

News from: City of Oakland



City of
OAKLAND
California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Prepared for Occupy Oakland Protest Saturday *City Leaders Call on Community to Get Involved in Productive Programs to Address Social Needs; OPD Prepared to Deter Unlawful Activity*

Oakland, CA — Occupy Oakland protesters have announced their intent to occupy a large, vacant building in an undisclosed location in downtown Oakland tomorrow, without the permission of the owner. At their General Assembly meetings and through other communications, they have acknowledged that this activity is illegal.

The City of Oakland welcomes peaceful forms of assembly and free speech; however, social media sites within this past month have continually announced that individuals or groups plan to target police personnel, police vehicles, property, and media vehicles or equipment on an ongoing basis.

The Oakland Police Department is aware of this threat and prepared to deter criminal activity or respond to illegal actions, including vandalism, arson, acts of violence, trespassing, and interference with officers performing their duties. Such activities disrupt otherwise peaceful and lawful gatherings and will not be tolerated.

Over the past few weeks, organizers have held marches in downtown Oakland which were billed as anti-police initiatives. During this period, about 15 arrests were made, with approximately 60% of those arrested residing outside the region or the state. Since the first encampment was removed on October 25, 2011, approximately 300 people have been arrested. The Police Department has been successful in obtaining restraining orders against individuals who repeatedly commit crimes, and are working with the Alameda County District Attorney's Office and Oakland City Attorney's Office to explore felony and enhanced charges for people who criminally plan and/or work in concert to break the law.

"The residents of Oakland are wearying of the constant focus and cost to our city," said Mayor Jean Quan.

At a news conference Wednesday announcing their plans, protesters presented a [letter to City officials](#) threatening to shut down the Port, blockade the Airport indefinitely, occupy City Hall indefinitely, or call on Anonymous (anarchic cyber "hacktivists"), if the City makes attempts to evict them from the vacant building or deter their actions.

"The City of Oakland will not be bullied by threats of violence or illegal activity," said City Administrator Deanna Santana. "This community has a rich history of community engagement and progressive activism to address the very complex issues that the protesters claim to stand for—poverty, the housing crisis, homeless, social justice, literacy, education, and economic inequality—none of which can be addressed through violence, threats, or intimidation."

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She continued, “If we are to achieve economic equality, concentrate on the disparities that lead to cycles of poverty, and stop the violence that plagues our neighborhoods, we must work together, collectively, productively, and cooperatively.”

“Breaking into buildings, assaulting police officers, provoking confrontations, and vandalizing property are tactics that are counter-productive and divide our community. They drain scarce City resources away from the neighborhoods in greatest need. Oakland deserves better,” she said.

The City of Oakland calls on the community of Oakland to get involved with any one of the hundreds of organizations dedicated to feeding the hungry, fighting for fair and accessible housing, enhancing literacy, serving children, or improving the livability of our community. To help, the City has provided a list of organizations already making a difference in our community.

“The Oakland Police Department will protect the safety of all residents,” said Interim Police Chief Howard Jordan. “However, we must remind you that we will not tolerate illegal behavior under any circumstances. Those who choose to carry out unlawful actions will be arrested.”

Ways You Can Help

This is a critical time of ever-shrinking resources and programs in our City when Oakland residents need these services the most. Oakland has a long history of supporting a wide variety of productive programs designed to help make the societal changes we all want to see in this great City. Choose one, and let’s work together to make a positive change for everyone.

Homeless Prevention and Support

Homeless Housing/Service Providers--The City funds 15 different local organizations that provide shelter, transitional housing, homeless prevention, rental assistance, legal services, mental health services and services for seniors, victims of domestic violence, youth and people with AIDS. For details, call Susan Shelton at sshelton@oaklandnet.com or call (510) 238-6186.

Foreclosure Prevention and Affordable Housing

Foreclosure Prevention--The City has been working with local community groups to develop a new foreclosure prevention loan fund that will help Oakland residents stay in their homes. The City’s new blighted foreclosed properties program holds banks accountable for cleaning up blighted properties they own. The City partners with the Urban Strategies Council in maintaining the Oakland Land Trust. The City invested funds to develop Oakland Community Land Trust, which purchases foreclosed and other vacant properties and rehabilitates them for low-income home ownership.

Affordable Housing—Oakland has a long history of working to provide a wide range of housing options to keep our city as economically diverse as possible. Most recently, the City created Oakland Green-for-all Model, using Federal stimulus dollars to retrofit homes owned by low-income residents for energy efficiency and creating a jobs pipeline for workers to implement the program. Call (510)238-6225 or email Lin Chin at lchin@oaklandnet.com

East Bay Housing Organizations—EBHO is a 27-year-old membership nonprofit organization dedicated to working with communities in Alameda and Contra Costa counties preserve, protect and expand affordable housing opportunities through education, advocacy, and coalition building. You can participate by donating, becoming a member and serving on one of their committees. www.ebho.org or call (510) 663-3830.

Oakland Community Organizations—OCO is a federation of congregations, schools, and allied community organizations, representing over 40,000 families in Oakland. Their current issues are:

- Quality Education
- Safe Communities
- Immigration Reform and Pathways to Citizenship
- Health Care Access
- Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

www.oaklandcommunity.org or call (510) 639-1444.

CausaJusta:Just Cause-- a multi-racial, grassroots organization building community leadership to achieve justice for low-income San Francisco and Oakland residents. With offices in East and West Oakland and in San Francisco's Mission District, CJJC is a force for justice and unity among Black and Brown communities. CJJC has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, from administrative to grassroots fund raising and community organization. www.cjjc.org or call Raven at (510) 763-5877 ext. 302.

Helping Schools and Youth

Oakland Literacy Coalition—represents 41 nonprofits working in Oakland schools to help pre-schoolers through elementary aged students improve their reading and writing skills. www.oaklandliteracycoalition.org/

Mayor's Mentoring Initiative—By promoting the need for mentors, close to 1000 adults have signed up with one of the 46 organizations that offer opportunities for volunteering or mentoring Oakland youth. www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/Mayor/

Volunteering in the Oakland Public Schools—At a time when local and state education funding is in peril and public schools face severe budget reductions volunteers are needed more than ever. Volunteer opportunities within OUSD's schools provide flexible ways for volunteers to commit as much time as they have available — from one to two hours to www.ousd.k12.ca.us/19941082618751677/

Helping Reduce Blight and Enhance Beautification

Oakland Parks Coalition—recruits and supports Park Stewards who help maintain Oakland's 120 parks. They also sponsor an annual clean-up project as well as the annual Love Your Parks Day survey. www.oaklandparkscoalition.org

Keep Oakland Beautiful and City Beautification Programs—sponsors local participation in the annual Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup, and promotes involvement with Earth Day, community clean ups, and the City's Adopt-A-Spot and Maintain-A-Drain programs. This year Oakland residents donated more than 30,000 volunteer hours to Oakland clean-up programs. The City publishes a monthly calendar of volunteer opportunities, available on the city website at <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/FE/s/VO/OAK030034>.

Sustainable Gardening and Community Engagement

City Slicker Farms—Since 2001, City Slicker Farms has been partnering with the West Oakland community to grow and distribute thousands of pounds of its own fresh produce. They offer a variety of administrative and urban agriculture opportunities for people of all skill levels. www.cityslickerfarms.org or call (510)763-4241.

Acta Non Verba, Youth Urban Farm Project—Their goal is to combat the growing disadvantage of young people of color not completing high school and attending a post secondary school by empowering them to achieve their goals through urban farming. They host a garden at Tassafaronga Recreation Center in East Oakland. Volunteer gardeners are always welcome. www.anyfarm.org or call (510) 972-3276.

Oakland Landscape Committee—Works with parents, teachers, local volunteer groups and the Youth Probation Training Academy Builds to create and maintain community and school gardens in Oakland. www.oaklandlandscapecommittee.org or call (510) 843-3828.

Urban Releaf—Since 1998, Urban Releaf has planted more than 12,000 trees in neighborhoods of Oakland and Richmond that have little greenery. Located in West Oakland, their program concentrates on working with at-risk youth organizations to promote and sustain community beautification projects. Volunteers are always needed. www.urbanreleaf.org or call (510) 601-9062.

Oakland Food Policy Council—a 21-seat council whose food policy work is about changing the "rules of the game" so that our food system will deliver *healthy food*, a *healthy environment*, a *healthy economy*, and *healthy choices* for ALL residents of Oakland. We are working to ensure that access to healthy, affordable food is a right and a reality for every Oakland resident. <http://www.oaklandfood.org/home> or call 510-654-4400 x233.

Phat Beets Produce—Aims to create a healthier, more equitable food system in North Oakland through providing affordable access to fresh produce, facilitating youth leadership in health and nutrition education, and connecting small farmers to urban communities via the creation of farm stands, farmers' markets, and urban youth market gardens. <http://www.phatbeetsproduce.org/>

Edible Demonstration Garden at the Gardens at Lake Merritt—The Green Heart of Oakland for Fifty Years. A seven-acre collection of themed gardens. The Gardens at Lake Merritt is located in the heart of Oakland at Lakeside Park.
<http://gardensatlakemerritt.org/>

Community Gardening Programs: The City has 9 community garden plots available to the public for \$30 per year. The City also partners with 4 nonprofit-run gardens. For details, contact Peter Collier at (510) 238-2197 or pcollier@oaklandnet.com.

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