



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: James P. Beere
Interim Chief of Police

SUBJECT: MOU Between City of Oakland and
the University of Southern California

DATE: April 15, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Apr 27, 2026 15:51:14 PDT)

Date: Apr 27, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Enter Into An Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) With The University Of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School Of Social Work To Create Internship Opportunities For Graduate-Level Social Work Students From August 2026 To May 2031.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Resolution would authorize the City Administrator to negotiate and execute a five-year MOU (**Attachment A**) with the University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work (School) to create internship rotation opportunities for graduate-level social work students with the City of Oakland (City) Oakland Police Department (OPD). The Social Work and Public Safety Program at the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School prepares students to enter the social work profession by providing relevant working partnership and professional development as part of it Master of Social Work degree. Students are required to fulfill a practicum placement which includes at least 450 hours per year. The School currently has Agency Partnerships with multiple Public Safety Agencies including the Gardena Police Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the Santa Monica Police Department.

Starting in 2026, OPD intends to begin a partnership with the University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work to participate in the practicum placement (see **Attachment B** for more information).

The services provided by students in a practicum placement include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Crisis intervention and emergency response support
- Data collection, analysis, and research
- Diversion programming
- Grant development and writing
- Inter-agency and multi-agency collaboration and coordination

Public Safety Committee
May 12, 2026

- In-home assessments to identify underlying issues and determine optimal treatment pathways
- Resource linkage and navigation
- Mental health first aid and trauma-informed care
- Mentoring programs
- Community outreach and engagement
- Program planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation
- Crisis assistance and resource provision

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Master of Social Work Degree offers a Social Work and Public Safety Program which includes practicum education. Practicum education prepares students for professional social work by integrating academic learning into practice, assisting with mastering core social work competencies, enhancing practice modalities and interventions, building knowledge for generalist practice, and advancing professional practice. The practicum placement includes at least 16 hours per week for a total of 450 hours in the first year placement and 24 hours per week for a total of 650 hours for the second year placement.

The City of Oakland must provide qualified staff as Practicum Instructors for the students. Practicum instructors serve as supervisors and educators and are responsible for orientation with the Oakland Police Department, fostering a teacher-learner relationship, and developing learning opportunities. While participants in the program are required to adhere to the applicable policies set forth for employees, they remain students of the School and not City employees. If applicable, students will be required to criminal background clearance and any other clearance required to carry out assignments.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work provides the following description of the need and proposed policy:

Social work and police work have more overlap than is commonly thought. Approximately 80% of calls to police are social service related. Police are also frontline responders addressing situations involving people experiencing homelessness, substance use or youth-involved crime and often find themselves striving to de-escalate a disturbance or connect people with social services. Associate Professors of Social Work Practicum Education Rosamaria Alamo and Ricardo Ornelas at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work are directly addressing this need through the Social Work and Public Safety Collaborative, a first-of-its-kind initiative they created to provide a working partnership and professional development pipeline between social work, local law enforcement agencies, and public safety and community based organizations.

The services provided by students in the practicum placement are aligned with the efforts of the Oakland Police Department and will reduce burden on existing staff. The internships are unpaid and the students will receive course credit only.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

This agenda item is a routine item and does not relate to any Oakland strategic planning efforts.

FISCAL IMPACT

This Affiliation Agreement does not involve funding to or from University of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. Rather, it establishes a partnership and efforts to be undertaken by both parties for mutual benefit. The internships are unpaid and the students will receive course credit only.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

This report and legislation have been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

RACE AND EQUITY

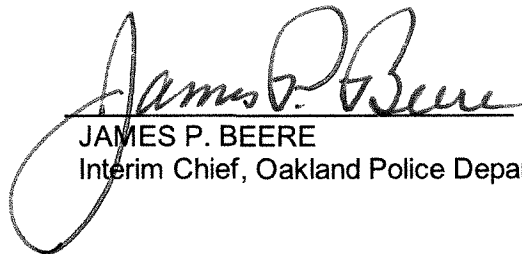
Staff did not complete a Racial Equity Impact Analysis on the recommended action; going forward, data will be tracked in order to measure the short- and long-term impacts of this action that will be dependent on the placement of interns and their specific responsibilities.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Enter Into An Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) With The University Of Southern California, Suzanne Dworak-Peck School Of Social Work To Create Internship Opportunities For Graduate-Level Social Work Students From August 2026 To May 2031.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Anthony Tedesco, Deputy Chief at 510-238-2144.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMES P. BEERE
Interim Chief, Oakland Police Department

Reviewed by:
Dr. Tracey Jones, Police Services Manager
OPD, BRM, Research and Planning

Prepared by:
Anthony Tedesco, Deputy Chief of Police
OPD, Bureau of Field Operations 1

Attachment (2):

- A: MOU with University of Southern California Department of Social Work
- B: Social Work Public Safety Program Overview