



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Alex Briscoe, Director  
Anita Siegel, Director

---

**Office of the Director**

1000 Broadway, Ste. 500  
Oakland, CA, 94607

**Anita Siegel**

Director

(510) 267-8099

(510) 267-8000 main

---

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**RE: City of Oakland's Annual Linked Banking Survey and Related Measures**

To Council President Reid and members of the City Council:

This letter is offered in full support of the proposed resolution which amends the City of Oakland's Linked Banking Survey (LBS), and offers a mechanism by which to analyze, compare, and publicly present information related to bank performance. The changes proposed in the resolution are in response to a growing need for transparency and greater accountability as they relate to banking practices, and reaffirms the notion that the investment of public money should be subject to public scrutiny. Accordingly, the proposed measures hold the potential to empower those residents who have up to now been on the losing end of a fierce battle to maintain control of their own homes, and for whole communities who have struggled to maintain the economic security necessary to leading healthy lives.

If adopted, an amended LBS would provide a more comprehensive view of issues which residents have expressed as high priorities, and would require that banks wishing to hold City deposits provide information related to home loan modifications. The importance of home loan modification data cannot be overstated, as more and more Oakland families are exposed to the threat of foreclosure, contributing to a crisis which continues to have devastating effects on the city of Oakland. According to recent data provided by the Urban Strategies Council, in the time period 2006-2011, about 1 in 7 Oakland homes had entered the Notice of Default stage. Issues related to foreclosure negatively impact the health of Oakland residents, creating conditions that place undue stress on the body and increase the risk of illness and premature death.

The amended LBS would also require that banks provide information concerning loans to small and minority-owned businesses in Oakland. This information provided could be used to encourage greater access to wealth-building opportunities for communities which have suffered from a lack of investment and available credit since the onset of our economic recession. Just as with income, there is a strong relationship between wealth and health, and this information could contribute to reducing the disproportionate burden of poor health outcomes already experienced by the very communities who continuously suffer from a lack of economic opportunity.

This economic climate also demands measures that will protect limited resources, which underscores the value of information related to a bank's complicity with offering predatory, high-cost financial products. The addition of questions related to payday lending in the survey instrument provide a better understanding of the financial landscape faced by our residents, and is a critical step to developing suitable, non-predatory alternatives.

If passed, the resolution would ensure a level of investment from our financial institutions that is fundamental to improving the health and economic vitality of Oakland, and which would ultimately prevent us from continuously rewarding poor performing banks with City deposits.

Best,

Anita Siegel  
Director, Alameda County Public Health Department

---