



19-20

2020-2021

**San Francisco Youth Commission  
Budget and Policy Priorities**



Commissioner Obermeyer



Commissioner Marshall-Fricter



Commissioner Dong



Commissioner Cureton



Commissioner Quick



Vacant Seat



Commissioner Sadarangani



Commissioner Ty



Commissioner Ibarra



Commissioner Green



Commissioner Vigil



Commissioner Chin



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Commissioner Nassiri



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Commissioner Min



Commissioner Hirji

# SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH COMMISSION



@SFYOUTHCOM

2018 - 2019

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## **Who We Are**

The San Francisco Youth Commission was created by the voters under a 1995 amendment to the City Charter. Composed of 17 youth appointed each year from across San Francisco, the Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor on policies and law related to youth. The Commission also provides comment and recommendation on proposed legislation that affects youth before it can be voted on by the Board and approved or vetoed by the Mayor.



## **The Budget and Policy Priorities (BPPs)**

According to SF Charter Sec 4.12 “The purpose of the Commission is to collect all information relevant to advising the Board of Supervisors and Mayor on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the children and youth of San Francisco.” The Youth Commission’s Budget and Policy Priorities, known for short as its BPPs, are a set of recommendations that the Commission prepares and releases each year in a report to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors on the budgetary and policy needs of the youth in San Francisco. This report provides a basis upon which the Mayor and Board of Supervisors can make informed decisions about how to allocate the City’s \$11 billion annual budget in a manner that equitably serves San Francisco’s youth population. The Youth Commission’s BPPs can also be used to highlight policy changes that would benefit youth.

## **How You Can Join the Youth Commission**

Youth Commissioners are appointed annually, and can seek reappointment at the end of their term. Each of the eleven members of the Board of Supervisors appoints one commissioner to represent their district; the Mayor also appoints one commissioner to represent youth city-wide. The Mayor also appoints five more commissioners from underserved communities to ensure the diversity of the Commission. Regular terms begin in September of each year. The Youth Commission usually releases an application in March, and accepts submissions through early May, though this timeline can change from year to year, and vacancies occasionally occur at other times of the year. The Commission believes in representing the full diversity of youth across San Francisco, and welcomes any passionate and involved youth to apply. Interested youth should sign up for the Commission’s newsletter at <https://sfgov.org/youthcommission/connect-with-us>, to receive updates when the Commission begins accepting applications.

Dear Community,

The City of San Francisco is constantly evolving. From the recent legislation introduced to shut down the Youth Guidance Center to new wealth coming in from the recent abundance of technological IPOs, the City has changed from the one we even knew when we started our term as commissioners.

Similarly, the San Francisco Youth Commission has been growing and trying new things this year. We focused on revamping and improving the Youth Commission's presence in the community, as well as in City Hall. Commissioners were able to improve the budgeting process by passing the first ever Omnibus Preliminary Budget and Policy Priorities Resolution in January 2019, allowing us to make meaningful budget recommendations to the Police Commission, the Juvenile Probation Commission, and hold a youth specific budget hearing at the Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee in February 2019.

In addition to our chartered Youth Commission work, we have gone above and beyond in community outreach and advocacy. Youth Commissioners sponsored and participated in a multitude of community events, ranging from a District 4 Youth Forum, DCYF's Youth Advocacy Day, Mayor Town Hall gatherings, voter pre-registration trainings, a youth-SFPD roundtable, and a kick off Vote16 event. In addition, we revamped our outreach efforts by improving social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Our Youth Commission Profiles series highlighted the accomplishments and personality of Youth Commissioners, as well as sharing information about our community partners and their events. We also organized the first ever Youth Commission Open House for prospective Youth Commissioners, where we saw over 50 young people express interest in the work the Youth Commission does.

The Youth Commission's table of contents for this year's Budget and Policy Priorities Report is much shorter, but more specific, compared to past years. The Youth Commission has focused on integral issues to narrow our focus to improve our overall impact and efficiency. The Youth Commission is focused, and will continue to focus, on six long term priorities covering our primary issue areas. Youth specific housing issues and needs have been promised by the city, but not implemented, and Youth Commissioners continue to put pressure for tangible outcomes that are not just merely symbolic. The Youth Commission is committed to the Vote16 campaign for a second time, and are extremely motivated to get 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in local elections on the November 2020 ballot. Likewise, the Youth Commission is excited to be a part of the movement to shut down the Youth Guidance Center in San Francisco by December 2021. All of these campaigns need youth at the forefront, and we welcome and encourage youth to not only be involved, but to lead the way as these issues move forward.

As Chairs, we are immensely proud of how much growth has happened this year and we are all excited to see what the future holds for our Youth Commissioners and the youth of San Francisco. With that, we are thrilled to share with you the Youth Commission Budget and Policy Priorities for FY 2019-20 and 2020-21.



Bahlam Vigil, Chair



Josephine Cureton, Vice Chair

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## Budget Executive Summary

On Wednesday, February 13, 2019, Youth Commissioners presented their mid-annual **budget** priorities to the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Finance committee. This was a follow up to the Youth Commission's in [YC File No. 1819-AL-03](#) Omnibus Preliminary Budget Priorities Resolution (OPBP Resolution) that was unanimously passed on January 7, 2019.

- The YC is focused on obtaining funding for:
  1. **Re-entry programs and services** for youth exiting the justice system;
  2. **Substantial immediate funding to meet SF's 2015 goal of 400 units** of permanent supportive housing for TAY exiting homelessness; and
  3. Funding for TAY-specific housing/ programs/services **proportional** to the size of that population in the homeless population (20%), and oversight on the construction of a TAY Navigation Center.
- **Most importantly, YC opposes cuts to any program directed towards underserved youth and TAY populations.**

\***items bolded** and asterisked indicate priorities considered important and urgent by the Commission's relevant committees.

Civic Engagement Committee	
1) Create Fee Waivers through DCYF for the \$30 fee to obtain a California ID at the DMV	YC will continue to work with DCYF
Transformative Justice Committee	
2) Mandatory trainings for law enforcement officers in youth cognitive development and interactions with youth (SFPD)	<- Needs oversight and implementation.
3) Young Adult Court	YC supports continuation of the program (funded by an outside grant administered through DCYF)
*4) <b>Enhanced re-entry programs and services</b>	<b>Needs inter-department coordination and development of resources/services/programs</b>
5) Rehabilitation and healing for youth who have experienced police brutality	Needs departments to develop long-term solutions
Housing and Land Use Committee	
*6) <b>HSH needs to meet SF's 2015 goal of 400 units of permanent supportive housing for TAY exiting homelessness (188 completed, 25 under construction, 67 more to come online in the future)</b>	<- <b>Needs substantial funding in the immediate future, as four years past the 2015 deadline the City is less than halfway to 400 units online</b>
*7) <b>Funding for TAY-specific housing/ programs/services proportional to the size of that population in the homeless population (20%)</b>	<- <b>TAY experiencing homelessness are a severely underserved segment of the population</b>
8) Mental health/substance use treatment and counseling programs in supportive housing for TAY	YC urges HSH to coordinate with service providers and DPH to enhance and expand existing options
9) Equip TAY experiencing homelessness with first-aid, and increased support services for food and laundry	YC urges HSH to coordinate with service providers to enhance and expand existing options
10) Employment training and life-training for TAY exiting homelessness	Needs HSH to develop programs
11) More accessible drop-in centers with staff trained in youth development and to receive youth from marginalized communities	Needs HSH to coordinate with service providers

# PRIORITY 1: RE INTRODUCE A BALLOT MEASURE THAT WOULD LOWER THE SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL VOTING AGE FROM 18 to 16 (VOTE16 SF)

*What would the political landscape of San Francisco look like if 16 and 17 year olds were allowed to vote in municipal and school board elections?*

## INTRODUCTION

There is much tension and frustration regarding the current national political climate and the new awareness of youth voter education and advocacy, especially in regards to gun control, immigration issues, and attacks on communities of color and other marginalized communities. Vote16 SF is a measure to be placed on the 2020 ballot that would lower the San Francisco municipal voting age from 18 to 16.



*SF teens protest for the right to vote  
Source: San Francisco Youth Commission*

In 2016, this youth-led voting initiative turned into a national movement, with support from the majority of the Board of Supervisors. Vote16 was endorsed by numerous community based non-profits and San Francisco Democratic Clubs and held monthly stakeholder meetings with organizations including SFRising, Coleman Advocates, and Generation Citizen. Vote16 was placed on the San Francisco ballot in the 2016 elections as Proposition F; although it lost by only 2%, campaign efforts

have only picked up speed. In addition to having eyes on the 2020 election in San Francisco, Vote16 has inspired historic campaigns in cities across the country, including Sacramento, Washington D.C., Chicago, and Boulder. Outside of Vote16, many initiatives have appeared that promote youth involvement in voting: in 2016, the City of Berkeley passed legislation allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote in school board elections. Additionally, in 2015, Hyattsville, Maryland and Takoma Park, Maryland became the first two municipalities in the nation to lower their local voting age to 16 [1].

On February 11th, 2019, the Civic Engagement Committee of the Youth Commission held a stakeholder meeting to plan the first steps of an organizing, lobbying, and electoral strategy for the 2020 election. Representatives from SF Rising, Coleman Advocates, B MAGIC, the Vote16 National Advisory Board, the D6 Supervisor's office, Vota Ya, and Generation Citizen were in attendance and spoke at length about lessons learned during the 2016 campaign and ways to improve Vote16 2020's electoral prospects. At the time publishing this document, the Civic Engagement Committee is planning a second stakeholders meeting in June for Vote16 2020 to further discuss strategy and better outline a timeline for the organizing efforts of the campaign.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Despite the moves some municipalities have made to extend some form of political representation to young people, youth in San Francisco lack a direct say in the political process. Currently, young people in San Francisco are voiceless in local politics even as many of them drive, work, pay taxes, and regularly take part in political demonstrations. On February 22, 2018, a group of young activists went to Diane Feinstein's San Francisco Office to rally support for the "Green New Deal" in which Feinstein in a dismissive manner replied, "I've been doing this for 30 years, I know what I'm doing." When the activists told her she has to listen to them as they were the needs of constituents, Feinstein directly told the 16-year old, "Well, you didn't vote for me." While youth are trying to address lawmakers without the ability to vote, their voices are not taken seriously and elected officials fail to recognize their needs. That any society would demand tax payments on the labor of a people, but refuse them voting rights and a say in politics is fundamentally unjust. Taxation without representation is unjust whether it is adults or youth who are affected. Youth have the same right to representation and engagement in a democracy as adults, and because this right is not currently recognized by our city, action must be taken to grant suffrage to 16 and 17 year olds in San Francisco.

## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Placing Vote16 legislation on the ballot is a bold idea to strengthen our democracy that will allow eager youth to participate in the political process and have a direct say on the decisions that affect their lives. Youth have a stake in politics as they are affected by local political issues such as housing, employment initiatives, interactions with police, public transportation, etc. While the most reliable way for ordinary citizens to influence the government is through voting, Vote16 will allow youth that to have a say in the political conversation and garner attention of politicians. This will overall push government to pay attention to better serve youth needs. Strong participation from the public allows government to perform best and better serve its people. Youth today are eager to participate in the political process, with 1,713 youth pre-registered to vote in San Francisco. Enfranchising 16- and 17-year olds now will instill life-long voting habits and create a long-term increase in voter turnout, especially in local elections. Lowering the voting age is not only necessary in crucial decisions today but also to sustain the democratic process for future years to come.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

As of 2019, fifteen states — California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and the District of Columbia have legalized the pre-registration of 16 and 17 year-olds (please see Priority 2 for more information regarding the Youth Commission's commitment to voter pre-registration). Additionally, Vote16 is currently campaigning to lower the voting age in 10 different cities across the country, including Chicago and Sacramento.

In February 2019, Assemblymember Evan Low introduced ACA 8, an amendment to the California State Constitution extending to lower the voting age to 17. Significant as well, on March 6th, 2019, Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA 7) introduced an amendment to H.R. 1, or the For the People Act which would lower the national voting age to 16, and 135 Democratic Representatives vote to support it [2].

On May 6th, 2019, the Civic Engagement Committee of the SF Youth Commission wrote a resolution to officially support Vote16 2020, and the full Youth Commission voted in support of placing this initiative on the November 2020 ballot.

## RECENT UPDATES

In the wake of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida on February 14, 2018, which took the lives of 17 high school students and teachers, thousands of youth across the country have used their voices to protest mass-shootings in the US. The March For Our Lives, a student-organized demonstration that took place in Washington D.C. with over 800 sibling events across the country, had an estimated turnout of 800,000 people [3]. On Wednesday, March 11, 2018 tens of thousands of middle and high school students, including thousands from San Francisco [4], walked out of class for 17 minutes to honor the 17 victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting [5]. These walkouts, with or without the support of various school administrations [6], brought further awareness to the growing frustration of local and national youth.



SF High School students participate in the student-staged walkout regarding gun awareness at City Hall on March 11, 2018.

These protests have sparked awareness of the voice, opinion, and influence of the self-labeled “mass-shooting generation”, and many cities have found themselves amidst newly awakened conversations about the prospects of lowering their municipal voting age [7]. The City Council of Washington D.C., home to the March for Our Lives, reintroduced legislation regarding the voting rights of 16 and 17 year olds on Tuesday, April 10, 2018; as of that day, the legislation had the support of seven of the 13 city council members [8].

This year has brought a shifting landscape as well, as on March 14th, 2019, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA 12) publicly supported lowering the national voting age to 16, saying, “I think it's really important to capture kids when they're in high school, when they're interested in all of this, when they're learning about government, to be able to vote [9].”

This sentiment echoes a point long highlighted by supporters of Vote16: that encouraging young voters to take part in politics increases their participation in democracy throughout

SF High School students march in a student-led rally against climate change, on March 15, 2019. Similar rallies took place across the country and the world to protest adult inaction on Green Policy.  
Source: Wired [10]



the rest of their lives. Public buy-in by a Democratic leader on the national stage has shifted the landscape and made Vote16 2020 much more politically salient. Only a day later, on March 15th, 2019, youth from all around the world walked out of class to protest adult inaction on climate change. Green policy has been a major focus of the growing movement of politically active youth people sweeping the nation, and they have been some

of its most staunch advocates. At a time when adult political leaders are failing to take action, it appears more and more important to grant those willing to take up the fight for environmentally-conscious policy the right to a voice in our democracy.

Along with recent research and analysis that suggests that the younger people begin voting, the more likely they are to become life-long voters [11], many organizations, including the National Youth Rights Association [12], have been long-time backers of the right of 16- and 17- year olds to vote.

## CONCLUSION

Back to the initial question of “what would the political landscape of San Francisco look like if 16 and 17 year olds were allowed to vote in municipal and school board elections”? The San Francisco Youth Commission is concerned by what Mike Males wrote in his April 28, 2019 article “A Lower Voting Age Isn’t Just About Politics”. Males states “High school-age youth, 48 percent of whom are of color, are being governed by older, White-dominated generations whose attitudes remain mired in the pre-Civil-Rights era.” While this may not be the case with elected officials in San Francisco, it is certainly true for those who are at the polls; San Francisco’s electorate skews older and white, and voters age 18-29 have the lowest voter turn out. When adults are making decisions that would impact young people, via ballot measures, youth have the right to vote on these measures and lowering the voting age to 16 years old will create access to youth to have an impact at the legislative level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to support San Francisco in continuing to lead the country in the discussion about young voter engagement by indicating their continued support for lowering the municipal voting age in San Francisco to sixteen.

- ② **The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors write a resolution in support of the Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8 (ACA 8) which would lower the voting age from 18 years old to 17 years old in the state of CA.**
- ③ **Finally, as this policy body did in 2016, the San Francisco Youth Commission strongly urges the Board of Supervisors to sponsor the Vote16 efforts, by voting in favor to place legislation on the 2020 ballot so it can go before local voters.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Youth Commission greatly appreciates the support of the many organizations and groups that have taken a stake in pushing for Vote16. Thank you to Generation Citizen, SF Rising, Coleman Advocates, B MAGIC, Vota Ya, the Vote16 National Advisory Board, Supervisor Matt Haney's office, Supervisor Norman Yee, and Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer and her team.

We would also like to thank Supervisor Fewer, Supervisor Peskin, Supervisor Yee, Supervisor Walton, and Supervisor Haney for supporting Vote16 while on the ballot in 2016.

The meaningful work done towards youth engagement in politics would not be possible without Youth Commission Staff, and we'd especially like to thank Kiely Hosmon for her continuous support and hard work.

## PRIORITY 2: IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY PRE-REGISTERTING 16- AND 17-YEAR OLDS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Urging for the recognition of the importance of youth civic participation in San Francisco and funding of civic engagement initiatives, as well as supporting continued efforts to increase voter pre registration among 16- and 17- year olds by capitalizing on partnerships with the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, the Department of Elections, the San Francisco Board of Education, and the SFUSD Student Advisory Council.*

### INTRODUCTION

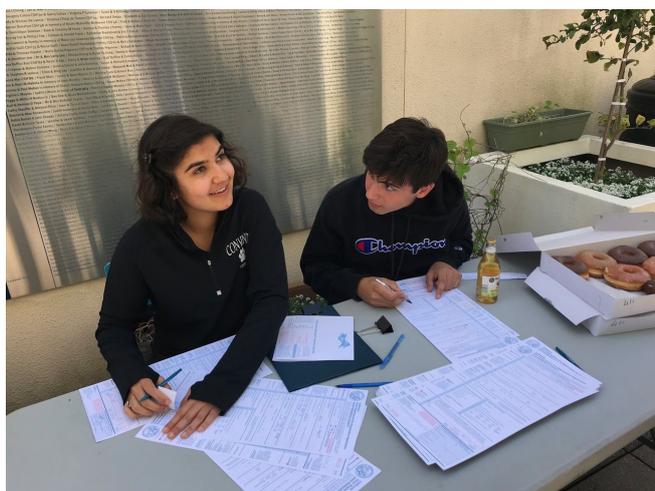
In response to numerous school shootings and weak policies regarding gun control, many young people have organized and mobilized their own student walkouts as well as attended many of the March for our Lives protests across America. Young people at these demonstrations have questioned why they cannot directly hold their elected officials accountable and why they do not have the right to vote for officials who can make changes that directly affect youth. These demonstrations have shown us that when there is a pressing issue affecting the lives of young people, youth have the knowledge and motivation to seek policy changes in order to improve the lives of not just the individual but also the lives of the youth in their communities. Since the very beginning, the Youth Commission has been dedicated to giving youth the resources they need for future success and the tools to contribute to policy change. We firmly believe that one of these resources is providing access to voter pre registration opportunities for 16- and 17- year olds in San Francisco. Youth today are eager to take part in the political process. Voter pre-registration and increasing civic engagement of young people can and will lead to a healthier democracy. Not only are youth mobilizing in favor of gun control reform, but San Francisco, in particular, is also leading the fight against President Trump, at a time when our president is continuously threatening our city, our values, and working to take away voting rights and many other civil liberties. In opposition to an attack on voting rights, the San Francisco Youth Commission has continued to pre-register 16- and 17- year olds to vote.

“ In 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 113 by Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) which allowed voter pre-registration beginning at age 16 once the California’s statewide voter registration database, VoteCal, was certified and California became the 21st state to allow pre-registration [1]. ”

Online registration is now available and as of February 2019, there are 142,717 youth pre registered in the state of California and 1,713 youth pre registered in San Francisco [2]. Strong voter turnout and voter engagement are at the core of a healthy democracy. All of this was accomplished by youth who believed in expanding the voting rights of 16- and 17- year olds. Data shows that there is a strong correlation between pre registering 16-

and 17- year olds in San Francisco and a continued trend of voting among transitional aged youth increasing [3]. With the recent demonstrations and protests, now more than ever, we believe that encouraging youth to participate in any type of voting or elections is extremely critical. Being pre registered to vote at 16- or 17- years old is one of the first steps in building a lifelong pattern civic engagement.

According to Path to the Polls, a report published in 2016 on pre registration in California, allowing 16- and 17- year olds to pre register to vote can increase young voter turnout by up to 13 percentage points and that people who vote at an early age are more likely to stay engaged and vote in later elections [4]. This data encourages us to wholeheartedly advocate for the process of pre registration and the importance it has for young people.



The Youth Commission has been increasing voter pre registration for 16- and 17- year olds for the past several years. In February 2017, the Civic Engagement Committee (CEC) met with the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) department heads where they agreed that their youth-serving agencies (after the 2017 request for proposal (RFP) process) should offer the option of pre registration to the youth they serve. In that same

month, CEC continued a partnership with the Department of Elections and received a presentation on the current numbers of 16- and 17- year olds pre-registered, a training on how to legally and ethically implement voter registration, and acquired special pre-registration forms that allowed Department of Elections to track the amount of youth the Youth Commission has pre-registered. In late April 2017, CEC met with the SFUSD Student Advisory Council (SAC) where they asked for feedback on increasing voter registration outreach at the district level as well as asking for support in implementing the Board of Education Resolution 162-23A3 -- Encouraging Students to Exercise Their Voting Rights [5]. In early May 2017, the committee attended a Board of Education Curriculum and Program Committee meeting with the Student Advisory Council and gave a presentation on the work that the CEC had done that year on pre registration, and gave suggestions on how to move this work forward at the school district level that the Student Advisory Council and the Youth Commission had brainstormed at the late April meeting.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to an increased demand by young people to be involved in the democratic process, have the opportunity to hold elected officials accountable, and be engaged earlier on in issues that directly impact youth, it is imperative that the City and County of San Francisco work in collaboration with the San Francisco Unified School District, as well as with local nonprofits and community based organizations, to create access to voter pre-

registration opportunities for 16- and 17- year olds.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION**

As part of this advocacy work, the Youth Commission has to make specific requests to partnering agencies, city departments, and organizations to help us achieve our goal of increasing the number of pre registered 16- and 17- year olds in San Francisco.

In January 2019, the CEC applied for a Youth Leadership Institute B.L.I.N.G. (Building Leaders in Innovative New Giving) grant. In February, the CEC was informed they were awarded a grant of \$5000 towards further pre registration efforts, and held the first pre registration training workshop in April 2019. The CEC is currently planning a second training session where we will train young people to act as “trainers” to go into their own schools and organizations to help increase pre-voter outreach. We hope that our trainings in 2019 will produce similar results to the outcome numbers of last term. The committee last term pre registered 23 sixteen year olds, 41 seventeen year olds as well as registering 11 eighteen year olds, and 7 people over the age of eighteen.



February 11, 2019 Stakeholder Meeting  
Source: Sophia Aeby [with permission]

During the 2018-2019 term, the CEC continues to focus on pre registration work. Throughout the year, stakeholder meetings were held with various groups and organizations such as Generation Citizen, B Magic, Coleman Advocates, SF Rising, the League of Women Voters, etc. CEC is reaching out to many community based organizations to bring in youth to pre register at their own schools. The Youth Commission also partnered with the Department of Children Youth and their Families (DCYF) to put on Youth Advocacy Day on April 25th, 2019. On this day, youth were welcomed to City Hall to attend issue-based panels, walk into the offices of the Board of Supervisors, and engage in meaningful dialogue about the issues that affect them and learn about how they can get politically involved. Finally, the Commission held the first ever Youth Commission Open House on May 2nd where CEC held a pre registration drive, reaching even more young people.

Knowing that data proves that young people are more likely to be civically involved the earlier they are involved in the process, will also help with our long term campaign of getting 16- and 17- year olds the right to vote (Vote16 2020) in local San Francisco elections. Please see Priority 1 for more information on this campaign.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

It is important to note that the Board of Education’s resolution from April 2016 has not been entirely implemented, and there are continued solutions to be enacted from this

existing piece of legislation. Such as:

- 1) “the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District, would encourage and support... the responsibility of sharing voting and proposition information to their school sites’ American Democracy classes...”
- 2) “That the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District requests that the Superintendent of Schools ensure that every American Democracy course offer a lesson on the requirements and process for registering to vote, which includes instruction on the requirements and process for pre-registration of students as young as 16 in accordance with California law, and which offers the necessary forms for voter registration or pre-registration, with information on where to return such forms...”
- 3) “The School District will partner with the County Registrar of Voters to develop information sheets outlining the legal requirements for voter registration and pre-registration, and partner with nonpartisan organizations that can offer voter registration drives at high school campuses at least once annually...”
- 4) “That the American Democracy course will include instruction on the platforms of political parties with significant (more than 5 percent) registration in San Francisco county and information on how to be an involved voter...”
- 5) “That voter registration activities at school should be structured so that students who do not meet the voter eligibility criteria in California law may still participate in class work and activities without disclosing their eligibility status...”

## Conclusion

Data proves that young people who pre-register to vote are more likely to show up to the polls and vote when they finally turn 18. By encouraging youth to start earlier and sooner in the voting process, will only increase voter engagement as they get older. San Francisco already has many organizations who are contributing to voter pre-registration work, along with the San Francisco Youth Commission. However, it is time to take symbolic efforts from the San Francisco Unified School District and actually implement them into action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

All of the above means nothing without the continued support from the City of San Francisco to engage San Francisco youth in the civic and voting process. The Youth Commission encourages the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to do everything in their power to assist the Youth Commission and their partners in the pre-registration of 16-17 year old youth in the city. The Youth Commission urges:

- 1** The Mayor's Office of Education continue to build bridges between the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Board of Education, to continue implementation of the Board of Education Resolution 162-23A3 -- "Encouraging Students to Exercise Their Voting Rights".
- 2** The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families require older youth-serving grantees to offer the option of pre registration to the youth they will work with. The Youth Commission thanks DCYF, especially Executive Director Maria Su, for their continued commitment to including pre registration efforts with their youth serving grantees.
- 3** The Board of Supervisors and the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families partner with the San Francisco Unified School District to support implementation of the required policies it previously committed to for the 2019-2020 School Year.
- 4** The Board of Supervisors continue to support the Department of Elections in their budget needs.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The meaningful work done to engage youth could not have been possible without the support of the Youth Leadership Institute's B.L.I.N.G. program for their generous financial contributions. Their monetary contribution was greater than our initial ask, for which we are extremely thankful and understand the importance they are emphasizing on this issue as well. The Youth Commission greatly appreciates the support and guidance that the Department of Elections has provided for young people on the issue of voter pre-registration. We look forward to future collaboration. We also would like to acknowledge our continued support from the Board of Supervisors, as well as from many independent city constituents, who have maintained awareness and investment in developing the representation of young people in San Francisco's electorate.

Thank you to Generation Citizen, B Magic, Coleman Advocates for Youth, SF Rising, and League of Women Voters to continue to be partners in increasing voter pre registration with 16- and 17- year olds.

# PRIORITY 3: INCREASE EMERGENCY SHELTER OPTIONS AND PERMANENT EXITS FROM HOMELESSNESS FOR TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH

*Complete the 2015 TAY Housing Plan, construct a TAY Navigation Center, and increase funding for supportive services targeting at-risk youth and youth experiencing homelessness.*

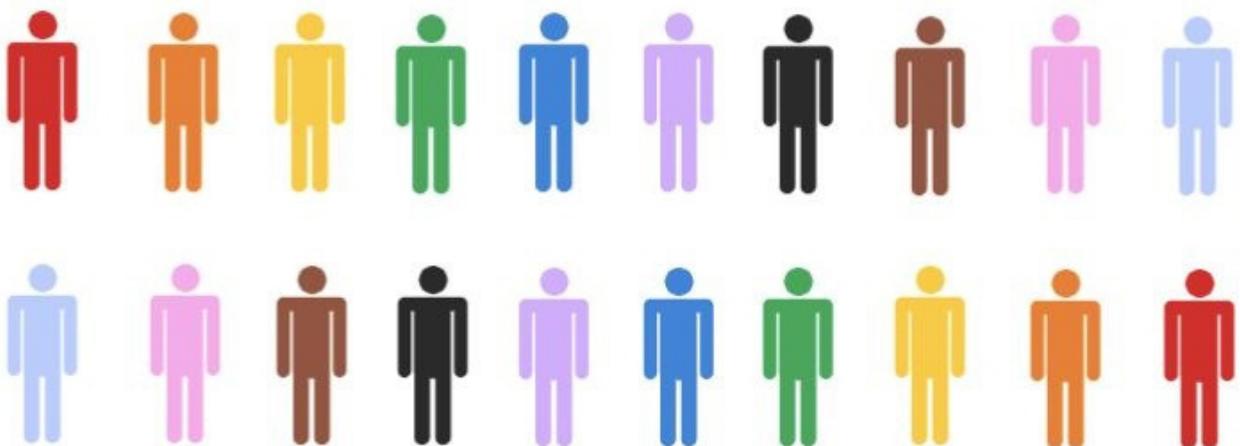
## INTRODUCTION



On the night of January 26, 2017, a total of

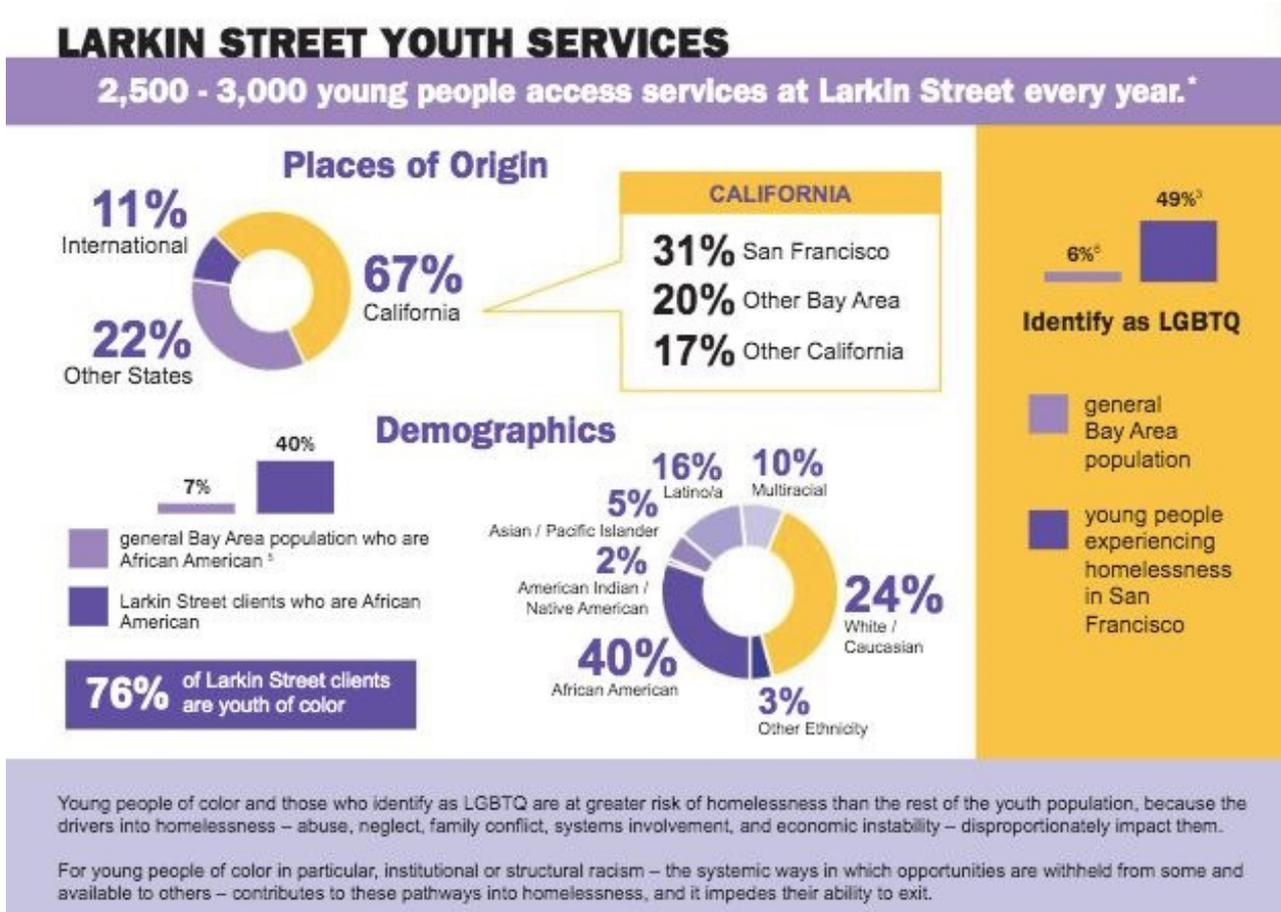
# 1,363

homeless unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth (TAY) were counted in the City of San Francisco.



On the night of January 26, 2017, a total of 7,499 homeless individuals were counted in the City of San Francisco. Of those, 1,363 were unaccompanied children and transitional-age youth (TAY), 20% of the entire homeless population. Of TAY, 49% identified as LGBTQ. Districts 5, 6, 8, 10 and Golden Gate Park counted the most TAY experiencing homelessness.

Recognizing and understanding that certain groups of young people are more likely to experience homelessness, can create better strategies to adequately address the youth homelessness crisis in San Francisco.



Youth are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness; they also disproportionately reflect otherwise vulnerable minorities--African American, Latinx, and LGBTQ notably.



KrAy LiT  
Age: 21  
Pronouns: It & He/Him/His

KrAy LiT is a youth who lives in San Francisco. It has had to make sacrifices between healthcare and food. KrAy has also experienced homelessness in San Francisco, having to learn

how to navigate homelessness and finding resources for itself while simultaneously advocating for itself and community stating “there was a lot of self-navigation and advocating for myself... deciding on putting health care over food or food over healthcare, trying to figure where I was gonna lay my head for the next few days. Going from couch to couch, from porch to porch, and park to park. It was a lot.” Furthermore, according to KrAy, it has noticed that many people working for organizations that provides resources to people facing homeless make assumptions about a person’s background and circumstances pushing people trying to find services away. KrAy stated “A lot of people just assume what a person is instead of asking and that would immediately draw a person away from wanting to getting services from that place. They’re probably not gonna want to come back or get any more services from there on.” KrAy LiT furthermore states its experiences about safety for queer and trans youth and the importance of that safety. “Safety for queer and trans youth matters to me because I know what it feels like to not be safe. I wouldn’t want somebody to go through what I did and relate to my experience of harm.” Lastly, KrAy ends the interview stating the need for youth to have a voice that encompasses issues of multiple generations and minorities. “Youth need a voice that speaks for more than just one generation, or for one minority, or for one kind of youth.”



**162%**

Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk of reporting homelessness.



**120%**

LGBTQ+ youth have a 120% higher risk of experiencing homelessness



**346%**

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk than their peers who completed high school

## CAUSES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

### Abuse, Neglect, and Family Conflict

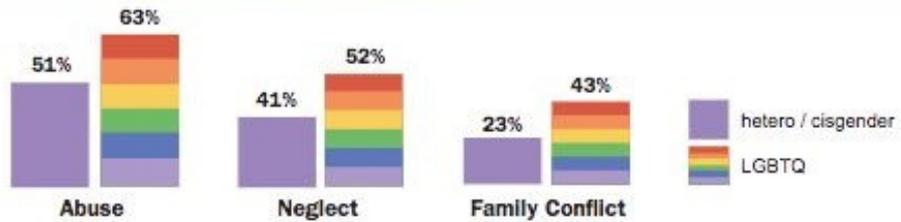
Young people often report abuse and conflict with a parent or guardian as contributing to their homelessness.

**88%** of young people report they experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse prior to becoming homeless <sup>7</sup>



**51%** of young people report they became homeless initially because they were asked to leave home <sup>8</sup>

These issues are particularly acute for young people who identify as LGBTQ.



### Justice/Foster Systems Involvement

A disproportionate number of young people experiencing homelessness have a history of involvement in the child welfare system.

The relationship is complex – children whose parents have experienced homelessness are more likely to enter the child welfare system, and having a history of involvement in this system makes one more likely to experience homelessness later.<sup>9</sup>

Involvement in the justice system can also increase a young person's likelihood of becoming homeless, and, in turn, many laws disproportionately affect young people experiencing homelessness (such as truancy, panhandling, sitting or sleeping in public places), making them more likely to enter the justice system.<sup>11</sup>

#### Prior involvement in the foster care system



**25%** of young people at Larkin Street report an arrest history



**17 years old** = average age of first involvement with the justice system

### Economic Instability

Bay Area housing costs are among the highest in the country. This affordability crisis means that many families are precariously housed and at greater risk for homelessness. Economic instability at the family level often contributes to cycles of entrenched, intergenerational poverty as well.



**16%** of young people in San Francisco reported job loss as a primary cause of their homelessness <sup>3</sup>

**36%** of young people in San Francisco report financial issues in general contributed to their homelessness <sup>3</sup>



Unemployment compounds the impacts of this crisis. While improvements in labor market participation have been made since the 2008 economic recession, just over half of young adults ages 18 to 24 are currently employed.

Economic instability also disproportionately impacts youth of color and their families.

Young African American men are **2x** as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts <sup>12</sup>

Median income for Latinos is just **73%** of the Bay Area average <sup>13</sup>

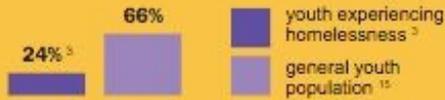
Median income for African Americans is just **48%** of the Bay Area average <sup>13</sup>

## Disconnection from Education and Employment

Histories of abuse, neglect, and trauma can compound young people's disconnection from mainstream education and employment systems. Factors such as poverty and poor health also create profound barriers to re-engaging, pushing young people further from the pathways that are meant to help them make a positive transition to adulthood and employment.

Many young people experiencing homelessness have little or no formal work experience. The costs of early periods of unemployment are significant and long-term, leading to fewer opportunities to advance and lower lifetime wages.<sup>12</sup>

### Currently employed



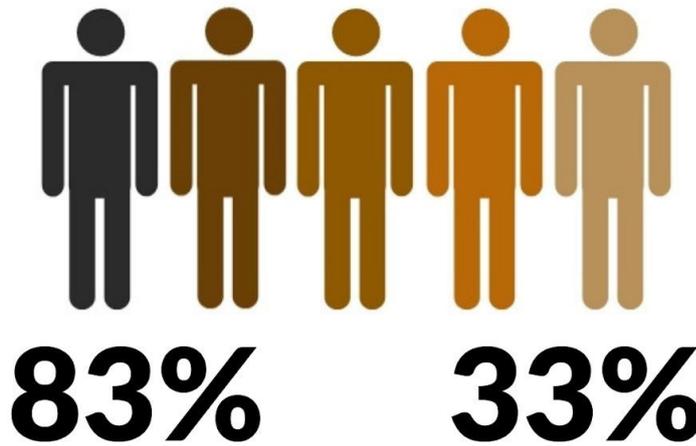
Education is key to career-track employment, however, most homeless youth are disconnected from formal educational systems and have been off-track educationally for an extended period of time.

### Average monthly income



Research has shown that the impacts of homelessness on educational attainment linger long after an individual is stably-housed and reconnected to education.<sup>16</sup>

### Completed high school or GED<sup>3</sup>

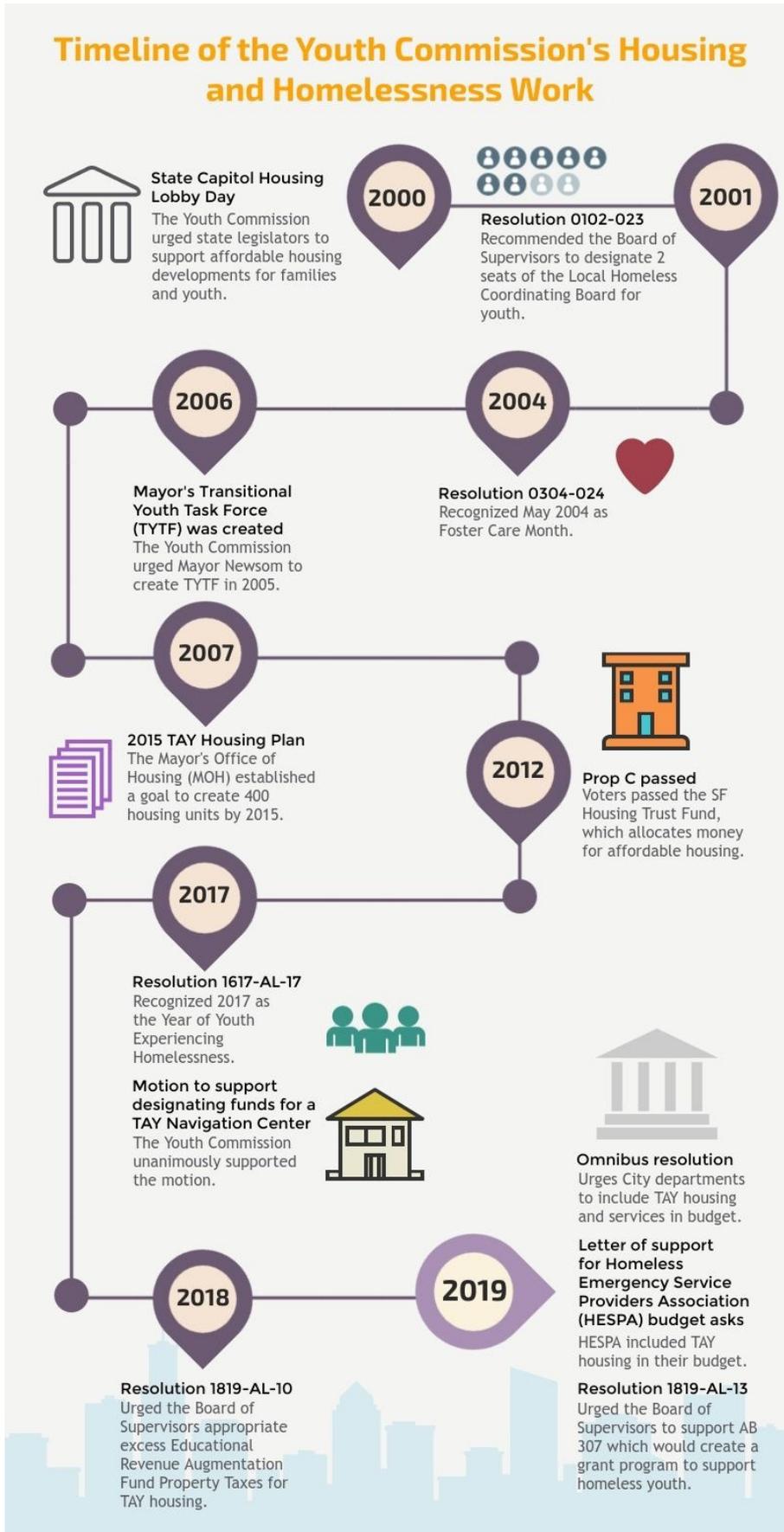


African American youth had an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk of reporting homelessness

## History

The Youth Commission has made many recommendations in the past 12 years relating to preventing and solving youth homelessness in San Francisco.



# THE YOUTH COMMISSION'S PAST BUDGET & POLICY PRIORITIES

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**2006-07**

Allocate funding through DCYF, MOH, and Department of Human Services to provide a full complement of developmentally appropriate housing options for youth that focus on safety, stability, affordability, and transitions to prevent precarious housing or homelessness, with special focus on the LGBTQQ youth community.

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**2011-12**

Support internal systems-building that is currently underway; follow through on 2007 Citywide goals and subsequent Department-specific targets

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**2012-13**

Fully Fund the Plan for Affordable Housing for Transitional Age Youth

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**2013-14**

Fully Fund the Plan for Affordable Housing for Transitional Age Youth and Expand Supports for TAY Seeking Housing

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**2014-15**

Declare 2015 as the Year of Recognizing Homeless Youth

Fully Fund the Plan for Affordable Housing for Transitional Age Youth

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**2015-16**

Adopt a Formal Definition of Family Housing and Prioritize Suitable Housing For Families with Dependents

Increase Emergency Shelter Options and Permanent Exits From Homelessness For Transitional Age Youth

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**2016-17**

Increase Emergency Shelter Options and Permanent Exits from Homelessness for Transitional Age Youth

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**2017-18**

Increase Emergency Shelter Options and Permanent Exits from Homelessness for Transitional Age Youth

## Problem Statement

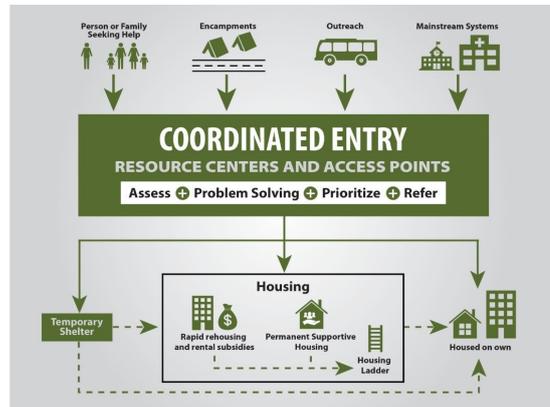
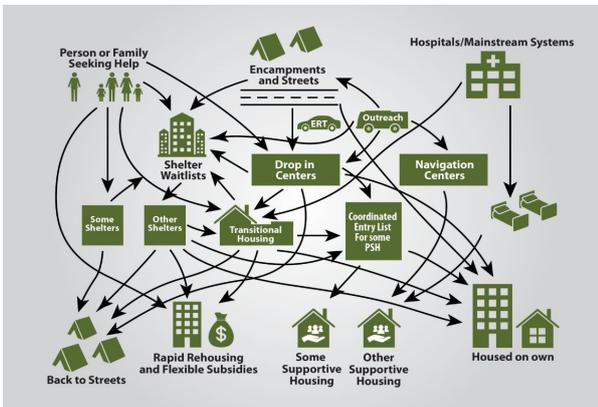
Existing community-based organizations and nonprofits on the frontline of providing services to TAY experiencing homelessness are currently severely overstretched. These frontline workers include, but are not limited to: Larkin Street Youth Services, Huckleberry Youth Programs, Homeless Youth Alliance, 3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic, LYRIC, and the San Francisco LGBT Center. As a result, many of those vulnerable youth have difficulty navigating the supportive system, otherwise known as Coordinated Entry for Youth.



The 6 Access Points for Youth Coordinated Entry: Larkin Street Youth Services, Homeless Youth Alliance, San Francisco LGBT Center, LYRIC, Huckleberry Youth Programs, and 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic

Through HSH, there has been an effort to coordinate the City’s resources for youth experiencing homelessness and youth-specific Access Points. “Access Points are localized community gateways into San Francisco’s Homelessness Response System, which is the overall system of programs and housing opportunities for youth

ages 18-24 experiencing homelessness,” according to the HSH Coordinated Entry for Youth page. These organizations have served high numbers of youth in the City; for example, Larkin Street Youth Services has served over 75,000 youth over the past 35 years. However, the current large number of youth and TAY at-risk of, or experiencing homelessness has made reaching all those youth and TAY more difficult if not impossible.



Furthermore, the City is behind on its goals for serving this population, which needs specific, targeted services due to its members’ young age. Some examples are education, job training and supportive housing. In 2016, the Board of Supervisors mandated that a TAY Navigation Center be established within the following two years. The Navigation Center Model targets unsheltered adults, those in encampments, and those who have priority housing status. Unlike the traditional shelter model, Navigation Centers are welcoming, service-rich, highly-staffed environments, which since 2015 have proven successful in aiding solutions to homelessness. Nearly half of the 3, 606 unique individuals served by navigation centers have successfully exited from homelessness [1].

As of May 2019, HSH has not identified a site on which it will proceed with the construction of such a navigation center. The City has also still not completed the 2015 TAY Housing Plan (Mayor's plan to create 400 units, which mandated opening 400 units of permanent supportive housing for TAY by 2015. As of 2019, four years late, approximately 200 of those units are in use.

Meanwhile, youth and TAY continue to be disproportionately represented in the population experiencing homelessness, while successive budgets have left them without the support they need. Swift and decisive action is needed to succeed in allowing these vulnerable youth and TAY to exit homelessness into a truly supportive system.

### **Myths and Stereotypes Debunked**

With TAY homelessness, like any other issue, there are many misconceptions. Some common stereotypes are as follows:

- TAY choose to become homeless;
- TAY experiencing homelessness are lazy;
- There are plenty of services for homeless TAY; and
- Homeless TAY should just find a job and be done with homelessness.

All of the above stereotypes are false. TAY do not simply choose to become homeless. Some become homeless because of circumstances outside of their control. Others are faced with continuing abuse, neglect or unsafe conditions at home that requires leaving their homes. TAY who experience homeless are not lazy: often they are actively searching for shelter or services. And speaking of services, there aren't many services available to TAY. Many shelters or service providers cater exclusively to the adult demographic, even though TAY make up a significant amount of the homeless population. This disparity leaves TAY looking for services that may not even be there. A lack of adequate resources leaves TAY unable to learn how to apply for a job. TAY also undergo difficulty finding food and looking for stable housing, taking time away from getting a job. What people think is a universe away from the actual truth.

**Proposed Solution**

<b>Big Problems</b>	<b>“Official” Solutions</b>	<b>Transformative Approaches</b>
<p>TAY experiencing homelessness often face violence and discrimination from partners, family members, community members, employers, law enforcement, and institutional officials.</p>	<p>Collect statistics on rates of violence and discrimination; collaborate with local and federal law enforcement to prosecute hate violence and domestic violence.</p>	<p>Build community relationships and infrastructure to support the healing and transformation of people who have been impacted by interpersonal and intergenerational violence; addressing root causes including police violence, imprisonment, poverty, immigration policies, and lack of adequate healthcare and housing infrastructure and services.</p>
<p>TAY get stuck in homelessness due to a lack of access to TAY-specific supportive housing offering resources and support for TAY transitioning out of homeless and into mainstream society who also face obstacles such as physical or mental health issues.</p>	<p>HSH spends expenditures in funding organizations such as the Salvation Army who provide resources and shelter to people experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Direct expenditures from November 2018 Proposition C toward mental health and other supportive services offered by organizations such as Larkin and spend expenditures in creating TAY supportive housing which offers onsite services such as mental health service providers or workforce related providers and finally restructuring HSH and other homeless related government institutions in order to be as humanly efficient as possible.</p>
<p>TAY Youth facing homelessness currently lack a navigation center that is specific to the TAY homeless population. Furthermore homeless TAY youth face countless obstacles to obtaining a shelter bed, or even to gaining access to housing or moving.</p>	<p>Build more shelters with larger bed capacity in order to get more people temporarily housed while they try to find resources and a permanent housing unit through services offered by the city and county of San Francisco and associated non-profits.</p>	<p>Build a TAY Navigation center preferably in Districts 5 and/or 8 which face the highest concentration of TAY in San Francisco, in order to streamline services and housing opportunities to prevent homeless TAY from falling through the institutional cracks.</p>

Various community advocates have come forward with policy and budget proposals to bridge the challenges facing the population of TAY experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. Notably, the San Francisco Homeless Emergency Service Providers Association (HESPA) presented a budget proposal to the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Finance Committee on at its April 17, 2019 policy hearing on housing and homelessness.

This proposal recommended:

- Expanding the Emergency Housing Flexible Fund for TAY (\$151,800 in FYs 2019/20 and 2020/21 each);
- Establishing a Multi-Service Center for Youth at 730 Stanyan Street (\$746,580 in FY 2019-2020);
- Expanding workforce development services for homeless youth, families and individuals (\$725,075 in FYs 2019/20 and 2020/21 each);
- Funding a TAY System of Care Psychiatrist (\$377,982 in FYs 2019/20 and 2020/21 each) and Youth Access Point Clinicians (\$206,172 in FYs 2019/20 and 2020/21 each) to reach TAY experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

On May 6, 2019, the Youth Commission voted unanimously to support HESPA's budget proposal.

The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Youth Commission heard presentations in fall of 2018 from departments, such as HSH and the Planning Department, and from various community groups, notably the Coalition on Homelessness and Larkin Street Services' Youth Advisory Board, and has compiled the following list of recommendations for the upcoming fiscal years.

### Conclusion

As stated, 1,363 TAY have been identified as experiencing homelessness, with half of that population identifying as LGBTQ. Many of these TAY have experienced early tremendous hardship, such as abuse and extreme poverty, and have thus been rendered helpless without shelter. TAY have fallen behind the average statistics in educational and work opportunities for general youth. KrAy provided first hand insight as to the insecurities that TAY have to experience every day of their lives. A statistic showed that underserved minorities had a 33% risk increase in homelessness while African-Americans had a 83% risk increase. This speaks to the severe insecurity that minorities face when lacking adequate support. Without the City to provide support, TAY have been isolated and disconnected from the basic needs that the average resident has had.

Without these basic needs, it is almost impossible for TAY to acquire the same opportunities and tools to succeed. Moreover, concerns for TAY were brought to light and promises were made by the City since 2000 to address these issues. However, **for almost two decades, the City has been unable to fulfill its quotas** and the number of TAY experiencing homelessness has spiked in proportion to the sudden growth of the City.

Despite the lack of support, blame for the growing homeless TAY population has been put on TAY themselves which has further inhibited the City's ability to best represent them. No TAY and no person intentionally wants to constantly live in the same circumstances as KrAy has described. No TAY wishes to feel the same isolation and abandonment, that they experienced in their childhoods, for the rest of their lives. Even with stable jobs, current residents of San Francisco have a difficult time finding permanent housing which only speaks to the difficulties TAY experience. With the proper support and care, TAY have all the ability to succeed as any other youth in the city. This has been clearly demonstrated by the many Community Based Organizations who have overstretched themselves trying to provide that support that the City hasn't. As said, these Community Based Organizations are the frontline of that support and the City must increase its support for those organizations if those organizations are to continue enabling homeless TAY to succeed.

Both completing the 2015 TAY Housing Plan and establishing a TAY Navigation Center are long overdue: **the Youth Commission recommends swift action and a targeted spike in funding to complete these goals that the City has already committed to in the next two fiscal years.**

Moving forward, the Youth Commission hopes that the City will take a more proactive role in providing more than adequate services to those most in need.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Complete the 2015 TAY Housing Plan.** The Youth Commission urges HSH to fully fund the identification of the remaining 120 units to reach the goal of 400 units of permanent supportive housing for TAY. At the Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee's April 17, 2019 policy hearing on housing and homelessness, Director of HSH Jeff Kositsky highlighted his department's goal of completing 700 units of permanent supportive housing in the next two fiscal years. HSH should dedicate a minimum of 120 of those units to fulfill the City's delayed commitment to vulnerable youth in San Francisco.
- 2 **Commit to a new 2025 TAY Housing Plan.** While completing the 2015 TAY Housing Plan goal of 400 units of permanent supportive housing for TAY is an essential first step, the City cannot stop at 400 units. HSH should conduct research and commit to a goal for permanent supportive housing units for TAY sufficient to house all TAY experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.
- 3 **Construct a TAY Navigation Center.** The Board of Supervisors has already allocated funding for a TAY Navigation Center. However, HSH has not yet identified a site for this facility. A TAY Navigation Center will allow TAY to access services and address their unmet needs in a supportive environment.

- 4 **Increase Supportive Services for TAY.** TAY who are experiencing or who have experienced the supportive system report that necessary improvements are needed in support services for food and laundry, in addition to increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment and counseling programs, particularly targeting TAY experiencing homelessness or living in supportive housing. Funding should be allocated for equipping TAY experiencing homelessness with first-aid survival resources.
- 5 **Fund TAY Programs proportionally to TAY population.** TAY are currently underserved in the HSH budget: the Youth Commission recommends including funding for TAY programs proportionally to the size of that population (20%) within the larger population experiencing homelessness in all future budgets.

### Acknowledgments

The Youth Commission would like to thank the Youth Policy Advising Committee (YPAC) and Ali Schlageter, Youth Program Manager at HSH for providing valuable insight into the existing and forthcoming City programs aimed at supporting youth and TAY experiencing homelessness. The Youth Commission would also like to thank Larkin Street Youth



Services' Youth Advisory Board for engaging with the Commission on the basic conditions and needs of youth and TAY experiencing homelessness or navigating supportive system in San Francisco.

Finally, the Housing and Land Use Committee would like to thank the committee staff, Naomi Fierro, for her invaluable contributions to realizing this effort.

## PRIORITY 4: CONTINUE TO EXPAND ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR YOUTH AND TAY AND URGING THE CLOSURE OF JUVENILE HALL AND 850 BRYANT

*The Youth Commission supports the closure of 850 Bryant and Juvenile Hall, and the freedom of young people from incarceration. Expansion of wrap-around services that provide opportunities for rehabilitative and restorative justice. Healing is crucial to those who have come into contact with the legal system and urge for re-entry services that support generational equity.*

### Introduction

“A philosophy of care with defined planning process used to build constructive relationships and support networks among students and youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD) and their families. It is community based, culturally relevant, individualized, strength based, and family centered”. Such services include:

Increasing Transitional Aged Youth Access points, childcare, employment, mental health, and chemical dependency training and rehabilitation services. Adopting alternative forms of stress relief, artistic outlets, and therapies that are culturally relevant to the underserved population of young people.

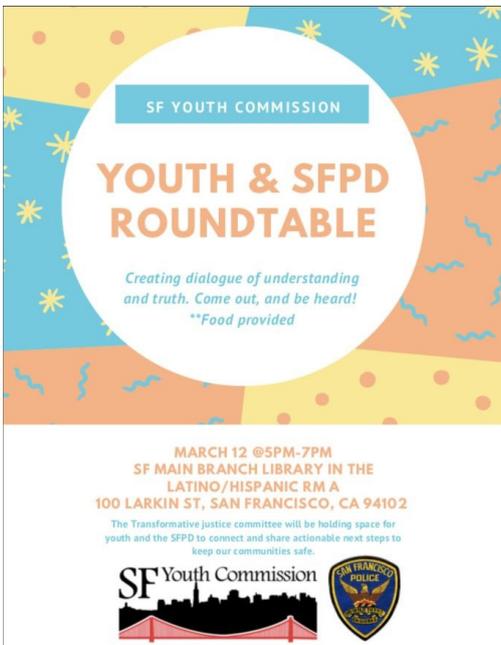


The Transformative Justice Committee advocates for amplifying the voices their peers who have been system impacted, under resourced, and disenfranchised. When a young person is unable to fulfill their basic physiological needs of food, water, and shelter - they are at a greater risk of coming into contact with the legal system. Therefore, creating a pipeline of incarceration to the under-resources and under supported young people of San Francisco. This is why the Youth Commission supports the closure of 850 Bryant and Juvenile Hall, and in replacement build on alternatives to incarceration. In its place create a community health center that builds on supportive care and wrap around services rooted in the community that is people centered.

### History

“In the mid-60s, child advocate Jean Jacobs organizes the Citizen for Juvenile Justice in her dining room after finding a 3 year old in an isolation cell at SF’s juvenile hall. Across the nation, juvenile justice is an evolving process. It is not until 1967 that the Supreme Court recognizes children have a right to due process. 1967 Huckleberry House opens. Jacobs persuades San Francisco to develop a network of community based homes for abused and neglected children and having youth arrested for truancy or running away treated in the community rather than being jailed. In their first year of operation they provide support for over 600 youth. 1969 After providing informal detention alternatives

for system involved youth, Jim McQueen and Tommie Kim create the Real Alternatives Program (RAP) to serve as a place where judges could send youth as an alternative to detention.” Alternatives to incarceration work and one of the Youth Commission’s chief priorities over the last decade have been to hold city governments accountable to fund alternatives. In San Francisco, the Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) population of 18-25 year olds make up 25% of the overall jail population, a disproportionate number of those incarcerated in county jails. Yet crime rates are continuously decreasing.



On March of 2019, the Transformative Justice committee held space to discuss police-youth relations with the intention to listen and come up with solutions in the name of the young people of San Francisco. The Youth-Police roundtable heard from intersectional, intergenerational voices. Some of which were young people from Project WHAT!, The Young Women’s Freedom Center, system impacted and targeted-youth, folks incarcerated as youth and recently reentered communities, elders of the community, and law enforcement administrators and school resource officers. Common themes were to nurture a young person with protective factors such as consistent caring adults education and job training programs that address each communities specific needs

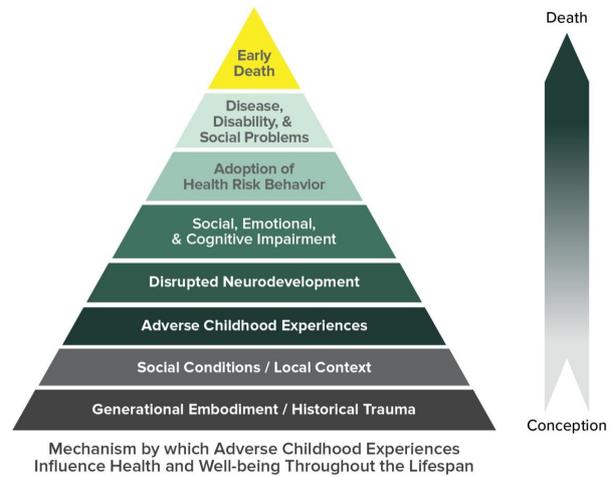
and strengths. Programs that are family centered and provide therapeutic resources to offset high ACE (adverse childhood experiences) scores and educated the community on social-emotional coping strategies when in contact with police. Intergenerational healing and building trust were also major themes.

To address the healing, we must also recognize the initial hurt and recognize where we, as a society, have failed young people and the communities they come from. We must listen to the impacted, change policy and work interpersonally to create safety, respect, and healing. Contributing factors for the likelihood of a young person committing a crime based on the US Dept of Justice states, “Researchers have concluded that there is no single path to delinquency and note that the presence of several risk factors often increases a youth’s chance of offending. Studies also point to the interaction of risk factors, the multiplicative effect when several risk factors are present, and how certain protective factors may work to offset risk factors.” Risk factors are defined “as an attribute, characteristic or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury”. We can counteract these risk factors by broadening a young person’s protective factors. Protective factors “are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities”. An example of a protective factor is having people who look like you and come from the same community mentor and

provide forms of accountability and educational/career pathways. “Takes the hood to save the hood”- United Playaz.

### Problem Statement

The closure of 850 Bryant and Juvenile Hall is about reimagining a prison and jail free San Francisco. This is important to young people of San Francisco because incarceration is not rehabilitation. Quite the opposite, when a young person enters Juvenile Hall they are being conditioned for an institutionalized mindset and sets of behaviors that promote recidivism. The matter is urgent due to the nature of a young person with unmet needs in conjunction with interpersonal and institutional harm. By not addressing the underlying causes of “why”, we are telling us and our families that we don’t matter.



The Youth Commission’s position is based, in part, on a commitment to family unity, and findings that San Francisco had an estimated 17,993 children with an incarcerated parent in 2010. A 2015 survey of parents in SF county jails found that 1,200 children had a parent in a San Francisco County jail on any single given day, and that a majority of those incarcerated are parents. Youth Commissioners also learned that 88% of people detained in county jails have not been sentenced and have not gone to trial. However, the Youth Commission’s opposition to jail construction was also based in large part on the knowledge that a sizable number of people in San Francisco’s county jails are still youth themselves.

Prison environments are no place for young, growing minds to develop and can negatively impact their mental growth. Research has demonstrated that young people’s brains are still developing until the age of 25 which leaves them vulnerable to develop mental health related illnesses [1]. 22% of San Francisco’s adult jail system cases are Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) [2], yet TAY are only 8% of San Francisco’s population. San Francisco’s incarcerated population is disproportionately made up of African American and Latinx youth [3]. San Francisco has prided itself on its historic values of diversity and equity, and yet, in 2015, African Americans represented over 55% of the incarcerated population, while only comprising 5.3% of the overall population [4]. 85% of people incarcerated in San Francisco county jails are awaiting trial and have not been convicted. 85% of beds occupied are pretrial; most held because they cannot afford bail. 56% are African American, approximately 70% are people of color and 25% are homeless.

San Francisco Juvenile Hall is under-filled, overfunded, and not a restorative space for

youth. Over the last decade, youth crime has steadily decreased, reaching record lows across the country, including in San Francisco. Currently, over 70 percent of San Francisco’s Juvenile Hall sits empty, with the city spending nearly \$270,000 to keep one young person behind bars each year. In January, for example, there were 45 children detained in the Hall, filling only 30 percent of its 150 beds, with nearly 70 percent of those detained being held for a non-violent offense. The city’s approach also disproportionately affects African American youth, despite the fact that African Americans make up a dwindling 3% percentage of San Francisco’s population.

Ethnicity	18-25	26-34	35-45	46-64	65+	Total
Black	135,578	119,193	86,678	103,220	2,195	446,862
White	28,243	50,603	49,543	45,079	5,777	179,246
Hispanic	53,009	35,548	21,182	15,514	1,411	126,665
Filipino	4,576	4,769	4,559	1,592	8	15,504
Chinese	925	2,836	1,824	6,959	314	12,859
Other	4,511	2,580	2,566	1,812	645	12,113
Less than 1%	819	5,637	2,322	912	9	9,699
Samoan	4,698	1,678	2,762	225		9,363
Other Asian	759	4,809	2,899	558	153	9,178
Vietnamese	281	2,225	1,654	1,979	4	6,142
NULL	926	1,700	2,253	883	156	5,919
American Indian	1,044	1,739	1,146	404	8	4,340
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,371</b>	<b>233,315</b>	<b>179,388</b>	<b>179,136</b>	<b>10,680</b>	<b>837,890</b>

Figure A (Jail Bed Days by Age and Ethnicity; Source: Work Group to Re-envision the Jail Replacement Project Issue Brief: Data Review)

The City is criminalizing young intersectional POC, unhoused and cannot afford bail. “According to a study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brown University, incarcerating young people increases the likelihood that they’ll go to jail by 23 percent.” Based on CDC’s study on Adverse Childhood Experiences was “one of the

largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and later-life health and well being”. High ACE scores are extremely common across gender, class and that is why wrap-around services to aid in our success. Out-of-detention alternatives and Restorative Justice efforts in the juvenile system have reduced the average daily incarcerated population amongst juveniles by over 37% from 2011 to 2015 [5]. In January of 2017, the State of New Jersey recently eliminated its cash bail system to address these disparities, resulting in a 20% decrease in its incarcerated population.

Previous Restorative Justice and collaborative court models policy enacted to support youth and TAY have demonstrated reduced costs and recidivism rates. The Young Adult Court, which began in 2015, has closed its doors to new cases three times in the last year due to capacity, and is expected to be immediately full again after expanding its services to a second court day in 2018. The Youth Commission unequivocally supports San Francisco youth who are involved in

RISK FACTORS <small>Risk factors increase the likelihood young people will develop health and social problems.</small>	DOMAIN	PROTECTIVE FACTORS <small>Protective factors help buffer young people with high levels of risk factors from developing health and social problems.</small>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low community attachment</li> <li>• Community disorganisation</li> <li>• Community transitions and mobility</li> <li>• Personal transitions and mobility</li> <li>• Laws and norms favourable to drug use</li> <li>• Perceived availability of drugs</li> <li>• Economic disadvantage (not measured in youth survey)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for prosocial involvement in the community</li> <li>• Recognition of prosocial involvement</li> <li>• Exposure to evidence-based programs and strategies (some are measured in youth survey)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor family management and discipline</li> <li>• Family conflict</li> <li>• A family history of antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• Favourable parental attitudes to the problem behaviour</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment and bonding to family</li> <li>• Opportunities for prosocial involvement in the family</li> <li>• Recognition of prosocial involvement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic failure (low academic achievement)</li> <li>• Low commitment to school</li> <li>• Bullying</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for prosocial involvement in school</li> <li>• Recognition of prosocial involvement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebelliousness</li> <li>• Early initiation of problem behaviour</li> <li>• Impulsiveness</li> <li>• Antisocial behaviour</li> <li>• Favourable attitudes toward problem behaviour</li> <li>• Interaction with friends involved in problem behaviour</li> <li>• Sensation seeking</li> <li>• Rewards for antisocial involvement</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social skills</li> <li>• Belief in the moral order</li> <li>• Emotional control</li> <li>• Interaction with prosocial peers</li> </ul>

the justice system in their efforts to restore their lives outside of detention.

Many youth who enter the juvenile justice system develop trauma while incarcerated, about 55% of all young people who exit the juvenile justice system are rearrested within 12 months and almost a quarter are returned to are re-incarcerated within a year [6]. Incarcerating young people contributes to a detrimental cycle that disproportionately affects vulnerable and systematically oppressed communities. Instead of incarcerating young people, the City and County of San Francisco should be investing in rehabilitation programs that can help to end the cycle of trauma and violence that is the incarceration of young people.

### **Legislative Updates**

On September 18, 2018, Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer introduced BOS File No. 180922 [Hearing on the juvenile justice system and strategies, including Juvenile Hall and the closure of Log Cabin Ranch, as well as community-based alternatives to detention; and requesting the Juvenile Probation Department to report]. The legislation BOS File No. 180922, was referred to the Full Youth Commission. Commissioners voted to unanimously support BOS File No. 180922 with the following comments and recommendations:

- 1) Conversations should be conducted with youth who went absent without leave from Log Cabin Ranch to understand the underlying reasons of why they would unexpectedly depart.
- 2) With the intended commitment to create a Task Force to identify best practices for alternatives to detention, that youth seats be made available on said Task Force to better represent youth voices and experience.
- 3) A youth member of the public stated that the amount of money that goes towards Log Cabin Ranch is a large waste of taxpayers money and could be better used for different services impacting the city.

On November 14th, 2018, the Transformative Justice Committee presented the recommendations on having two youth seats in the to be established Log Cabin Ranch Taskforce.

In November 2018, the Transformative Justice Committee met with District 1 Supervisor Sandra Fewer to review the draft Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) Report that give details on the cost to the city for justice system involved youth vs. the costs of alternatives to incarceration. With this material, the committee will infer, estimate, and analyze prior and current data to create effective recommendations about alternatives to incarceration for TAY to be included in the next budgetary cycle. The report is still being reviewed and resolved by the District Attorney's office as of May 2018.

On December 10, 2018, Commissioners gave public comment to share the importance of closing Log Cabin Ranch at the Public Safety Neighborhood Services hearing on BOS File No.180922.

On March 6th, 2019, The Transformative Justice Committee was invited to join the Log Cabin Ranch Re-Envisioning Taskforce to work with city and community agencies to rethink the utilization of Log Cabin Ranch. However, in light of the announcement that three members of the Board of Supervisors have expressed their intent to introduce an ordinance to close juvenile hall, the LCR Task Force was disbanded to reframe the focus of the work.



On April 9th, 2019, Supervisor Shamann Walton, along with Supervisors Hillary Ronen and Matt Haney introduced BOS File No. 190392 [Administrative Code - Juvenile Hall Closure] an ordinance amending the Administrative Code to require the City to close Juvenile Hall by December 31, 2021, expand community-based alternatives to detention, and provide a rehabilitative, non-institutional place of detention, among other recommendations to support community based alternatives to detention. Nothing like this had ever been proposed before, and Supervisors Gordon Mar, Aaron Peskin, and Sandra Lee Fewer quickly signed on, bringing the total number of supporters to six — a majority. Hours after a rally organized by Young Women Freedom Center on City Hall steps, Supervisors Ahsha Safai and Vallie Brown added their names to their colleagues, guaranteeing that the vote will be immune to a veto.

On April 18th, 2019, the Transformative Justice Committee was invited to the inaugural meeting of the Juvenile Justice Reform Blue Ribbon Panel, which will focus on comprehensive and system-wide reform to San Francisco's juvenile justice system. The panel is co-chaired by San Francisco Human Rights Commission Executive Director Sheryl Davis and Corey Monroe, a twenty year member of the Omega Boys Club of San Francisco who works with incarcerated youth in the juvenile justice system, teaching them how to avoid the risk factors that lead to violence and drug abuse. The panel consists of elected officials, City representatives, Superior Court Judges, advocacy group

members, service providers, and residents with lived experiences in the juvenile justice system. The effort is facilitated and assisted by experts and leaders in criminal justice reform with decades of experience, including David Muhammed, Executive Director of National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, and Shawn Ginwright, author and Professor of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University.

The Panel is charged with identifying systematic, implementable, and compassionate reforms to drastically reduce the number of youth detained in both Juvenile Hall and the state Division of Juvenile Justice. They will evaluate existing programming, facilities, and the statutory requirements of the juvenile justice system, with a focus on reinvestment and creating opportunities for at-risk youth. With an emphasis on feasibility and implementation, the Panel will recommend alternatives to detention and appropriate funding levels for related programming; compatible uses and investments for the City's existing facilities at the Log Cabin Ranch and the Juvenile Justice Center; and will create a plan for eliminating discretionary youth detention in San Francisco.

On May 6th, 2019, BOS File No. 190392 [Administrative Code - Juvenile Hall Closure], was referred to the Youth Commission. Legislative aide to Supervisor Walton, Tracy Brown presented to the Youth Commission. The Transformative Justice committee commented on the legislation with a letter of support. We, the Transformative Justice Committee of the Youth Commission, believe that incarceration leaves youth traumatized, disconnected and disempowered. In its place, San Francisco would develop an expanded array of alternatives to incarceration for young people who do not need to be locked up. In addition to expanding community-based alternatives to detention and it'll provide a rehabilitative, non-institutional place of detention, it will establish a working group for the closure plan, and establish a Youth Justice Reinvestment Fund. The Youth Commission passed the legislation with a full vote of support.

On May 16th, 2019, The Transformative Justice committee, along with community partners, gave public comment at the GAO hearing in support of the legislation. "Juvenile Hall is not a rehabilitative model that works for young people. Survival crimes should not be punished and young people should be held with compassion not cages. The legislation offers alternatives that build up the capacity of community organizations that already do the work with our young people. Young people want jobs, to see the world, to feel heard and seen. Chances don't feel possible in cells. How can youth be free to thrive if "rehabilitation and accountability looks like and feels like "cancelling" people or isolating them as pariahs? Young people are asking for jobs, safe after-school spaces with caring peers and adults. That looks like more TAY access points and trauma-informed community members and social workers that provide protective factors for our success."

### **Proposed Solution**

Solutions to incarceration are simple and multifaceted - the city needs to build with community partners and invest in community resources, and address unmet physical and emotional needs of a young person. We must move away from building prisons and jails

to rehabilitate a young person as they only serve to remove them from the community. We must address the initial reasons why a young person gets into contact with the legal system. There needs to be a reallocation of the budget of 318,000, it takes to incarcerate a young person for a year at DJJ and provide wraparound services that provide ways to earn and contribute funding to address harm. There needs to be a reenvisioning of the \$270,000 it costs for a young person in Juvenile Hall. The youth commission supports “the Department of Finance predicts that spending per youth at DJJ will reach \$318,000 in fiscal year 2017-18, an amount that far outpaces the cost of secure, county-run youth facilities or other local alternatives. State leadership must reject this proposed expansion of the youth prison system and reinvest in community Alternatives.” The Youth commission recognizes and supports the “radical model for decriminalizing” as an example of a framework for the City of San Francisco to adopt. We believe in creating protective factors that benefit families and abolish prison systems.

The emphasis that the Youth Commission would like the City to invest in protective factors that will increase the likelihood of young people to live out positive health outcomes, life-long education, and financial security and equity to progress and flourish. The risk factors that contribute to incarceration and poor outcomes that intern become generational which places generations after also at a higher risk. Our young people are an urgent matter due to them being next to add there gifts and talents with the world. Yet when generation after generation is continuously navigating their basic needs, it makes self-actualization a statistical anomaly. Reentry and aftercare services for high-risk youth returning from placement are an essential component to a successful exit from the legal system.

## Conclusion

The Transformative Justice Committee is supporting the closure of 850 Bryant and Juvenile Hall and in its place, building on alternative support systems that re-envision a prison free San Francisco that young people can get their needs met from and within the community. We want young people to feel held accountable with compassion and to work with families to heal the intergenerational trauma.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Youth Commission urges:

- 1 **The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to close Juvenile Hall and 850 Bryant by December 2021 and provide young people open-door, non-detention settings in non-deputized facilities. Accessible after school programming that provide internships and job opportunities.**



The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and Mayor Breed to continue to invest in open-door alternatives to incarceration, especially for those who are mentally ill, transitional age youth, and/or parents and caretakers. Youth commissioners are especially heartened by the young adult court and alternative sentencing models, as we are by growing discussions about ways to reduce the number of people in pretrial detention.

Examples of these spaces can simulate TAY access points, and Community based organizations such as: The Boys and Girls clubs, Larkin street youth services, United Playaz and the Young Women’s Freedom Center.

Within these structures in bed and increase budgets for caring consistent adults who are and can provide culturally relevant case management: Certified social workers, Drug and alcohol counselors, Emotional regulation educators and counselors, Mentors and elders in the community who can advise and pass traditional heritage-DYCF.

- 2 **The Board of Supervisors and Mayor to expand the Young Adult Court.** We thank the Department of Children, Youth and their Families for expanding the Young Adult Court, and encourage other ways to expand the court to be able to handle all qualifying cases. The Young Adult Court provides a useful model of a way of investing in young people, as an alternative to incarceration.

- 3 **The Board of Supervisors’ to hold a hearing to discuss alternatives to incarceration for 18-24 years olds in San Francisco’s county jails. Make monetary investments in organizations that promote rehabilitation and support to young people in and around the juvenile justice system.** This hearing can explore promising approaches currently in use in the Young Adult Court; existing barriers to young adults’ successful enrollment in or graduation from the Young Adult Court; insights learned from the Juvenile Probation Departments’ successful efforts to develop alternatives to out-of-home detention for youth; and

approaches being used by other states and counties to better address the needs of 18-24 year olds involved in the criminal justice system. We thank Supervisor London Breed for introducing File No. 180396 [Hearing - Work Group to Re-Envision the Jail Project - Annual Report].

In 2018, the projected cost of housing one youth in juvenile hall was \$273,750 yearly. We believe that the city should be investing just as many resources in the rehabilitation of young people as it does the incarceration of young people. Therefore, we believe that the city should match it's proposed budget in the 2018-19 fiscal year for juvenile hall and invest \$44,217,772 in organizations such as the Young Women's Freedom Center, San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents, Larkin Street Youth Services and Huckleberry Community Assessment and Resource Center (CARC). In addition to investing in community organizations that focus on rehabilitation and support of young people, we advise you to invest in government services invested in supporting young people involved in the juvenile justice system, namely Young Adult Court.

- 4** **The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to include and incentivize formerly incarcerated youth on panels and commissions that focus on youth incarceration such as the Police Commission and the Juvenile Probation Commission.** It is vital that voices of impacted youth are heard, as they are able to give a more personal perspective to issues the commissions deal with and are able to vouch for programs that benefit them and their community. In addition to a grieving and community healing services ran by community members and continuation of including impacted youth in the effort to envision alternatives to Incarceration.
- 5** **The Judiciary to enact policies reforming the bail system, such as to better serve low income communities.** We applaud recent efforts to implement “ability to pay” models within the bail system, whilst simultaneously recognizing that it is but a step in the right direction. We urge lowering the bail schedule in addition to “ability to pay”.
- 6** **Continue funding family and individual holistic healing services such as Drug Rehabilitation therapies, Behavioral Health screenings, early interventions and alternative therapies that follows the Bayview Child Health Center (BCHC) to recognize the impact of ACE scores and treat toxic stress. Family therapy that is accessible, free and culturally appropriate for families. That educate family structures on toxic stress and possible solutions to promote health positive outcomes.**

For culturally relevant healing services that acknowledge how complex trauma

impacts neurological development and decision making, interpersonal relationships, parenting, and the overall family structure. The transformative justice committee supports and wants an increase Mayor London Breed’s “plan to have 70-90 new mental health beds and announces introduction of conservatorship legislation for those suffering from severe mental health and substance use issues”. We ask that DPH and the Mayor’s office to increase funding towards these programs that match the need of young people that meet a chemical dependency criteria that is culturally relevant and has a harm reduction approach.



**Acknowledgements**

The Youth Commission would like to firstly thank the young people and families of San Francisco and an especially thank the Young Women’s Freedom Center through Supervisor Ronen words “I got to work in close partnership with a grassroots organization of extraordinary women who brought not only their own lived experiences but also a sophisticated approach to policy-making and political strategy. It is largely because of their early groundwork that we are here today moving forward with this historic legislation” to close Juvenile Hall. Supervisor Walton, Ronen, and Haney for spearheading the legislation to Close Juvenile Hall, and Supervisors Gordon Mar, Aaron Peskin, Sandra Lee Fewer, Vallie Brown and Ahsha Safaí for the support of the closure of Juvenile Hall.

Many thanks to a number of youth-centered and justice oriented organizations — Huckleberry Youth, Larkin Street Youth Services, My Brother My Sister’s Keeper, BMagic, MoMagic, United Playaz, the Bayview Hunters Point YMCA, Project What!, Hope SF, and Critical Resistance for showing that — there is ample local evidence that therapy, education, job training and leadership programs can empower youth, reduce crime, and prevent recidivism.

And deepest gratitude, to the San Francisco Public Library for being our hosts for the Youth-Police roundtable. And community partners such as Young Women Freedom Center, Project What!, Larkin Street Youth Services, for bringing the youth. Thank you Chief William Scott for continued partnership and the efforts of the Community

Engagement Team, Commander Lazar, A/C Captain Williams, Lt. Dangerfield and Lt. for getting school resource officers and partners to attend.



*To the Youth commission staff who have supported the development of young people in the name of advocacy and work in struggle and in solidarity with young people of San Francisco.*

## PRIORITY 5: IMPROVE SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS AND SUPPORT FAMILY UNITY BY INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO VISIT THEIR INCARCERATED PARENT

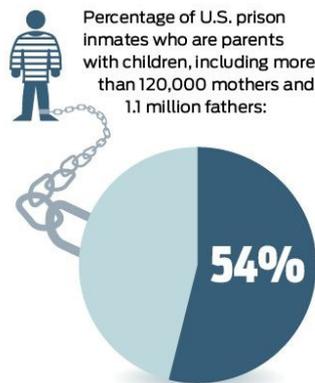
*Urging support of families with incarcerated parents by supporting implementation of time-of-arrest protocols, supporting youth-friendly jail visiting policies, and assisting the school district's commitment to supporting students with incarcerated parents*

### Introduction

Currently in the Bay Area, over 3,000 children under 25 have an incarcerated parent on any given day [1]. Nationally, this number is 2.7 million [2]. All these youth are deprived of basic human connection and nurturing from this experience. Over half of all U.S. prisoners in 2007 were parents of one or more children under the age of 18 [3]. According to the Center for Youth Wellness, incarceration is one of the most adverse of childhood experiences and a DCYF Community Needs Assessment found that 17,993 children and youth were estimated to have had a parent who spent time in either county jail or state prison in 2010 [4]. As this number does not include youth and children who had a parent that was incarcerated at any time during their childhood, and does not include transitional age youth (TAY), parental incarceration may affect an even greater number of San Francisco's young people.

Although there is no city or state department responsible for collecting data on youth and children with incarcerated parents (CIP), a recent survey of people in San Francisco county jails found that 536 (59%) reported being a parent or primary caregiver to a total of 1,110 children aged 25 years or younger. This report also states "...it can be conservatively estimated that, on any given day, there are more than 3,000 children aged 25 years or younger with parents in Alameda or San Francisco County jails," [5] because there were a fair number of individuals not surveyed due to not being present in the housing units at the time of the survey due to court appearances, medical appointments, and lawyer visits. As illustrated by the graphic, this disproportionately affects children of color, especially African Americans. With African Americans representing over 55% of the incarcerated population in San Francisco, it is much more likely that their children will suffer from a parental

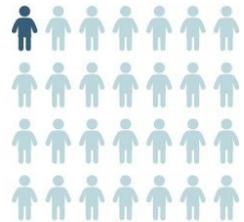
### Bound by blood: Children of incarcerated parents



Source: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010

**1 in every 28 children**

— or 3.6 percent — has a parent incarcerated. That's a total of 2.7 million children, up from 500,000 in 1980.



#### BY RACE

African American children

**1 in 9**  
11.4%

Hispanic children

**1 in 28**  
3.5%

White children

**1 in 57**  
1.8%

incarceration and need more support and services for success.

## **History**

### **Time of Arrest Protocols**

In May 2014, the Police Commission passed new protocols [6] for supporting children at the time of their parents' arrest. The Police Department committed to establishing a roll call training on the new protocols for its officers. The video training includes real-life arrest scenarios involving parents and children and includes the voices of youth who were present at the time of their parent's arrest. In 2016, the police department began including a new question in its incident reports, wherein officers ask people being arrested if they are responsible for a child under the age of 18. 'Yes' answers prompt the officer to confirm they complied with the provisions of the general order which require cuffing parents outside the presence of children when possible; reassuring the child they will be cared for; arranging for the child to be picked up by another adult whose background is verified with Family and Children's Services; and arranging with school resource officers or school sites for children to be picked up from and cared for after school. In 2016, two other arresting agencies are in the process of adopting or implementing similar protocols. The District Attorney's office has provided in-person training to DA Investigators on supporting children during a parent's arrest. The Sheriff's department is implementing protocols for deputies with arresting duties. In 2017, Youth Commissioners attended the Police Academy to view new recruit's training in DGO 7.04.

### **Visitation Policies**

In March 2015, Youth Commissioners, working in partnership with Project WHAT, passed a resolution (1415-AL-08 [Lowering the jail visiting age to 16 and establishing an online inmate locator]) urging for the promotion of family unity for youth with incarcerated parents by lowering the visiting age in county jails to age 16 and urging the establishment of an online inmate locator tool.<sup>7</sup> In March 2015, the visiting policy was amended by then-Sheriff Mirkarimi and a Request For Proposal (RFP) was issued for the creation of an online inmate locator. Youth Commissioners met with Sheriff Vicki Hennessy in April 2016, and were pleased that Sheriff Hennessy expressed commitment to implementing the 16 and 17-year-old visiting policy; working with the Youth Commission to outreach for the new policy, and evaluating whether the current application process for the visiting program presents any barriers for young people wishing to visit their parents and guardians.

In 2017, only one young person has officially enrolled in the 16-17-year-old minor visitation program. Youth commissioners met with both school board member, Matt Haney, and Sheriff Hennessy and confirmed their willingness to participate in a working group aiming to coordinate efforts to support interested and qualified young people's enrollment in the Minor Visitation Program. The working group will coordinate young people's access to the identification and/or verification needed to substantiate their relationship to their incarcerated loved one; align efforts to inform both young people and incarcerated parents about the minor visitation program as well as to assist them in their

successful enrollment; explore other opportunities for supporting youth maintaining contact with their incarcerated parent. The Working Group took a hiatus until Fall 2018.

Back in October 2018, the Transformative Justice Committee joined a second working group meeting held by Project What!, as it pertains to the Visiting Age Policy (#VisitationWithoutHesitation). The working group included the SF Sheriff's office, Mission Peace, ReEntry Council, Larkin Street Youth Services, SF Youth Commission and Project WHAT! Youth. To date, still only one youth has take advantage of this opportunity. As of 2019, Project What! have yet to map out next steps for community partners to show up in support following two workgroup meetings. Next steps would mean having a strategy that address and makes possible supports that could eliminate barriers for a young person. These included: more education and awareness of policy, build on SFUSD ID program to aid in the documentation part of the visit, looking into financial support for getting IDs as well as transportation to jails for youth via transit passes or shuttle bus.

Recently, in November 2019, the Youth Commission voted to support the most recent version of the SFCIPP Bill of Rights [8]. Written by a coalition of community organizations, city departments, and elected officials, it details the rights for San Francisco's children of incarcerated parents.

### **School District Support**

In March 2016, the SFUSD Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution "In Support of Staff Training, Curriculum and Services to Meet the Needs of SFUSD Students with Incarcerated Parents" introduced by Commissioners Matt Haney and Shamann Walton. The resolution commits to continued training for school counselors, social workers, nurses, wellness center staff, and school resource officers on an annual basis. It also commits the district to integrating awareness of the impacts of incarceration into curricula and school libraries; pursuing specific programming and services for students with incarcerated parents; assigning a district staff liaison to work with One Family, the organization providing parenting education and child visitation in San Francisco county jails, to allow for parent-teacher conferences in the jails and to support students in establishing visitation; and adding information about parental incarceration to student surveys.

**43% of youth witnessed their parent's arrest**

**HALF of those youth (51%) reported witnessing violence or abuse by a police officer against their parent when they were arrested**

Courtesy of Project WHAT "We're Here and Talking," January 2016

## Problem Statement

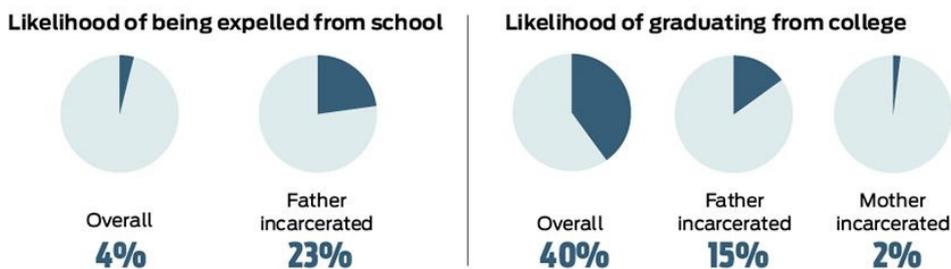
Youth are the future of our city, country, and the world. So why are so many youth getting left behind once at least one of their parents is incarcerated? Over 10 million youth have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives [9]. As seen by the graphics, parental incarceration has detrimental effects on house stability, education, and daily life. This can lead to mental health and trauma-related issues that can plague the youth throughout their adult life. Also, now a high school and college education is almost essential for job opportunities. If these children of incarcerated parents are dropping out at higher rates, they may not be able to support themselves and their families in the future. This could even lead them into the adult incarceration system. If youth really are the future, investments need to be made to ensure the least amount of trauma and loss of support from an experience with an incarcerated parent. If youth are able to drive a car, have a job, pay taxes and go to jail, they should be allowed to visit their loved ones without restrictions, heal with their loved ones, and be supported in all the transitions.

### As a result of a parent's incarceration...



Courtesy of Project WHAT "We're Here and Talking," January 2016

### How having an incarcerated parent affects educational success



Source: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010

Below see the data collected by OneFamily, an SFCIPP program partner, presented at the last SFCIPP general meeting in March 2019, for number of family visits in SF jails. OneFamily is the program that facilitates family contact visits in jails in San Francisco. The numbers indicate that there are few visits despite having over 3,000 children under 25 with an incarcerated parent on any given day in Bay Area. Though there are a variety of factors that impact whether or not visitations happen such as: whether or not the incarcerated parent is approved, if a caregiver can bring the child to the jail (the number of men that gets visits is higher than women), as well as there's been a shift in command staff that can affect visitation.

**FEBRUARY VISITS**

Number of unduplicated visiting children per facility	February
County Jail #2	13
County Jail #4	10
County Jail #5	23

Number of unduplicated clients getting visits	February	
County Jail #2	Men: 3	Women: 6
County Jail #4	8	
County Jail #5	20	

Number of individual visits per facility	February
County Jail #2	8
County Jail #4	14
County Jail #5	4

**March Visits**

Submissions By Location	Current Month
County Jail #2	5 (Men: 4 and Woman: 1)
County Jail #4	6
County Jail #5	1

Approvals By Location	Current Month
County Jail #2	4
County Jail #4	4
County Jail #5	0

Denials By Location	Current Month
County Jail #2	0
County Jail #4	0
County Jail #5	4

**Proposed Solution**

There are many different solutions to improving support and services to children of incarcerated parents. Most notably, we can gain support and implement the work of projects of community-based organizations, like the SFCIPP Bill of Rights and Project What!’s We’re Here and Talking Campaign. These empower youth to live full lives, even without a parental support, and advocate for change within the justice system. Also, we need to continue to make visitation accessible and easy for youth to maintain a connection with their incarcerated parent. In addition to establishing this connect, SFUSD students should have access to mental health support and a school district liaison to get the supportive resources they may now be lacking at home. Finally, time-of-arrest protocols must ensure that a child does not have to live through the traumatic experience of their parent being arrested and possibly abused by law enforcement.

## Recent Legislative Updates

On November 05th, 2019, the Youth Commission voted to support the new Bill of Rights for Children of Detained Parents [10]. Written by a coalition of community members, non-profit organizations, city departments, and elected officials, it is created in the image of the Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated parents, to improve the lives and living conditions of children with detained parents and of children in government custody during parental detention. The Bill of Rights for Children of Detained Parents seek to create a “rights to reality” wherein the rights of children and their families are acknowledged, uplifted, and protected during the process of migration. By supporting the new Bill of Rights, the Youth Commission hopes to build solidarity and to stand alongside the children and families who face detention and separation. Building on the support, the Youth Commission signed on to support the ongoing awareness-raising campaign using the new bill of rights as a platform for advocacy. The Transformative Justice Committee has joined quarterly meetings and attended monthly policy calls to build strategically and share information collaboratively with SFCIPP. The meetings include community partners from SFUSD, Project What!, SF Sheriff’s Department, Department of Police Accountability, DCYF, CJCJ, and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

## Conclusion

In summary, support and services are essential for maintaining the health and success of children of incarcerated parents. By keeping families in close connection through visitation and phone calls, providing supportive services within school, and following Police Department guidelines to avoid trauma, San Francisco’s youth will have the support necessary to go on to live healthy productive lives. No child should have to go through this; however, because it is a harsh reality, we need to ensure that they have all the rights and resources they need to survive the experience without lifelong harm.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Youth Commission urges

- 1
**The Board of Supervisors fully implement the SFCIPP Bill of Rights for all youth of incarcerated parents.** The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors draft and support a resolution supporting the most recent revision of the Bill of Rights to ensure that youth’s rights are known and respected across city agencies and community-based organizations. By supporting the Bill of Rights, we hope it leads to an immediate divestment and reallocation of funds from local dollars spent on detention and family separation to family reunification and resources for healing the traumatic effects of detention for youth and families. We also encourage the Adult Probation Department to hold a hearing to figure out if these rights of youth of incarcerated parents are being upheld when in contact with the justice system.

- 2** **The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor assist the school district’s efforts to support students with incarcerated parents by establishing a family-focused school-district liaison role inside the jails.** The Youth Commission urges Mayor Breed and the Board of Supervisors to commit resources to establish a staff role inside the county jails to provide family-focused support, liaison with school districts, and coordinate services with the Sheriff and parents inside.
- 3** **The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor ensure regular evaluations of the Police Department’s use of time-of-arrest protocols set forth in DGO 7.04.** The Youth Commission also urges the Mayor and Board to urge the Police Commission to commit to regular reviews of the time-of-arrest protocols, including reviewing the use of the new incident report question and compliance with the protocols.
- 4** **The Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, and specific city departments continue, advertise, and evaluate family-positive visiting policies, including Project What!’s Visitation without Hesitation Policy.** We look forward to working with the Sheriff, SFUSD, MTA and DCYF to ensure that both parents and teenagers are aware of the new 16- and 17-year-old visiting policy, and to ensure that the application and enrollment process is accessible and youth-friendly; to grant financial support to help families address visitation obstacles, build on family healing classes, and that access to the non-contact visits does not preclude youth 16 and 17 years old from also participating in contact visits through existing established visiting programs. Giving the numbers as gathered from OneFamily on page 19, there needs to be increased access and support to make visits happen between children and parents/caregivers in SF jails.

### Acknowledgements

The Youth Commission would like to thank San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Program (SFCIPP) and Project What! for advocating for the rights of youth with incarcerated parents in San Francisco. We look forward to working with them to support and fully implement their initiatives. Also, we thank now-Supervisors Haney and Walton for their support for families in contact with the justice system while on the Board of Education. We hope their work in this issue continues during their terms on the Board of Supervisors.

## PRIORITY 6: IMPLEMENT AND INVEST IN SFPD, SRO'S AND JPD MANDATORY TRAUMA/YOUTH COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT YOUTH RIGHTS TRAININGS

*The Transformative justice committee is urging SFPD, SRO's and JPD or any law-enforcement officers to have a mandatory trauma/cognitive development training and for the SFUSD to work with the SFPD and CBO's to direct resources to create and expand culturally relevant youth rights training.*

### **Introduction**

In August of 2018, the “Balboa High School Incident” occurred when a 14-year-old freshman’s firearm went off in a Balboa classroom. Shortly after the student was arrested off campus after turning himself in, but not before three other students were taken into custody on campus and investigated for possibly assisting him after the fact. Parents were not notified their children were being investigated nor did the young people know their rights to council. Therefore, it is imperative for every youth to have direct access to know their rights as a young person. The transformative justice committee also advocated for the expansion of Miranda rights to be expanded to youth 17 years old and under in light of the problem Balboa High School Incident brought up.

This is a two-fold issue, given as to how SFPD protocol and trainings are not developmentally nor trauma informed and the gap of young people being mentored and advised on their interactions with law enforcement and knowledge of their rights leads to decisions that are not fully informed. When we talk about trust between police and members of the community, it is our contention that young people should be at the center of the discussion.

### **History**

Historically, youth-police interactions are loaded with too much use of force and a history of inequitable treatment especially for black and brown youth. We have seen increased national attention on the issues of police violence, and youth-police relations with the death of Michael Brown, Jordan Edwards, Jessica Hernandez, Tamir Rice, and many more. More than once, SFUSD students from multiple high school campuses have walked out to protest the death of Mario Woods, Alex Nieto, and others. What was made clear through these discussions in San Francisco and beyond is that tensions between community members and police departments across the country are strained to the breaking point and are in dire need of dedicated efforts to enhance mutual understanding, trust, transparency, and accountability.

When we talk about trust between police and members of the community, it is our contention that young people should be at the center of the discussion.

Over the past year the Transformative Justice Committee have collaborated with the Department of Police accountability to produce relevant DPA's know your rights factsheet. We've trained up with Frisco Cop Watch on their know your rights training and have worked with Larkin Street youth services to distribute that information through their Engagement center and GED programming.

We've worked with Supervisor Ronen's office and community advocates such as Coleman Advocates, Huckleberry Youth, Patricia Lee from the Public Defender's Office, and Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, on expanding Miranda Rights Protection for youths ages 17 and below.

"Our youth are incredibly scared and vulnerable when they are asked to talk to the police, and many of them cannot understand what their rights are," said Lee. "I've represented 12-year-olds who don't even understand what a lawyer is or what the courts do. This ordinance ensures that they will have an advocate for them who will make sure that they understand what is happening."

We've also worked with SFPD and SFUSD to revise their Memorandum of Understanding to develop alternatives to arrest and school suspension as well as policies that will strictly limit arrests and suspensions for minor offenses and disruptive behavior. The Advancement Project reports that "[y]outh of color, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities are punished more often and more harshly than their peers for the same behavior," with Hispanic or African-American students accounting for over 70% of the students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement. Yet, while the number of police in schools has grown dramatically, there is no positive correlation between police in schools and student safety, with research instead showing that heavy reliance on SROs in schools can promote disorder and distrust [1]. We want to reduce the preschool to prison pipeline and restore youth rights as much throughout this process. Discipline should not be punitive and return to social workers and administrators. We recognize that schools also have their role to play in surveillance and policing of young folks but we firmly believe we can transform institutions to give youth the dignity and freedom to thrive and move towards pathways to success.

### **Problem Statement**

Communities of color have a long-standing history of inequitable treatment by the police in the U.S. as evidenced by the following: In general, police-youth interactions are fraught with too much use of force. A Bureau of Justice Statistics Survey found that between 1998 and 2008, youth aged 16-18 years old comprised 7.6% of the U.S. population but were involved in 30.1% of police uses of force.

The widespread over-policing and racial profiling of communities of color, our country's historic treatment of people of color, and implicit and explicit biases by the police and society that cause police and the court systems to view youth of color as older than they are and more culpable than their white peers. Moreover, the lack of consistent and real

accountability for police mistreatment and brutality has led to a continuation of this unjust system. By properly training ALL of our officers to counteract the learned implicit bias and educating our youth about their rights, we can take a step in the right direction for positive youth-police relations.

### **Proposed Solution**

As we have seen nationally, the people want a transformation of how law enforcement interacts with youth of color, and other vulnerable populations of youth. Police officers, School resource officers and Juvenile Correctional Officers are currently interacting with young people without the proper education on the teenage and young person brain. A significant first step in creating meaningful change would be to address officer biases that may impact their relationship with youth of color and their communities. This could help to reduce police violence and use-of-force against youth of color. Ultimately, we want to reduce their over-representation in the criminal justice system.



At the March 2019, Youth-Police Roundtable, we heard stories of youth who had been disrespected and harassed by police officers and school resource officers on the street and at school. We feel that implementing programs that explicitly cover youth rights and youth cognitive development would decrease the amount of negative experiences between police and young people. Eventually, we would like this training implemented in officer training in the police academy to ensure that all officers are educated on youth cognitive development and youth rights. All though the San Francisco Police Department has done two trainings, 50 officers in total, of their program, “Policing the Teenage Brain,” we think that more widespread implementation is necessary to truly make a change in police-youth interactions. Youth rights training matters because young people who make an informed decision will have a positive view over their choices and outcomes. The problem is we do not have uniform access to youth rights training and curriculum nor a way to distribute the information.

All officers, SROs and Juvenile Correctional Officers should be required to undergo a mandatory quarterly two day training period on youth rights and youth cognitive development training. Previously as partnered with Strategies for Youth, police officers were to undergo a training for trainers on “Policing the Teenage Brain,” every 3 months however last year it only had 60 officers go through 2 seminars. We wish to work with

Strategies for Youth, Police Commission, Department of Police Accountability, and the SFPD to ensure wider implementation of these trainings that includes:

- 1) De-escalation skills and strategies for asserting authority effectively with youth.
- 2) Scenarios of real life police-youth interactions and include youth in training components.
- 3) Opportunities for officers to practice and apply their skills.
- 4) Address the issue of racial profiling and disproportionate police contact with youth of color.
- 5) Offer practical communication skills and best practices for working with youth that are grounded in developmental psychology. Topics that should be included are: adolescent cognitive development, mental health issues among youth, and recognizing and interacting with traumatized youth.
- 6) Focus on policing tactics unique to juveniles, and offer a comprehensive overview of the department's policies surrounding juvenile policing outlined in the Department General Order 7.01.

### **Legislative Updates**

Early October 2018, Governor Brown signed AB 748 making certain peace officer records subject to disclosure under the California public records act and SB 1421 Peace officers: the release of records which increases police transparency and accountability. SB 1421 will make public three categories of information that are specific to the powers of police officers or their potential for abuse: use of deadly force; sexual assault tied to the abuse of power to coerce a victim into sexual acts; and perjury or the fabrication of evidence tied to police officers' unique powers in investigating and prosecuting crimes. "Black and Brown youth across the state are celebrating the passage of SB 1421," said Anthony Robles with the Youth Justice Coalition LA.

The Transformative Justice Committee strongly supports this action. By adopting these practices would mean implementing intergenerational healing modalities and expansions of restorative justice training for officers, youth, and families. Introducing these types of methodologies will promote a higher degree of beneficial, secure interactions between youth and law enforcement. We want to recognize that the signing of this legislation is not implementing the fullest extent of police accountability. There is still much more work to be done on ensuring the adoption of rehabilitation practices and initial alternatives to incarceration. However, we appreciate this step forward to a better future.

On October 15th, 2018, the Youth Commission voted to support BOS FILE No. 180901 [Hearing on the Police Department's and San Francisco Unified School District's current protocols and policies where students are questioned and arrested at their school site, as well as when they are in police custody, particularly relating to parental noticing, student privacy, and school safety; and requesting the Police Department and San Francisco Unified School District to report], the sponsors being Supervisors Ronen, Safai, Cohen. The Youth Commission supported the hearing as it is called not just because of the

Balboa High School incident but because it brought up questions about SFPD and SFUSD current protocols and policies and they would like to look at what legislative changes could be made. The current SFUSD and SFPD Memorandum of Understanding is active till the start of 2019, but the young person was impacted by what happened that day with being filmed by media, being taken out in handcuffs, and denied parents being present during the questioning.



On November 28th, 2019 the Youth Commission spoke out in public comment in support of the youth and parents. We used the hearing as an opportunity for youth and their allies to share why it's important that police treat young people with dignity and respect as defined by San Francisco Youth. We want to highlight the gap in policy and on the ground inter-

actions with youth. Our goal is to motivate the City to pass policies expanding legal protection for youth under 18 when interacting with the law enforcement, and give youth a meaningful role in shaping the way SFPD interacts with youth.

Following that, the Transformative Justice committee worked with Supervisor Ronen's aide Carolyn Goosen, community advocates, parents, and peers on a groundbreaking legislation to strengthen youth rights when in police custody. The legislation required that all San Francisco Youth 17 and under to have legal representation before they can be questioned or waive their Miranda Rights. The legislation also mandates that a family member or responsible adult chosen by the adult to be present when they are questioned. The language made sure to include a broad range for folks who are unhoused, foster youth, or had a chosen family. On February 11th, 2019 youth commissioners gave public comment calling for an interruption in the power dynamics that occur between police and youth. By February 26th, 2019 the legislation passed and was named the Jeff Adachi Ordinance.



**Conclusion**

We want youth rights trainings that are created by and for system impacted young people. These need to be relevant to the time, culture and prevention of interacting with the legal system. We want San Francisco to re-invest the money used to incarcerate

young people towards Know Your Rights training for Youth and developmentally and culturally competent trainings for school and legal system agents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** **The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to advocate for targeted police training (skill based and scenario-based) for all police officers that focuses on youth rights with a focus on de-escalation tactics, and how to recognize the indicators of trauma and mental health concerns.** The Transformative Committee recommends culturally relevant youth rights training. Expanding know your rights outreach trainings in schools, afterschool programs, and urge the BOS to support the Department of Police Accountability (DPA), community organizations with updated information regarding Miranda Rights expansion, ICE, and other related information.
- 2** **The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to ensure widespread and regular distribution of DPA “Know Your Rights for Youth” pamphlets through all City agencies, the school district, and social media, and the education system.**
- 3** **The Youth Commission recommends SFPD oversight and expansion in mandatory trauma and cognitive development training for SFPD, SRO’s and JPD.** Specifically, the Youth Commission urges training on the effects of trauma on neural pathways and cognitive development’s role in decision making. Oversight for SFPD to have continuous mental health evaluations and initial emotional intelligence tests that determine if a person is considered overly aggressive.
- 4** **The Youth Commission urges for the establishment of a youth seat on the Police Commission, quarterly Chief’s Youth Advisory Roundtable to discuss youth-relations, as well as a yearly youth-police roundtable.** Youth Commissioners would like to thank Chief Scott, A/C Captain Williams, and Commander Lazar for their swift follow through on this recommendation. We look forward to working with them to plan round tables with them in fall of 2019.

## Acknowledgements

The Transformative Justice Committee would like to thank several community-based organizations such as Projects WHAT!, Larkin Street Youth Services, the Young Women's Freedom Center, Strategies for Youth, BMagic! and Coleman Advocates for their continued allied work and support on the expansion of Know Your Rights trainings and Youth Cognitive Development trainings for SRO's and the Police Force. Many thanks to members of the organizations for sharing personal stories and brainstorming on how to improve youth-police relations inspired many of our budget priorities and budgeting asks. We also want to thank our City partners we want to thank: Department of Police Accountability, Police Commission, Juvenile Probation Commission, and SFUSD for supporting the San Francisco Youth Commission and the Transformative Justice Committee by attending the Youth-Police roundtable.



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