

TOOLKIT



Human Impact Budget
Alameda County

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any county initiative requires a champion to succeed. We want to acknowledge Supervisor Wilma Chan, who spearheaded the Human Impact Budget effort with her pointed questions during the 2011 budget hearings, and who successfully advocated to acquire funding through The California Endowment to initiate this two-year project. Supervisor Chan has shown immense leadership to ensure broad county participation throughout the project's duration. HIB also reflects the leadership and collaborative spirit of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, County Administrator's Office, Social Services Agency, Health Care Services Agency, Early Education & Child Care Planning Council, Interagency Children's Policy Council, and a number of local community-based organizations.



Alameda County

Human Impact Budget

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION: WHY A HUMAN IMPACT BUDGET PROJECT

The Great Recession left many people without jobs, homes, and hope for a better future. As the economy collapsed, the loss of sales and property tax revenue had a dramatic effect on the State budget and, at a time when millions of people were more dependent on safety net services than ever, \$15 billion was cut from core safety net programs. In Alameda County, Supervisor Wilma Chan asked what happens to people impacted by budget cuts to safety net services. The attempt to answer that question became the Alameda County Human Impact Budget Project (HIB).

Human Impact considers how budget decisions and, by extension, policy decisions impact individuals and families. It brings a “human element” into the annual budget deliberations. Initially, HIB was designed to highlight the human impact of State budget cuts; however, now that fewer budget cuts are occurring, HIB focuses on the ongoing impacts of cuts not being restored and the broader issue of income inequality.

Human Impact was first built into the County budget process in 2012-13, with the insertion of Human Impact pages, highlighting key cuts to programs. While this was an important first step, it was necessary to bring the voice of people impacted by budget decisions more directly into the process. Supervisor Chan and the County of Alameda received a grant from The California Endowment to humanize the budget process and make it more accessible by collecting stories from people, gathering and disseminating local data highlighting needs and less visible trends, and encouraging greater collaboration across agencies to promote innovations and solutions.

The budget pages were updated, a website was created to disseminate stories and information at www.acgov.org/hib, and presentations have taken place across the county, all to expand awareness and increase engagement. A hearing was added during the budget process to promote community participation and to connect budget decisions to human impacts. Cross-sector and interagency collaboration to address key impacts has been dubbed the “New War on Poverty,” and new community partners continue to become engaged. Working groups are now focused on solutions to early childhood education, economic development, and food security.



BUDGET FOR THE PROJECT

The project is funded with a two-year \$300,000 grant from The California Endowment, and with in-kind support from Alameda County including office space, printing and supplies, and staff support. The grant supports one position, communications & media relations, community meeting costs, and County overhead.

The grant funds the County to:

- Collect stories from people impacted by budget cuts
- Raise awareness through data collection and dissemination
- Identify and support successful intervention strategies
- Increase cross-sector partnerships
- Create a website to disseminate stories and reports
- Create a toolkit to support replication

County staff provided significant support in the form of web design, budget analysis, fact checking, and clerical support, as well as leadership and collaboration.

“THE BUDGET
IS NOT ABOUT
NUMBERS,
IT’S ABOUT
PEOPLE.”

SUPERVISOR WILMA CHAN

SUCCESSSES OF THE HUMAN IMPACT BUDGET PROJECT

Human Impact is now part of the budget process and budget language. A HIB presentation helps kick off the Early Budget Work Sessions each year. In County budget deliberations, we now not only look at program impacts, but human impacts to individuals, families, and communities. It has opened a new conversation about the County’s role in lifting people out of poverty. This new language has led to improved relations with community members and human services organizations – a greater willingness to see the County as a partner, rather than a budget adversary.

In fact, this year community partners filmed and disseminated the HIB Hearing, a part of which can be seen online at <http://youtu.be/--mcCuFVHUo>. Most importantly, the focus on Human Impacts is leading to innovations in program design and collaboration, with a new emphasis on early childhood education, food security, and economic development.

In an early planning session, Supervisor Chan commented, “The budget is not about numbers, it’s about people.” One measure of budgetary success is increased awareness among our residents and our State delegation about the County’s role as the safety net provider, and the impact of cuts to essential services. Our delegation has seen the HIB materials and commented on their effectiveness in raising awareness to restore and reinvest for basic needs.

Another measure of budgetary success is bringing new resources into the County from foundation investors as well as community service providers. Several funders, in addition to TCE, are currently engaged in the HIB process.

HIB has been successful in raising awareness about poverty and income inequality in California and Alameda County, humanizing people who have been demonized for being poor, and greatly increasing awareness about the county budget process and the role of counties as the safety net for the State.

OUTLINE FOR A HUMAN IMPACT BUDGET PROJECT



THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE HUMAN IMPACT BUDGET PROJECT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Identify core programs that make up safety net services (e.g., housing, child care, health care, food, income)
- Work with agencies and community partners to identify people impacted by safety net services who are willing to talk about it
- Collect stories from people impacted by safety net services
- Identify key data and policy experts within and external to the County, and develop ongoing relationships to surface new ways of understanding and addressing poverty locally
- Work with the Board of Supervisors to identify community meetings to disseminate information
- Identify willing county and external partners to increase cross-sector partnerships
- Use stories, data, responses from community events, and promising innovations to inform funding decisions
- Create a website to disseminate stories and reports
 - Use as a vehicle for education and advocacy*
- Raise awareness through data collection and dissemination
- Identify funding to test new approaches
- Consider internal and external sources
- Use a system, such as Results-Based Accountability to measure impact of innovations
 - Advocate for ongoing funding in support of known solutions*

Narrow range of solutions to no more than three policy areas

Create working groups to identify and own strategies

BEST PRACTICES FOR GATHERING HUMAN IMPACT STORIES

HUMAN IMPACT STORIES: WHAT AND WHY

Stories are the foundation of the Human Impact Budget Project. Stories humanize service recipients and remind us why we care. Equally important, taking the time to listen to recipients can be extremely informative. Recipients have a first-hand understanding of what they need to rise out of poverty, as well as what is working and not working in service delivery.

NOTES ON OUTREACH

In gathering stories, we sought to represent a range of safety net services, the geography of the county to demonstrate that safety net recipients live in all communities, and the diversity of the people who live in Alameda County.

We began by reaching out to our many service and advocacy contacts with a simple email, below.

Dear NAME,

I'm contacting you on behalf of the Human Impact Budget, an innovative project launched by Supervisor Wilma Chan and adopted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

The goal of the project is to inform local residents about State budget cuts with a direct focus on impacts to people, families and communities; raise awareness of the role of County government and the safety net; and strengthen advocacy efforts for resources from the State.

In addition, it's the goal of the Human Impact Budget to collect and share powerful local stories from community members to put a human face on the true cost of State budget cuts.

We want to interview county residents who have stories to tell about how budget cuts to safety net programs have impacted their lives. We will be putting together some guidelines for the interviews, but we wanted to get an initial sense of how many people are available, the types of services they receive or need, and their geographic location in the county. We are anticipating interviewing about 20 people initially, and want to limit our interviews to people and their families who have been impacted directly, rather than service providers who might speak to community impacts or policy issues—just direct, personal impacts.

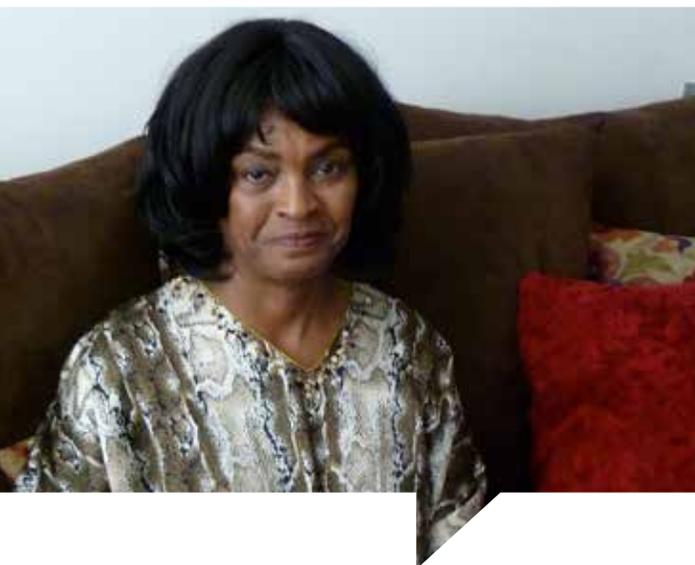
Over time, we anticipate we will interview many more people and will provide new ways for people to share stories. For now, if you can provide me with leads to people you know who have personal stories to tell, I would greatly appreciate it. Ideally, I would love to know name, contact information, types of services needed, and location as a first step; however, I am happy to meet with you to talk through an interviewing strategy, if that feels more comfortable.

Thanks for your help.

One of the significant challenges of collecting stories was scheduling and maintaining interview appointments. The same issues that make it challenging for many service recipients to get to appointments applied here, with the added challenge that participants were receiving no incentives to participate. They were simply being asked to share their stories with us. It was common for more pressing matters to arise with little or no notice.

To help manage story collection, we produced a Story Collection Tracking Matrix. Produced on Google Docs, the matrix had categories for:

- Name of the organization referring the participant
- Organization contact information—very helpful in making initial contact with speakers
- Participant name and contact information
- Summary of personal story
- Participant's city – it was important to track geographic diversity since more than one-third of all county service recipients reside in one city
- Safety net program—what services have improved or would improve the life of the participant? Again, looking for program diversity.
- Participant Contacted?
- Interview time and day
- Final story completed



HOW TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH COUNTY SERVICES RECIPIENTS

Written Stories

Most, if not all, of our participants came to the interviews nervous and concerned. We came to understand that recipients of county safety net services have an uncomfortable relationship with county employees. Many were concerned they were being tricked into saying something that would lead to sanctions. So, while we initially scheduled 20-30 minutes for interviews, they were typically 1-2 hours as we built trust.

The importance of open, active listening cannot be over-emphasized. It was important to be clear about our role, and that nothing said would lead to greater or fewer county benefits. Participants had to be assured that they were free to leave, free to give their name or not, free to have a photo taken or not, and that nothing would be published without their permission. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and sent to the participant to confirm accuracy.

Video Interviews

We conducted audio interviews of subjects before inviting a few to do a video interview. While this is obviously more time consuming, we found that it led to a number of advantages, particularly with our target population:

- We were able to hear stories before committing to the added cost and complexity of video.
- Participants were able to get to know us in a less formal and stressful setting. Many of the stories were accompanied by great emotion and, being as the project was sponsored by the County, it was important for participants to feel safe.
- Participants were able to tell their story in a less formal and stressful way before committing to video. Because of the personal nature of the stories, most of our participants would not have committed to video without more understanding of what was being asked of them.

STEPS TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL VIDEO INTERVIEW

- 1 STEP ONE:** Take some time to share the purpose of the interview, what you will and won't do with it. Take the time to indicate your gratitude for the time the participant is taking to help you, and how their words will be heard by people who can change policy.
- 2 STEP TWO:** Take some time to gather biographical information on the person (what's their name, what city do they live in, how long have they been in the county?) You can ask about family and vocational background as well). It is important to be truly interested in the person and his or her story.
- 3 STEP THREE:** Explore how county services are a part of your interview subject's life (What challenges do you face? Is it better or worse than prior years? What programs do you rely on? How have these programs helped you? How have they changed? Are there any service cuts, shortages, or delays that have affected you? How can programs be improved? What would make life better for you?)
- 4 STEP FOUR:** Provide a space for your interview subject to talk about budget impacts, and urge legislators in Sacramento to listen to the human story of budget decisions (what would you want the Governor to know about you and your life? What would you say about there not being enough money to restore cuts?).



BE OPEN TO SURPRISING RESPONSES.

Many people have very specific issues they want to share, and many issues are more about service than funding. If the goal is to improve safety net services, listen with an open mind and build all responses into your analysis.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR VIDEO INTERVIEWS

- Keep your video short (less than five minutes long).
- Use a tripod to produce a stable image.
- Find a bright and simple background – for example, a lawn, trees, the front of a related building, or an office space with limited distraction.
- If filming outdoors, be aware of background noise. Shooting in front of a water feature, while visually attractive, will ruin the audio. (Yes, we speak from experience!)
- Take a few minutes to introduce yourself and get to know your interview subject. Thank them for working with you.
- Familiarize your interview subject with the questions and topics you'll be using in the interview. We told speakers that, since this was the story of their life, there was no way they could get it wrong. It is very important to ensure that speakers are relaxed.
- Because speaking into a camera can be so awkward, we used a two-person team and asked the speaker to make direct eye contact with the interviewer, with the camera placed behind. If you have the resources, this is recommended.
- If you are using this method, it is important that the person sitting in front of the camera is actively engaged in the story, and not just sitting there as a visual point of reference. Storytellers come alive in front of a receptive audience.
- When filming your subject speaking, keep your video frame zoomed in on their head and upper torso.
- Be willing to film more than one take, but we encourage you to keep filming if the speaker becomes emotional. Honest emotion only adds to the connection between the speaker and his or her audience.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET PERMISSION FROM SPEAKERS TO USE THEIR WORDS AND IMAGES. HERE'S A SAMPLE RELEASE FORM YOU CAN MODIFY AND USE:

AUTHORIZATION TO USE PHOTOGRAPHS AND/OR AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

I, _____, hereby authorize the Alameda County Human Impact Budget project to use, reproduce, and/or publish photographs and/or video that may pertain to me—including my image, likeness and/or voice without compensation.

I understand that this material may be used in various publications, including digital and print, as well as public relations materials, or for other related endeavors.

This material may also appear on the project's website. This authorization is continuous and may only be withdrawn by my specific rescission of this authorization. Consequently, the project may publish materials, use my name, photograph, and/or make reference to me in any manner that the project sponsor deems appropriate in order to promote/publicize the project.

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

SAMPLE HUMAN IMPACT BUDGET STORIES

DAVIONNE VANN SR.

Schqueilla and I met on MySpace in 2005, and I kept tabs on her through her brother even when she moved to Atlanta. We got married in June of 2010 and have three beautiful children.

A few years ago, I started having what I thought was asthma problems. I tried to wait it out, but I was wheezing so badly, we had to call 911 and they took me to the hospital. The tests showed my kidney function was really low. I didn't think much about it, just that I was dehydrated or something. They gave me some medication and put me on a strict diet. The thought was I take the pills and eat well and it would go away. And that's the way it was until January 2013.

I worked at CVS but my health got so bad, they put me on Family Medical Leave and then let me go. Schqueilla found a job at the post office, but I couldn't really look for a job because when Schqueilla was at work, I had to take care of the kids. My schedule was take my wife to work, go home and get my oldest daughter dressed and take her to school, pick up my wife from the first part of her split shift and take her home, pick up my daughter from school, come home and take my wife back to work. Come home, and be a dad for a little while and pick up my wife. It was hectic. I was always with two or three kids. Day care was way out of our budget. We applied for subsidized child care and the head start program and we've been on a waiting list for more than two years.

I finally got a job at the post office, working night shift, so I could be home during the day and Schqueilla would be there at night. Then, a week into my job, I got the asthma thing again, and I went back to the emergency room in the middle of the night. Schqueilla was home with the kids. I called her from the hospital and said "come down, I've got fluid in my lungs and it's because my kidneys are failing. They're taking me to ICU and putting me on a dialysis machine." I went from chronic kidney disease to complete kidney failure, and everything changed.

While I was in ICU, Schqueilla was home taking care of the kids, but she couldn't take much time off work—and still no child care. Some days, I don't feel good, but the family needs me. I know I've got to deal with this problem like a man—take it like it is. I don't get frustrated anymore. We just wish life were a little easier. If we had child care, I could find a job so we wouldn't have to live in that percentage. You know that percentage they put out there—low income—we don't want live like that, we don't want to be a statistic. We want to show our kids that there's more to life besides struggle. We want to show them a different way. My mom struggled

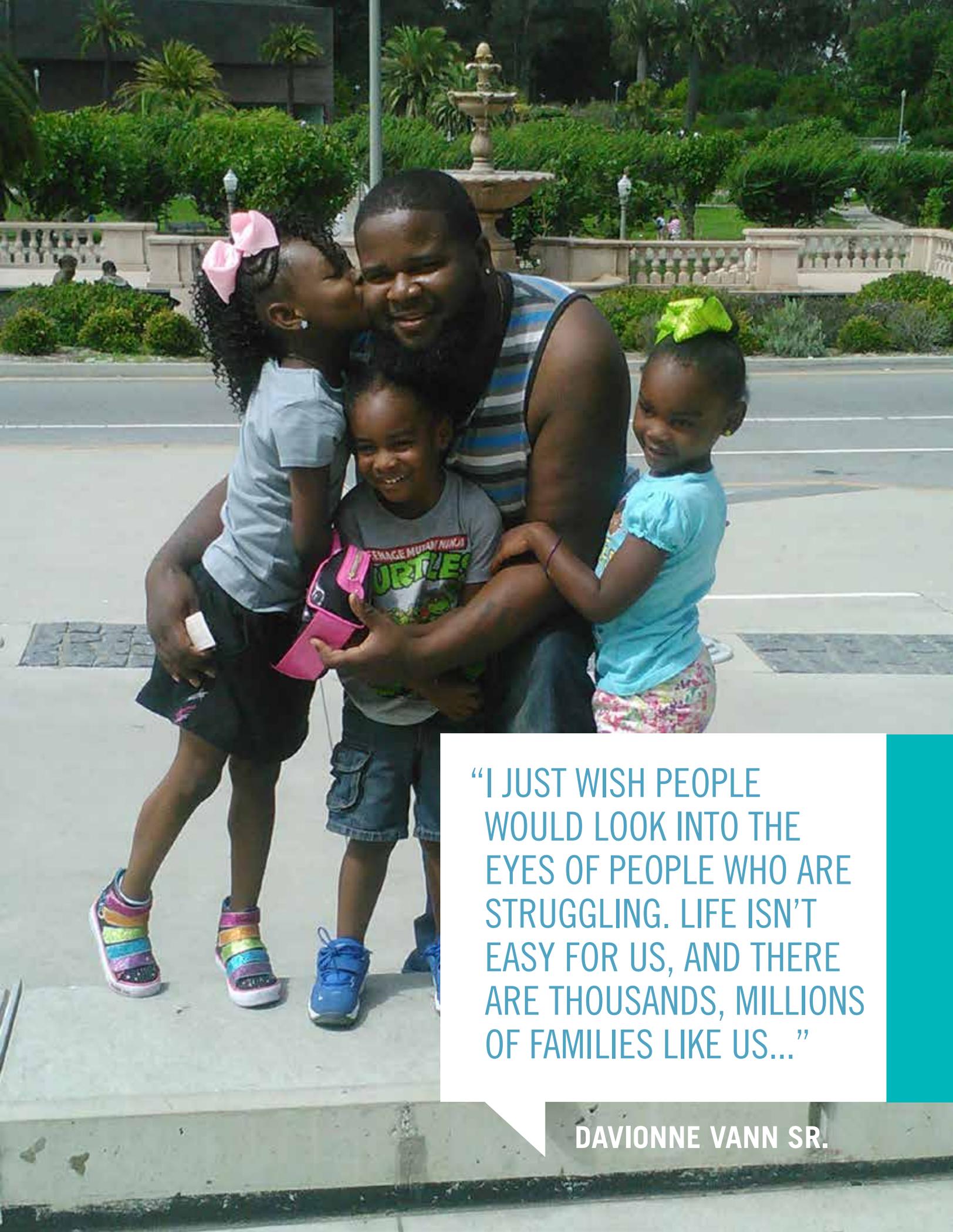
a lot—she worked two jobs with four kids and she had babysitting problems as well. I don't want to deal with that.

Even though I'm on dialysis, I'm fine. I can work. If I had day care, I could work in the morning and go to dialysis at night, and it would be so much easier for us. The kids need to learn, they need to be around other kids. We want them to be in a teacher's presence, to learn new things. The first five years are very important in a child's life and they haven't had what they need.

Now with the budget cuts, it's just harder. My wife hasn't worked for a full year yet, so she doesn't have medical insurance. All our medical is from the County. It's crazy time consuming. You can be on the phone for 40 minutes just trying to get a question answered. Even with that, I have to pay about \$140 a month for my medicine. It's a big impact. We get just enough to get by but not enough to get out of trouble.

Now that Shequilla is working, she is not eligible for the same benefits she was. She just learned our child care co-pay would be \$1,600 a month. That's crazy! We can't afford that. She doesn't even work fulltime. Schqueilla was on CalWORKs back with our firstborn, but that's a route we don't want to go, we don't want to go backwards. We'd have to lose everything. She'd have to stop working. We want to work. We hate to ask, but when we need help, it shouldn't be this hard. Child care would make living easier. I could get work, they could have friends, and Schqueilla could wake up without worrying what's going to happen today.

I just wish people would look into the eyes of people who are struggling. Life isn't easy for us, and there are thousands, millions of families like us—many worse. Billions get wasted every year and it could make such a difference. Every year brings another cut. Stop taking away everything we need. Try something new—be open to changing rather than snatching and making it harder. People need to help each other out. When I see homeless people on the streets, I always give them money because they're worse off than me. There's always someone who has less than you—help them out. That would be sweet.



“I JUST WISH PEOPLE WOULD LOOK INTO THE EYES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING. LIFE ISN'T EASY FOR US, AND THERE ARE THOUSANDS, MILLIONS OF FAMILIES LIKE US...”

DAVIONNE VANN SR.

NANCY DELANEY

I'm a 68 year-old former foster kid. What I want to say is people need an advocate to help them navigate the system and a place, a loving place, where they can not only find out about the services they need, but feel part of things—part of the human family.

It's so easy to feel marginalized and to be left adrift out there on your own. There was a period of time when I was homeless and I felt emotionally estranged from the human race. And I know that came from being a foster child.

I became a foster child when I was 12. My brother and sister were 9 and 7. My mother and her brother were in an orphanage when they were growing up, and their mother and father had both lost a parent when they were growing up. I'm like a 3rd generation orphan. So coming from a family without a history of parenting, I needed help. I needed counseling as a foster kid and as a former foster kid. I graduated from CSU Hayward when I was 60, and while I was there, I learned about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the need for deep counseling.

As a foster youth, it's like your family has died, but they didn't—you don't go to any funeral. No one helps you grieve the loss of your family, because they're not really gone. And now you're under the control of strangers and they put you in some stranger's home, and then another. Meanwhile you're trying to grow up, and when you look at the other kids around you at school, no one else is going through this, so you figure there must be something wrong with you.

Far more foster kids go homeless than graduate from college. Many become pregnant too early, and become homeless right away.

When you're on the street, there's a commonality, an equality that happens—like you all know there's no lower you can go, and a sort of healing takes place—like for the first time you're being seen by another human being. They served free meals at the Lutheran Church, and I always went to that. I didn't feel comfortable in the shelters. I stayed outdoors or sometimes I could stay at someone's house for a few weeks. Eventually I got on SSI and that helped. But I still needed counseling, not just money.

I got cancer in 2009 and ended up losing my place. That's when I learned about low-income housing for seniors. It's not easy finding housing. They give you a big catalogue and you have to research and put in a separate application for each one. I was in much better shape this time than other times I was homeless, but it's a lot to ask. We really need a place where someone can just come in and get taken care of. People—who need housing, usually need more than one thing. You need a place where someone will talk to you and help you figure out how to succeed—a nonjudgmental ombudsman.

Counseling for anyone on the street is so essential. So many people are trying to go it alone and it's hard. We don't have the support system that most people have, and everyone deserves that. It's not about being bad or broken, it's because we deserve the human connection. The things that happened to me when I was child, I'll be dealing with those my whole life. If you've been abused or neglected, it can be really intimidating to go ask for help.

You know what I tell people to help them understand? If there's anybody in your family that you love: grandparents, nephew, nieces—no matter how much money you have, no matter how much power you have, everyone, every human is equal to those people you love. There are certain basic needs and so many are doing without. Do you really want that for someone's loved one?

SAMPLE STORIES



“WE DON’T HAVE
THE SUPPORT SYSTEM
THAT MOST PEOPLE HAVE,
AND EVERYONE
DESERVES THAT.”

NANCY DELANEY

SAMPLE STORIES



VINCIANNA REED

I'm 20 years old and lived in the Bay Area my whole life. I moved around a lot even before I was in the foster care system, so that's just what I'm used to. I entered the foster care system when I was 11 or 12.

My mom got back rights to me just before my 18th birthday. I know it was important to her—no parent wants their child taken from them—and she worked hard to do what the County said she needed to do to regain custody. I would say it was detrimental to me because I lost resources I would have had as an emancipated youth after 18, like transitional housing and funding for school. My mom and I have a wonderful relationship, but we can't live together. So reunifying with my mom and having that not work out meant I was homeless on my 18th birthday.

I'm a pretty independent person and I'd already started college, and had a full-time job. So when things didn't work out with my mom, I moved into an apartment with my two kids. Then I lost the job and then I lost the apartment. It was hard to have to overcome so many obstacles at 18.

The last couple of years have been like a roller coaster. The highs and lows are starting to level out as I get used to adult life. I'm learning my lessons with every glitch that comes along. I'm still a full-time student and I have a full-time job with a nonprofit agency, helping foster youth. And housing remains my biggest challenge. I recently became eligible for the City of Alameda rental assistance program, called Family Unification Program. It's an 18-month program where, if you do all the things you're supposed to, you become eligible for Section 8 housing, as long as you need it. When I got in I thought I won the lottery. I've been looking for three months and still haven't found anything—no one wants to rent to me. I tell them I'm responsible and a good tenant, I meet all their criteria, but it's always no.

So, I've been homeless a few times since I turned 18. Currently, I'm living in Vallejo with relatives. That's hard with two kids. Every morning I get up early to take the kids to child care in Fremont, then I go to work in Oakland, then I pick up the kids in Fremont, and then I go to our place in Vallejo. And I'm going to school. I drive about 200 miles a day. I've been taking my oldest to the same child care since I was in high school and I don't want to move her because she needs that stability. She's been there since she was 3 months old and she's about to graduate from pre-school. The subsidized child care is so important—I couldn't work without it and would need even more government assistance; but, Fremont is too expensive to live, so this is what I have to do.

Our next challenge is getting her into kindergarten without a permanent address. There's always something....I have a lot of people in my life who care about me, but the financial burdens make it hard. I feel like I take five steps forward and three steps back living my life like this. I feel like if I could just make it past college and child care, I wouldn't need help after that. Sometimes I get the sense there are resources out there, but I don't know about them and I don't know how to find out. Or I hear about something but there's always a waiting list. Really, it all comes down to money. There doesn't seem to be enough money to help people.

For me, a perfect world would be child care for my son close to work, a nice school for my daughter, with a full-day program so I could drop her off in the morning and pick her up after work, and somebody in Alameda to take a chance on me and see I can be a responsible tenant. I'm looking for a stepping stone, not a crutch. I don't want help the rest of my life, just until I graduate college. I don't see myself depending on government assistance my whole life because, quite frankly, I don't want to deal with that. That's a full-time job in itself, just asking for help.

“I'M LOOKING FOR A STEPPING STONE,
NOT A CRUTCH.”

VINCIANNA REED

ADDITIONAL STORY STRATEGIES

Once we completed the HIB website, we provided the opportunity for people to upload written and video stories directly. We have not found this to be a successful strategy. What has been more successful is having a video room at community events. Attendees at events are invited to speak for 2-3 minutes about the impact of budget decisions on their life. These unrehearsed stories have been surprisingly cogent and certainly worth the effort. Video stories from the 2014 hearing can be found on the “About” page of the website (www.acgov.org/hib).

EXPERIENCE THE STORIES.
GET THE FACTS.
TAKE ACTION.



BEST PRACTICES FOR TOWNHALL MEETINGS

TOWNHALL MEETINGS: WHAT AND WHY

In addition to an annual community or “townhall” meeting during the budget season, Human Impact stories and presentations have occurred before the full Board of Supervisors during early budget work sessions, at a convening of East Bay Funders, and from time to time connected to community events. Presentations from these meetings can be found on the Reports page of the website (www.acgov.org/hib). Videos from the hearings can be found on the “About” page on the website.

The townhall meetings are central to the Human Impact Budget because they provide a “conversation” between community members and county policy leaders. Board members, county agency directors, and the Human Impact Analyst provides updates and forecasts on human impacts from the State budget, and community members provide testimony, stories, and suggestions for improving services.

TOWNHALL CONSIDERATIONS

As you may know, any community meeting takes a fair amount of planning. Please ask us for a sample Run of Show, if you want more detail. Consideration should be given to:

- Who needs to be there to make it successful? With elected officials, agency directors, and community leaders all adding value to the meeting, it is challenging and unlikely to find a time that works for everyone. Think about who needs to be there and give a minimum of 30 days’ notice to everyone else.
- Where and when should it take place? Daytime meetings are never a good idea if you want community participation. The location should be accessible and easy to find.
- Consider the balance between full participation and length of the event. Our first townhall meeting (see agenda) ran over 3 hours. The next year we added the video stories to reduce the number of testimonials and were able to keep the event under 2 hours.

While turnout for the event is important, press coverage ensures the message reaches a broader audience. Our first year, we focused on emailing and calling community members and drew about 200 attendees. By our second year, we had brought on a media consultant. While our attendance dropped to about 100, we received considerably more press coverage which continued through the following week.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR TOWNHALL MEETING

Human Impact Budget Hearing
Wednesday, May 1: 6:30-8:30 PM
Alameda County Administration Building, Board Chambers
1221 Oak Street, 5th floor, Oakland, CA
AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introduction by Supervisor Wilma Chan
2. Brief Overview of Issues Facing Alameda County (Seth Kaplan)
 - a. State Budget Cuts 2007-2012
 - b. Impacts in Alameda County
 - c. Poverty in the State & County
3. Human Impacts on Children & Families
 - a. Overview of Children & Families in Alameda County (Seth Kaplan)
 - b. CalWORKs (Lori Cox, Diana Spatz, Jarika Cox)
 - c. Child Care and Preschool Services (Angie Garling, Marva Lyons, Davionne Vann)
 - d. Children's Behavioral Health (Alex Briscoe)
4. Human Impacts on Adults
 - a. Overview of Adults in Alameda County (Seth Kaplan)
 - b. Medi-Cal and TLICP (Lori Cox, Alex Briscoe)
 - c. Health Care Reform (Alex Briscoe, Luella Pensergera)
 - d. Housing and Homelessness (Michelle Starratt, Francine Williams, Fran Beale)
5. Human Impacts on Older Adults & People with Disabilities
 - a. Overview of Older Adults & People with Disabilities in Alameda County (Seth Kaplan)
 - b. In-Home Support Services (Lori Cox, Michelle Rousey)
 - c. Adult Day Health Care/Community-Based Adult Services (Alex Briscoe)
6. Legislative & Judicial Update (Darius Anderson)
 - a. Overview of climate in Sacramento
 - b. Recent legislative and judicial action
 - c. Highlight advocacy efforts

HUMAN IMPACT AS PART OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

The Human Impact Budget is now integrated into The Alameda County budget process. A presentation is given to the full Board at an early budget work session and each agency presents human impacts specific to their policy area elsewhere in the budget process. A section on human impacts has been added to the budget book, which can be found on the Reports page of the website (www.acgov.org/hib) or on the County's budget website (www.acgov.org/budget).



COMMUNICATION TOOLS

BUILDING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

The Human Impact website is accessible at www.acgov.org/hib. It is updated annually during the budget process to ensure that data remains current. It has become an important resource for advocates, grant writers, and others concerned with local safety net issues.

The Human Impact Budget website was a collaboration of the County's Information Technology Department, Full Court Press Communications Consultants, Office of Supervisor Chan, County Administrator's Office, and the HIB Analyst. Design consideration was given to:

- *A clear message.* The tagline "Experience the Stories. Get the Facts. Take Action." conveys the intention of the website and the project. The pages build from the stories, to the data, to opportunities to take action.
- *Human feel.* Many photos of real people are used throughout.
- *Part of the County, but not the County.* The award-winning Alameda County website was also designed by ITD. While the design team acknowledged the quality of that website, we felt it important to have a separate identity, with less of a government and more of a community feel. Colors, fonts, and logo were all selected for a more accessible feel.
- *Accessible information.* Lots of pull quotes and white space are designed to make a significant amount of information more accessible.

THE WEBSITE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

- *The Home Page:* this page features video stories from local people
- *About:* this page provides a short history of the project and includes videos from human impact hearings.
- *Stories:* this page includes human impact stories from local residents.
- *Reports:* this page includes materials from the current and past budget books as well as many community presentations in PowerPoint format.
- *Need Help:* this page provides links to county resources.
- *Take Action:* this page helps people reach out to their elected officials and register to vote.

The screenshot shows the Alameda County Human Impact Budget website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, STORIES, REPORTS, NEED HELP?, and TAKE ACTION. Below this, there are several content blocks. On the left, a section titled "Why a Human Impact Budget?" explains the need for such a budget. To the right, there's a "Nestor's Story" section with a photo of an elderly woman and a man. A central banner features a video player for "Judy's Story" and a large graphic showing "\$15,000,000,000" in cuts to state health and human services programs from 2008 to 2013. Below this, there's another video player for "Sharon's Story" and a graphic showing "200,000 Alameda County residents that live below the Federal Poverty Level". Further down, there's a video player for "Rabbit's Story" and a graphic showing "250,000 Alameda County residents that went hungry last year. Almost half of them were children." The footer contains the Alameda County logo, the text "The Human Impact Budget Project", and the same navigation links as the top bar.

BUILDING A SOCIAL MEDIA ECHO CHAMBER

A website, like other information tools, benefits from social media to guide uninformed people to the site. HIB could be doing more with social media, and we hope to build this effort in the near future. Our focus at this point has been on putting videos up on YouTube.

EDITORIAL CAMPAIGN

Our communications outreach included drafting and placing an opinion piece in the Bay Area News Group papers on the California Budget, poverty in Alameda County, and the Human Impact budget Project. You can see it online at:

www.contracostatimes.com/opinion/ci_25747150/guest-commentary-responsible-state-budget-will-restore-many

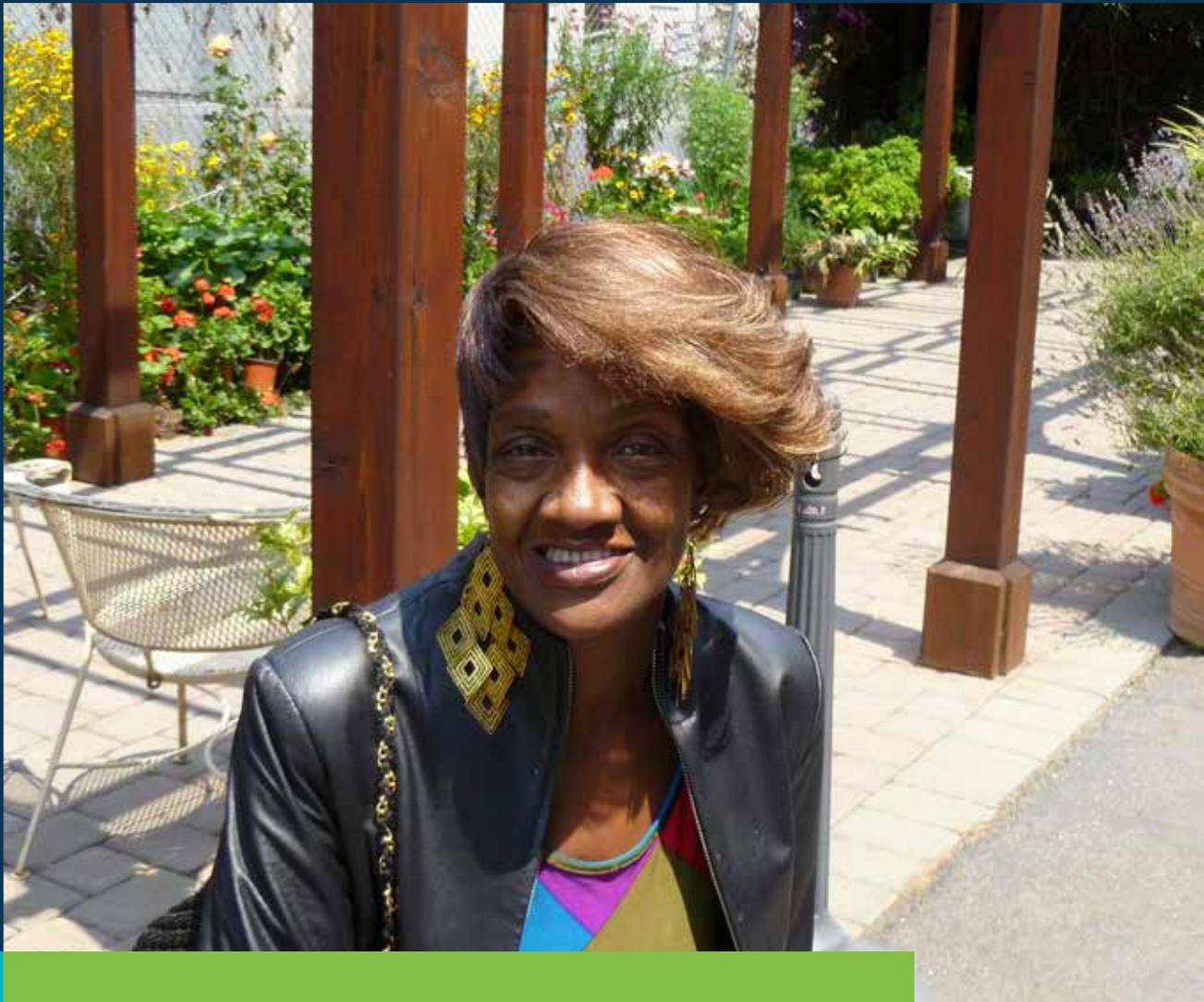
PRESS COVERAGE

HIB has received consistent press coverage since bringing on Full Court Press Communications as media consultants. Funding for a communication firm was built into The California Endowment grant. The project utilized press releases, media advisories, and pitch calls to local media to encourage them to cover the issue. Samples of coverage follow:

www.sfgate.com/news/article/Alameda-County-says-economy-is-better-poverty-5479137.php



We hope this toolkit is helpful.
For more information please contact
The Office of Supervisor Wilma Chan at
District3@acgov.org or 510-272-6693.



EXPERIENCE THE STORIES.
GET THE FACTS. TAKE ACTION.



Human Impact Budget
Alameda County