

People's Programs Proposal for Partnership with the Omni Commons

Introduction

The Omni Commons Today:

Established in 2014, the Omni Commons (Omni) in Temescal/North Oakland has been a hub for collective organizations with community-focused missions and goals. As a sanctuary and source of empowerment amidst the challenges of capitalism, police violence, and gentrification, Omni envisions an equitable space deeply interwoven with the community's fabric. However, we have noticed that its ideals are currently hampered by facility issues, financial hurdles, an overstretched administration, and a noticeable void in local Black representation and leadership. Not only that, this drift could potentially culminate in Omni's potential sale to developers hungry for profit. Thus, reimagining the Omni's structural, cultural, and strategic dimensions becomes imperative to retain it as a supportive bedrock for radical community growth and transformation. We believe that People's Programs can play a vital role in the future of Omni Commons.

Why People's Programs:

People's Programs, operational since 2017, is a member-led New Afrikan, Pan-Afrikanist grassroots organization deeply rooted in communal and egalitarian practices. We build towards Black liberation by executing a range of community-centric programs in Oakland. As North Oakland, historically a Black neighborhood, grapples with gentrification, the Omni Commons' evolution into a community hub for Black residents will reinforce grassroots efforts and address community needs.

The Future Promise:

Welcoming People's Programs can transform Omni into a pulsating Black community center, where diverse collectives can roll out beneficial programs. We have a vast network within our community, financial acumen, professional excellence, and community rapport, which promises to infuse Omni with fresh vitality and direction.

The Proposal

In this spirit, People's Programs proposes a partnership with Omni Commons, fostering a symbiotic relationship between the Black community and Omni. We envision this as the "New Omni Commons" (NOC) and will stand as a collective emblem of the Black (New Afrikan) community, emphasizing democratic practices through collective programs and actions.

People's Programs is willing and has the financial backing to solve Omni Commons financial issues. We are aware of the outstanding debt, and a funder has shown willingness to make a donation, if the leadership of Omni is transitioned to People's Programs. We see this as an administration transition where we will take full responsibility for running the building's financials and administrative/operational logistics. While still having a democratic leadership council of tenant organizations.

Reimagining the Omni Commons

A transformation towards a Black Community Center will better resonate with and serve Oakland's demographic.

- The Omni Commons' existing Board and Delegates would collaborate closely with a new leadership committee in collaboration with People's Programs
- Regular political education sessions that center communal and egalitarian principles, and build towards equity and inclusion within the space. This will give a shared language and shared understanding so a truly safe and brave space can be created.
- Current member organizations will be granted leases at unchanged rates. Omni's revitalization will be a collective effort, involving member organizations in diverse working groups.
- The present paid staff at Omni will continue during the transition phase
- This transformative decision promises to rejuvenate Omni Commons and stands as a commitment to Oakland's Black community.

Member organizations will contribute to upkeep, financial support, programming, and collective decision-making.

- **Delegate Structure of Collective Organizations:** The existing delegate structure will be maintained, allowing collectives to democratically decide on their needs concerning the building and overall operations. Administrative body will join delegate meetings for smooth transition and elevation of concerns.
- **Commitment to Restorative Justice Practices:** Implement restorative justice practices to effectively address and resolve conflicts among delegates, as well as between the new leadership and member organizations.
 - Several members of People's Programs leadership team are trained in Restorative and Transformative Justice practices.
 - People's Programs has an established Restorative justice process that we will offer to collective members and the community at omni.
- **Fiscal Sponsored Projects:** Projects sponsored by Omni will collaborate with new leadership to reimagine collective partnerships that better serve the broader Oakland community.
- **Maintaining Relationships with Event Vendors:** Continue hosting previous events with an open and transparent booking process for the space, ensuring equitable access and use.

We recognize that Omni Collective has created conflict resolution and safe Space Policies. People's Programs' goal is to intertwine our internal processes for these areas with the standing policies as they have a similar goal - for omni commons to be a safe space for community members.

People's Programs Brings Instant Programs and Instant Community at Omni Commons:

Through our various successful community programs, we will provide a space to instantly transform Omni with community.

- **Free Breakfast Program:** serves over 70,000 meals.
- **Grocery Program:** Distributed 3,600+ food boxes to those in need.
- **Farm Program:** Harvested 1,400+ lbs. of fresh produce. Distributed to the community for free.
- **Mobile Health Clinic:** Offering free primary care to the residents of Oakland.
- **Poetry Jam:** monthly poetry jam for community
- **Live Podcasts**
- **Tenant Organizing**
- **Community Political Education**
- **Volunteer base of 300+**

Maintenance and Repairs

People's Programs is committed to elevating the physical state of Omni Commons to ensure it remains a safe, functional, and inviting space for all community activities. A primary focus of our maintenance plan is to address urgent infrastructure needs, starting with the roof situation. We propose a detailed inspection followed by necessary repairs or replacements.

We will also establish regular inspections to identify potential issues before they escalate. This includes checking electrical systems, plumbing, heating and cooling systems, and structural integrity. Preventive maintenance not only prolongs the life of the building but also ensures a consistently safe environment for community members.

People's Programs can successfully address the Financial Situation:

Over the years we've seen Omni Commons have to launch campaigns to save Omni. We have been made aware of the approaching the end of its second loan extension. Omni's potential financial salvation might lie in its strategic utilization of the ballroom and the "disco room" through a proficient events management team, ensuring a harmony between mission-driven and revenue-generating events. We also believe our community rapport can help address the financial situation as well. Largely because we can garner community support to keep Omni in the hands of the community.

Governance and Administration:

People's Programs has staff on hand with experience in governing and administering space. This can help alleviate the workload on the current administration's stretched resources. We can help build a standard operating procedure for the space that will allow all organizations housed in it to thrive. People's Programs is also well versed in conflict resolution and has folks trained in restorative justice. When conflicts do arise, we are committed to proactively addressing conflicts

through an equitable lens that ensures the safety of the New Omni Commons and all its members.

Mission Statement:

The NOC champions the ethos of a Black (New Afrikan) community center, emphasizing collective ownership and democratic practices that cater to the community's aspirations.

Points of Unity:

The New Omni Commons embodies the principles of:

- Self-determination for the Black (New Afrikan community) and all colonized peoples.
- Solidarity among colonized communities, promoting collective consciousness and action.
- Support for community organizations resonating with communal and egalitarian beliefs.
- Emphasis on collective economics and ownership.
- Unwavering accountability to the broader community.
- Championing the causes and interests of the oppressed and working-class communities.

Operating Principles:

- We use language that uplifts the humanity of ALL Afrikan people (including but not limited to: Trans folks, Queer folks, disabled folks, poor folks).
- What's learned here in the name of liberation is to be shared with the people, in the name of liberation.
- No cop zone!
- Keep a learning stance.
- Transparency - practice a high level of self-awareness. Communicate what you need & what you can do.
- Follow through on your commitment to the people & the work.
- Protect your comrades & the community
- Remember why you are here - to contribute to the liberation of ALL Afrikan people and thus all of humanity!
- LOVE - the goal is to heal, protect, & liberate ALL Afrikans (including self)!

Publicity and Marketing Initiative:

The unveiling of the new Black Community Center will permeate both local news channels and national Black entities. We have an expansive social media influence (10M+ impressions) and Hella Black Pod audience (35,000 plays monthly), which stands as a testament to our marketing prowess and their ability to galvanize community interest. Our imminent fundraising initiative, aimed at safeguarding and rejuvenating the building, will be rolled out in tandem with:

- A press conference headlined by Delency Parham, Abbas Muntaqim, Yemi Belachew and representatives from People's Programs, leveraging both local and national media networks.

- A robust multi-media blitz, heralding the reimagined leadership and positioning the Omni Commons as the seminal Black community nexus.
- Engaging philanthropic stalwarts, notably NFL and NBA luminaries, who have previously championed People's Programs, to rally behind this transformative community venture.

The objectives driving this campaign are twofold: firstly, to secure enough capital to validate the organization's viability to lenders, and secondly, to amass seed capital for reinvestment to the infrastructure of the space.

History of Event-Driven Revenue: We have a deep-rooted affiliation with the entertainment echelons in the Bay Area. Our "Tales of the Town" initiative, featuring Bay Area music heavyweights like G-Eazy, P-LO, and many more, stands as a testament to our expansive network. Our past events, be it the release party or the Def Jam Poetry event, consistently saw turnouts surpassing 1000 attendees. We not only have our finger on the pulse of our community; but we represent the very heartbeat of the town's cultural tapestry. This affinity will undeniably amplify Omni's prestige.

Debt/Asset Ratio: Omni is in a favorable position regarding this metric. The building, boasting an estimated value of \$4 million, is juxtaposed against an outstanding debt of 895,000. We are confident in our ability to manage this debt and to create a successful financial model to ensure Omni's sustainability for years to come.

Capital: Our proposal is backed by a commitment of immediate funds to the new administration. This is contingent upon the Omni board of delegates endorsing this proposal. People's Programs has also maintained programs for over 6 years in the community, and has a staunch track record of growing its operations. Omni doesn't just need a financial "benefactor" to come in, it needs an investment by a true community organization.

Conclusion:

In the shifting sands of time and circumstance, it is pivotal for organizations to evolve, not just to survive, but to thrive. People's Programs, through its history, commitment, and vision, has proven time and again its unwavering dedication to the community. Entrusting co-stewardship of the Omni Commons to People's Programs is not merely a change in leadership; **it's a promise of rejuvenation, responsibility, and a commitment to a brighter future.**

The case for People's Programs transcends mere numbers or logistical arrangements. Our foundation is built on community values, on the recognition that spaces like Omni Commons are not just buildings, but community bedrocks where futures are forged, and dreams are nurtured. Through our previous endeavors, our expansive network in the entertainment and social sectors, and our tangible track record of transformative programs all testify to our capabilities. More than that, they speak volumes about our hearts, passion, and relentless drive to usher in positive change.

However, change doesn't imply exclusion. As we stand on the cusp of this new chapter, we also acknowledge, value, and deeply respect the contributions of existing organizations that have been integral to Omni Commons. **Unity, after all, is our strength.** We fervently believe in collaboration, merging the old with the new, and blending wisdom with innovation. As co-stewards, our vision is to lead, partner, collaborate, and forge a cohesive, collective path forward. We are enthusiastic about working hand-in-hand with current organizations, channeling our combined strengths and visions to fortify Omni Commons, making it a vibrant, inclusive, and dynamic space for our community.

In entrusting People's Programs with co-leadership in Omni Commons, we will build together a brighter, collaborative, and community-centered future. Together, we can, and we will elevate the New Omni Commons to unprecedented heights, making it a beacon of hope, unity, and progress in Oakland.