Alameda County Housing and Community Development
Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee

Staff Report
2024/2025 Urban County Capital Projects Recommendation
March 14, 2024

Background:
On November 29, 2023, Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to award Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for capital public improvement projects in the Unincorporated County. An estimated $569,000 for one year was made available through this RFP. This amount is determined by taking the full Unincorporated County CDBG allocation and applying The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 15% capital projects service cap.

Discussion
HCD sent the RFP Notice to current and previously funded agencies in the Unincorporated County, including over 2,500 individuals and organizations who had contacted HCD previously to receive such notices. Organizations were notified that the priority for the RFP was for capital public improvement projects.

HCD received eight requests for funds. These requests and their budgets include Community Child Care Council of Alameda County, $50,000; Eden I&R, Inc., $54,000; Mandela Partners, $198,554; San Lorenzo Family Help Center, $205,000; WeeCare, Inc., $200,000; Women on the Way Recover Center, $58,000; YMCA of the East Bay, $100,000; and RCD, $70,000.

These seven requests represent a range of capital projects with particular attention paid to expanding the capacity of Unincorporated County residents with low incomes. Three proposed projects would expand childcare opportunities and develop small childcare businesses, two would develop food-service opportunities, another proposes to make needed upgrades at a local shelter for male parolees in recovery, one would provide referrals to needed community services, and one will undergo a study of the financial services currently available for low-income residents of Unincorporated Alameda County.

Four HCD staff ranked the projects using the criteria published in the RFP. Applicants could receive 100 possible points. The final rankings are as follows.

Organization	**Project**	**Score (Out of 100)**	**Budget**
YMCA of the East Bay	Solar Power for YMCA of the East Bay	89.95	$100,000
Women on the Way Recovery Center	Men on the Way flooring project	87	$58,000
Mandela Partners	E14th Street Eatery and Kitchen	81.75	$198,554
Eden I&R	211 Communications System	81	$54,000

Community Child Care Council of Alameda County (4c's)	Child Care Initiative Project	79.75	$50,000
San Lorenzo Family Help Center	San Lorenzo Family Help Center Mobile Pantry	66	$205,000
WeeCare, Inc. DBA Upwards	BOOST (Business Operation & Optimization Support Tools)	49	$200,000
Resources for Community Development	Equitable Access to Financial Services in Alameda County's Urban Unincorporated Communities	80.75	$70,000

Staff recommends funding seven of the eight proposals: five proposals – YMCA, Women on the Way, Mandela Partners, Eden I&R and 4c's are recommended to be funded at the full amount. San Lorenzo Family Help Center is being recommended a reduced the amount of $108, 446 - if this project requires full funding to be operational and is a one-time ask, staff recommends funding San Lorenzo Family Help Center with any remaining capital public improvement funding up to $96,554 should additional funds become available. Staff recommends Resources for Community Development be funded for one year using CDBG CV funds. A separate staff recommendation has been written to propose this. These projects will provide benefits to low-income individuals in the Unincorporated County by providing upgrades to public service centers, training and business development education, and information and referral services.

The final application, WeeCare, Inc., was not recommended for funding due to the lack of funds remaining after awarding funding to higher-ranking proposals, and the proposal's low score of 49/100. The proposal received a low ranking in the following areas: project design (5.5), income targeting (1), organization capacity (3.5), cost effectiveness (5), and leveraging contributions (.75). The ranking committee felt that considering the areas for improvement, staff would not recommend the CDBG funding of WeeCare, Inc's Upwards BOOST Program

<u>Recommendation</u>
It is recommended that the HCDAC:

1. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors authorization to enter into contracts with CDBG FY24 funds:
    a. YMCA of the East Bay, $100,000
    b. Women on the Way Recovery Center, $58,000
    c. Mandela Partners, $198,554
    d. San Lorenzo Family Help Center, $108,446
    e. WeeCare, Inc., is not recommended for funding.

Recommendations for CDBG CV projects are in a second Staff Report: Eden I&R, $54,000; Community Child Care Council of Alameda County, $50,000 and Resources for Community Development, $70,000 using CDBG CV funds.

Applicant Summaries

YMCA of the East Bay requested funds to purchase a 29.7 Kilowatt Photovoltaic System to power the YMCA of the East Bay's Cherryland Early Childhood Center. This will help reduce operating costs and run the program in a more environmentally sustainable manner. By providing free quality childcare, intergenerational family support services and a proven Early Educator job training program the center is an essential support to low-income Cherryland and Ashland families, helping children to thrive, and families to break the cycle of poverty.

Women on the Way Recovery Center requested funds to replace flooring at the Men on the Way Recovery center in Hayward. The project will replace the old, dilapidated flooring at the center, which provides support services, outreach, and referrals to recent Unincorporated County parolees in recovery for drug and alcohol addiction. All the clients of the center are unemployed and low to extremely low income and at risk of homelessness. The floor replacement project would allow the center to continue to operate and provide a safe, clean space for the men to gather and collaborate as they rebuild their lives after being incarcerated.

Mandela Partners requested funds to implement the third phase of their E. 14th Kitchen Incubator Project. The project has been funded through Alameda County in the past and the proposed CDBG project will build on that work. The E. 14th Kitchen Incubator Project supports developing small and micro business by creating shared kitchen space for food vendors and entrepreneurs. In this third phase of the project, Mandela Partners proposes to expand the culinary, food safety, and business workshops, building out a software tool to automate and track shared kitchen use EBT card capabilities, increase marketing for small and developing businesses, and increasing the Entrepreneur Incubation Coordinator to a full-time position.

Eden I&R requested $54,000 to fund the continuation of its 2-1-1 system, a Public Communication Tool. The 2-1-1 system is a three-digit telephone number set-aside by the FCC as a 24/7, multilingual, "single point of information" to easily connect individuals and families--particularly low-income, at-risk people--with health, housing, and human services. In addition to many other services, 2-1-1 identifies individuals and families that meet HUD's definition of homelessness and provide an assessment for those individuals to enter the County's Coordinated Entry System. The language capabilities are Spanish, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

The Community Child Care Coordinating Council (4 C's) of Alameda County requested $50,000 for its program to increase the supply of high-quality childcare services available to families living in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. 4C's proposes recruiting and training eight family childcare providers to help meet the local needs for childcare, particularly focusing on Spanish-speaking and Mandarin Chinese-speaking families. Comprehensive start-up assistance is provided to help participants through the licensing process, including pre-licensing home visits, assistance with completing the licensing application and consultation and advice on all aspects of family childcare. Newly licensed providers complete a minimum of 25 hours of training on caring for children in the home. Technical assistance is also provided on how to develop contracts and set up a record keeping system.

San Lorenzo Family Help Center (SLFHC) requested $205,000 to expand their food distribution program. SLFHC currently operates a food pantry located in Hayward. They intend to expand their current services by developing a mobile food distribution program, including purchasing a mobile food truck. This will allow SLFHC to increase their service area and provide nutritious meals to low and extremely low-income people in Unincorporated Alameda County – especially those who are immobile, disabled, elderly, or otherwise unable to reach the food pantry without assistance. Staff recommends funding this proposal at $108,445, the remaining amount available after funding the five higher ranked proposals. If other public funding becomes available, SLFHC can apply for those to backfill the unfunded amount of this proposal, up to $96,445.

WeeCare requests funds to provides technical assistance and business support to 25 women and minority owned microenterprise childcare providers who run in-home daycares over a 12-month period. The programs' goal is to expand economic opportunities for daycare providers in Alameda County by training them to use essential tools to make their operations more efficient. The BOOST Program also has a job creation component, where Upwards will support the recruitment, background checking, training, and onboarding of new teacher assistants for these facilities as they expand their operations to more children in the community. Staff does not recommended funding this proposal due to lack of available funding and various areas of improvement needed.

Resources for Community Development request funds to research and assess the level of quality, accessible financial services available for low-income residents living in unincorporated Alameda County. This study would undertake a landscape analysis to establish what types of financial services and products currently exist in the community, evaluate their utility and accessibility, develop an understanding of innovations and best practices for how to close the gap to financial services, and provide policy and programmatic recommendations to Alameda County, financial institutions, and community-based organizations. Closing the financial services gap is critical to building economic prosperity and addressing the racial wealth gap that has long plagued disinvested communities, like the urban unincorporated areas. The Equitable Access to Financial Services in Alameda County's Urban Unincorporated Communities project will deepen our collective understanding of this issue and strategies for how Alameda County and the community can address it.