

## Details

**File #:** 2023-2966  
**Type:** Regular Agenda Item  
**Body:** [City Council](#)  
**On agenda:** 5/2/2023  
**Title:** Recommendation to Accept the Social Service Human Relations Board Community Needs Assessment Report. (Community Development 10061831)  
**Attachments:** 1. [Exhibit 1 - Draft 2023 Community Needs Assessment](#), 2. [Presentation](#)

## Text

**Title:** Recommendation to Accept the Social Service Human Relations Board Community Needs Assessment Report. (Community Development 10061831)

**Body:**  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Jennifer Ott, City Manager

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Alameda's Charter assigns Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB) the responsibility of assessing and responding to the social service and human relations needs of the City of Alameda (City). To fulfill that responsibility, SSHRB has periodically surveyed Alameda residents to determine the scope of the community needs and to evaluate and publicize resources to meet those needs. The last Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was presented to the City Council in June 2018.

Over the last year, SSHRB members have volunteered hundreds of hours in the preparation of the 2023 CNA. The CNA is intended to inform the City Council of Alameda residents' needs. The CNA will also help community-based organizations document community needs in funding applications and will give granting agencies important information to help guide their giving programs.

### BACKGROUND

At its March 24, 2022, meeting, SSHRB finalized an alternative methodology for collecting and compiling the Community Needs Assessment compared to the methodology used in previous years. Most notably, SSHRB decided to base the CNA on secondary data and public comments presented at SSHRB meetings instead of conducting the community survey that had been done in past years. All of SSHRB's changes to the CNA methodology are summarized below:

- **Eliminate previous survey format**-The 2012 and 2017 CNAs relied on community surveys posted on-line, distributed by email, and made available in hard copy at various locations in multiple languages throughout the City. SSHRB considered the limitations of this approach in producing a statistically representative sample of Alameda's population. In addition, the phrasing of the survey questions left ambiguity whether the responses were to be based on personal experience or perceived needs in the community.
- **Utilize existing secondary data**, from the U.S. Census Bureau, the State of CA, and other agencies/organization, while also including data collected from numerous community-wide surveys. As an alternative methodology, and based on the professional experience of SSHRB members, SSHRB decided to consolidate data from the many government studies and surveys already conducted of Alameda's population and social indicators.
- **Supplement data with community meeting input**-SSHRB regularly solicits and receives comments from community-based organizations and stakeholders to identify priority public service needs for the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Most recently, SSHRB held a CDBG-related public hearing on December 1, 2022, where it received written and/or verbal input from 12 local service organizations.

**Introduce a new report format**, broken down by the following sections:

- Demographics
- Economy
- Housing
- Health
- Social Connectedness
- Social Supports
- Transportation
- Civic Engagement
- Personal Security
- Environmental Quality

### DISCUSSION

Over the last year, SSHRB members have volunteered hundreds of hours in the preparation of the 2023 CNA. At the February 23, 2023 meeting, SSHRB reviewed the draft CNA for final comments. At its March 23, 2023 meeting, SSHRB approved the final CNA to be presented to City Council.

The following themes and community needs emerged based on the data collected and information gathered from previous community meetings with local service providers and stakeholders, as described above.

- Racial equity concerns are at the core of many of these issues. While the statistics regarding race and ethnicity provide a snapshot, the stark statistics of overall financial inequity indicate a strong reason to investigate and address these needs. Examples include:

- The median household income of households of color (households that self-identify as non-white) was significantly lower than households that identified as white. American Indian and Alaskan Native households reported income 44 percent lower than white households, Black and African American families were 41 percent lower, and Hispanic and Latino incomes were 32 percent lower.
- Students of color were more likely to drop out of public schools in Alameda prior to high school graduation than White students.
- There are serious underlying issues and needs among certain segments of the population, especially in regard to student mental health crisis intervention and supportive programming. For example,
  - Student social connectedness decreased with age, with 72 percent of 5th graders feeling connected and 57 percent of 9th and 11th graders. Just 53 percent of 9th graders reported being able to identify a caring adult at school.
- Many languages other than English are spoken as the primary language among Alameda residents, highlighting the continued need for language access to information and referral services for English-as-a-second language and recent immigration populations. For example:
  - More than one third of Alameda residents speak a language other than English in the home.
- There are a number of household-level concerns identified in the CNA, including housing and homeless services, domestic violence, available and affordable childcare, food security, and mental health services. Examples include:
  - More than one-third of households in Alameda have a significant housing burden. This was especially true for renters with one in five households facing a housing burden.
  - Unsheltered homelessness increased by 27 percent between 2019 and 2022.
  - There was a 36 percent increase in the number of felony domestic violence cases between 2019 and 2021. Though SSHRB notes that reported cases are not necessarily reliable indicators of the prevalence of actual incidences of domestic violence. In addition, most domestic violence incidences either go unreported or are handled through the family law/civil court system.

The CNA is intended to inform City Council of Alameda residents' needs. The CNA may also assist community-based organizations document community needs in their funding applications and will give granting agencies important information to help guide their giving programs.

#### Alternatives

- Accept the SSHRB 2023 CNA
- Provide feedback to SSHRB on the 2023 CNA
- Take no action at this time

#### Financial Impact

Funds to support SSHRB are budgeted in SSHRB Administration (Org 10061831). There is no financial impact from accepting the SSHRB CNA report.

#### Municipal Code/Policy Document Cross Reference

SSHRB is a chartered Board assigned to advise City Council on the Social Service and Human Relations needs of the City. This action is consistent with Alameda Municipal Code 2-9.4(e):

Assess and report to the City Council the social service needs of the people and the methods of meeting those needs.

#### Environmental Review

This action does not constitute a "project" as defined in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378 and therefore no further CEQA analysis is required.

#### Climate Impacts

There are no identifiable climate impacts or climate action opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Social Service Human Relations Board Community Needs Assessment report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Means, Acting President, Social Services Human Relations Board

By,  
Eric Fonstein, Development Manager

Exhibit:  
1. Draft 2023 Community Needs Assessment