



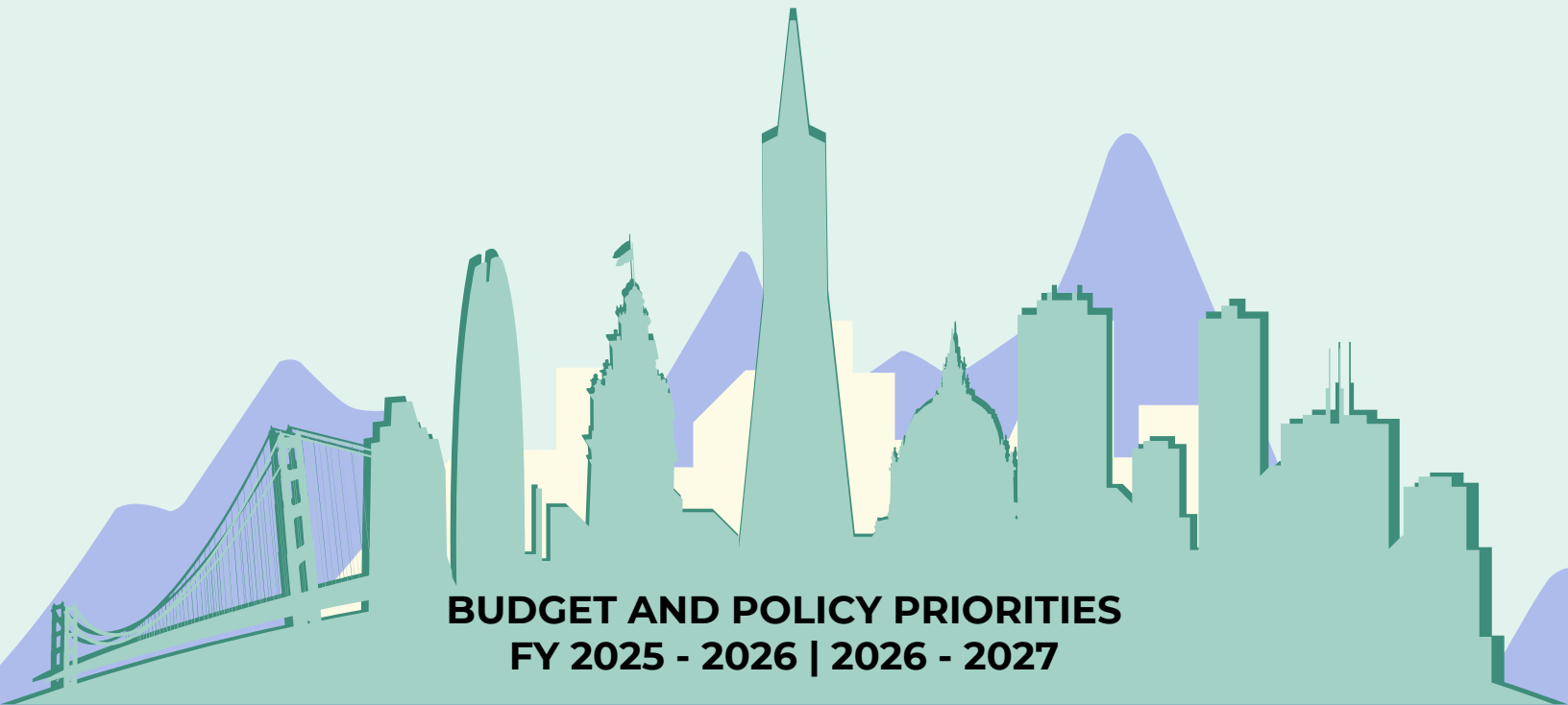
# **YOUTH COMMISSION**

**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**



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**BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES  
FY 2025 - 2026 | 2026 - 2027**



## March 2025 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH COMMISSION, Room 345  
1 DR CARLTON B GOODLETT PLACE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-4532

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## March 2025 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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## INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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On behalf of the San Francisco Youth Commission, I am proud to present the Budget and Policy Priorities for the fiscal years of 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. This report serves as a key mechanism to identify the needs and unmet needs of San Francisco’s more than 113,000 young people. It is foundational to the Youth Commission’s role in advising the Mayor and Board of Supervisors and ensuring that youth voices are at the forefront of policy discussions.

The Youth Commission has a long history of advocating for and achieving meaningful change for youth in our city. From establishing the Free Muni for All Youth program to championing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that the needs of young people are met. We have also led efforts to lower the voting age to 16 in municipal elections to increase civic engagement, getting it on the ballot twice, and have pushed for rehabilitative alternatives to youth incarceration. These achievements highlight the power of youth-led advocacy and the importance of prioritizing young voices in shaping policy decisions.

The Youth Commission recognizes the significant fiscal challenges San Francisco faces, including a near one-billion-dollar deficit. We are hopeful that the city will bring its budget into strong fiscal health to ensure that vital resources for youth remain consistent, reliable, and stable. Beyond addressing the deficit, the Youth Commission has, since the election of the current federal administration, shifted into listening mode to better understand how we can most effectively support young people during this time. We embarked on one of the most, if not the most, extensive community outreach initiatives in the history of the Youth Commission in order to identify the needs that are paramount to young people. While some may not fall entirely or directly under the city’s jurisdiction, we’ve included them alongside actionable steps the city can take to support these efforts, given their significance to our community.

The creation of this report would not have been possible without the dedication and effort of our Commissioners and staff. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Chairs of our issue-based committees, Camryn Marlow, Imaan Ansari, and Skylar Dang, for their leadership and coordination. Our Communications and Outreach Officers, Emily Yang and Winnie Liao, deserve recognition for their work in engaging young people from all backgrounds, while our Legislative Affairs Officers, Jin Valencia-Tow and Lucas Liang, played an instrumental role in research and development. I also wish to thank our Vice Chair, Gabbie Listana, for their invaluable support throughout this process. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to our Youth Commission staff, Alondra Esquivel Garcia, Joy Zhan, and Joshua Rudy Ochoa, for their commitment and long hours dedicated to supporting this year’s Budget and Policy Priorities report from its early stages to its publication.

I hope you find this year’s Budget and Policy Priorities Report to be informative and helpful and that it serves as a reminder of the needs of young people through this extensive process. City leaders *must* prioritize the recommendations in this document and take meaningful steps to ensure that these priorities are not only recognized but also thoughtfully and prudently addressed in this year’s budget decisions. The Youth Commission is always excited and open to collaboration to help make these visions a reality. Let’s build a future we are all proud to be a part of. When young people win – San Francisco wins.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Fong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jason Fong  
Chair of the San Francisco Youth Commission

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## San Francisco Youth Commission



### FULL YOUTH COMMISSION

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair - Jason Fong (Mayoral)  
Vice Chair - Gabbie Listana (D6)  
Legislative Affairs Officer - Jin Valencia-Tow (D7)  
Legislative Affairs Officer - Lucas Liang (D4)  
Communications and Outreach Officer - Emily Yang (Mayoral)  
Communications and Outreach Officer - Winnie Liao (D3)



#### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**Chair** - Camryn Marlow (D2)  
**Vice Chair** - Clarisse Kim (D1)  
**Members** - Jason Fong (Mayoral)  
Emily Yang (Mayoral)  
Lucas Liang (D4)



#### HOUSING, RECREATION, TRANSIT COMMITTEE

**Chair** - Imaan Ansari (D11)  
**Vice Chair** - Harper Fortgang (D8)  
**Members** - Jin Valencia-Tow (D7)  
Winnie Liao (D3)  
Eloise Krehlik (Mayoral)  
Ava Oram (Mayoral)



#### TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

**Chair** - Skylar Dang (D9)  
**Vice Chair** - Téa Lonné Amir (Mayoral)  
**Members** - Gabbie Listana (D6)  
Ethar Alameri (D5)  
Ikahihifo (Hifo) Paea (D10)



**JOSHUA RUDY OCHOA**  
Community Partnership Specialist



**ALONDRA ESQUIVEL GARCIA**  
Director



**JOY CHAOYING ZHAN**  
Youth Development Specialist

2024 - 2025

# COMMISSIONERS



**Clarisse Kim**  
District 1



**Camryn Marlow**  
District 2



Communications and  
Outreach Officer



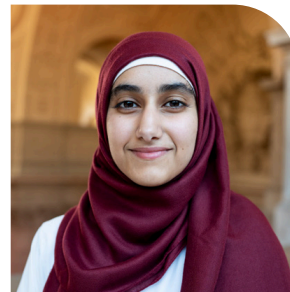
**Winnie Liao**  
District 3



Legislative Affairs Officer



**Lucas Liang**  
District 4



**Ethar Alameri**  
District 5



Vice Chair



**Gabbie Listana**  
District 6



Legislative Affairs Officer



**Jin Valencia-Tow**  
District 7



**Harper Fortgang**  
District 8





2024 - 2025

# COMMISSIONERS



**Skylar Dang**  
District 9



**Ikahihifo Paea**  
District 10



**Imaan Ansari**  
District 11



## Chair



**Jason Fong**  
Citywide



**Téa Lonné Amir**  
Citywide



**Eloise Krehlik**  
Citywide



**Emily Yang**  
Citywide



**Ava Oram**  
Citywide



## Communications and Outreach Officer



## Budget and Policy Executive Summary

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On Monday, March 3, 2025, the San Francisco Youth Commission unanimously passed their 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 Budget and Policies Priorities. The San Francisco Youth Commission will be presenting its Budget and Policies Priorities Report on March 19, 2025, to the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Appropriations Committee.

The San Francisco Youth Commission will focus on advocacy and outreach with the following actions:

- Hosting two Youth Budget Community Forums on December 4, 2024, and February 5, 2025, at the SF Public Library
- Presenting at SFUSD Schools and Community Organizations
- Requesting Community Organizations and City Departments to provide Budget Presentations to the Youth Commission
- Support Budget Requests from Community Organizations and City Departments

### **2025-2026 and 2026-2027 Budget and Policy Priorities:**

- ❖ Transit: Maintaining Free MUNI for All Youth and Expanding the Reliability and Access to Transit
- ❖ Protections for Undocumented and Newcomer Families and Youth
- ❖ Addressing Food Insecurity
- ❖ Supporting In-School Youth Development Programs
- ❖ Workforce and Youth Employment Program Access
- ❖ Climate: Mitigating Climate Change and Expanding Climate Literacy
- ❖ Improving Police and Judicial Relations with Youth
- ❖ Violence Prevention
- ❖ Addressing Sexual Violence Amongst Youth
- ❖ Youth Civic Engagement: Vote16 and Voter Preregistration
- ❖ Addressing Youth Social Isolation
- ❖ Expanding Recreational Spaces
- ❖ Ensuring Street Safety
- ❖ Addressing Hate Crimes
- ❖ Housing
  - Addressing Single Room Occupancy Living Conditions
  - Affordable Housing
  - Tenant Protections
  - Education Workforce Housing
  - Equitable Housing Assistance for Transitional-Aged Youth

## EXPAND RELIABILITY AND ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC TRANSIT

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to allocate funds to expand the School Tripper program, extend bus lines to serve more schools (including independent and parochial schools), improve the reliability of public transit, continue funding the Free Muni for All Youth program, and explore enhancements to the program.*

### Background

The Muni System in San Francisco was relied upon by about 458,821 riders per month in 2024,<sup>1</sup> with peak months being between September and June (school months). Muni experiences up to 29,000 students on an average day.<sup>2</sup> The Muni system is heavily relied on by youth city-wide as a means of transportation to school and recreational activities. The Youth Commission believes it is crucial to sustain Muni as a safe and essential form of transportation for youth while expanding the program to improve accessibility across the City.

### School Tripper Program

The School Tripper program serves schools throughout the year by increasing Muni’s capacity to accommodate students at high-enrollment public schools. It achieves this by adding more buses to the route during school start and end times, while some buses begin their trips at the school before continuing on their regular routes.<sup>3</sup> This program provides a less crowded trip for normal Muni riders as well as students and can result in a quicker and more pleasant trip for all riders.

The Youth Commission has found that Muni’s goal for every public school in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to be served by at least one Muni route makes school routes easier to access for middle school and high school youth throughout San Francisco.<sup>4</sup> Although the school system is striving towards equity, there are many disparities. The School Tripper Program is helping schools maintain reasonably accessible Muni routes to school for students but has not taken into account certain factors, including the lack of prioritization for schools with high pass-up rates. Many students struggle with bus lines that may run frequently but are often crowded and don’t receive school trippers. The Youth Commission strongly questions the inclusivity and equity of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) School Tripper services, expressing deep concern over their fairness and accessibility for all students.

SFUSD is required to provide school buses to a limited number of schools, putting additional strain on its already tight budget.<sup>5</sup> Integrating the School Tripper program with these services could help reduce costs while strengthening SFUSD’s partnership with Muni. Under this approach, designated Muni School Tripper routes could replace some school bus services, allowing students to use public transit instead of district-funded buses where feasible. This would expand access to reliable transportation for more students while making better use of existing transit infrastructure, ultimately saving money and improving mobility for youth across the city.

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<sup>1</sup> “Muni Ridership | SF.Gov.”

<sup>2</sup> “SFMTA School Safety Programs,” SFMTA, October 15, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> “Muni Routes to City Schools,” SFMTA, December 6, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> “Muni Routes to City Schools.”

<sup>5</sup> “Transportation | SFUSD,” n.d.

## Frequency and Reliability of Muni on High-Traffic Routes

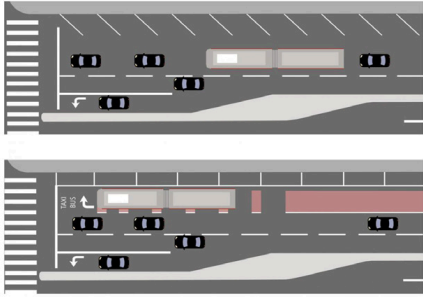


Diagram showing a bus approaching an intersection **without** transit lanes vs. **with** transit lanes. It only takes one or two cars to prevent a bus from catching a green light.

The Youth Commission urges the increase of resources, such as red lanes for Muni in high-traffic areas. The implementation of transit-only lanes has been proven to reduce travel time and congestion on San Francisco streets.<sup>6</sup> Transit lanes keep buses from getting stuck behind single-passenger vehicles, and colored lanes have been shown to improve car compliance by as much as 50%.<sup>7</sup> Transit-only lanes also can help buses get to the front of intersections and take advantage of transit signal priority, meaning buses using red lanes spend less time at red lights, leading to quicker transit. In 2021, the first phase of a transit-only lane project was completed at Geary and Stanyan Streets. SFMTA reports that reliability was improved by 38% after the transit-only lane

implementation.<sup>8</sup> Other streets in the city, which are a part of high-traffic routes like streets surrounding Market, would also benefit from this policy.

## KEEP AND ENHANCE FREE MUNI FOR ALL YOUTH

### Background

The Youth Commission has consistently advocated for Free Muni For Youth (FMFY). This advocacy began in 2010 with RESOLUTION NO. 1011-AL041 calling on the SFMTA and SFUSD to implement the Youth Lifeline Fast Pass. Further Resolutions called for the expansion of the program to 18-year-olds and later to expand the program to all youth.

The FMFY program was created in 2013 as a pilot program that allowed low to moderate-income youth aged 5-17 to ride for free. The program was partially funded with a grant from Google. The implementation was a partial response to SFUSD school bus cuts. The means-tested pilot program became permanent in 2015.<sup>9</sup> In April 2020, the program was expanded to 18-year-olds and students enrolled in Special Education and English Learner programs through age 22.<sup>10</sup>

The 2019-2020 Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 1920-AL-144, where they highlighted that the Free Muni for Low and Moderate-Income Youth program suffered from a complex application process and was not widely known, especially to people with limited English proficiency and who did not have easy access to the SFMTA offices at 1 South Van Ness Avenue. Youth Commissioners proposed the current Free Muni for All Youth (FMFAY) Program in the resolution. The new program reduced the administrative burden on SFMTA to process applications, verify eligibility, and issue Clipper cards.

<sup>6</sup> “General Education Transportation Services | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>7</sup> “Extending Transit and Safety Benefits to the Western Geary Corridor,” SFMTA, November 2, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Sawchuk, “‘Transit First’ Policy and a Better Bus Stymied, Again, by Parking Spots on Geary,” *The Frisco*, July 22, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> KQED News Staff and Wires, “Google to Fund San Francisco’s Free Muni for Youth Program,” *KQED*, February 28, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Chun, “Young People to Ride Muni for Free,” SFMTA, July 26, 2021.

During the 2020-2021 budget advocacy season and forward, Youth Commissioners met with SFMTA budget staff and urged them to fund the 1-year pilot program. Additionally, Youth Commissioners included the FMFAY program in RESOLUTION NO. 1819-AL-03, on Omnibus Preliminary Budget Priorities. On August 15, 2021, Muni, with \$2 million in funding included in Mayor London Breed’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 and FY 2022-2023 budget proposal, launched the 1-year pilot FMFAY program until August 14, 2022. On April 19, 2022, the SFMTA Board of Directors voted to approve their FY 2021-2022 and FY 2023-2024 budget, which included \$4.1 million over two years to continue the FMFAY program until June 2024.<sup>11</sup>

### **Effects of Free Muni for All Youth**

The implementation of FMFAY has dramatically increased program accessibility compared to the previous means-tested program. SFUSD’s most recent travel tally survey found that 60% of SFUSD 9th graders use Muni on any given day.<sup>12</sup> The new program is succeeding in reaching youth who didn’t previously have a Free Muni Clipper Card. According to a Fall 2021 SFMTA survey, 61% of youth utilizing the FMFAY program did not participate in the means-tested FMFY program.<sup>13</sup>

The FMFAY program is critical in removing the financial burden of fares for families. The easy and equitable access to public transportation that the FMFAY program provides is essential for San Francisco’s young people to access school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and other opportunities.

### **Possible Enhancements to Free Muni for All Youth**

Currently, youth riding Muni have no proof of fare. This means that youth have no quick, easy, and consistent way to prove their age during Muni fare inspections. As the SFMTA expands its fare enforcement efforts, it is essential that youth with the right to ride for free are not inadvertently targeted.<sup>14</sup>

One possible solution is making physical or online SFUSD student ID cards also function as Clipper Cards. Currently, San Francisco State University ID cards already act as Clipper cards.<sup>15</sup> The SFMTA could collaborate with the SFUSD and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to explore modeling SFUSD ID cards after SFUSD ID cards’ Clipper capabilities.

## **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

### **Expand Reliability and Access to Sustainable Public Transit**

- 1. Urge the SFMTA to expand the School Tripper program** – Using clear metrics such as student population, proximity to existing high frequency/popular transit services, and route overcrowding when determining how to allocate School Tripper resources. SFMTA should work with SFUSD to combine required school bus programs with SFMTA buses

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<sup>11</sup> SFMTA Citizens Advisory Council, “FY 2023 & 2024 Consolidated Budget,” February 17, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> “2019-20 SFUSD Travel Tally Data K, 5th, 6th, 9th 3.11.20.xlsx,” Google Docs, n.d.

<sup>13</sup> “Free Muni for Youth Survey Results January 2022.pdf,” Google Docs, n.d.

<sup>14</sup> Danielle Echeverria, “Muni Is Cracking Down on Fare Evasion. Tickets Have Hit Pre-pandemic Levels,” San Francisco Chronicle, November 18, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> “Clipper Card Transit Benefits | OneCard | SF State,” n.d.

through school tripper. Additionally, include services to non-SFUSD schools, such as independent and parochial in order to incorporate all SF youth.

2. **Increase Transit Reliability** – Expand the transit-only lane to decrease rider travel and wait times.

#### **Keep and Enhance Free Muni For All Youth**

1. **Keep Free Muni for All Youth funded** – Provide funding for Free Muni for All Youth for FY 2025-2026 and FY 2026-2027.
2. **Find a permanent source of funding for Free Muni for All Youth and explore options for free transit for transitional-aged youth** – Include FMFAY in the SFMTA baseline budget.
3. **Explore making San Francisco Unified School District student identification cards compatible with Clipper** – Urge the SFMTA to collaborate with the SFUSD and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to explore making SFUSD student ID cards and/or online ID cards (use of StudentVUE) compatible with Clipper to provide youth a proof of fare.

## **CONTINUE IMPLEMENTING EFFORTS TO PROTECT UNDOCUMENTED FAMILIES FROM DEPORTATION AND MAINTAIN ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

*The Youth Commission urges the City of San Francisco to continue honoring its role as a “City and County of Refuge”, ensure that all San Francisco families facing deportation have access to guaranteed legal support, and continue to provide access to higher education for undocumented youth.*

### **Background**

Since the beginning of the President’s second inconsecutive term, his administration has focused on sending undocumented people back to their country of origin. Within the first few weeks of his presidency, he signed various Executive Orders that limit migration and the rights of undocumented people in the United States. For example, he signed the “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship” Executive Order, excluding those born to parents who are both unlawfully present in the U.S., on temporary visas, are in the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program from obtaining birth-right citizenship, a protected Constitutional right under the 14th Amendment.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, his “Securing Our Borders” and “Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States” Executive Orders permit the usage of armed forces, additional physical barriers, unmanned aerial systems, and a revision of policies and strategies to impede entry into the Southern border of the United States as well as detaining undocumented people by any means possible.<sup>345</sup>

Furthermore, the President and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers across the nation have begun deportation raids in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. According to ICE’s daily statistics posted on X, an average of 800 - 1000 undocumented people have been arrested each day since the beginning of the new Federal administration. This has caused many undocumented people to avoid going outside, buying groceries, going to religious gatherings, and even sending their children to school.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, there have been efforts by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to track down newcomer families living in San Francisco. On Friday, January 24, ICE agents appeared at multiple buildings in Downtown San Francisco where Union janitors (members of SEIU Local 87) were working.<sup>7</sup> Plainclothed agents attempted to enter the buildings and question the janitors, but security stopped them and asked them to provide warrants, and no one was detained. Additionally, there have also been many unconfirmed sightings of ICE agents near schools and in newcomer communities, impacting the estimated 43,000 undocumented people in San Francisco.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip Pullig et al., “A Summary of President Trump’s Immigration-Related Executive Orders – Jackson Walker,” Jackson Walker, January 24, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> The White House, “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship,” January 21, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Pullig et al., “A Summary of President Trump’s Immigration-Related Executive Orders – Jackson Walker.”

<sup>4</sup> The White House, “Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States,” January 21, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> The White House, “Securing Our Borders,” January 21, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Bernd Debusmann Jr, “As Trump Ramps up Immigration Raids, Some Migrants Go Underground,” BBC, January 29, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Samantha Lim, “ICE Agents Tried to Enter Downtown SF Office Buildings, Janitors Union Says,” *KQED*, February 7, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> “Profile of the Unauthorized Population: San Francisco County, CA,” Migration Policy Institute, n.d.

## DACA Rights

As of March 31st, 2023, there are an estimated 164,320 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients in California, with 11,270 living in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area alone.<sup>9</sup> The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program allows people who came to the United States as children without documentation to file for deferred action on deportation for up to two years, and it can be renewed.<sup>10</sup><sup>11</sup>

On September 13th, 2023, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas issued a decision deeming DACA illegal, and only those who received their initial DACA status before July 16th, 2021 could continue to file for renewal. While people can still file for DACA status, their applications will not be processed.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, DACA renewal fees have steadily increased over recent years, with the most recent price bump being \$555 if filing online or \$605 if filing via paper/mail.<sup>13</sup> While there are fee waivers, the criteria are highly specific:

homeless or unhoused, under 18 and in Foster Care or lacking parental support, disabled and have very low income, income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or have very high debt.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the fee waiver only covers part of the filing fee.



According to the Migration Policy Institute, many undocumented people in San Francisco are either below the poverty level or low-income. The price of DACA filing, even with the fee waiver, makes it harder for undocumented people, especially young people, to renew their status. Furthermore, with court action, DACA rights, even for those who already have DACA status, are at risk of being revoked.

## “City and County of Refuge” Status

In 1989, San Francisco passed the "City and County of Refuge" Ordinance.<sup>15</sup> This ordinance prohibits city employees from using city funds or resources to assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the enforcement of Federal migration law unless such assistance is required by federal or state law.

In 2013, San Francisco passed the “Due Process for All” Ordinance.<sup>16</sup> This ordinance limits when City law enforcement officers may give ICE advance notice of a person’s release from

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<sup>9</sup> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Performance and Quality, “Count of Active DACA Recipients,” March 31, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) | USCIS,” USCIS, January 24, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) | USAGov,” n.d.

<sup>12</sup> “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals,” USCIS, June 3, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> United We Dream, “USCIS Announces DACA Price Increases - United We Dream,” February 23, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> “Additional Information on Filing a Fee Waiver | USCIS,” USCIS, January 25, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> “Sanctuary City Ordinance | SF.gov,” n.d.

<sup>16</sup> “Sanctuary City Ordinance | SF.Gov.”



local jail. It also prohibits cooperation with ICE detainer requests, sometimes referred to as “ICE holds.”

The “City and County of Refuge” Ordinance establishes protections for undocumented people stricter than state regulations.<sup>17</sup> The Ordinance promotes public trust and cooperation, helping communities, regardless of status, to feel safe when cooperating with City agencies. Additionally, it ensures that undocumented residents can safely access City-funded programs such as healthcare and other benefits.

While these protections have been in place for the past few decades, current federal legislation is putting San Francisco’s status as a “City and County of Refuge” at risk. For example, the President’s Executive Order, “Protecting the American People Against Invasion”, would deny federal funds to similar jurisdictions across the country, highlighting the need for this status to be protected both on the local and state level.<sup>18,19</sup>

### **Access to Higher Education**

In the United States, there are an estimated 408,000 undocumented students in higher education, with 86,805 in California alone.<sup>20</sup> Many state-level protections have been set in place to ensure higher education is accessible for undocumented students. For example, Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540), enacted in 2001 and amended by subsequent legislation, allows eligible nonresident students, including undocumented individuals, who have met specific California schooling and graduation requirements, to pay in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities in California.<sup>21,22</sup> Additionally, the California Dream Act allows undocumented students and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients (valid or expired) to receive/apply for certain types of financial aid such as private scholarships funded through public universities, state-administered financial aid, university grants, community college fee waivers, and Cal Grants.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, many public and private universities (University of San Francisco, San Francisco State, UCSF, and City College of San Francisco) across San Francisco have undocumented student resource centers, supporting students in accessing financial support, legal assistance, academic counseling, and more.<sup>24</sup>

While these policies provide financial assistance in accessing higher education for undocumented students, they still cannot access federal aid or work on-campus jobs, making these fees too expensive for students to afford. A campus job would



<sup>17</sup> “Sanctuary City Ordinance | SF.Gov.”

<sup>18</sup> The White House, “Protecting the American People Against Invasion,” January 21, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Ana B. Ibarra, “Trump Wants to Break California’s Sanctuary State Law: 5 Things to Know,” *CalMatters*, January 29, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> “California - Data on Immigrant Students | Higher Ed Immigration Portal,” Presidents’ Alliance, November 18, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> “California Nonresident Tuition Exemption | California Student Aid Commission,” n.d.

<sup>22</sup> San Francisco State University, “AB 540 & Undocumented Students,” n.d.

<sup>23</sup> California Student Aid Commission, “California Dream Act FAQ,” 2021.

<sup>24</sup> “City DREAM,” CCSF, n.d.

allow undocumented students to cover these tuition differences and pay major expenses such as housing, transportation, and food. According to CalMatters, a nonprofit organization that covers California state policies, many undocumented students are forced to seek employment as independent contractors or find under-the-table jobs, which can be rampant with labor exploitation.<sup>25</sup> Attempts to allow undocumented students to work on campus, such as Assemblymember Alvarez's Assembly Bill 2586 and the UC proposal to hire undocumented students, have either been vetoed or rejected.<sup>26,27,28</sup>

Additionally, while San Francisco and California are a safe City and State, respectively, for undocumented people, and many universities in the city provide information on how students should deal with ICE agents, the City College of San Francisco is the only campus that limits cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), protecting undocumented students from deportation. With more rumors of sightings of ICE agents around college campuses in San Francisco, many undocumented students are scared or uncomfortable about going to campus.<sup>29</sup> According to one undocumented student at San Francisco State University, "I feel like I'm limiting my access to going out to more public places with my friends or taking public transportation."<sup>30</sup>

### Youth Commission Involvement

Undocumented youth rights and newcomer pathways have been topics in the Youth Commission Budget and Policy Priorities from the 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2018-2019 terms.

During the 2021-2022 term, Commissioners Asfaw, Santos, Listana, Shaw, Catubig, Foley, and Pimentel established the Transformative Justice Workgroup. One of the main priorities of this Workgroup was newcomer support and services. To educate themselves more on this topic, Commissioners reached out to many organizations in San Francisco that worked with undocumented people to hear more about the challenges they experienced.



On February 28th, 2022, the Transformative Justice Workgroup heard a presentation from La Raza, an organization that provides legal services to undocumented people to educate themselves more on the issues they face.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Mikhail Zinshteyn and Adam Echelman, "College Campuses Can't Hire Undocumented Students. How That Might Change in California," *CalMatters*, September 22, 2024.

<sup>26</sup> Zinshteyn and Echelman, "College Campuses Can't Hire Undocumented Students. How That Might Change in California."

<sup>27</sup> Mikhail Zinshteyn, "UC Rejects Proposal to Allow Campuses to Hire Undocumented Students," *CalMatters*, January 26, 2024.

<sup>28</sup> Leo Rodriguez, "How California Can Simplify the Financial Aid Process for Undocumented Students," *CalMatters*, May 25, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Daniela Haro, "ICE Rumors Spark Uneasiness for SFSU's First Week Back," *Golden Gate Xpress*, n.d.

<sup>30</sup> Haro, "ICE Rumors Spark Uneasiness for SFSU's First Week Back."

<sup>31</sup> "La Raza Community Resource Center," La Raza Community Resource Center, n.d.

## Recommendations

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to:

1. **The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor continue to honor San Francisco’s “City and County of Refuge” status** – San Francisco is a city where undocumented people are supposed to be shielded from the national government’s newcomer laws. ICE raids have launched a wave of uncertainty among the general public as agents enter homes without warrants.
2. **All San Francisco families facing deportation have access to guaranteed legal support via the Public Defender and community organizations.**
3. **All higher-education campuses in San Francisco should limit cooperation with ICE agents and establish clear policies on how campuses should protect undocumented students and allow undocumented students to seek employment on campus.**
4. **Support for community organizations that provide assistance for newcomers and undocumented families in San Francisco** – including La Raza, Latino Task Force, Mission Neighborhood Center, CANA, etc.

## **MAKE A COMMITMENT TO NUTRITIOUS, CULTURALLY RELEVANT MEALS AT SFUSD**

*The Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to improve the quality of SFUSD school meals to be more culturally relevant, increase funding to expand supplemental food services, and ensure accountability for the establishment of the SFUSD Central Kitchen.*

### **Background**

Food insecurity is one of the most detrimental youth issues in our city. In San Francisco, 15% of all households with children are food insecure. The 2019 San Francisco Community Health Needs Assessment reported that 2 in 3 youth do not eat 5 servings of fresh food daily. These students are at higher risk for chronic health conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, among others.

According to Feeding America, childhood food insecurity also leads to poorer academic performance. A recent study from Brown University found that the highest level of food-insecure students faced 40% greater rates of absenteeism than other food-secure students. Given that SFUSD's already-tightened budget revolves around Average Daily Attendance (ADA), it is critical to ensure that students' nutrition needs are met.

In 2019 and later in 2023, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Student Nutrition Services (SNS) recognized the importance of the quality and cultural diversity of school meals. The program promised to provide a more culturally relevant menu and implement the most current research on child health into their nutrition practices. As of 2024, SFUSD provides the most food to students in the entire city. These schools are often the main source of nutritious meals for many students.<sup>1</sup>

However, students and other SFUSD community members have repeatedly expressed concerns about the quality of SNS's nutrition programs. The San Francisco Youth Commission has consistently advocated for increasing support for city-funded food programs in alignment with this strong youth sentiment.<sup>2</sup> Making high-quality school meals more accessible over longer hours and across all SFUSD schools is vital to sustaining student health and future success in schools.

### **Youth Commission Involvement**

In January 2025, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION No. 2425-AL-03, urging an increase in outreach and funding for city-funded food programs to address food insecurity. The Youth Commission's 2024-2025 Budget and Policy Priority Proposals (BPPs) addressed food and nutritional insecurity, especially in low-income communities and communities of color, where health, developmental, and psychological effects are direct consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership, "San Francisco Community Health Needs Assessment 2019" (City and County of San Francisco, April 2021).

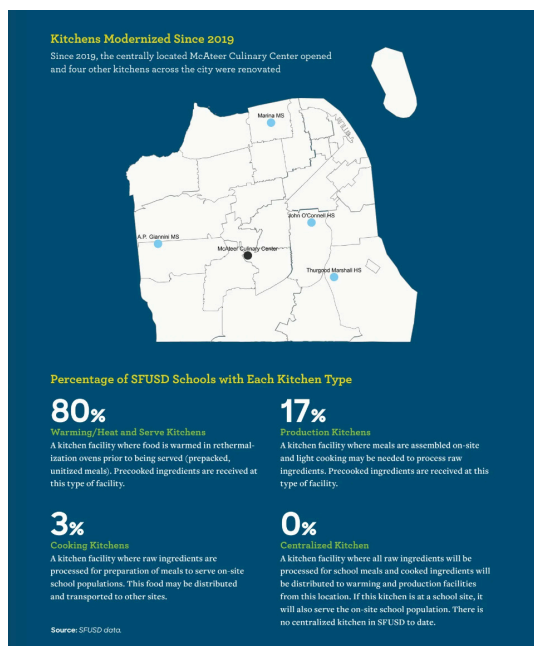
<sup>2</sup> Skylar Dang et al., "RESOLUTION NO. 2425-AL-03," March 2, 2025.

## SFUSD School Meals

Currently, SFUSD partners with Refresh and Revolution Foods to produce student meals.<sup>3</sup> Revolution Foods meals are all pre-packaged and delivered to school sites daily from the Revolution Foods facility in San Lorenzo, California. The Refresh menu is only available to schools with an on-site kitchen facility, where meals are prepared fresh using locally grown, small-business-sourced ingredients.<sup>4</sup> Currently, only 40% of the district’s students—11 middle schools and 8 high schools—follow the Refresh nutrition program. All other schools in SFUSD get their meals from Revolution Foods.

Overall, Refresh meals are more appetizing than Revolution. Consuming higher-quality ingredients and fresh-cooked meals is also linked to higher academic performance and attendance, stronger memory and concentration, increased participation,<sup>5</sup> and the likelihood of pursuing higher education.<sup>67</sup>

However, two overall issues with both Refresh and Revolution Foods are taste and cultural diversity. Revolution Foods received especially negative reviews; students skipped lunch altogether due to the poor quality and small portions of food.<sup>8</sup> In November 2023, the Youth Commission held a listening session for SFUSD students from Districts 9 and 11 to gather opinions on what the Student Success Fund should be spent on. Many students at the Listening Session mentioned incorporating a wider variety of culturally conscious food options.



## Supplemental Food in SFUSD

SFUSD does not provide supplemental food options other than breakfast and lunch. Only a select number of facilities serve supper for students, and there isn’t a set budget for schools to fund additional food. However, according to SFUSD Child Nutrition Program Manager Hannah Smith, students need meal options outside of typical lunch hours. Students are left hungry in class and often rely on Wellness Centers for snacks; additional food is one of the most in-demand goods in Wellness Centers.

Food insufficiency among youth is also higher in the summer since students do not have access to the school meals available during the academic year.<sup>9</sup> Despite the increased rate of food insecurity over break, 70% of eligible students do not participate in the Summer Lunch Program.

<sup>3</sup> “Lunch | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>4</sup> “Lunch | SFUSD.”

<sup>5</sup> EdSource Commentaries, “We Must Continue to Improve the Quality of School Nutrition in California,” *EdSource*, May 30, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Center for Ecoliteracy, *MAKING THE CASE for Healthy, Freshly Prepared School Meals* (Learning in the Real World, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Hinrichs, “The Effects of the National School Lunch Program on Education and Health,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 29, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 479–505.

<sup>8</sup> MacKenzie Chung Fegan and Cesar Hernandez, “How Bad Are S.F. Public School Lunches? We Sent Our Restaurant Critics to Find Out,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 16, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> “School Meals Play a Critical Role in Student Health, Well-Being, and Academic Success,” July 2019.

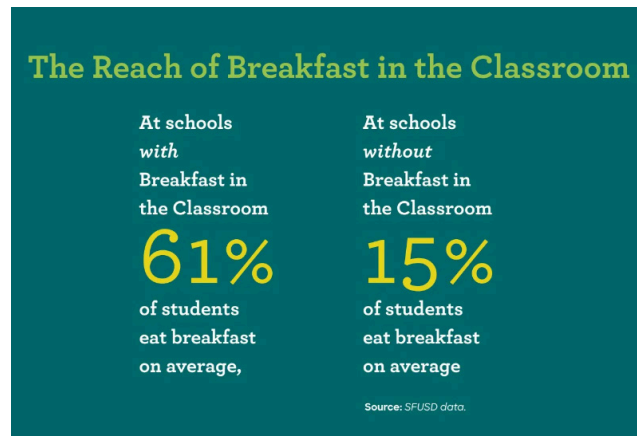
Supplemental food needs can be met with classroom initiatives like Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC), Second Chance Breakfast, and Grab and Go Breakfast, which are recognized by SFUSD’s SNS (pg. 58-60). BIC enables school breakfast to be delivered directly to students in their morning class. Second Chance Breakfast packages breakfast at a fixed location on campus for students to grab between class



SNS pivoted to commercial units for their grab and go mobile carts because they included a mechanical cold holding unit.

61

periods. Grab and Go Breakfast expands the in-school breakfast services by distributing pre-packaged breakfasts to students in high-traffic areas throughout campus.



SFUSD Data shows that ~61% of students in schools with BIC eat breakfast, compared to ~15% of students in schools without BIC. BIC also addresses food equity issues by giving every student an opportunity to have breakfast in the classroom; the meals provide a reliable source of nutrition and help students develop healthy eating habits. Schools with BIC have also seen a decrease in the number of visits to the nurse’s office, complaints of hunger, and behavioral issues. Chuck Waters, a Visitacion Valley Social worker, states, “Maybe our biggest academic

intervention is having breakfast every day. Having the extra food in the school is huge. It is definitely getting eaten. And I think it does show love for your students. Our school’s mission is love, liberty, and liberation, and breakfast is under the love category.”

### SFUSD Central Kitchen

In the next few years, SFUSD aims to establish a central kitchen to produce Refresh meals for all schools in SFUSD. Schools with kitchen facilities serve meals that students are more likely to finish; the kitchen can also be used to cook meals for schools without the proper facilities.



McAteer provides meals for 11 standalone early education centers located throughout the city. A centralized kitchen would be able to serve approximately 90 additional schools and become a location for dining staff training.

For example, in McAteer High School, the opening of the Culinary Center has led to a 200% increase in breakfast and lunch participation. The center also provides meals for 11 standalone early education centers. A student from McAteer states, “ It helps students be able to focus. I feel it makes school more fun to come to.”

Given the success of scratch cooking—preparing food from scratch using fresh ingredients—in McAteer High School, a central kitchen could reciprocate similar highlights. SFUSD data projects that a

Source: SFUSD data.

centralized kitchen would be able to serve Refresh food to approximately 90 additional schools and become a location for dining staff training.

Financially, the Chef Ann Foundation estimates that a central kitchen could save the district millions of dollars a year in operating expenses, increase access to fresh food by 23%, and provide overall more nutritious meals. Additionally, this model is cost-effective, able to sustainably feed students district-wide, and helps the district reach its goal of eliminating 80% of packaged meals.

### **Proposition A**

SFUSD lists the Prop A General Obligation (GO) Bond approved by voters in November 2024 as the main source of funding for kitchen facilities upgrades.<sup>10</sup> Out of the \$790 million addressed in this bond, \$225 million will be dedicated to constructing newer school kitchens and dining spaces, modernizing kitchen equipment, and building a food warehouse space. In order to maintain transparency, SFUSD must regularly communicate with an independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC). The CBOC reviews and reports quarterly on how the G.O. Bond money is spent.

Only a portion of the \$225 million allotted for SNS is dedicated to starting—but not completing—the design of a central kitchen. SFUSD plans to finish the construction of the central kitchen using future bonds and other sources of funding. With such a small percentage of the bond money being allocated to this project and no guarantee for future funding, there is a possibility that the central kitchen may be discontinued mid-development.

The Youth Commission is concerned with this fund allocation. By trying to cover both infrastructure upgrades and the design of a central kitchen with one tightly budgeted bond, SFUSD risks inadequately solving either issue. In order to ensure the best solution for both facility concerns, the 2024 GO Bond should focus on essential renovations, and another bond should be issued to properly carry out the building of a central kitchen.

Despite their detailed plans for the 2024 Bond, SFUSD failed to reach enough youth voices when it conducted its facilities and funding research.<sup>11</sup> Only 233 voices out of the ~50,000 students and ~9,000 staff in SFUSD were taken into account through public surveys. 44% of school sites did not participate in any direct outreach, and 83% of all school sites did not receive a presentation on SFUSD's renovation plans.

### **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

- 1. Urge the School Board to allocate a new bond dedicated to establishing the SFUSD Central Kitchen** – Given that SFUSD is under a tight fiscal budget and Prop A only covers \$790 million for both renovating school facilities and building a new central

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<sup>10</sup> SFUSD, "2023 Facilities Master Plan" (San Francisco Unified School District, February 19, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> "20240514 2024 GO Bond Adoption to BOE\_final.pdf," Google Docs, n.d.

kitchen, allocating a new bond for the SFUSD Central Kitchen would realistically benefit the establishment of a central kitchen.

- a. Prioritize using Prop A funds on essential school facility renovations** – Regularly communicate with the Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee to ensure all funds are spent efficiently and with the utmost transparency. Encourage the committee to meet during youth-friendly hours.
- 2. Urge SFUSD to restore the School Food Advisory Program<sup>12</sup>** – Designate SNS team members to gather SFUSD student input on school meals. This advisory program should provide quarterly reports on menu planning, present to the school board and SFUSD Student Advisory Council each May, and communicate regularly with SNS, school chefs, and families. The Youth Commission acknowledges that while SFUSD is undergoing a budget deficit, this program will be beneficial to augmenting student experiences. We recommend restoring this program when it is fiscally responsible.
- 3. Integrate student feedback on school meals** – Using the data collected from Recommendation 2, develop a new and comprehensive SFUSD menu with culturally diverse options that fit the SNS Nutrition Guidelines.
- 4. Continue addressing increased food insecurity over school breaks** – Provide consistent funding and outreach for SFUSD Summer Meal programs, including SUN Bucks, the Summer Food Service Program, and the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Collaborate with youth-centric CBOs to provide food distribution sites in low-income neighborhoods over breaks.
- 5. Increase supplemental food provided in SFUSD schools** – Dedicate funding for all SFUSD schools to provide after-school supplemental meals (ie, snacks and supper) for students. Increase existing funding for SNS programs, especially Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC).

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<sup>12</sup> “Food Culture | SFUSD,” n.d.



## CONTINUE AND INCREASE SUPPORT FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to increase existing funding for SFUSD wellness centers and youth development programs with an emphasis on those providing mental health, drug, and substance use, and academic and college/career student support services.*

### **Background**

Community-based organizations (CBOs) and school wellness centers have long been an important cornerstone of student well-being and development. CBOs that partner with schools to offer on-campus services are often the most accessible for students. In San Francisco’s current fiscal climate, many services directly impacting youth, including those that provide said in-school support, are at risk of budget cuts. This severely curtails their ability to support youth across the city.

Wellness centers were implemented in San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) schools to make mental and physical health care services readily accessible to all students and to cultivate a sense of safety and belonging.<sup>12</sup> During the pandemic, the need for mental health services skyrocketed among youth.<sup>3</sup> Now, these centers have grown to be one of the most important services offered on campus. Serving 16,000 public high school students across 19 SFUSD campuses, the centers act as one of the most accessible places for getting comprehensive support from licensed staff.

SFUSD has also adopted three interim goals for 2022-2027 – 1) Increasing third-grade literacy to 70% by October 2027; 2) Increasing math proficiency by 65% by October 2026 (measured by the state tests in Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Math); and 3) Increase the percentage of all high school 12th graders to be “college/career ready” to 70% by June 2027.<sup>4</sup> Investing in CBOs that offer on-site academic and college support for students will not only push SFUSD towards accomplishing these goals but will also benefit student learning.

However, in the most recent 2024-2029 Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF) Request For Proposal (RFP) Cycle, CBOs requested \$414,713,817, and only \$92,017,300 was granted to 231 out of the 698 proposals submitted. 66.9% of CBOs that requested funding did not receive any funds at all.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, SFUSD’s budget deficit has led to a reduction of funding for materials and full-time staff.

The Youth Commission has consistently advocated for increased funding for both wellness centers and school-based CBOs. The 2023-24 Youth Commission passed a motion of positive recommendation for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) Charter Amendment which supported accountability on behalf of city departments and the school district for funding children and

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<sup>1</sup> “SF Wellness Initiative | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>2</sup> “SFUSD Expands Access to Health and Wellness Supports for Students | SFUSD,” August 6, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> “COVID-19 Pandemic Associated With Worse Mental Health and Accelerated Brain Development in Adolescents,” National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), January 26, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “20242-25 Interim Goals and Guardrails,” Slide show, August 27, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> “DCYF Request for Proposals | SF.gov,” n.d.

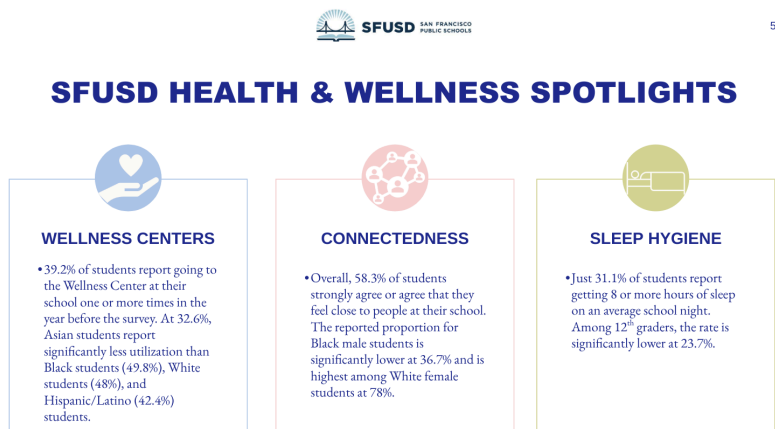
youth services.<sup>6</sup> In the 2020-2021 term, the Youth Commission made a motion of support towards reinvesting over \$100 million in CBOs and youth services.<sup>7</sup>

The Youth Commission has also repeatedly advised expanding and funding SFUSD wellness centers. The Youth Commission’s 2022-2023 Budget and Policy Priority Proposals (BPPs) advocated for increased and diversified staffing, as well as increased investment in restorative practices and peer resources programs.<sup>8</sup> In older BPPs such as the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 proposals, youth commissioners advised the Board of Supervisors to expand wellness centers and increase said centers’ staff.

Finally, the Youth Commission has also commended the efforts of various CBOs that provided in-school aid to students, including United Playaz ([RESOLUTION No. 2324-RC-01]) and the San Francisco Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center ([RESOLUTION 2223-RC-01]).<sup>9</sup> In response to the budget cuts projected in the DCYF RFP 2024-2029 cycle, the Youth Commission passed Resolution No. 2324-AL-20, urging the Mayor and BOS to amend the proposed funding allocations to youth-serving nonprofits and CBOs and explore additional revenue sources for the Children and Youth Fund.

**Wellness Centers: Mental Health**

Results from the 2023 Youth Behavioral Risk Survey show that “39.2% of students report going to the Wellness Center at their school one or more times in the year before the survey. At 32.6%, Asian students report significantly less utilization than Black students (49.8%), White students (48%), and Hispanic/Latino students (42.4%).”<sup>11</sup>



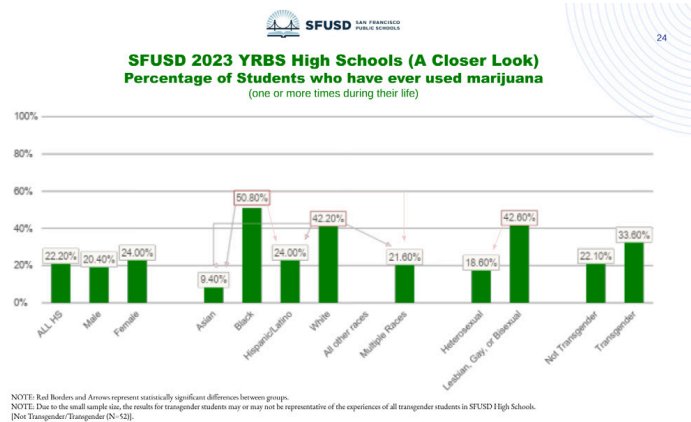
Many school wellness centers also work in conjunction with clinics that are part of Community Health Programs for Youth (CHPY) to provide medical and reproductive care for San Franciscan youth. Having these therapy services at wellness centers allows students who do not have supportive parents/caregivers to access mental health services with the protection of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

<sup>6</sup> “Legislations Referred | Youth Commission,” n.d.  
<sup>7</sup> “Legislation 2019-2020 | Youth Commission,” n.d.  
<sup>8</sup> San Francisco Youth Commission, “2022-2023 Budget and Policy Priorities Report,” *Sfgov.Org*, March 2023.  
<sup>9</sup> Linda Ye, Skylar Dang, and Ewan Barker Plummer, “RESOLUTION NO. 2324-RC-01,” April 1, 2024.  
<sup>10</sup> Ewan Barker Plummer, Astrid Utting, and Gabrielle Listana, “Recognition of LYRIC Center for LGBTQ Youth,” *Sfgov.Org*, March 20, 2023.  
<sup>11</sup> “SFUSD HS YRBS 2023 Results and Trends.pptx,” Google Docs, n.d.

One major issue SFUSD Wellness Centers continue to face is the lack of language-based therapy. In the 2022-2023 BPP, the Youth Commission found that there is a lack of diverse representation in the wellness centers. Statistics show that Black students are the least likely to report having a trusted adult at school and the most likely to state that their school mental health professional cannot understand their situation due to racial or ethnic differences.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese Progressive Association’s 2017 survey (of nearly 1000 SFUSD students), found that the SFUSD wellness centers currently do not meet the cultural and linguistic needs of its students and families. This issue persists in SFUSD, hurting schools with the highest populations of newcomer youth the most. There has subsequently been a rise in mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicide among youth of color, as reflected in SFUSD’s administered.<sup>13,14</sup>

### Wellness Centers: Drug and Substance Use

Drug and substance use among youth in SFUSD has continually risen over the past decade. SFUSD’s 2023 Youth Behavioral Risk Survey reveals that 22.2% of high school students—and 50.8% of Black-identifying high school students—have used marijuana one or more times. 7.8% of students report using marijuana on school property in the 30 days before the survey.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, 11.1% of high school students report ever taking prescription medications without a prescription; 4.5% report ever using inhalants; 3.2% ecstasy; 2.9% cocaine; 1.8% methamphetamines; and 1.3% heroin.<sup>4</sup>



### SFUSD STUDENT ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE SPOTLIGHTS

**BINGE DRINKING 10+**

- Overall, 1.5% of students report that the largest number of alcoholic drinks they had in a row was 10 or more. White students and Hispanic/Latino students report higher rates at 3.4% and 2.5%, respectively.

**OTHER DRUG USE**

- Overall, 11.1% report ever taking prescription medications without a prescription; 4.5% report ever using inhalants; 3.2% ecstasy; 2.9% cocaine; 1.8% methamphetamines; and 1.3% heroin.

**POT USE AT SCHOOL**

- 7.8% of students report using marijuana on school property in the 30 days before the survey. Reported rates are higher among Black (17.5%) and White (17.0%) students.

There has also been increased accessibility to illicit drugs at school.<sup>15</sup> 13.3% of high school students were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property; 9.8% of high school students used an electronic vapor product on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey (slide 31) with 20.9% of students identifying as Black; and at the high school level, 1.9% of all students report using electronic vapor products daily, ranging from 0.7% reported use among Asian students to 9.9% for Black or African American students. These statistics underline the

<sup>12</sup> Naaz Modan, “Survey: Third of Students Reluctant to Seek Help for Mental Health Issues,” *K-12 Dive*, May 23, 2022.  
<sup>13</sup> “Our Healing in Our Hands Campaign,” Chinese Progressive Association, n.d.  
<sup>14</sup> Mara Cavallaro, “Fuerte Program Provides Mental Health Education for Arriving Immigrant Youth,” *El Tecolote*, December 3, 2022.  
<sup>15</sup> Zara Abrams, “More Teens Than Ever Are Overdosing. Psychologists Are Leading New Approaches to Combat Youth Substance Misuse,” *Monitor on Psychology* 55, no. 2 (March 1, 2024).

prevalent distribution and usage of drugs, calling for restorative solutions to fund drug-focused support programs and mental health services.<sup>1617</sup>

The existing health curriculum fails to comprehensively cover the relevant drugs students may encounter. Truant youth are also at higher risk of engaging in substance use, preventing them from receiving drug awareness education despite needing drug education the most. Individualized support is crucial for these students.<sup>181920</sup>

However, wellness centers have also faced significant barriers to providing this support. Staffing issues and recent hiring freezes have prevented the onboarding of licensed clinicians who can provide professional intervention. This lack of expertise, combined with overall low staffing numbers, has barred substance-using youth from getting adequate support.

### **Community-Based Organizations: Mental Health**

Aside from Wellness Centers, CBOs can also provide on-campus youth reproductive services, mental health support, and drug awareness resources to students in need. These CBOs have also been at risk of budget cuts.

The 3rd Street Youth Clinic provides free therapy and behavioral health services to SFUSD students on-site in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and CHPY. Clinic Staff have responded to schools' needs by providing sexual health presentations. Two of the center's youth programs – Youth Outreach Squad and Health Core – have also engaged in harm reduction and sexual health workshops, promoting educational resources to benefit youth.

The Bayview Hunters Point Association (BHPA) provides both individual and group therapy, rehabilitation services, targeted case management, crisis intervention, and psychiatry. BHPA has also worked with truant students at several San Francisco public schools to provide counseling and substance abuse programs. The CBO has also supported youth in navigating drug usage, which is especially prevalent under San Francisco's Drug Crisis landscape.

Tech@Hand, a branch of the Mental Health Association, provides digital literacy to access online mental health support services to transitional-aged youth (TAY) and socially isolated transgender adults. According to data from 2022-2024, 73% of participants were unhoused at enrollment, and 38% identified as transitional-aged youth. Without access to technology or digital literacy, these youth remain disconnected from resources vital to their stability, well-being, and connection. To date, Tech@Hand has provided community-led digital skills training to over 200 unduplicated participants and over 120 community members.

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<sup>16</sup> Caroline Miller, "Mental Health Disorders and Teen Substance Use," Child Mind Institute, June 5, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Abrams, "More Teens Than Ever Are Overdosing. Psychologists Are Leading New Approaches to Combat Youth Substance Misuse."

<sup>18</sup> "SFUSD HS YRBS 2023 Results and Trends.Pptx," n.d.

<sup>19</sup> Jill Tucker and Nami Sumida, "Nearly 90% of Kids at One S.F. School Were Chronically Absent Last Year. What Is SFUSD Doing About It?," San Francisco Chronicle, September 23, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Kimberly L. Henry and Terence P. Thornberry, "Truancy and Escalation of Substance Use During Adolescence," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 71, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 115–24.

### Community-Based Organizations: Academic/College Support

Access to academic and college services is especially limited in areas with more low-income youth of color.<sup>21</sup> San Francisco is host to numerous CBOs that address these resource disparities by offering academic and college support to underrepresented students.

The Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC) provides free tutoring support for under-resourced students throughout San Francisco, equipping them with the resources to prepare students for higher education and academic success. JCYC’s College Access Programs, like Educational Talent Search (ETS), Upward Bound, and California Student Opportunity help over 3,000 SFUSD first-generation students from low-income backgrounds achieve higher education. The programs provide high school students with financial aid, academic development, and career exploration opportunities. Because of their impact, 96% of participants were promoted to the next grade or graduated from high school.

The Community Youth Center (CYC) operates on multiple school-based sites, offering literacy and academic support. Specifically, STAMP (Supporting Transitions & Aspirations Mentorship Program) supports AAPI high school sophomores and juniors with monthly one-on-one mentorship, giving them essential guidance with college applications, financial literacy, and additional academic support. However, they only received partial funding in the 2024-2029 RFP Cycle.

In the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood, Young Community Developers (YCD) provides tutoring, mentorship, and college readiness through their collaborations with 100% College Prep and Inner City Youth.

Primarily serving Black, Latinx, and newcomer communities residing in the Bayview-Hunters Point, these critical services address systemic inequities in resource disparities for academic and college support.<sup>22,23</sup>



In the Excelsior and Mission, Mission Graduates provides academic development and college preparation for low-income Latinx, Black, and newcomer youth.<sup>24</sup> However, they are only operating with one grant from DCYF – their only source of funding – to support hundreds of youths.

<sup>21</sup> “DCYF Community Needs Assessment | SF.gov,” January 1, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> “100% College Prep,” 100% College Prep Institute, n.d.

<sup>23</sup> “About ICY — Inner City Youth Sf,” Inner City Youth Sf, n.d.

<sup>24</sup> “Mission Graduates | Making College the Expectation for Mission Youth and Families,” Mission Graduates, January 4, 2024.

Across San Francisco, Boys & Girls Clubs provide homework and SAT/ACT assistance through their Power Hour program and Teen Center.<sup>25</sup> They also offer opportunities for career exploration and college prep through workshops and mentorships.

Despite their overwhelmingly positive impact, the previous three CBOs mentioned above received zero funding for college preparation services in the 2024-2029 DCYF RFP Cycle.

## **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors of San Francisco to collaborate with the Board of Education to:

**Secure consistent funding for Community-Based Organizations that work directly with schools to support youth** – take needed actions to ensure school-partnered CBOs have the funding necessary to run their youth development programs. The Youth Commission advocates for overall increased funding for the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF) to preserve the pivotal enrichment programs they support.

- 1. Explore additional options for potential CBO funding** – to lessen the fiscal impact on DCYF and to help fulfill a greater percentage of CBO proposals for funding.
- 2. Fund CBOs across various sectors of youth development**
  - a. Mental Health CBOs: Mental Health Association, Mission Neighborhood Centers, and Southeast Child Family Therapy Center
  - b. Drug Awareness and Reproductive Health CBOs: 3rd Street Youth Clinic and Center, Bayview Hunters Point Association, and Mission Neighborhood Health Center
  - c. College and Career Preparation CBOs: JCYC, CYC, YCD, Mission Graduates, Boys and Girls Club, and Richmond Neighborhood Center

**Advise SFUSD to allocate more funding for SFUSD Wellness Centers:**

- 3. Continue providing resources for Wellness Centers** – including free therapy sessions, spare clothing, menstrual products, first-aid supplies, and food.
- 4. Increase professional development for Wellness Center staff** – ensure that students can receive support from trusted mental health care professionals. Meeting students' needs with expertise and compassion fosters a positive wellness center experience and can encourage students to seek out further assistance in the future.
- 5. Improve communication for the Community Health Programs for Youth Clinic** – Improve response time and quality to youth calls. Students often get no response from CHPY's referral appointment system, barring them from receiving help.

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<sup>25</sup> "Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco | Academic Support," n.d.

6. **Increase funding for clinically trained substance-use counselors** – Hire 2-3 counselors to work with students weekly to understand the health consequences of substance use and develop prevention strategies.
7. **Increase funding for language-based therapy services and staff** – Hire bilingual staff, therapists, and social workers to support monolingual newcomer youth. Access to therapy is constrained by language barriers. The highest demand for language-based therapy is in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish.

## WORKFORCE AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ACCESS

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to provide increased funding to programs that expand access to trade schools and employment opportunities, particularly to youth in low-income communities and communities of color, to promote economic stability and career development.*

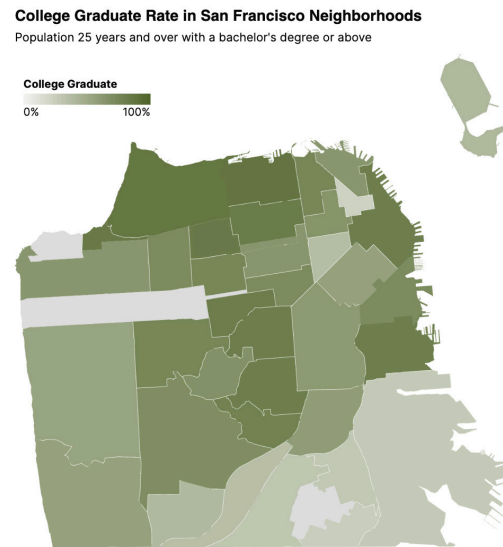
### Background

For many years, youth in San Francisco and the broader Bay Area have struggled to find stable career opportunities. The city of San Francisco has experienced significant economic transformation due to the tech boom as well as increasing housing prices starting in the 1990s. While some people became better off, these changes also intensified the divide between the available opportunities for many working adults and youth, specifically for those who do not have advanced degrees or specialized skills, and the highly paying tech jobs. These economic changes, increasing prices, and rising competition within the job market have made it challenging for young people to attain stable employment. Traditional four-year college pathways are not always an option, particularly for youth from neighborhoods like Chinatown, Bayview Hunters Point, and Tenderloin, due to financial and systemic barriers.

In the Chinatown neighborhood, the college graduation rate is 23%, Bayview Hunters Point is 27%, and Tenderloin is 36%.<sup>1</sup> Transitional-aged youth (TAY) in California face particularly steep challenges in finding stable employment, with 9.3% of 20 to 24-year-olds either unemployed or disconnected from education and work.<sup>2</sup> Trade and vocational programs equip students with practical skills and open doors to well-paying jobs without the burden of long-term student debt. These efforts have helped connect some youth to new career paths, particularly in high-demand fields like technology, entrepreneurship, and healthcare. However, these programs remain limited in scale and don't reach all vulnerable populations, highlighting the ongoing disparities in access. The new working generations should be able to fill this vocational gap to ensure that affordable resources are available for young people of any background, as this directly leads to stable, well-paying jobs, breaks the cycle of financial disparity, and offers an opportunity to create a successful future.

### Youth Employment Programs

San Francisco offers many youth employment programs, such as SFUSD Summer Internships, Code Tenderloin, Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP), San Francisco YouthWorks, Opportunities for All (OFA), SF Stem Academy, and SFTech. Many of these



<sup>1</sup> Jiyun Tsai, "One in Three Homes in This San Francisco Neighborhood Lives Below the Poverty Line," The San Francisco Standard, December 8, 2022

<sup>2</sup> California Employment Development Department, "California Labor Market Top Statistics," n.d.



programs are funded through the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). As a result of the 2024-2029 RFP (Request for Proposals) and adjustment to the city's budget deficit, many of the programs that relied on this funding either received little or no funding at all. Out of the \$414,713,817 for 698 proposals submitted, only \$93,467,300 for 234 proposals were granted. Many programs experienced major budget cuts or even had to stop programming as a result of their lack of funding.<sup>3</sup>

On January 9th, Mayor Daniel Lurie announced to city department heads that the administration is enacting a hiring freeze, calling for justifications and closer scrutiny of new hires to “ensure effective delivery of core government services.”<sup>4</sup> Youth jobs were impacted by this hiring freeze, as seen with the Recreation and Parks Department job applications (such as internships and summer camps) being paused. While they were unpaused after a day, there is still uncertainty surrounding how much these new hiring measures will impact youth internships and jobs with city departments.

### **Trade Schools**

A vocational school, also called a trade school or career school, provides specialized education designed to equip students with the practical skills and expertise needed for high-demand careers in various fields. Trade schools and programs offer a direct path to success, providing hands-on training for careers in industries like automotive, construction, HVAC, and healthcare. In countries like Germany and Switzerland, vocational education is highly regarded, with trade schools playing a central role in preparing students for stable, well-paying careers.<sup>5</sup> These countries have integrated apprenticeships and vocational programs into their education systems, allowing students to transition smoothly from education to skilled labor. Additionally, in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, individuals with vocational certifications often experience higher employment rates and job security compared to those with only academic degrees.<sup>6</sup> The three main providers of trade programs in San Francisco are the City College of San Francisco (CCSF), the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) apprenticeship program, and the Bay Area Medical Academy (BAMA). They offer certifications for automotive, construction, HVAC, and healthcare trades. Approximately 31% of all jobs in San Francisco consist of trade jobs such as construction, transportation, manufacturing, education, and health services.<sup>7</sup> With the growing demand for skilled labor and the rising cost of living, it is more urgent than ever to expand these initiatives. However, many youth in San Francisco face barriers to accessing these valuable resources, such as funding constraints, limited availability, and transportation challenges, which can make it harder to enter these in-demand fields. According to high school students surveyed by DCYF in 2021, more than 80% reported an interest in jobs and internships, and 65% of the high school students surveyed expressed interest in career preparation programs/activities. Only 43%, according to parents/caregivers of the survey respondents, agreed that they had access to job training for their TAY-aged child.<sup>8</sup> In response, San Francisco has implemented several programs aimed at improving employment access, such as the Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC), Larkin Street Youth Services, and Enterprise for Youth, but these programs need more support.

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<sup>3</sup> “DCYF Request for Proposals | SF.gov,” n.d.

<sup>4</sup> Joe Eskenazi, “San Francisco’s Citywide Hiring Freeze Is Neither Citywide, nor a Hiring Freeze,” *Mission Local*, January 28, 2025

<sup>5</sup> “Gold Standard: The Swiss Vocational Education and Training System,” report, *National Center on Education and the Economy*, 2015

<sup>6</sup> Sally Weale, “Reforms Announced to Vocational T-levels in England After Slow Uptake,” *The Guardian*, December 2, 2024

<sup>7</sup> “Jobs by Industry - Vital Signs - SF Bay Area,” n.d.

<sup>8</sup> “DCYF Community Needs Assessment | SF.gov,” January 1, 2022

## **Youth Workforce Development**

After graduating from SFUSD, many are faced with the decision of either pursuing higher education or joining the workforce, while some do both. Many do this in order to build a resume for the plan of their future career. However, those in underserved communities like Hunters Point-Bayview, Mission, Alice & Griffith, Sunnysdale, the Tenderloin, etc. face systemic barriers to employment due to transportation, professional networks, lack of funding for programs that assist youth to find employment, etc. With the cost of living on the rise, youth are having difficulties finding affordable housing even while working full-time jobs. Many youths must sustain more than one job, while some juggle higher education and familial duties. This leads to youth, especially Transitional Aged Youth (TAY), becoming homeless. According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 63% of homeless youth in San Francisco are in school or employed, up from 49% in 2022. Specifically, 28% of these youth are employed, an increase from 22% in 2022.<sup>9</sup> To re-emphasize San Francisco's hiring freeze, TAY has been impacted by having difficulty in affording the cost of living in San Francisco.

## **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to:

1. **Establish defined pathways for youth who are transitioning to employment** – The pathway can be created by creating or strengthening partnerships between SFUSD high schools, local community colleges offering career-focused programs or courses, trade/vocational academies, and industry employers. Some ways to initiate this connection would be by hosting job fairs specifically for youth or creating more opportunities for internships, entry-level employment, or apprenticeships. This relationship with these collaborators will provide students with a comprehensive and structured post-graduation plan for students, ensuring that they are well-equipped and have the opportunity to choose the career path they see fit for themselves.
2. **Integrate Equity into Workforce Development** – by making workforce programs such as SF Youth Works, MYEEP, and OFA more accessible in underserved neighborhoods, youth can find opportunities to seek employment in their area. Also, integrating programs to be culturally responsive to ensure that meet the unique needs of BIPOC, newcomer, LGBTQ+, and disabled youth.
3. **Address and dissolve the systemic barriers that prevent youth from reaching employment** – addressing the barriers of transportation, housing stability, and lack of support that affect youth to be unable to uphold any form of employment. Making simple changes like expanding programs that support youth and reintegrate them into education and employment like Project Rebound or Young Community Developers (YCD), and creating pathways for youth to have transitional housing in hand with job opportunities would be a great benefit.

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<sup>9</sup> "2024 Point-in-Time Count | SF.gov," September 6, 2024

## **ACCELERATE EFFORTS TO COMBAT & PREPARE FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH**

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to take urgent action to address climate change by expanding equitable access to public electric vehicle chargers for families, developing a network of respite locations where youth and their families can seek refuge during climate disasters, ensuring that youth voices are included in the process of updating the Climate Action Plan, assessing the impact of sea level rise on buildings that serve youth, increasing youth-led community outreach efforts to ensure the adoption of environmental initiatives in communities, allocating funding for designated green schoolyard coordinators across the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), expanding funding for the San Francisco Environment Department (SFE)'s education program to broaden their curriculum, supporting and increasing teacher training for climate education, creating opportunities to share climate resources across schools, and dedicating a district wide-climate action day for the annual Climate Action Youth Summit organized by SFE.*

### **SCALE UP ELECTRIFICATION & STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE AGAINST CLIMATE DISASTERS**

#### **Climate Change**

Climate change threatens San Francisco youth in the short and long term. The City is already experiencing heightened intensity and frequency of extreme weather events exacerbated by higher global temperatures, including heat waves, air pollution from wildfires, and flooding, which is further compounded by rising sea levels.<sup>1</sup> These impacts place San Francisco's ecosystems, public health, and economy at major risk. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the physical and mental health effects such as heat stroke, lung disease, respiratory infections, and climate anxiety.<sup>2</sup> Youth living in our City today will experience the impacts of climate change 50-75 years into the future. By the end of the century – when children born in 2025 will be 75 years old – they will experience 8-27 more extreme heat days and 3- 6 feet of sea level rise.<sup>34</sup> While San Francisco leads the country on many environmental efforts, we must take additional and larger-scale steps to curb the impacts of climate change.

#### **Electrification of Vehicles & Buildings**

San Francisco has committed to reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.<sup>5</sup> To reach this goal, we will need a range of environmental solutions, including electrification of transportation and buildings which each account for 44% (88% total) of the City's annual emissions.<sup>6</sup> Based on current and projected electric vehicle (EV) ownership, the City needs 5,000 EV charging ports by 2030.<sup>7</sup> This estimate follows Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-79-20, mandating that 100% of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks are

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<sup>1</sup> David Ackerly et al., "California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment: San Francisco Bay Area Region Report" (University of California, Berkeley, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> "Climate Change and Children's Health | US EPA," US EPA, January 14, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> "Extreme Heat and Health | SF.gov," May 17, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> "Sea Level Rise Adaptation | SF Planning," n.d.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Department of Environment, "San Francisco's Climate Action Plan 2021," www.sfenvironment.org, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> "Climate Action at the SFMTA," SFMTA, January 26, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Affirming Support for SFMTA and SFE, in Partnership with Public Works, SFPUC, and SFCTA to Expediently Implement Curbside Electric Vehicle Charging Feasibility Study and Pilot Program, R. 326-24, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (2024).

zero-emission by 2035, a target that could reduce California’s greenhouse gas emissions by 35%.<sup>8</sup> Given that 70% of San Francisco residents live in multi-unit housing and 67% of registered vehicles are parked in multi-unit housing spaces and street parking, it is critical to ensure equitable, convenient access to public chargers.<sup>9</sup>

The City has already made strong progress toward expanding access to EV chargers but must take steps to dramatically scale up these efforts. Currently, there are 0.04 public charging ports per registered EV.<sup>10</sup> San Francisco’s Commercial Garage EV Charging Ordinance (NO244-19) passed in 2019, requires public, commercial garages and parking lots with 100+ parking spaces to install EV chargers at 10% of vehicle spaces.<sup>11</sup> The EV Charge SF program offers up to \$120,000 to encourage the installment of EV chargers in new construction projects.<sup>12</sup> Last March, under Supervisor Mandelman’s leadership, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), SFE, Department of Public Works (DPW), Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and San Francisco County Transportation Agency (SFCTA) launched the Curbside Electric Vehicle Charging Feasibility Study.<sup>13</sup> Findings will inform Curbside EV Charging Pilot Program installations beginning in Dogpatch and Duboce Triangle this year. The San Francisco Department of Environment has received over \$50 million over the last year through eight federal and state grants to support these electrification efforts, including a \$15 million grant in January 2025 from the U.S. Department of Transportation to expand the existing number of charging ports by 30% in parking lots, garages, and curbside spaces, including installation of Level 2 and 3 chargers.<sup>14</sup> The City must install chargers in off-street parking given the limited available curbside space and must focus on level 2 and 3 chargers given that level 1 chargers can take 5+ hours to recharge vehicles. Moreover, it will be important to consider the equitable placement of chargers, for example, locating them near community spaces that serve youth and their families, such as libraries and parks.

The City is also taking steps to electrify residential and commercial buildings. In 2020, San Francisco adopted the All-Electric New Construction Ordinance, prohibiting gas piping in all new buildings and requiring all-electric appliances.<sup>15</sup> In September 2024, San Francisco was awarded a \$14 million grant through the Inflation Reduction Act for building electrification.<sup>16</sup> Former Mayor Breed launched a series of programs to offer discounts and rebates for electric appliances for low-income residents.<sup>17</sup> Expanding electrification infrastructure across the City must begin with community outreach, and youth should play an active role in these efforts, given they are directly impacted by climate change and can provide insights into addressing community-specific concerns to ensure the implementation of electric infrastructure.

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<sup>8</sup> “Governor Newsom Announces California Will Phase Out Gasoline-Powered Cars & Drastically Reduce Demand for Fossil Fuel in California’s Fight Against Climate Change | Governor of California,” Governor of California, June 28, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> R. 326-24, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (2024).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> “Ordinance No. 244-19: Environment, Police Codes - Electric Vehicle Charging in Commercial Parking,” September 30, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> “Mayor London Breed Announces New Programs to Reduce Carbon Emissions and Promote Equitable Access to Clean Energy | Office of the Mayor,” April 7, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> R. 326-24, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (2024).

<sup>14</sup> “San Francisco Wins \$15 Million Grant to Meet Growing Demand for EV Charging Throughout City,” San Francisco Environment Department (SFE), January 14, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> “All-Electric New Construction Ordinance | SF.gov,” n.d.

<sup>16</sup> “San Francisco Awarded \$14 Million Federal Grant to Advance Building Electrification Projects | SF.gov,” September 13, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> “Mayor London Breed Announces New Programs to Reduce Carbon Emissions and Promote Equitable Access to Clean Energy | Office of the Mayor.”

## Climate Resilience

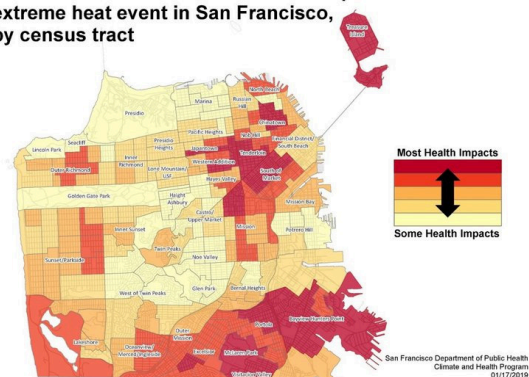
As temperatures continue to rise, the atmosphere absorbs more liquid to fuel storm systems, increasing the frequency and intensity of rainstorms.<sup>18</sup> The City faces significant risks of flooding with old storm drains and coastal inundation. Flooding damages infrastructure, closes roads, freeways, and transit lines, affects the sewage system, impacts tourism and businesses, and threatens recreation areas.<sup>19</sup> These effects are compounded by rising sea levels. Under the worst-case sea level rise scenario without additional protective actions, \$77 billion of total property value is at risk, including \$37 billion of public property.<sup>20</sup> Certain areas of the City face the greatest risks (see map to right, light blue denotes areas at greatest risk of sea level rise).<sup>21</sup>



The Islais Creek Adaptation Strategy published in 2021 analyzes the risks of Sea Level rise in the Islais Creek basin and recommends strategies to combat these risks.<sup>22</sup> The City is currently designing a Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan for Yosemite Slough and partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a Port Flood Study to evaluate the risks of sea level rise from Aquatic Park to Heron's Head Park.<sup>23,24</sup> In addition to adapting to the City's coastal landscape, it is also critical to prepare for the impacts of sea level rise on people and ensure that emergency response is ready to deploy.

San Francisco also faces the threat of more frequent and severe heat waves. Between 1960 and 1990, the City experienced 3-4 extreme heat events per year. This average is projected to double or quadruple between 2030 and 2060.<sup>25</sup> Higher temperatures also exacerbate California's drought conditions, leading to a greater risk of air pollution from wildfires in the City. Many factors impact vulnerability to these events, including access to cooling systems, homelessness, and neighborhoods with higher levels of air pollution and higher temperatures

**Predicted distribution of the health impacts of an extreme heat event in San Francisco, by census tract**



<sup>18</sup> "How Can Climate Change Affect Natural Disasters?," USGS, December 31, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, "Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequences Assessment Executive Summary," n.d.

<sup>20</sup> San Francisco Public Works and San Francisco Planning Department, "San Francisco Sea Level Rise Action Plan Executive Summary," March 2016.

<sup>21</sup> "Sea Level Rise Adaptation | SF Planning," n.d.

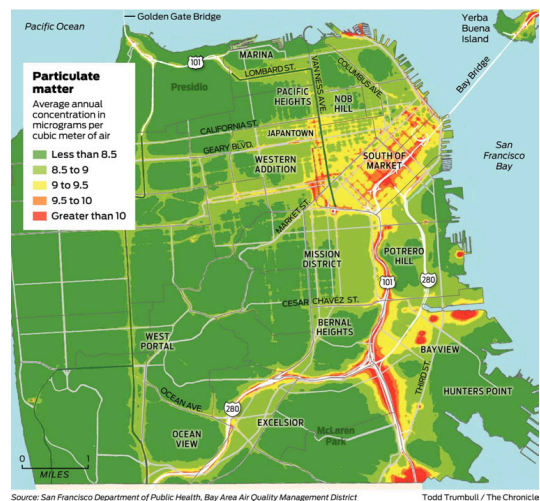
<sup>22</sup> San Francisco Planning Department et al., "Islais Creek Southeast Mobility Adaptation Strategy," Slide show, June 30, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> "Yosemite Slough Neighborhood Adaptation Plan | SF Planning," n.d.

<sup>24</sup> San Francisco Planning Department et al., "Islais Creek Southeast Mobility Adaptation Strategy."

<sup>25</sup> Greg Wong, "Is the City in Danger of Losing Its Chilly Climate Identity?," San Francisco Examiner, July 4, 2024.

(see maps to right).<sup>26,27</sup> Children are especially vulnerable to the health impacts of heat and air pollution, including heat mortality, lung disease, and impaired brain development.<sup>28,29</sup> In 2023, San Francisco created its first Heat and Air Quality Resistance (HAQR) Plan to prepare for heat waves and air pollution.<sup>30</sup> The City must rapidly implement the pathways outlined in the plan, especially Pathway 3 to create an Extreme Weather Respite Center Strategy. The City must expand the number and location of respite spaces to ensure that youth and their families have access to air conditioning and air filtration during extreme events, especially in communities that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The strategy should support and learn from efforts such as the A. Philip Randolph Institute’s plan for heat and air quality disaster response in the Bayview, led in part by youth.<sup>31</sup> It is important that youth are involved in outreach efforts to identify and address community-specific concerns.



## EXPAND CLIMATE LITERACY IN SFUSD TO ACTIVATE YOUTH

### Climate Literacy

Strengthening climate literacy in schools is crucial to addressing climate change. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “climate literacy” is defined as “an understanding of how the climate system works, how human actions influence climate, and how climate influences people and other parts of the Earth system.”<sup>32</sup> Understanding the relationship between humans and the environment equips youth with knowledge and tools to address climate change and environmental justice issues in their communities. A comprehensive climate education includes: the science and systems behind climate change, local examples of climate change impacts, potential small and large-scale solutions, action projects, strategies to counter climate anxiety and focus on hope, connections to environmental justice, integration of climate topics across disciplines, outdoor education, and exposure to green jobs.<sup>33</sup>

SFUSD aims to graduate students who are prepared “to thrive in the 21st century.”<sup>34</sup> Learning about the causes and threats of climate change and strategies to take action is critical for preparing students to face one of the biggest threats to young people in the 21st century. While SFUSD has implemented environmental science initiatives across grade levels in alignment with

<sup>26</sup> “San Francisco Releases Plan to Prepare for Extreme Heat and Air-quality Events | SF.gov,” July 17, 2023..

<sup>27</sup> “Extreme Heat and Health | SF.Gov.”

<sup>28</sup> “Protecting Children and Maternal Health From Extreme Heat | US EPA,” US EPA, March 11, 2025.

<sup>29</sup> American Lung Association, “Who Is Most Affected by Outdoor Air Pollution?,” n.d.

<sup>30</sup> ONESF, San Francisco Department of Emergency Management, and San Francisco Department of Public Health, “The Heat and Air Quality Resilience Plan,” May 2023.

<sup>31</sup> “12 Local Organizations to Receive \$900,000 in Grants for Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience Projects,” n.d.

<sup>32</sup> “Key Definitions and Literature Cited,” NOAA Climate.gov, n.d.

<sup>33</sup> UNESCO, “Youth Demands for Quality Climate Change Education,” UNESCO (France: UNESCO, 2022).

<sup>34</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “SFUSD Vision 2025: Reimagining Public Education in San Francisco for a New Generation,” June 2014.

the California Department of Education’s “Blueprint for Environmental Literacy,” these efforts must be expanded to ensure that all students graduate as climate-literate citizens.<sup>3536</sup> In elementary school, students learn about natural environmental systems and human dependence on them.<sup>37</sup> SFUSD’s Environmental Science Center offers free, hands-on field studies and overnight programs, engaging over 1,500 3rd – 5th graders each year.<sup>38</sup> In middle schools, 6th-grade students develop citywide environmental action plans based on the science behind global warming, and 7th graders learn about natural resources and maintaining healthy biodiversity.<sup>3940</sup> In high schools, connections to climate change are integrated within classes such as Chemistry, Biology, and Physics.<sup>41</sup> Five out of seventeen SFUSD high schools have environmental-focused Career, Technical, and Educational Pathways, which enable students to gain exposure to green jobs and implement climate action projects. SFUSD also initiated a 7-week Climate Action Fellowship in 2023 that gives high school participants (a total of 25 students; one from each SFUSD high school) support to launch climate action projects and professional development opportunities.<sup>42</sup> Finally, SFE’s education program with funding from Recology and the San Francisco Department of Public Works, brings climate modules focused on Zero Waste and clean water to PK-12 classes.<sup>43</sup> Expanded funding sources would enable the program to diversify its content to develop a curriculum that covers a broader range of climate topics. To build on existing climate education efforts in SFUSD, teachers have expressed interest in creating more opportunities to share resources across schools to ensure that the available curriculum is implemented and to spread successful programs at one school with others across the district.

At a state level, California Assembly Bill 285 passed in October 2023, amended sections 51210 and 51220 of the Education Code to require science classes across grades 1-12 to include material about “the causes and effects of climate change, and on the methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change,” starting in the 2024-25 school year.<sup>4445</sup> AB285 is also supported by California Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs), which are embedded in multiple California State Curriculum Frameworks (Arts, Health, Mathematics, Science, History-Social Science, World Languages, and Climate Change and Environmental Justice).<sup>46</sup> In order to implement these climate education standards in schools, it is important that all teachers receive sufficient training and resources about climate literacy.

SFUSD has offered several professional development initiatives to give teachers training about environmental education, including the Environmental Solutionary Teacher Fellowship through the San Mateo County Office of Education, engaging 50 educators to design and implement climate action projects in their schools.<sup>47</sup> Other teacher professional development opportunities

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<sup>35</sup> “SFUSD Teaches Environmental Literacy and Climate Justice to All K-12 Students | SFUSD,” April 15, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> “Environmental Education and Environmental Literacy - Professional Learning (CA Dept of Education),” n.d.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “ESC Field Studies | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>39</sup> “6th Grade Science Curriculum Home Page | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>40</sup> “7th Grade - Unit 4: Earth’s Natural Resources | SFUSD,” n.d.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> “Empowering the Future of Climate Action!,” San Francisco Environment Department (SFE), March 28, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> “Environmental Education,” San Francisco Environment Department (SFE), n.d.

<sup>44</sup> Luz Rivas, “AB-285 Pupil Instruction: Science Requirements: Climate Change,” October 10, 2023..

<sup>45</sup> CAELI County Office of Education Innovation Hub, “AB 285 Climate Science Education: CAELI County Office of Education Innovation Hub’s Overview and Recommendations for Educational Leaders,” n.d..

<sup>46</sup> “Environmental Principles and Concepts - Science (CA Dept of Education),” n.d..

<sup>47</sup> “Environmental Solutionary Teacher Fellowship - San Mateo County Office of Education,” San Mateo County Office of Education, n.d..

include the Climate Justice & YOU series in Spring 2022, connecting SFUSD staff and community organizations and a year-long professional development program for elementary school teachers, Scientific Literacy through Climate Justice.<sup>48</sup> These teacher training fellowships must continue to receive support from the school district and expand the number of teachers who can access them.

### **Green Schoolyards**

SFUSD must also improve green schoolyards to connect youth to the natural environment, provide shade coverage during extreme heat, and encourage greater physical activity and mental health.<sup>49</sup> School gardens can also be used to enhance climate curriculum, for example, offering students a chance to apply climate action steps. In November 2024, San Francisco Voters approved a \$790 million bond to improve SFUSD’s school facilities, including funding for improving outdoor learning spaces.<sup>50</sup> While the bond provides money for installing green schoolyards, funding is also needed to ensure these spaces are maintained. According to a survey of school gardens at 112 SFUSD schools led by Abraham Lincoln High School’s Green Academy program, while >93% of all schools have gardens, only 62% of elementary schools, 36% of middle schools, and 35% of high schools have a designated garden educator.<sup>51</sup> As a result, teachers are left to support them on top of their full-time commitments, and gardens are not maintained or utilized to their full potential to enhance students’ learning. Therefore, the City must allocate funding for an SFUSD-wide green schoolyard coordinator as well as designated coordinators at each school site.

### **Youth Commission Involvement**

In an ongoing 2024 Youth Commission High School Climate Literacy Feedback Form, the Commission received almost 400 responses from youth across the city. While the survey is still in progress, SFUSD students were asked: “*On a scale of 1-5, how empowered did you feel to take climate action after learning about climate change?*” 44% of respondents answered with 3/5, suggesting that students are currently only moderately empowered by existing climate change instruction. Additionally, only 17.3% of students would recommend SFUSD’s current climate change curriculum with a 5/5 rating, suggesting that improvements in the curriculum are needed. Current data reflects that SFUSD students would like the curriculum to relate climate change to local impacts and extend to other subjects beyond science. Students also want to explore climate change beyond classrooms such as through interactive field trips and internships.

A student from Burton High School wrote: “[For students to be more involved with climate change], they would need time to go on field trips to make an impact.” Similarly, a student from Mission High School suggested: “Have more community involvement learning days like more field trips.” Students from Wallenberg’s ESEP (Environmental Science, Engineering, and Policy) Pathway would like “more projects regarding climate change and presenters to work with in solving climate change.”

Youth Commissioners also met with SFUSD teachers and SFE leaders. In February, they also heard a presentation from SFE about their annual Climate Action Youth Summit, which brings

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<sup>48</sup> “SFUSD Teaches Environmental Literacy and Climate Justice to All K-12 Students | SFUSD.”

<sup>49</sup> “Schoolyard Forest Rationale — Green Schoolyards America,” Green Schoolyards America, n.d..

<sup>50</sup> “2024 Bond Report FINAL.pdf,” Google Docs, n.d..

<sup>51</sup> Green Academy Class of 2024, “Project Support the Gardens,” Slide show, 2024..



together 5,000 youth of all ages to share climate action projects. Youth Commissioners expressed support for the long-term goal of expanding it to a district-wide climate action day.

## **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

### **ELECTRIFICATION & CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

#### **Short Term**

- 1. Scale up the City’s electrification initiatives to meet greenhouse gas emission targets** – ensure that SFMTA and SFE develop and implement a plan to expand public EV chargers across the City based on results from pilot installations in 2025, including level 2 and 3 chargers in public parking lots and garages. Locate EV chargers near community spaces that serve youth and their families, including parks, libraries, and community centers, to expand EV charging access for families while also encouraging the usage of community spaces.
- 2. Develop a network of respite locations across the City where youth and their families can access air conditioning and air filtration** – during heat waves, extreme cold, and poor air quality events in line with objective B-2.2 in the City’s Hazards and Climate Resilience Plan and Pathway 3 in the HAQR plan.<sup>52</sup> Prioritize neighborhoods on the City’s environmental justice map that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as well as those with the highest numbers of youth.<sup>53</sup>
- 3. Ensure that youth are included in the process of updating San Francisco’s Climate Action Plan in 2025** – Form a working group of diverse youth from across the City to incorporate their input.

#### **Long Term**

- 4. Assess the impact of sea level rise and flooding on vital centers of youth activity** – including schools, parks, athletic facilities, recreation centers, libraries, and other youth spaces, and incorporate insights to take protective steps for structures at high risk.
- 5. Increase youth-led community outreach efforts to build support for environmental initiatives, including electrification and climate disaster preparedness in their communities** – Youth perspectives are powerful voices to express the urgency of climate action and understand which outreach methods are most effective in their communities.

### **CLIMATE LITERACY**

#### **Short Term**

- 1. Allocate funding for a designated green schoolyard coordinator across SFUSD** – to oversee the implementation of the City’s 2024 School Bond priority to expand outdoor

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<sup>52</sup> ONESF, San Francisco Department of Emergency Management, and San Francisco Department of Public Health, “The Heat and Air Quality Resilience Plan.”

<sup>53</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, Environmental Justice Burden, January 2023, January 2023..

learning spaces across the district, as well as **funding for a designated green schoolyard garden educator to maintain outdoor learning spaces at each school site.**

2. **Expand funding for the San Francisco Environment Department's education program** – to build other topics into their curriculum in addition to current materials about Zero Waste and Clean Water.
3. **Support and expand opportunities for teachers to receive comprehensive training and resources** – to educate their students about climate change and facilitate action projects in their schools, including SFUSD's Environmental Solutionary Teacher Fellowship & High School Climate Action Fellowship.
4. **Create opportunities for cross-school collaboration between climate educators** – to connect existing climate programs in SFUSD and share resources. Consider re-launching an SFUSD climate educators working group.
5. **Support High School Environmental Pathways** – allowing SFUSD high school students to continue gaining exposure to outdoor education, field skills, professional scientists, green career training, and climate action projects.

#### **Long Term**

6. **Urge SFUSD and SFE to dedicate a district-wide climate action day** – to enable all students to attend the Climate Action Youth Summit.

## IMPROVING POLICE RELATIONS WITH YOUTH

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to support efforts to improve the relationships and outreach between the San Francisco Police Department and youth.*

### Background

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) is one of the most well-funded departments in San Francisco. Of the \$6.8 billion allocated in the general fund, \$821 million is designated for the police department.<sup>1</sup> This is over \$200 million larger than the 2020 budget. Yet, there is no specific allocation stated for youth programs and/or training or strategies to appropriately deal with youth who might be entering the system.

There is currently no separate topic for how to interact with youth in the training that an SFPD officer goes through before going out into the community. This can and has led to improper treatment of youth by San Francisco police officers, whether this be pre-, during, or post-arrest.

### Dolores Hill Bomb

On July 8th, 2023, 32 arrests and 81 citations were made during the annual Dolores “Hill Bomb” event.<sup>2</sup> This event includes skaters of all ages skateboarding on Dolores Street and has caused multiple property damages and injuries. On this particular day, an officer reported being spat in the face by a 16-year-old boy, which then resulted in two teens being detained and arrested. At the same time, the crowd started to light fireworks and throw smoke bombs, glass bottles, and metal cans at the officers when making the arrest. The police officers then announced to have everyone evacuate the premises. Shortly after, skaters started to remove the barricades, which resulted in a mass arrest. 32 adults were arrested, and 81 minors were cited for charges of inciting a riot, unlawful assembly, and violence against an officer.<sup>3</sup>

However, many of the people who attended the event argue that the police were the ones who escalated the situation. Police officers were seen arriving in riot gear with batons, blocking intersections and closing in on the skateboarders to make arrests. Dozens of skaters were then zip-tied, photographed, and kept on the street for hours, waiting for transportation. After hours of waiting, police vans and buses arrived to transport the arrestees to the Mission Police Station or 850 Bryant Street. During this time, teenagers were still zip-tied, which cut off their circulation while peeing themselves and experiencing panic attacks without



<sup>1</sup> Sydney Johnson, “San Francisco Police Audit Finds ‘Excessive Use of Overtime’ Spending Since 2019,” *KQED*, December 13, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> KTVU FOX 2, “32 Arrests, 81 Citations During Dolores ‘hill Bomb,’ San Francisco Police Say,” *KTVU FOX 2*, July 9, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Dustin Jones, “Police Clashed With Skaters at ‘hill Bomb’ Event in San Francisco,” *NPR*, July 10, 2023.

receiving any support.<sup>4</sup> According to an anonymous source who was present at this incident, “no cop did anything [but] simply stood and watched.” The final juvenile was released from the Mission Station at 4:15 am.

According to the San Francisco Police Department’s Policies and Procedures for juveniles, detention, arrest, and custody; Section 3: Procedures, Subset B, Number 7: Access to basic amenities, letter A states, “reasonable access to toilets and washing facilities” are “amenities [that] are to be made available to juveniles.” This was not an amenity the officers gave to the teenagers which shows a clear violation of this policy.

Jeffrey Kwong, president of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, responded, “We’re outraged by the unprecedented – one of the most violent responses – we’ve seen the police conduct in San Francisco in recent memory in response to a bunch of teenagers. It’s an annual tradition.”<sup>5</sup> The responses from the police made clear they overstepped when it came to handling this issue.

### Existing Programs



Anti Police-Terror Project (AFTP) is a community-based organization that works to “eradicate police terror in communities of color.”<sup>6</sup> They work to support families recovering from police terror by connecting them to any resources they need, helping document cases of police abuse, and overall just supporting victims and their families with community resources, legal referrals, and more. They have locations in Sacramento and Oakland, California. Specifically in Oakland, they are working on ending police violence and obtaining clearer rules and boundaries pertaining to the role of police officers in the community.

SFPAL, the San Francisco Police Activities League, is an SFPD-led community organization that specializes in building community with youth through youth sports and other healthy activities that “develop personal character and foster positive relationships among police officers, youth, and dedicated volunteers.” The organization was founded in 1959 by two policemen who wanted to do something about the “growing juvenile delinquency program.” It is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and receives no funding from the City and County of San Francisco, receiving the money it needs through donations and sponsorships. The program has evolved to serve more than 1,200 youth across San Francisco, with the help of over 100 civilian and police volunteers every year. It has helped foster positive relationships between SFPD and youth throughout San Francisco.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Will Jarrett, Gilare Zada, and Joe Rivano Barros, “Explore: The Hill Bomb Heard ’Round the Mission, Hour by Hour,” *Mission Local*, May 16, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Betty Yu, “Dozens Protest San Francisco Police Response to Dolores Hill Bomb Melee,” CBS News, July 10, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> “About AFTP — AFTP,” AFTP, n.d.

<sup>7</sup> “About,” San Francisco Police Activities League, n.d.

## Youth Commission Involvement

While the Youth Commission has not commented or produced any recent legislation on this topic, they did address the issue of the School Resource Officers (SRO) program in the 2010-2011 Budget Policy and Priorities. This program involved community police officers within specific schools who “work to build trusting relationships with youth, school staff, and the community to create safer schools”.<sup>8</sup> However, the Youth Commission found that these officers abuse their power and take stronger action than necessary. “That same year [2007], SROs filed 87 incident reports. A plurality of such arrests were for minor incidents, such as “disrupting school”, “battery” (a fight), “graffiti,” and “theft,” incidents that historically would have been disciplinary issues dealt with by a school administrator”.<sup>9</sup> While this program was shut down in 2020 by the San Francisco Unified School District Board, it highlights the history that SFPD has with the mistreatment of youth.

The Youth Commission has also heard presentations from the District Attorney of San Francisco’s office, most recently last year, about the potential building and the design plans of a new juvenile hall. The public defender’s office also gave presentations to the full Youth Commission, Chair Fong, and Vice-Chair Listana.

## Recommendations

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to:

1. **The San Francisco Police Department to develop proper training when interacting with youth** – The Youth Commission understands that establishing this mechanism may take time and slow down hiring processes, but it is imperative because this ensures police officers are properly trained and understand they are interacting with youth, not adults, to guarantee situations would not be further escalated.
2. **SFPAL incorporates educational aspects to its programs** – This can continue to strengthen relationships between SFPD and youth while almost making sure youth are informed on how to interact with police and have experience interacting with them in a controlled environment.
3. **Allocate appropriate funding to Departments that work with SFPD in fostering youth partnerships** – Additional funding for programs such as Law Enforcement Cadets and the Community Safety Initiative ensures that the police department is addressing the needs of youth. It is also important to make these resources publicly known so that young people can access them if need be.

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<sup>8</sup> “School Resource Officers SRO | San Francisco Police Department,” San Francisco Police Department, June 16, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Youth Commission, “Youth Commission Budget Priorities 2010-2011 Fiscal Year,” 2010.

## REDUCING WEAPONS ACCESS

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to continue supporting gun violence prevention measures for youth in San Francisco.*

### Background

In San Francisco, owners of handguns must obey the following law in accordance with SEC.4512 of the San Francisco Police Code: “Handgun owners can keep their weapons at home but must keep them locked in safes or disabled by trigger locks when not using them”.<sup>1</sup> Despite this measure, it has been proven to not be enough as break-ins have allowed individuals to steal these so-called “locked and safe guns” and take them to use or sell on the street. Additionally, youth who reside in residences with firearms are more likely to be able to access these weapons. 1 in 3 homes with children have guns, many of which are left unlocked or loaded.<sup>2</sup> Over the past 5 years, shootings in San Francisco have increased by 74%, with 158 people killed with firearms.<sup>3</sup>

### School Incidents

Following significant advocacy from local gun violence prevention groups, the San Francisco Unified School District released a letter via the District email newsletter titled “Letter about Gun Safety to Families” in August of 2023, including information to increase awareness of gun safety and stopping school shootings. This included information for safe storage of firearms to keep them out of the hands of children by storing guns securely by locking the weapon in a gun safe unloaded and having the ammunition locked separately; asking about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes of neighbors, families, and play dates; and recognizing the risk factors and warning signs of depression and suicide.<sup>4</sup> While this was an important step in raising awareness, it did not address the requests of local gun violence prevention groups who urged the District to follow the best practices of the Be SMART Program, including sending home physical letters informing parents/guardians of their legal obligation to protect kids.<sup>5</sup> The Youth Commission has previously urged all San Francisco schools to send home safe firearm storage information (RESOLUTION NO. 2022-AL-06).

Recently, many schools, both public and independent, in the San Francisco Area have experienced many threats and real occurrences of a person going to school and using weapons on the students and school personnel. Between March 2022 and April 2023, of 100 student conflicts on and off the San Francisco school campus, 31 involved guns.<sup>6</sup> For youth, weapons have been proven to be easy to access. The United States has more civilian-owned guns per capita than any country in the world, with 120.5 guns per 100 residents.<sup>7</sup> Many youths in possession of a weapon list protection as their primary reason, leading to questions over why youths feel unsafe in their current environments and would need a weapon to issue that kind of protection. Factors

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Police Code, SEC. 4512.

<sup>2</sup> Judy Schaechter. (2023, September). Guns in the Home: How to keep kids safe. HealthyChildren.org (American Academy of Pediatrics).

<sup>3</sup> Sydney Johnson. (2023, June 13). San Francisco considers banning guns in more public places after recent shootings. KQED.

<sup>4</sup> Letter about Gun Safety to families | SFUSD. (2023, August 16).

<sup>5</sup> Be SMART | Secure gun storage. (2023, March 8). Be SMART.

<sup>6</sup> Ida Mojadad. (2023, May 8). Youth violence rocks San Francisco. Where does the city go from here? The San Francisco Standard.

<sup>7</sup> Brad Bushman, & Dan Romer. (2023, January 12). How does a child become a shooter? Research suggests easy access to guns and exposure to screen violence increase the risk. The Conversation.

including social media and mental health have been used to justify the lack of safety students feel in their environments.

On August 21st, 2024, within a week of the first day back to school, a student from Galileo Academy of Science and Technology was shot in the middle of the day at Ghirardelli Square. The whole school was placed on lockdown, but the students were completely unaware of the situation that was happening. On October 10th, a 17-year-old San Francisco Resident was arrested for this incident. The officers on the scene found the suspect in possession of a loaded gun.

On December 8th, 2023, two students at George Washington High School and one student at Galileo Academy of Science and Technology were found to have brought guns onto the campus.<sup>8</sup> These cases were only the ones that had been caught. Community organizers point out there are weapons on school campuses brought by students every day. The incident caused students and families to question safety protocols and students wondering if weapon violence in schools were being taken seriously. In January 2024, SFUSD students conducted a walkout of their classrooms in protest of deficient security measures to prevent violence on school campuses.

### **Weapon Prevention Programs**

United Playaz is a San Francisco-based violence prevention and youth development organization located in the heart of the South of Market (SoMa). Founded in 1994 by Rudy Corpuz Jr., United Playaz offers a range of services, including, but not limited to, in-school aid, afterschool programs, case management, and workforce training. The organization offers a 7 out of 10 success rate among guiding at-risk youth. A former SoMa gang member himself at the age of 12, Rudy recalls the significance of being able to access weapons, saying, “When we would break into homes, we looked for three things: money, jewelry, and guns.” He then explained that the guns would be used to commit additional crimes.

In 2014, United Playaz instituted an annual Gun Buyback Program with the goal of reducing the number of weapons on the streets. In exchange for payment, people can turn in a handgun for \$100 and an assault rifle for \$200, no questions asked. The guns are then melted down, and the parts are used for jewelry and other products that help finance later gun buy-backs. Since its implementation, the program has yielded over 2500 weapons. Most recently, the program had its Gun Buyback event in December of 2024, and it yielded very positive results.

### **Youth Commission Involvement**

The Youth Commission previously produced a Reducing Weapons Access Budget and Priorities report in FY 25/26. They continue to advocate for reduced weapons access through resolutions, like Resolution NO. 2022-AL-06), and interacting with community-based organizations (CBOs).



<sup>8</sup> Megan Fan Munce. (2023, December 8). S.F. police: Three students brought guns to two high schools Friday. San Francisco Chronicle.

The Youth Commission recognized United Playaz for their work in preventing youth gun violence with a Resolution of Commendation in early 2024 after touring their facilities and speaking with Rudy.

### **Recommendation**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to:

1. **Continue to partner with Gun Buy-Backs and Weapon Trade-In event organizers** – to stop gun violence by providing a place for people to turn in weapons for payment, with no questions asked, and get guns off the streets and out of our communities.
2. **Ensure that youth are able to easily access mental health resources and help** – by investing and pushing SFUSD to strengthen access to existing resources such as mindfulness, community schools, restorative practices, peer resource programs, and therapy.
3. **Increase funding for schools to create Community Safety Initiatives** – school funding can ensure that SFUSD can expand or create programs for conflict resolution and restorative justice. This can also give students the opportunity to take the initiative in this setting to become trained mediators in times of conflict.
4. **Creating partnerships with Violence Prevention Initiatives** – by creating a professional relationship with both Violence Prevention Programs like the Street Violence Prevention Intervention Program (SVIP); trained Street Violence Interrupters can mediate conflicts, can support victims of violence and refer youth to various resources like case management. Community-based organizations like United Playaz, Bayview Hunters Point Foundation, and the Samoan Community Development Center also offer services in regard to Violence Prevention in SFUSD high schools.



## ADDRESS SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT IN SCHOOLS

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to address the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment cases in schools. Sexual assault and harassment have continued to impact schools across San Francisco severely.*

Sexual assault and harassment have continued to impact schools across San Francisco severely. Within six months in 2022, more than 50 lawsuits were filed against school districts across San Francisco and the larger Bay Area.<sup>1</sup> Over the past 7 years, more than 19 employees of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) accused of sexual misconduct were allowed to resign to avoid termination. The City must make necessary changes to address this systemic issue that continues to impact and harm San Francisco youth.

Regarding SFUSD, recent reporting shows allegations that an SFUSD athletic director at George Washington High School has been accused of sexual abuse, and despite law enforcement being contacted and an active lawsuit, he was permitted to “quietly resign” and obtain similar employment elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> A California Public Records Act Request showed that only 5 out of 24 Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaints within the SFUSD were investigated in 2022. The lack of action and investigation further demonstrates the flaws of the reporting system and the lack of accountability throughout SFUSD.

Another report from the U.S. Department of Education covers a recent investigation of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music regarding the Conservatory’s failed attempt at responding to a student’s allegations and providing the necessary support, therefore not abiding by the Department of Education’s Title IX grievance procedures.<sup>3</sup> The Conservatory has failed to comply with Title IX regulations on multiple occasions and is just now being penalized for overlooking the complaints of its students.

Efforts to address the aforementioned issues began in 2005 when the Youth Commission, in collaboration with the SFUSD Student Advisory Council, produced a report on sexual assault and harassment in San Francisco schools entitled “Youth Commission Report on Sexual Assault and Harassment in San Francisco Schools,” which showed the primary factor preventing students from receiving needed resources and support is disconnecting between service providers and San Francisco students.<sup>4</sup> This report entailed a survey conducted by the Youth Commission, the Youth Leadership Institute, and the Student Advisory Council, which surveyed 6,000 high school students. The survey concluded that 48.4% of students are affected by sexual harassment on or off campus, exemplifying the urgent importance of this issue.

In April 2016, the Board of Supervisors passed, and then-Mayor Lee signed, legislation ([FILE NO. 150944, ORDINANCE NO. 89-16]) sponsored by then-Supervisor Jane Kim to create the

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<sup>1</sup> Sophia Ballog, “These 51 Bay Area Schools Face Sexual Abuse Lawsuits. Here Are the Details of Each Case,” San Francisco Chronicle, last modified January 10, 2024, accessed February 6, 2025

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Dizikes, “New Sexual Assault Accusation Is Made against SFUSD Athletic Director, Who Was Allowed to Quietly Resign,” San Francisco Chronicle, last modified September 2022, accessed February 6, 2025

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, “Resolution Agreement,” 2022

<sup>4</sup> Peter Lauterborn et al., “San Francisco Youth Commission Report on Sexual Assault and Harassment in San Francisco Schools,” San Francisco Youth Commission, April 2005

Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force.<sup>5</sup> The Task Force recommended there be an established and ongoing Task Force to coordinate sexual assault prevention and response on campus and in the broader community. Secondly, the Task Force recommended fully implementing state and federal laws reflecting years of work to prevent sexual assault on campus and respond effectively when it occurs. But, despite specific recommendations to city institutions and resolutions by previous Youth Commissions, the issue of sexual assault and harassment runs rampant in San Francisco schools, affecting youth citywide.

In 2021, hundreds of students from more than eight San Francisco high schools walked out of class to protest SFUSD's inadequate handling of sexual assault and harassment reports. However, this problem is experienced by students beyond SFUSD. Today, students from parochial schools across San Francisco are demanding that the Archdiocese release the list of religious leaders accused of involvement in the sexual harassment cases that lie at the center of their decision to declare bankruptcy in August of 2023.<sup>6</sup> While institutions like the Archdiocese are only now beginning to be investigated on the matter of sexual assault and harassment, these issues have long been present and repeated year after year. With 30,000 students attending parochial schools in San Francisco, the City must not ignore the prevalence of these cases that accompany those within the SFUSD. City services must be accessible to all San Francisco youth.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current background checking system in SFUSD –** Even with the current checks in place, faculty can find employment at other institutions despite having criminal allegations on their record. In being able to “quietly resign,” teachers can escape these allegations, as in the case of George Washington’s athletic director. In 2018, the state of New Jersey passed the “Pass the Trash” law to address this very issue.<sup>7</sup> This law requires a school to examine the employment history of each prospective hire, assessing whether the candidate has any substantiated allegations of sexual assault or harassment in the past 20 years. Something similar should be done in San Francisco to prohibit this cycle of having teachers with criminal accusations move from one school to the next.
- 2. Standardize more training and curriculum on sexual harassment and assault –** as of now, schools have significant leeway on how to structure their respective health education courses that cover these issues. As a result, many schools ineffectively and insufficiently address topics like consent and recognition of sexual harassment and assault. Furthermore, SFUSD must ensure faculty members are adequately prepared to identify these cases and provide support to the victim(s) involved.
- 3. Support the work being done in the Title IX Student Advisory Group –** When the Title IX Advisory Group reconvenes next school year, we urge the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor’s office, and city departments to work with students and faculty alike to address and prevent gender-based violence amongst SFUSD students.

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<sup>5</sup> Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force, “Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force: Report and Recommendations,” City and County of San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, December 2017

<sup>6</sup> Sophia Bollag, “Hundreds of Alleged Sex Abuse Victims in Limbo as S.F. Archdiocese Declares Bankruptcy,” San Francisco Chronicle, August 22, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> David Nash, “The ‘Pass The Trash’ Law – What Does It Mean For School Districts?,” NJPSA and FEA, December 13, 2023.

## INCREASING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to increase outreach and information about preregistration opportunities to students and schools, conduct further research on the effectiveness of current outreach efforts and ways to increase voter preregistration, and place a charter amendment to expand the voting age to 16 in San Francisco in future processes.*

### **Voter Preregistration**

Since the 2020 cycle, voter turnout rates of people from the age of 18-24 have steadily declined.<sup>1</sup> With 9.6% of the population in San Francisco being people aged 18-24, only about half of them are registered to vote.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the youth voice is underrepresented during the cycles.

The Youth Commission of San Francisco has made past statements on the importance of voter awareness among youth across San Francisco. A continued effort must be made to give San Francisco youth the resources and opportunities that would be helpful to learn about their civic duties with pre-registering or registering to vote.

### **In Schools**

In San Francisco, school classes and clubs are a helpful resource for students to be engaged with and informed on their civic duties. By implementing Board of Education Resolution 162-23A3, a Resolution encouraging students to exercise their voting rights, San Francisco public schools can rebuild their school systems to teach voting processes, rights, and pre-registration.<sup>45</sup> Every SFUSD High School American Democracy class that implements the changes will be required to provide students with pre-registration forms. Although this Resolution was passed, there is no information on how many and in which schools this policy has been enacted. In addition, most students who take American Democracy classes in San Francisco are seniors. To build habitual voting, classes like American Democracy and other resources must be offered to all High School students.

In addition to available classes, educators also have a huge influence on student voter participation. According to one study, 64% of respondents were encouraged to vote by a teacher in high school, while only 50% of them said that they were taught how to register to vote.<sup>6</sup> In the same study, they also analyzed the attitudes of young people towards voting. They found that 26% of those who were not encouraged to vote in high school had negative feelings about voting, versus 12% of young adults who were encouraged to vote in high school. Furthermore, 25% of people who were not encouraged to vote in high school responded that they did not know enough to vote versus 15% of respondents who were encouraged to vote. These staggering

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Allen and Bay City News, "Bay Area's Young Voters Are Registering at Lower Rates. Organizers Are Combating This Ahead of 2024 Election," SFGate, September 6, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> County, "Report of Registration as of July 16, 2021," July 16, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> "San Francisco, California Population 2024." n.d. World Population Review. Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> "Schools to Teach Voting Process & Rights, and Offer Voter Pre-registration to Students | SFUSD," April 14, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Sandra Lee Fewer et al., "Resolution No. 162-23A3 Encouraging Students to Exercise Their Voting Rights," April 12, 2016, accessed February 29, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Andes et al., "Youth Who Learned About Voting in High School More Likely to Become Informed and Engaged Voters," Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, August 31, 2020.

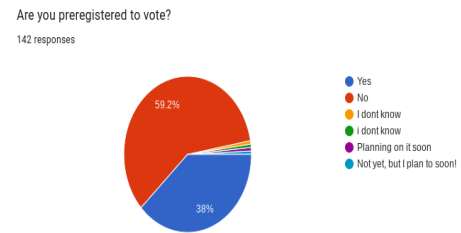
statistics show that students who learn and are encouraged to vote by educators are more likely to have positive attitudes towards voting and are more likely to continue to vote.

### Department of Elections Workshops

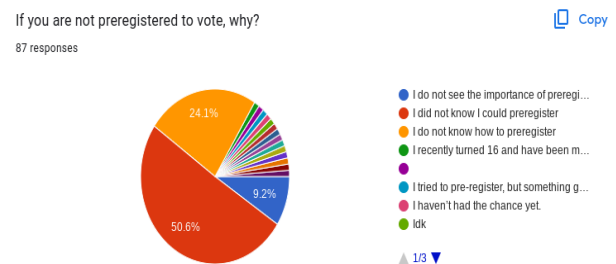
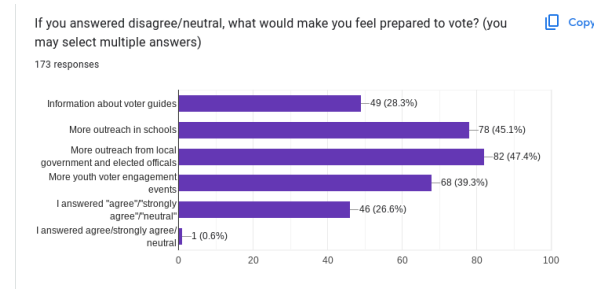
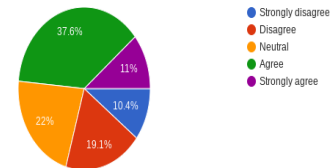
Although Voting Pre-registration forms are available online and in person through the Department of Elections, there are also workshops youths can attend to get the information needed. The San Francisco Government voter outreach team hosts many of these workshops, which can be found on their outreach event calendar.<sup>7</sup> The outreach team does presentations not only on pre-registration but also on other topics such as voting options, language services and translated materials, accessible services and tools, ranked-choice voting, and poll worker service. It's also possible to host resource tables at individual sites. These events can help youths, especially those with language barriers, to get in-person help with voter registration and overall voting awareness.

In addition, in a 2023 Youth Commission Civic Engagement Survey, it was found that when students answered “no” or “neutral” when asked if they felt prepared to vote in a local electoral process, 45.1% of respondents responded that more outreach in schools would make them feel more prepared to vote. Furthermore, 39.3% of respondents answered that more youth voter engagement events would prepare them for voting. Moreover, when asked if students felt that San Francisco provides many opportunities for youth to be educated about local government, it was found that 19.1% of students disagreed, with 22% of students remaining neutral.

Finally, when asked if students were pre-registered to vote, 59.2% of students responded that they were not. When asked why they were not pre-registered, 50.6% of students responded that they did not know they could pre-register and 24.1% of students responded that they did not know how to pre-register. These statistics show that students in our school district do not feel ready to vote because of a lack of accessible resources in their schools, and not knowing available opportunities to learn about voting in general.



Please select the answer you feel best represents your opinion about this statement: "I think San Francisco provides many opportunities for youth to be educated on local government"  
173 responses



<sup>7</sup> “Voter Outreach | San Francisco”

## **Vote16**

The Youth Commission believes that expanding the voting age to 16 and 17-year-olds in San Francisco's democratic processes will increase overall youth civic engagement and provide needed representation in our democracy.

In 2015, the Youth Commission embarked on a mission to expand the voting age to 16 through a charter amendment. The initiative has been on the ballot twice, first in 2016 and then for a second time in 2020. In both runs, Vote16 had strong support from the Board of Supervisors along with many other elected officials. In 2016, as Proposition F, Vote16 lost by 2.1% of the vote. In 2020, as Proposition G, Vote16 lost by a smaller margin at 0.80% of the vote.<sup>8</sup> The Youth Commission still believes that Vote16 is a priority for the future of San Francisco.

## **Responsibilities**

At 16 and 17 years old, teens hold many societal responsibilities. By 16, teens can work up to 46 hours a week and are taxed for the income they earn.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, every time a 16 or 17-year-old purchases a product, they pay local sales taxes. This creates a form of taxation without representation for 16 and 17-year-olds.

In California, teens can be tried as adults in court beginning at age 16, being held responsible as adults in court but unable to vote, which often determines criminal justice policy.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, 16 and 17-year-olds in California are deemed responsible enough to hold several government licenses, including for driving, hunting, flying aircraft, operating drones, piloting boats, driving motorcycles, and food handling.<sup>1112131415</sup>

## **Access to resources**

16 and 17-year-olds have access to more resources than ever before, using them to form informed opinions on city matters, and are prepared to use them to vote. High school students in San Francisco are required to complete an American government and civics class, informing them on political systems and the legislative process, while simultaneously providing a space for educated discourse amongst peers and teachers.<sup>16</sup> These conversations in classrooms throughout San Francisco provide a safe foundation for 16 and 17-year-olds to inform themselves on city issues and engage in thoughtful discussions. Additionally, with such easy access to teachers or librarians, 16 and 17-year-olds can easily ask for clarification or background on electoral matters, something that is out of reach for adults starting around age 18.

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<sup>8</sup> “Yes on G Earns 49.2% and Looks to the Future.” 2020. Vote 16 SF.

<sup>9</sup> “What are California limitations on the hours that minors are allowed to work?” 2020. SHRM.

<sup>10</sup> “Proposition 57.” n.d. California Courts. Accessed February 8, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> “License Requirements - California DMV.” n.d. California DMV. Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> “Boating laws rules and license requirements.” n.d. California State Parks. Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> “California Food Handlers Card Requirements.” n.d. Food Handlers Card Help . Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> “Provisional Licensing - California DMV.” n.d. California DMV. Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Rupperecht, Jonathan. n.d. “- Drone Law and Drone Attorney Assistance.” - Drone Law and Drone Attorney Assistance. Accessed February 15, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> “State Minimum High School Graduation Requirements - High School (CA Dept of Education).” 2023. California Department of Education.

Further, today's 16 and 17-year-olds have the unique experience of growing up with modern technology, allowing them access to a vast amount of resources while being adept at identifying online misinformation and bias. <sup>17</sup> It is with these resources that 16 and 17-year-olds can easily access the tools necessary to effectively participate in city government.

### **Overall Voter Turnout**

Studies have shown that voting is a habitual action. Once someone casts their first vote they are more likely to continue voting in later life, and an individual who votes in the first electoral process they are eligible for is likely to continue voting consistently, while someone who doesn't will take several years to pick up the habit. <sup>18</sup> Expanding the voting age to 16 and 17 years old increases the likelihood that voting will become a habit. The earlier someone starts voting, the more likely they are to be a lifelong voter, increasing overall voter turnout.

Additionally, 18 is a year of transition for young adults. 18-year-olds are transitioning into adulthood, beginning college, moving out, and/or entering the workforce. This allows for optional new responsibilities, like voting, to be forgotten and deprioritized. Granting 16 and 17-year-olds the right to vote allows for voting to become a strong habit before this major life transition and build a voting habit. This will help increase voter turnout in future democratic processes.

### **Future of City**

San Francisco is at a decision point. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn, San Franciscans are redetermining their future. The choices made today, on issues ranging from public transit and housing to public safety and crime, will determine the future city that today's teens will inherit. Those same youth should have a voice and a vote on the policies and leaders that will shape the San Francisco of tomorrow. Let's give it to them by expanding our democracy to include them.

### **Recommendations:**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

- 1. Offer more in-school opportunities for students to learn about voter pre-registration** – including working with the San Francisco Unified School District to dedicate extra time on how to register to vote and be informed on what is on the ballot during class.
- 2. Continue funding the Department of Election's Youth Voter Outreach program** – This includes High School Voter Education Week, Student Poll Worker Opportunities, Preregistration Outreach, and Department of Elections Tours.
- 3. Place a charter amendment on the ballot to expand the voting age in San Francisco to 16 years of age** – allow voters the option to expand the voting age in municipal, school district, and community college district races in a future ballot.

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<sup>17</sup> Janna, Anderson, and Lee Rainie. 2012. "Main findings: Teens, technology, and human potential in 2020." Pew Research Center.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, Coppock, and Donald P. Green. "Is Voting Habit Forming? New Evidence from Experiments and Regression Discontinuities." *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 4 (2016): 1044–62.

## REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to implement strategies to reduce social isolation in the City and County of San Francisco.*

### Background

Over the last several years, teenagers have increasingly been experiencing more and more social isolation. There are many suggested reasons for this, ranging from the stay-at-home experiences of COVID-19 and the use of cell phones and social media - but whatever the exact cause, youth today do not have the face-to-face meaningful interactions and relationships that our parents did.

### What is Social Isolation?

Social isolation is not having relationships, contact, or support from those around you.<sup>1</sup> It is an absence of social contact with others and not interacting with many people.<sup>2</sup> People often treat loneliness as the same as social isolation when they are two very different things. The definition of loneliness is the sensation of being isolated, detached, or lacking a sense of closeness with others. Simply put, loneliness is the bothersome sentiment of being alone. While on the other hand, social isolation is not having people to keep in touch with regularly.<sup>3</sup>

### Social Isolation Is All Around

Social isolation is a growing epidemic — one that's increasingly recognized as having dire physical, mental, and emotional consequences. Since the 1980s, the percentage of American adults who say they're lonely has doubled from 20% to 40%.<sup>4,5</sup>

The data surrounding social isolation is quite concerning. The typical 18-year-old spends more time alone than the average 60-year-old. This unexpected statistic stems from the fact that today's youth do not have or know where to find locations and events to meet new people and make new friends face-to-face. As a result, they spend time alone and do not meet and/or interact with others.

### The Health Risks of Social Isolation

Social isolation's risks among people are more serious than what is perceived. The American Psychology Association did a study on the risks of social isolation and reported that 40% of respondents reported feeling socially isolated, many of whom also reported difficulty finding help with their functional needs, including bathing.<sup>6</sup>

Further, another study has shown that a lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and/or increases the risk of alcoholism. It has also been found that loneliness and social isolation are twice as harmful to physical and mental health as obesity.<sup>7</sup> In short, social isolation is both an emotional and physical disorder.

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<sup>1</sup> "Health Effects Of Social Isolation and Loneliness," CDC U.S. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention, last modified May 2024, accessed January 22, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> "Loneliness and Social Isolation - Tips for Staying Connected," National Institute of Aging, accessed January 23, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> "Loneliness and Social," National Institute of Aging.

<sup>4</sup> Dhruv Khullar, "How Social Isolation Is Killing Us," The New York Times, last modified December 22, 2016, accessed February 13, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Jessica Olien, "Loneliness Can Kill You. Don't Let It.," Slate Magazine, August 23, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Novotney, A. (2020, March 24). The risks of social isolation. *American Psychology Association. Monitor on Psychology*, 50(5).

<sup>7</sup> Novotney, A. American Psychology Association.

Individuals with less social connection have disrupted sleep patterns, altered immune systems, more inflammation, and higher levels of stress hormones. One recent study found that isolation increases the risk of heart disease by 29 percent and stroke by 32 percent.<sup>8</sup>

The last analysis that pooled data from 70 studies and 3.4 million people found that socially isolated individuals had a 30 percent higher risk of dying in the next seven years and that this effect was largest in middle age.<sup>9</sup>

### **How Social Isolation Affects Youth**

Teens who deal with social isolation often have trouble fitting into society. This is often because they lose their sense of belonging and feel like an outcast.<sup>10</sup> Many teens who experience social isolation usually worry an excessive amount, try their best to avoid social interactions, cancel plans and are happy that they aren't going, panic at the thought of social interactions, spend too much time by themselves, and limit their contact only to a tiny group of people, and/or no one at all.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, teens have experienced a lot less face-to-face interaction.<sup>12</sup> Including basic things such as catching a movie, going out for lunch, etc. compared to previous generations.<sup>13</sup> The lack of these basic connections with peers can result in damaging mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation and increases the risk of substance abuse.<sup>14</sup> Not having the feeling of being connected to people is very powerful among teens, which, very sadly, is the second leading cause of suicide among 10-24-year-olds.<sup>15</sup>

### **Efforts to Reduce Social Isolation**

Many countries around the world have come to recognize loneliness and social isolation as health concerns and have launched campaigns and coalitions in countries such as Australia, Denmark, and the United Kingdom to raise awareness.<sup>16</sup> The programs have brought together research experts, nonprofit agencies, government agencies, community groups, and skilled volunteers to address social isolation through evidence-based interventions and advocacy.<sup>17</sup>

Examples include:

- Japan passed an important legislation this year: an Act to Promote Measures Against Loneliness and Isolation.
- The Danish government has introduced a loneliness strategy, underpinned by a plan setting out 75 cross-governmental actions.

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<sup>8</sup> Khullar, "How Social," The New York Times.

<sup>9</sup> Khullar, "How Social," The New York Times.

<sup>10</sup> "The Effects of Social Isolation in Adolescence," Key Healthcare, accessed January 28, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Caroline Fenkel, DSW, LCSW, "Isolation's Silent Role in the Teen Mental Health Crisis," charlie health, last modified September 8, 2022, accessed January 28, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Fenkel, DSW, LCSW, "Isolation's Silent," charlie health.

<sup>13</sup> Fenkel, DSW, LCSW, "Isolation's Silent," charlie health.

<sup>14</sup> Beyond Differences, accessed January 28, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> "The Effects," Key Healthcare.

<sup>16</sup> Novotney, A. American Psychology Association.

<sup>17</sup> Novotney, A. American Psychology Association.



- In the United States, US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy launched an advisory that called Americans’ attention to the epidemic of loneliness and isolation and provided detailed guidance for addressing these issues in public life.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) is launching a three-year Commission on Social Connection to foster the accumulation of evidence that will inform causes and treatments, strengthen advocacy, and encourage effective practice.<sup>18</sup>

An example of a step San Francisco could take to address COVID-19’s effect on youth is to make City-sponsored biking or hiking events in San Francisco only for youth. This event would be open to all junior high and high school students. Students from different schools would be divided into teams to foster communication and greater interaction. If successful, this could become a monthly event for the youth of San Francisco. This could be held at Golden Gate Park, The Great Highway, etc. Most importantly, these events would be free of cell phones and social media. The goal is for youth to be present in the moment and make face-to-face interactions.

## Recommendations

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to:

1. **Support more San Francisco community-based organizations that organize events for people to meet and get together** – These organizations host events that bring communities from all around San Francisco together. They encourage everyone to socialize and build strong relationships.
2. **Model SF’s Response(s) on What Has Worked in Other Countries** – Review the legislation, campaigns, and coalitions passed and/or launched in other countries (e.g., Japan, Denmark, and the United Kingdom) to develop (or consider developing) legislation and/or campaigns targeting social isolation.
3. **Address COVID-19’s Impact On San Francisco Youth** – The COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound disruptions to young people at a critical period of psychosocial development. In San Francisco, the youth had to stay at home and take classes online, which deprived them of face-to-face interactions for almost two years.

As further evidence of the effects of COVID-19, a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine on almost 600 young people found that there were high levels of clinical depression (48%), anxiety (51%), and loneliness among these youth.<sup>19</sup> In short, although the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, its effect on youth’s psychological and emotional well-being has not.

As such, the Mayor and Board of Supervisors must find ways to help the large numbers of San Francisco youth still suffering from COVID-19. An example is one shared in “**EFFORTS TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION**”.

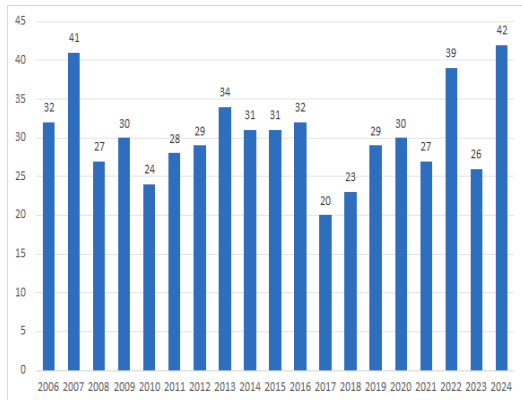
<sup>18</sup> Paul Cann, "How Communities Around The World Are Connecting Social Isolation and Health," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, last modified December 6, 2023, accessed February 13, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Imogen H. Bell et al., “The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth Mental Health: A Mixed Methods Survey,” *Psychiatry Research* 321 (January 28, 2023): 115082.

## ENSURING STREET SAFETY

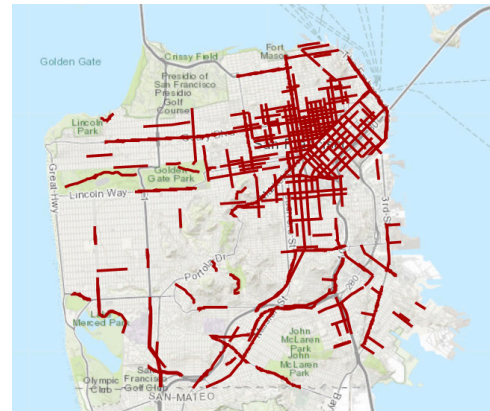
*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges for the expansion of No Turn on Red infrastructure and curbside protected bike lanes, continued monitoring of speed limits in high injury networks, maintaining the slow streets program, exploring other car-free spaces, specifically Valencia Street, and the passage of legislation working to enhance safety on public transit and San Francisco streets to reduce the number of injuries and deaths.*

### Background



Vision Zero is “a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.” It was first implemented in 2014 as an effort to build safer streets and traffic laws and educate the public. Every single year in San Francisco, about 30 people lose their lives, and 500 are seriously injured as a result of traffic fatalities.<sup>1</sup> Mistakes are bound to happen on our roads, but it is the responsibility of the city to ensure we are doing all that we can to make our streets safe for pedestrians, drivers, cyclists, and all residents. Despite the deadline for Vision Zero being in 2024, there was

an increase in traffic-related fatalities last year, going from 26 to 42. While an evaluation report of the 28 Vision Zero projects recorded a 16% decrease in traffic-related collisions at these locations, including a decrease in pedestrian-related collisions of 35%, there is still much work to be done.<sup>2</sup> According to studies done by Vision Zero SF, 68 percent of severe and fatal traffic collisions occur on just 12 percent of streets in San Francisco, which are identified as high-injury networks (as shown in the visual).<sup>3</sup> The San Francisco Youth Commission firmly believes that infrastructure and programs centered around street safety should be continued and bettered throughout the city, but especially in high-injury networks.



### No Turn on Red and Speed Limits

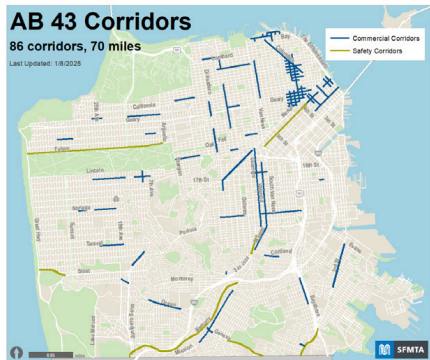
In 2023, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-07,<sup>4</sup> supporting the expansion of the No Turn on Red (NTOR) program. Currently, drivers in San Francisco are allowed to turn right on a red light if there is no sign installed prohibiting it. Turns on red are incredibly detrimental to pedestrians, drivers, and all San Franciscans, as they not only make our streets more stressful but also increase the chance of a fatal vehicle collision. After the

<sup>1</sup> “Vision Zero SF,” SFMTA, October 24, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> SFMTA Livable Streets, “2023 Safe Streets Evaluation Summary,” ArcGIS StoryMaps, February 28, 2025.

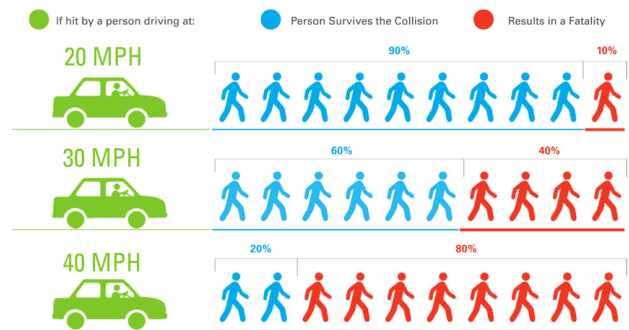
<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Department of Public Health-Program on Health, Equity and Sustainability. 2017. Vision Zero High Injury Network: 2017 Update – A Methodology for San Francisco, California. San Francisco, CA.

<sup>4</sup> Jason Fong and Chloe Wong, “No Turn on Red Policy: RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-07,” San Francisco Youth Commission, November 27, 2023.



implementation of NTOR on 50 intersections in the Tenderloin, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) found that 20% of pedestrian or bicycle-related injury crashes involving turning drivers at signalized intersections demonstrate high compliance (92%) with NTOR restrictions. Close calls for vehicle-pedestrian collisions, in which an accident was narrowly missed, decreased from 5 before NTOR signs were posted to 1 after restrictions were in place at observed intersections, and vehicles blocking or encroaching onto crosswalks on a red signal were reduced by more than 70%.<sup>5</sup>

On top of NTOR, lower speed limits can greatly decrease the amount of traffic fatalities and deaths. Studies have shown that compared to the 20% chance of survival if someone has been struck by a vehicle traveling 40 mph, a person has a 90% chance of surviving being struck by a vehicle going 20 mph or slower. In 2022, SFMTA began implementing 5 MPH speed limit decreases in key business activity districts, as shown in the map above.<sup>6</sup>



These improvements are promising for the future of safe streets and the San Francisco Youth Commission strongly urges for the expansion of No Turn on Red and speed limit policies to all high injury networks, as well as other parts of San Francisco.

### Curbside Protected Bike Lanes

In 2024, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-06,<sup>7</sup> supporting the removal of the center bikeway on Valencia Street and the construction of curbside-protected bikeways. As of 2025, the center bikeway is being removed and replaced. Valencia Street is a prominent location for frequent vehicle-related injuries in the city, as three pedestrians have been killed there since 2020.<sup>8</sup> Unsafe turning, misuse of the bike lane, double parking, and speeding cause many collisions to occur, discouraging people from walking or biking, thus harming local businesses and recreational activities. A pedestrianized Valencia Street, where people can walk and bike safely, with only vehicles permitted for commercial deliveries and local residents, would greatly benefit the city. According to SFMTA’s evaluation of the center bikeway project, the number of bikers has gone down 53% since the implementation, due to the center bikeway making cyclists feel unsafe.<sup>9</sup> A pedestrianized Valencia Street would bring cyclists and pedestrians back, cause fewer vehicle-related deaths and injuries, and result in an

<sup>5</sup> SFMTA, “TENDERLOIN NO TURN ON RED EVALUATION PROJECT FINDINGS,” SFMTA, season-03 2021.

<sup>6</sup> “Speed Management,” SFMTA, March 5, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Imaan Ansari, Jason Fong, and Chloe Wong, “Valencia Street Protected Bike Lanes: RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-06,” San Francisco Youth Commission, November 27, 2023.

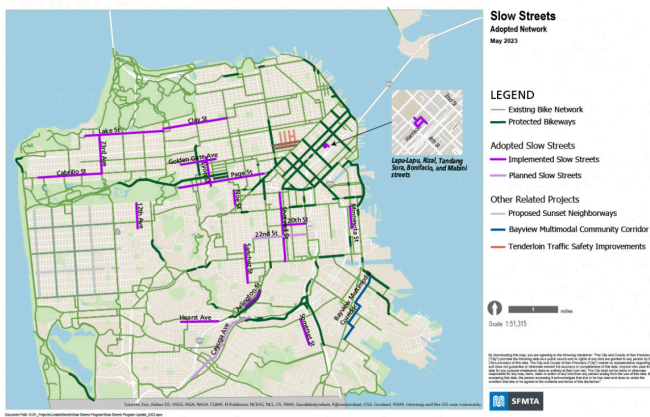
<sup>8</sup> Ricardo Olea. (2023, May 8). 2017-2022 San Francisco Traffic Crashes Report. SFMTA.

<sup>9</sup> Valencia Bikeway improvements. SFMTA.

environmentally friendly, economically thriving Valencia Street. The Youth Commission believes that a plan to fully create pedestrianized Valencia St. should be explored, funded, and developed with the opinions of local businesses and the public in mind.

Other than full pedestrianization of streets, curbside protected bike lanes alone can greatly benefit the city’s pedestrians, bikers, and drivers. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, separated, protected bike lanes can reduce vehicle-bicycle crashes by up to 53%.<sup>10</sup> Protected bike lanes reduce the risk of collisions while encouraging people to ride bikes and making them more accessible for less experienced bikers. Curbside-protected bike lanes also improve traffic flow as drivers and bikers aren’t forced to change their speeds or lanes to accommodate each other. For all these reasons and more, the Youth Commission firmly urges the exploration of other areas in the city where pedestrian and vehicle safety can be improved.

### Slow Streets



In 2022, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 2223-AL-035 urging officials to approve a citywide network of permanent Slow Streets.<sup>11</sup> In December 2022, the SFMTA Board approved the permanent Slow Streets program. According to SFMTA’s 2023 evaluation of the Slow Streets Program, only three of the sixteen permanent Slow Streets (23rd Avenue, Sanchez Street, and Shotwell Street) meet the Board-adopted volume and speed targets for Slow Streets.<sup>12</sup> The remaining 13 Slow Streets require volume management tools, speed management

tools, or both to better meet the adopted targets for low-traffic streets. Funding and support should be given to SFMTA’s efforts to improve the program, as Slow Streets encourages recreational activities, biking, and walking. Slow Streets gives way to community-building recreational activities, such as the Slow Streets Mural Program, which engages community members by putting art on the pavement. Current Slow Streets not only need to be improved and maintained but should be explored and funded to further expand the program. While Slow Streets are incredibly beneficial in some areas, residents of certain neighborhoods have become frustrated with the halt in the flow of traffic. The Youth Commission believes that Slow Streets that have resulted in substantial negative feedback should be re-evaluated, and more local community outreach should be conducted for potential Slow Streets to ensure the needs of every community are being recognized and met.

It is essential that our streets are safe for all, especially our youth. Areas that youth frequent for school, recreation, and other uses should be prioritized in the creation of safe street

<sup>10</sup> “Separated Bike Lanes—Making Roads Safer for Bicyclists | Innovator | 2024 | March / April,” n.d.

<sup>11</sup> Hayden Miller, “Supporting a Permanent Slow Streets Program: RESOLUTION NO. 2223-AL-03,” San Francisco Youth Commission, November 14, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> 2023 Slow Streets Evaluation. (2023). SFMTA.

infrastructure. High injury networks, equity priority areas, and streets with youth-focused spaces should be the center of street safety improvements.

## **Recommendations**

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

1. **Create and Commit to a New Ten-Year Vision Zero Goal** – As traffic-related fatalities continue to increase, it is clear that the city must reaffirm and commit to a new Vision Zero goal to reduce traffic fatalities to zero by 2034.
2. **Expand No Turn on Red** – infrastructure to all high-injury networks in San Francisco and explore other location possibilities.
3. Expand curbside protected bike lanes to protect bikers and pedestrians.
4. Continue monitoring and working to expand legislation regarding speed limits in high-injury networks.
5. **Maintain Slow Streets Program** – Provide funding and support for the SFMTA to fully implement, maintain, and expand permanent Slow Streets program infrastructure.
6. **Expand Car-Free Space** – Urge and provide funding to city agencies to conduct outreach and explore making other pedestrianized streets, specifically Valencia Street.

## EXPAND ACCESS TO YOUTH-CENTERED RECREATIONAL SPACES

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges for higher utilization of public spaces, prioritization of renovation and maintenance, improvement of public parks, and increased funding and expansion of programs at the MIX and local libraries.*

### Background

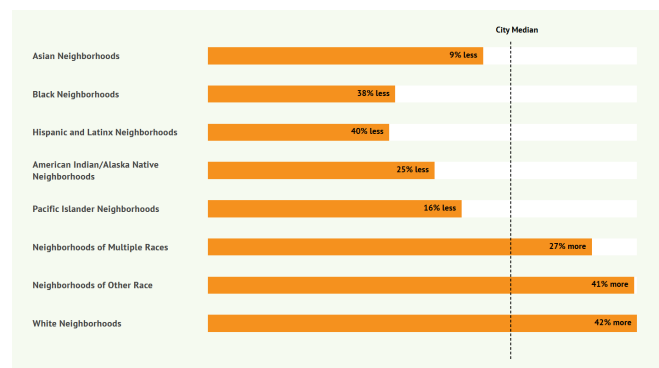
Open spaces, recreational facilities, and other public spaces are vital to the quality of life for the city's residents, as they provide numerous mental and physical health benefits and contribute to a sense of community and culture. In terms of economics, public spaces facilitate economic development and community revitalization. The liveliness and continuous use of public space lead to urban environments that are healthy and safe, making the city an attractive place to live and work.

According to the San Francisco General Plan for Recreation and Open Space, open spaces and recreational centers are vital to citizens' mental and physical health, offering a wide range of health-related benefits. They provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to exercise and encourage socialization. By providing and maintaining high-quality open spaces for all, more residents would have opportunities for physical recreation, reducing obesity and the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other health ailments. Open spaces are particularly important for youth as they provide opportunities to play sports, use playgrounds, and stay active. Whether it be playgrounds, picnic fields, or bustling streets, open spaces can build community by giving neighbors a realm to get to know each other and children a safe place to play.

Open space provides tangible economic benefits. Numerous studies have quantified the dollars that parks and tree plantings bring back to a city. They attract and expand local businesses and tourism and make the area more attractive for investment. The Trust for Public Lands' study, *The Economic Benefits of Parks & Open Space*, cited that our Golden Gate Park has been shown to increase the value of nearby property to \$5-\$10 million additional dollars annually.

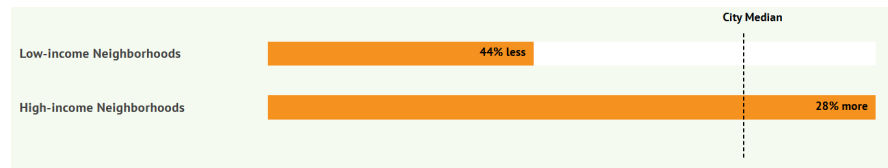
### Public Parks

The Youth Commission strongly supports improving and ensuring that all neighborhoods in the city have equitable access to well-maintained and funded parks. According to the Trust for Public Land's ParkScore Index, 100% of city residents are within a half-mile radius of a park, but equity is lacking.<sup>1</sup> Residents in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and other people of color have access to 35% less park space per person than the city's average and 54% less than residents in neighborhoods with high



<sup>1</sup> 2024 ParkScore Index: San Francisco, CA. (2024). Trust for Public Land.

concentrations of white people. Residents living in lower-income neighborhoods have access to 44% less nearby park space than those in higher-income neighborhoods.

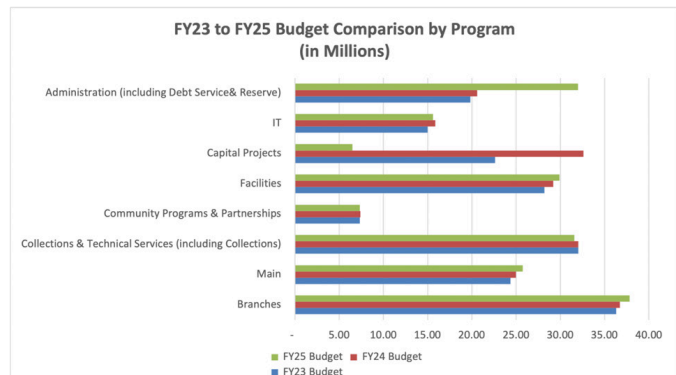


According to the 2024 Park Maintenance Standards Evaluation Report, most of the city’s 8 lowest-scoring parks had a “notable decrease in percentage points” from

last year, with over half being located in equity zones. While the report also cites improvements in the difference between park maintenance in equity zones and out, this is not fully reflected in the ParkScore Index. Thus, the Youth Commission strongly urges continued recognition and action on this issue. In order to achieve equitable access to parks, more funding should be allocated to improving local parks, especially in equity zones, low-income neighborhoods, and neighborhoods with a larger population of communities of color. To further close the equity gap, outreach should be conducted in collaboration with local community organizations in equity-priority neighborhoods to promote the use of larger parks, such as Golden Gate Park, Stern Grove, and John McLaren Park. This is to ensure that all youth in the city are aware of the opportunities for recreation in the park and how they can take advantage of them. This can be done by spreading awareness about the transit options to get to the parks.<sup>2</sup>

### Public Spaces

The Youth Commission firmly supports expanding and improving public youth-centered spaces. The Mix at the San Francisco Main Library has historically provided youth with unique opportunities by providing multiple ways for youth to engage within the program space. The Mix is different from most library programs as it provides hands-on experience with activities such as social and writing groups, sewing, music recording, production lessons, 3D printing, and computer access rather than just paper books. These resources, especially lessons and groups, are incredibly valuable for youth to connect with others and learn new skills. The Youth Commission's past advocacy resulted in the MIX’s summer hours being extended, which is incredibly beneficial and increased the space’s accessibility. However, expanding programs such as the ones at the MIX at local libraries, especially those in low-equity areas, would increase accessibility to resources for San Francisco youth. More resources should be available to youth in their local libraries, not only the Main Library. Youth engagement is a goal of the San Francisco Public Library and expanding the availability of its programs and resources will further progress towards that goal. This can be done by allocating more funding to community programs and branches, as well as conducting outreach to the local youth to ensure their needs are



<sup>2</sup> 2024 Park Score Ranking. (2024) Trust for Public Land.

being met. Further, expanding The Mix’s youth program hours would allow more youth who may live farther away to attend these programs at the Main Library.<sup>3</sup>

## **Recommendations**

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

1. Ensure a well-maintained, highly utilized open space system by prioritizing renovation and maintenance.
2. Support and fund efforts of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department to improve and promote the use of local parks and playgrounds, especially those in equity zones.
3. Invest funding and resources to expand programming in local libraries to make opportunities to attend more accessible by resembling resources like the ones at The Mix, which include cooking classes, music lessons for youth, tutoring, community building, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Budget information: Fiscal Year 2024-2025. (n.d.). San Francisco Public Library.



# ADDRESSING HATE CRIMES

## Background

Hate crimes can affect anyone, including San Francisco youth, and can have a lasting impact on the victim and their community, causing challenges to their safety and well-being. Ensuring the safety and equitable treatment of youth on the streets and within San Francisco’s public transportation system is crucial for fostering an inclusive and secure environment.

**HATE CRIMES, 2014-2023**  
Single-Bias Events by Race/Ethnicity/National Origin

Race/ethnicity/national origin	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*
Total .....	412	428	519	602	594	523	875	1165	1298	1017
Anti-white .....	28	34	56	47	48	39	82	83	103	53
Anti-Black or African American .....	238	231	251	302	276	243	456	513	652	518
Anti-Hispanic or Latino .....	60	81	83	126	149	110	152	197	210	199
Anti-American Indian/Alaskan Native .....	2	2	9	5	2	1	2	2	6	3
Anti-Asian .....	19	19	22	37	34	43	89	247	140	125
Anti-Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander <sup>1</sup> .....	-	1	5	3	3	0	0	1	0	0
Anti-Arab <sup>2</sup> .....	12	12	19	15	16	20	10	20	22	22
Anti-multiple races (group) .....	14	17	34	22	23	26	25	33	56	41
Anti-other ethnicity/national origin .....	37	30	37	42	31	32	44	55	96	48
Anti-citizenship status .....	2	1	3	3	12	9	15	14	13	8

\*Caution should be used when comparing 2023 hate crime data to prior years. Not all agencies were able to submit a full year of data for 2023. See Understanding the Data, Characteristics and Known Limitations for additional information.

<sup>1</sup> Reporting of anti-Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander bias motivation began in 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Data do not match previously published reports due to the separation in 2016 of anti-Arab bias type from anti-other ethnicity/national origin bias type.

In 2021, San Francisco experienced a 567% rise in reported hate crimes against Asian Americans, escalating from nine incidents in 2020 to 60 in 2021.<sup>1</sup> While reported hate crimes have decreased in subsequent years, this decline may be attributed to

underreporting due to fear or mistrust. For instance, in 2023, the number of reported hate crime events in California decreased by 7.1% from the previous year.<sup>2</sup> However, hate crimes against other groups of people have seen alarming increases; anti-Jewish hate crimes in San Francisco more than quadrupled in 2023 compared to 2022.<sup>3</sup> These statistics suggest that hate crimes remain a significant concern, and the apparent decrease in overall numbers may not fully capture the ongoing risks faced by vulnerable communities, including youth.

## Youth Hate Crimes

Youth are represented in these numbers both as victims and as perpetrators. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), approximately 11% of those who commit hate crimes are under the age of 18, a troubling reality that underscores the need for comprehensive intervention.<sup>4</sup> Many youths fall under this influence due to a combination of social, psychological, and environmental factors. Peer pressure, exposure to extremist rhetoric, and lack of teacher supervision are some ways that youth are influenced to commit these acts of hatred. Many young people are still in the process of forming their identities and beliefs, as their prefrontal cortex is still developing, making them more susceptible to acting on these biases. Harmful narratives spread through social media or misinformation pollute their brains as they are in the process of discovering where they belong. A lack of education, diversity, and empathy, combined with personal frustrations, further drives young individuals to act on these harmful beliefs.

<sup>1</sup> Dani Anguiano, “SF Police Data Shows 567% Increase in Reports of Hate Crimes Against Asian Americans,” The Guardian, January 27, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Justice and Rob Bonta, “Hate Crime in California,” report, 2023.

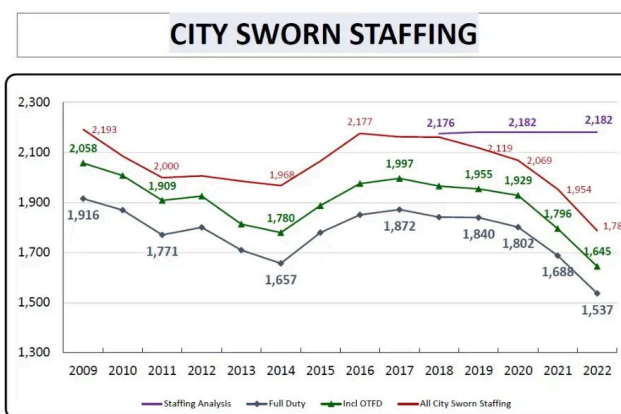
<sup>3</sup> Gabe Stutman, “Anti-Jewish Hate Crimes Quadrupled in San Francisco in 2023,” The Jewish News of Northern California, March 24, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> ICF, “Preventing Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Initiative,” n.d.

A recent example that emphasizes the urgency of this matter is that on the day after election day, many African American students in San Francisco schools received racist text messages, some stating that they had been selected to "pick cotton at the nearest plantation." These text messages were received by African Americans all across the U.S., and some of these texts came from local area codes. A student from Raoul Wallenberg High School received a message that threatened "she [would] be picked up by a brown van on Masonic Street, which actually borders [the school] campus, and taken back to the cotton fields."<sup>5</sup> This student received this message from a local San Francisco 415 area code and is now working with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and the FBI, who are investigating the origins of the text messages. This incident reinforces the importance of collaboration between law enforcement and school districts to prevent hate crimes and support hate crime-affected youth.

### Police Understaffing

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) is currently grappling with a significant staffing shortage, operating with approximately 500 fewer officers than required. This deficit has led to the rationing of public services, compelling officers to make difficult decisions about which incidents to prioritize.<sup>6</sup> This understaffing has tangible consequences for youth safety: Emergency calls, particularly high-priority incidents, have increased by 12% since early last year, while response times have concurrently slowed. This delay in response can leave young individuals vulnerable during critical situations and can also force officers to focus less on preventative outreach and education.<sup>7</sup>



Vacancy budget savings are offset by the growing need of overtime to address operational staffing shortages



Understaffing in the police department has a profound impact on youth. When fewer officers are unable to patrol neighborhoods, it leaves young people vulnerable to the negative influences of unsupervised environments and further alienates youth who already feel neglected by public institutions. This gap in staffing perpetuates a cycle where young individuals are more exposed to hateful influences and less supported by the community safeguards that a well-resourced police force can provide.

### Hate Crimes On Public Transportation

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has unfortunately been the setting for several hate crimes targeting youth, particularly those of Asian descent. In May 2024, a 14-year-old Lowell High School student experienced a traumatic incident on the 29 Sunset inbound bus. A man began shouting anti-Asian slurs, stating that Asians should "go back to their

<sup>5</sup> Joe Burn and Beki San Martin, "SF School Kids Harassed by Racist Texts After Election Day," The San Francisco Standard, November 9, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Bilal Mahmood, "Understaffed Police Are Rationing Public Safety in San Francisco. Here'S How to Fix It," The San Francisco Standard, October 29, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> "Police Staffing and Public Safety in San Francisco," Marina Times, n.d.

country” and using derogatory language. The assailant then brandished a Taser, causing significant fear among the students present. This event not only highlighted the vulnerability of young passengers but also underscored the pressing need for enhanced safety measures on public transit.<sup>8</sup> In another alarming incident, a woman was charged with a hate crime after attacking two passengers on a Muni bus. These occurrences have sparked community outrage and calls for increased protection for all riders, especially students who rely on Muni for their daily commutes.<sup>9</sup>

SFMTA employs fare inspectors to promote fare compliance and provide information about discount programs. While these inspectors are trained in de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution, their primary role is to ensure fare compliance and to educate riders.<sup>10</sup> They are not equipped or authorized to handle criminal activities or enforce laws beyond fare-related issues and lack the authority to detain or arrest individuals, limiting their capacity to address serious incidents such as hate crimes. SFMTA fare inspectors need additional training in crisis intervention and conflict resolution to better address the challenges they face on Muni. Expanding their training to include trauma-informed response techniques and implicit bias training would help them interact more effectively with diverse communities. Given the rise in hate crimes on public transit, inspectors should also be trained to recognize the warning signs of hate-motivated incidents and respond in a way that prioritizes the safety of all passengers. Additionally, equipping them with skills in mediation and nonviolent intervention could help prevent situations from escalating into violence. Since fare inspectors are not law enforcement officers, they should have clear protocols for working with SFPD and transit ambassadors when serious incidents occur. Investing in these expanded training programs will ensure that fare inspectors can foster a safer, more inclusive environment on Muni while maintaining their primary role in fare enforcement.

Given the current financial constraints with the SFMTA facing a projected budget deficit of \$322 million, it is imperative to strategically allocate resources to ensure passenger safety. Implementing targeted safety measures, such as increasing the presence of transit ambassadors or collaborating with community organizations for rider education programs, can enhance security without imposing significant financial burdens. These initiatives aim to deter potential offenders and provide immediate assistance during incidents, thereby fostering a safer environment for all passengers.<sup>11</sup>

While efforts have been made to support safety and access in San Francisco, disparities remain. Addressing youth-related hate crimes in San Francisco requires a multi-faceted approach that combines education, community engagement, law enforcement, and institutional support. To ensure the safety and well-being of all young people, educational efforts must be expanded, youth must be equipped with the tools to combat hate and bias, and programs that empower students to act as allies in their schools and communities should be invested in. It is crucial to address the current challenges within law enforcement agencies and the public transportation system to promote safety, equity, and inclusivity for all young residents.

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<sup>8</sup> Ko Lyn Cheang, “S.F. Students on Muni Bus Face anti-Asian Slurs, Taser. It’s Deepened Fears Among Asian Americans,” San Francisco Chronicle, May 5, 2024.?

<sup>9</sup> Tim Fang, “Woman Accused in San Francisco Muni Bus Attack Facing Hate Crime, Assault Charges,” CBS News, January 24, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> “Paying Your Fares Keeps Us Moving,” SFMTA, December 21, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> “SFMTA Budget Balancing Exercise FY 2025 and 2026,” SFMTA, May 20, 2024.

## **Recommendations**

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

1. Address Police Understaffing to improve hate crime response and general safety for all.
2. Expand SFMTA Fare inspector training strategies to maintain a safe and equitable environment for all MUNI riders.
3. Increase the presence of transit ambassadors and collaborate with community organizations for rider education, enhancing security without significant financial strain.

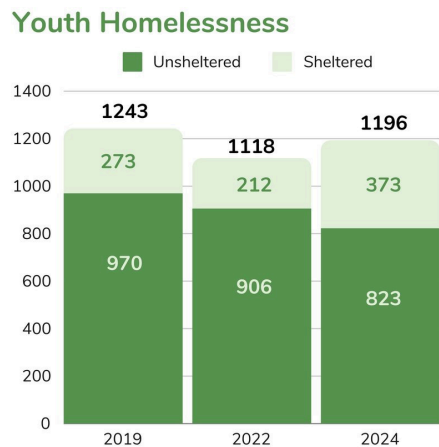
# ADDRESS HOUSING IN SAN FRANCISCO

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to accelerate the development of critical housing that supports teachers, low-income families, youth, and transitional-aged youth. Additionally, we urge for improvements in the habitability of single-room occupancies in San Francisco.*

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

### Background

San Francisco, with a median home price of \$1.39 million, is one of the most expensive cities to live in the United States.<sup>1</sup> For the vast majority of residents, home ownership is unattainable, and will continue to be as long as market rate prices continue to grow or remain unchanged. With owning a home out of the question for most San Franciscans, many are forced to struggle to keep up with ridiculously high-priced rents or are driven out of the city altogether. In San Francisco,



65% of the population rents.<sup>2</sup> The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$2,900, and in some areas, it is upwards of \$3,500. Notably, the cheapest rent in San Francisco is 88% higher than that of the national average.<sup>3</sup> Currently, to afford rent while staying within the 30% affordability guideline, an individual must make at least \$113,000.<sup>4</sup> According to the San Francisco 2024 Youth Homelessness Point-In-Time Count, a total of 8,323 homeless individuals were counted in San Francisco. Many families with youth are at risk of going homeless and are struggling to keep up with the rising costs of living in the city. In addition, only 13% of San Francisco's population is under 18, a direct consequence of the city's housing shortage.<sup>5</sup>

Focusing on housing will help our city thrive by protecting families from displacement, preserving our diverse communities, and ensuring that living in San Francisco can be accessible for all. Addressing the housing crisis requires a multifaceted approach. This includes looking at past historical context to learn from previous challenges, as well as examining current policies that have a tangible effect on the housing crisis today. Such policies include zoning laws, rent control, and middle-income housing.

### Tech Influence

While San Francisco has always been an expensive city to live in relative to the average income of the time period, median home prices in recent years have skyrocketed over 100% from 2010-2020. This is in part due to the embrace of tech companies like Google, Apple, Twitter,

<sup>1</sup> Mike Winters. "The 10 U.S. places with the highest cost of living—No. 1 costs more than double the national average." cnbc.com. Last modified June 29, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> "San Francisco City Demographics: A Housing Market Overview for Homeowners and Property Managers," Doorstead, n.d.

<sup>3</sup> "Average Rent in San Francisco, CA - 2025 Rent Prices," Apartments.com, n.d.

<sup>4</sup> "Average Rent in San Francisco, CA - 2025 Rent Prices."

<sup>5</sup> Susie Neilson, "San Francisco Is the Most Childless Major City in the U.S. These Maps Show Which Neighborhoods Have the Fewest Kids," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 22, 2022.

Uber, LinkedIn, and more. In 2011, then-Mayor Ed Lee granted tax breaks to companies moving into the mid-Market area, exempting them from paying a 1.5% payroll tax.<sup>6</sup> Companies like Uber, Yelp, Slack, and especially Twitter benefited from the exemption. What was then lauded by Mayor Lee as creating “vibrancy [and] people wanting to live here, work here, play here,” has since been recognized as contributing to much of the gentrification in the SoMA, Tenderloin, and Mission neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

With the deliberate centralization of tech companies in San Francisco’s downtown came an influx of employees seeking housing in the city. Between 2017 and 2022, the Bay Area saw an increase of 75,000 tech workers.<sup>8</sup> Currently, San Francisco tops the United States with an average salary of \$134,000 for tech workers, \$34,000 more than Seattle, the next highest.<sup>9</sup> Given San Francisco’s constrained geography, competition amongst high-salary tech workers for housing created additional strain on already limited housing availability. Landlords raised prices, with real estate investors reacting to the rise of tech companies by prioritizing building luxury properties suitable to the desires of a growing class of tech employees. Rising rental prices made it increasingly difficult for low and middle-income residents to afford housing. Between 2012 and 2013, Ellis Act evictions increased by 81%. Additionally, in 2011, 69% of no-fault evictions occurred within four blocks of private tech employee bus shuttle stops.

At the same time, it is also important to note that many tech employees were laid off during the pandemic, resulting in a drop in rental and housing prices. Currently, even tech workers are struggling to afford rent themselves or have resorted to commuting from outside the city.<sup>10</sup> While tech workers are not necessarily the root cause of the housing crisis, the policies that empower tech companies allow them to contribute significantly to the disruption of the housing market.

In order to achieve a holistic understanding of the present-day housing crisis, it is necessary to first immerse ourselves in the historical context and impact of the systematic embrace of tech companies in the mid-2000s. While it is important to acknowledge the benefits that tech companies have brought, including economic growth, revenue, and innovation, it is equally crucial to be mindful of the devastating effects that it has had in exacerbating the housing crisis in San Francisco.

As of 2025, Mayor Daniel Lurie has pledged to “embrace clean tech green tech,” referring to AI companies.<sup>11</sup> The impact of AI companies on San Francisco’s housing market is yet to be seen, however, given previous patterns, it is important to consider potential implications for affordability and displacement. The city should balance AI company growth alongside the development of affordable housing to prevent worsening housing affordability issues.

### **Zoning Laws & Housing Shortage**

San Francisco has long faced the burden of slow housing production. Given the city’s 7x7 mile geographical constraints, space is finite, and expansion is limited. As a result, San Francisco has

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<sup>6</sup> Aditi Roy, “San Francisco’s Mayor Oversaw Tax Break That Helped Spark New Tech Boom in the City,” CNBC, December 12, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Katy Steinmetz, “What the Twitter Tax Break Means for San Francisco,” *TIME*, February 28, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Emily Landes, “Bay Area Tops the Nation for Both Tech Talent and Expenses,” *The Real Deal*, July 19, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Lushi Zeng, “Navigating Tech Recruiting in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2024 | Rocket Recruiting Blog,” GetRocket, April 26, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Olivia Solon, “Scraping by on Six Figures? Tech Workers Feel Poor in Silicon Valley’s Wealth Bubble,” *The Guardian*, February 27, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Hoffman, “A Look Into Lurie,” *The Urban Legend*, April 21, 2024.

only built around 1,000-5,000 new units per year since 2000. However, this slow growth in housing is not solely due to the density of the city but also due to restrictive zoning laws.

Historically, San Francisco has been composed of mostly single-family homes. According to the San Francisco Planning Department’s 2023 Housing Inventory, over 30% of homes surveyed were single-family homes. This has led to multi-family apartment buildings being concentrated on the high-density east side of the city. In contrast, the west side is much lower in density with less development of apartment buildings.

Recently, San Francisco committed to the housing element of building 82,000 new units by 2031, which includes over 46,000 affordable units. Currently, the city has only achieved 5% in moderate-income housing, 7% in low-income housing, and 7% in very low-income housing.<sup>12</sup>

Because affordable housing often comes in the form of multi-family apartment buildings, zoning

REGIONAL HOUSING NEED ALLOCATION, PLANNING PERIOD 2023-2030

**13. RHNA PROGRESS, PLANNING PERIOD 2023 - 2030**

Household Affordability	Housing Goals	Projection Period Units	Authorized Units	Acquisition / Conversion	Progress Toward RHNA Targets	Deficit	% Progress
Above Moderate (> 120% AMI)	35,471	1,251	1,742	0	2,993	32,478	8%
Moderate Income (80–120% AMI)	13,717	284	410	45	739	12,978	5%
Low Income (50-<80% AMI)	12,014	241	373	225	839	11,175	7%
Very Low Income (< 50% AMI)	20,867	309	514	742	1,565	19,302	7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>82,069</b>	<b>2,085</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>6,136</b>	<b>75,933</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: SF Planning Department

laws around height and density have made it difficult to meet building goals. In 2023, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation allowing apartment buildings up to 240 feet tall along Geary Boulevard, 19th Avenue, Sunset Boulevard, and

other major roads. On December 4th, 2023, the Youth Commission voted to support the ordinance. Since then, multiple affordable housing projects have been implemented, such as the 4200 Geary Boulevard development (86 ft) with all 98 units being affordable and focused on formerly unhoused seniors and veterans.<sup>13</sup> It’s crucial to continue to prioritize the construction of 100% affordable housing to address the ongoing housing crisis.

Although there has been some progress in building more affordable housing, the challenge of permitting has continued to be a roadblock for the future of new housing projects. While former Mayor London Breed asked Departments involved in housing development to reduce approval times, permitting is an often slow and lengthy process that reduces the amount of affordable housing the city can build. For example, the approval for a full building permit to construct multi-family housing takes 627 days on average, an 83% increase from 2012.<sup>14</sup> Housing developers often have to pass through many legal challenges to get approval, including discretionary review and CEQA requirements. As of 2024, the role of the discretionary review

<sup>12</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, “SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING INVENTORY,” April 2024.

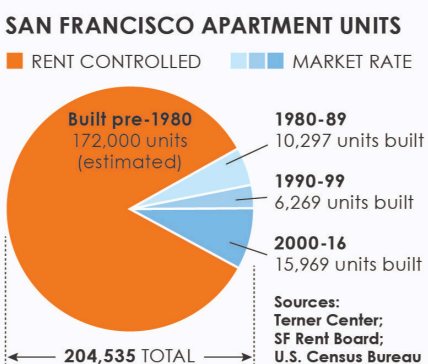
<sup>13</sup> Andrew Nelson, “Construction Tops Out for 4200 Geary Boulevard in Richmond District, San Francisco - San Francisco YIMBY,” San Francisco YIMBY, March 19, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Dustin Gardiner and Susie Neilson, “627 Days, Just for the Permit: This Data Shows the Staggering Timeline to Build Homes in S.F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 14, 2022.

was reduced with the passing of Senate Bill (SB) 423, which streamlined the pathway for new housing development.<sup>15</sup><sup>16</sup> Discretionary review allowed individual residents to file complaints against housing projects and block development. Recently, Mayor Daniel Lurie launched PermitSF, an initiative to speed up the permitting process. Mayor Lurie has proposed centralizing permit applications by allowing online filings, creating a public permit tracking tool, and merging permitting responsibilities into one department.<sup>17</sup> The success of this program has yet to be seen. While the permitting process has been a challenge for multi-family housing development, it is also important to ensure that policies resulting in the streamlining or cutting of permitting times don't end up exclusively favoring market-rate housing.

## Rent Control

Despite how expensive San Francisco has become, residents and families have still managed to make the city their home. One major pathway to affording a life in the city is through rent control. The Rent Ordinance, which passed on June 13th, 1979, capped the amount that landlords can raise rent each year, adjusted to inflation.<sup>18</sup> Any units (excluding most single-family homes) built before the passage of the Rent Ordinance are protected with rent control.<sup>19</sup> Because most of San Francisco's homes are over 70 years old, most units in the city are under rent control, at around 250,000 units of housing.



Recently, the allowed rent increase was set at 1.4% for 2025-2026. Importantly, current city policy requires a landlord to provide a 30-day written notice if they decide to increase the rent. Rent may not be raised again until at least 12 months later when a new rent increase limit goes into effect.<sup>20</sup> This allows for transparency in lease agreements and protects tenants from unpredictable and unfair rent hikes, giving them greater stability in their housing situation.

Many city leaders and nonprofits have expressed their support for rent control, including former Board President Aaron Peskin, former Mayor London Breed, and the San Francisco Tenants Union. Additionally, San Francisco's 2023 housing ordinance passed with amendments from Supervisor Rafael Mandelmann protecting rent-controlled units from being demolished and replaced with market-rate units.<sup>21</sup>

In San Francisco, 17,565 low-income renter households don't have access to an affordable home. On top of that, renters in San Francisco need to earn \$68.56 per hour (3.8 times the minimum wage of the city) to afford the average rental prices.<sup>22</sup> Given these challenges, it's important to

<sup>15</sup> Scott Wiener, "SB-423: Land Use: Streamlined Housing Approvals: Multifamily Housing Developments.," California Legislative Information, October 12, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Gabe Greschler, "YIMBY Dreams Come True as State Bill Eliminates Housing Red Tape," The San Francisco Standard, July 2, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Roland Li, "Mayor Lurie Launches Initiative to Speed up S.F.'s Slow Permitting Process," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 13, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> "CHAPTER 37: RESIDENTIAL RENT STABILIZATION AND ARBITRATION ORDINANCE," American Legal Publishing, n.d.

<sup>19</sup> "Rent Control," San Francisco Tenants Union, n.d.

<sup>20</sup> "Learn About San Francisco Rental Laws | SF.gov," n.d.

<sup>21</sup> J. K. Dineen, "Faced With 'Builder's Remedy' Threat, S.F. Supes Advance Housing Development Legislation," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 28, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> California Housing Partnership and Danielle M. Mazzella, "SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY 2024 Affordable Housing Needs Report," *CHPC.NET/HOUSINGNEEDS*, 2024.



protect policies such as rent control that enable thousands of residents to live in San Francisco without it being a financial burden.

### **Middle-Income Housing**

Middle-income housing is another pathway for residents to remain in San Francisco. Many middle-income San Franciscans, such as teachers, firefighters, healthcare workers, and librarians have fought to stay in the city amid growing rental prices.

In July 2024, former Board President and Supervisor Aaron Peskin introduced an affordable housing initiative targeted at middle-income residents.<sup>23</sup> The Workforce Housing & Affordable Middle-Income (WHAMI) initiative would utilize revenue bonds approved by city departments and the Board of Supervisors to build affordable housing for residents earning between 80%-120% of AMI.<sup>24</sup> Importantly, while one-bedroom apartments are affordable for middle-income families, family-sized housing remains out of reach. Other examples of middle-income housing programs include the Shirley Chisholm Village, which provides 135 units of affordable housing targeted at educators and employees of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).

Supporting programs like WHAMI is essential in allowing middle-income residents who make just above the AMI to access affordable housing that is suitable for families.

## **EDUCATION WORKFORCE HOUSING**

### **Teacher Housing Now**

San Francisco's housing crisis has placed significant financial burdens on its workforce, particularly public servants such as teachers, who struggle to afford homes in the city they serve. Recognizing this challenge, the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) established special programs to make homeownership more attainable and to stop the displacement of its vital workforce.<sup>25</sup> In addition to offering monetary assistance, MOHCD manages affordable housing programs by establishing criteria for eligibility and enforcing compliance to ensure housing is set aside for middle-income households. For educators, MOHCD administers the Teacher Next Door (TND) Loan Program, a specialized initiative aimed at retaining SFUSD employees by making homeownership more attainable. The TND program offers up to \$20,000 in forgivable loans, provided that the borrower remains employed within SFUSD and occupies the purchased home as their primary residence (the home in which they live for at least 10 months per year) for a minimum of ten years.<sup>26</sup> A Forgivable Loan is a loan that does not require repayment if certain conditions (such as maintaining employment in SFUSD) are met.<sup>27</sup> With regard to the loan forgiveness structure, the TND loan is gradually forgiven at a rate of 20% per year after the fifth year, meaning that teachers who stay in their homes for 10 years will not have to repay any portion of the loan.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, full repayment

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<sup>23</sup> Aaron Peskin et al., "Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin Joins SEIU 1021 to Call for Housing for Essential City Workers," press-release, City and County of San Francisco (City and County of San Francisco, August 5, 2024).

<sup>24</sup> Aaron Peskin, "Workforce Housing & Affordable Middle-Income (WHAMI) Act Moves," Press release, July 10, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Affordable housing resources for teachers | SF.gov

<sup>26</sup> Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, "San Francisco Teacher Next Door Loan Program (TND)," manual, *City and County of San Francisco*, October 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, "San Francisco Teacher Next Door Loan Program (TND)."

<sup>28</sup> Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, "San Francisco Teacher Next Door Loan Program (TND)."

is only required if the teacher leaves SFUSD or fails to meet residency obligations. In cases of employment termination due to long-term disability, workforce reductions, or position elimination, educators may opt into a structured repayment plan (a schedule for paying back the loan in smaller monthly amounts rather than all at once) instead of an immediate lump-sum repayment.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond financial assistance, MOHCD also enforces critical housing regulations to prevent the misuse of affordable housing programs. The agency oversees compliance measures, including occupancy verification (ensuring that the homebuyer lives in the property), income eligibility checks (confirming that the buyer qualifies under the program's financial guidelines), and resale price controls (rules that restrict how much a property can be sold for to keep it affordable for future buyers). Additionally, MOHCD retains a Right of First Refusal on properties purchased through its programs, meaning the city has the option to buy back homes before they are sold on the open market, ensuring that they remain within affordability guidelines.

Despite these initiatives, the actual implementation of affordable housing for teachers has been full of inefficiencies, miscalculations, and unclear eligibility requirements. A prime example is Shirley Chisholm Village, the first affordable housing project in San Francisco specifically designed for educators. The 135-unit complex received 900 applications and was meant to provide stable housing for SFUSD employees, yet many qualified teachers have been unable to secure units due to administrative missteps.<sup>30</sup>

Teachers who were awarded high-priority spots in the housing lottery have been denied units due to miscalculated income limits and disputed household size determinations. Some applicants were incorrectly told they exceeded the income cap, even when their earnings fell within the listed requirements. In some cases, conflicting income thresholds were published on the city's affordable housing portal (DAHLIA), causing confusion and wrongful disqualifications. Other teachers have faced challenges related to family size and custody arrangements. The housing program uses a mix of local and federal regulations, some of which require formal custody agreements to count children as part of a household. However, many parents rely on informal custody agreements that are not recognized under federal rules, leading to situations where applicants were told they qualified as a household of two instead of five, making them ineligible for larger units.<sup>31</sup>

Payroll inconsistencies from the school district have also complicated income calculations. Some educators received lump-sum back pay due to delayed salary adjustments, which artificially inflated their earnings on paper and led to inaccurate income determinations. Even when housing applications were approved, some teachers were given only a few days' notice to move in, making it difficult to transition without risking financial instability.<sup>32</sup> The affordability of teacher housing itself is another pressing issue. Some units are priced at over \$2,000 per month—more than 50% of some teachers' take-home pay. This reality is nothing new; a survey conducted in 2017 by QTEA found that 60% of District teachers spend more than 30% of their income on rent, and close to 15% of teachers in San Francisco spend more than half of their income on

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<sup>29</sup> Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, "San Francisco Teacher Next Door Loan Program (TND)."

<sup>30</sup> Griffin Jones, "SF Built Homes for Teachers — but They Can't Get In," *The San Francisco Standard*, February 4, 2025.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, "SF Built Homes for Teachers — but They Can't Get In."

<sup>32</sup> Jones, "SF Built Homes for Teachers — but They Can't Get In."

rent.<sup>33</sup> This contradicts the city’s goal of making housing truly accessible for educators, forcing some applicants to remain in shared housing situations or continue searching for affordable alternatives. Additionally, the 2024 update to the SFUSD Facilities Master Plan (FMP) has identified teacher housing as one of four areas to “accelerate” development, prioritizing it over Water Quality, Healthy Air Quality, Seismic Readiness, Delicious and Healthy School Meals, Technology and Network Improvements, Core Functionality (roofing, pavement, heat projects, etc.), Modernization Program (constructing Mission Bay School, etc.), Zone-Based Student Assignment, and Portfolio Management.<sup>34</sup>

The Board of Education also passed Resolution 1911-12A1 on Jan 14, 2020, which established a framework for SFUSD to repurpose some of its properties into affordable teacher housing. The resolution addresses the increase of “super-commuters” within SFUSD; these are employees who are traveling 2-5 hours daily to escape the unaffordable housing costs.<sup>35</sup> The District is the third largest holder of city-owned land and thus makes them a valuable partner to achieve additional density and meet our RHNA goals.

SFUSD also has an attrition rate of 10%.<sup>36</sup> Although it is unclear whether or not the development of such housing will reduce these rates, the UC Berkeley Turner Housing Center notes that it can be a good way to attract educators.<sup>37</sup> SFUSD must maintain at least 3,600 TK-12 teachers; however, as of December 2024, the District only has 3,364 teachers. Additionally, a study conducted through the American Educational Research Journal found that students in classes with higher turnover scored lower in both English language arts (ELA) and math. These effects were particularly magnified in schools with low-performing and African American students.<sup>38</sup> Reducing turnover can also impact the financial and human resources in districts and schools, allowing greater investment to be centered on students. Most importantly, providing affordable housing to teachers permits them to focus their time and energy on helping students. Teaching well and encouraging learning and growth in the classroom is where we want our educators to spend their time. Having a strong school system for our young people is the bedrock of San Francisco. Building the housing that teachers need will bring us closer to creating a city where we can all thrive as one community.

## **ADDRESS LIVING CONDITIONS OF YOUTH IN SINGLE-OCUPANCY ROOMS**

### **Background**

San Francisco has long been a home for all and is a city symbolizing new opportunities for a diverse range of individuals. Historically, many of our city’s residents have relied on affordable housing to support their livelihoods or families in San Francisco. In particular, Single Resident/Room Occupancies (SROs), were key ways to access housing for many families looking to start a new life. SROs are typically small, 8 x 10 feet living spaces with communal bathrooms and showers on each floor. During the 1950s, many SROs were demolished due to

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<sup>33</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “2023 Facilities Master Plan,” *San Francisco Unified School District*, 2023.

<sup>34</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “2024 Facilities Master Plan Update,” San Francisco Unified School District, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Faauga Moliga, “Resolution No. 1911-12A1: Educator Affordable Housing Development Policy,” San Francisco Unified School District, January 14, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> “Facts About SFUSD at a Glance | SFUSD,” n.d.

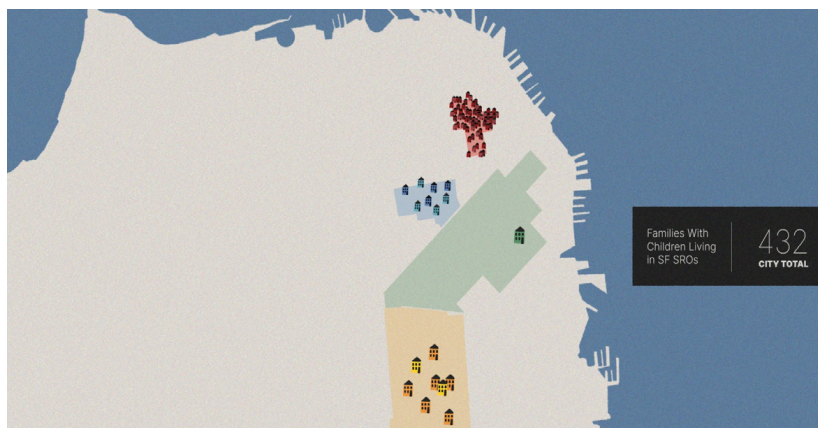
<sup>37</sup> Shazia Manji, “Struggling to Live in the Communities They Serve: How Housing Affordability Impacts School Employees in California - Turner Center,” Turner Center, January 31, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew Ronfeldt, Susanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff, “How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement,” by American Educational Research Association, *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 1 (2013): 4–36

downtown restructuring and a growing upper class seeking housing. At the same time, many residents who had previously lived in apartments had to move to SROs with the advent of the housing market becoming more and more expensive.

Currently, SROs have continued to enable hundreds of families and individuals across San Francisco to survive in the city. There are currently 432 families with children living in SROs. 350 are in Chinatown, 40 in the Tenderloin, 37 in the Inner Mission, and 5 in SOMA, as shown above. As of 2024, there are over 500 SRO buildings across San Francisco. Of those, most are concentrated in Chinatown, the Tenderloin, and the Inner Mission. 76% are privately owned, 24% are contracted by nonprofits, and 2 are owned by the City. These buildings include more than 19,000 residential rooms with an additional 4,400 tourist rooms.

While SROs are often the only option for low-income families, in the short term, their physical and mental impacts on families make them an unsustainable long-term living option. In 2023, a report by the San Francisco Chronicle found that living conditions in SROs are similar to that of being homeless on the street. As of 2025, there has been ongoing progress made to move families out of SROs and into permanent stable housing. In June of 2024, 270 families living in Chinatown SROs were able to transition to permanent stable housing. However, despite the efforts aimed at securing permanent, stable housing for residents of SROs, many challenges remain.



### Living Conditions

In recent years, many SROs in San Francisco have been inundated with a plethora of code violations, including but not limited to: insect infestations, mold and mildew, unsanitary shared restrooms, exposed electrical wiring that can cause fire hazards, and damaged ceilings, floors, and walls.<sup>39</sup> These issues pose serious health and safety risks

to residents and families. 48% of residents living in SROs have reported that their health has been negatively affected by the abhorrent living conditions. While multiple efforts have been made by the City Attorney to respond to tenant complaints over unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, many cases still go unreported or unaddressed.

Besides the health and safety risks, SROs are also incredibly small and cramped. Families of four or five live in SROs, sharing the space with each other. For families, these 100-square-foot spaces are not enough<sup>40</sup> to support adults and to nurture young children.

<sup>39</sup> S.F. City Attorney's Press Office, "City Attorney Sues Tenderloin SRO Owner Over Deplorable Living Conditions," January 9, 2024.

<sup>40</sup> Kimberly A. Rollings et al., "Housing and Neighborhood Physical Quality: Children's Mental Health and Motivation," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 50 (January 26, 2017): 17–23.

Due to the lack of space, children are forced to eat, sleep, and complete schoolwork in the same room as their families. This leads to a lack of privacy as well as increased stress and tension between families, as they are unable to accomplish tasks within their own spaces. Living in poorer quality housing has also been shown to have adverse effects on a child's well-being, including their psychological health. Without a comfortable, quiet space, children can have difficulties studying, affecting their school performance. When space is scarce, the different schedules of household members may disturb children's sleep, potentially leading to difficulty concentrating during the day and negatively affecting mood and behavior. In addition, children in crowded housing have a higher probability of catching illnesses, which can interfere with their daily routine and interrupt their schooling.

### **Newcomer Communities & Resource Access**

SROs are mainly concentrated among communities of non-native settlers in San Francisco, such as Chinatown and the Mission. Of the individuals who have sought opportunity in San Francisco, 10%, or 27,831, are students, 48.5% speak English less than "very well", and 38% are unemployed or not in the labor force. Within that, 18.1% of them are "limited English proficient" speakers, meaning their primary language is not English, and their ability to speak English is significantly limited. Their native languages range from Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, and many more.<sup>41</sup> Despite this large population, access to basic foreign language services such as translators, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and more are quite limited. This is especially pertinent given the abundance of issues that may arise when living in an SRO. Families often face issues regarding tenant rights and living conditions but face language barriers to receiving legal education and assistance. Many are not even aware of the rights they have, such as the fact that landlords should only enter their apartments during business hours unless stated otherwise.

Basic, essential facts like these are inaccessible to newcomer families, increasing their likelihood of being manipulated or subjected to abuse from landlords or other entities. Having bilingual and culturally competent resources will allow more people to fight back in times of need, and it will also allow more people to live safely and happily in their own homes. Due to these reasons, the Youth Commission strongly encourages outreach and collaboration with community organizations such as Chinese for Affirmative Action, Chinese Progressive Association, Mission SRO Collaborative, and the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco to develop and allow tenants to utilize these basic services.

### **Rent**

Housing is considered affordable when an individual doesn't have to spend more than 30% of their income on housing. For many SRO tenants, the average rent of \$800, significantly below the citywide average for most units, is the only option for them to live in San Francisco while being able to afford rent. Unfortunately, this also means many SRO residents are unable to afford stable housing big enough to raise a family. As Malcolm Yeung, Executive Director of the Chinatown Community Development Center, put it, "The traditional Chinatown family 'dream' used to start with life in an SRO, a starter job in the community, and an eventual move to a

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<sup>41</sup> Claudia D. Solari and Robert D. Mare, "Housing Crowding Effects on Children's Wellbeing," *Social Science Research* 41, no. 2 (October 17, 2011): 464-76.

multi-bedroom home to raise your children. But for the past decade, the real estate market has made this dream impossible to achieve.”

With SROs becoming the only viable option for families, it is crucial to provide continued support, especially in the form of financial support. Between 2022 and 2024, the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) provided up to \$2 million in rental subsidies for families living in SROs. These subsidies are specifically targeted towards families living with at least one child under the age of 18, living in unsafe conditions, and with a household income of at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Funding Opportunity Title	3/1/22-6/30/22	7/1/22-6/30/23	Total Funding	Program Area
<b>1 Older Adults/Adults with Disabilities-</b> Continuing subsidies, case management & subsidy program delivery	\$410,000*	\$1,640,000	\$2,050,000	Eviction Prevention & Housing Stabilization
<b>2 SRO Families-</b> Continuing subsidies & subsidy program delivery	\$150,000*	\$600,000	\$750,000	Eviction Prevention & Housing Stabilization

Maintaining funding for rental subsidies is essential to ensuring that families living in SROs have the support they need in order to access affordable housing. Continuing to invest in these programs will help prevent families from being displaced.

**Vacancy**

Hundreds of supportive housing units in San Francisco still remain unoccupied. In particular, these vacancies often affect SRO hotels and continue to prevent residents from accessing housing. Some SROs, like Le Nain Hotel, suffer from slow referrals that have led to 22 out of 86 available units sitting vacant. Similarly, the Elk Hotel on Eddy Street has struggled to fill 18 vacant units but to unsanitary living conditions.

In a 2023 report done by the Chronicle, 40% of vacant units remain unoccupied due to “uninhabitable” living conditions posing health risks to residents. The other 60% has been attributed to slow referral processes from the Department of Homeless and Supportive Housing (HSH), which included some tenants declining placements. While a slow referral process has made it difficult to fill vacancies, it’s clear that the city needs to be doing more to address the living conditions of SROs for more units to become occupied. As one resident seeking supportive housing said in a report done by the Chronicle, “I’d rather stay in a tent than go to an SRO.” She was, of course, referring to the decrepit living conditions of SRO units as well as violent incidents that have been reported to occur.

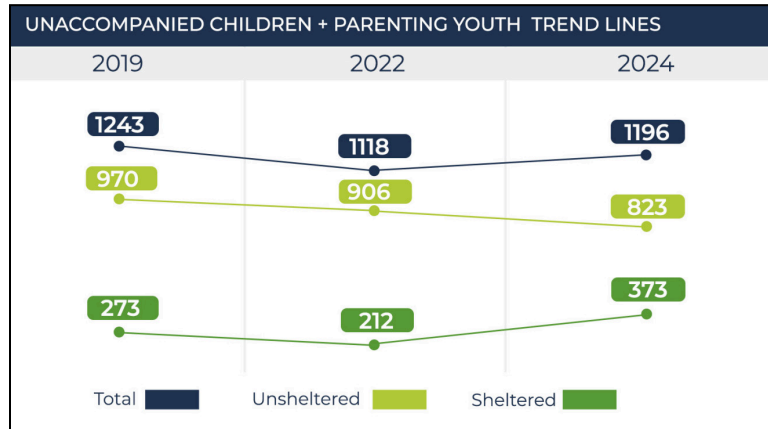
In 2023, the city made progress in lowering vacancies from 11.5% to 7.8%. However, many challenges remain in addressing the abhorrent living conditions of youth and a lengthy referral process of coordinated entry that often doesn’t serve the needs of youth.

## EQUITABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR YOUTH AND TAY

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges for the improvement of the process in which youth and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) receive aid when facing homelessness, the implementation of long-term solutions, as well as short-term supportive services, to address homelessness and help youth avoid it, and the research of the efficacy of navigation centers for youth and Transitional Age Youth.*

### Background

According to the San Francisco 2024 Youth Homelessness Point-In-Time Count<sup>42</sup>, a total of 8,323 homeless individuals were counted in San Francisco, and 1,196 were unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The overall number of people counted in the Point-in-Time Count increased by 7% between 2022 and 2024, and the number of homeless youth increased by 11% over the same period. Unaccompanied children and



transitional-age youth accounted for approximately 14% of the individuals counted in the 2024 Point-in-Time Count. The majority (93%) of youth experiencing homelessness were transitional-age youth between 18 and 24 years old. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of transitional-age youth and 62% of children were sleeping on the streets or in tents, vehicles, or abandoned properties. With youth and TAY making up a significant portion of the total homeless population, the Youth Commission strongly urges the improvement and continuation of aid given to youth and transitional-aged youth facing homelessness.

### Previous initiatives

While the City has made advancements and progress in handling the homelessness crisis, especially in youth and TAY populations, there is still much work to be done.

In<sup>43</sup> 2018, Mayor Breed launched Rising Up, a \$50 million initiative aimed to cut the city's homeless youth population in half by 2023. It was designed to serve young people who were experiencing, or at risk of, chronic homelessness and help them increase their income to eventually afford their rent without the added financial support. The initiative provides participants with a total rent subsidy of \$27,000 over three years, which is an average of \$750 per month. It follows a method of rapid rehousing, which provides time-limited rental subsidies to help someone quickly get stabilized and return to permanent housing. It differs from

<sup>42</sup> San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and Applied Survey Research, "San Francisco 2024 Youth Homelessness: Point-In-Time Count & Report," *San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing*, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Pear Moraras, Samantha Batko, and Brendan Chen, "Evaluation of Rising up: Participant Experiences and Outcomes From a Cross-Sector, Citywide Campaign to Rapidly Re-House 400 Young People in San Francisco," report, *Urban Institute: Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center*, November 2023.

permanent supportive housing, which offers tenants long-term affordable housing with a range of supportive services.

Since the program began in January 2019, it has helped more than 450 young people secure housing, but San Francisco’s overall youth homeless population has only dipped by 4%. It also has some significant shortcomings, as recipients reported long wait times for housing and no significant increases in income. According to the program’s evaluation report, “from referral to housing application and from application to moving into a rental unit, young people averaged [wait times of] 60 days and 125 days, respectively.” On top of this, with a median rent of \$1,735, most participants in the sample had rents well above the \$750 provided by the initiative.

Sherilyn Adams<sup>44</sup>, CEO of Larkin Street Youth Services, the nonprofit lead on the Rising Up initiative, said rapid rehousing is an especially effective approach for young adults experiencing homelessness because of its effectiveness in helping young people transition into being independent. Also, the share of unhoused youths sleeping in a shelter grew from 22% in 2019 to 31% in 2024, while youths living in tents or vehicles dropped from 970 to 823 during that same period, according to the point-in-time count. Regardless of its shortcomings and failures, this initiative is an example of an organized, coordinated response to youth and TAY homelessness. The San Francisco Youth Commission strongly advises the City to investigate more new and innovative ways to provide support for TAY facing homelessness while attempting to address these efficiency concerns.

### Housing Assessment

Currently, the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) uses “coordinated entry” to assess and connect those facing homelessness to available resources. This includes locally designated population-specific assessments, a centralized data system, a name database of clients, and a prioritization method.

Coordinated Access Entry Points Serve adults, families, and young adults ages 18 to 24, as well as some points that have a tailored approach, serving subpopulations like veterans and justice-involved people. Access points are locations where people can learn more and get connected to housing, housing problem-solving, and other resources. Youth and families can also access shelter at these sites. Each access point is for a specific group of people (Adult, Family, TAY, Survivors). The key issue in this process is that each access point uses the same assessment approach.

#### 3) How long have you been homeless this time?

<input type="radio"/> Less than one year	<input type="radio"/> 15 years or more
<input type="radio"/> One year or more, but less than two years	<input type="radio"/> Client doesn't know
<input type="radio"/> Two years or more, but less than five years	<input type="radio"/> Client refused
<input type="radio"/> Five years or more, but less than ten years	<input type="radio"/> Data not collected
<input type="radio"/> Ten years or more, but less than fifteen years	

There are currently two types of assessments: the family housing primary assessment and the Adult/Young Adult assessment. This means that the assessment used to

<sup>44</sup> Maggie Angst, “S.F. Set Out to Cut Youth Homelessness in Half. Here’s Why It Failed,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 21, 2024.



determine if someone can receive housing assistance is the same for adults and TAY (transitional-aged youth). This puts TAY at an unfair disadvantage, as some of the criteria involve how long they've been homeless, which is less than older adults. One of these questions can be seen in the visual, "How long have you been homeless?"

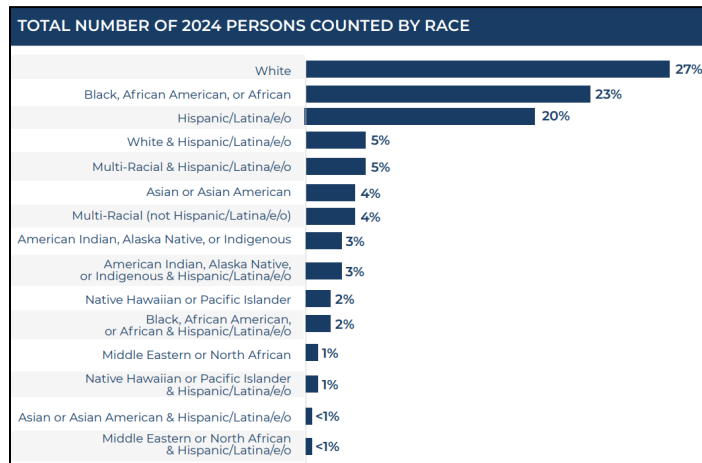
On top of this, there is a consensus of dissatisfaction surrounding the assessment, results, and overall experiences at entry points. According to the HSH evaluation, many respondents say they were told they were not homeless enough to qualify for housing placement. This sentiment was written in response to many open questions throughout the survey. The majority of respondents say entry point staff worked with them on a housing plan. However, the same proportion of respondents that feel progress is being made towards their housing goals feel progress is not being made. Respondents most commonly waited 1-3 months or over 1 year to move into housing from the time they asked for help. Also, the majority of respondents say they didn't get a problem-solving conversation and/or were not listened to, and many who did get it said it was not helpful. This makes it clear that serious improvements need to be made to the process, especially regarding the proper training and expectations for staff at entry points.

Respondents aged 18-29 were about one-third less likely to know where to go for help than other age groups. Having separate access points for different age groups is beneficial to the greater community, but it isn't worth anything if the youth are not aware of where to go. Outreach should be conducted with heightened transparency to ensure all facing homelessness are aware of the resources available to them.

### Disproportionate Demographics

**TOTAL UNSHELTERED AND SHELTERED SAN FRANCISCO POINT-IN-TIME COUNT YOUTH UNDER 25 POPULATION BY DISTRICT**

District	Total
1	76
2*	32
3*	133
4*	33
5*	318
6*	261
7*	32
8*	61
9*	91
10*	129
11	2
Confidential/Scattered Site	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>1196</b>



Addressing the issue of youth homelessness calls for not only recognizing their disproportionate representation in the homeless population but also developing and implementing targeted solutions and comprehensive supportive services tailored to their unique needs and challenges. According to the San Francisco 2024 Youth Homelessness Point-In-Time Count, the most unsheltered people reside in districts 3 and 10. 63% of the total homeless people are people of color, and 38% of unhoused TAY identify as LGBTQ. It is evident that certain populations of San Francisco are being affected more by this crisis, and it is incredibly important that the city's methods in addressing homelessness are rooted in equity and prioritizing those most affected.

Especially because there has been a history of inadequate assistance given to these groups. Referring back to the Rising Up initiative, among the 13 people who were never housed, 70 percent were Black, African American, or African participants, a slightly higher proportion than their share of the total sample (60 percent). Even in the general participant demographics, more than half of the participants were Black, African American, or African. It is essential to recognize this inequity in our city’s housing assistance efforts.

### **Navigation Centers**

It is incredibly important that new, innovative, and equitable solutions are found to house youth and TAY. In 2015, San Francisco launched a new kind of interim housing site—Navigation Centers—which provided shelter, meals, and essential services to long-term unsheltered San Franciscans, many of whom were fearful of accessing traditional shelters. Since then, a youth-focused navigation center was founded, The Lower Polk TAY Navigation Center at 700 Hyde Street—the first of its kind for Youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. It offers a comprehensive array of services and a supportive environment tailored to the needs of young unhoused individuals.<sup>45</sup> This includes medical and mental health services, workforce development support, and connections to paid career training opportunities, provided in a safe and healthy environment. According to the center’s 2023 report<sup>46</sup>, they have served 1825 youth, with 600 placed in affordable housing, through the center’s resources. This approach is indicative of the city’s commitment to finding humane and effective solutions to homelessness, particularly for its youth and TAY populations.

### **Recommendations**

The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to:

#### **Affordable Housing**

To address the housing crisis in San Francisco, the Youth Commission urges the following recommendations:

1. **Continue to prioritize the building of affordable housing** – to meet San Francisco’s Housing Element goals, avoid a state builders remedy, and work towards reducing homelessness in our city.
2. **Amend the Planning Code** – continue to expand pathways to build multi-family housing, including lessening restrictions on height limits and reducing permitting times to meet the requirements of the Housing Element. These changes should not be made without the assurance that new developments will be affordable.
3. **Continue to protect rent control** – a policy that has protected thousands of San Franciscans from displacement and should remain in place to prevent rent hikes and ensure housing stability.

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<sup>45</sup> “San Francisco to Open New 75-Bed Navigation Center for Transitional Age Youth | Office of the Mayor,” February 3, 2021

<sup>46</sup> 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, “Expanding Horizons: Annual Report FY2022-2023,” Canva, Slide show, 2023.

4. **Expand programs for middle-income housing** – protect San Francisco’s working class by expanding pathways for residents to seek family-sized housing at an affordable rate, such as the WHAMI Act and affordable housing developments sponsored by MOHCD aimed at educators and healthcare workers.

### **Education Workforce Housing**

Update Inadequate Policy and Framework:

1. **Expand housing for teachers** – Increase land use flexibility, streamline the approval process to facilitate the development of housing on SFUSD-owned land, and make the application process easier for teachers to navigate.
2. Work with the School District to identify more viable joint-use land options and rezone them if needed to permit the development of affordable teacher housing.
3. **Create a financing plan** – Work with the District to identify how cuts in federal funding can be covered by state and local funds to ensure teacher housing production is not stalled.

### **Youth Living Conditions in SROs**

1. **Expand bilingual and culturally competent resource networks** such as the Chinatown Community Development Center and SRO Collaborative to ensure tenants have access to vital housing rights resources – Youth deserve equal access to tenant resources, so it is imperative to broaden this access through language support.
2. **Increase assessments of housing conditions and expedite maintenance requests** – Youth deserve to live in housing that is free from overcrowding and infestations. A healthy living environment is essential for well-being and development.
3. Continue to provide funding for rental subsidies for units that are in healthy condition
4. **Address SRO vacancies** – Including crowded living spaces, infestations, unsafe building infrastructure, and potential incidents of violence, as well as the referral process, which includes coordinated entry.

### **Equitable Housing Assistance for TAY**

1. Implement long-term solutions, as well as short-term supportive services, to address homelessness and help youth avoid it
2. Improve the process in which youth and TAY receive aid when facing homelessness by:
  - a. Creating separate, youth-specialized assessment criteria, ensuring equity in the process
  - b. Sufficiently training access point staff

- c. Enhancing transparency and outreach about the assessment, access points, resources
3. **Research the efficacy of navigation centers for youth and Transitional Age Youth** – to increase the impact of the City’s Navigation Centers (specifically the one dedicated to serving Transitional Age Youth on 700 Hyde St), further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of these centers.
- a. Include an assessment of current practices and identification of areas for improvement, such as enhancing on-site services and pathways to long-term housing.
  - b. Allocate more city funding to these centers, ensuring they are equipped to meet the complex needs of young residents and align with San Francisco's broader strategy for reducing Youth homelessness.

## Get Involved with the Youth Commission!

If you are ever curious as to what the role of a Youth Commission could be like, please feel free to contact any of our Youth Commissioners at [youthcom@sfgov.org](mailto:youthcom@sfgov.org).

You can learn more about our issue-based committees and campaigns as well, we have Civic Engagement and Education Committee, Transformative Justice Committee, and Housing, Recreation, Transit Committee.

Please see our website for more details and stay connected with our office via social media @SFYouthCom or email at [youthcom@sfgov.org](mailto:youthcom@sfgov.org).

We are located in City Hall, Room 345, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102-4532.



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## March 2025 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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## March 2025 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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