

## **Recommended Best Practices for Engaging and Building Capacity for Measure X Service Providers**

### **Introduction**

This resource is intended to promote greater accessibility, transparency, and equity in the county's engagement with community stakeholders regarding Measure X-funded programs and projects. These three pillars function interdependently to foster more inclusive and dynamic practices that draw from the many strengths of our diverse expertise of community providers; enhance alignment with residents' needs and experiences; and address the disparities, inequities, and gaps identified via the Measure X Community Advisory Board's (MXCAB) needs assessment process and consistent resident input. These principles intentionally uplift the importance of people with lived experience in the design, promotion, and evaluation of Measure X funding opportunities because we feel this can address and surface programmatic gaps and ensure that scopes of service are aligned with community voice.

Most critically, we believe that in order to remedy the racial disparities and resource inequities that continue to harm the populations that Measure X funds are intended to protect, the County must work concertedly to build the capacity of grassroots organizations who are embedded and vested in the well-being of these populations. This, in turn, will ensure that Measure X funds are benefiting and boosting the communities represented and the intent reflected in the ballot language and the Measure X Community Advisory Board Operating Principles.

These recommendations are spurred by feedback relayed by residents and community-based service providers regarding the pace of Measure X funds distribution; the processes, communication, and documentation around awarding those funds; and concern and confusion about how Measure X dollars are moving into the community and being allocated across diverse service providers and communities. The MXCAB believes that improvement in governmental processes proceeds through the integration and institutionalization of resident voice; that, indeed, this is a vital means to achieve equitable opportunities, resources, and outcomes for all county residents.

Measure X represents an important threshold for community members, department staff, the County Administrator's Office, and the Board of Supervisors to work together

to fulfill these goals. MXCAB hopes to collaborate with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) to uplift and institutionalize these recommendations and practices, given the department's close relationships and aligned work with county department staff. As evidenced by their stated values and priorities, ORESJ is committed to improving and strengthening County processes in ways that center equity and expand opportunities for community members to engage and partner with County agencies in decision-making process. ORESJ has identified procurement and RFP processes as critical areas for further exploration and growth.

### **Recommendations**

- In addition to following the County's legal, fiduciary, and other guidelines, prioritize simplicity, accessibility, and equity. This includes providing clear and transparent instructions and minimizing onerous requirements, e.g., excessive attachments, additional forms, etc. It is essential that staff implementation is consistent and timely from the initial consultation, review, determination of grantees and oversight.
- Invite community members with lived and/or professional experience and/or subject matter expertise to serve on proposal development and evaluation panels.
- Communicate and incorporate MXCAB's core values of equity, justice, inclusion, and compassion and [MXCAB Operating Principles](#) (revised 4/28/2021) into outreach and evaluation materials, including in the metrics, which should be reflected in qualitative outcomes, e.g., more trust in systems, improved relationships.
- Develop and communicate transparent and equity-informed rubrics that clearly identify evaluation criteria to applicants. Co-Creation of rubrics with community members is encouraged.
- Focus on building capacity with our regional provider base by providing regular outreach, education, and technical assistance related to opportunities for

community providers to deliver Measure X services, including office hours where people can access 1:1 support and coaching.

- Conduct intentional and sustained outreach to a wider base of service providers with deep community relationships. Distribute and promote funding opportunities beyond inner circles and familiar faces; think dynamically and innovatively about how to attract new and/or smaller organizations who might be best positioned to address the county's equity goals and/or resonate with or come from historically and/or currently underserved or underrepresented communities.
- Consider using plain-language in all communications, offering alternative modes of proposal submission, and permitting other forms of documentation and presentation that are more inclusive and welcoming of people with different backgrounds.
- Publicize funding opportunities for community-based providers so they are more accessible and funding opportunities can be viewed without having to log in and create a profile on the County's procurement portals.
- When designing programs and services that target hard-to-reach, vulnerable, and/or underserved communities and require service providers that specialize in engaging and serving those communities, ensure that processes are effective and appropriate in soliciting community-based programming services.

#### Funded Programs:

- Prioritize funding for capacity building and technical assistance for grantees geared toward expanding the ability of BIPOC-led organizations to provide culturally relevant services, effective programs, and community-defined supports using established best and innovative practices.
- Create facilitated learning communities among service providers that convene regularly to problem solve, learn from one another, coordinate services and referrals, leverage resources and expertise, and build networks.

- Consider longer service delivery periods that allow providers and program participants more time to develop relationships, meet goals, and sustain outcomes.