

Upward Mobility by Race and Place

The Alameda County Upward Mobility Project is an interagency initiative intended to boost mobility from poverty and ensure prosperity is shared by all residents. Alameda County has a host of efforts, programs, initiatives, and plans focused on aspects of upward economic mobility. Through this project, the county will use a racial equity lens to address inequities in economic and social outcomes. This work focuses on the priority areas of essential needs, financial health, employment and community wealth, and cross-cutting systems change.

A VISION FOR UPWARD MOBILITY

Alameda County's vision for boosting upward mobility from poverty is place based and considers race and racism, the COVID-19 pandemic, and systems in addressing upward mobility. It uses a targeted universalism approach, which focuses efforts in geographic areas and populations with the highest disparities of upward mobility outcomes. The county also analyzes the effects of and interventions deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the plan focuses on the role of Alameda County itself and how systems change within county agencies can serve upward mobility for its residents.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

This Mobility Action Plan examines current and recent efforts in the county (including from the Alameda County Social Services Agency, Alameda County Housing and Community Development, the Alameda County Probation Department, Alameda County Transit, the Alameda County Health Care

ALAMEDA COUNTY GOALS

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Increase access to safety-net and income supports, credit, capital, and financial tools for residents and families living with low incomes, with a focus on reducing inequities for racial or ethnic groups and neighborhoods facing systemic barriers.

ESSENTIAL NEEDS

Increase capacity of residents and families with low incomes to meet basic needs for food, housing, child care, and transportation, with a focus on reducing inequities for racial or ethnic groups and neighborhoods facing systemic barriers.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY WEALTH

Increase pathways and access to livable-wage, high-quality jobs, and build wealth in communities of concentrated poverty, with a focus on reducing inequities for racial or ethnic groups and neighborhoods facing systemic barriers.

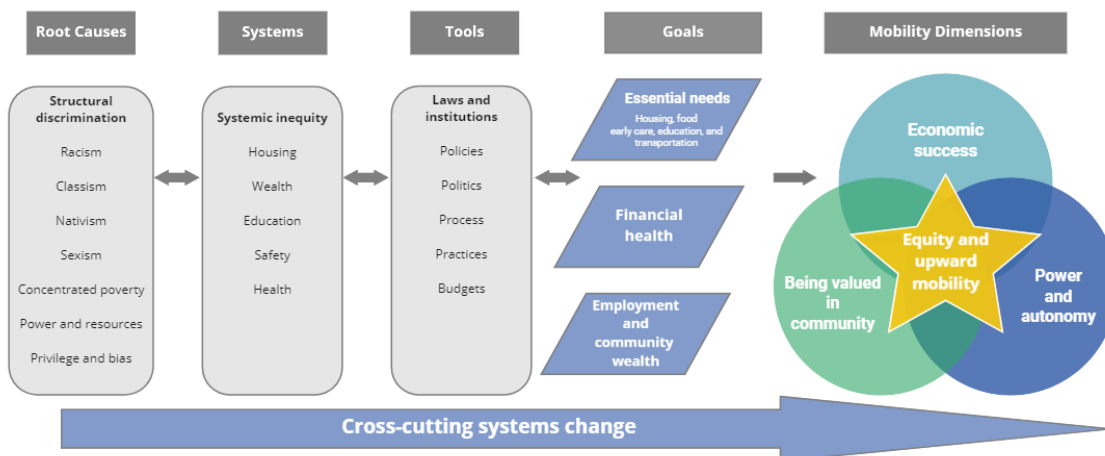
CROSS-CUTTING SYSTEMS CHANGE

Expand on efforts to identify and implement institutional practices that center equity and collaboration to most effectively meet the needs of Alameda County residents, with a focus on racial or ethnic groups and neighborhoods facing systemic barriers.

Services Agency, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, ALL IN Alameda County, the City of Oakland, and various community organizations) to build on and expand existing momentum. The Executive Team is made up of a subset of County Supervisors and County department heads, the County Administrator, and Chiefs of Staff to Board Supervisors. As goals and strategies were developed, the internal team developed a survey to be sent to strategic leaders from relevant county agencies to gather feedback on the direction and any relevant initiatives and plans. These leaders were then convened several times as a group and individually to inform the strategic actions and implementation matrix for goals and strategies. Given the robust landscape of plans and initiatives in Alameda County and the accompanying community engagement conducted, the team chose to conduct an analysis of existing community engagement efforts to analyze needs, gaps, and opportunities.

A THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change: Upward Mobility Action Plan in Alameda County



Source: Adapted from material published by the Urban Institute, the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative, and Ruqaiyah Yearby, "Structural Racism: The Root Cause of the Social Determinants of Health," *Bill of Health* (blog), Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School, September 22, 2020.

UPWARD MOBILITY INSIGHTS

The insights that informed the mobility action planning process were guided by three types of engagement: (1) interagency coordination, (2) engagement of affected residents, and (3) engagement of community-based organizations. The data collection process cemented the selection of the three priority areas as the most pressing in Alameda County.

- **Essential needs:** Alameda County understands the cost of living far exceeds the average household income. Housing and other essentials needs such as food should be accessible to all Alameda residents regardless of socioeconomic status.
- **Financial health:** Residents, especially residents of color, have been at the mercy of predatory loans and effectively severed from capital lifelines. County programs to expand

access to capital, financial supports, and education to marginalized communities can help alleviate the financial strain imposed on Alameda residents.

- **Employment and community wealth:** The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for livable-wage jobs and the need to increase access to employment opportunities.
- **Cross-cutting systems change:** The county recognizes it can better promote equity through policy, funding allocation, and services.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

FINANCIAL HEALTH

- 1 Expand enrollment in county public-benefit programs among eligible residents and families.
- 2 Increase access to nonpredatory financial products.
- 3 Expand and increase use of the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.
- 4 Expand access to unrestricted cash assistance supports.

ESSENTIAL NEEDS

- 1 Prevent and reduce homelessness in Alameda County through new investments, a racial equity lens, and regional coordination of resources.
- 2 Support promising models for affordable housing construction and rehabilitation, centering community-controlled social housing initiatives.
- 3 Continue and expand housing and renter protection strategies to keep vulnerable homeowners and renters housed.
- 4 Provide focused support to populations with persistent barriers to housing, including justice-involved residents.
- 5 Increase access to food and build local circular food economy.
- 6 Increase access to affordable, high-quality child care.
- 7 Increase transportation access, affordability, safety, and clean mobility options, particularly in communities experiencing transportation challenges and disparities in investment and access.

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY WEALTH

- 1 Increase access to earn and learn opportunities in livable-wage jobs in priority growth industries.
- 2 Support the expansion of nontraditional employment through social enterprises, worker-owned cooperatives, and other worker-oriented business models.
- 3 Support populations with persistent barriers to work, including justice-involved and unhoused residents.
- 4 Advance strategies that improve worker protections and job quality, with a focus on expanding opportunities in growing industries and occupations.

CROSS-CUTTING SYSTEMS CHANGE

- 1 Develop county infrastructure (across agencies and across jurisdictions and places) to coordinate, implement, and monitor upward mobility strategies and actions, with an equity lens.
- 2 Build county data infrastructure to monitor community needs and key population indicators related to economic mobility and equity issues.
- 3 Increase equity and transparency in county funding allocations, with opportunity to apply an equity lens by race and place.
- 4 Identify opportunities where the county can support positive narrative change.
- 5 Promote county local procurements and direct investments in community benefit enterprises.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Although the Upward Mobility Action Plan outlines areas to focus and existing efforts, the key to any plan is implementation and sustainability. The Board of Supervisors and County agencies now have the opportunity to use this plan as a jumping-off point to align efforts and resources and break down silos for collaboration. Built into the Cross-Cutting Systems Change goal of this plan is the development of county infrastructure to coordinate, implement, and monitor these strategies with an equity lens. This work does not sit squarely within one department in Alameda County and involves cross-agency coordination and collaboration. To implement and sustain this work, agencies will need to convene to go deeper on relevant goal areas and strategies, coordinate efforts, and engage community members around specific strategies. Initial recommendations for this work include identifying where your agency is already involved, with whom efforts could be combined and coordinated, and resources that can be aligned.