A plan to promote impact volunteering for the City of Richmond
# Message from Mayor Gayle McLaughlin

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“Time is not measured by the years that we live
But by the deeds that we do and the joys that we give”

– Helen Steiner Rice
Dear Friends in Service,

There is no greater job than serving the community and helping to bring about social change. Volunteerism is truly a reward in itself. As a lifelong social justice activist, I can honestly say that volunteering time and effort to the creation of a better world is the most exciting journey to be on. To actually witness change in the world and community around us is the greatest reward there is. My volunteer efforts as a young person organizing against racism, sexism and economic inequity profoundly help me every day as I continue to journey together with our community to build a better Richmond.

Here in Richmond, the service movement is picking up momentum as we build on the established spirit of service in our community. In March 2012, thanks to funding from the S.D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation and technical support from Cities of Service, a bipartisan coalition of over 150 mayors who are committed to using volunteerism to address pressing local needs, the City of Richmond began engaging the Richmond community to implement an impact volunteering program in our city. Impact volunteering seeks to tackle priority challenges through volunteer strategies that target a community’s priority needs, use best practices, and set clear outcomes for measurable results.

I am appreciative of the community partners who helped shape our service plan and program, Richmond ESC – Excellence Serving our Community. Through our community research process, we learned from our community partners that our city’s most pressing challenges to address are:

- building an infrastructure and the capacity of community based organizations to utilize volunteers.
- raising awareness and mobilizing our residents to volunteer to address our community’s biggest challenges.
- engaging parents and volunteers to support children’s educational and health development.
- supporting neighborhoods to beautify and revitalize their surroundings.

We will engage community partners from across the city to share their talents, resources, and time to collaboratively address these challenges. As a city that serves, we can make profound impacts that enrich the lives of our residents.

In service,

Gayle McLaughlin
Mayor, City of Richmond
CITIES OF SERVICE
Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009, by 17 mayors from cities across the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to engage citizens to address critical city needs through impact volunteerism.

The coalition aims to create a vibrant and growing network of municipal governments effectively leveraging citizen service as a reliable, viable tool to achieve measurable impact on pressing local challenges. By accelerating the service movement at the most local level—connecting local needs to the supply of willing volunteers in innovative and impactful new ways—Cities of Service aspires to create a new chapter in America’s longstanding history of service while making local government more effective.

Today, the Cities of Service coalition includes more than 150 mayors, representing nearly 50 million Americans. Like the founding mayors, each coalition member has made a commitment to work with other mayors around the country and advance service strategies in their own city by crafting a high-impact service plan.

In addition to funding, all Cities of Service grant recipients received technical assistance and support from Cities of Service to develop high-impact service plans. Much of this support follows a methodology outlined in the Cities of Service Playbook.¹

In January 2012, the City of Richmond was awarded a two-year grant by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation to plan and implement the Cities of Service model in our city. Through a citywide ballot in October 2012, Richmond’s program model was branded by the community as “Excellence Serving our Community (ESC).” Additionally, students from two local high schools were invited to submit logo designs that illustrate and incorporate the program’s name.

¹The Cities of Service Playbook is available for download at www.citiesofservice.org/resources/playbook/
Richmond has a deep history of service and is best known for its unique role in the World War II home front effort, where workers and volunteers from across the United States streamed into the City of Richmond to serve our country. This legacy of service still lives on today. Each month Richmond citizens give their time to various service projects throughout the City.
Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.”
– Martin Luther King Jr.

Every April at its Volunteer Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the City of Richmond recognizes a cadre of dedicated, local volunteers who donate their time to help others and make our city a better place to live in. This long-standing tradition will continue as we challenge more residents to make a positive difference in our community.
We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”
– Winston Churchill
Like all cities that create a high-impact service plan using the Cities of Service model, Richmond ESC embarked on a community research process to leverage the collective knowledge of volunteers, local leaders and residents.

The main objectives of this process were to analyze the landscape of local, community-based organizations utilizing volunteers, prioritize the specific challenges the city would address through our initiative, and identify the resources and opportunities available to support the effort.

This community research process included:

- Focus groups with key stakeholders, including representatives from city agencies, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities, local businesses, and foundations;
- Expert interviews with local and national leaders, including Chief Service Officers from cities across the nation; and
- Surveys of volunteer-using nonprofit organizations, city agencies, and K-12 schools.

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<tr>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>FEB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richmond is awarded Bechtel grant</td>
<td>Consultant hired to support Richmond</td>
<td>Workshop with community leaders to garner input on priorities</td>
<td>Released service plan and project launch and implementation</td>
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Community Engagement and Research Process:
- Internal strategy workshops with City of Richmond Team
- Interviews with Chief Service Officers (CSOs) and community leaders
- Focus groups with community leaders, residents, and parents
DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROCESS

The following table outlines our approach to the landscape analysis process and highlights our extensive efforts. For a complete list of participants, please see Appendix II.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INTERVIEWS</th>
<th>FOCUS GROUPS</th>
<th>ONLINE SURVEYS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conducted interviews with six Chief Service Officers from around the country to identify best practices in launching and managing high-impact service initiatives in local government</td>
<td>Conducted five focus groups with 42 participants on selected topics including health and wellness, volunteer infrastructure, parent engagement, and community beautification</td>
<td>Developed and deployed two online surveys to 10 community-based organizations and local government agencies</td>
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<td>Conducted interviews with 13 community leaders in Richmond from the nonprofit, government, and philanthropy sectors</td>
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Our community research process further reinforced what we already suspected: the City of Richmond is a vibrant hub of volunteerism consisting of dynamic community-based organizations with a rich history of utilizing volunteers. Additionally, we found that the City is home to a host of dedicated, long-term volunteers, and even more residents and parents who are excited to get involved.

Expert interviews, focus groups, and online surveys also surfaced citywide challenges that must be addressed in the near future in order to advance our mission.

- There is no central place – online or otherwise – to identify volunteer opportunities or source volunteers in Richmond.

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) and volunteers both voiced limited capacity to meaningfully engage volunteers and require training and other support to improve volunteer experiences and outcomes.

Engaging parents as volunteers is tough – they are not only juggling competing priorities, but also mentioned lack of confidence and know-how in regards to getting involved.

- There is a need to overcome neighborhood and other demographic boundaries – respondents tended to identify with their individual neighborhoods, rather than the City of Richmond as a whole.

In order to ensure the success of our effort, we will not only have to increase the number of volunteers and volunteer opportunities in Richmond, but must also improve the overall experience of volunteers and the community-based organizations that utilize them. This will help ensure that volunteers remain dedicated to the effort over the long-term and that their work is well managed and impactful. The following framework serves as a roadmap outlining the potential progression of a volunteer who is new to service into a “super” volunteer who is committed to service over the long-term.

There are three types of volunteers in Richmond

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIER 1</th>
<th>TIER 2</th>
<th>TIER 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>NEW OR MANDATORY VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>LONG-TERM OR SUPER-VOLUNTEER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service - learning</td>
<td>Event-oriented</td>
<td>Goes above and beyond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Court referral/parking tickets</td>
<td>Immediate need</td>
<td>Volunteers daily/weekly over many years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Desires well-organized events with opportunities to connect</td>
<td>Desires capacity-building</td>
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<td>Desires quick means to connect and complete service</td>
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Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.”
– Booker T. Washington
Given our assets, challenges, and deeper understanding of our volunteer base, we led a series of conversations with community stakeholders in order to identify and clarify our guiding principles for the design of Richmond ESC. The guiding principles that emerged are as follows:

- Focusing our efforts will enable us to have a greater impact through volunteerism.
  
  We will spend the majority of our efforts on fundraising, providing resources, support, and raising awareness of ESC.

- Building on existing efforts of Richmond community-based organizations and agencies will significantly improve our likelihood of demonstrating success.
  
  We will invest in and build the capacity of existing community-based organizations and local agency volunteer efforts in Richmond.

**For the next five years, Richmond ESC will focus on the following four priorities:**

1. **Build the infrastructure and capacity of community-based organizations so they can efficiently and effectively leverage volunteers.**

2. **Raise awareness and mobilize communities to volunteer to address our community’s biggest challenges.**

3. **Engage parents, guardians, and other residents to support young adults and children’s educational development and health and wellness.**

4. **Empower neighborhoods to beautify and revitalize their own surroundings.**
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<tr>
<th>ASSUMPTIONS</th>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there is an infrastructure for that residents and CBOs are aware of, these parties will use it to connect and network</td>
<td>ESC staff and leadership</td>
<td>Building city-wide infrastructure (web portal)</td>
<td>Increase in residents volunteering and civically engaged</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ESC resources and funds</td>
<td>Raising awareness and connecting and networking communities</td>
<td>Increase in awareness of volunteering</td>
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<td>If volunteers and CBOs are provided training and other capacity-building services, they will have more positive volunteer/programmatic experiences</td>
<td>ESC Advisory Board</td>
<td>Building capacity of volunteers and CBOs</td>
<td>Increase in CBO volunteer roles filled</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small grants to CBOs and neighborhood councils</td>
<td>• Branding and website</td>
<td>Increase in residents aware of initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>If parents/guardians are provided training and capacity-building services, they will be able to support their children’s educational development and health and wellness</td>
<td>Parents, volunteers, and other residents</td>
<td>• Community events</td>
<td>Measureable increase in new connections made</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community-based organizations</td>
<td>• Radio, media, billboards</td>
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<tr>
<td>If volunteers, CBOs, and city agencies are connected, coordinated, and provided resources, they will collaboratively work to beautify and revitalize their own environments</td>
<td>Communications, strategy, and trainer consultants</td>
<td>• Fellowship for volunteer leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research and evaluation</td>
<td>• Trainings</td>
<td>Improvements in volunteer and CBO experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Other capacity building activities</td>
<td>Increase in long-term volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting, educating, and empowering parents &amp; guardians</td>
<td>Increase in partnerships and capacity of CBOs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• School-based events</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Parent trainings</td>
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<td>• Walking school bus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinating and providing resources to neighborhoods, residents, and CBOs</td>
<td>Improvement in appearance of neighborhoods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Small grants to neighborhood councils</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Neighborhood events</td>
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Our Initiatives
Through expert interviews and focus group dialogues, parents and school officials expressed the need to better engage parents and volunteers to support and improve the development of youths’ academic and health outcomes.

In partnership with Community Alliance for Learning and the West Contra Costa Unified School District, Richmond ESC will recruit and train parents and community volunteers to support the WriterCoach Connection program, which brings one-on-one help to high school students to improve their writing efficiency.

In November 2012, Cities of Service, with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, awarded Richmond ESC $25,000 to support and expand WriterCoach Connection, an impact volunteering initiative, to address the high school writing achievement gap at Richmond High School.

**CHALLENGE ADDRESSED:**
Engagement to support youths’ academic outcomes

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<tr>
<th>LEAD</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Learning Alliance</td>
<td>Number of volunteers recruited and trained</td>
<td>January 2013 launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Contra County Unified School District</td>
<td>Number of students with increased writing proficiency</td>
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<td>Richmond ESC</td>
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</table>
The City of Richmond is proud to have thriving community beautification organizations and groups that are committed to improving the quality of life for Richmond residents by creating sustainable neighborhoods. Volunteers have tirelessly planted trees, cleaned community gardens, participated in neighborhood clean ups, removed litter from Richmond shorelines, and provided much needed home repairs for low-income residents.

Richmond ESC and key city departments will team with neighborhood groups, community beautification organizations, and local companies to leverage funds to support volunteer-led neighborhood revitalization projects to reduce blight.

**CHALLENGE ADDRESSED:**
**Neighborhood blight**

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<tr>
<th>LEAD</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>Number of blocks revitalized</td>
<td>June 2013 launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Departments <em>(Code Enforcement, Public Works, Parks, Successor Agency, Environmental Initiatives, Stormwater)</em></td>
<td>Number of volunteers participating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Groups</td>
<td>Number of tonnage of litter removed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Beautification Groups and Organizations</td>
<td>Number of neighborhoods participating</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of community gardens planted and/or maintained</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of low-income homeowners receiving repairs to their homes</td>
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“Every person can make a difference, and every person should try.”
– John F. Kennedy
The City of Richmond, in partnership with Cities of Service, has developed a central web portal for volunteers to access service opportunities within the Richmond community. The web portal will serve as an added resource for local agencies to promote meaningful volunteer opportunities. Additionally, richmondvolunteers.org will feature volunteer experiences from citizens, best practices from organizations, training opportunities for volunteers and agencies, and raise community awareness regarding the benefits of volunteering.

**CHALLENGE ADDRESSED:**
Connectivity to volunteer opportunities and added resource for community-based organizations

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<th>LEAD</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>Number of visitors to website</td>
<td>February 2013 launch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Volunteers connected to service projects</td>
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<td>Number of agencies posting opportunities</td>
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The City of Richmond is committed to becoming a city of service.

To support this effort, a volunteer infrastructure must be in place. The necessity to develop a volunteer infrastructure was a common theme among the focus group discussions during the planning process. Specifically, the cross-cutting challenges that prevent local citizens from volunteering are:

- Central web connectivity to service opportunities
- Training and support for volunteers and community-based agencies
- Public awareness regarding the benefits of volunteering
In partnership with volunteer training and management organizations, training and support will be provided to volunteers and Richmond’s community based organizations to help build their capacity as we collectively address our city’s priority needs.

**CHALLENGE ADDRESSED:**
Availability of training and support for volunteers and local agencies

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<th>LEAD</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>Number of volunteers receiving service and personal development training</td>
<td>April 2013 launch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of agencies receiving capacity building training</td>
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<td>Number of long-term project volunteers</td>
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<td>Increased number of volunteers leading service projects</td>
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Youth Service
In August 2012, Youth Service America announced its selection of Richmond ESC as a 2013 Global Youth Service Day lead agency to engage and organize youth, ages five to 25, to lead service projects that improve the Richmond community. Richmond ESC will support the Global Youth Service Day initiative and similar efforts to grow the number of youth volunteers in Richmond and to cultivate a spirit of service.

Seniors
Richmond and other West Contra Costa County cities have the longest waiting list in the county for volunteers to connect with homebound seniors. Richmond ESC is supporting Meals on Wheels and the Friendly Visitors program to recruit committed volunteers to deliver healthy prepared meals to seniors and/or to become “friendly visitors” to seniors who have requested these services.

Veterans
According to the 2010 census, Richmond has over 6,000 veterans in our community. Richmond ESC is supporting the efforts to convene a Richmond Veterans Collaborative that will connect veterans to services such as housing, employment, mental health, counseling, and legal assistance. Additionally, veteran volunteers will be engaged to identify service projects that will support fellow veterans and returning soldiers.

Mentor Richmond
Recognizing the importance of connecting qualified mentors with Richmond youth who can benefit from some extra guidance and support, Richmond ESC is supporting the Mentor Richmond collaborative by assisting with recruiting mentor candidates and providing space at Civic Center Plaza to provide training to candidates.

“
The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
– Mahatma Gandhi
The following table outlines our high-level work plan over the next five years. We seek to accomplish and hold ourselves accountable for the following activities across our four strategic priority areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA AND ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>YEAR 1 2013</th>
<th>YEAR 2 2014</th>
<th>YEAR 3 2015</th>
<th>YEAR 4 2016</th>
<th>YEAR 5 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Build the infrastructure and capacity of volunteers and community-based organizations so they can efficiently and effectively connect</td>
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<td>Develop web portal</td>
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<td>Partner with volunteer clearinghouses</td>
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<td>Clarify volunteer / CBO request processes</td>
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<td>Design and conduct volunteer and CBO trainings</td>
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<td>&gt; Raise awareness and mobilize communities to volunteer</td>
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<td>Launch website</td>
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<td>Develop branding and communications campaign</td>
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<td>Launch communications campaign</td>
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<td>Design and launch fellowship for super volunteers to connect</td>
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<td>&gt; Engage parents, guardians, and other residents to support young adults and children’s educational development and health and wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support WriterCoach Connection program at Richmond High</td>
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<td>Support parent leadership and training workshops</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and launch health and wellness volunteer initiative</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>&gt; Support neighborhoods to beautify and revitalize their own surroundings</td>
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<td>Partner with neighborhood groups and community-based organizations</td>
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<td>Support neighborhood beautification process</td>
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## APPENDIX I: INITIATIVES AT A GLANCE

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<tr>
<th>PRIORITY NEED AREA</th>
<th>SPECIFIC CHALLENGE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>INITIATIVE LEADS</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Engagement to support youths’ educational outcomes</td>
<td>Writer’s Coach Connection</td>
<td>In partnership with Community Alliance for Learning and the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), Richmond ESC will recruit and train parents and community volunteers to support the WriterCoach Connection program, which brings one-on-one help to high school students to improve their writing efficiency.</td>
<td># of volunteers recruited and trained</td>
<td>Community Learning Alliance</td>
<td>1/13</td>
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<td>WCCUSD</td>
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<td>Richmond ESC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood development</td>
<td>Neighborhood blight</td>
<td>Love Your Block</td>
<td>Richmond ESC will team with key city departments, neighborhood groups, community beautification organizations, and local companies to leverage funds to support volunteer-led neighborhood revitalization projects to reduce blight.</td>
<td># of blocks revitalized</td>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>3/13</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Groups</td>
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<td>Community beautification groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross cutting</td>
<td>Connectivity to volunteer opportunities and added resource for community-based organizations</td>
<td>Richmondvolunteers.org</td>
<td>Develop a central web portal for volunteers to access service opportunities within the Richmond community</td>
<td># of visitors to website</td>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>1/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of training and support</td>
<td>Excellence Serving Our Community</td>
<td>Provide training and support to volunteers and Richmond’s community based organizations to help build their capacity</td>
<td># of volunteers receiving service and personal development training</td>
<td>Richmond ESC</td>
<td>1/13</td>
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</table>
Thank you to the following community participants and stakeholders.

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Cameron Waldner – Houston, TX
Rafael Gonzales – Los Angeles, CA
Michael Drake – Little Rock, AR
Jenne Myers – Chicago, IL
Marcia Hope Goodwin – Orlando, FL

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Shasa Curl - City of Richmond
Marin Trujillo – West Contra Costa Unified School District
Karen Baker - California Volunteers
Jeannette Ramirez – Chavez Elementary School

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Amanda Elliot – Richmond Main Street
Rebecca Brown – Healthy Richmond
Shahid Wright - YMCA
Diane Aranda – The California Endowment

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Tamisha Walker - Parent

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Ruth Vasquez-Jones – Lifelong
Gabino Arredondo– City of Richmond
Doria Robinson – Urban Tilth
Eduardo Martinez – Retired Teacher
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Joan Davis – Richmond Community Foundation
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ONLINE SURVEYS

Community-Based Organizations
Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council
Self-Sustaining Communities
Making Waves Academy
Be a Mentor
Saffron Strand

Local Government Agencies
City of Antioch
City of Oakland
City of San Pablo
Richmond Industrial Waste
Richmond LEAP
"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."
– Mahatma Gandhi
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