



Rubicon's Journey to Advocacy

October 3, 2018

Mission & Values

By acting on our values, Rubicon has conviction that we will achieve our mission and our vision.

VISION

An East Bay without poverty.



MISSION

To transform East Bay communities by equipping people to break the cycle of poverty.

Mission & Values (continued)

Our Values

JUSTICE

We believe in the promise of fairness, equality and opportunity for all people. We collaborate with others who share our goals of dismantling institutional racism and the cycle of poverty, and we are committed to examining the role we play in perpetuating these systems. We hold ourselves accountable to these promises.

HOPE

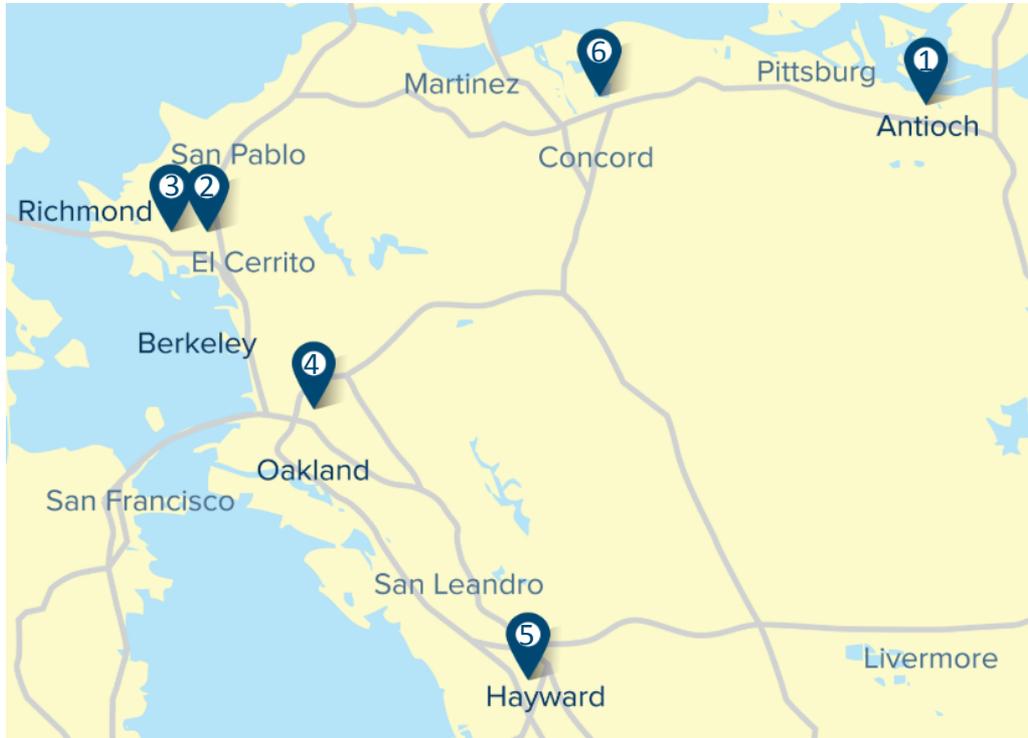
Our optimism and hope drive us to constantly seek justice. We think creatively about how to solve social problems. Our belief in our participants, staff and community fuels our hope in achieving our mission to break the cycle of poverty.

HUMILITY

We are responsive to the ever-evolving needs of the people we serve and the community in which we live. We humbly listen to our clients, our community and one another. The urgency of our work demands that we act boldly, and take risks, even if we make mistakes along the way.



Locations



1 Rubicon Antioch
 418 West 4th St.
 Antioch, CA 94509
 (925) 399-8990



2 Rubicon Richmond
 101 Broadway
 Richmond, CA 94804
 (510) 412-1725



3 Reentry Success Center
 912 Macdonald Ave.
 Richmond, CA 94801
 (510) 679-2122



4 Rubicon Oakland
 2000 San Pablo Ave.
 Oakland, CA 94612
 (510) 208-0912



5 Rubicon Hayward
 524100 Amador St.
 3rd Floor, Hayward,
 CA 94544
 (510) 670-5700



6 Rubicon Concord
 4071 Port Chicago
 Highway, Suite 250
 Concord, CA 94520
 (925) 765-7293



Why we Decided to Do Advocacy

- Mission
- Decision to Focus
- Theory of Change
- Recognition of system barriers for people to break cycle of poverty
 - Systems are not broken – they are optimized to maintain inequity and lack of opportunity

Advocacy Timeline

Prior to Summer 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2012 – Supported AB 1831, Ban the Box• Ban the Box was turning point for Rubicon in recognizing the systemic barriers to break cycle of poverty, and the advocacy needed to address these barriers• Regularly signed letters and supported other organizations’ advocacy efforts.
Summer 2014	<p>Theory of Change process led to three new strategic goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Become a nationally recognized multi-service organization.2) Develop systems and communications structures that support cohesion and consistency of program delivery and overall operations across all geographic regions.3) Impact and influence public policy benefitting its participants.
2016	<p>Rubicon Programs vs. Solano County Superior Court: Rubicon was lead plaintiff in lawsuit challenging the court’s practice of suspending driver’s licenses of those who are financially unable to pay exorbitant traffic fines. Lawsuit was resolved in settlement.</p>
Fall 2016-Summer 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MSW Management and Planning Intern developed report on Advocacy at Rubicon.• Concluded that the next step at Rubicon was to do advocacy education and culture building among staff.• Created Rubicon’s first Voter Guide for Nov. 2016 Elections. Focused on state ballot measures. Published on social media and website.• Executive Team members attended FESP-sponsored training on ACT Quick-Advocacy Capacity Tool.

Advocacy Timeline

July 2016-June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created Legislative Alerts Digest• Developed tools to track advocacy activities/legislative• Ad-hoc Advocacy Involvement Decision Group develops to vet advocacy requests.• Identified our participants voice as potentially being our strongest asset in policy influence.• Launched Participant Advisory Board.• Rubicon champion(s) assigned to issue areas: 1) Justice reform/employment and other rights of people who are formerly incarcerated 2) affordable housing• External organizations/coalition identified in each issue area.• Developed Anti-Racism stance and had bolder conversations about racial justice and related policy issues.• Participants and staff started protesting injustice and attending public meetings/hearing together.
Summer 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Communications Manager raised level of social media advocacy and media coverage including op-eds.
Fall 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opposition to West County Jail Expansion• Why we did this, allying with partners

How We Choose Our Priority Issues

VOTER GUIDE:

- Process:
 - Community Connections Manager, Communications Manager, and Staff Attorney meet to discuss ballot initiatives and come up with recommendations
 - Present recommendations to Executive Team with explanations; possible changes made
 - Recommendations presented to and approved by Board

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY:

- Process:
 - Requests for letters of support
 - Approval from Executive Team
 - Staff Attorney drafts and sends letters of support

How We Choose Our Priority Issues

What issues directly affect our participants and/or our mission of an East Bay without poverty?

Examples:

- Voter's guide
 - November 2016: Prop 57; Prop 64
 - November 2018: Props 1, 2, and 10 (pending)
- Legislative advocacy
 - 2017 – AB 1008 – Ban the Box
 - This year – AB 2138 – Occupational Licensing Reform

Target Audiences

VOTER GUIDE

- Participants, their friends, family and co-workers
- Local elected officials and government officials
- Partner Organizations
- Voters who care about ending poverty in the East Bay

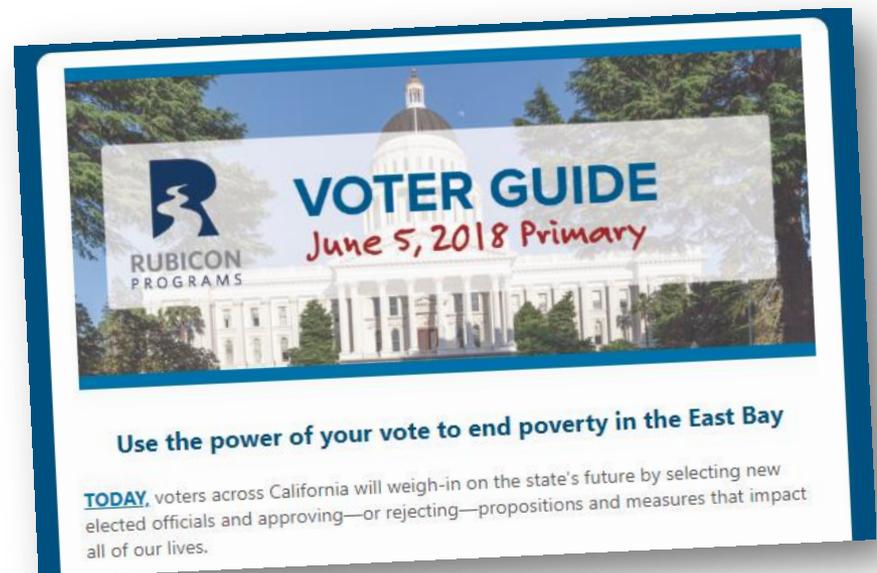
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

- Local elected officials
- Activists and stakeholders that elected officials listen to, including participants

Community Outreach & Media

VOTER GUIDE

- Email distribution to 3,500 community members, elected leaders, government officials, institutional givers and other stakeholders
- Social media advertisements to Rubicon's network, and people likely to be in poverty in our communities
- Printed copies for participants to access
 - *Condensed one-pager planned for Nov. 2018*



Community Outreach & Media

LEGISLATIVE & JUDICIAL ADVOCACY

- **Proactive Media Outreach**
 - Press Releases
 - Media advisories
 - Email & Phone Pitches

California court to halt license suspensions of poor drivers

JANIE HAR, ASSOCIATED PRESS | August 8, 2017 | Updated: August 8, 2017 6:54pm



SOLANO COUNTY LAWSUIT

Settlement gives low-income relief from traffic fines

By Tammerlin Drummond
tdrummond@bayareanewsgroup.com

Jesse Austin, a 39-year-old Antioch resident, owed more than \$1,800 in unpaid tickets stemming from a September traffic stop in Benicia. He couldn't pay that high an amount on the \$800 he earned every two weeks at a store that sold men's grooming products. When he didn't pay or show up in court, Solano County put a hold on his driver's license. That in turn, he said, stopped him from getting a job as a delivery driver, better-paying work than he had done in the past.

"Not having a license has really hindered my earning ability," said the father of six who works as a bicycle messenger in San Francisco. "You have to have one for a lot of jobs."

Last week, Solano County Superior Court agreed to a first-of-its-kind settlement in California that offers low-income people such as Austin some relief from crushing traffic ticket debt

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Community Outreach & Media

LEGISLATIVE & JUDICIAL ADVOCACY

- **Media Advocacy**
 - Op-Eds
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Editorial Board Meetings

California

AB 1250 is a vivid lesson in unintended consequences

By Dan Geiger and Jane Fischberg

In government, good intentions frequently have unintended consequences. Unfortunately, many of these unintended consequences can have irreversible impacts, costing lives, chilling innovation and disintegrating community institutions that have reliably served our neighbors for decades.

That's the case with AB 1250. This legislation has a purportedly noble goal: to protect employment security for public employees. But in actuality, it constructs an elaborate system that locks out the nonprofits and medical specialists that ensure that some of our community's most vulnerable residents receive care.

The bill would require all county contractors — many of whom are nonprofit Community Benefit Organizations (CBOs) — to spend a significant portion of their modest budgets on expensive audits, burdensome paperwork and administrative overhead.

In the short run, this would divert critical resources from vital services.

In the long run, it could force hundreds of community organizations to shut their doors, leaving tens of thousands of people with limited resources — including survivors of domestic violence, those living with mental illness and families who are homeless — out in the cold.

Almost 65 percent of Contra Costa County's mental health services are contracted out to provide much-needed additional capacity to the county's health delivery system. Partnerships between these organizations and the Health Services Department ensure that residents benefit from the cultural responsiveness, expertise and skill they have to offer, while remaining flexible enough to continually innovate and improve their practices.

Outside contracting is particularly necessary in situations where labor is scarce and few people have hyper-specialized expertise. If a disease is relatively rare, why have the county hospital hire a full-time doctor just to serve a handful of people? It makes much more economic sense for a few counties to contract one shared doctor to serve an entire region.

AB 1250 would make it cost prohibitive for a doctor or health group to choose that arrangement. On top of that, there are many emergency services that must be contracted out to protect public safety. The simple truth is that no health department can employ enough professionals to staff and manage the entire system on its own.

Other organizations, such as Rubicon Programs in the counties of Contra Costa and Alameda, deliver services that help the unemployed find jobs. Due to its nonprofit status, Rubicon is able to pool varying sources of funding to maximize its impact. It also can build close, active partnerships between local businesses and community groups, allowing them to develop comprehensive supports that help individuals find a job, establish a career and achieve economic mobility. This holistic, hands-on approach is not one that a government agency could manage effectively.

It all comes down to this: AB 1250 is an existential threat to our local health care delivery systems. It's a one-size-fits-all policy that solves no real problems and creates new ones.

The 21 members of the Human Services Alliance of Contra Costa — in partnership with the county — serve more than 360,000 residents. Millions more are served in Alameda, San Francisco and across the state. These organizations already face potential cutbacks instituted by the federal government. They cannot afford to further jeopardize their ability to provide high-quality services.

No one wins when you decrease quality and access to services.

We urge you to contact your State Sens. Nancy Skinner, Bob Wieckowski, Bill Dodd and Steve Glazer. Ask them to vote no on AB 1250.

Dan Geiger is the director of the Human Services Alliance of Contra Costa. Jane Fischberg is the president and CEO of Rubicon Programs, a nonprofit serving Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

Letters to the edit

Passing AB 1250 would kill community outreach

Multiple nonprofit agencies statewide providing mission-critical services through contracts with counties are at risk of closing if the California State Legislature adopts Assembly Bill 1250. This bill would put many high-quality, community-based organizations out of business. Examples include Rubicon Programs, Shelter Inc. and Early Childhood Mental Health.

If passed, dozens of nonprofits in Contra Costa and Alameda County could be required to spend a large share of their modest budgets on extensive audits, burdensome paperwork, and unnecessary overhead.

In the short run, they would need to reduce services to survivors of domestic violence, those living with a mental illness, and families who are homeless. In the long run, they may have to shutter altogether.

Please contact our State Sen. Nancy Skinner at 916-651-4009 and tell her to vote no on AB 1250 to save our nonprofits.

— David Gray, Richmond

Community Outreach & Media

LEGISLATIVE & JUDICIAL ADVOCACY

- **Grassroots Social Media Advocacy**
 - Legislator and Partner Tags
 - Calls to Action



Key Takeaways

- It's unusual for service agencies to embrace advocacy. Doing so gives us all the opportunity to frame what it looks like, and hopefully, be a model for other organizations.
- We're still finding our sea-legs. Trying not to duplicate efforts or miss major opportunities. Our strategies are continually evolving.
- It doesn't always make sense to take a position, if it doesn't directly affect our participants.
- Direct service agencies have day-to-day exposure and first-hand information from those who are impacted by policies and poverty, and can provide a unique perspective to the public and to electeds.
- Elected leaders look to providers for perspective and on-the-ground feedback on policy because they don't often hear from us.
- Being proactive with media and community partnerships is a key to success.

Questions? Contact Us!



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