



CITY OF OAKLAND

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR &  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Joe DeVries  
Deputy City Administrator/  
Chief Resilience Officer

**SUBJECT:** Oakland City Challenge

**DATE:** October 13, 2022

City Administrator  
Approval

Date: October 14, 2022

### INFORMATION

#### Executive Summary

The purpose of this memo is to provide information on the Oakland City Challenge, a unique resident-engagement initiative where residents co-design and implement solutions to urban challenges in partnership with City staff, the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation (OFPI), Mills College (now Mills College at Northeastern University), The Burnes Center for Social Change at Northeastern University, and The GovLab. The City Challenge is intended to deepen participatory democracy and strengthen the relationship between local government and residents.

#### Background

The Oakland City Challenge is a one-year project that started in January 2022. As stated above, it is run in partnership with the [City of Oakland](#), the [Oakland Fund for Public Innovation \(OFPI\)](#), [Mills College](#) (now Mills College at Northeastern University), [The Burnes Center for Social Change at Northeastern University](#), and [The GovLab](#). The City Challenge builds the capacity of local civil servants and residents to collaborate, identify and co-design potential solutions that tackle urban challenges and improve the livability of Oakland. The Oakland City Challenge specifically focused on the following three challenge areas:

1. Urban Blight (abandoned vehicles and illegal dumping)
2. Homelessness and Housing Insecurity
3. Violent Crime

From April-June 2022, The Oakland City Challenge received solution proposals from 237 Oaklanders, which were then voted on by 860 members of the community. Solutions were voted on 2361 times, with the average voter upvoting 2.75 ideas. The top twenty proposals for each category were reviewed by a panel of 18 reviewers, made up of community leaders and city staff, students, and experts in the Oakland City Challenge issue areas.

## **Winning Proposals**

Based on the voting and the review, the panel selected six winning proposals that are proceeding through a coaching program where winning teams and city officials will collaborate to develop pilots that are implementable and impactful to the three challenge areas: homelessness, violent crime, and illegal dumping. Winners are all from Oakland and include the formerly incarcerated and homeless as well as students and seniors.

Upon completion of the coaching program each winning team will receive \$5,000 from the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation to help them develop an implementable pilot of their project or to further develop their existing programming. Teams will also develop project plans and budget requests to invite the City, philanthropy and corporate partners to fund the scaling of their projects in the future.

A summary of the winning challenges is provided below. Please note that all teams have committed to the coaching program and the first session took place on Monday September 19, 2022:

### **Homelessness Challenge Winner 1: “Urban Compassion Project”**

- **Team:** Vincent Williams and the Urban Compassion Project
- **Solution:** Urban Compassion Project (UCP) partners with unhoused residents and a dedicated group of volunteers to dispose of trash, debris, and large items in communities across Oakland. This work helps build trust between housed and unhoused neighbors while establishing an initial point of contact for potential future wrap-around services. [Link to solution](#)

### **Homelessness Challenge Winner 2: “Tiny Home Communities”**

- **Team(s):** Youth Spirit Artworks/Sustainable Housing at California from UC Berkeley and private resident June Lee with L.C. and Lillie Cox Haven of Hope (fiscal sponsor)
- **Solution:** This is the combination of two winners/proposals involving Tiny Homes that focus on supporting the formerly incarcerated, unhoused youth, and other specific populations. These solutions would focus less on building homes, and more on building community with access to essential services. [Link to solution 1](#) and [2](#)

### **Violent Crime Challenge Winner 1: “Oakland Speaks- Conflict Resolution for All”**

- **Team:** Ana-Marie Jones
- **Solution:** Actively teach and embrace evidence-based conflict resolution and nonviolent/compassionate communication skills all across Oakland. The project would support and challenge every business, school, volunteer group, government partner, philanthropic organization, scout troop, book club, prayer circle, and every person to find ways to embrace, share, and use conflict resolution and nonviolent/compassionate communication in as many ways as possible. [Link to solution](#)

### **Violent Crime Challenge Winner 2: “Project Bedrock”**

- **Team:** Jim Pugh and Morgan Mendez
- **Solution:** In partnership with the Department of Violence Prevention, adapt and replicate a crime prevention program from Liberia that found that providing therapy and cash assistance to young men at high risk of violent crime dramatically decreased the chance that they would commit violent crimes, even 10 years later. [Link to solution](#)

### **Abandoned Vehicles and Illegal Dumping Challenge Winner 1: “Friends of the Urban Forest for Oakland”**

- **Team:** Alexis Frank
- **Solution:** Develop a mechanism of collaboration between nonprofits and the City of Oakland with a focus on lowering the barrier to entry for street trees, community garden development, and urban beautification efforts. [Link to solution](#)

### **Abandoned Vehicles and Illegal Dumping Challenge Winner 2: “Combined Solution on Marketing Free Pickup/Drop-off Services for Trash”**

- **Team(s):** Violet Henderson and Kelcey Poe
- **Solution:** Multiple solutions pointed to the need for more targeted bulky waste collection programs. These solutions would first and foremost focus on marketing campaigns that would aim to increase the uptake of existing opportunities and programs. [Link to solution 1](#) and [2](#)

### **Coaching and Mentoring Program:**

This online and in-person coaching program is designed to help winners of the [Oakland City Challenge](#) and Oakland city officials design and launch pilots of their winning ideas.

With the support of researchers, mentors, and experts, participants will work to:

- Clearly articulate the problem that the solution is designed to solve
- Research similar solutions that have been tried elsewhere
- Scope an effective pilot of the idea
- Develop a timeline, engagement strategy and budget to put the idea into practice

The goal of the coaching program is to take a participants’ idea and put it into action with and for the residents of Oakland. Thus, coming out of this program participants will have developed:

1. A persuasive presentation about their project
2. The launched pilot
3. A budget and funding request to scale the program

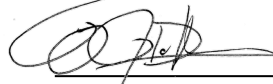
The goal of the program is to help challenge winners launch pilot projects in one year and to prepare proposals for scale up.

This 3-month program meets approximately 1x per week for about 1-2 hrs. Throughout the coaching and mentoring process, the team works hand in hand with participants to develop specific project and program plans. This program includes such elements as:

- Developing a theory of change and setting project goals and objectives
- Articulating a monitoring and evaluation plan
- Developing a project budget and working to identify funding sources
- Connecting participants with academic and expert mentors from across the country and world
- Connecting participants with Oakland city staff who can help participants realize their vision and how they might collaborate with the City to achieve it
- Developing a communications and marketing plan to build support and recognition of the impact participants' pilot project is making

Once the mentoring process is complete, the City Challenge Team will conduct a media event showcasing the different proposals and will continue to keep updates about the pilot implementation available online with a link to the City's website.

Respectfully submitted,



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Joe DeVries  
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Officer, Office of the City Administrator

For questions, please contact Joe DeVries, at (510) 238-3083.