

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN SERVICES

City of Oakland



The City of Oakland is an equal opportunity employer that values workforce diversity, inclusion, and equity. Oakland has a long history of activism around issues of justice and equity. Both oppression and this resistance to oppression have shaped the city's historical roots and the lives of its residents to this day. As public servants in one of the most diverse cities in the nation, we strive to develop employees who understand the harm and impacts of systemic inequity to create lasting, meaningful outcomes for everyone. Oakland strives to establish an environment that embraces the richness of culture, community, and individualism of employees.



THE CITY OF OAKLAND

The City of Oakland is a vibrant urban hub located in the San Francisco Bay Area. With a population of over 400,000, Oakland is renowned for its rich diversity, boasting a multicultural community where more than 125 languages are spoken. The city is home to one of the nation's largest LGBTQ+ communities and offers a unique blend of traditional neighborhoods, an expanding downtown, and thriving arts, entertainment, and recreational amenities.

Oakland's strategic location between the Pacific Ocean and rolling hills provides breathtaking views and abundant green spaces, including over 140 parks and scenic areas like Lake Merritt and Joaquin Miller Park. The city is also a key economic driver in Northern California, anchored by the Port of Oakland, the region's busiest international trade center, and a strong corporate presence with headquarters such as Kaiser Permanente, Clorox, and Pandora.

Known for its innovative spirit, Oakland continues to grow as a center for commerce, technology, and education, with six major universities in close proximity. This dynamic city combines the appeal of its natural beauty with the energy of a rapidly developing urban landscape, making it a desirable place to live, work, and thrive.

#OaklandLoveLife

In April 2016, the City of Oakland adopted an official city motto in memory of 16-year old Lo'Eshe Lacy. Lo'Eshe in Nigerian Igbo means "love life," a rallying cry to embody Oakland love. The Official City Motto of Oakland, California [#OaklandLoveLife](#)

CITY GOVERNANCE

The City of Oakland operates under a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor, elected at-large for a term of four-years, leads the executive branch and appoints the City Administrator, who oversees daily operations across all departments. In May 2025, Barbara Lee, longtime U.S. Congressional Representative and the first Black woman elected Mayor of Oakland, was sworn in as the City's 52nd Mayor. Her administration is focused on transparent, accountable leadership and delivering meaningful results for Oakland residents. Learn more about the [Mayor](#).



Oakland is a full-service city with approximately 4,200 employees and an annual budget exceeding \$1.3 billion. The City provides a wide range of essential services, including police, fire, public works, violence prevention programs, parks, libraries, and more. Learn more about [Oakland City Services](#).



The City Council consists of eight members – seven elected by district and one at-large – serving staggered four-year terms. The Council sets citywide priorities, adopts ordinances, approves the budget, and appoints members to boards and commissions. [Council information is available here](#).

The City recently adopted its biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2025–2027. While addressing a structural deficit, where ongoing expenses exceed ongoing revenues, leaders focused on long-term, sustainable solutions rather than short-term fixes. Learn more about the [City's budget process](#).

For those called to public service, this is a pivotal and exciting time to join the City of Oakland. Budget discussions have created space to reimagine how local government can work better for all residents by prioritizing equity, strengthening core services, and ensuring resources are aligned with community needs. City leadership is committed to innovation, collaboration, and strategic investment, and is seeking talented professionals who want to make a lasting impact.



HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

The Human Services Department (HSD) promotes the health, education and well-being of Oakland children, youth, families, single adults and seniors by providing free resources and programs to build strong Oakland communities. We collaborate with a diverse group of local organizations to eliminate poverty, economic, and racial disparities by addressing the current and emerging needs of the community.

WHAT WE DO


The Human Services Department delivers a wide range of programs and services designed to uplift Oaklanders of all ages and backgrounds. HSD provides direct support, coordinates with nonprofit and government partners, and manages grants that address the City's most urgent and emerging social needs.

SERVICES INCLUDE


- **Support for Seniors & Adults with Disabilities:** From transportation and wellness programs to meal delivery, case management, and job training, we help older adults age with dignity and independence.
- **Homelessness Services & Housing Solutions:** We provide shelter beds, outreach, hygiene services, safe parking, housing subsidies, and employment programs to support unhoused residents.
- **Youth & Family Programs:** We invest in after-school and academic programs, youth employment, parent engagement, and community-based safe spaces.
- **Early Childhood Education & Family Support:** Our Head Start programs serve over 1,000 low-income families with early education, health, nutrition, and disability services — both in centers and in homes.
- **Food Security Initiatives:** Through programs like the Summer Food Service Program and food distribution at senior centers and shelters, we help combat food insecurity.
- **Economic Empowerment:** We support job training, financial coaching, tax assistance, and other strategies to build financial resilience, especially among BIPOC and low-income residents.
- **Nonprofit Capacity Building:** We help local grassroots organizations grow and compete for funding to provide homelessness services and other community supports.

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT


DIVISIONS & BUREAUS




ADMINISTRATION: Oversees departmental strategy, policy, communications, HR, and fiscal operations. This team also leads inter-agency partnerships and resilience initiatives grounded in racial equity and trauma-informed care.




AGING & ADULT SERVICES: Delivers a wide array of programs that promote health, safety, and community engagement for older adults and people with disabilities, including paratransit and senior centers.




ALAMEDA COUNTY-OAKLAND COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (AC-OCAP): Manages federal funding to fight poverty through initiatives like hunger relief, housing advocacy, free tax preparation, and the Summer Food Service Program.



COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES: Delivers services to the homeless, supported by federal, state, County, and Measure Q funding, with a focus on reducing the disparities in support to the homelessness communities in the City of Oakland.



CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES: Supports children and young people from birth to age 21 through grants to community organizations. Programs include after-school care, youth internships, and civic engagement.



EARLY CHILDHOOD & FAMILY SERVICES: Provides Head Start and Early Head Start programs to young children and families, ensuring school readiness and family stability through education, health, and social services.



THE POSITION

The Human Services Director is an at-will executive management position reporting directly to the City Administrator. This role leads one of the City's largest departments, overseeing a broad array of social services and programs that support Oaklanders across every stage of life; early childhood through aging.

The Director is responsible for the strategic direction, administration, and performance of the Human Services Department, including its six divisions. Providing executive-level guidance to a diverse and multidisciplinary team of professional, technical, and administrative staff.

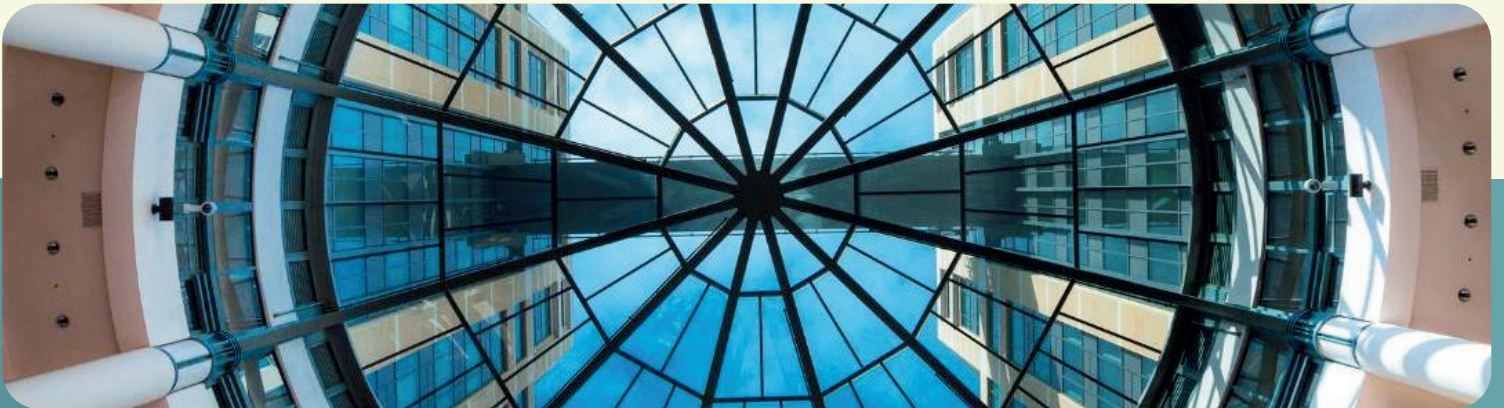
The position requires exceptional policy and operational leadership to ensure that HSD's programs respond effectively to community needs and align with the City's equity goals. The Director develops and implements departmental goals, policies, and long-term strategies in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, including elected officials, community-based organizations, funders, and other public agencies.

In FY 2024–25, the Department's total budget is over \$145 million, with funding sources including \$67.7 million in General Funds, \$77.4 million in Special Revenue Funds, and \$680,000 in Internal Service Funds. These resources support services such as early education for more than 1,000 low-income families, shelter and housing solutions for thousands of unhoused residents, senior centers and case management for older adults, food security programs, workforce development, and community-based youth services.



The Director is also responsible for oversight of the largest grantmaking program within the City of Oakland. The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY), funds community-based programs and services that provide critical support to Oakland's most vulnerable children and youth ages 0 – 21 years. The OFCY is a cornerstone initiative of the City of Oakland, operating within the Children and Youth Services Division of the Human Services Department. Through strategic funding of community-based organizations, OFCY invests in programs that uplift, empower, and protect Oakland's most vulnerable populations, ensuring access to critical resources, enriching opportunities, and brighter futures for the next generation. For more information about OFCY, click [here](#).

The Director serves as the City's chief strategist for human services policy and planning, ensuring that programs are both innovative and grounded in community needs. This includes overseeing critical initiatives that combat homelessness, reduce poverty, support aging in place, and increase equitable access to services for low-income and historically marginalized communities. The role demands a collaborative and visionary leader who can drive systems-level change, manage complex funding streams, and build strong partnerships across sectors.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Human Services Department is at a pivotal moment. In recent years, we have experienced significant transition, including the departure of long-serving staff and leadership changes, creating a sense of instability and uncertainty. The next Director must bring not only expertise and vision, but also deep emotional intelligence, humility, and resilience. Building trust and psychological safety with staff will be essential, as will leading with authenticity, compassion, and a steady hand.



The ideal candidate is a visionary strategist and a people-centered leader with a strong track record of managing large, complex, and highly visible human services systems. They will demonstrate a firm commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice, and possess a nuanced understanding of how systemic barriers impact communities of color, low-income populations, and other historically marginalized groups.

The next Human Services Director will bring extensive knowledge of social welfare policy, public administration, and state and federally funded programs, along with the ability to manage compliance, reporting, and accreditation standards. A strong understanding of how to braid and align multiple funding streams to achieve meaningful outcomes is key.

The ideal candidate will be a thoughtful organizational builder, experienced in change management, organizational design, and empowering high-performing teams. They will be adept at navigating ambiguity, building consensus, and driving innovation while honoring the expertise and lived experiences of staff and community members. A reflective, data-informed, and adaptable leader, the Director must be comfortable leading through change and inspiring others to reimagine what is possible.



REQUIREMENTS

Any combination of education and experience that is equivalent to the following minimum qualifications is acceptable.



Education: A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in social welfare or health administration, public policy, business or public administration, or a closely related field. A master's degree is preferred.

Experience: Five (5) years of administrative experience in the human services, social welfare, community development or health services, or a closely related field. Experience in federally funded programs is desirable.

License: Individuals who are appointed to this position will be required to maintain a valid California Driver's License throughout the tenure of employment OR demonstrate the ability to travel to various locations in a timely manner as required in the performance of duties.

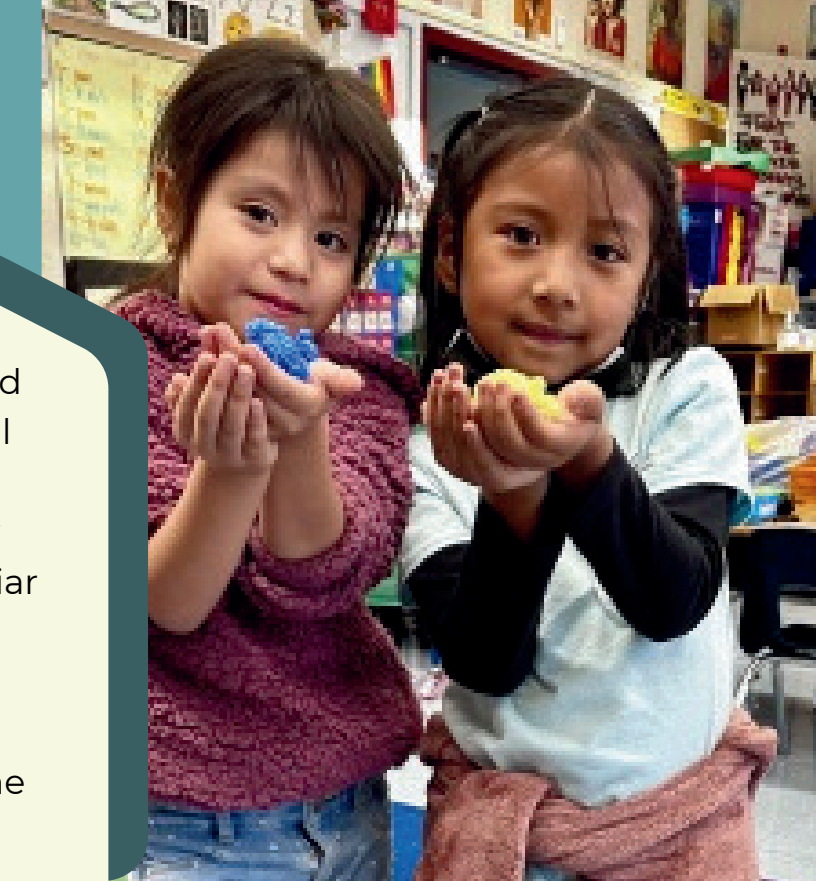


THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- Demonstrated success leading in high-stakes, high-accountability environments
- The ability to build strong cross-sector partnerships and represent the City with credibility and integrity
- High emotional intelligence, political acumen, and the ability to “read the room” and adapt communications accordingly
- A commitment to continuous learning, active listening, and inclusive leadership
- Strong budgeting and financial management skills in complex public sector settings
- The ability to bring stability to a department in flux and model the values of transparency, fairness, and mutual respect
- The ability to think creatively and strategically to foster departmental resiliency during times of political, social, and economic uncertainties.

THE PROCESS

The process for the Director position will begin with the screening of applications, resumes, and cover letters by the Human Resources Management Department. The most qualified candidates will be contacted to arrange a screening interview, which will determine who advances to the interview phase. Interviews will be conducted - likely with a panel of external stakeholders familiar with the position and with internal representatives. The most highly qualified candidate will be selected for this critical position and will serve at the pleasure of the City Administrator.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

This comprehensive package reflects the City's commitment to attracting and retaining top talent in public service. The salary range for this position is \$180,276.84 - \$270,415.20 annually. Salary is negotiable within the defined range depending on qualifications. Benefits include generous medical insurance, life insurance, automobile allowance, paid holidays, vacation, sick leave, management leave, public sector retirement (CalPERS 2.5% @ 55 classic member; 2% @ 62 new PEPRA member), and voluntary deferred compensation. Click on the [link](#) for the city's 2025 Benefits Matrix.



HOW TO APPLY

To be considered, please submit your resume and cover letter outlining the background and experience that makes you the ideal candidate electronically through the city's online applicant portal found here: www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oaklandca

Applications will be accepted through August 14, 2025, those received by July 27, 2025, will receive first consideration. If you have any questions about the recruitment process, email Amber Lytle at ALytle@oaklandca.gov.