



# AGENDA REPORT

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

**FROM:** Dr. Jason H. Lester  
Human Services Director

**SUBJECT:** SAMHSA Oakland ReCAST  
Program FY 25-26

**DATE:** December 15, 2025

City Administrator Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (Jan 15, 2026 16:04:04 PST)

Date: 01/15/2026

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:**

- 1. Awarding Grant Agreements Using Substance Abuse And Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Funds To Three Agencies In A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$437,000 To Provide Trauma Informed Behavioral Health Services To High-Risk Youth And Their Families From October 1, 2025 Through December 31, 2026; And**
- 2. Waiving The Local And Small Local Business Enterprise Program (L/SLBE) And Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Requirements And Awarding Professional Services Agreements To Three Entities In An Amount Not To Exceed \$200,000 In SAMSHA Funding From October 1, 2025 Through December 31, 2026; And**
- 3. Authorizing The City Administrator To Amend The Above Grant Agreements And Professional Services Agreements To Increase The Amount Of Said Agreements Using Carryover Or Reallocated Grant Funding In Accordance With SAMHSA Authority**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Oakland's Human Services Department was awarded a second 5-year ReCAST Grant from the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) with annual payments of \$1,000,000 for a total award of \$5,000,000 beginning September 30, 2021, through September 29, 2026. The purpose of this grant is to continue assisting highly stressed youth and families and promote resilience and equity in communities that have recently faced civil unrest through the implementation of evidence-based violence prevention and community youth engagement programs, as well as linkages to trauma-informed behavioral health services.

Life Enrichment Committee  
January 27, 2026

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The City of Oakland's Human Services Department (HSD) was first awarded a 5-year grant to help address Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) during the first cycle of this 2016-2021 grant. The second cycle of the ReCAST grant runs from 2021-2026 and it was awarded to the City of Oakland based on a competitive application that built on the successful work of the first ReCAST grant. On December 21, 2021, the City Council authorized the acceptance of the 5-year ReCAST Program grant from SAMHSA ([Resolution No. 88964 C.M.S.](#)).

The City Council awarded grant agreements and professional services agreements for the use of these SAMHSA funds in Resolution No. 88964 C.M.S. and [Resolution No. 89942 C.M.S.](#) for funding through September 2024, with the ability to enter into contract amendments through 2025 based on carryover funding.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Oakland ReCAST advances the Citywide priority of holistic community safety by addressing the root causes of violence through trauma-informed, community-designed prevention strategies rather than post-incident response. The program delivers culturally appropriate, evidence-based interventions for under-resourced youth, individuals and families impacted by violence, civil unrest, and the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. By acknowledging the role of systemic racism and intergenerational trauma in community violence, ReCAST focuses on strengthening relationships in community collective healing and resilience. These community-driven supports are intended to improve behavioral health outcomes, reduce incidents of violence, and increase long-term community stability.

Oakland ReCAST is a multi-departmental, multi-agency partnership that supports community resilience in the face of trauma. 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 existing 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.

Adoption of this proposed resolution will authorize the City Administrator to renew agreements with the providers indicated in the report, to deliver services aligned with the three ReCAST goal areas for the final year term, subject to SAMHSA funding and grant compliance: *Goal 1*: Increase the capacity (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) of City of Oakland workforce, local service provider networks, and community interventionists to provide and collaborate in the provision of trauma-informed and culturally relevant services and activities for youth and families impacted by stress and trauma; *Goal 2*: Expand practice of community and youth partnership to promote the trauma informed principles of voice, choice, collaboration, and mutuality in Oakland City agencies and local provider networks; and *Goal 3*: Increase

opportunities for community-driven resilience and healing among and between Oakland community members most affected by violence and trauma.

***ReCAST Program Offerings For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025-2026:***

Oakland ReCAST recommends entering into grant and professional service agreements with the following providers in support of the ReCAST goal areas as described above.

**Goal 1 - Capacity Building**

**Be The Change Consulting, LLC** will provide a series of capacity building trainings to community-based organizations that serve youth and families most impacted by stress and trauma in East and West Oakland. Trainings are extended to grantee networks within Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY), Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP), and other City of Oakland divisions to support the organizations that are serving Oakland residents most impacted by trauma and racial disparities. This partnership strengthens community-based organizations' emotional capacity and resilience and allows for the reimagining of systems that community members seek when in distress. These trauma-informed trainings, teach skills such as restorative conflict resolution, healing centered case management, trauma literacy 101, and more.

**Trauma Transformed (T2), a program of East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC)**, will provide trauma-informed training, coaching, and learning sessions to Human Services Department staff as part of our organizational change management efforts. Using the Trauma-Informed Systems (TIS) framework, this initiative will strengthen the City of Oakland staff's well-being, support resilience, and embed trauma-informed practices across programs. Additional learning events will focus on the impacts experienced by service providers who support community members navigating trauma, offering strategies to maintain wellness while delivering high-quality, healing-centered services. Trauma Transformed is the only regional center and clearinghouse in the Bay Area that promotes a trauma-informed system by providing training and policy guidance to systems of care professionals and organizations. T2 is an Oakland-based organization that is uniquely qualified to provide these services. This agency was not selected through a competitive Request for Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) process and is not L/SLBE certified; therefore, a waiver of these requirements is requested in order to execute a professional services agreement.

**Crisis Support Services (CSS)** will implement a Mental Health Learning and Training Program to equip community members and City staff with the knowledge and skills to recognize, understand, and appropriately respond to mental health challenges impacting Oakland residents. These trainings will be provided to Oakland residents at local community-based sites and to all City staff through the Citywide Training platform. In addition, the program will provide direct mental health services, including individual, family, and group therapy. Crisis Support Services will also deliver on-site mental health services at City of Oakland Senior Centers, offering both individual and group therapy. The agency's expertise and long-standing presence in the community uniquely position it to deliver these services effectively and in alignment with the City's goals for resident well-being. CSS has received Alameda County's Small, Local, Emerging Business (SLEB) certification. However, CSS was not selected through a competitive RFP/Q process and is not L/SLBE certified by the City of Oakland. A waiver of these requirements is requested in order to execute a professional services agreement.

Due to the timing of the grant cycle and limited staff supporting the program, ReCAST has not been able to conduct an RFP/RFQ process. ReCAST has worked with T2 and CSS in the past and would like to continue partnerships with these Oakland-based organizations. ReCAST staff encourage partners to become L/SLBE certified with the City of Oakland, should they meet the criteria. Timely execution of these agreements will ensure continuity of programming, which is essential for grant compliance.

### **Goal 2 – Community And Youth Partnership To Promote The Trauma Informed Principles**

Oakland ReCAST will continue its partnership with the **Youth Leadership Institute (YLI)** to support community-based programming, capacity-building, and grantmaking. YLI will manage and facilitate the Community Grant Making process in collaboration with the Oakland ReCAST Community Advisory Team, oversee community grantmaking projects, and serve as the fiscal agent responsible for allocating funds to grantees and community-based organizations identified to implement the ReCAST Community Advisory program operations.

YLI will also help facilitate portions of the Community Advisory Team meetings and community-led programming, including sponsorship activities for community partners. In addition, YLI will provide coaching and training services to community-based organizations (CBOs) working with the Community Advisory Board to strengthen their capacity in leadership, community engagement, and project implementation. This will include Program Coordination, Administrative Support, and oversight of flexible reserves for emerging needs.

YLI will further support the delivery of Liberation Ecotherapy™, a nature-based resiliency and mental health strategy designed to promote rest, healing, recovery, and joy for historically excluded and underrepresented communities in Oakland. YLI will also assist in facilitating and supporting subrecipients, including CBOs participating in ReCAST initiatives.

### **Goal 3 –Community-Driven Resilience And Healing**

**Creative Arts Practices conducted by AE Creative Consulting Partners, LLC (AE Creative)** in conjunction with the 501c3, Artist as First Responder program, which uses art-based and culturally responsive approaches to healing activities for Oakland community members that promote resiliency, healing, belonging, joy, and equity. AE Creative, in partnership with the community, will provide safe, intimate sessions for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) men and women experiencing grief and discuss grief, fear, violence, healing, and transformation through storytelling, testimony, music, and art therapy. Oakland ReCAST seeks to award a grant agreement to AE Creative Consulting Partners, LLC, to provide creative arts practices for community healing from trauma.

The Oakland ReCAST program will execute a professional services agreement with The Bridging Group, LLC (TBG), for independent evaluation services. This provider was selected through the Human Services Department Request for Proposal process for 2022-2025. This agency is uniquely positioned to provide these services. The Bridging Group is an Oakland based organization that has received Alameda County's Small, Local, Emerging Business (SLEB) certification. TBG is not L/SLBE certified by the City of Oakland, and a waiver of this requirement is requested in order to execute a professional services agreement.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

SAMHSA funding for Oakland ReCAST is appropriated in the Department of Health and Human Services Fund (2128), Department of Human Services: Administration Organization (78111), SAMHSA 09-29-26 FY26 Project (1007723), and Fostering Safe and Healthy Communities Program (SC22). **Table 1** and **Table 2** below provide a breakdown of the grant agreements and professional services agreements as described in the report and resolution:

**Table 1: Oakland ReCAST Grant Agreements**

<b>Partner Agencies</b>	<b>Not To Exceed \$</b>
AE Creative Consulting Partners, LLC	\$75,000
The Youth Leadership Institute (YLI)	\$262,000
Be The Change Consulting LLC (BTCC)	\$100,000
<b>Total Contracts Amount:</b>	<b>\$ 437,000</b>

**Table 2: Oakland ReCAST Professional Service Agreements**

<b>Contractors</b>	<b>Not To Exceed \$</b>
Crisis Support Services of Alameda County	\$75,000
East Bay Agency for Children	\$50,000
The Bridging Group, LLC	\$75,000
<b>Total Contracts Amount:</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>

Adoption of the proposed Resolution will also authorize the City Administrator to amend these agreements to increase the funding amount based on carryover funding available from prior SAMHSA years, contingent upon the successful carryforward of funds from the prior fiscal year. Such carryover funding amounts will not be available after the December 2026 contract term ends. Should carryover funds be identified, they would be used to expand the offerings of the ReCAST program by increasing training and trauma-informed behavioral health-services in accordance with SAMHSA guidelines.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

For the past three years, Oakland ReCAST has worked in partnership with the ReCAST Community Advisory Board to develop and guide program design, priorities, and implementation. Through this partnership, extensive community outreach was conducted during the development of the Strategic Navigation Plan, during which community members, community-based organizations, and key stakeholders convened to provide direct input into program goals and service offerings. As a result of this sustained community-driven planning process and ongoing advisory board engagement, no additional outreach beyond the City Council's standard agenda noticing requirements was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action.

## **COORDINATION**

The Budget Bureau and Office of the City Attorney were consulted in the preparation of this report.

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

The Oakland ReCAST program focuses on helping Oakland residents heal from stress and trauma through training, mental health services, community partnerships, and public awareness campaigns. This report shows how the program grew from Year 3 to Year 4 and the positive impact it has had on our community.

### **1. Training More People in Mental Health**

Our annual goal is to provide training in mental health prevention and promotion to at least 200 community members each year. This goal has been exceeded each year. In Year 3, ReCAST trained 525 people in mental health prevention and promotion. In Year 4, this number grew to 651 people. The program exceeded its goal by more than three times this past year. One of the most successful training programs was Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for city employees. Based on the surveyed participants, 58 City of Oakland employees took this training, and they represented 17 different city departments, including the City Attorney's Office, Fire Department, Police Department, Libraries, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and Transportation. The survey data also shows that 84% of participants said they better understood their own levels of trauma and stress. Additionally, 81% of participants learned new strategies to help someone going through a mental health crisis.

### **2. Building Our Mental Health Workforce**

ReCAST also focused on training mental health professionals and related professionals in Oakland. In Year 3, the program trained 250 professionals. In Year 4, this training increased to 278 professionals, an 11% increase. The program exceeded its goal by 39%. These trained professionals are better equipped to provide quality mental health services to Oakland residents. By investing in our workforce, we're building a stronger mental health support system for the future.

### **3. Creating Community Partnerships**

In Year 3, the program worked with 65 organizations. In Year 4, this grew to 79 partner organizations, a 22% increase. The success of ReCAST Staff in bringing organizations together to work on mental health demonstrates the value of this programming. Some of the partner organizations include A&E Creative, Oakland Senior Centers, Crisis Support Services, Youth Leadership Institute, East Bay Agency for Children, Trauma Transformed, and Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership. These partnerships help ReCAST reach more people, share resources, and create a united approach to mental wellness across Oakland.

### **4. Providing Mental Health Services**

ReCAST provides evidence-based mental health services through several programs. In Year 3, these programs served 1,569 people. In Year 4, ReCAST continued to provide a combination of direct services and community-led initiatives. Evidence-based mental health and wellness programming was provided to 2,271 individuals, which is a 45% increase over the previous year, and 9 times the annual goal of 250. Key initiatives included:

- **Mental Health for Seniors:** This program provides individual and group therapy sessions at Oakland senior centers. In Year 4, 434 Oakland seniors were served. This service is important because it brings mental health support directly to places where seniors already gather.
- **Men's Wellness Fellowship:** This Fellowship program holds monthly gatherings focused on men's mental health, social connection, and wellness and it creates a safe space for men to talk about mental health and support each other. In Year 4, 1,300 community members were engaged.
- **Youth Mini-Grant Program:** In Summer 2025, ReCAST supported 10 youth-led projects that served 614 young people. When we surveyed the youth participants, they reported feeling more aware of wellness, more creative, and more empowered. This grant program shows that when we invest in young people's ideas, they create meaningful change in their own communities and demonstrate the program's healing-centered impact.

## 5. Spreading Mental Health Awareness

ReCAST works to reduce stigma and increase awareness about mental health throughout Oakland. In Year 3, the program reached 560,000 people with mental health messages. In Year 4, this increased dramatically to 1,061,832 people, an impressive 90% increase. Since the IKE Kiosks located around East and West Oakland were used to display mental health awareness messages during year 4, the increase is believed to be driven by this super useful community tool. ReCAST staff also sent weekly communications to Human Services Department leaders with practical, trauma-informed strategies to support staff wellbeing, especially during Mental Health Awareness Month. The success of this internal awareness effort has prompted expansion in Year 5, including the development of a ReCAST website, and a citywide mental health awareness campaign guided by the ReCAST Advisory Team.

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## OVERALL IMPACT

From Year 3 to Year 4, the Oakland ReCAST program showed strong growth in every area:

- **Direct Services:** The program served 2,409 people through training and mental health services in Year 3. In Year 4, this increased to 3,279 people, a 36% increase overall.
- **Exceeding Goals:** Every service area exceeded its targets, showing that the program is well-managed and meeting community needs.
- **Community Reach:** The program nearly doubled the number of people reached with mental health awareness messages while continuing to provide quality direct services.
- **Building for the Future:** Growing partnerships with community organizations help ensure the program can continue its work long-term.

The effectiveness of trauma-informed behavioral health services for under resourced youth individuals and families will be measured using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Performance Accountability and Reporting System. This federally required digital reporting system collects standardized outcome and performance data on participant access, service delivery, and behavioral health indicators.

Data will be used to assess improvements in mental health and substance use outcomes, track engagement and retention in services, and evaluate alignment with national behavioral health prevention and treatment goals. This approach ensures timely, accurate, and consistent measurement of program impact, while providing accountability to federal, state, and local stakeholders.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** The Oakland ReCAST initiative promotes healing and resilience among residents who have experienced trauma, racism, violence, and civil unrest by implementing trauma-informed practices across multiple sectors. These approaches are designed to improve educational achievement, enhance workforce preparedness, and foster long-term economic stability for Oakland's most vulnerable populations.

The program strategically partners with and funds local, small-scale, and community-based organizations to provide direct services. This investment model ensures that public dollars remain within Oakland neighborhoods, stimulates small business development, and advances the City's broader policy objectives around economic development and equitable procurement. By centering community-led organizations in service delivery, Oakland ReCAST builds sustainable local capacity while ensuring services are culturally responsive and grounded in community expertise.

***Environmental:*** There are no environmental impacts associated with this policy recommendation.

***Race & Equity:*** Oakland ReCAST prioritizes communities that face the highest rates of trauma exposure and have historically encountered the greatest barriers to accessing mental health services. Target populations include residents of low-income, high-stress neighborhoods in East and West Oakland; children and youth attending under-resourced schools; survivors and victims of violence; and communities of color, with particular emphasis on Black residents and Black youth.

Program outreach actively engages additional priority populations, including immigrants and refugees; Latinx, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander children and youth; LGBTQ+ youth; and youth with disabilities. Services are delivered through culturally responsive, community-led approaches designed to remove barriers to care.

Since program inception, Oakland ReCAST has substantially increased access to mental health care and prevention services, serving over 1,500 individuals through evidence-based interventions. The program has exceeded performance targets in training, workforce development, and direct service delivery, demonstrating measurable progress toward the City's equity goals and advancing community-driven care in Oakland's most impacted neighborhoods.

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

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:**



- 1. Awarding Grant Agreements Using Substance Abuse And Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Funds To Three (3) Agencies In A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$437,000 To Provide Trauma Informed Behavioral Health Services To High-Risk Youth And Their Families From October 1, 2025, Through December 31, 2026; And**
- 2. Waiving The Local And Small Local Business Enterprise Program (L/SLBE) And Request For Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Requirements And Awarding Professional Services Agreements To Three (3) Entities In An Amount Not To Exceed \$200,000 From October 1, 2025 Through December 31, 2026; And**
- 3. Authorizing The City Administrator To Amend The Above Grant Agreements And Professional Services Agreements To Increase The Amount Of Said Agreements Using Carryover Or Reallocated Grant Funding In Accordance With SAMHSA Authority**

For questions regarding this report, please contact Desralynn Cole, Oakland ReCAST Program Manager, at 510-238-6477.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dr. Jason H. Lester*

[Dr. Jason H. Lester \(Jan 7, 2026 14:35:47 PST\)](#)

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Prepared by:  
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