investing in Proven Models to Break the Cycle of Violence* (2021), recommendations developed by Oakland's Reimagining Public Safety (RPS) Task Force (2021)
- Additional data related to crime, community stress, and COVID-19 infection, death, and vaccination rates in Oakland and Alameda County
- Oakland Department of Housing and Community Development's Strategic Spending Plan

## Community Background

Oakland, with a population of 444,956, is a highly diverse city: 36% of residents are White, 24% Black, and 16% Asian, with 26% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latinx.<sup>4</sup> Over 17% of Oakland residents live in poverty.<sup>5</sup> The city faces significant and interrelated challenges related to poverty, homelessness, violent crime, and mental health, all of which have been intensified by the spread of COVID-19. The City's 2019 Homeless Point-in-Time Count found 4,071 homeless individuals, 79% of whom were

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<sup>4</sup> World Population Review. (n.d.). *Oakland, California Population 2022*. Retrieved from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/oakland-ca-population>

<sup>5</sup> World Population Review. (n.d.). *Oakland, California Population 2022*. Retrieved from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/oakland-ca-population>

unsheltered.<sup>6</sup> This number has grown in the intervening years and will likely grow exponentially as COVID-19 related eviction protections lapse. Notably, this population includes many families; of the 198 unhoused families, only 30 children were housed in the City's expanded family shelter, which was at capacity in its first month. The City is working to address these issues through numerous programs that address the needs of these communities through offerings such as emergency shelters, affordable housing units, and transitional housing. At present, the City has approved 173 affordable housing units through Project Homekey and provided temporary shelter to 2,206 individuals under the auspices of Project Roomkey.<sup>7</sup> Of the unhoused population served in Oakland, 66.9% identify as Black or Black. While many individuals are receiving supportive services, the number graduating into residences has decreased dramatically. In 2021, the number of unhoused individuals exiting Oakland programs to permanent or temporary housing decreased from 1,462 to 298, representing a 79.6% drop.<sup>8</sup>

After a near 50% decrease in homicides and shootings from 2012–2018 and a slight increase in 2019, Oakland saw a 47% increase in homicides and a 72% increase in shootings in 2020. That year, 102 lives were lost in Oakland due to gun violence and almost 500 people were shot. This trend continued into 2021; there were 15 homicides in January 2021, while in January 2020 there was just one.<sup>9</sup> While research on the drivers of this increase is limited, anecdotally, it is widely thought to be an indirect response to the additional stressors due to COVID-19.

Multiple factors have consistently limited the number of high-risk youth and families who seek out needed services, including real and perceived barriers to access, mistrust of government, fear of bias among service providers, and confusion about how to access services. This is particularly detrimental now, when miscommunication poses a very real risk to the city's ability to reduce stress and trauma resulting from the pandemic and recent civil unrest. According to the 2019 California Healthy Kids survey, among Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students, 30% of elementary, 31% of middle, and 28% of high school students have lost a family member or friend to violence (7–8% of students have lost more than three family members or friends). The same survey found that 27% of middle school and 11% of high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide in the last 12 months.<sup>10</sup> Further, local service providers and staff from across OUSD and city agencies have noted a considerable increase in demand for mental health services as the pandemic stretches on. More broadly, there are limited mental health resources for those who are not enrolled in Medi-Cal and/or do not have a formal diagnosis. As a result, there is a tremendous need for upstream investments in

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<sup>6</sup> Applied Survey Research. (2019). *City of Oakland Homeless Count & Survey*. Retrieved from <https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/2019-Oakland-Point-In-Time-Count.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://homelessness.acgov.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/homelessness-dashboard>

<sup>9</sup> Email correspondence with Oakland Police Department.

<sup>10</sup> *California Healthy Kids Survey*. (2019). Retrieved from <https://calschls.org/reports-data/>

training and capacity building for the teachers, mental health clinicians, and other staff who interact with high-risk youth and families to ensure their ability to deliver trauma-informed services.

Oakland has a long history of systemic racism fueling civil unrest and tension between community members, law enforcement, and local government, as evidenced by the 1966 formation of the Black Panther Party whose primary focus was on challenging police brutality. In the past two decades, the City has spent \$74 million to settle at least 417 lawsuits against its police officers, and since 2003, the Oakland Police Department (OPD) has been under Federal Oversight as part of a negotiated settlement agreement stemming from a police misconduct case involving 119 plaintiffs.<sup>11,12</sup> While incremental progress has been made in recent years, events of the summer of 2020 have reignited old tensions. In the past 24 months, Oakland has responded to police shootings across the country with protest and unrest in sync with the communities affected. In 2020, thousands of residents protested in response to the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and others. Most notably, on June 1, an estimated 15,000 people attended a youth-organized march against police brutality. Like other protests in Oakland that summer, this march ended with intense confrontation, with police shooting tear gas, flashbang grenades, and rubber bullets at demonstrators, including many youth, in front of OPD headquarters.<sup>13</sup> While Oakland residents express pride in their city's history of civil action, these incidents point to deep issues embedded within the fabric of the city and function as an expression of community outrage stemming from long-term social and economic inequality.

The aforementioned challenges are not felt equally by all. The Oakland Community Stressors Index indicates that many intersecting sources of stress and trauma are concentrated in East and West Oakland, home to much of Oakland's Black population.<sup>14</sup> As of February 6, 2021, Oakland had reported 23,399 COVID-19 cases, with a disproportionate percentage of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths among Black and Latinx residents.<sup>15</sup> A 2020 Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) Evaluation Report found that "the pandemic has exacerbated continued and persistent inequities. These ranged from poverty and unemployment, food insecurity, housing insecurity, continued system involvement,

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<sup>11</sup> "Oakland, CA Spent \$74 Million Settling 417 Police Brutality Lawsuits." Oakland, CA Spent \$74 Million Settling 417 Police Brutality Lawsuits | Prison Activist Resource Center. Accessed March 28, 2022.

<https://www.prisonactivist.org/alerts/oakland-ca-spent-74-million-settling-417-police-brutality-lawsuits>.

<sup>12</sup> "Federal Oversight of the Oakland Police Department May Be Nearing Its End, Attorneys Say." The Oaklandside, September 22, 2021. <https://oaklandside.org/2021/08/25/federal-oversight-oakland-police-department-nearing-end-negotiated-settlement-agreement/>.

<sup>13</sup> Democracy Now! "15,000 People Attend Youth Rally in Oakland, CA; Police Continue Attacks on Protesters." Democracy Now!, June 2, 2020.

[https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/2/headlines/15\\_000\\_people\\_attend\\_youth\\_rally\\_in\\_oakland\\_ca\\_police\\_continue\\_attacks\\_on\\_protesters](https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/2/headlines/15_000_people_attend_youth_rally_in_oakland_ca_police_continue_attacks_on_protesters).

<sup>14</sup> *Oakland Community Stressors Index*. (n.d.). City of Oakland. Retrieved from <https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/oakland-community-stressors-index>

<sup>15</sup> <https://covid-19.acgov.org/data.page?#cases>

and gaps in access to digital learning.”<sup>16</sup> The issue sections of this CRNA will speak in more detail to the impact of COVID-19 on the city of Oakland relative to each of the areas discussed.

With a longstanding commitment to fighting for civil rights and social justice, Oakland has responded to growing civil unrest and the challenges of COVID-19 with grassroots ingenuity and a clear call for change. Artists have always been a crucial resource for community healing and resiliency in Oakland. In summer 2020, dozens of artists breathed life into the epicenter of civil unrest by creating murals on boarded up storefronts to express grief, demand justice, and encourage unity. In June 2020, the OUSD School Board unanimously agreed to eliminate their sworn police department and seek alternative strategies. In July, the City Council unanimously agreed to form the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force to rapidly reimagine and reconstruct the public safety system in Oakland. Head Start is currently developing a mobile classroom to better accommodate homeless families. Life coaches with Oakland’s Department of Violence Prevention have successfully transitioned to a hybrid virtual/in-person model for service delivery, and Oakland ReCAST has adapted all grant activities to allow for virtual delivery. Finally, Oakland Thrives was recently relaunched. This innovative public/private partnership is led by the Mayor, a designated Alameda County Supervisor, the OUSD Superintendent, and the Kaiser Permanente Health Foundation. The partnership convenes community members, nonprofits, government agency directors and line staff, and elected officials to collaborate in Impact Tables focused on health, wealth, education, housing, and safety, creating a new opportunity for deep and lasting systems change.

Further, through the 2016-2021 ReCAST grant, HSD built upon citywide efforts to address community trauma in many meaningful ways, including funding Mental Health Consultants in Head Start centers; training over 3,000 providers in trauma informed practices; creating opportunities for resilience and healing among community members and between the community and Oakland Police Department through Youth-to-Youth Mini-Grants; and centering the stories of cultural workers whose art practices heal communities through a variety of trauma-informed therapeutic interventions.<sup>17</sup> All these efforts are structured to involve community members and ensure their voice in decision making. While these efforts represent great successes, there is much room for cross-systems leveraging and coordination that could improve service delivery across the City. This year’s ReCAST initiative is an opportunity to build on the success of the last ReCAST cycle by working with community partners. Recently, Oakland Thrives restructured their convening model and priority areas. As a result, Oakland ReCAST will establish and convene the Oakland ReCAST Community Advisory Board and will also leverage the expertise of other community boards such as the Head Start Parent Council and the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission in ReCAST activities. Oakland Thrives will continue to provide an opportunity to broaden the impact of our work and raise its profiles that will help bring the work to scale and institutionalize the practices leading to community-led resilience.

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<sup>16</sup> Oakland Fund for Children and Youth. (2020). *Oakland Fund for Children & Youth FY 2019-20 Evaluation Report*.

<sup>17</sup> Training numbers increased significantly in the transition to virtual training. We anticipate a return to in-person engagement prior to resumption of training in 2022.

# Community Needs, Resources, & Gaps

## Behavioral Health

### Community Needs

Findings from the 2017 Oakland ReCAST CNRA revealed that mental health stigma, system navigation, and provider capacity all posed barriers to behavioral health services in Oakland. For many members of the community, youth in particular, any programs that are perceived as part of the mental health system are viewed as negative. Even if members are open to services, many community members are unaware of existing behavioral health services and navigating the system without support can be especially difficult. Once connected, community-based service providers are challenged to meet community needs as there is a high level of demand that exceeds the number of available resources to properly respond. In addition, there is a need for more socially- or culturally-responsive providers and services as not enough mental health consultants share the same lived experience (e.g. racial and ethnic background, engagement with similar community stressors or traumas) as the community they serve and many services and resources are not offered in alternate languages. In addition, socioeconomic factors such as high household cost burden, child poverty, citizenship status and educational attainment pose large barriers to behavioral health service accessibility.<sup>18</sup>

### COVID-19 Impact

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there was an exponential increase in social, emotional, and behavioral health needs for California children including suicide, suicidal ideation, self-injury, anxiety and depression. With the stress of the pandemic and the addition of distance learning, these behavioral health needs have been exacerbated for children with additional social isolation, economic instability and general family strain.<sup>19</sup> A national study found declining parental mental health and subsequent child behavioral health due to COVID-19, and CDC data revealed a rise in pediatric mental health-related visits compared to 2019.<sup>20</sup> In addition, multiple studies have found significantly increased anxiety or depressive symptoms due to COVID-19, in particular for women, young adults, healthcare workers, people with pre-existing mental health conditions and transgender or non-binary people.<sup>21</sup>

Substance abuse continues to be a leading behavioral health issue in the US as drug-related deaths have more than tripled since 2000. In the past year, deaths among Alameda County's unhoused population have increased by 40%, with overdose and chronic substance use contributing heavily to this increase. In the first nine months of 2020 alone, drugs or alcohol played a role in more than a third of unhoused populations' deaths compared to less than a quarter in 2017.<sup>22</sup> Both COVID-19 restrictions (e.g., social distancing and reduced social gatherings) and drug criminalization have contributed to the increase in drug overdoses. Health professionals typically advise drug users to use with someone

else in case of an overdose, however gathering has been discouraged during a pandemic, so many are using alone. Additionally, the criminalization of substance use discourages people who use drugs from accessing emergency services, including lifesaving overdose prevention, emergency housing, and risk-reducing practices such as syringe exchanges.

Although the long-term behavioral health effects of COVID-19 are unknown, many Oakland children experience potentially traumatic events outside of the pandemic that increase their risk of negative, long lasting health issues. These Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are disproportionately experienced by children of color compared with White children. In a UCSF study, 20% of mostly Black and Latinx children in Oakland experience discrimination before they are 12 years old. In addition, more than half have endured four forms of ACES including food, housing insecurity, community violence and discrimination that lead to chronic health conditions that disproportionately affect communities of color.<sup>23</sup>

## Resources & Identified Gaps

**Expand mobile crisis teams and behavioral health service coordination.** The Alameda County Behavioral Health department currently operates several successful models which send clinicians along with police officers for behavioral health calls. However, the Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF)<sup>24</sup> recommends reducing or eliminating the presence of law enforcement in crisis responses and expanding County-funded mental health services to respond to 911 calls for individuals experiencing mental health crises. For example, the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program is currently proposed as a small pilot program in selected areas of East and West Oakland and is a team of unarmed, civilian first responders for non-violent, non-emergency behavioral health calls. The RPSTF recommends the creation of a centralized Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) that coordinates 24-hour mobile crisis teams and stabilization centers. As a one-stop hub, the BHU would be able to provide a continuum of care across its clinical and non-clinical wraparound services to ensure stabilization from a crisis, access to treatment, clinical follow-up care, and linkages to ongoing preventive and support services.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> City of Oakland. (2017). *Oakland ReCAST Community Needs and Resources Assessment*.

<sup>19</sup> California Department of Education. (2020). *Distance Learning Innovations for Special Education Webinar: Addressing Mental Health and Behavior*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v--m5ZJg0n0>

<sup>20</sup> University of California, San Francisco. (2020). *Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Indirect impacts and mitigating interventions for Decision-making (RAPID)*.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Kendall, M. (2020, November 1). Despite protections, deaths surge in Bay Area homeless communities. *East Bay Times*. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/11/01/despite-protections-deaths-surge-in-bay-area-homeless-communities>

<sup>23</sup> University of California, San Francisco. (2020). *Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Indirect impacts and mitigating interventions for Decision-making (RAPID)*.

<sup>24</sup> The Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force was created in 2020 by the Oakland City Council to develop recommendations for reallocation of police funds to public safety alternatives.

<sup>25</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

**Transfer 911 calls to mental health hotlines.** MH First (Mental Health First) is a mental health hotline that that Anti Police-Terror Project (AFTP) recently launched in Oakland that operates on Friday and Saturday nights between 8PM to 8AM when there are currently no other mental health support options available. The goal of MH First is to respond to mental health crises as an alternative to police intervention, including psychiatric emergencies, substance use support and domestic violence safety planning. The RPSTF recommends funding this hotline so it can operate 24/7 to give community members unwilling to call 911 a way to receive professional support. RPSTF also recommends transferring 911 call centers out of the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and to invest in cross-functional teams (e.g. MH First, MACRO) to address behavioral health issues.<sup>26</sup>

**Provide trauma-informed care for children, particularly for those of color.** Programs like Oakland Head Start work with children and families to address socio-economic conditions that may lead to adverse childhood experiences. However due to capacity and limited resources, there is a need to expand early childhood programs focused on behavioral health, in particular for Black and Latinx children.

**Decriminalize substances.** Although Oakland has set enforcement of marijuana or psychedelic substances as the “lowest law enforcement priority,” the Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) recommends a “non-enforcement policy” that decriminalizes personal-use possession and diverts drug-related calls to mobile crisis teams rather than the police.<sup>27</sup> This approach to drug use and addiction ensures that substance abuse is treated as a behavioral health issue rather than a crime and is accompanied by harm reduction services, health services and substance abuse treatment for those who need it.

**Increase harm reduction programs.** Oakland is currently under-resourced with only two Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) – HIV Education Prevention Project of Alameda County and Punks with Lunch. There are not currently any Supervised Consumption Services (SCS) in Oakland, which are designated sites where people can use pre-obtained drugs under the safety and support of trained personnel. The Oakland City Council voted to include a SCS pilot program into current state legislation (SB 57). If passed, Oakland will be one of the first cities in the US to implement this type of harm reduction program.

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<sup>26</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



# Health & Healthcare

## Community Needs

Oakland community members experience various needs related to health and health coverage. Disparities in health outcomes are often due to disproportionate exposure to risk factors such as chronic stress, trauma, violence, and environmental exposures. Life expectancy is often used as an indicator of overall health, as it is impacted by several interrelated risk factors. One study found a 14-year difference in life expectancy for Blacks in West Oakland compared to White residents of the Oakland Hills.<sup>28</sup> City wide, Blacks had the lowest life expectancy at 73 years, compared to Asian residents at 85.9 years.<sup>29</sup> Though there have been overall improvements in health indicators in recent years, disparities persist in several areas.

One such area is maternal, child and adolescent health. Since 2000, there has been an 80% decrease in teen pregnancy rates in Oakland, down to 164 pregnancies from residents under age 20. However, the teen pregnancy rate for Latinas in Alameda County is nearly double the rate for White and Asian teens.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, while the infant mortality rate and preterm birth rate in Oakland is lower than California overall, there are still significant disparities.<sup>31</sup> The infant mortality rate for Black babies born in Oakland was 6.16 times higher than the infant mortality rate for White babies in Oakland in 2019.<sup>32</sup> These disparities are not explained by socioeconomic status alone, highlighting the role that systemic racism and exposure to racial stress and trauma plays in maintaining health disparities.

There are also significant racial disparities in rates of hospitalization and disease. The overall hospitalization rate for preventable disease was higher in zip codes with mostly non-White residents compared to zip codes with mostly White residents in Oakland.<sup>33</sup> Hospitalization rates are highest for Black residents for several conditions including asthma (10 times higher than White residents), mental illness (8.4 times higher than Asian residents), and substance use (16.66 times higher than Asian residents). Disease prevalence is also often higher for Black residents, including HIV prevalence (4.73 times higher than White residents).<sup>34</sup>

Disparities also exist with accessing quality healthcare and benefits, further exacerbating disparities in disease burden. Latinx Oakland residents were 4.92 times more likely to be uninsured than White residents (13.1% compared to 2.7%, respectively).

### COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 disproportionately impacted residents in East Oakland and Fruitvale neighborhoods. These communities had higher COVID-19 case positivity rates compared to Oakland overall (12.2% compared to 10%) and even more significant implications for Black and Latinx residents. Though

Latinx residents make up only 22% of the population of Alameda County, they accounted for more than half of the cases. Similarly, the death rate for Blacks was more than double that of White residents in the county.<sup>35</sup>

## Resources & Identified Gaps

**There are resources available for community members to address their health needs.** One of the major resources is public health insurance. According to the 2015–2019 American Community Survey, 37.9% (160,515) of Oakland residents are covered by Medicaid, Medicare, and/or Veterans Affairs health coverage. However, nearly 8% of residents (33,417) are uninsured.<sup>36</sup> This may be due to eligibility requirements of public insurance programs. For example, if a family is covered by Medi-Cal but their income changes to put them just above the income limit, they would no longer qualify for coverage, but may be unable to pay for health care insurance out of pocket.<sup>37</sup>

**There are community-based resources available for youth and families experiencing the impacts of violence and trauma.** Unfortunately, these services are not able to meet the needs of every resident. A significant number of children and youth in Oakland score high on the ACEs survey, indicating a high need for services, though only a small proportion actually receive these services.<sup>38</sup>

## Education & Youth

### Community Needs

Educational attainment is a powerful predictor of well-being and economic success beginning as young as 0 to 5 years of age. While the number of Oakland youth under 18 years of age has decreased by 12% in the past six years, the population of children under the age of five has increased slightly to 6.3% of the population.<sup>39</sup> Oakland Head Start parent surveys indicate parents' need for more early

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<sup>28</sup> Alameda County Public Health Department. (2008). *Life and Death from Unnatural Causes in Alameda County*, as cited in City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>29</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>30</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>36</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>37</sup> City of Oakland. (2017). *Oakland ReCAST Community Needs and Resources Assessment*.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

childhood services that extend from birth-to-five.<sup>40</sup> Research has found that preschool experience prior to kindergarten is correlated with greater readiness and success in school.<sup>41</sup> The 2019 City of Oakland Equity Indicators Report found Latinx children in Oakland were 4.72 times more likely and Asian children almost 3 times more likely to not have attended preschool than White children.<sup>42</sup> In addition, full-time childcare or preschool in Alameda County costs more than tuition at UC Berkeley (an estimated average of \$23,000 per year), making early childhood education less accessible for low-income families.<sup>43</sup> Only 31% of Alameda County children with working parents have a licensed childcare and early education space available to them and 23% of families eligible for subsidized childcare are receiving a subsidy.<sup>44</sup>

Black boys were most prone to have health issues emerging before kindergarten, including low birthweight, asthma, and dental health issues, which may contribute to chronic absence and suspension in the early grades, significant trauma, and lack of reading and math proficiency in third grade.<sup>45</sup> Latinx boys in Oakland had the lowest rates of preschool participation, pre-literacy skill development before kindergarten and the highest rates of English Learner status in third grade. School readiness assessments in Alameda County and Oakland found similar results, with Black and Latinx children behind their peers in key school readiness indicators, in particular children who are dual language learners.<sup>46</sup>

In the 2018–2019 school year, only 35.1% of OUSD third grade students were reading at or above grade-level, with Black and Latinx students over five times more likely to not meet these standards compared to their White peers.<sup>47,48</sup> Third grade is when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn, and US studies show that students who were not proficient in reading by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school and 66% would end up in jail or on relying on public assistance.<sup>49</sup> The illiteracy issue disproportionately affects Black and Latinx students, with the disparity widening in recent years. While Oakland Unified School District high school graduation rates have increased and dropout rates have decreased, Latinx students and English language learners are more likely to not graduate, compared with their peers.<sup>50,51</sup> This disparity has long-lasting ramifications for well-being, as nearly 30% of Oaklanders that do not have a high school degree or equivalency, are

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>43</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> 2017 study by Urban Strategies Council; City of Oakland. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>46</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.; City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>47</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>48</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>49</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>50</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>51</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

living at or below the poverty level.<sup>52</sup> Lastly, more than 1 in 3 residents living in predominantly Latinx immigrant communities in West and East Oakland<sup>53</sup> do not have a high school diploma.<sup>54</sup>

### COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue of child care accessibility, as both family child care sites and centers are at half capacity compared to pre-2020.<sup>55</sup> Prior to COVID-19, community voices during the 2017 CRNA shared that public schools struggle to meet the behavioral health needs of students, in particular those who have experienced violence and trauma.<sup>56</sup> Since then, behavioral health needs of students have increased due to COVID-19 while accessibility to school support has decreased due to the physical constraints of distance learning.

### Resources & Identified Gaps

**Increase access to early childhood education.** Current programs such as Oakland Head Start and Alameda County First 5 aim to support education prior to kindergarten. Through a variety of innovative programs, partnerships with various organizations, foundations, universities, and City departments, Head Start and First 5 work with children and families to address socio-economic conditions that lead to adverse childhood experiences. These programs are designed to address the racial disparities in regards to access to quality early childhood education through innovative models that meet the particular needs of low-income children of color. However, there is a need to increase capacity and accessibility of these programs, in particular for Latinx, Black and English-language learners. This was addressed in 2021, as the Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) recommended expanding and investing in early literacy services and supports, in particular those focused on third grade and below.<sup>57</sup>

**Increase individualized, youth-led spaces and support programs.** Oakland currently lacks a variety of both physically and psychologically safe spaces that fulfill the multifaceted needs of young people, ranging from assistance with supplemental education, counseling, and more creative activities, such as sports, art, and dance. In addition, there is a lack of targeted, safe spaces for a greater diversity of young people, including queer youth, disabled youth, and parenting youth. The few spaces available are rarely led by young people, thereby limiting their ability to practice self-determination and sense

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<sup>52</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>53</sup> Zip codes: 94601, 94603, 94606, and 94621

<sup>54</sup> US Census Data; City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>55</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>56</sup> City of Oakland. (2017). *Oakland ReCAST Community Needs and Resources Assessment*.

<sup>57</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

of belonging in their communities. For example, Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) recommends an increased investment and alignment in the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission (OYAC) and the Oakland Police and Community Youth Leadership Council (OPC-YLC) to enable effective, youth-led improvements for community safety.<sup>58</sup>

**Invest in affordable higher education.** Programs like Oakland Promise aim to support low-income students with academic achievements through scholarships and academic guidance from birth to college. This type of support throughout a child’s academic career should be expanded upon for not only educational attainment but violence prevention, as numerous studies have shown a correlation between level of education and criminal activity. The Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) recommends making all Oakland Community Colleges free for local residents in order to eliminate the financial barriers that low-income students face when pursuing higher education.<sup>59</sup>

## Poverty & Income

### Community Needs

The traumatizing impact of chronic and persistent poverty cannot be underestimated. The challenge with meeting basic needs, from affordable housing to consistent employment to childcare, has a tremendous impact on one’s well-being and sense of safety, and too easily intersects with violence, trauma, and toxic stress. Without a safe place to sleep or the promise of a regular meal, individuals are often not ready to receive the benefits of trauma-informed services. Therefore, poverty and its precipitating factors must be considered in a trauma-informed approach.

Unfortunately, some populations must contend with conditions of poverty at a disproportionate rate. The neighborhoods of West and East Oakland, spanning six zip codes, show a significantly higher rate of poverty than the overall city rate (average of 21.6%, compared to 13.9%), and a lower per capita income (\$33,948 compared to \$40,628).<sup>60</sup> In six of the nine zip codes, 1 in 4 residents on average are living in poverty.<sup>61</sup> The rates of child poverty are most concentrated in three zip codes, where 4 out of 10 children are living below the poverty line.<sup>62</sup> Even earning above the poverty line does not guarantee your basic needs will be met. According to the Insight Center for Community Economic Development’s Family Needs Calculator, an Alameda County family of four in 2021, consisting of two adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child, would require an annual household income of \$123,080 simply to meet their basic needs.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>59</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>60</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>61</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>62</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>63</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

While the cost of living is high, employment is not easy to come by. Between February 2020 and February 2021, the total number of available employment opportunities in the East Bay decreased by 9.5%.<sup>64</sup> The summer of 2020 saw a steep increase in unemployment rates, spiking to 13.9%, and since settling down to 7.4% as of February 2021.<sup>65</sup> This downturn has a disproportionate impact on women of color in low-income households<sup>66</sup>, who saw unemployment rates from 15% to 29% in 2020.<sup>67</sup> This equity issue likely relates to the high cost of childcare (see *Education & Youth*), and yet, a lack of program funding means that only 23% of Oakland families eligible for subsidized child care receive a subsidy.<sup>68</sup>

Rising living costs and few job opportunities also take a toll on food security. Nearly 800,000 Bay Area residents are food insecure, with the highest proportion living in Alameda County.<sup>69</sup> Over the 2019–2020 school year, 71.6% of Oakland students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.<sup>70</sup> In Oakland, Latinx households are 5.44 times more likely to receive SNAP benefits as compared to White households.<sup>71</sup> This highlights the increased prevalence of food insecurity in non-White communities. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity in Alameda County. Between February 2020 and February 2021, the number of people receiving CalFresh surged by 14.5%, with 62,000 from Oakland.<sup>72</sup> There is a strong correlation between food security and safety, as research shows that childhood hunger significantly increases the likelihood of involvement in violent acts as an adult, and healthy nutrition can help reduce violent behavior in adults.<sup>73</sup> According to one study, the risk of early childhood exposure to violence and/or abuse in the home is roughly six times higher in families that are chronically food insecure.<sup>74</sup>

### COVID-19 Impact

Primarily due to the high cost of living, approximately 12% of Alameda County residents are food insecure. The Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) reports that it serves one out of every five Alameda County residents, two-thirds of whom are children or seniors. The COVID-19 crisis, however, has dramatically increased the need for subsidized food by 50–70%. The ACCFB reports that food distribution soared from 600 pounds of food per week to over a million pounds

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021–2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>66</sup> Households with a total income of \$50,000 or less.

<sup>67</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>68</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>69</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>70</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>71</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>72</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>73</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

per week to their distribution sites, highlighting increased levels of food insecurity in the County.<sup>75</sup>

## Resources & Identified Gaps

**Increase access to affordable and nutritious food.** To ensure all neighborhoods that experience food insecurity have access to affordable, nutritious, and fresh food options, the Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force recommend that the City: **1)** implement and enforce Healthy Development Guidelines (HDG); **2)** fund a plan to remedy the harms created by historically racist planning policies and practices.<sup>76</sup> The HDG was developed by the East Oakland Building Healthy Communities (EOBHC) Land Use Workgroup, in collaboration with Oakland residents, architects, developers, the City of Oakland Planning Department, Alameda County Public Health Department, Communities for a Better Environment, HOPE Collaborative, and East Bay Housing Organization, to ensure healthier and more equitable development in Oakland.

**Invest in childcare centers to address the needs of low-income Oakland families.** As of December 2020, only 69% of family childcare providers and 60% of centers were open in Alameda County. The resulting permanent closures could impact the cost of childcare if centers and providers are in higher demand in the future, further driving up costs.<sup>77</sup>

# Housing Affordability & Displacement

## Community Needs

While high costs are driven by multiple factors, housing affordability plays a leading role. A lack of affordable housing often results in overcrowding and household stress, thus perpetuating cycles of poverty among residents.<sup>78</sup> A 2015–2019 ACS report highlights that a staggering 49% of households in Oakland are rent burdened (i.e., housing costs that exceed 30% of the total household income). A majority of families residing in East and West Oakland are severely rent burdened (i.e., housing costs exceed 50% of the total household income).<sup>79, 80</sup> These rates increase when narrowing the scope to Oakland’s lowest income households. Over 80% of extremely low-income (ELI) households pay more than 30% of their income towards rent.<sup>81</sup>

High housing costs are also responsible for the forced displacement of families who can no longer afford to live in areas with increasingly soaring rents and real estate prices. Between 2013 and 2017,

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<sup>75</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>76</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>77</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>78</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>79</sup> Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Data Profile: Alameda County and Oakland*.

<sup>80</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>81</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021–2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

one in three Oakland neighborhoods experienced gentrification, and in the last 20 years, the Black population declined by more than one-third.<sup>82, 83</sup> This data suggests that increasing rents and residual impacts of the 2008 foreclosure crisis which disproportionately impacted Black homeowners have contributed to this precipitous demographic shift.

While homelessness is the most apparent consequence of this displacement, many Oakland families were forced to relocate to more affordable areas within the region or abandon the region and their communities entirely. This has led to mass displacement, forcing families to move 'downward' to lower opportunity neighborhoods. Data has shown that low-income families moving from historically Black neighborhoods relocate to neighborhoods with lower housing values and health scores, indicating that relocation is due to economic constraint.<sup>84</sup>

### *Equity Issues*

In addition to high costs of living, a history of systemic racism and discriminatory policies contributes to severe racial inequities when it comes to housing. When compared to the other topics of economics, education, public health, public safety, and neighborhood and civic life, Oakland's 2018 Equity Indicators Report ranked housing as the third most important indicator of equity. This inequity can be seen across housing affordability, quality, and displacement and gentrification.

Forced displacement poses a significantly higher risk for Black Oaklanders than for residents of other racial backgrounds. In majority Black census tracts, renters are 8 times more likely to receive an eviction notice than those in majority Asian tracts, where eviction is least likely. This leads to high rates of homelessness, with Black residents 41 times more likely than Asian residents to become unhoused. As a result, 70% of the unhoused community is Black—an extraordinarily disproportionate number as compared to the overall population (22%).<sup>85, 86</sup> Furthermore, this population experiences over-policing and criminalization of poverty at a rate much higher than other racial groups. Data shows that 82% of people stopped by the Oakland Housing Authority Police Department between January 14 and March 19, 2021, were Black adults charged with offenses such as "loitering" on or near Oakland Housing Authority property or merely being suspicious.<sup>87</sup>

Oakland's high cost of living and rent, a result of gentrification and a lack of affordable housing, have contributed to a rise in the number of homeless families and children. A homeless count in January

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<sup>82</sup> Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership. (2021). *Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>83</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>84</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>85</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>86</sup> U. S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Quickfacts: Oakland city, California*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/oaklandcitycalifornia>

<sup>87</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.



2019 indicated over 4,000 unsheltered residents in Oakland, a 47% increase in total homelessness from 2017.<sup>88</sup>

### **COVID-19 Impact**

The COVID-19 crisis has placed a disproportionate burden on housing security for low-income communities. According to a renter vulnerability index created by University of Pennsylvania to identify neighborhoods most vulnerable to housing insecurity as a result of COVID-19, renters in East and West Oakland were identified as the most vulnerable to housing insecurity.<sup>89</sup> Data also suggests that the pandemic may have impacted non-White tenants more significantly. A similar survey found that the inability to pay rent was most heavily felt by BLIPOC<sup>90</sup> residents.<sup>91</sup>

Rent burden differs greatly when broken down by race. Black households have the lowest median household income, and over 60% of Black renter households are rent burdened, with one-third severely rent burdened – the most significant rate of any racial/ethnic group in Oakland.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, Black residents in Oakland are the least likely to own their homes and 2.3 times more likely than White residents to have their home loan application denied by banks.<sup>93</sup> While half of all Oakland households are rent burdened, Black and Latinx residents experience rent burden at a rate of 58% and 52%, respectively.<sup>94</sup>

For those residents of color who remain in Oakland homes, the quality of the housing and provision of essential services is not equivalent to their White counterparts. The 2019 Oakland Equity Indicators Report cited that Black residents are most likely to not have plumbing or complete kitchen facilities in their homes, while Latinx families were most likely to live in overcrowded units<sup>95</sup>. Both Black and Latinx residents were most likely to lack high speed internet access at home, at 41% and 34%, respectively, as compared to White residents at 15%. This limitation has significant implications during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the world saw a shift to online social engagement and virtual employment requirements.

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<sup>88</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>89</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>90</sup> Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and People of Color

<sup>91</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>92</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>93</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>94</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>95</sup> Defined by Oakland Equity Indicators Report as units with more than 1.5 people per room.

## Resources & Identified Gaps

**End homelessness for BLIPOC families and seniors.** The Alameda County–Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC–OCAP) has committed to a goal to end homelessness for BLIPOC families with children and seniors over 55. They aim to achieve this by partnering with organizations who are committed to increasing housing allocation for children and seniors experiencing homelessness.

**Decriminalize homelessness and poverty.** While Oakland Police Department’s (OPD) Homeless Outreach Unit is a prominent resource in the community, the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) recommends dissolving the unit in favor of investing in mobile street outreach units. This is due to reports by unhoused residents and advocates of chronic over–policing of homeless encampments and mistreatment by OPD.<sup>96</sup>

**Invest in affordable housing with a focus on racial equity.** The housing crisis in Oakland, triggered by the 2008 Recession and exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic, continues to destabilize in its second decade. Immediate housing solutions are needed to address not only the chronically homeless population, but also the housing needs of the newly unsheltered and working–class populations, who have been underserved by traditional homeless service providers.<sup>97</sup> RPSTF recommends developing immediate housing solutions for the unhoused by collaborating with unhoused community members to generate solutions to the housing crisis. These needs must be addressed not only by the provision of affordable housing units, but also by increasing protections for long–time housed residents and developing strategies to improve housing habitability and health.<sup>98</sup> Anti–displacement strategies are needed to address the racialized inequities that pervade housing insecurity across the City.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the City of Oakland’s housing agency responsible for allocating housing dollars, managing housing law compliance, and supporting the creation and preservation of affordable housing. In their 2021–2023 Strategic Action Plan, they outline three primary strategies to address the primary housing needs of the City: **1)** Protect tenants from displacement by conducting rights awareness campaigns, enforcing rent laws, aligning anti–displacement and homelessness prevention activities, and evaluating Oakland’s neighborhood preference policy to mitigate racial inequities in displacement; **2)** Preserve housing to ensure long–term affordability for residents by placing regulatory restrictions on existing housing and implementing resident ownership strategies; and **3)** Produce more affordable housing units by investing City funding into affordable housing construction. A key component of their protection strategies is the Rent Adjustment Program, which includes anti–displacement policies such as recently passed Tenant Protection, Just Cause, and Eviction Moratorium Ordinances.<sup>99</sup> Above all, these address excessive rent increases, which can have devastating impacts on not only residents, but the entire community.

## COVID-19 Impact

Soaring rental prices force thousands of Oakland residents to choose between paying more than half of their income on rent, foregoing other basic needs, or moving far away from jobs and neighborhood ties. None of these options are viable for many people, resulting in homelessness. The COVID-19 situation has not only aggravated the problem but has also highlighted the necessity for a strong protective framework.

# Violence & Criminal Justice Involvement

## Community Needs

Violent crime has long been a problem for the residents of Oakland. Communities in the city experience a disproportionately higher burden of violence and related instability, especially among youth and young adults, and particularly in the neighborhoods of East and West Oakland. Results from the 2017 CRNA revealed that residents of Oakland shared that persistent violence within their communities was a major contributing factor to their trauma.<sup>100</sup> Particularly, gun violence, residential break ins, and domestic violence were cited as problem areas. Given the high levels of these issues, many residents also reported that violence, while traumatic, had been normalized in their communities.

Further, issues related to disparity have also been layered on top of crime problems in Oakland. According to the Oakland ReCAST Disparity Statement, the majority of shooting and homicide victims and suspects were Black and Latinx men between the ages of 18 and 35, with homicide being the leading cause of death for Oakland residents under the age of 25. In 2019 Black people in Oakland had the highest rates of homicide and were 16 times more likely to be a victim of homicide than Oakland's White residents.<sup>101</sup> These disparities persist deeper into the criminal justice system with Blacks in Oakland being 8.6 times more likely to be incarcerated in jail and 20 times more likely to be incarcerated in prison than White residents. Similarly for youth, those living in poverty experienced more incarceration for non-violent offenses than those living in affluent communities.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>97</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>98</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>99</sup> City of Oakland Housing & Community Development Department. (2021). *2021-2023 Strategic Action Plan*.

<sup>100</sup> City of Oakland. (2017). *Oakland ReCAST Community Needs and Resources Assessment*.

<sup>101</sup> Oakland ReCAST Disparity Statement

<sup>102</sup> City of Oakland. (2017). *Oakland ReCAST Community Needs and Resources Assessment*.

More recent statistics for the City of Oakland reveal that crime continues to be a persistent issue. Data from the Oakland Police Department comparing crime rates in 2020 to a five-year average (of crime rates between 2016 and 2020) show that while some violent crimes like rape and robbery have slightly decreased (9% and 11% respectively), homicide and aggravated assault have had a marked increase (28% and 20% respectively). When accounting for all crime, there was a 6% decrease in 2020 compared to the five-year average.<sup>103</sup> Violence reduction efforts undertaken in the city seemed to positively impact crime rates in the early 2010s, with homicides dropping from their peak of 126 murder in 2011 to total of 75 murders in 2019.<sup>104</sup> However, as in many cities, violent crime in Oakland increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with crime statistics showing a 45% increase in year-over-year shootings and murders in 2020.<sup>105</sup> Shootings in Oakland increased 60% from 2019 to 2020 and there was an average of 100 shootings per month between June and December of 2020.<sup>106</sup> The year 2020 also saw a 77% increase in female shooting victims. Oakland continues to rank among the 30 most violent cities in America<sup>107</sup> and the neighborhoods of East, Central East, and West Oakland have the most concentrated high rates of violent crime.<sup>108</sup>

In 2019, the city of Oakland published its community stressors map to share information about the experiences of chronic stress, violence, and trauma in its neighborhoods. The map provided a point-in-time snapshot of multiple risk factors on community stress across Oakland's neighborhoods and many of those factors were related to violent crime.<sup>109</sup> Similar to other data, the community stressors map revealed that the communities in East and West Oakland were the most stressed in terms of crime rates (particularly homicides, shootings, and domestic violence), number of juveniles and adults on probation, and police stops and arrests.<sup>110</sup> The prevalence of crime related stress serves to increase the trauma experienced by residents of these neighborhoods who are overwhelmingly Black and Latinx.

### COVID-19 Impact

Like many cities, across the country, violent crime increased in Oakland during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same way that the COVID positivity rates were higher in East Oakland, crime rates also increased disproportionately during the pandemic. Circumstances such as school closures, job loss, and shelter-in-place orders contributed to the rise in shootings and homicides and exposed

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<sup>103</sup> Oakland Police Department. (2020). *UCR Crime Stats - Citywide*.

<sup>104</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>105</sup> City of Oakland Human Services Department. (2021). *Head Start Community Needs Assessment*.

<sup>106</sup> City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention. (2022). *Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24*.

<sup>107</sup> Mathematica. (2021). *Oakland Unite 2016-2020 Comprehensive Evaluation*.

<sup>108</sup> City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention. (2022). *Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24*.

<sup>109</sup> Other stressor measures included health and environment, housing, education, and poverty

<sup>110</sup> *Oakland Community Stressors Index*. (n.d.). City of Oakland. Retrieved from <https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/oakland-community-stressors-index>

already vulnerable residents to higher levels of intimate partner violence and child abuse. Exacerbating the impact of violence during the pandemic, existing community support and violence prevention efforts that had been entrenched in the community were significantly disrupted by the city's stay-at-home orders, further contributing to the stress and trauma experienced by the residents of Oakland.<sup>111</sup>

In addition to community violence, Oakland residents also experience violence from the Oakland Police Department (OPD), in particular those who are Black and/or have behavioral health needs. In 2017, Black Oaklanders were 24 times more likely to experience use of force from police than a White person.<sup>112</sup> As of 2019, Blacks are more likely to be arrested and/or experience discretionary stops by OPD in comparison to White and Asian residents. In particular, Black youth experience disproportionately more police interactions and as of 2019 young Black people are 112 times more likely to be arrested for a juvenile felony than a White youth.<sup>113</sup> The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports almost half of the people who die at the hands of police have some kind of disability and estimates that 40% of mentally ill Americans will be jailed or incarcerated at some point in their lives.<sup>114</sup>

## Resources & Identified Gaps

**Improved response to violent crime.** In response to the persistent violent crime and trauma experienced by Oakland residents, both the city and community organizations have established resources designed to support neighborhood residents. In 2017, the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) was established to address violent crime in the city. DVP's mission focused not only on the victims and perpetrators at the center of violent crime, but also included a prevention and intervention mission of advocating for and supporting families impacted by unsolved cold cases and addressing broader community trauma. DVP endeavored to reduce levels of violent crime (e.g. gun violence, intimate partner violence, commercial sexual exploitation) and family and community trauma associated with violence. The DVP was mandated to use a public health approach to addressing violence in Oakland that focused on both the root causes of violence as well as the specific individual, peer, family, and community active levels of violence. This approach calls for coordinated efforts for violence prevention that engage diverse sectors of the community.<sup>115</sup> The pandemic shut down many of the efforts of the DVP until very recently. In 2021 the DVP was revived with its original focus and incorporating a focus on the impact of COVID in the communities it serves. Current themes from the DVP's 2021 community engagement for violence prevention strategic plan include:

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<sup>111</sup> City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention. (2022). *Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24*.

<sup>112</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>113</sup> City of Oakland. (2018). *Oakland Equity Indicators Report*.

<sup>114</sup> City of Oakland. (2021). *Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, Report and Recommendations*.

<sup>115</sup> City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention. (2022). *Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24*.

- Prioritize investments in people and places most impacted by violence;
- Elevate and develop natural, homegrown expertise of community leaders to address violence prevention from within the community;
- Provide services and programs for youth living in neighborhoods with high violence exposure rates;
- Provide financial and employment support that addresses the economic insecurity that leads to poverty and homelessness;
- Provide culturally relevant mental health services to address multi-generational trauma and assist with individual and community healing
- Improve coordination between and across city departments and community organizations;
- Adequate funding is needed for the Department of Violence Prevention to tackle both violence prevention and intervention; particularly for youth programs and gender-based violence;
- Educate the community on all of the available resources delivered by the DVP and its network of partners;
- A balance of community approaches is needed to address conflicts that do not require law enforcement presence as well as those conflicts of extreme violence that residents perceive require constitutional law enforcement efforts.

Based on these themes, for its strategic spending in fiscal year 22-24 the DVP identified myriad activities organized around the goals of violent incident crisis response, gun/group/gang violence response, gender-based violence response, and community healing and restoration.<sup>116</sup>

**Improved community supports for victims and families.** In 2019, the Urban Strategies Council Violence Prevention Report was released that included data gathered through a participatory methodology from Oakland residents. The report included the views of residents related to existing community needs, resources, and service gaps. Sixty percent (60%) of the participants in the study experienced violence in public spaces and 53% had prior experience with gun violence as a victim, relative, friend, or perpetrator. Given these high numbers of involvement, many respondents were in a position to seek out support services. Respondents reported that they found healing through targeted services (e.g. counseling, behavioral therapy), faith-based healing, and support from family and friends. Respondents who were also victims of domestic violence cited receiving support from community-based services and classes such as A Safe Place, MOM’s Program, and the Peace Program (among others).<sup>117</sup>

Services provided by city agencies such as Oakland Police Department were also discussed. While residents saw the role of the city as “crucial” to violence prevention and praised the efforts of OPD’s

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<sup>116</sup> City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention. (2022). *Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24*.

<sup>117</sup> Other programs cited included Love Amelia, Victims of Crime, The Family Violence and Law Center, and Laney College Counseling.

Ceasefire program, respondents in general viewed OPD as “disconnected” from client-centered services.<sup>118</sup> Overall, respondents articulated a need and desire for more services and support systems in their communities that were accessible, culturally sensitive, non-judgmental, and non-system affiliated.<sup>119</sup> Respondents also highlighted the need to create prevention and intervention methods that target the unique needs of the different racial and ethnic groups in Oakland and articulated a need for trauma-informed and healing-centered principles to be integrated into systems and policies.<sup>120</sup>

Based on the lived-experience of respondents with violent crime and available services across the city, the Urban Strategies report also included some community-proposed solutions to address crime and service delivery. Specifically, respondents suggested addressing gun violence through community buyback programs, stricter gun laws and regulations, and community-based participatory research to understand the root causes of gun violence.<sup>121</sup> To address domestic violence, respondents suggested affordable rehabilitation services for offenders, education classes on healthy choices, and relocation support services for victims. Other suggestions included changes in the police processes for dealing with domestic violence, better communication between the community and the government agencies (more town hall meetings, community forums, etc.), education and outreach, and family support services for victims and perpetrators of violent crime.<sup>122</sup>

**Implement alternatives for violence prevention outside of the police.** In response to the national civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Oakland City Council approved an FY20-21 budget that trimmed the Oakland Police Department (OPD) budget by \$14.6 million and created the Oakland Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) to develop recommendations for public safety alternatives. Specifically, recommendations aim to reduce racial equity disparities in the provision of public safety services and infrastructure, specifically for black communities in Oakland. The first priority of the Task Force was to allocate \$20 million to the Department of Violence Prevention to fulfill its mission of reducing shootings, homicides, domestic violence, and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, the Task Force recommends funding and strengthening community-based organizations such as existing Neighborhood Crime Prevention Councils and the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO, see Behavioral Health section).

## Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The following section summarizes findings and conclusions drawn from the CNRA.

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<sup>118</sup> Urban Strategies Council. (2019). *Rethinking Violence Prevention In Oakland, CA*.

<sup>119</sup> Urban Strategies Council. (2019). *Rethinking Violence Prevention In Oakland, CA*.

<sup>120</sup> Urban Strategies Council. (2019). *Rethinking Violence Prevention in Oakland, CA*.

<sup>121</sup> Urban Strategies Council. (2019). *Rethinking Violence Prevention in Oakland, CA*.

<sup>122</sup> Urban Strategies Council. (2019). *Rethinking Violence Prevention In Oakland, CA*.

Many needs and resources gaps still exist in the city of Oakland. Residents, particularly those in East and West Oakland, are continuing to experience trauma from a multitude of sources. Much of that trauma has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its disparate impact on already traumatized neighborhoods. Many of those neighborhoods are also disproportionately filled with BIPOC residents. As well, the findings of the current CNRA largely mirrored the findings of the 2017 CNRA.

### ***What areas are contributing to the trauma experienced by Oakland residents?***

- Based on a thorough review of existing data related to community needs in Oakland that has been compiled for the past five years, the CNRA found that the following need areas were present:
  - Behavioral health
  - Physical health and health care
  - Education and youth issues
  - Poverty and income
  - Housing affordability and displacement
  - Violence and criminal justice involvement
- Data suggests that these traumatizing factors disproportionately impact the BIPOC residents of Oakland.
- In each of these areas, the COVID -19 epidemic and the response to it (e.g. stay at home orders, loss of employment, limited resources, etc.) exacerbated the effect of these traumatizing factors.

### ***What resources exist in the community for residents experiencing trauma?***

- While there are several HSD Divisions and other city departments as well as some community organizations that provide some support, **no one organization or resource emerged** as the most used by Oakland residents.
- Overall, community members seemed appreciative of the services they received, however the available **services were often insufficient to meet the level of need** displayed by residents.
- Some of the programs that existed in Oakland pre-pandemic are no longer available to residents as a result of closings
- Across many of the traumatizing factors examined, **residents relied on family, friends, and other informal supports** to meet many of their needs.

### ***What gaps in resources or services are residents experiencing?***

- Many community members cited a **need for more socially or culturally responsive providers and services**, as well as services and resources offered in alternative languages.
- Residents cited a need for **trauma-informed services** across multiple areas and contexts.
- Relative to mental health, residents identified a need for **non-police related services and response options** for communities.
- **Increased access** to support programs and options (e.g. early childhood education, behavioral health services, individualized youth-led spaces and support programs, affordable and nutritious food, etc.)



## Next Steps

The current CNRA highlighted several needs that continue to exist in the Oakland community, many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As well, many of the community resources that existed at the time of the prior CRNA were significantly negatively impacted by closures and stay-at-home orders during the pandemic. This has left many neighborhoods with well-articulated needs around poverty, education, health, and violent crime but with fewer resources than in years past. Oakland ReCAST's strategic navigation plan will focus on those service gaps and leverage community voices to identify and implement trauma-informed community-based services.

Informed by the CNRA, the strategic navigation plan will outline a specific strategy for community engagement to inform service development and delivery. The plan will include focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews with stakeholders and community members, and participatory research activities, all designed to address the three ReCAST goals:

**ReCAST Goal #1:** Increase the capacity of City agencies, local service provider networks, and community interventionists to provide and collaborate in the provision of trauma-informed and culturally-relevant services and activities for high-risk youth and families.

**ReCAST Goal #2:** Expand the usage of trauma-informed practices and increase alignment of plans to promote trauma-informed systems across City agencies and local service provider networks.

**ReCAST Goal #3:** Increase opportunities for community-driven resilience and healing among and between community members most affected by violence and trauma.

The CNRA revealed that across all of the identified issue areas, communities were lacking trauma-informed services. The strategic navigation plan will outline a strategy for working with community partners to identify existing resources and barriers to violence prevention and trauma-informed services; identify barriers to coordination among providers; explore training needs of City staff, local service providers, and peer support providers; and assess the efficacy of existing trauma-informed services and modalities, and identify opportunities for enhancing these services. The ReCAST goals will serve as a centerpiece of the navigation plan, providing context and direction for the next iteration of ReCAST efforts.



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