

African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub (AAHWRH) Steering Committee
Record of Action for Monday, December 9, 2024

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members:

- In-person (CAO Building, Martinez): **Phil Arnold; Vanessa Blum; Mark McGowan; Patt Young; Jacqueline Smith**
- In-person (Black Parent Resource Center, Richmond): **Zelon Harrison; Sheryl Lane**
- In-person (Urban Tilth, Richmond): **N/A**
- In-person (Genesis Church, Antioch): **Desirae Herron; Ashley Green; Rohanna Moore**
- Online: **Taylor Sims**
- Absent: **Chinue Fields; Alfonzo Edwards**

County Staff:

- In-person: **Kendra Carr and Peter Kim, Co-Directors, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ)**
- Online: **Jill Ray, BoS District 2 Representative; Alejandra Sanchez, BoS District 4 Representative; Rhonda Smith, Health Department.**

Public Attendees:

- In-person: **Kerby Lynch (Ceres Policy Research)**
- Online: **Ryan Drake Lee (Ceres Policy Research); Tonia Lediju (Ceres Policy Research); Randi Dean (Ceres Policy Research); Shantell Owens; Gigi Crowder; Wanda Johnson; Jeralynn Brown-Blueford; Jamie; Liliana Gonzalez; Stephanie Taddeo; Desiree Rushing; Damon Owens; Jamie.**

1. Roll Call and Introductions

(Staff announced that meeting would begin once a quorum of members were in attendance.)

Staff convened meeting at 5:38 PM, took a roll call attendance, and welcomed those in attendance. Staff reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. RECEIVE and APPROVE Record of Action for November 18, 2024 meeting of the Steering Committee for the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub Feasibility Study, with any necessary corrections.

Public Comment:

None.

Vanessa Blum made the motion to receive and approve the Record of Action. Zelon Harrison seconded the motion.

Conducted roll call vote to receive. 9 members voted yes (all present at time of vote). Item passed.

3. RECEIVE update on the survey and listening session insights and DISCUSS the planning and next steps for the feasibility study.

Dr. Kerby Lynch of Ceres Policy Research, accompanied by Ryan Drake-Lee, Dr. Tonia Lediju, and Randi Dean, provided summary of the high-level findings and themes gleaned from listening sessions and preliminary recommendations of services and phased roll-out, as informed by community input. Also offered a summary of their analysis on potential site location and offered a preliminary recommendation of best site options based on site availability and identified funding. (See attached PPT slide deck for details).

Highlights from the presentation are below:

Overview of Community Engagement Themes and Findings:

- *Partnered with multiple community organizations to host over 15 in-depth listening sessions (60-90 min each), both in-person and virtual.*
- *Organized sessions along target populations: justice-involved, Black women, Black men, Black elders, parents/families of 0-5 years old children*
- *Countywide community survey: 4,074 participants*
 - *Reinforced insights from listening sessions*
- *How we deliver services to community and where we deliver services*
- *Will do Community Cafes by districts in late January through February*
- *See slide deck for statistical breakdown of respondents by:*
 - *Supervisorial district*
 - *Demographics (target population, age, gender, income)*
 - *Barriers to accessing services*
 - *Exposure to violence*
 - *Services desired*
 - *Challenges to wellness*
 - *Site location preference*
 - *Desired future improvements*

Partner Engagement strategy:

- *Community Data-Driven Approach*
 - *Data will determine the kinds of services and the kinds of providers who deliver those services*
- *Creating Partnership Criteria*
- *Formalizing Agreements*
- *Next Steps:*
 - *Outreach to key health/service providers to explore partnerships*
 - *Engage EHSD to assess County services/programs and opportunities to partner around culturally-relevant, culturally-competent service provision*

Community-Driven Service Recommendations:

- *Provided listening session/survey respondent feedback/quotes, as they related to the 5 priority service categories determined by Steering Committee:*
 - *Behavioral Health*
 - *Food and/or Housing Insecurity*
 - *Maternal and Infant Health*
 - *Youth Development*
 - *Community Healing*

Phased Wellness Hub Model

- *Phase 1: Immediate Access (year 1)*
 - *Re-purpose existing community-based spaces (i.e. CBO's, churches, County sites)*
 - *Mobile units*
- *Phase 2: Transition to Permanent Hub (year 2)*
 - *Identify County-owned site (i.e. Antioch Sheriff's Building and Veteran's Halls) to refurbish and partner with existing service providers to continue during transition*
- *Phase 3: Full Implementation (year 3)*
 - *Establish fully operational hub with full range of comprehensive and holistic support services*

Other Models:

- *Offered examples of Axis Community Health, La Clinica de la Raza, Lifelong Medical Care*
- *Lessons learned: scalable strategies; culturally competent service delivery; community-led planning for sustainability*

Location Analysis and Recommendations

- *Considered the following when assessing site feasibility:*
 - *Accessibility for underserved populations*
 - *Immediate usability or renovation requirements*
 - *Alignment with phased hub goals*
- *Conclusions and Recommendations:*
 - *Category A: County-owned, turn-key ready*
 - *Sheriff Building (4559 Delta Fair Blvd, Antioch)*
 - *Category B: Existing Structure, renovation required*
 - *Veterans Halls (Antioch, Brentwood, Pittsburg)*
 - *Category C: Undeveloped/greenfield land, new construction required*
 - *Pacheco Community Center (5800 Pacheco Blvd, Pacheco/Antioch, and adjacent land)*
 - *Adjacent land to Head Start complex (1203 W. 10th Street, Antioch)*
- *Dr Lynch invited group to attend next week's Dec 16 Equity Committee meeting for a more complete presentation on site selection.*

Questions/comments from Steering Committee:

- *Phil Arnold: 1.3% of respondents being elders is disappointing; during COVID, community ambassadors were equipped with iPads to engage elderly members, establishing trust in regard to vaccinations; why not do something similar?*
- *Zelon Harrison: Agreed, we need to do better with engaging elders; also need to create a pathway for young people to be involved, as a preventative approach*
- *Sheryl Lane: Would like to see a more detailed breakdown of cities/communities within cities; also feel like 12% being 45-54 years old is small and more can be done to outreach to them*
 - *Dr. Kerby Lynch: January/February is going to be a time for community cafes where we will need to target specific populations that were missed, like elders, youth, and 45-54 y/o.*
- *Mark McGowan: Was there more nuanced conversation around the limited availability of specific services? On that note, what is a “community healing circle”?*
 - *Dr. Kerby Lynch: Our final report will include more nuanced qualitative data gathered from listening sessions.*
- *Patt Young: Suggest you reach out to Pittsburg senior center and senior housing for the Jan-Feb community cafes.*
- *Zelon Harrison: Will the data produced be broken down by region or area?*
 - *Dr. Kerby Lynch: We will code and disaggregate the data by Supervisorial District for targeted discussion at the community cafes. If you would like to have it broken down by a specific city, please let me know as soon as possible and I will see if we can.*
- *Phil Arnold: Will we see the list of organizations that you have spoken to?*
 - *Dr. Kerby Lynch: Yes, we can provide that list; we will provide a draft report in January, and then a final full draft in March.*
- *Desiree Herron: Want to clarify to the group for sake of time that we are not receiving the micro-level data tonight, and that it is necessary to move through this more high-level presentation this evening*
- *Vanessa Blum: In regard to the phased approach, is there room to implement a decentralized model while also still having a centralized location? And what is the potential of raising more funding beyond the \$7.5M?*
 - *Dr. Kerby Lynch: Yes, a hybrid approach is ideal, both centralized and decentralized, and also with the needs of the community will determine what is best; in terms of funds, we are working with what is available currently and assessing what’s available within those limitations*
 - *Ryan Drake Lee: Yes, we are assessing how to distribute the \$7.5M among start-up programming in phase 1, and then operations and potential remodel/renovations*
- *Zelon Harrison: Can we get a sense of how much add’l investment is needed beyond the \$7.5M to fully establish the hub, similar to how City of Berkeley increased their initial investment? The \$7.5M has always been intended for one-year start-up costs.*

- *Mark McGowan: How are we able to inform or influence which partners will be brought into the hub? And how will we determine how the money will be distributed? Who makes those decisions?*
 - *Ryan Drake Lee: It depends on what building is selected, what that facility will require; a lot of variables that cannot be foreseen.*
- *Phil Arnold: I object to a Sheriff Office if it means being co-located, similarly I object to use of Veteran's facilities (which I believe are not County-owned); not sure if those are appropriate given their history of excluding Black communities and the triggering nature of the history surrounding those buildings*
 - *Ryan Drake Lee: will provide a link to a map to the sites considered based on what was provided by CAO; also took an agnostic, more pragmatic, logistical approach to assessing the sites, considering things like transportation access, purchase and up front costs, need for renovation, etc.*
- *Patt Young: In Pittsburg, they took back the lease from a Sheriff's Office and turned it into a (youth services space?) and it has not been problematic, from what I know.*
- *Vanessa Blum: I would love to reclaim a space and redefine its purpose and legacy.*
- *Desiree Herron: I agree, it's important to reclaim spaces that once caused harm; also, our role as steering committee members is not exclusive in this room and in these meetings, we need to continue to be involved and attend Equity Committee and BOS meetings.*

Public comment:

Gigi Crowder: I personally would not want to go into a space where Black pain and trauma has occurred, it's incredibly triggering, especially when we have spaces of healing and worship that are available. I was also personally involved in the advocacy for this \$1M and then \$7.5M, and while it is not enough, it is possible if we leverage the churches and community spaces that currently exist. NAMI's budget is less than \$1M, and we are able to reach across the county; the survey did not include any questions about the structural racism that created the conditions of our trauma.

Jeralynn Brown Blueford: I am confused; when the Hub was first uplifted, there were already names and populations and purpose identified; elders have been left out, people that were affected by the Antioch Police text messages were left out; we aren't we moving ahead with the original plan, I think there needs to be more than what we are hearing.

Shantell Owens: the phased proposal of 3 years is concerning; I agree that there are faith centers that currently exist that can help with the services in the immediate sense; I am concerned how we don't have the seniors' voices; I believe our community has what we need now to begin the work.

- *Vanessa Blum: This is a space that needs to address the needs of everyone, and not everyone in the Black community feels safe in a church.*
 - *Patt Young and Zelon Harrison shared agreement.*

- *Kerby: 21% of the survey respondents said they preferred a worship site, so we did not prioritize. But if there is data that you all can offer to substantiate a deeper dive into churches, please let us know as soon as possible. We can only research what we know there is substantive data that speaks to the realistic feasibility of a potential site.*

Desiree Rushing: In my daily experiences helping unhoused people in my community, feeding and supporting folks, there has never been a problem with a church being where people congregate, feel safe, or receive services; this is not where we will preach to them, it will be a resources center. It will be a place where our community can have conversations and receive wisdom.

- *Kerby: There are other factors involved with religious institutions, such as zoning, gov't funding for religious organizations, that limits what is possible. Please email me with your suggestions and data, we need all input.*
- *Desiree Herron: This is not a new concept, not about politics, optics, or individual organizations; this is about our community and people dying.*
- *Sheryl Lane: We appreciate the 40 Voices group for all the advocacy, but we also want to honor the 4,000+ survey respondents' voices; if we dismiss and ignore their voices, then others, including decision makers, will ignore them too.*
- *Ashley Green: It seems like people have forgotten why we are here, and it is not important to me anymore who started this work first. The end goal is what we should be focused on. At the end of the day, numbers don't lie. Men's voices were the highest percentage of those polled.*
- *Staff: We request that people come to this process with respect and curiosity, and not accusations. The BOS determined that a feasibility study was necessary for a Hub to happen, so we formerly request that people refrain from accusations or attacks against the Ceres Policy Research team who have been contracted by the County to conduct the study.*

Wanda Johnson: I believe that everyone coming to this space is coming with the people and community in mind, and we need to all hear each person that is expressing this in their own way, without taking it as a cry for wanting their own way. We each have different personalities, and even if we do not like how someone says something, we need to remember that so many of us say we are coming as children of God, and we need to come with love. It will be important that the entire Black community deems the Hub as a safe space, and we need to listen to the people on this call who have been advocating for this work for years; using a Sheriff's office will not feel safe to many people.

Mark McGowan made motion to accept the update and move the item. Patt Young seconded the motion. Conducted roll call vote to receive. 10 (all present at time of vote) voted yes. Item passed.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. DETERMINE the date, time, and location of future meetings

The next meeting is currently scheduled for January 13, 2025 from 5:30-7:00 PM.

The meeting will take place at County Administration Building at 1026 Escobar Street, 2nd Floor, Martinez, CA 94553. Additional locations to be confirmed when agenda is posted.

6. Adjourn

Phil Arnold: Nikki Giovanni passed today and is now among our ancestors, and I went to school with her. I would like to remember her on this day.

- Staff: We will adjourn in the memory of Nikki Giovanni.*

Mark McGowan made motion to adjourn. Patt Young seconded the motion.

Conducted roll call vote to adjourn. 10 voted yes (all present at time of vote).

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.