



CITY OF OAKLAND

# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Elizabeth Lake  
Acting City Administrator

**FROM:** Emylene Aspilla, Director  
Department of Workplace  
and Employment Standards

**SUBJECT:** Construction Resource Center Grant  
Agreement for Mentor-Protégé  
Program Support Services

**DATE:** June 30, 2026

---

City Administrator Approval

  
Betsy Lake (Jul 1, 2026 17:28:35 PDT)

Date: Jul 1, 2026

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution Awarding a Grant to Construction Resource Center in an Amount Not To Exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for Fiscal Year 2026–2027 to support the development and implementation of the City of Oakland’s Mentor-Protégé Program, in partnership with the National Association of Minority Contractors – Northern California (NAMC-NorCal).**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Department of Workplace and Employment Standards (DWES) requests City Council approval of a grant agreement for \$100,000 with Construction Resource Center (CRC), which will subgrant appropriately and partner with the National Association of Minority Contractors – Northern California (NAMC-NorCal), to deliver targeted technical assistance, trade-specific training, and business-capacity support during July 2026 through June 2027. DWES seeks approval to fund this programming for fiscal year 2026-2027.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

On December 18, 2001, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. [12389 C.M.S.](#), which authorized Oakland’s Local and Small Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program. The L/SLBE program was put in place with the intent of equitable contracting practices to ensure more small, local business participation to provide greater economic opportunities, stimulate economic development, and to strengthen the Oakland economy.

Life Enrichment Committee  
July 14, 2026

On February 24, 2021, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. [13640 C.M.S.](#), which made several adjustments to the L/SLBE Program, including revisions intended to support the growth of small and local firms through mentorship opportunities. As part of these amendments, the City Council established criteria to ensure that eligible Mentor-Protégé agreements provide meaningful mentorship, capacity development, and a genuine business opportunity for Protégés. The Ordinance determined that increasing the preference point percentage for Mentor-Protégé teams from five percent (5%) to ten percent (10%) would likely expand use of the program. Section 2 of the ordinance also limited the number of Mentor-Protégé teams per project to two.

City Council has adopted additional amendments to the L/SLBE since February 2021, but none of these changes have altered the provisions of the Mentor-Protégé Program. While the Mentor-Protégé Program has been codified in the L/SLBE program for some time, it is only now being implemented for the first time on a public works project.

On June 16, 2026, the City Council adopted Resolution No. [91224 C.M.S.](#) authorizing the City Administrator to award a construction contract to McGuire and Hester for the Martin Luther King Jr. Way streetscape improvements project. This contract will include the City's first approved mentor-protégé relationship on a public works project.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The recommended action of approving a \$100,000 grant agreement with Construction Resource Center (CRC) to support implementation of the City's Mentor-Protégé Program is the most effective and timely approach to supporting successful implementation of the City's first Mentor-Protégé relationship on an OakDOT contract and building a strong foundation for the program overall.

Although the Mentor-Protégé Program has been codified in the L/SLBE Program since its inception, it has not yet been implemented on a public works project until now. As a result, the City lacks a standardized framework, monitoring tools, and technical-assistance infrastructure to ensure that Mentor-Protégé relationships deliver meaningful capacity-building benefits for Protégés and advance the City's equity goals.

CRC and NAMC-NorCal bring deep expertise in contractor development, trade-specific technical assistance, and minority-contractor advocacy. Their partnership provides the City with:

- Industry-specific technical assistance tailored to construction trades
- Structured mentorship support grounded in lived contractor experience
- A replicable program model that can be scaled across departments
- A monitoring and reporting framework to evaluate program effectiveness
- Direct access to a contractor network that expands Protégé visibility and opportunities

Given that the City is implementing its first Mentor-Protégé relationship on a public works project, this grant provides the operational capacity needed to ensure the program is implemented effectively, equitably, and in alignment with Council intent.

The recommended action directly advances racial equity by addressing disparities identified in the City's 2020 Draft and 2024 Disparity Studies, which show persistent barriers for Black-owned, Latino-owned, and very small firms in accessing City contracting opportunities. The Mentor-Protégé Program is intentionally designed to reduce these burdens through structured mentorship, hands-on technical assistance, expanded industry visibility, and consistent support from City staff. DWES will track key equity indicators, including Protégé capacity gains, participation rates, contracting outcomes, payment timeliness, and mentor effectiveness, to evaluate impacts and guide future refinements.

### **1. Program Activities and Deliverables**

CRC and NAMC-NorCal will deliver a comprehensive set of services from July 2026 through June 2027, including:

- Development of a Program Management Plan outlining expectations for mentors and protégés
- A Program Onboarding Session
- A Support Services Action Plan tailored to the Protégé's business-capacity needs
- Delivery of trade-specific technical assistance, including estimating, back-office support, project management, accounting, and other services
- Weekly progress meetings with the Mentor, Protégé, and City staff
- Bi-monthly performance reports documenting progress, barriers, and lessons learned

These deliverables establish a structured, accountable, and measurable framework for the City's first Mentor-Protégé partnership.

### **2. Expected Outcomes and Impact**

The program is designed to produce measurable improvements in Protégé capacity, including:

- A comprehensive Mentor-Protégé model for long-term City implementation
- More effective and willing mentor participants
- Reduced disparities in City contracting

DWES will evaluate program impact using bi-monthly reports, Protégé progress indicators, and feedback from mentors and City staff. These data will inform future program refinements and help identify any unintended consequences.

### **3. Policy Alternatives Considered**

Two policy alternatives were considered. First, the City could choose not to seek a grant award. While this would preserve funds, it would leave the City without the technical-assistance infrastructure needed to implement the Mentor-Protégé Program. Protégés would not receive structured support, the City's first Mentor-Protégé relationship would proceed without standardized expectations or monitoring tools, and progress toward contracting-equity goals would be significantly delayed. For these reasons, this option is not recommended.

---

A second alternative would be to implement the program using only City staff. This approach would avoid external contracting and provide full control over program design. However, DWES and OakDOT do not currently have the specialized trade-specific expertise or staffing capacity required to deliver weekly mentorship support, site visits, and business-capacity coaching. Without access to contractor networks, Protégé visibility and opportunities would also be limited. Given these constraints, this option is not feasible.

Overall, awarding the grant is the most effective and equitable approach for launching the Mentor-Protégé Program. It provides the structure, expertise, and monitoring tools needed to ensure that the City's first Mentor-Protégé partnership delivers meaningful and measurable outcomes.

### **OAKLAND STRATEGIC PLAN**

This agenda item supports the Strategic Priority to Streamline Operations. Specifically, this item relates to the implementation of the following task:

Create process, timeline, and begin to implement priority 1 recommendations from Baker Tilly report. Evaluate and improve efficiency on the contracting process and payment schedule and timeline.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN**

This agenda item supports Goal 2: Sustain and Support Businesses by improving access to City contracting for small and minority-owned firms, reducing administrative barriers, and strengthening cross-departmental coordination to help businesses succeed in City contracting. This grant will help expand opportunities for Oakland businesses to compete for City work, increase transparency and consistency in procurement, and align with the Action Plan's emphasis on equitable business support and ongoing engagement with the business community.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Sufficient funds are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Biennial Adopted Budget, with the one-time grant being funded by OakDOT utilizing Measure BB – Local Streets and Roads.

A breakdown of the appropriated project funding sources is included in Table 1:

**Table 1: Project Funding Source**

<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Account</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2218 Measure BB- Local Streets and Roads	35111 Director's Office	54919 Services: Miscellaneous Contract	1008466 "Construction Contract For Capacity Building"	IN06 Project Delivery	\$100,000
<b>Total Project:</b>					\$100,000
<b>Total Ongoing:</b>					Not applicable. One-time grant.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

The City Administrator and staff worked directly with community-based organizations, small business advocates, and L/SLBE firms to jointly identify barriers and develop potential solutions for contracting inequities. These discussions were structured as working sessions where stakeholders, including executive leadership and member representatives from the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce, Construction Resource Center, National Association of Minority Contractors-NorCal, and East Bay Rental Housing Association, shaped and co-created the priority to support and develop the Mentor-Protégé Program.

**COORDINATION**

Preparation of this Agenda Report was done in coordination between the Department of Workplace and Employment Standards, Oakland Department of Transportation, Department of Finance, and the Offices of the City Administrator and the City Attorney.

**RACE AND EQUITY**

Equity is the primary driver of initiating this grant. Historical and present inequities have led to the exclusion of small and minority firms in City contracting, as documented in both the Draft 2020 Disparity Study and the 2024 Disparity Study. The purpose of the grant is to remove barriers, improve access to City contracts, and increase equitable participation opportunities for businesses who have been historically underrepresented.

---

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt a Resolution Awarding a Grant to Construction Resource Center in an Amount Not To Exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for Fiscal Year 2026–2027 to support the development and implementation of the City of Oakland’s Mentor-Protégé Program, in partnership with the National Association of Minority Contractors – Northern California (NAMC-NorCal).

For questions regarding this report, please contact Emylene Aspilla, Director of the Department of Workplace and Employment Standards at 510-238-6270.

Respectfully submitted,



EMYLENE ASPILLA  
Director, Department of Workplace and  
Employment Standards