

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **Honorable Loren Taylor Oakland City Councilmember**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **DISTRICT 6 COUNCILMEMBER LOREN TAYLOR AND OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL'S EQUITY CAUCUS ALLOCATE 2 MILLION TO ADDRESS HEALTH, ECONOMIC, AND FOOD ACCESS DISPARITIES EXACERBATED BY COVID-19**

OAKLAND, CA – Last night, Oakland Councilmember Loren Taylor successfully advocated for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to community based organizations that serve Oakland's most vulnerable when they need it most. Black and Latinx residents living in the East and West Oakland flatlands struggle with significantly worse health outcomes, high unemployment rates, and the greatest risk of housing displacement before the pandemic and the disparities have only increased. Vice-Mayor Larry Reid, Councilmembers Noel Gallo and Lynette Gibson McElhaney, and Councilmember Taylor co-authored the Resolution that was unanimously passed by the Council.

"I am proud to have led this effort to bring much needed funding and resources to my district and other parts of East Oakland to ensure that pre-existing disparities are not exacerbated, during this pandemic. I am grateful to the many community partners who have been on the ground serving our community for years - long before this pandemic began. They have stepped up to serve our community in an amplified way and it is an honor to support their efforts," said Councilmember Loren Taylor.

On June 23, 2020, the City Council adopted a Fiscal Year 20-21 midcycle budget with amendments that included CARES Act funding allocations to provide critical resources to residents and businesses.

There was universal agreement among the councilmembers to help those who are vulnerable to food insecurity, negative health disparities, job loss and underemployment.

The City Council granted \$500,000 to the Oakland Frontline Healers to address health disparities in the most affected communities in Oakland. The Oakland Frontline Healers is a collaboration of 30 of large non-profits and volunteer organizations, that have been working together to address COVID-19 vulnerabilities in the Black Community from food delivery to case management and shelter stays.

In order to address food insecurity and entrepreneurship \$150,000 was allocated to the City's Digital Arts and Culinary Academy (DACA) to bring the existing commercial kitchen in compliance with COVID-19 requirements and other state and local standards to provide space for food entrepreneurs to reduce the cost of serving our community and to provide nutrition classes. In addition, to address the inadequate access to low-cost healthy foods, the Black Cultural Zone was granted \$150,000 to establish an ongoing Farmer's Market in East Oakland.

In recognition of the need for business and technical assistance, \$700,000 was granted to each of 7 organizations that work with our traditionally harder to reach and least capitalized businesses. Organizations include the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce, Latino Chamber of Commerce, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, Unity Council, East Oakland Entrepreneurial Forum, and OCCUR. "I want to thank the Oakland City Council, especially the Equity Caucus and Council member Taylor for ensuring that East Oakland received financial support for its residents and businesses. The funding will allow the East Oakland Entrepreneurship Forum to continue to provide small businesses with technical and other assistance in their recovery efforts," said Pastor LJ Jennings.

To address the high unemployment rates that have dramatically increased in the wake of COVID-19, the caucus invested in innovative workforce development programs. \$500,000 of those workforce development funds were granted to The Brothers & Sisters BarberCosmo Academy. This program provides affordable barbering and cosmetology training to unemployed, under-employed, and formerly incarcerated Oakland residents. With the ultimate goal of students either working in a salon or owning their own business, BSBCA teaches the hard and soft skills of barbering and running a business and will incorporate training on how to do so in a COVID-19 compliant way. "We are grateful that the City council has committed to our program. Eastmont has been down for too long. This project will be a Phoenix in District-6. We look forward to providing jobs to our community. Many thanks to Councilmember Loren Taylor," said Rose Munene.

Finally, \$100,000 was granted to Spearitwurx, an employer of local artists and culture keepers that curate arts and culture programming to supplement income loss faced by East Oakland artists.

The budget also included \$6 million in small business support including a specific allocation of \$2 million to small businesses in the lowest income and most underserved regions of Oakland.

Federal CARES Act funding resources are intended to be deployed by December 31, 2020.

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