MINUTES

Alameda County-Oakland
Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP)

Administering Board (Special) / Executive Committee Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026, 5:30 PM
City Hall – 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Hearing Room 3

Board Members Present: Monique Rivera (Chair), Sandra Johnson (Vice-Chair), David Walker (Secretary), Supervisor Lena Tam (Cesley Ford-Frost), Councilmember Carroll Fife (Tonya Love), Mayor Barbara Lee (Dr. Atiya Rashada), Councilmember Ken Houston, Dr. Kimberly Mayfield, Patricia Schader, Rana Matly, Mitchell Margolis, Michelle Edmond, and Terrence Riley.

Board Member Excused: Andrea Ford (Treasurer), Supervisor Nate Miley (Angelica Gums)

Board Vacancies: Low-Income District 1 and Alameda County Low-Income.

Pending Designation Reappointments: Elected District 5 (Councilmember Noel Gallo)

Guest(s): Ginger DeContreras (Community Member)

Staff: Deputy Director Lea Lakes, HSD Director Dr. Jason Lester, Maria Huynh, and Thea On

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A. Call to Order/Recite Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP) Promise
Chair M. Rivera called the January 12, 2026, Administering Board Meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The AC-OCAP Promise was recited.

B. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum
Staff T. On performed Roll Call; a quorum for the Administering Board Meeting was established at 5:40 p.m.

C. Approval of Agenda
MOTION: To approve the January 12, 2026, Administering Board Agenda.
M/S/Carried: S. Johnson / P. Schader / Motion Carried

D. Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership (AC-OCAP) Administering Board Meeting of December 8, 2025 (Attachment D)
Chair M. Rivera and D. Walker requested that the minutes for December 8, 2025, be approved at the Executive Meeting in February due to the time needed to make revisions.

E. Public Comment: (Specific Agenda item(s): Audience Comment Period) – None

F. Community Action Partnership Board (CAP) Updates:

1. **Executive Committee**
   a. **AC-OCAP By-Laws Update** – Chair M. Rivera highlighted that the bylaws have been out of compliance since 2011. Three draft versions have already been prepared, focusing on necessary updates to the following areas: The current bylaws stipulate a notice period of 7 to 10 days for certain items; however, in practice, the board has sometimes provided only about 3 days' notice. Some sections do not clearly reference Alameda County and the City of Oakland, and they need to be revised to reflect the service area and organizational structure accurately. She noted that

substantive language regarding the mission and role within the bylaws will not be discarded; the primary emphasis is on making administrative and technical corrections.

b. **National Updates** – None

c. **Chair Updates** – Chair M. Rivera noted that the committee chairs (T. Love, R. Malty, A. Gums) are preparing a year plan and possibly a budget to present at the retreat, so the board can better organize 2026 activities.

2. **Fund Development:**

   a. **Updates on Funding Research -** R. Matly reported that the Fund Development Committee has been meeting to review its current list of potential funders. The committee is updating and expanding this list as part of its funding research. She identified two specific needs: workshops and training to enhance grant-writing skills, as well as hands-on grant-writing support, which would involve assistance from someone who can draft or coach on actual grant applications. Staff M. Huynh explained that she had shared a link to UC Berkeley grant-writing workshops, but they do not include a dedicated writer. That link was provided by CalCAPA as a suggested resource from Lawrence Hiner. D. Walker clarified that CalCAPA has someone who can assist with grant writing. Additional clarification is needed regarding this discussion.

   Action item(s):

   - Confirm exactly what CalCAPA / UC Berkeley resources provide.
   - Are they only training/workshops?
   - Is there an actual person who can help write or co-write grants?
   - Report back so Fund Development can plan its funding strategy more clearly.
   - Continue outreach with the San Francisco Foundation and report scheduling.

3. **Program Planning:**

   a. **Holiday Toy Drive Event Takeaways** – The Toy Drive was a success, attracting a large number of attendees. Chair M. Rivera estimated that approximately 600 toys were given away. It was a CAP (Community Action Partnership) connected event. Elected officials and partners in attendance included Councilmember Houston, Supervisor Miley, and Supervisor Tam. The board discussed lessons learned and potential improvements for future events. Although they asked people to register in advance, some participants showed up with different or additional children than those listed. This discrepancy created logistical challenges in matching toys with pre-registered kids. The group explored various methods for organizing gift distribution and acknowledged the need for a clearer system next time. While there were not many toys left at the end, the few remaining were successfully donated through a resource identified by T. Love.

   b. **Other Updates** – None

4. **Advocacy:**

   a. **Committee Update** - T. Love discussed a tutorial titled "Legislative 101" to explain how the legislative process works. The committee aims to help board members and grantees better understand how laws are made and where they can intervene. She outlined a proactive plan to engage CAP grantees in advocacy efforts. The goal is to collect the survey results by the March conference so that the data can be presented to DC legislators as concrete information from local agencies. Additionally, T. Love plans to hold 30-minute interviews with grantees to delve deeper into their needs and challenges. This will help identify the themes necessary to build a policy agenda, with a draft expected to be completed by the end of April. This way, when representatives go to the state in May, they will have a clear and prioritized list of issues and requests. She highlighted that state legislation likely has the greatest impact on CAP agencies. While local issues may arise, the primary focus will be on county, state, and federal matters. They will also inquire whether grantees are interested in participating in legislative visits organized by CAP.

Action Item(s):

- Send grantee advocacy survey.
- Draft and distribute a survey to grantees asking about their capacity to do legislative advocacy (legal, staffing, time).
- Whether they already have an advocacy program.
- Client day-to-day challenges they're hearing.
- Agency-level challenges that could be solved legislatively.
- Conduct follow-up interviews with grantees.
- Schedule and complete ~30-minute interviews with selected grantees
- Use these to go deeper on needs, challenges, and potential policy solutions.
- Use survey + interview data to draft a policy agenda.
- Identifies specific county, state, and federal policy priorities.
- Aim to send it out by the end of the week, so responses are back by the March conference.

G. Retreat updates (Monique Rivera and Lea Lakes):

1. **Strategic Plan -** Chair M. Rivera emphasized that the main focus of the meeting was to prepare for the upcoming retreat, which aims to update the strategic plan. The retreat is scheduled for January 24th. The strategic plan will guide grant-making decisions, including which organizations will receive funding and the reasons behind those choices. It will also outline the board's priorities and activities for the upcoming cycle. M. Rivera reminded the board that in previous cycles, questions arose about why certain organizations were chosen for funding. She stressed that these decisions must be grounded in the strategic plan. During the meeting, M. Rivera reviewed the existing 2019–2025 strategic plan, noting that the vision is expected to remain the same and that only a brief review is needed. The purpose statement was paraphrased to say, "The Community Action Partnership has a responsibility to plan, develop, and execute initiatives that alleviate poverty and promote systemic changes so that low-income families in Alameda County can achieve self-sufficiency, defined as having the resources and opportunities to meet a range of individual needs." The board expressed its intention to reaffirm the existing framework rather than completely rewrite the strategic plan during the retreat. Additionally, the board plans to maintain the five existing pillars as the plan's primary framework and refine them as needed.

    1. Entrepreneurship & job training
    2. Low-income housing
    3. Community development
    4. Civic engagement
    5. Capacity building

2. **Board Retreat (Strategic Plan 2027-2029) January 24, 2026**:
    Lea Lakes facilitated a round table and sticky notes discussion:

- Mental health & emotional wellness
- Not just clinical treatment, but support and a safety net around people's well-being while they manage poverty, trauma, and instability.
- Emphasis on wraparound supports, possible linkages to other providers, and addressing "hurt" and suffering in communities.
- Low-income/affordable housing:
- Housing, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurship are high priorities.
- Supporting housing-related safety-net programs and weatherization / home-modification concepts mentioned later.
- Whole family / two-generation approaches
- Support both parents/guardians and their children simultaneously.
- Affordable childcare so parents can work or train, while kids are safe and learning.
- Youth support, arts & technology
- Concern about breaking cycles for youth, even when parents may not engage.

- Use of arts and technology as tools for healing and emotional expression.
- Skill-building and future job pathways.
- Plug youth into creative/tech programs as an on-ramp away from negative cycles.
- Food insecurity & response to policy changes
- Homeless individuals
- Veterans
- Foster youth
- Capacity building & partnerships
- Wraparound service coordination (connecting grantees to mental health, legal, and other supports).

H. Informational Item:

1. **NCAF 2026 Washington Conference, March 17th to 20th (Attachment H1)** – T. Love, L. Lakes, and M. Rivera will attend the 2026 NCAF in Washington, D.C. Their goal is to meet with legislators and gather information from grantees regarding client and agency needs. To prepare for this, T. Love plans to send out a survey to the grantees and collect their responses before March. The survey results, along with interviews, will help shape their presentation in Washington, D.C.

2. **2026 CalCAPA Advocacy Day - Sacramento, May 14th(Attachment H2)** – T. Love will help organize and coordinate the trip to CalCAPA in Sacramento. She will work on scheduling meetings with state legislators. The goal is to improve upon last year, when they waited too long and missed some meetings. They are also open to trying to secure a meeting with the Governor's office regarding the policy agenda. Tonya's advocacy plan is timed so that the Grantee survey results and interviews will inform a policy agenda by the end of April. This agenda will be used during their May visit to the state for CalCAPA Advocacy Day, allowing them to present a clear, prioritized list of issues and requests. Staff M. Huynh suggested they might be entitled to one night of accommodation due to the distance. Chair M. Rivera asked to verify the travel policy and report back, as they had previously been told it was "too close" to justify an overnight stay.

I. Community Action Partnership Programming Updates (Maria Huynh and Thea On):

1. Mayor Appointment Letter (Atiya Rashada) – **Attachment I1**
   MOTION: To approve Atiya Rashada's appointment to the AC-OCAP Board.
   M/S/Carried: K. Houston / P. Schader / Motion Carried

2. **State of HSD Leadership** - Dr. Lester, the HSD Director, prepared a speech to introduce himself to the board. He emphasized that Oakland needs a servant leader, not just another bureaucrat or administrator. He believes poverty is a systemic issue rather than a personal shortcoming and frames his role as a calling, not merely a job. Dr. Lester's professional background includes being a trained social worker, a teacher, and a public servant by conviction. He has extensive experience in child welfare, early childhood systems, behavioral health, and leadership in both non-profit and government sectors. He has taught over 750 graduate students at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work and has managed complex systems with real financial stakes and lives on the line. He identifies as a husband and a proud father of a child with autism, understanding firsthand the worries that come with a child's school day and the hope that programs remain funded. He leads with lived experience rather than spreadsheet data alone. Dr. Lester defines the department's purpose as reducing suffering, restoring dignity, and creating real opportunities in every corner of Oakland. He pointed out that HSD serves children, families, seniors, and individuals in crisis daily. While the portfolio is broad, the mission remains simple: stabilize families, strengthen communities, and break the cycles of poverty.

   Dr. Lester's leadership, five goals for HSD:

   1. Radical Service Excellence: Services must be fast, fair, and humane. For instance, if a grandmother waits three months for assistance, it's not a delay; it's a betrayal.
   2. Workflow Modernization: Plans include cutting unnecessary approvals and simplifying access to help.
   3. Fiscal Discipline with Soul: A commitment to being strong stewards of public funds, strengthening contract management, payment timelines, and accountability systems. Vendors should be paid on time, and programs monitored in real time.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making: Emphasizing informed decisions based on data rather than anecdotes.
5. People-First Leadership: Acknowledging that staff are HSD's greatest asset. There will be clear expectations, honest feedback, and genuine pathways for professional development. He explicitly rejects a culture that leads to burnout among good employees, leaving them to wonder why they left.

Dr. Lester advocates for community partnerships, recognizing that the government cannot eradicate poverty from City Hall alone. He aims to build stronger relationships with non-profits, churches, fraternities and sororities, the broader public, and philanthropic organizations, emphasizing that philanthropy should be strategic rather than merely symbolic.

He highlighted key outcomes HSD will track, such as:

- Children entering kindergarten are ready to learn (Head Start).
- Families are stabilizing their housing and income.
- Seniors receiving support with dignity.
- Providers are being paid accurately and on time.
- Neighborhoods experiencing reduced crisis service usage.

His guiding principle is: "If it cannot be measured, it cannot be managed, and if it does not change lives, it's not worthwhile." He concluded his speech with a powerful quote: "100 years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of car I had, or the type of house I lived in, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of someone else.

3. **Board Vacancies: Low-Income Alameda County, and Low-Income Oakland District 1 (Attachment I3) -** Chair M. Rivera provided a brief overview of current vacancies, noting 2 to 3 open positions. The mayor's appointee seat was previously vacant, but has now been filled by Dr. Atiya Rashada, and was approved by the board at the beginning of the meeting. There is still a pending appointment from Councilmember Gallo, and efforts are underway to recruit for the low-income seat in Alameda County, particularly from unincorporated and low-income areas such as Cherryland. Transportation assistance is being offered because many people have difficulty getting to Oakland. Additionally, District 1 still has a vacancy and remains unrepresented.
4. **AC-OCAP Draft Board Resolution 01-26 (Attachment I4)**
   MOTION: To approve the AC-OCAP draft Board Resolution 01-26
   M/S/Carried: T. Love / P. Schader / Motion Carried

5. **Draft Resolution 1-12-26: Jointly notice the Special Executive Committee in place of the Administering Board meeting if a quorum is not met. (Attachment I5):**
   MOTION: To approve the resolution allowing the Executive Committee to serve as the Administrative Board when there is no quorum, with the resolution effective 1/12/26 onwards.
   M/S/Carried: T. Love / T. Riley / Motion Carried

6. **Status of 2025 Grantee Reimbursements** – Staff member M. Huynh provided an update on Grantee reimbursements from August 2025 to October 2025. A total of 14 reimbursements have been processed, while 3 are still pending. She indicated that a status of all blue means all is good, meaning the full allocation is essentially committed and utilized across both processed and pending reimbursements. Additionally, she distributed a folder containing on-site monitoring visit reports for August to October 2025. Board members can review them and email her with any questions.

   Action Item(s):

   - Review and, if necessary, amend or strike the October letter to the three non-compliant grantees to align with the actual audit requirements.
   - Verify the audit status of all other grantees.
   - Confirm in writing whether any other funded organizations are below the audit threshold, and whether the board required anything extra of them (or not).
   - Produce a clear list/confirmation for the board: which grantees are under the threshold, and what was or was not required of them.

7. **2025 Grantee Site Monitoring Reports (Attachment I7)** – see I6

8. **CalCAPA Indian Wells Key Takeaways (Maria Huynh) -** M. Staff Huynh provided insights from the 2025 CalCAPA conference held in Indian Wells. The theme of the conference was “Rooting in Resilience,” which focused on responding to political and funding uncertainties within the CSBG network while remaining committed to community action. During the morning breakfast event, one speaker remarked, "Low-income people are not the problem; low-income people are the symptom of the problem, and Community Action will try to solve the problem.” M. Huynh also spoke with David Knight to clarify the audit requirements for grantees. Additionally, she noted that David Bradley shared concerning information about staff reductions at the Office of Community Services (OCS), which decreased from 69 employees in January 2025 to only 14 by November 2025. Bradley advised fostering good-faith relationships with the current administration, including Republican members, and encouraged seeking opportunities amidst chaos. He stressed the importance of working with both parties to protect and advance CSBG and anti-poverty initiatives. Furthermore, she attended a session on the whole-family/two-generation approach, which focuses on programs in which both parents or guardians and their children participate together. This approach aims to support the entire family unit in moving toward stability and self-sufficiency.
9. **VITA 2025 Tax Season Flyer (Attachment I9)** – None

J. Open Forum (General Audience Comment Period) – None

K. Announcements:

1. **United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County:**

   S. Johnson: United Seniors is preparing its annual retreat, held as a series of sessions: First session: last Friday in January, starting at 10:00 a.m., 4–5 sessions total, used to plan the year’s work. Location: 7200 Bancroft Avenue, Oakland, under the leadership of County Supervisor Nate Miley

2. **Alameda County Social Services/Board of Supervisors**:

   C. Frost will provide a full written update on federal funding and county impacts and send it via email to staff for submission to the board. She also announced the upcoming Point-in-Time Count. Emphasized they need enough volunteers to get an accurate count. Especially critical now because of Measure W funding ties; data affects how homelessness dollars are allocated. She will pass that information to the staff so they can circulate the sign-up details.

3. **City of Oakland:**

   L. Lakes reminded everyone to prepare for the upcoming retreat, including a review of the current strategic plan and bylaws. The agenda will focus on reaffirming the organization’s mission, vision, and promises; clarifying the roles of the board and staff; and conducting breakout sessions to define goals, actions, and milestones under the five pillars.

4. **Board Members/Others:**

   D. Walker announced the Brotherhood of Elders Network is offering an 18-month outdoor internship program for Black and Brown boys ages 16–22. There are 10 slots available. It includes a $7,500 stipend over 18 months. Training as outdoor educators and community leaders. Wilderness First Aid certification. Free gear (backpacks, equipment, etc.) and transit stipends. He offered to share the email/flyer so board members can refer eligible youth.

   M. Rivera mentioned the Hidden Genius Project, which is a youth tech and leadership program. She has previously hosted a Hidden Genius intern but hasn't had one in recent years. She expressed interest in re-engaging with the program and potentially hosting another youth intern. Rivera emphasized the value of early work experience and the importance of supporting young men of color by providing them with real-world workplace exposure.

L. Attachments:

D Draft Minutes from December 8, 2025, Administering Board Meeting
H1 NCAF Washington Conference (March 17th - 20th)
H2 CalCAPA Advocacy Day - Sacramento (May 14th)
H3 Debrief Sessions for Conference/Training Attendees
I1 Mayor Appointment Letter (Atiya Rashada)
I3 AC-OCAP Board Vacancies
I4 AC-OCAP Board Resolution 01-26
I5 Special Executive Committee Meeting Resolution 1-12-26
I6 Status of 2025 Grantee Reimbursements
I7 2025 Grantee Site Monitoring Reports
I9 VITA 2025 Tax Season Flyer

M. Adjournment:
a. **The Next In-Person Meeting: February 9, 2026**

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm
M/S/Carried: S. Johnson / A. Rashada / Motion Carried.