



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Dr. Reginald D. Freeman
Chief, Oakland Fire Dept.

SUBJECT: Informational Report on the Status of
the MACRO Program Advisory Board

DATE: October 25, 2022

City Administrator Approval

Date: Nov 1, 2022

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends The Oakland City Council Receive An Informational Report On The Status And Work Of The Mobile Assistance Community Responders Of Oakland (MACRO) Advisory Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 2, 2021, City Council directed the City Administrator to explore options for expediting the implementation of the 18-month pilot phase of the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland (MACRO) program, a community response program for non-violent, non-emergency 911 calls.

This informational report provides City Council and the public with an update on the implementation of the MACRO program with specific focus on the volunteer MACRO Advisory Board which was selected in April 2022.

The purpose of the MACRO Community Advisory Board is to provide community input to the MACRO program, advocate for a reimagined response to the needs of Oaklanders, ensure that MACRO executes policy in alignment with the needs of Oakland residents, and partner with community organizations already doing invaluable work on the street.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 2019, City Council allocated \$40,000 to research the feasibility of launching a program in Oakland modeled after an innovative community-based public safety system in Eugene Oregon, known as CAHOOTS. The Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) model operating is widely recognized as a non-law enforcement mobile crisis intervention that has seen significant success since its inception. The program, launched 31 years ago, provides mental health first response for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction.

With the support of the Urban Strategies Council (USC), several stakeholder groups and community members, including people in Oakland's most impacted communities, engaged in

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nine months of analysis to determine the best pathway forward. This work resulted in a recommendation for a pilot program in two geographic areas of Oakland.

In October 2021, the MACRO program, which is housed in the Oakland Fire Department (OFD), was directed to initiate a process to create an advisory board to support and provided ongoing community guidance to program leadership.

In November 2021, the Fire Department provided a report to the Public Safety Committee and City Council that outlined the general goal of the advisory board.

Following a month-long solicitation for candidate recommendations from the public, 11 persons were selected by the Department to participate on the inaugural MACRO advisory board.

In the meantime, on April 9, 2022, MACRO was formally launched and began deploying personnel into the streets. The two-person teams are made up of an Emergency Medical Technician and a Community Intervention Specialist. There are currently 16 MACRO personnel which conduct responses in the two designated pilot areas.

On April 26, the first meeting of the Advisory Board was convened. Since then, the board has held four additional meetings, with the most recent meeting held October 25, 2022.

The primary outcome of each meeting was to update the board on MACRO staffing figures, share data from the monthly impact reports which track volume of “on view” (self-dispatched) interventions and calls for service from police and fire dispatch by incident type, share highlights and recent media coverage, and address operational challenges. There was time scheduled into each meeting agenda to hear from the board about anything they heard from the community, or to ask questions of MACRO staff.

After multiple initial meetings where the MACRO staff and board could get acquainted and share the latest information on the status of the program and answer questions, Fire Administration and MACRO program leadership provided a framework document for the role and responsibilities of the MACRO advisory board (see **Attachment A**). The advisory board is currently reviewing the document and is expected to bring feedback and recommendations for changes to the framework to the next advisory board meeting on November 29, 2022. Any changes and recommendations from the board will be reviewed by the MACRO Program Manager and Fire Chief.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Personal characteristics of current and future MACRO advisory board members

- Ability to: listen, analyze, think clearly and creatively, work well with people individually and in a group, provide constructive feedback.
- Willing to: prepare for and attend board meetings; ask questions; share ideas, opinions, and experiences; open doors in the field and community.
- Possess: honesty; openness to differing views; a friendly, responsive, and patient approach; engagement skills; personal integrity; a developed sense of values; concern for and interest in the program’s development.

The Framework, Roles and Responsibilities of MACRO Advisory Board Participants

The framework under consideration by the advisory board states that the MACRO program advisory board and responsible MACRO program staff will work together to ensure that the program is living up its community driven vision and the adopted goals determined by the Oakland City Council.

As a core function, the board will provide support where requested, assist in the promotion of the program, and identify best-practice standards that are relevant to the work. Board members will also serve as ambassadors to the program, providing a connection to and ongoing exchange of information and ideas between the MACRO / Oakland Fire staff and members of a broader Oakland community.

The MACRO program and its collaborative city agency partners recognize the value and importance of involving external stakeholders from appropriate fields and diverse constituencies (social/criminal/juvenile justice, government, business and industry, education, homeless services, and others) in the development, delivery, and promotion of its pilot program by building an effective working relationship with an appointed advisory board.

The advisory board provides a critical link between program leadership, MACRO responders, key stakeholders, the public and practitioners in the field to achieve the highest quality program and relevance. The MACRO Program Manager and senior officials in Fire Administration are charged with working with program partners in the management of the board and helping the group realize its potential.

Specific duties and responsibilities of board members may include the following:

- Attend monthly advisory board meetings and other events/functions as requested. Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board meetings.
- Be informed about the program(s); its recent data, services/supports, and activities, and inform others.
- Identify and present opportunities for community members and academic entities to engage and study the program.
- Assist with recruitment of potential MACRO employees.
- Provide support and advice to program(s), assist in the development of complementary initiatives that the MACRO program could engage with, and identify best-practice standards for similar programs.
- Serve as an ambassador and advocate to the program(s), providing a connection to and ongoing exchange of information and ideas with practitioners in the field and other external contacts.
- Realistically assess the labor market and advise the program to ensure City is being inclusive about the skills required to meet employment and programmatic needs.
- Assess the relevancy and quality of the training curriculum for new and current employees. Work with program staff and other board members to ensure that the program is delivering learning that is up to date and relevant to current industry, labor, and professional employment practices.
- Assist with program marketing and promotion (social media, hosting events, earned media opportunities).

- Assist in the identification and acquisition (when appropriate) of external funding and resources to support the sustainability and ongoing success of the program
- Assist in the identification and recruitment of new board members.
- Provide recommendations for topic presenters for advisory board meetings.

The work of the MACRO Advisory Board advances the Citywide priorities of holistic community safety and responsive trustworthy government by providing a proactive resource to address behavioral health issues or when there is initial concern for a person's mental health & well-being. The earlier a MACRO team can initiate an intervention, the better chances are to de-escalate the challenge before an individual is in crisis, becomes violent, or whose actions may generate a threat of violence from others. This program was devised by the community of Oakland.

The call for this alternative service model largely came from Oakland neighbors who were disappointed by the fact that many of Oakland's most vulnerable populations were not being well served available existing city services in times of crisis or beforehand.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The Fire Department, and MACRO staff continue to be responsive to requests for information from advisory board members, the public, media, elected officials and academic entities and others seeking information about this alternative service model.

To date, four of the advisory board members, several city council members, media members and community stakeholders have taken the opportunity to go on a "ride along" with MACRO teams. During these experiences, a ride-along participant can learn about what responders are seeing in the community, and what issues may generate an on-view intervention by a crew in the field. A ride along will also give people a chance to evaluate the trends among specific residents who receive care or referrals and provides a unique view of the wholistic approach that responders are using when interacting with persons in the community.

COORDINATION

The Fire Department is in ongoing coordination with the City Administration, various city departments, advisory board members, local, state, and federal officials as it strives to meet the goals of this pilot program.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic impacts related to this informational report.

Environmental: There are no environmental impacts related to this informational report.

Race & Equity: The ongoing coordination between the MACRO program, the advisory board and the City to implement the MACRO program will directly support the following objectives related to race and equity:

- Decreased negative outcomes from law enforcement response to nonviolent 911 emergency calls, especially among Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC);
- Decreased criminal justice system involvement for people in crisis, especially among Black, Indigenous, People of Color;
- Increased connections to community-based services for people in crisis, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color;
- Redirection of MACRO-identified 911 calls to an alternative community response system;
- Reduced Oakland Police expenses and call volume related to 911 nonviolent calls involving people with mental health, substance use, and unsheltered individuals.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff recommends the Oakland City Council accept this informational report on the status and work of the Mobile Assistance Community Responders Of Oakland (MACRO) Advisory Board.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Michael Hunt, Assistant to the Director, Oakland Fire Department at 510-238-6353.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Reginald D. Freeman
Chief, Oakland Fire Dept.

Attachment (1)
A: MACRO Advisory Board Framework