

1 **[Motion to Support Larkin Street Youth Services for the Fiscal Years of 2023-2024**
2 **and 2024-2025]**

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4 **Supplemental Information:**

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6 See attached document [Letter of Support]

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Youth Commission
City Hall ~ Room 345
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May 1st, 2023

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102

Mayor London Breed
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
Room 200
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Support Larkin Street Youth Services for the Fiscal Years of 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Dear Mayor and Board of Supervisors,

The San Francisco Youth Commission is composed of seventeen members between the ages of 12 to 23. In 1995, San Francisco voters approved an amendment to the City Charter to establish the Youth Commission, and it is tasked with advising the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of San Francisco on policies and laws related to young people. The Youth Commission is also charged with providing comments and recommendations on all proposed laws that primarily affect youth before the Board takes final action. The Housing, Recreation, and Transit Committee is particularly invested in addressing the challenge of homelessness in San Francisco, especially among Youth and Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY). Both past and present iterations of the committee have been involved in difficult discussions about how to best address the issue. Today, our message has remained the same: we must resolve this crisis, and in order to do that, we must make it a top budgetary priority.

In the past few decades, San Francisco's homeless population has steadily increased, and the crisis not only affects the thousands of individuals actively experiencing homelessness but also has profound economic and social consequences for the City. Youth living in San Francisco have been uniquely susceptible, with a 2022 point-in-time (PIT) survey finding 1,073 youth under the age of 25 experiencing homelessness. This crisis, like many others, disproportionately affects the marginalized and disadvantaged segments of society – 40% of youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco are



Black, and 38% identify as LGBTQ+. The City has long recognized the importance of facing this crisis, but past efforts and policies have largely been unable to stem the tide of rising homelessness. Today, this issue remains one of San Francisco's most pressing challenges, and addressing homelessness is one of London Breed's Mayoral Priorities.

Meanwhile, Larkin Street Youth Services has been a reliable partner in helping young people experiencing this crisis firsthand. Since its founding in 1984, Larkin Street Youth Services has served over 78,000 transitional-aged youth (TAY) between ages 18 and 24. Over the years, their services have changed thousands of lives for the better and continue to play a crucial role in the fight against youth homelessness in San Francisco. Today, Larkin Street Youth Services provides housing, health care, education, and employment support to San Francisco's vulnerable youth and receives its funding from a variety of partners, including the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD).

In 2022, the work of Larkin Street Youth Services directly touched 1,466 young people. For 429 of these individuals, their service meant being provided with long-term housing, and for 160 others, it meant short-term shelter. For some young people, it meant receiving high-quality education, and for many others, it meant finding stable employment and receiving an average wage of 19 dollars per hour. Truly, Larkin Street Youth Services helps youth in a variety of ways, but all of these services—regardless of the form they take—help youth find their place in the world and disrupt the cycles of poverty and homelessness.

In the coming years, Larkin Street Youth Services plans to expand food pantries and meal distribution for TAY and hopes to provide robust support services at 730 Stanyan beginning in FY 2024-2025. Additionally, they are interested in expanding programs regarding job readiness and career-focused employment preparation for all youth and TAY, including those that are immigrants, undocumented, or asylum youth. This is especially critical as it is the key to ending the cycle of poverty, setting our youth on a path to success, and thus, further regenerating our workforce.



One of Larkin Street's current budget priorities requests that the Mayor and Board of Supervisors focus on and allocate a portion of their budget towards funding for increased clinical staff/support and case management across all TAY systems. Clinical staff and service providers often work with caseloads that extend far beyond what's recommended (20:1 to 25:1) and these large caseloads can be extremely difficult for staff members to effectively handle. However, the lack of support does not exclusively affect the staff, as it can also greatly affect the youth they work with. For youth and TAY, it can be highly difficult to form connections with those who may be fatigued by their workload, thus potentially hindering a person's recovery from homelessness. Therefore, the City must do more to ensure that people on the frontlines of this crisis are receiving the support they need, and this means redoubling our investment in staff support.

At present, the City of San Francisco is facing a worrisome financial outlook, and many tough decisions lie ahead. The number of pressing issues continues to grow, and the amount of resources needed to tackle these challenges is outpacing available funds. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to overlook the homeless crisis, as diverting funds away from necessary services will contribute to the suffering of thousands. Given this context, the San Francisco Youth Commission strongly urges that the upcoming budget further increases spending on addressing homelessness, even if this means making sacrifices elsewhere. Ultimately, we have no other choice but to double down on our spending efforts, which allows organizations such as Larkin Street Youth Services to carry out much-needed work. Thus, the Youth Commission calls on the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to continue prioritizing efforts to address the homeless crisis in San Francisco in the upcoming budget.

Sincerely,

Emily Nguyen, Chair
Adopted on 5/1/2023 2022-2023
San Francisco Youth Commission