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**WORK PLAN**

**2025-2029**

**Mandela Family Resource Center**

Oakland, Alameda County

Neighborhoods Ready for School Initiative



*Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) is a place-based initiative launched by First 5 Alameda County in 2018 to support equity and neighborhood-led investment, programming, and policy related to early childhood development, family health and well-being, and kindergarten readiness.*

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## Executive Summary

Lincoln Families' journey, deeply rooted in West Oakland since 1883, shows its deep commitment to breaking the cycles of poverty and multigenerational trauma through 14 family-centric programs across Alameda and Contra Costa counties. With a \$26 million budget and 246 dedicated staff members, the organization focuses on education, family health, and overall well-being, addressing poverty's root causes. The Mandela Family Resource Center (MFRC) services have been pivotal to West Oakland youth and families since 2018. It has garnered high community engagement by meeting families where they are with what they need, as evidenced by increased awareness about neighborhood resources and caregiver tools for child development. Community-driven priorities emphasize culturally-affirming spaces, expanded programming, and employment opportunities for caregivers. Looking ahead, the MFRC's vision for 2030 is a resource-rich West Oakland, empowering families with choice and agency for their children's readiness and establishing a robust West Oakland Zone of Excellence (WOZE) network that includes a multitude of voices from caregivers, providers, and government officials. To date, WOZE has cultivated a collaborative space that allows for resources to be shared amongst organizations, problem solving, and positive networking in alignment with NRFS's Coordination, Navigation and Resources focus area. The next four years prioritize goals like enhancing English-language learning for caregivers, dedicated early childhood development staffing, affinity playgroups for Black and Arab families, expanded youth and elder programming, enhanced housing stability and financial mobility programming, and supporting a comprehensive West Oakland Zone of Excellence network. The plan details specific steps, staff leads, partnerships, timeframes, expected outcomes, and progress tools for each goal, demonstrating a comprehensive strategy guided by community feedback and continuous evaluation.





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# Our Story



With roots in West Oakland since 1883, Lincoln Families has a singular mission: to disrupt the cycle of poverty and trauma by running 14 family-centered programs in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Our \$26 million budget supports 246 staff members who deliver programs in education and family health and well-being to address the root causes of poverty. Our historic presence in the Bay Area, trained and trauma-informed staff, and culturally responsive approach have earned us a powerful reputation for delivering effective youth programs. Since our return to West Oakland in 2010, we have prioritized the delivery of multiple programs focused on educational and family success.

In 2018, our Mandela Family Resource Center became a First 5 Alameda County Neighborhoods Ready for School site and began providing early childhood development, family health and well-being, and kindergarten readiness service coordination and programming. These programs were reflective of a needs assessment in which we engaged the community and evolved into offering playgroups for our 0-5 families, parenting classes and support groups, as well as offering basic needs such as free diapers, food produce, and holiday gifts. Since the inception of the program, MFRC has increased the number of children ages 0-5 and families served in West Oakland and has become a steady presence in support of community development, supporting multi-generational familial needs with more than 2,000 households supported since its launch.

- **100% of families participating in programs at the MFRC indicated a greater awareness of neighborhood resources.**
- **78% of caregivers learned more strategies to practice at home to help their child's developmental growth at the MFRC.**







## Our Vision for the Mandela Family Resource Center

Built from the influence of the Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) initiative, our vision for 2030 is that West Oakland will be a resource-rich neighborhood that provides families with children ages 0-5 choice and agency in all aspects of their lives to prepare them for kindergarten. This vision includes streamlined and accessible options for childcare, schools, healthcare, housing, jobs, and more. To do this, we envision a West Oakland where families live in a safe, literacy-rich, and stimulating environment with a collaborative of non-profit and government providers that support their various needs.

### Allison Becwar, President & CEO

I believe there's an undeniable connection between neighborhood, family, and child well-being. We all do better and feel better if we experience a sense of well-being and a sense of belonging. Children succeed in loving families. Families succeed in supportive communities and communities have the answers.

We believe that a concrete but innovative investment in West Oakland between now and 2030 can ensure that at least 80% of all families with children ages 0-5 who live in the 94607 area code (which is roughly 10% of the 94607 demographic per [healthyalameda.org](http://healthyalameda.org)) will feel prepared and equipped with the tools they need to financially, mentally, emotionally, and academically enter the school system.

### Chris Nguon, Associate Director of Grant-Funded Programs

With the support of First 5 Alameda County and the Neighborhoods Ready for School Initiative came a wealth of resources, brain power, people power, connections, and community that allowed our Mandela Family Resource Center to truly thrive. MFRC is a place-based family resource center that is open to all the community to come in and gather the resources they need to support and strengthen their family. A place-based model says we are going to you and that is critical.

## Community-Driven Priorities

The Mandela Family Resource Center prioritizes the experiences and desires of the West Oakland community. The MFRC continuously seeks feedback from the community, both informally and formally, through various platforms. MFRC regularly asks families to complete surveys to create space for feedback, thoughts, and reflections on the programs. Additionally, the MFRC has worked with outside consultants, both in 2021 and 2022, to conduct focus groups with caregivers of children ages 0-5 and has received quality feedback on the program from these focus groups.

MFRC has also integrated a Parent Leaders program to inform best practices for serving the community. In late 2021, our program put out a call for parents who had interest in supporting growth in their community. The interest was palpable, as 15 households jumped at the opportunity and became the first cohort of Parent Leaders. Through a multi-pronged co-learning and co-planning process, Parent Leaders identified areas in their community that piqued their interest, such as planning for a holiday event for the community, leveraging their expertise and the Mandela FRC's budget to lead planning and execution on various events and gatherings.

### Ruby Butler: Parent Leader, MFRC

When you're in a neighborhood where sometimes resources are slim-to-none, your parenting skills are doubled sometimes with making sure that you provide for your own kids and making sure that they're safe within this neighborhood that you want to see be better.

Community feedback from more than 100 families in the MFRC program has been gathered through a myriad of avenues, including but not limited to anonymous surveys, focus groups, feedback from 1:1 case management, and themes from partner convenings. Based on the experiences and feedback from families, there are several areas of focus for the MFRC in the next four years, which we will elaborate on in the Priority Goals section of this plan:

- Enhance culturally-affirming spaces and programming
- Expand enrichment programming for all ages
- Strengthen employment skills and opportunities for caregivers

Through the design of our program, the MFRC shares First 5 Alameda County's core value on Cultural Access Services (CAS), which have proven to be a critical component of curating culturally responsive support systems for our families. Our Parent Leaders have led cultural events, such as an Eid Celebration and a Black History Month Celebration, as well as advocacy and collaboration efforts between tenants and landlords.

Our parents are also renters, neighbors, and concerned community members. Collectively they have facilitated tenant meetings, advocated for policy change on site that have supported housing stability of their neighbors, and curated ideas for future collaborations. These cultural events create opportunities for the community to bond and learn about one another's culture, with parents leading the charge. These advocacy efforts lead to more communication and understanding between landlord and tenants, and increase the housing stability of families.





## Four-Year Priority Goals

The six goals below have been curated by specific feedback from our community members. While not in any order of preference, these priorities have been consistently identified as needs from the West Oakland community with whom we work.

1. Provide a one-stop space for family learning with enhanced English-language learning opportunities for caregivers at MFRC that includes the Legacy Family College Admission program.
2. Secure dedicated early-childhood development teaching staff.
3. Provide playgroup affinity groups for our African-American and Arab-American communities.
4. Expand the continuum of programming for youth and elders.
5. Enhance our programming of housing stability and financial mobility capabilities.
6. Continue to co-build a robust West Oakland Zone of Excellence network of providers for collaborative advocacy and organizational capacity-building.

## Activities & Timeline

**Goal 1:** Enhancing English-Language Learning Opportunities for Caregivers

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Hire two PTE ESL teachers and recruit adult students.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs		Year 1
Develop comprehensive assessment and individual learning plans for participants.	Program Supervisor	Peralta Community College Oakland Private Industry Council	Year 1
Create streamlined eligibility criteria for interested students.	MFRC ESL teachers	Peralta Community College Oakland Private Industry Council	Year 2
Measure success and pivot as needed based on student feedback.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs		Years 3-4

### Progress Tools:

- ESL teachers will track progress via caregiver program entry and exit exams.
- Lincoln will ask caregivers to fill out a beginning and end-of-course survey.

### Expected Outcomes:

Caregivers' English-language proficiency will improve based on entry/exit exam scores and caregivers will report increased confidence in their ability to speak and advocate for themselves and their families in English.



# Activities & Timeline

**Goal 2:** Dedicated Early-Childhood Development Teaching Staff

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Hire two PTE early childhood educators (one Arabic speaking and one Amharic speaking).	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs	Lincoln Families' East County First 5 Center Lincoln Families' Lincoln Early Childhood Mental Health	Year 1
Recruit caregivers to participate in programs. Create an intentional learning journey for families. Develop comprehensive assessment.	Program Supervisor	Lincoln Families' East County First 5 Center Lincoln Families' Lincoln Early Childhood Mental Health	Year 1
Create a robust integrated workshop schedule into MFRC delivery	MFRC Early Childhood Teachers	Lincoln Families' East County First 5 Center Lincoln Families' Lincoln Early Childhood Mental Health	Year 2
Measure success and pivot as needed.	Program Supervisor	Lincoln Families' East County First 5 Center Lincoln Families' Lincoln Early Childhood Mental Health	Years 3-4

**Ruby Butler, Parent Leader-** My favorite [activity] was monthly developmental toys for the children. So it wasn't just a toy. It actually was something that would get them in the practice of meeting their developmental landmarks.

### Expected Outcomes:

Parents and caregivers will have increased capacity and early childhood skills and confidence with supporting their child's kindergarten readiness, a significant predictor of academic success. Eighty percent of caregivers in our program will state they have increased knowledge and applied skills in the areas of wellness and early childhood development that support their child for kindergarten readiness.

### Progress Tools:

MFRC will measure caregivers' long-term retention and level of use of the skills through a pre-program survey and a post-program survey. The post-program survey will be administered annually until a caregiver's child has entered kindergarten.

# Activities & Timeline

**Goal 3:** Playgroup Affinity Groups for our African-American and Arab-American Communities

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Hire a primary consultant, such as Afro-Play, to guide and inform best practices on creating community-driven affinity groups.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor	Afro-Play Oakland Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Saint Vincent's Day Home	Year 1
Identify potential Parent Leaders with a goal to lead an affinity group on-site. Collaborate with Parent Leaders to develop programs.	MFRC Early Childhood Teachers MFRC Family Navigators	Afro-Play Oakland Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Saint Vincent's Day Home	Year 1
Hold one affinity playgroup per week.	MFRC Early Childhood Teachers MFRC Family Navigators	Afro-Play Oakland Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Saint Vincent's Day Home	Year 2
Measure success and pivot as needed.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor		Years 3-4

### Progress Tools:

- Playgroup attendance sheets.
- Participant and Parent Leader surveys pre and post. Parents will be surveyed post-program at least once a year leading up to their child's entry into kindergarten.
- Parents will also be invited to participate in an annual focus group.

### Expected Outcomes:

We anticipate and aim for an average attendance of seven families per affinity playgroup. Arab and Black families attending playgroups report more positive relationships with their children. We also want Arab and Black participating families to feel represented and seen at the MFRC through our affinity playgroups. In a research study conducted by the Black Teacher Project and supported by the National Equity Project, intentionally designed affinity groups have shown to increase wellness, connection, and tools to navigate spaces for participants (BTP, April 2021).



# Activities & Timeline

**Goal 4:** Expand Multigenerational Programming Along the Lifespan Continuum to Enhance a Thriving Community

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Hire An Expanded Enrichment Coordinator to lead the expansion of youth development programming at the MFRC, which will include a teen intern initiative in partnership with OUSD. Launch senior and elder programming for wellness and community connections.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs	Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative CiviCorps Higher Ground West Oakland Senior Center DeFremery Park Recreational Center Oakland Unified School District	Year 1
Hire consultant to support strategic planning with all Lincoln families in West Oakland-based programs.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs	Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative CiviCorps Higher Ground West Oakland Senior Center DeFremery Park Recreational Center	Year 1
Train staff in life skills programming and instruction.	Program Supervisor	Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative West Oakland Senior Center Oakland Housing Authority Higher Ground	Years 1-2
Complete strategic planning for West Oakland-based programs. Invest in curriculum and materials for programs.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor MFRC Expanded Enrichment Coordinator	Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative West Oakland Senior Center Oakland Housing Authority Higher Ground	Year 2
Execute strategic planning initiatives, centering community voices and feedback as our guide.	Program Supervisor MFRC Expanded Enrichment Coordinator		Years 2-4
Gauge progress and evaluate impact based on priority goals.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor MFRC Expanded Enrichment Coordinator		Years 3 & 4

## Expected Outcomes:

Programs for seniors and youth enhance the overall community and strengthen the family unit in general. We are aiming for attendance of five youth and five elders per activity. At least 80% of teens and parents of teens report increased ability and tools to navigate emotional wellness, greater understanding of financial wellness, and experience the program as fun and enjoyable. For the elder group, 80% report increased abilities and tools to navigate emotional wellness and feel that the program helps them build stronger connections with neighbors.

## Progress Tools:

- Program attendance sheets.
- Caregiver, youth, and elder pre and post surveys.
- Caregiver, youth, and elder focus groups or 1:1 interviews to learn what worked, what didn't, and to learn more about the influence of the program on each group.

# Activities & Timeline

**Goal 5:** Enhanced Programming of Housing Stability and Financial Mobility Capabilities

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Develop manual of best practices of what has worked for MFRC staff of the resident services model.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor MFRC Expanded Enrichment Coordinator		Year 1
Work with the strategic planning consultant to support the program logic model. Engage key partners listed to give feedback on the strategic plan based on shared collective organizational goals.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor MFRC Expanded Enrichment Coordinator	BRIDGE Housing Oakland Housing Authority Self-Help Credit Union County Supervisor of District 5 City Councilmember of District 3	Years 1-2
Execute strategic planning initiatives, centering community voices as guide and informed by feedback.	Program Supervisor MFRC Resident Services Coordinator	BRIDGE Housing Oakland Housing Authority Self-Help Credit Union	Years 2-4
Deepen partnerships with community organizations that focus on housing and financial stability efforts.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor MFRC Resident Services Coordinator	BRIDGE Housing Oakland Housing Authority Self-Help Credit Union	Year 3
Deepen partnerships with community organizations that focus on housing and financial stability efforts.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs Program Supervisor		Year 4

## Progress Tools:

- Track and evaluate execution of annual priority goals that lead toward creation of robust programming.
- May include focus groups and interviews with community members during and after goal implementation.

## Expected Outcomes:

Through working with Lincoln staff, clients see increased outcomes of maintaining stable housing for an additional 12-16 months and stronger financial stability to become fully self-sustaining in supporting housing needs.



# Activities & Timeline

**Goal 6:** Robust West Oakland Zone of Excellence (WOZE) Network of Providers

Steps	Staff Leads	Partners	Timeframe
Hire coordinator of the WOZE network.	Associate Director of Community-Based Grant Funded Programs	WOZE network Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative OUSD	Year 1
Identify key policy advocacy goals with partners and parents to enhance kinder readiness for families.	WOZE Coordinator	WOZE network Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative OUSD	Year 1: Meet quarterly with the network. Year 1: West Oakland needs assessment. Year 2: Identify policy advocacy initiatives. Year 3: Gauge progress and evaluate impact.
Create a network of resources that is streamlined for families.  Launch a robust and functional resource guide map for community members highlighting West Oakland resources.	WOZE Coordinator	WOZE network Lincoln Families' Early Childhood Mental Health Department Lincoln Families' West Oakland Initiative OUSD	Year 3

## Expected Outcomes:

Our aim is to ensure that a stable, strong, and sustainable network that includes all touchpoints for 0-5 families (nonprofit organizations, parents/caregivers, teachers, government officials) is deeply and intentionally connected to enhance wellness and resourcing of families with children 0-5 with continual community input, engagement, and involvement. We are working toward an integrated community-feedback loop centering Parent Leaders through focus groups and surveys, consistency of meetings, and the consistent attendance of parent leaders, organizations, teachers, and government officials. We hope that more than 80% of partner feedback notes an added value of taking part in the WOZE network.

## Progress Tools:

- Monthly attendance of participating partners
- Quarterly survey asking partners of effectiveness of collaborative
- Tracking on progress and pivots on policy goals

# Plan Investment

The **'25-'27 budget** reflects roughly double our current budget and would offer a critical expansion of our current programming to enhance our kindergarten readiness work. The additional resources would deepen our ability to support caregivers with evidence-based and parent-led early childhood classes, offer expansion of parent skill development through our ESL program, and increase support with our Tier 1 community partners to provide continued key community resources and referrals. The additional resources would also expand our physical FRC space.

The **visionary budget** reflects our view of what a full-fledged functioning early childhood development family resource center would look, feel, and sound like for the West Oakland community. This vision includes a significant expansion of our FRC physical space. The additional resources would include a significant expansion of the MFRC team to 19 FTE, offer deepened early-childhood development programming and comprehensive caregiver skill development programming, and create coordination of a robust community partners collaborative that would be able to curate and maintain an easily accessible system for resources and referrals that families could access for their key needs. The visionary budget, which would also include an expansion of our family navigator team to offer more 1:1 supports for caregivers, would enhance all six key pillars of the 2022 Road to Kindergarten Readiness Roadmap for the West Oakland community.

## Budget Tiers

Budget Line Items	FY 24-25	FY 25-27	Visionary Budget
Personnel Expenses	\$223,655	\$609,416	\$1,233,754
Benefits	\$62,623	\$170,636	\$345,451
Training	\$1,200	\$2,060	\$20,600
Program Materials	\$23,125	\$47,380	\$154,500
Printing	\$1,421	-	-
Office Supplies	\$1,079	\$2,575	\$15,450
Staff Travel	\$335	\$2,060	\$3,914
Consulting	-	\$7,725	\$41,200
IT Support	\$5,000	\$19,282	\$32,136
Evaluation	\$9,180	\$9,270	-
Facilities	-	\$56,650	\$123,600
Communications	-	\$6,180	\$11,742
Parent Stipends	\$5,000	\$15,450	\$25,750
Misc.	\$13,355	\$7,000	\$15,000
Sub-Contractors	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
Indirect	\$57,327	\$123,627	\$297,934
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$453,300</b>	<b>\$1,179,311</b>	<b>\$2,441,031</b>



# FIRST 5



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