



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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City Council  
Oakland City Hall  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Allocating Revenue for the West Oakland Job Resource Center**

Dear Councilmember Brunner:

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) is writing to share our comments regarding allocating revenue for the West Oakland Job Resource Center. As the agency responsible for protecting the public health of Alameda County residents, our department has called attention to the health and safety impacts of Oakland's high unemployment and economic crisis. I write to express our support for a sustained source of funding from the billboards revenue to establish the West Oakland Job Resource Center.

The West Oakland Job Resource Center would be a critical link between our communities, good jobs at the former base, and a brighter future for Oakland. The anticipated center is a cornerstone of making commitments to local hire real. Improving access to jobs, especially those that pay a living wage, with benefits, is one of the best ways to improve health outcomes.

Improving access to high quality jobs for Oakland residents, while not a panacea, would be an important contribution to the elimination of health inequities. In Alameda County, there is a strong gradient in health based on neighborhood poverty levels. This means that for each step up in neighborhood poverty, life expectancy goes down. People living in the highest poverty neighborhoods (where 30 percent or more residents live in poverty) are expected to die, on average, six years before people living in the lowest poverty neighborhoods (where fewer than 10 percent of residents live in poverty).

Residents of high-poverty neighborhoods are disproportionately people of color. In Alameda County, about 1 in 3 African Americans, 1 in 4 Latinos, and 1 in 7 Asians—compared to 1 in 10 Caucasians—live in high-poverty neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> This concentration of people of color in neighborhoods with fewer resources and opportunities for good health is a major driver of disparate health outcomes by race.

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ACPHD CAPE Unit, using data from American Community Survey, 2005-2009.

ACPHD is working in partnership with communities to reduce unfavorable neighborhood and social conditions that dramatically affect the life chances of local residents. As a public agency, we are concerned with the health of all Alameda County residents, and when the most burdened suffer, this affects all of society's ability to improve its outcomes. Solutions to benefit individuals and community economic opportunities are a community health strategy.

Thank you for considering our comments. Sustainable and ongoing revenue for the Job Resource Center would be critical in making the commitments of the Army Base redevelopment real for Oakland communities. We look forward to continuing discussions with Council and staff on this very important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH  
Interim Director of Public Health

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