

African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub (AAHWRH) Steering Committee
Record of Action for Monday, March 10, 2025

Attendance:

Steering Committee Members:

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

County Staff:

- In-person: **Peter Kim, Kendra Carr, Co-Directors, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ)**
- Online: **Jill Ray, BoS District 2 Representative; Alejandra Sanchez, BoS District 4 Representative; Emann Ahmed, Equity Analyst, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ); Jessica Travenia, Equity Analyst, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ)**

Public Attendees:

- In-person:
- Online: **Kerby Lynch (Ceres Policy Research); Ryan Drake Lee (Ceres Policy Research); Randi Dean (Ceres Policy Research); Alisha Semplar; Andrea McBride Foster; Anthony Randolph; Bryan Canty; Debra Vinson; Henderson; Cheryl Sudduth; Jamie; Lenisha Williamsa-Bekheet; Liliana Gonzalez; Lisa; Mary Taylor; Odessa Lefrancois; Shantell Owens; Sharronda; Singbren; Susan Hlidreth; Traci Fuqua; YWFC; Stephanie Taddeo; Willie Robinson; Kimberly Payton; Benisa Berry; Tamisha Walker; Kirsten Johnson Bell; Sheenna Glover; Delta Veterans Group; Anabel Kasembe; Tonia.**

1. Roll Call and Introductions

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

Staff convened meeting at 5:40 PM, took a roll call attendance, and welcomed those in attendance. With 7 members in attendance, we achieved quorum. Staff reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. RECEIVE and APPROVE Record of Action for the February 10, 2025 meeting of the Steering Committee for the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub Feasibility Study, with any necessary corrections.

Public Comment:

N/A

Vanessa Blum made a motion to receive and approve the Record of Action. Taylor Sims seconded the motion. All members (7 present) voted yes. Item was moved.

3. RECEIVE and DISCUSS presentation on the draft proposal of the African American Wellness and Resource Hub Feasibility Study, and DETERMINE the next steps for the feasibility study proposal.

Dr. Kerby Lynch of Ceres Policy Research, offered an update on their almost-final feasibility study report, including summary of need and purpose, process and methods, analysis of data, findings, and recommendations. See attached draft report and PPT slide deck for details.

Invited feedback and questions from the Steering Committee to further inform and refine the recommendations before final submission to Equity Committee. Encouraged people to email her with questions or suggestions: klynch@cerespolicyresearch.com.

Highlights from the presentation are below:

- *Community engagement and community leadership remains at the core and center*
- *Private and public funding needed for long-term sustainability*
- *Joint Powers Authority structure to provide governance, accountability and oversight*
- *Services must be comprehensive and holistic, catered to meet needs of Black communities, and prioritize critical health needs (Black people lead in almost every category of highest risk for chronic health issues that lead to premature death.*
- *Facility options must include fiscal feasibility, and will rely upon leveraged County-owned spaces*

Proposes the Steering Committee extend its service and function beyond the feasibility study; to continue to support the process by contributing oversight, strategic thought partnership, and content expertise.

Phased-Approach to Establishing a Wellness Hub Model

- *Phase 1: Immediate Action – Mobile & Distributed Services*
 - *Extend and expand steering committee role and function*
 - *Dedicated street teams & mobile units to deliver services in high-priority communities where most needed*
 - *Continue funding of grassroots, community-based services currently being funded by ORESJ*
 - *Design, fund, operationalize JPA structure*
- *Phase 2: Expanding Infrastructure & Network Building*
 - *Establish satellite service locations throughout East and West County (libraries, faith-based centers, community spaces)*
 - *Investment in collaborative networks (i.e. West County Collaborative)*
 - *County-funded service contracts*
- *Phase 3: Permanent Holistic Wellness Center*

- Centralized, fully-equipped wellness hub (recommend 1650 Cavallo Road, Antioch; a County-owned resource for long-term sustainability, that is accessible to an impacted community)
- Support and ensure service provision through sustained investment from County and other public and private sources; include contracting with CBO's, as well as leveraging County services
- Developed based on data-driven service utilization insights
- Joint Powers Authority:
 - CCH, EHSD, Library, Public Works, ORESJ, City of Antioch, City of Pittsburg, City of Richmond, and CBOs
 - Ensure transparent accountability and long-term funding
- Equity and Accountability Measures
 - Community Advisory Board

Next Steps:

- Equity Committee 3/17
- BOS vote TBD
- Confirm feasibility of extending and expanding Steering Committee involvement

Discussion:

Jacqueline Smith: the report reflects the feedback and insights and concerns offered here at Steering Committee as well as the Community Cafes/Town Halls, two of which I attended. I appreciate that the report really tries to incorporate the many diverse set of perspectives.

Patt Young: I echo a lot of what Jacqueline offered, I particularly appreciate the intentionality in incorporating community voice and the attention to long-term sustainability. This can be a model for other jurisdictions.

Vanessa Blum: I appreciate the amount of time and effort taken to have as many town halls and listening sessions, the large number of surveys collected, and the very thorough and thoughtful process taken to assemble this plan, timeline, and all elements of the process that leads up to a permanent hub.

Zelon Harrison: I appreciate Ceres Policy Research and ORESJ both to center healing in this process, and all the effort of the steering committee to prioritize our Black communities in all our feedback and suggestions.

Rohanna Moore: really appreciate the amount of hear tand care put into the process, reflecting what we were looking for, and I am encouraged by this report.

Desirae Herron: the level of Black excellence that Ceres has shown from beginning to end is truly commendable, you've thought of all angles and levels of concern, and remains a For Us By Us effort.

Chinue Fields: I echo all that has been said and can only add that prior to Ceres' involvement, there was division and disagreement, but since Dr Lynch's participation and her spirit has truly squashed much of that dissension and brought us along a very long way from that time.

Sheryl Lane: I agree, and appreciate that so much has been done in such a short amount of time; Thank you Dr Lynch for being on the ground and in the community to engage so many. We recognized where the outreach fell short (i.e. elders) and then made intentional effort to address that. I also acknowledge the work of those in the East County who started this advocacy to get this work started, and I appreciate the JPA proposal as well as the multi-phased approach as a realistic exopectations. I would like to continue to lift up and support all the efforts already happening and doing good work.

Taylor Sims: Just chiming in to express my appreciation and to agree with what has been said already.

Public Comment:

Shantell Owens: I agree with the comments so far, want to express my support for Dr Lynch and this report; the feasibility study lifts up voices of 4000 voices and it is hard to refute the wisdom offered. I look forward to the continued work ahead.

Traci Fuqua: Thank you for all your work on this. I like the phased approach because it allows us to get the work started sooner than later. I offer and avail myself to you all to help move the work forward.

Cheryl Sudduth: I want to reiterate the point that we need to look to existing Black-led organizations for their expertise, and cautious us to not let the County determine or limit who delivers these services without the expertise or perspective of the Black community and Black service providers.

Tumani Drew: I look forward to learning how this will come to life and also want to emphasize the importance of making the hub and services accessible to West County residents, so I'm curious how the mobile services will work.

Benisa Berry: I commend the steering committee on getting this work to this point, and I am not surprised at the excellent job that Dr Lynch has done based on my previous experience with her. I am happy that there is openness to expanding the scope beyond just mental health services. I am also unclear how the services will reach all parts of the County, beyond East County. I like the proposal to have a community oversight body, it's important that Black community members continue to weigh in and provide direction.

Willie Robinson: I have been fairly active throughout this process, and I express kudos to the steering committee, and appreciate the way Dr Lynch has ensured an equitable and fair process. I lead the NAACP West County Branch, and we will continue to take a close look and support this project over the long haul with particular attention to how young black males are served.

Susan Hildreth: I support the plan as presented. I am a resident of District 2 and co-hosted a zoom on the project for District 2 residents, primarily Rossmoor. I created a JPA in Sacramento years ago and am NOT volunteering, it was challenging. Although I think we do not have as much need in District 2 as other parts of the country, I want to support this effort as an ally and a community member who sees a healthy and inclusive community as a critical value for our county.

Public Comments (via Chat):

Alisha Semplar: Thank you, Dr. Lynch and Steering Committee for centering community input by conducting surveys, listening sessions and the highly informative townhalls. I will be supporting community members/listening session attendees with preparing for public comment at BoS in April and May and look forward to date specifics.

Tamisha Walker: Thank you for the breakdown of the community engagement data and the recommendation of an oversight body to follow the implementation of this project closely. I'm interested more in what cities can do to support sustainability.

Debra Vinson: Thank you Dr. Lynch and the Steering Committee. 4K surveys is amazing. Appreciate all the work and dedication to the community.

Vanessa Blum made a motion to receive the update. Patt Young seconded the motion. All members (10 present) voted yes. Item was moved.

4. Public Comment

No comment.

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

The next meeting is currently scheduled for April 14, 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

Staff adjourned the meeting at 7:03 PM.