

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CASE STATEMENTS

Community Strategists in Government (CSIG) 2018-19

#1: Department of Human Services

Mission

The City of Oakland Human Services Department's mission is to build strong communities by enriching the quality of life for individuals and families in Oakland. We do this work through a broad array of services that range from Head Start to Senior Centers, from services to unsheltered residents to anti-poverty work.

Project Description

The Human Services Department's (HSD) Oakland Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) initiative is focused on building resiliency and equity for communities that have been impacted by high levels of violence, trauma, and civil unrest. ReCAST goals include increasing access to behavioral health care services, transforming systems to become trauma-informed and responsive, and supporting community work to address tensions in law enforcement-community relations and to promote community healing. ReCAST, in partnership with the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission, kicked off its first pilot cycle with a Youth-to-Youth Mini-Grant program focused on strengthening community and law enforcement relations. In this first cycle, eight youth-led projects were selected and projects ranged from healing circles, to community gatherings, to service projects.

In a second cycle of ReCAST, HSD will fund creative and dynamic projects that support and increase resiliency and healing for some of Oakland's most marginalized communities—with a particular focus on East and West Oakland. We believe our clients' ability to share their individual and unique perspectives on the issues they face can be a powerful vehicle for healing. We are looking for a Cultural Strategist to help us expand our ReCAST program by identifying creative opportunities for our clients—including Head Start families, seniors, and individuals who are homeless—to integrate the arts in telling their stories. We are open to the variety of mediums (for example, digital film, public art, performance) being used and seek a Cultural Strategist who can help guide and inform our program design.

Issue

The Human Services Department serves communities that face enormous challenges. Our goal is to promote community resilience in the face of trauma. We are looking to employ ways of creatively promoting resilience for our clients as well as our staff, and building compassion and understanding for those most affected by violence and trauma.

Desired Skills and Qualifications

Ideally, the Cultural Strategist should:

- Be knowledgeable of the Oakland community and in dealing directly with racial equity issues facing our clients,
- Be experienced in effectively partnering and communicating with a variety of people,
- Have expertise in storytelling and communication strategies, and
- Have experience in building capacity among non-artists (in this case, staff) to provide ongoing support of this type of story-based work.

Timeframe

The initial project will start at the beginning of 2019 and work will run during FY 2019-2020.

For information on the first pilot program of Oakland ReCAST, visit:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/news/2017/oyacgivesback-youth-led-project-grants-available>

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#2 Mayor's Office for Housing Security

MISSION

The housing security work in the Mayor's Office focuses on policies and advocacy to promote equitable access to safe, healthy, affordable, and stable housing in Oakland.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Promotion of Accessory Dwelling Units: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs, also known as "secondary units" or "in-law units") are small homes typically located in the backyard of, or within, a single-family home. Creating ADUs is one strategy to help ease the housing situation in Oakland and recent changes to state and local laws make it much easier to build ADUs. There are many potential benefits of ADUs, including: they are less expensive to build than traditional single-family or multi-family housing, are a good source of relatively affordable housing, enhance household and neighborhood resiliency by providing flexible housing options, maintain or enhance a neighborhood's social diversity, provide additional housing opportunities in neighborhoods rich in amenities, create new housing that doesn't dramatically change the character of a neighborhood, provide rental income to the property owner, and they can enhance the local economy since they are typically designed, constructed, and owned by local residents and businesses.

The Mayor's Office is launching an initiative to further promote ADUs in Oakland. This initiative involves collecting data on ADUs in the city, identifying barriers to creating ADUs, implementing ways to remove barriers, and creating a public educational and outreach campaign to promote ADUs in Oakland.

ISSUE

Despite the many benefits, there are challenges to creating ADUs—the cost; the complex nature of project planning, permitting, and construction processes; physical constraints on individual properties; and managing the tenant/landlord relationship of rental units. With the help of a Cultural Strategist, we want to explore how to creatively address these challenges, and then, how to communicate effectively with property owners who could create ADUs successfully. We would like to develop compelling answers to the questions "Why should I construct an ADU on my property?" and "How do I construct an ADU on my property?" with the aid of the Cultural Strategist.

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the Cultural Strategist should:

- Have experience in community-building
- Have the ability to understand individuals' motivations for pursuing or not pursuing the creation of ADUs
- Be an effective communicator, and
- Be able to help develop strategies that will result in the community's being more informed, motivated, and better equipped to pursue ADUs.

TIMEFRAME

The project will start at the beginning of 2019 and the work of the Cultural Strategist will run during FY 2019-2020.

For more information about the Mayor's Office for Housing Security, please visit the following URL: <https://oakland-home.squarespace.com/about/>

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#3 Planning and Building Department

MISSION

The Planning and Building Department (PBD) oversees the City's growth and development. We make sure all City projects support the health and welfare of all Oaklanders. The PBD creates policy guidance on development, linking land use, transportation, economic development, housing, public spaces, cultural arts, and social equity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The policy guidance created by the PBD takes into consideration all neighborhoods, natural resources, cultural assets, public venues, employment areas, and infrastructure. To plan for realistic outcomes that reflect the aspirations of Oakland's residents, development policy must be informed by community engagement, cultural mapping, land-use evaluations, transportation demand projections, and market analysis. The PBD is committed to inclusive planning and implementation, and seeks to enhance its outreach practices to the community with the help of a Cultural Strategist-in-Government. It is our intention to be a more effective partner with Oakland's residents generally, and the creative community in particular. While there may be different measures of success for this project, the outcome should cement a practice of ongoing outreach within the Planning Bureau to Oakland's cultural constituency. We believe such a practice will also leverage initiatives of other City departments, such as those of Economic and Workforce Development, Housing and Community Development, and Parks and Recreation, among others.

ISSUE

Although specific outreach efforts toward the creative community may now occur around individual planning initiatives, the Department wants to establish an ongoing means of communicating, ideating, and documenting concepts that capture value and increase support from a broader swath of Oakland's tapestry of constituents. We seek to work with an embedded Cultural Strategist to review our current processes and propose actionable changes that will enhance our capacity to plan together better with the creative community.

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the Cultural Strategist should be able to:

- Effectively communicate (talk AND listen) either to creative or process-driven thinkers and doers, and
- Problem-solve within both creative and analytical parameters.

TIMEFRAME

This work is to take place during FY19- 20 (July 2019-June 2020). We will refine specific dates to align with the Strategic Plan Division's work plan and the Cultural Strategist's availability.

For more information about the Planning and Building Department please visit the URL:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/departments/planning-and-building>

ALSO

For an example of the Planning and Building Department's efforts to make spaces for creative voices, please visit <https://www.oaklandca.gov/news/2018/what-does-equity-mean-to-you-community-voices-from-ayodele-nzinga>

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#4 Department of Race and Equity

MISSION

The Department of Race and Equity was created by [ordinance](#) in 2015 and added to Oakland's Municipal Code under Section [2.29.170](#) as a first step to rectify government policies and actions that systematically marginalized the city's Native, Black, Asian, and Latinx communities throughout the 20th century, with devastating socioeconomic impacts. The Department provides training and technical assistance to City staff and leadership to achieve the following goals:

- Eliminate systemic causes of racial disparities in City Government.
- Promote inclusion and full participation for all residents of the City.
- Reduce race-based disparities in our communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Department of Race and Equity seeks a Cultural Strategist to collaborate on a planning process for creating programming and inclusive processes to further understanding of, and to advance addressing anti-black bias in the City of Oakland. We are interested in projects that, for example:

- Explore the relationship of structural racism to city government and the dynamics it creates in the communities it serves to perpetuate anti-black implicit and explicit bias,
- Explore how anti-blackness impacts other racial and ethnic groups,
- Use community dialogue and participatory research as a core component of the creative process and performance,
- Helps all participants to understand better the role they can play create change for racial equity and inclusion in Oakland,
- Demonstrates an outreach and engagement process that is inclusive and transformative for participants,
- Result in visually-compelling, high-quality outcomes and meaningful measures to address anti-black bias and benefit all racial and ethnic groups in Oakland.

ISSUE

The results of the Department's Equity Indicator Report released in July 2018 found that most every indicator of well-being in Oakland shows troubling disparities by race, and that the Black community was the most impacted racial group. Since systems produce outcomes consistent with their design, it follows that there is a racial dynamic that is particularly impacting Black community, sometimes referred to as anti-black bias or anti-black racism. Deepening awareness of how this element operates structurally can serve to advance the dismantling inequitable systems.

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the Cultural Strategist should:

- Have demonstrated experience of using their art form to create dialogue about racial issues, equity, and inclusion across racial and ethnic differences,
- Be well versed in [anti-racism principles](#).

TIMEFRAME

This planning project is to begin no later than August 2019 and will conclude by the end of December 2019.

For more information about the Department of Race & Equity, please visit the following URL:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/departments/race-and-equity>

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#5 Department of Transportation—Case Statement

MISSION

The Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) was created to advance a vision of equity, accessibility, vibrancy, and safety for all of Oakland’s residents, visitors and businesses.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

OakDOT is focused on partnering with communities to design public spaces so that cultural identities are elevated, public gatherings are facilitated, and a sense of belonging is realized for underrepresented communities. Placekeeping in the public realm (plazas, intersections, sidewalks, etc.) is a vital component of instilling a sense of belonging for the multitude of cultures that make Oakland a rich and vibrant city. The Cultural Strategist will be a key player in helping OakDOT identify and follow through on opportunities to make culture and belonging an indelible part of the Oakland experience—on our streets, sidewalks, and in our neighborhoods.

ISSUE

The public right of way has too often been used to prioritize the safety, comfort, and efficient movement of automobiles at the expense of pedestrians and other forms of transportation. OakDOT is committed to reclaiming a share of the public realm for the express purpose of prioritizing community building in public space through gatherings, public activities, and local commerce.

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Ideally, the Cultural Strategist should:

- Be a skilled team player with cultural competencies for effective communication with underserved communities, particularly communities of color,
- Have experience working with youth, and
- Be skilled in contributing to multiple projects in a collaborative environment.

TIMEFRAME

The project will start at the beginning of 2019 and the work of the Cultural Strategist will run during FY 2019-2020.

For an example of OakDOT’s Placekeeping work, please visit

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/paint-the-town>
