

# Measure X Community Advisory Board report to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors October 6, 2021

*Submitted by Mariana Moore, Chair, and BK Williams, Vice Chair,  
on behalf of the Measure X Community Advisory Board*

The purpose of this report is to summarize the work completed by Contra Costa's Measure X Community Advisory Board ("Advisory Board") during the past six months, following the Advisory Board's creation by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors. The report contains three sections:

1. **Background information** on Measure X and the Community Advisory Board, and a summary of the Advisory Board's efforts and accomplishments to date.
2. A summary of the issues explored during the **Community Needs Assessment** process. (Note that a separate, formal Needs Assessment report will be completed over the next few months; the Advisory Board has requested an allocation of up to \$20,00 from Measure X funds to contract with a consultant to assist in compiling and writing the report.
3. The Advisory Board's **recommended funding priorities for Fiscal Year 2021-22.**

## 1. BACKGROUND ON MEASURE X COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

On November 3, 2020, voters in Contra Costa approved Measure X, a countywide, 20-year, half-cent sales tax.

The ballot measure language stated the intent of Measure X as "to keep Contra Costa's regional hospital open and staffed; fund community health centers, emergency response; support crucial safety-net services; invest in early childhood services; protect vulnerable populations; and for other essential county services."

The Measure X Community Advisory Board was established on February 2, 2021, to advise the Board of Supervisors on the use of Measure X funds. The Advisory Board consists of 17 members, comprising 10 Supervisorial District appointees (2 per Supervisorial District) and 7 At-Large members. The Advisory Board also includes 10 alternates, who are expected to attend all

regular Advisory Board meetings and may participate fully, except that they may not vote unless substituting for an absent member.

The responsibilities of the Advisory Board, according to its bylaws, include:

1. Overseeing an annual assessment of community needs, focusing primarily on the priority areas identified in the Needs Assessment, including emergency response (fire/medical), health care, safety net services, preventative care, affordable housing, and supports for early childhood, youth, families, and seniors.
2. Creating detailed priority lists of the top ten service gaps (county- and community-provided) based on the results from the needs assessment. Using the assessment to make general funding priority recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on 95% of the revenue generated by Measure X.
3. Providing an annual report on the outcomes and impact of allocated funds.
4. The Advisory Board committee shall initially meet as needed and thereafter shall meet quarterly.

On April 6, 2021, the Board of Supervisors appointed the inaugural members of the new Measure X Community Advisory Board.

Current members of the Measure X Community Advisory Board include:

**District I:** BK Williams (Vice Chair), Edith Pastrano; Kathy Hanville (alternate)

**District II:** Kathy Chiverton, Jim Cervantes; Steven Bliss (alternate)

**District III:** David Cruise, Odessa Lefrancois; Sandro Trujillo (alternate)

**District IV:** Sharon Quesada Jenkins, Michelle Hernandez; Pello Walker (alternate)

**District V:** Michelle Stewart, Ali Saidi; Gigi Crowder (alternate)

**At-large members:** Kimberly Aceves-Iniguez, Ruth Fernandez, Susun Kim, Mariana Moore (Chair), Jerry Short, Debbie Toth, Sandra Wall

**At-large alternates:** Peter Benson, Genoveva Calloway, Diana Honig, Lindy Johnson, Melissa Stafford Jones

**Advisory Board launch and activities, April-September 2021**

The first meeting of the Advisory Board was held April 13, 2021. Members decided to meet every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, via Zoom, in order to conduct an updated Community Needs Assessment as expeditiously as possible.

During the subsequent months, the Advisory Board met a total of 25 times (as of Sept. 22), with each meeting lasting from two to 4.5 hours. Every meeting was well-attended by community stakeholders and members of the public, with attendance consistently growing over time to a high of 133 participants. Total attendance during the needs assessment portion of the Advisory Body's work was 940, including Advisory Board members, presenters, and members of the general public.

### **Language Access and Inclusion**

The Advisory Board also took action to support language access and equity, including requesting Measure X funds from the Board of Supervisors to provide simultaneous Spanish-language interpretation at all Measure X Community Advisory Board meetings, as well as translation of the meeting agendas and other materials on the County's Measure X Community Advisory Board web page. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation was also provided at Advisory Board meetings. Both interpretation services were utilized frequently by members of the public, enabling their full participation in Advisory Board presentations and deliberations. The Advisory Board appreciated the County's support in providing these language access services.

### **Measure X Vision Statement and Operating principles**

In April 2021, the Advisory Board adopted a formal Vision Statement and Operating Principles to guide their work, as summarized below.

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

Contra Costa County will have the necessary funds to invest in and sustain a robust system of care and the social and public services necessary to support a vibrant community and ensure that all county residents have equitable opportunities to thrive.

#### **OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

1. Shared responsibility to practice the values of equity, justice, inclusion and compassion.
2. Sustaining a strong social safety net is important for the health and prosperity of all.

3. Investments will prioritize prevention as well as addressing current system gaps.
4. Investments will help leverage other funding sources when feasible.
5. Needs and issues are intersectional and interconnected. Think about needs and services from the point of view of residents.
6. Name inequities and disparities, and be specific in naming and recognizing those who are most harmed by them, especially Black and Latinx residents. Additional areas of focus include residents with mental health needs, indigenous people, Asian American/Pacific Islander American residents, seniors, disabled people, children and youth (prenatal to adult), immigrants, unsheltered and homeless residents, rural communities, LGBTQ+ residents, and poor people.
7. Economic opportunity and equity are at the heart of our purpose.
8. Seek transformative solutions, in addition to filling current service gaps.
9. Fostering a culture of inclusion, welcoming, and belonging demonstrates our commitment to equity and will improve our work process and outcomes.

**Rules of Conduct for Advisory Board meetings** *(adopted April 2021)*

1. Consider not repeating a point someone else has already made (or briefly agree).
2. Treat each other and all participants with mutual respect.
3. Be curious; practice active listening; seek to understand.
4. To fully embody our principle of inclusion: Support the accessibility needs of all participants to the extent feasible, including language access (interpretation and translation), technical support, and visual/audio support.

**2. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS:**

The original needs assessment was completed in 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial reckoning, and other significant events that deeply affected the residents of Contra Costa County. Accordingly, the Advisory Board decided to undertake a comprehensive review of community needs to take into account current community needs, strengths, and resources, and to identify potential strategies to address those needs, as the

basis to make funding recommendations for FY 2021-22. After developing an initial list of community needs, issues, and topics, the following schedule of Advisory Board discussions was established, with each presentation featuring a panel comprising county program staff, community-based service providers, and residents who have been directly impacted by the issues being discussed.

- May 12, 2021 Seniors, Veterans, and Persons with Disabilities
- May 19, 2021 Community Safety: Fire Protection
- May 26, 2021 Early Childhood
- June 9, 2021 Youth and Young Adults
- June 23, 2021 Mental & Behavioral Health/Disabled
- June 30, 2021 Housing & Homelessness
- July 7, 2021 Community Safety: Justice Systems
- July 14, 2021 Safety Net Services
- July 21, 2021 Immigration/Racial Equity Across Systems
- July 28, 2021 Library, Arts & Culture, Agriculture
- August 4, 2021 Environment & Transportation

A total of 94 subject matter experts -- including county program staff, community-based program staff, and residents with lived experience -- shared their expertise with the Advisory Board and the public during these presentations. The data and materials submitted by presenters are contained in Advisory Board meeting records. Collectively, they provided a wealth of information about community needs, trends, service gaps, and potential solutions. This material, along with significant additional data and ideas shared during public comment, form the basis of the updated Community Needs Assessment that is being prepared for submission to the Board of Supervisors.

Following the final panel presentation in early August, the Advisory Board requested and received additional information from some prior presenters, and also received additional input from members of the public. The Advisory Board then developed and implemented a variety of tools and processes, including conducting three straw polls, to aid in identifying service gaps, determining areas of alignment, and developing shared funding priorities.

On September 22, Advisory Board members voted unanimously to approve the following funding priority recommendations for FY 2021-22, to submit to the Board of Supervisors. The funding recommendations are grouped into five Goal areas: Mental Well-being, Equity in Action, Healthy Communities, Intergenerational Thriving, and Welcoming and Safe Community.

Beginning on the following page, the Advisory Board is pleased to present their recommended funding priorities under each Goal area, followed by a description of Additional Considerations that Advisory Board members believed were important to bring to the attention of the Board of Supervisors.

## Recommended Funding Priorities for Measure X Funds in FY 21-22

The Advisory Board's funding recommendations are grouped into five goal areas: Mental Well-Being, Equity in Action, Healthy Communities, Intergenerational Thriving, and Welcoming & Safe Community.

The recommended strategies listed under each goal area were rated as Top Priority by at least 51% of Advisory Board members who participated in the survey poll conducted during the meeting on September 8.

Note: The number listed in parentheses at the end of each strategy reflects the relative ranking of that strategy in the September 8 poll; an asterisk indicates a tie in the rankings.

### GOAL 1: MENTAL WELL-BEING

**We strive to be a community that supports the mental and behavioral health well-being of all residents, through prevention, crisis response services, intersectional supports, and innovative cross-sector approaches.**

#### Strategies

1. Community-based mental health: Crisis Response Initiative (1)
2. Childhood mental health services: Community grants to local community health service providers serving younger children (age 0-5) to improve children's social and emotional development as a preventive strategy (2)
3. Community-based mental health services: Addressing the needs of at-risk populations (5\*)
4. Substance Abuse Treatment (community-based) (11)
5. Mental health services for Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community (14)
6. Community-based mental health for LGBTQ+ individuals (22\*)
7. Medical response to mental health crisis: San Ramon Valley Fire model (26\*)

## **GOAL 2: EQUITY IN ACTION**

**We strive to be a community that prioritizes equity and removes structural barriers that cause inequities and poverty, so that all residents can thrive.**

### **Strategies**

1. County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (4)
2. East County community-based equity center (based on the Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition presentation) (12)
3. Removal defense and case management for immigrant residents, via Stand Together Contra Costa: including legal representation across court systems and social service workers to provide holistic, language-accessible, culturally-responsive social services and navigation. (14\*)
4. Community-based and schools-based arts programs (17)
5. Immigration-based legal services via Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance (25\*)
6. Arts & Culture Commission programs (22)
7. Innovation fund (to facilitate community-based responses to service needs) (26)
8. Community-based asylum support for LGBTQ+ individuals and immigrants (27)

## **GOAL 3: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

**We strive to be a community in which all residents have access to affordable, timely, culturally-responsive healthcare; adequate housing; high-quality childcare; and nutritious food, all of which has become more urgent as we address the ravages of the pandemic.**

### **Ranked Strategies**

1. Expanded and comprehensive healthcare for remaining uninsured residents via Contra Costa CARES (5\*)



2. Local Housing Trust Fund (6): Serve as a funding mechanism for County housing programs, including: tenant assistance; assistance for unsheltered residents; the acquisition, preservation and rehabilitation of affordable housing; creation of permanently affordable housing; affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities; community land trusts (19); and permanent supportive housing.
3. Tenant legal services and supports, both county-based and community-based (8)
4. Subsidized child care (9\*)
5. Permanent housing subsidies for youth and young adults (18)
6. Community-based food distribution (23)
7. Community-based training & employment (26)

## **GOAL 4: INTERGENERATIONAL THRIVING**

**We strive to be a community that intentionally strengthens and provides support for all residents and for family members of all generations, including children, youth, and older adults.**

### **Strategies**

1. Services for children with disabilities: Improve access to comprehensive services that support children with disabilities to be independent and included in society. This strategy could include vouchers to providers on behalf of families for necessary services. Provide childcare providers with consultation and guidance to modify their services and programs to be inclusive of all children.(5\*)
2. Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan (ATS) (7)
3. Community-based youth centers/services in Central and East County (10)
4. Community-based aging services (13)
5. Guaranteed income pilot (15)
6. East County multi-agency for disabled (22\*)

7. Master Plan on Aging local implementation (22)
8. Community-based restorative justice (24)
9. County family support services (26\*)
10. Discretionary funds for Child Protective Services and foster youth (26\*)

## **GOAL 5: WELCOMING & SAFE COMMUNITY**

**We strive to be a community where all residents feel safe and welcome, and receive emergency help when they need it.**

### **Strategies**

1. East County Fire Services (3)
2. Re-open closed stations (9\*)
3. Public Defender front-end advocacy teams (12\*)
4. Fire/wildfire mitigation/fuel reduction (16)
5. Community-based reentry support services (21\*)
6. Community-based employment services (21\*)
7. Abuse prevention and support, including building sustainable infrastructure, civil & legal assistance, community victim advocates, community connectedness, flexible financial assistance, and public health (25\*)
8. Rental assistance for immigrants (27)
9. Reimagine Public Safety initiative - countywide (28\*)
10. Seasonal fire staffing (28\*)
11. Multicultural wellness center for Nepali/AAPI residents (29)

## Additional Considerations

1. **Prioritizing community-based strengths, wisdom, and services:** Whenever possible, prioritize funding to community-embraced and community-based programs and services. This may include grants from the “Innovation Fund” (see Goal 2, item 7) that can be given to community programs that may not have 501(c)(3) status but are deeply trusted by local community members.
2. **Addressing racism:** Racism is the root cause of many of the problems our community faces. All services must prioritize addressing structural and systemic racism.
3. **Addressing trauma:** Racism and other social and economic inequities are a major cause of trauma, and trauma is a public health issue. All programs receiving Measure X funding should adhere to trauma-informed practices, i.e., assuming that an individual is likely to have a history of trauma, and recognizing and addressing the presence and impact of trauma symptoms.
4. **Bold and transformational focus:** The Advisory Board encourages the Board of Supervisors to prioritize Measure X funds for programs that are bold, innovative, and transformational. There are many gaps in existing services to be filled, but the Advisory Board also supports new strategies that have the potential to be life-changing for members of our community. As a part of this philosophy, we encourage the County to prioritize programs with staff who have lived experience. We also encourage prioritizing preventative, community-defined strategies that address structural root causes.
5. **Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers.** The Advisory Board recognizes that the need for a strong hospital and clinic system were key elements in the Measure X ballot measure language. The Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and Health Centers (and related clinics) provide critical services to the most vulnerable members of our community, and it is imperative that they remain financially viable. In light of the fact that the Advisory Board did not receive a clear funding request for this purpose from County Health Services, we leave it to the Board of Supervisors to make such a funding decision. We do ask that the Board of Supervisors balance that potential funding decision

with other urgent community needs and priorities as identified by the Advisory Board and described in this report.

6. **Prioritizing Measure X funds in the context of the overall County budget.** The Advisory Board spent months receiving and reviewing information regarding unmet community needs, and spent significant time in discussing processes to develop funding recommendations. This prioritization process was very challenging, given the depth of needs in the community and the limited amount of Measure X funding available. The Advisory Board received over \$350 million in total funding requests, and recognizes that there are many additional community needs that were not formally brought to their attention. There are many worthy strategies and programs presented to the Advisory Board that are important, but that did not rank in the top 29 strategies as determined by the 51% threshold established for the September 8 Advisory Board member survey poll. Given that Measure X funds represent just 2% of the County's overall annual revenue, we encourage the County to identify other County, state, and federal revenue sources to fund these additional worthwhile programs. We encourage the County to maximize and leverage funding wherever possible, and to ensure that Measure X is the funding of last resort. We also encourage the County to distribute funds to community providers as expeditiously as possible, removing traditional obstacles in the RFP process, in recognition of the importance of addressing the urgent needs of the community in an expeditious manner

## Acknowledgments

The Measure X Community Advisory Board wishes to acknowledge and appreciate the participation of Lisa Driscoll and Enid Mendoza, both of whom work in the County Administrator's Office, for providing significant staffing and logistical support for the work of the Advisory Board. From preparing agendas and other meeting materials, to guiding the Advisory Board's adherence to public meeting protocols, to arranging for language interpretation, to managing the complex technical requirements for conducting virtual public meetings, Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Mendoza were consistently exemplary in their willingness to go above and beyond (including working late into the evening on a weekly basis) to support the Advisory Board in fulfilling their important duties.