

**African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub (AAHWRH) Steering Committee**  
Record of Action for **Monday, June 10, 2024**

**Attendance:**

Steering Committee Members:

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

Public Attendees:

- In-person: **N/A**
- Online: **Gigi Crowder; Shantell Owens; Desirae Rushing; Lea Murray; Lilia Gonzalez; Wanda Johnson; Carlynn Wooten-Scott; Antoine Watt; Rena Moore**

**1. Roll Call and Introductions**

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

*Staff convened meeting at 5:41 PM and welcomed those in attendance. Introductions were completed. Staff reviewed the meeting agenda.*

**2. Public Comment**

*Gigi Crowder: The bulk of unsheltered people in CCC are African American, yet Af Am agencies were not funded by MX H3, just another reminder of the need of AAHWRH; Black folks are often the first to be harmed and first to die; County procurement processes must include review committees with members that reflect the harmed communities.*

*Lea Murray: We achieved a victory with the BoS to suspend the recommendations of the MX H3 funding awards, but are still disheartened and frustrated that the language of the RFP was confusing and misleading, and we need to have the language be more than just words and optics; we need the support of everyone here, please join us at the BoS meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup>.*

*Shantell Owens: The funding for the AAHWRH needs to be released; Not receiving the H3 funds was completely disheartening, and just speaks to this need for funds in our Black communities; in East County, we are often overlooked, esp those of us in the trenches doing the work; my hope is that this feasibility study happens swiftly.*

*Desiree Rushing: I'm with NAMI, on the ground doing the work, and I received the call from the mother of a young unhoused man who was killed recently; why did certain CBO's get the funding over ours when we're on the ground doing the work?*

*Zelon Harrison: I have a clarifying question: am I hearing that the million dollars for Af Am support services have been released?*

*Staff clarified that these funds that are being addressed through public comment are a different set of funds via a recent RFP process overseen by the Health Department's H3 Program, and that this funding is not an agenda item of the Equity Committee.*

*Wanda Johnson: I am deeply concerned about these H3 funds because of the statistics that show that African American-led organizations are most often not funded yet they are the orgs that have the most credibility and relationships in the communities where most are harmed, where the people who need the most help actually live; we must look at not just the most harmed people, but also at the orgs that can engage and support them most effectively.*

*Jeralynn Brown-Blueford: we need the funds for the AAHWRH to help the elderly, the youth, the homeless, those being sent to jail; withholding these funds are a disservice and is so sad; I spoke with a mother who just lost her child with nowhere to go, but if we had this hub we would have had a place to meet with her, be with her, and hold her.*

**3. RECEIVE and APPROVE Record of Action for May 13, 2024 meeting of the Steering Committee for the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub Feasibility Study, with any necessary corrections.**

**Public Comment:**

*None.*

*Zelon Harrison made the motion to receive and approve the Record of Action as submitted. Patt Young seconded the motion.*

*Conducted roll call vote to receive. 11 (all present at time of vote) voted yes. Item passed.*

**4. RECEIVE and DISCUSS report from the steering committee's Ad Hoc Proposal Review Committee, and SELECT one organization to forward to the Equity Committee as the recommended contractor to conduct the feasibility study for the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub.**

*Staff shared updates:*

- Review Committee read 6 complete proposals, over 350 pages total; each submitted their individual scores per proposal, today we will discuss and deliberate further with the goal of achieving consensus for a final recommendation*
- Staff shared a summary of the applicants and reviewer's scores per the scoring rubric; shared the average scores for each proposal and their ranked order*

*Review Committee members each shared their reflections and scoring rationale for the top-ranked proposals:*

*Taylor: Appreciated BRG's exp in CC County versus others who offered examples from throughout the state and west coast; also appreciated stipends for focus groups; I liked CERES involvement in development of ORESJ, that they know which reports will use already; Jeweld submitted an in-depth proposal, lots of experience, but hourly rate was high.*

*Phil: Looking for several factors: is it Black-led? Lived-experience is vital; Only 1-2 applicants had staff my age, but in CCC we have an increasingly aging population; No mention of healthcare, no mention of maternal mortality, esp w/in Black communities; I liked CERES and BRG.*

*Vanessa: BRG was going to bring in real estate expertise that they do not currently have in-house, their budget looked good, a solid 10 points above CERES; I liked CERES' clear approach, incentives for stipends, timeline was good, but budget had issues.*

*Desirae: CERES was good; BRG is good but not Black-led, instead they bring in Black consultants, which is not ideal; both have solid track records of feasibility studies in the past; other groups like Shah Kawasaki seemed to not have solid experience with Black communities, and instead partnered with a Black-led organization which felt like it was more for optics; Shah Kawasaki appear more concerned with the design and building of the hub, that seems like their strength; I like CERES because they are Black-led.*

*Zelon: My top pick is Urban Strategies, they are not pulling in Black consultants but are actually Black-led; They have a history that spoke to me, and a clear approach on how they would fund the project; CERES is strong too, and have a stronger proposal around deliverables, incentives, and how to engage the community; BRG had a strong plan too but not truly Black-led; but after this conversation, I would lean towards CERES with my colleagues.*

*Steering Committee members weighed in*

*:*

*Patt: I appreciate the Review Committee for their work and diligence in scoring.*

*Jacqueline: What is the tipping point between CERES and BRG? Is there something that can set them apart?*

*Vanessa: Between the two, I feel good with either, unlike the others applicants who are a distant third and fourth place for me*

*Taylor: I'm good with either one.*

*Desirae: Both have done this before, that's what raised them above the rest for me, but the difference is that BRG must hire Black consultants, where CERES research director is a black woman and seems excellent.*

*Rohanna: My concern is around the sustainability, are these research organizations proven in doing the work, and will whatever plan they produce be able to sustain itself?*

*Ashley: my main concern is if the applicant's truly have a passion for this work and the black community? What are their commitments to lifting up our communities and people?*

*Sheryl: Between BRG and CERES, seems like there is more experience with BRG on similar local projects but they must sub-contract with other people of color; Who are they though? Are those folks Black? Where they will get them? Whoever is selected must be able to convene, talk with, and engage the Black community.*

*Desirae: Yes, most proposals included the names, faces, resumes, and roles of team members including sub-consultants, and BRG had strong people, many are Black, but the senior leadership is not POC; also not sure how long the sub-consultants have been on the team; CERES' research director and other project lead are Black women, actual executive-level staff of the organizations, so shows they have leaders that are Black.*

*Chinue: It's curious that some proposals provided pictures and others did not, and the varying transparency that each led with; I appreciate that CERES has worked in the Contra Costa Black community in the past. I wanted to get clarity on Rich City Rides and why their proposal was not considered, did they have an opportunity to submit the missing pieces of their proposal?*

*Staff clarified that all submissions were accessible by staff only after the submission deadline, and it was at that point that we learned of the incomplete submission of Rich City Rides. We confirmed that the error was on the applicant's part and not an error on the County's part nor the online procurement platform's part. Staff also shared that the proposal omissions were significant, with the majority of the proposal missing, including the Cover Letter, Project Narrative, and Staff Descriptions/Resumes, all of which are key to a fair and accurate review and assessment.*

**Public comment:**

*Gigi Crowder: I am surprised and offended and insulted that any non-Black led org would even apply; and I would have hoped that a Black male-led organization to have applied, and none of the top ranked agencies are led by Black males. Urban Strategies is led by a Black man with Black men employed. This is feasibility study is grossly underfunded in the first place so if Jeweld Legacy charged high rates, it's deserved and probably still undervalued; Black people have historically undervalued their work due to the racist nature of compensation for our labor and expertise. I also want to point out possible conflicts of interest.*

*Staff clarified that ORESJ currently works with Ceres Policy Research as the lead research partner of the Core Committee who led the community-led process to design and establish the ORESJ. Co-Director Peter Kim also has previous experience with 3 of the other 5 applicants, having worked at BRG as a senior consultant prior to coming to CC County, and having partnered with Jeweld Legacy and Urban Strategies, respectively, on different projects when he was with the City of Oakland. However, none of this was shared with the Review Committee prior to this meeting in an effort to not influence their*

*thinking; neither Co-Director provided any input, insight, or opinion on the review or scoring of any proposal.*

*Desirae Herron: We all have ties to folks in the Bay Area, this is a relatively small community, and so it makes sense; ORESJ staff have approached this process with integrity, been authentic, and never offered anything to sway us in any direction or in any way. We must keep in mind, a Black leader doesn't necessarily guarantee good work. We are in a time crunch and do not have the luxury to have the best most ideal applicant. There is no room in this discussion for any misinformation that may mislead or create a narrative that this process was tainted.*

*Vanessa Blum: We all came to our decisions independently, I can say that this process was fair and transparent. We really took our mission seriously and took the time to read and choose the very best person.*

*Shantell Owens: I would like to know more and hear about Jeweld Legacy. Was their hourly rate comparable to the others? I also want to remark that Black women are just as capable as Black men, even if Black men are the most harmed.*

*Desirae: Jeweld seemed to have low rates for their staff, as well. And amount for stipends for community participants was low in comparison to CERES and BRG.*

*Sheryl Lane: If an applicant overcharged, did they come under the project budget though?*

*Taylor: I'm the reviewer that suggested that Jeweld Legacy's fees may have been high, but this is my first time reviewing proposals such as these, and \$233/hour seemed high to me. I deducted 5 points (out of 30) from their budget section because of this.*

*Phil Arnold: I want to lift up Jewled Legacy's long history of serving our most harmed communities, their work with and for children of incarcerated people, and their strong leadership by a Black woman principal and a team of Black professionals.*

*Based on the discussion and feedback of the full Steering Committee and public comment, the Review Committee took a final vote of their top qualified applicant:*

- *Taylor: CERES*
- *Phil: Jeweld Legacy*
- *Vanessa: CERES*
- *Desirae: CERES*
- *Zelon: CERES*

*Patt Young made the motion for the full Steering Committee to accept the Review Committee majority vote (versus a consensus) as presented. Taylor seconded the motion.*

*Conducted roll call vote to approve item. 10 voted yes, 1 voted no. Item passed.*

**5. DISCUSS key performance indicators for African American wellness in Contra Costa County and desired long-term outcomes**

*This item was not discussed.*

**6. DETERMINE the date, time, and location of future meetings**

*The next meeting is currently scheduled for July 8, 2024 from 5:30-7:00PM.*

*The meeting will take place at County Administration Building at 1025 Escobar Street, Martinez, CA 94553. Additional locations will likely include same sites as today (to be confirmed).*

**7. Adjourn**

*Vanessa made motion to adjourn. Taylor seconded.*

*Conducted roll call vote to adjourn. 11 voted yes (all present at time of vote). Meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.*