



City of Alameda • California

January 3, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Sarah Lewis, President
Social Service Human Relations Board

Subject: Social Service Human Relations Board
FY 2023-2024 CDBG Public Service Needs Statement

As an advisor to the City Council, the Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) assesses the community's social and human service needs and establishes strategies to address those needs. In 1997, the City Council tasked SSHRB with participating in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process by reviewing and commenting on residents' public service needs and forwarding recommendations to Council on the CDBG Non-Housing Public Services funding. This letter represents SSHRB's recommendations for priority needs for social and community service support in the City of Alameda.

At the SSHRB meeting on December 1, 2022, City staff presented the priorities that were identified in the CDBG Five-Year Strategic Plan, including: affordable housing, fair housing, food security, homelessness services, mental health support, safety and anti-crime programs, tenant rights and housing support, and transportation and pedestrian safety. Staff invited 23 non-profit organizations active in Alameda to comment on the community's current needs, especially as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. SSHRB received written and/or verbal comments from 14 community service providers and organizations. SSHRB members, with consideration from the service providers, recommend the following priority areas, and are strongly emphasizing that racial equity concerns are at the core of many of these issues:

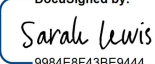
- Housing and homeless services
 - Provide emergency services such as shelters, showers, storage, day center, restrooms, and housing navigation services
 - Develop housing options that include rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, independent housing, etc.
 - Increase the supply of affordable housing
 - Promote fair housing
 - Provide access to crisis and ongoing mental health services for unhoused individuals
 - Acknowledge that a disproportionate amount of unhoused individuals in the City are Black and try to understand the cause(s)
- Domestic violence
 - Address economic insecurity, which often leads to increased risk for homelessness and legal problems
 - Provide shelter and prevent homelessness for individuals fleeing domestic violence
- Access to information and referral services, especially for English-as-a-second-language and recent immigrant populations

- Legal information services
- Mental health services
 - Access to emergency and ongoing supportive mental health services
 - Youth and student mental health crisis intervention and supportive programming
 - Community access to mental health services for the unhoused
- Available and affordable child care
- Food pantries and food security

The impacts of COVID-19, rising rents, inflation, and the high cost of living continue to challenge many of our residents in Alameda. The needs of our citizens are outpacing the resources available to meet the basic necessities of Bay Area living. The CDBG Non-Housing Public Services funding provides an important safety net that supports Alameda's most vulnerable populations, but its modest amount is shrinking. Prioritizing the needs identified by Alameda stakeholders is therefore an imperative, and leveraging other sources must be explored. SSRHB strongly encourages the City Council to supplement the CDBG funding with other resources, such as General Funds. Without the identification and deployment of additional financial resources, the community organizations our citizens depend on will be forced to reduce their much-needed services.

Alameda's compassionate, strong, and resilient community is what makes our island city unique. SSRHB recommends that the City Council make policy and funding decisions that prioritize the needs of the people that have been identified in this needs statement letter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Sarah Lewis, President
Social Services Human Relations Board