



City Council

AGENDA REPORT

DATE:	June 17, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Councilmember Robinson Councilmember Jimenez Councilmember Wilson
Subject:	Establish a Black Resiliency Project and Fund
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	Approximately \$1.5 million is needed for the development of a "State of Black Richmond" report; and to support the implementation of the Black Resiliency Project and Fund from the Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget; and City staff time to support this work.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None.
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	Establish an initiative to examine the root causes for why Black residents, residents of African descent, experience disproportionate negative impacts and outcomes across all categories for health, health access, education, housing, home ownership, displacement, employment, financial wellness, community and cultural cohesion, victims of violent crime, police interactions and mental health in order to establish a baseline of data on the topic that is particular to Richmond, CA and to create a clear set of actionable recommendations to work towards uprooting the conditions that allow these disparities to persist.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:	DIRECT City staff to work with the City Council to allocate approximately \$1.5 million for the development of a “State of Black Richmond” report; and to support the implementation of a Black Resiliency Project and Fund from the Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund Budget to address inequities and disproportionate impacts experienced by residents of African descent – Councilmember Doria Robinson/Councilmember Claudia Jimenez/Councilmember Sue Wilson (510-620-6743).
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DISCUSSION:

In 2023 Richmond Confidential wrote, “In the past four decades, Richmond's Black population has dropped 41 percent. Nearly half of Richmond residents were African American in 1980. By 2020, only 18% were. The exodus has affected many families, whose children have left in search of safer, more affordable places to settle down.”

During the past 50 years, we have seen the Black community in Richmond, and nationwide, experience persistent, disproportionate negative impacts in nearly all critical health, wellness, economic indicators.

For instance, in the 2023 Homeless Strategic Plan it is stated that “In Richmond, although people who identify as Black/African American make up 18% of the general population, they make up 57% of the population experiencing homelessness.”

In Richmond, California, a significant portion of the African American population faces poverty, and a significant portion of homicide victims are African American males, often between 18 and 29 years old.

The data consistently shows that African American students in the West Contra Costa Unified School District, including Richmond, have lower graduation rates compared to their white counterparts.

In Contra Costa Counties Report on Health inequities states:

“In Contra Costa, the hospitalization rate for asthma for African American children (63/10,000) is almost five times that of White children (13/10,000). Most of the homicide deaths in Contra Costa occurred among African Americans (107), followed by Whites (37), Hispanic/Latinos (19), Asians (14), and others (6)....African Americans and Latinos, as well as people living in San Pablo, Richmond, and Pittsburg, are more likely to die from diabetes compared to the county overall.”

Residents of African descent, experience disproportionate impacts and outcomes across all categories for health, health access, education, housing, home ownership,

displacement, employment, financial wellness, community and cultural cohesion, victims of violent crime, police interactions and mental health.

Some would like to believe that there is something essentially wrong with African Americans that lead to these outcomes, but research shows that in fact these disproportionate impacts are often driven by systemic disinvestment, conscious and unconscious bias and structural exclusion of African Americans from critical services and systems (e.g., economic, education, health, etc.).

It is past time that the City of Richmond explores how we can better serve disproportionately impacted segments of our community and directly address clear inequities and their impact, especially now as the City of Richmond emerges from decades of financial struggles, where Black residents especially, but not exclusively, experienced the brunt of a lack of investment in critical infrastructure, services, youth development, education, parks, health care, affordable housing and employment.

This item seeks to gather statistics, and conduct research if needed, in order to create a clear data supported picture of the current and historic challenges that the African American residents have faced and continue to face as they try to raise families, create a home and live their lives in Richmond, California.

It will ask questions such as 1) Are there supporting institutions that other segments of our populations have established to support community wellness, cultural integrity and support the youth development such as African American Cultural Centers, African American Health Centers, African American Chambers of Commerce and if they existed at one time but no longer exist how can they be reestablished to support current African American residents?

It will also make recommendations to the City Council and City staff on how they can make changes in service evaluation, design and delivery to better serve this clearly vulnerable population.

It will establish a fund to begin resourcing community-based programs and projects that seek to directly engage in reversing these disproportionate impacts. In order to further increase the capacity of local organizations to meet the needs of those within the Black Community experiencing these disproportionate impacts the fund will also work with philanthropy to resource and convene a capacity building, coaching and inter-organizational mentoring grantee cohort.

And finally, it will establish a community advisory council composed of Richmond residents of African descent, key stakeholders, city staff and councilmembers to guide, advise and provide oversight and guidance for this project.

Direct staff to work with City Council to:

1. Hire a consultant to draw on existing statistics and conduct research if needed to establish vetted baseline data on the State of Black Richmond. This should

include meaningful, non-repetitive community engagement. Then write and publicly release the 1st State of Black Richmond Report to inform residents, stakeholders and policy makers of the challenges that continue to face this community. The report will especially, but not exclusively, examine current and historical access and barriers to access of City services and include recommendations for improving equitable access, as well as recommendations to improve outcomes across indicator categories for Black Richmond residents. Release a Request for Proposal (RFP) within 3 months of approval of this agenda item. Follow-up reports should be scheduled and resourced every three years to evaluate progress towards recommended goals.

2. Allocate approximately \$1.5 million for the development of a “State of Black Richmond” report; and to support the implementation of the Black Resiliency Project and Fund from the Fiscal Year (FY) 25-26 General Fund Budget to address inequities and disproportionate impacts experienced by residents of African descent as described in this Agenda Item.
3. Recommend a structure to City Council that includes the use of RFPs and a community grant program that can strategically allocate funds to programs and projects that seek to directly improve one or more of the negative disproportionate impacts Richmond’s Black residents experience. Bring this implementation recommendation back to the City Council within 3 months of item approval. Please note: In order to build community capacity to address the specific challenges faced by Richmond’s Black community the community grant program will also work with philanthropy to secure resources to create grantee cohorts where additional organizational capacity building, coaching and inter-organization mentorship can be offered and nurtured to further strengthen the ecosystem of organizations capable of deeply addressing this issue.
4. Create a community advisory committee to oversee the project and propose programmatic funding recommendations, recommend adjustments and improvements to its operations as the project proceeds.
5. Assign staff to support the project’s implementation who have time available to move this project without delay.
6. Seek external funding from philanthropic and other government sources to continue the work into future years until significant progress is made towards reversing inequitable impact trends.