



WEST CONTRA COSTA PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

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Jobs for the Future

Anna Luna

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Bertha Romo

City of San Pablo, Youth Services

The Ed Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization

Tax ID: 68-0005307

Non-profit ID #: 68-0005307

Dear Chairs Moore, Williams and distinguished Measure X CAB members;

It is with great respect for the process of the Measure X Community Advisory Board that the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund (EdFund) was deeply engaged with the informing presentations, hearing about the needs in Contra Costa County. We had a particular interest in the topics of Youth and Young Adults, Housing & Homelessness, Arts and Culture, and Economic Security/Safety Net.

As the lead fund development partner to WCCUSD, we've cultivated many partnerships that supported the WCCUSD Covid-19 Fund, raising over \$673,531 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. During the pandemic we also worked with local partners to launch a city-wide initiative, the Richmond Rapid Response Fund (R3F), and raised over \$1.4 million to provide rental assistance to 47 households and financial disbursements to 751 families. R3F has developed a unique approach to responding to our community's needs with an emerging community-centric fund. We are committed to honoring the fortitude and resilience of our communities by repairing the harms that impact our communities. Together, we activated rapid response for systems transformation.

Through the COVID-19 crisis we have solidified our position as an integral intermediary organization for West Contra Costa Unified School District and the City of Richmond. We stay proximate and rooted in our community, adaptive and attuned to conditions that harm and heal our BIPOC students, families, and communities; stewarding and asserting reparative and restorative policies, investments, and systems. Governance includes the processes of decision-making and implementation, not just rules and laws, focusing on who gets included in transparent and effective decisions.

Upon hearing the weekly presentations, we found several **points of intersection and key themes** which align with projects that we currently support, work we are planning, and activities that we would like to uplift.

Observations from the previous meetings charge us to uplift the following needs:

Affordable and Low Income Housing:

Housing insecurity impacts generational poverty and the health and wellbeing of students, teachers, families, and the greater community. Currently, the City of Richmond has many Protections which we would like to see instituted countywide. This includes but is not limited to rent relief and legal assistance. Additionally, there are many conversations about Production, which is necessary but has its own limitations unless the County commits to allocating a portion of their requested housing trust fund dollars to local capacity building grants for nonprofit developers and community groups serving the highest impacted neighborhoods otherwise will not meet the needs of our community. We also cannot outbuild homelessness, which is why an explicit carveout should be made to support the preservation of affordable housing as a key preventative measure to keeping our communities stably housed.



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Jobs/Basic Needs/Safety Net Services/Points of Access:

Joblessness, underemployment and delays in EDD perpetuate a lack of ability to provide for one's basic needs. While there is evidence to suggest the success of some one-stop-shop designs; many agencies **lack key capacities**. **Capacity needs include wraparound services**, and an *adequate* staff of *qualified providers necessary* to support personal development and other protective factors. Coordinating appropriate services, internally or cross agency, *may* address the needs of integrative health challenges and social needs, *only if* they include the proper host of services, resources and providers.

Critical resources noted by all presenters as an immediate and imperative need:

- Housing
- Equity and Access
- Support for Families

Truly the needs of the community have long exceeded capacity for service, the Covid-19 Pandemic accelerated, exacerbated and revealed the gaps in services. The lack of collaboration and coordination failed to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities. Rather than overinvesting additional wraparound services to County departments or organizations who have historically struggled to engage with clients with particular needs, we'd like to underscore the importance of deep collaboration with community-based partners across sectors who have expertise in serving traditionally disengaged high needs populations; these agencies possess the cultural competencies, are trauma-informed and have language capacities to meet families where they are at.

We would like to encourage the members to explore the recommendations made around allocating Measure X funding to meet gaps in critical services and ***uplift the following innovative strategies, making deep investments and collaboration to implement:***

- ❖ **Universal Basic Income (UBI)/Guaranteed Income/ Direct Income Cohorts**
- ❖ **Low Income/Affordable Housing Development: Protections, Preservation & Production. Consider providing the necessary resources and funding for permanent affordable housing and homeownership like the Community Land Trust Model (CLT)**
- ❖ **Prioritizing the allocation of space and robust funding for Arts, Culture, Healing, and Behavioral Health supports that meet the needs of youth, families, and vulnerable populations.**

Over the last year, we have been inspired by how our community came together to support our students, families and educators in ways that we could not have foreseen.



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The Ed Fund was there to support WCCUSD and the City of Richmond in responding to what was needed for a successful year of distance learning and supporting teachers, students, families, and individuals through a year of uncertainty.

We are building strong relationships so we can build healthy communities and just power. These efforts towards supporting students' social and emotional needs, financial recovery and community stabilization are catalyzing broader and deeper interest and commitment to a restorative and reparative economy and eco-systems, moving us to address the root causes of the conditions that require recovery and stabilization. As we move into our second year, R3F is embarking on a guaranteed basic income policy platform in partnership with the City of Richmond. From guaranteed income, we hope to ensure guaranteed housing, guaranteed healthcare, guaranteed safe passage and all that humanizes and heals. Using a racial equity lens, we will invest to create community wealth.

R3F has focused on key priority areas including food and essential supplies, economic recovery and security, housing and homelessness, health and healing, education and learning, and social and legal services.

In alignment with our recommendations to the CAB, we are looking forward to continuing our work in the following areas:

- *Moving into a Direct-Income pilot with the City of Richmond*
- *Continuing housing work including partnering with community land trusts to address post-pandemic displacement and stabilize small sites*
- *Ongoing strategies to ensure that renters stay housed*
- *Supporting education from cradle to career (from K-12 and beyond)*

We anticipate sharing our continued success and observations and to continue to support the work of the Measure X Community Advisory Board and their investments.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Jones
Executive Director

Jessica Travenia
R3F Program Officer