

**YOUTH COMMISSION**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

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**BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES**  
**FY 2026 - 2027 | 2027 - 2028**



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## March 2026 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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## INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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I grew up in a small apartment with my parents and three older siblings, nestled on the corner of Eddy and Taylor Street, living in a neighborhood where low-income immigrant families, including my own Filipino family, built their lives. My family, my neighbors, the community organizations that served our neighborhood, and the activists who fought to improve it taught me the importance of standing up for my

community, which eventually led me to the San Francisco Youth Commission in the Fall of 2020.

The Tenderloin and South of Market communities raised me, and it is with great pride that, after six terms, I serve as Chair of the San Francisco Youth Commission, representing not only the voices of youth in my neighborhoods but those across our entire city. Leading sixteen fellow young leaders—each from a distinct background, yet united in their dedication to creating meaningful and lasting change for the youth of San Francisco—is a privilege I do not take lightly. Since the Commission's inception, hundreds of Youth Commissioners have walked the halls of City Hall, each carrying that same conviction, and together leaving a legacy of victories: Free Muni for All Youth, the closure of 850 Bryant, and placing Vote16 on the ballot twice, to name a few.

On the occasion of the San Francisco Youth Commission's 30th anniversary, we present this report at a moment of both challenge and transformation for our city. These recommendations were shaped by deep community engagement: holding multiple forums and meeting with numerous City departments and community organizations, to accurately reflect the needs of young San Franciscans, while remaining mindful of the budget deficit the city is facing.

Our report spans a broad range of issues: from youth employment protections and language access for immigrant communities, to addressing homelessness among Transitional Age Youth and advancing sustainability efforts. It also reaffirms our commitment to strengthening the Youth Commission itself, through remaining in the Charter and maintaining staffing capacity, to ensure this body can continue fighting for the youth of San Francisco for decades to come.

This report would not have been possible without the immense dedication and hard work of each Commissioner and staff member since the beginning of our term. I would like to thank our Committee Chairs: Emily Yang, Harper Fortgang, and Shoon Mon, for their leadership and coordination. Our Communications and Outreach Officers, Ayan Azad and Aanya Shah, deserve recognition for their commitment to ensuring youth across the city have their voices represented in this report. Our Legislative Affairs Officers, Evelyn Conboy and Leah Moredehai, both deserve appreciation for their research and effort in organizing this report. The Commission's Vice-Chair,

Téa Lonné Amir, deserves my personal thanks for her support during the development of this report.

Finally, I extend my deepest gratitude to our staff: Acting Director Joy Zhan and Community Partnership Specialist Joshua Rudy Ochoa, whose tireless dedication extends far beyond this report, and whose unwavering support of the next generation of leaders makes all of our work possible.

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. Since 1996, each class of Youth Commissioners has all fought for the same thing: a seat at the table. And as I look to the future, I envision hundreds more Youth Commissioners doing the same, because youth should always have a seat at the table. City leaders *must* prioritize these recommendations and take meaningful steps to implement them, because if we want to build a better San Francisco, we must look to the generations that will come after us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Listana', written in a cursive style. The signature is centered below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Gabbie Listana

Chair of the San Francisco Youth Commission

## 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY LETTER FROM YOUTH COMMISSION STAFF

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### **Joy Zhan, Acting Director**

Congratulations to the San Francisco Youth Commission for its 30 years of history! For the past 30 years, the Commission has served as the bridge between youth and government, ensuring that there's open communication between youth, elected officials, and city agencies, so that we have a city that works and serves all youth. As its current Acting Director and previously the Youth Development Specialist, I have the honor of providing the skills and training necessary for the Commissioners to succeed and serve as their liaison to the Mayor's Office, Board of Supervisors, and various City Departments. For the past 30 years, in community with youth-serving organizations and elected officials, the Commission worked to establish Free Muni for Youth, continued to address juvenile justice, increased youth civic engagement, and equipped more young people with the skills and power to speak up and advocate for themselves and their communities. I want to give a special thank you to Alondra Esquivel Garcia, our immediate past Director, who has led the Commission for the past three years. Thank you to Joshua Rudy Ochoa, our Community Partnership Specialist, who has continuously ensured that we have a presence in community and listen to community. To all the city officials, city staff, and adult allies who have supported the Commission in the past 30 years, thank you. Lastly, thank you to all the Youth Commissioners in the past 30 years who ensured that there are always youth at the decision-making table and helping define what the Youth Commission is what today. Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and looking forward to 30 more to come!

### **Joshua Rudy Ochoa, Community Partnership Specialist**

For the past 30 years, the San Francisco Youth Commission has given young leaders a seat at decision-making tables in City Hall. As the primary staff liaison from our Commission to our City's communities, I know first-hand how much the community respects and appreciates the work of the Youth Commission in advocating for their needs to be met by their government and elected officials. The San Francisco Youth Commission continues to be a beacon of hope and an example of what youth organizing can be across our City and beyond. It's been an honor to work with youth who have pioneered in advocating for greater access to public transportation, increased funding for critical youth programs, advocate for building more affordable housing for youth and families, and give a voice to so many unheard residents of San Francisco. I'm confident that our current and future Youth Commissioners will continue to lead the way to collaborate with communities to ensure that young people remain at the front lines of advocacy, accountability, and policy leadership for the next 30 years.



YOUTH  
COMMISSION

TH

30

Anniversary



## TIMELINE

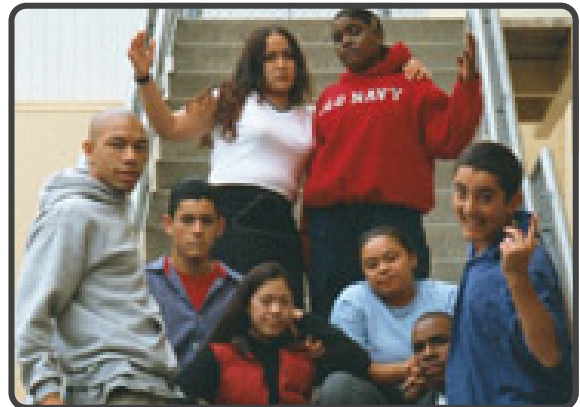


### 1995-1998

- **November 1995:** Proposition F won 60% vote on the November 1995 ballot, and the Youth Commission was created
- **April 1996:** The first class of Youth Commissioners was sworn into office
- **September 1996:** The YC advocated for LGBTQ+ youth
- **May 1998:** The LGBTQ Youth Task Force was created

### 1999-2000

- **March 1999:** The commission sponsored the first-ever Youth Budget Hearing, allowing youth to voice their opinions on the City's funding allocation
- **2000:** YC participated in ACLU Legal Challenge against Prop 21 to advocate for Juvenile Hall issues





## 2001-2003

- **December 2001:** YC hosted the first annual Youth Recognition Day, where the Board of Supervisors formally recognized the contributions of young citizens to the SF community
- **2001:** SF Coalition for Juvenile Justice Reform was formed to address alternatives to incarceration and less reliance on the Juvenile Hall
- **2002:** YC created a Skateboarding Task Force to work towards providing legal venues and a safe skateboard park for youth to skate

## 2004-2006

- **2004:** The Youth Commission successfully expanded “Healthy Kids,” SF’s universal health care system for children, to include 18-24-year-olds
- **2006:** Youth Commission advocated for the expansion of funding for SFUSD wellness centers to the city’s middle and high schools



## 2007-2009

- **2007:** The Transitional Youth Task Force transformed into the Transition Age Youth San Francisco Initiative (TAYSF) to implement policy recommendations from youth
- **August 2007:** Schools officially received major funding and support for school-based wellness centers
- **2008:** YC advocated for mental health programs and to hire more wellness center staff in the city’s middle and high schools
- **2009:** The 2009 SF Juvenile Justice Local Action Plan was successfully approved



## 2010

- **2010:** With the cuts of SFUSD school buses, the youth lifeline passes start the campaign for Free Muni for Youths (FMFY) to help low-income and marginalized youths



## 2011-2012

- **2011:** Advocacy to increase access to services & outside recreational time was advocated by the YC
- **2011:** YC surveyed youth at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) regarding their experience
- **2012:** Cuts of SFUSD Buses Inspired Free Muni for Youth (FMFY)
- **2012:** YC urged the funding of a full-time grant writer to support SFUSD and teachers at school sites

## 2013-2016

- **2013:** More advocacy led to the FMFY Pilot Program, which also included 18-year-olds
- **2014:** YC sponsored and organized the first Youth Advocacy Day
- **2015:** The Vote16 Movement began, to lower SF's legal voting age to 16 in municipal and school district elections
- **2016:** Vote16 first appearance on Ballot (Prop F)



## 2019-2021

- **2019:** Along with a broad coalition of community organizations, SFYC pushes the legislation to close Juvenile Hall
- **April 2020:** FMFY expanded to 18-year-olds and students enrolled in special education and English learner programs through age 22
- **2020:** Commissioner met with SFMTA Budget staff to urge the funding of a 1-year pilot program for FMFAY
- **2020:** Initial Advocacy for Free Muni for All Youth (FMFAY) began
- **August 2021:** FMFY was successfully funded for a 1-year pilot program

## 2022-2023

- **2022:** FMFY pilot program extended to 2024
- **2021-2023:** YC advocated for LGBTQ+ permanent support housing, funding safety measures for LGBTQ+ youth-serving organizations, and safer conditions for transgender youth in shelters through the LGBTQ+ Task Force



## 2024-2025

- **2024:** YC urged SFMTA to install curbside protected bike lanes / pedestrianize Valencia St. to reduce traffic fatalities and increase public safety
- **2025:** YC urged an increase in outreach and funding for city-funded food programs to address food insecurity
- **2025:** YC successfully urged the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to increase funding for human trafficking resources

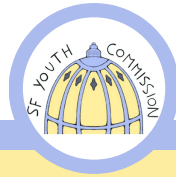
## 2026

- This year marks the **San Francisco Youth Commission's 30th anniversary**, celebrating decades of youth leadership and honoring the impact of young voices in our city!



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## San Francisco Youth Commission



### FULL YOUTH COMMISSION

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair - Gabbie Listana (D6)  
Vice Chair - Téa Lonné Amir (Mayoral)  
Legislative Affairs Officer - Evelyn Conboy (D7)  
Legislative Affairs Officer - Leah Mordehai (D1)  
Communications and Outreach Officer - Ayan Azad (Mayoral)  
Communications and Outreach Officer - Aanya Shah (D3)



#### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chair - Emily Yang (Mayoral)  
Vice Chair - Camryn Marlow (D2)  
Members - Symona Elias (D10)  
Jacqueline Moreno (Mayoral)  
Evelyn Conboy (D7)



#### HOUSING, RECREATION, TRANSIT COMMITTEE

Chair - Harper Fortgang (D8)  
Vice Chair - Ava Oram (Mayoral)  
Members - Natalie Liu (D11)  
Azzam Alameri (Mayoral)  
Ayan Azad (Mayoral)  
Aanya Shah (D3)



#### TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Chair - Shoon Mon (D4)  
Vice Chair - Maximiliano Trujillo (D9)  
Members - Gabbie Listana (D6)  
Téa Lonné Amir (Mayoral)  
Leah Mordehai (D1)  
Matthew Nguyen (Mayoral)



**JOSHUA RUDY OCHOA**  
Community Partnership Specialist



**JOY CHAOYING ZHAN**  
Acting Director



**CHLOE LIANG**  
YouthWorks Intern

# COMMISSIONERS

2025 - 2026

## District 1



**Leah Mordehai**

Legislative Affairs

## District 2



**Camryn Marlow**

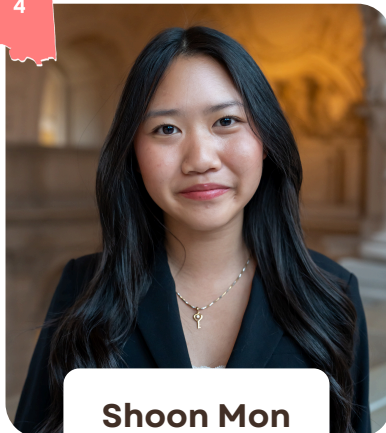
## District 3



**Aanya Shah**

Communications & Outreach

## District 4



**Shoon Mon**

## District 5



**Azzam Alameri**

## District 6



**Gabbie Listana**

Chair

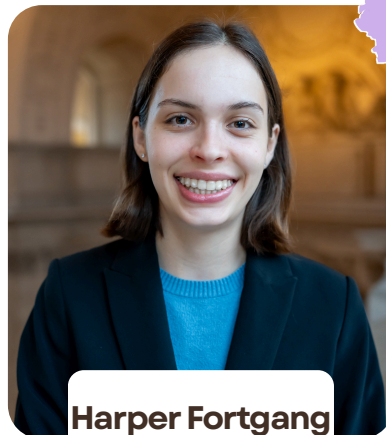
## District 7



**Evelyn Conboy**

Legislative Affairs

## District 8



**Harper Fortgang**

# COMMISSIONERS

2025 - 2026

District 9



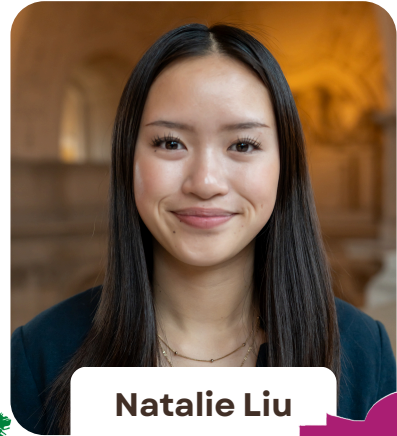
Max Trujillo

District 10



Symona Elias

District 11



Natalie Liu

Citywide



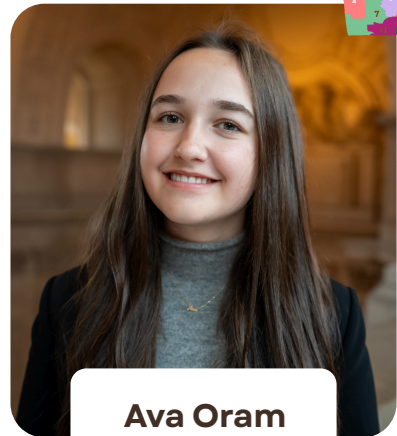
Téa Lonné Amir  
Vice Chair

Citywide



Emily Yang

Citywide



Ava Oram

Citywide



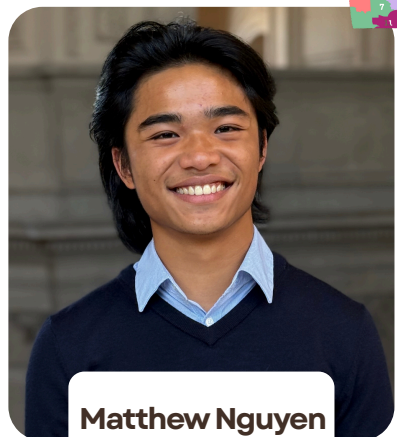
Jacqueline Moreno

Citywide



Ayan Azad  
Communications & Outreach

Citywide



Matthew Nguyen



## Budget and Policy Executive Summary

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On Monday, March 2, 2026, the San Francisco Youth Commission unanimously passed their 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 Budget and Policies Priorities. The San Francisco Youth Commission will be presenting its Budget and Policies Priorities Report on March 25, 2026, 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 Youth Budget Community Forums throughout the City
- Presenting at SFUSD Schools and Community Organizations
- Requesting Community Organizations and City Departments to provide Budget Presentations to the Youth Commission
- Supporting budget requests from Community Organizations and City Departments

### **2026-2027 and 2027-2028 Budget and Policy Priorities:**

1. Youth Commission Charter Reform
2. Youth Commission Staff Hiring
3. Youth Violence Prevention
4. Gender-Based Violence
5. Protect Newcomers & Language Access
6. Housing
7. Youth Homelessness
8. Expand Mental Health Initiatives
9. Protected Bike Lanes, Pedestrianization, & Street Safety
10. Climate Change
11. Food Insecurity
12. Youth Transit Accessibility
13. Improve SFUSD Educational Resources
14. Increase College Access
15. Economic Empowerment for Youth
16. Ethical AI Governance & Regulation
17. Youth Use of Recreational Spaces
18. Environmental Justice

# YOUTH COMMISSION CHARTER REFORM

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to keep the San Francisco Youth Commission protected by the City Charter.*

## Background

On November 7th, 1995, San Franciscan voters approved Proposition F by over 60%, thereby establishing the San Francisco Youth Commission as a permanent body for youth policy advocacy within the City’s Charter in Sections 4.122-4.125<sup>1</sup>. Since then, the Youth Commission has contributed immensely to the well-being of youth across San Francisco. The Youth Commission has fought for and successfully helped implement the Free Muni For Youth Program, which became indefinite in 2022<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the Youth Commission successfully helped expand Healthy Kids insurance, the universal health care insurance for youth in San Francisco, to 18 to 24-year-olds in 2004<sup>3</sup>. Finally, the Youth Commission led the advocacy in support of Vote16, the effort to lower the local voting age from 18 to 16, allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in local elections, on the 2016 and 2020 ballots. Although both measures narrowly lost, they greatly increased voter pre-registration and civic engagement efforts with youth across San Francisco.

On November 5th, 2024, San Franciscan voters approved Proposition E: Creating a Task Force to Recommend Changing, Eliminating, or Combining City Commissions, with 52% of the vote<sup>4</sup>. The Proposition then created the Commission Streamlining Task Force, whose purpose is to make recommendations about ways to “modify, eliminate, or combine the City’s board and commissions to improve the administration of city government”.

On January 28th, 2026, the Commission Streamlining Task Force published their Final Report, which includes recommendations on appointive boards and commissions to improve the “efficiency and effectiveness of San Francisco government”. In their recommendations for the San Francisco Youth Commission, they decided to keep the Commission and eliminate the Charter prohibition on stipends for Youth Commissioners, but implement a 3-year term limit on Commissioners and move out of the City’s Charter into the Administrative Code, which is under the Board of Supervisors’ jurisdiction. This recommendation to move the Youth Commission from the Charter to the Administrative Code was passed during their October 15th, 2025, meeting, with a 4-1 vote (Chair Harrington in opposition). Being in the Administrative Code would reduce the Youth Commission’s independence and additionally make it easier to change aspects of the Youth Commission that would otherwise require a Charter Amendment.

According to Section 4.102 of the City’s Charter, Charter bodies oversee City departments and exercise the following powers:

<sup>1</sup> *San Francisco Youth Commission*, n.d., [https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sf\\_charter\\_-\\_youth\\_commission\\_0.pdf?1457456360#:~:text=Provisions%20of%20the%20San%20Francisco,F%20on%20November%207%2C%201995.](https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sf_charter_-_youth_commission_0.pdf?1457456360#:~:text=Provisions%20of%20the%20San%20Francisco,F%20on%20November%207%2C%201995.)

<sup>2</sup> Ida Mojadad, “Muni Stays Free for All SF Youth Under Expanded Pilot—for Now,” *The San Francisco Standard*, April 21, 2022, <https://sfstandard.com/2022/04/21/muni-stays-free-for-all-san-francisco-youth-under-expanded-pilot-for-now/>.

<sup>3</sup> “SFGov: Office of the Mayor: Youth Commission Swearing In,” November 24, 2007, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071124053520/http://www.sfgov.org/site/mayor\\_page.asp?id=27060](https://web.archive.org/web/20071124053520/http://www.sfgov.org/site/mayor_page.asp?id=27060).

<sup>4</sup> “Proposition E: Creating a Task Force to Recommend Changing, Eliminating, or Combining City Commissions | SF.Gov,” SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/information--proposition-e-creating-task-force-recommend-changing-eliminating-or-combining-city>.

<sup>5</sup> “November 5, 2024 Election Results,” SF Elections, <https://sfelections.org/results/20241105w/index.html>.

1. **Policymaking:** approving goals, objectives, plans, programs, and setting policy for the department
2. **Budget authority:** approving departmental budgets, rates, and fees
3. **Hiring:** recommending at least three qualified candidates for department head to the Mayor
4. **Firing:** removing a department head
5. **Power of Inquiry:** holding hearings, taking testimony, and conducting investigations into any aspect

The San Francisco Youth Commission is categorized as an Advisory Body, which means that it provides feedback and recommendations to City Departments and elected officials, but lacks decision-making authority over the City Department it advises. According to the Commission Streamlining Task Force, because the Youth Commission “does not oversee a City Department”, it lacks the powers outlined for a Chartered body in Section 4.102, and it therefore cannot be considered a Chartered body. Additionally, the Task Force voted to move the Youth Commission into the Administrative Code to make it easier to amend the body, as it would only require a vote from the Board of Supervisors rather than a Charter Amendment. Lastly, to ensure consistency with other advisory bodies, the Youth Commission has also been moved into the Administrative Code.

The Commission Streamlining Task Force’s recommendations will first be voted on by the Board of Supervisors to be placed on the ballot as a Charter Amendment. If passed, San Franciscans will then vote on these recommendations in the November 2026 elections.

## **Recommendation**

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

1. **Keep the San Francisco Youth Commission in the City Charter.**

Amend the recommendations of the Commission Streamlining Task Force to keep the Youth Commission in the San Francisco City Charter. A chartered Youth Commission allows Commissioners to be more independent and truly advocate for the needs of youth, without the fear of being removed from the Administrative Code. Additionally, the Youth Commission was voted into the Charter by the people of San Francisco, making it the constituents' will to have a chartered advisory commission to be part of the City Charter.

## YOUTH COMMISSION STAFF HIRING

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to support the Clerk's Office's Budget Proposal to maintain and hire three staffers at the San Francisco Youth Commission.*

### **Background**

For much of the San Francisco Youth Commission's history, there have been three staffers who handle a diverse array of tasks under their positions, which are the Community Partnerships Specialist, the Youth Development Specialist, and the Director of the San Francisco Youth Commission. In the 2021-2022 term of the San Francisco Youth Commission, there was an extreme staffing shortage where the number of staff dropped from three to two, and eventually one in the span of six months. The staffing shortage not only placed immense stress on the remaining staff, but also prohibited both staff and Commissioners from functioning at their full potential. For instance, due to the staffing shortage, there was a lack of capacity to hold official Committee meetings, forcing Commissioners to instead hold unofficial Task Force meetings that did not have the ability to produce resolutions, motions, or statements. This can be seen in the absence of Committee meetings for the 2021-2022 term, along with an extreme decrease in the number of resolutions passed compared to the following years. While the San Francisco Clerk's Office did step in during this period of staffing shortages, they did not have the capacity to provide the necessary level of developmental support for Commissioners that not only strengthens their abilities to act as Commissioners, but also supports their professional development as future civic leaders.

On January 9th, 2026, Alondra Esquivel Garcia resigned from the position of Youth Commission Director. After her resignation, Joy Zhan was named Acting Director, which vacated the role of Youth Development Specialist and delegated that position's responsibilities to both Joy and Community Partnership Specialist Joshua Rudy Ochoa. One of the essential requirements for a stable and effective Youth Commission is a fully staffed team of three who are able to navigate the administrative functions of the Commission. With the Mayor's hiring freeze and with a large City deficit looming, we cannot risk the potential of eliminating the role of Youth Development Specialist, without either significantly increasing the workload of the other two staff positions, or significantly reducing the capacity of the Youth Commission's ability to represent the needs of San Francisco youth. Mirroring the staffing situation in the 2021-2022 term of the Commission, this has required both existing staff members to work outside of their job descriptions and classifications to fill the gap where a third staffer would be.

### **Recommendation**

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

- 1. Support the Clerk's Office's budget proposal to maintain a fully staffed team of three at the San Francisco Youth Commission.**

Ensure that the Youth Commission continues to have a Director, Youth Development Specialist, and Community Partnership Specialist to ensure the success of the Youth Commission's work and capacity.

## YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION

*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> From 2018 until 2023, shootings in San Francisco increased by 74%, with 158 people killed with firearms,<sup>3</sup> and while that number did decrease to 77 in 2025 (from 101 in 2024), that is still an unnecessarily high number of people injured by weapons<sup>4</sup>.

The Youth Commission previously produced a Reducing Weapons Access Budget and Priorities report during the FY 24/25 and 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). 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 Corpuz Jr.

### School Incidents and Weapon-Related Incidents Involving Youth

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>5</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>6</sup> The Youth Commission has previously

<sup>1</sup> “SEC. 4512. FIREARMS LOCATED IN ANY RESIDENCE TO BE KEPT IN A LOCKED CONTAINER OR DISABLED WITH A TRIGGER LOCK.,” American Legal Publishing, [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san\\_francisco/latest/sf\\_police/0-0-0-8459](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_police/0-0-0-8459).

<sup>2</sup> Judy Schaechter, “Guns in the Home: How to Keep Kids Safe,” HealthyChildren.Org, March 2, 2026, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Handguns-in-the-Home.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> Sydney Johnson, “San Francisco Considers Banning Guns in More Public Places After Recent Shootings | KQED,” June 13, 2023, <https://www.kqed.org/news/11952872/san-francisco-considers-banning-guns-in-more-public-places-after-recent-shootings>.

<sup>4</sup> George Kelly and Jonah Owen Lamb, “The Year in SF Crime: 4 Charts That Tell the Story,” The San Francisco Standard, January 2, 2026, <https://sfstandard.com/2026/01/02/san-francisco-2025-crime-stats/>.

<sup>5</sup> “Letter about Gun Safety to Families | SFUSD,” August 16, 2023, <https://www.sfusd.edu/announcements/2023-08-16-letter-about-gun-safety-families>.

<sup>6</sup> “Be SMART | Secure Gun Storage,” Be SMART, <https://besmartforkids.org/>.

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>7</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>8</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, including social media and mental health, have been used to justify the lack of safety students feel in their environments.

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>9</sup> These cases were the only ones that had been caught. Community organizers point out that there are weapons on school campuses brought by students every day. The incident caused students and families to question safety protocols, and students wondered if weapon violence in schools was 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.

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 November 8th, 2025, at around 9 pm at Ocean Beach, a physical fight ensued, and gunshots suddenly rang out, leaving four youth injured. Additionally, a stray bullet struck a 35-year-old man identified as Nathan, who had stepped out onto his balcony to see what the commotion was. He later lost a kidney and part of his bowel<sup>10</sup>. Neighbors have expressed frustration over a delayed response to the shooting as well albeit was rare, it still was not responded to in an adequate time.

Around noon on the school day of December 2, 2025, a student at Phillip and Sala Burton Academic High School was shot in the leg. A suspect, who was later identified as a minor, was apprehended after escaping the scene, and the victim was transported to a nearby hospital in stable condition. Although there was no extended threat to the public, students and families continue to experience fear, trauma, and uncertainty about safety at school, highlighting the lasting emotional impact of gun violence on young people and school communities. Even when injuries are not life-

<sup>7</sup> Ida Mojada, "Youth Violence Rocks SF. Where Does the City Go From Here?," The San Francisco Standard, May 8, 2023, <https://sfstandard.com/2023/05/08/youth-violence-has-rocked-san-francisco-this-spring-where-does-the-city-go-from-here/>.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Romer and Brad Bushman, "How Does a Child Become a Shooter? Research Suggests Easy Access to Guns Increases the Risk • Ohio Capital Journal," *Ohio Capital Journal*, January 13, 2023, <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2023/01/13/how-does-a-child-become-a-shooter-research-suggests-easy-access-to-guns-increases-the-risk/>.

<sup>9</sup> Megan Fan Munce, "S.F. Police: Three Students Brought Guns to Two High Schools Friday," San Francisco Chronicle, December 9, 2023, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/s-f-police-three-students-brought-guns-friday-18543000.php>.

<sup>10</sup> Betty Yu, "Man Hit by Stray Bullet during San Francisco's Great Highway Shooting," Text.Article, KTVU FOX 2, KTVU FOX 2 San Francisco, November 15, 2025, <https://www.ktvu.com/news/man-hit-stray-bullet-home-during-san-franciscos-great-highway-shooting>.

threatening, the existence of weapons on campuses poses a danger to students physically and emotionally.

On January 30th, 2025, three youths were shot at Golden Gate and Laguna Street after attending a protest at Dolores Park. One youth, a 15-year-old sophomore girl from Gateway High School, named Jayda Mabrey, died the following day from her injuries. Her younger sister witnessed Jayda get shot. The other two youths survived the attack. As of February 2nd, no arrest has been made, and a motive has not been disclosed<sup>11</sup>.

## 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.

## Recommendations

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 continue to 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. This should include increasing counseling staff, reducing wait times for students

<sup>11</sup> Henry Lee and Aja Seldon, “San Francisco Triple Shooting: 15-Year-Old Jayda Mabrey Identified as Victim Killed,” Text.Article, KTVU FOX 2, KTVU FOX 2 San Francisco, February 2, 2026, <https://www.ktvu.com/news/san-francisco-triple-shooting-jayda-mabrey-killed>.

seeking support, improving awareness of services, and protecting funding for school-based Wellness Centers, which are often students' first and most accessible point of contact for support. Additionally, providing support for SFUSD wellness centers that are at risk due to budget cuts, as they are often the first point of contact that most youth have with access to mental health resources.

- 3. Creating and Continuing 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. Through a collaboration with SVIP and the San Francisco Police Department, a violence prevention initiative called San Francisco Violence Reduction Initiative (SF-VRI), there has been a 19% decrease in citywide gun violence. This program helps at-risk transitional age youth (18-24) by providing them with specialized support from city and community services and life coaches. Continuing and securing funding for this program allows those who are most at risk to seek support and create safer communities for youth. Community-based organizations like United Playaz, Bayview Hunters Point Foundation, and the Samoan Community Development Center also offer services regarding violence prevention in SFUSD high schools.

## **ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND YOUTH EXPLOITATION IN SAN FRANCISCO**

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to address the ongoing prevalence of human trafficking, exploitation affecting youth, and lack of funding for victim support services, particularly in anticipation of increased regional activity connected with major 2026 sporting events. We urge the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to address sexual assault and harassment cases in schools and continue grant funding for community-based organizations providing violence prevention youth services.*

### **Background**

Human trafficking, encompassing the recruitment, harboring, transportation, and exploitation of individuals through force, fraud, or coercion, profoundly impacts vulnerable youth across San Francisco. Human trafficking continues to be a serious local issue. According to the 2024 San Francisco Human Trafficking Report, 2,501 cases of human trafficking were reported by 18 agencies between 2022 and 2023, and in cases where age was known, 10 % of individuals were under 18 and 28 % were between 18 and 24 years old, meaning 38 % of known cases involved youth and young adults.<sup>1</sup>

Youth and young adults are especially susceptible due to factors such as housing instability, homelessness, foster care involvement, and involvement with juvenile systems. Past analyses of local data found that in 2017, at least 307 youth experienced commercial sexual exploitation, with 33 % of all persons trafficked in commercial sex being minors and 50 % aged 18–24; 70% of survivors were people of color.<sup>2</sup> Although data collection on trafficking prosecutions in San Francisco remains limited, it is widely documented that patterns of exploitation often go under-reported, and many victims do not seek services due to fear, coercion, or lack of awareness. National statistics show that trafficking cases identified in California numbered 1,733 in 2024 alone, involving 3,603 victims, including 358 minors, demonstrating the scale of trafficking impacts on youth statewide.<sup>3</sup>

### **Current City Victim Services Response**

San Francisco’s response to human trafficking and youth exploitation is significantly constrained by limited investigative and survivor-support staffing capacity across multiple agencies. Within the San Francisco Police Department, human trafficking investigations fall under the Special Victims Unit (SVU), which also handles domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, stalking, and internet crimes against children.<sup>4</sup> However, SVU staffing has declined sharply in recent years. Public reporting and Police Commission data indicate that SVU personnel decreased from approximately 72 members in 2019 to roughly 43 today, including only 35 sworn

<sup>1</sup> City and County of San Francisco, “2024 Human Trafficking in San Francisco,” City and County of San Francisco, 2024, <https://www.sf.gov/2024-human-trafficking-in-san-francisco>

<sup>2</sup> City and County of San Francisco, “Mayor London Breed Announces \$9 Million in State Funding to Serve Survivors of Human Trafficking,” City and County of San Francisco, news release, 2024, <https://www.sf.gov/news--mayor-london-breed-announces-9-million-state-funding-serve-survivors-human-trafficking>

<sup>3</sup> National Human Trafficking Hotline, “California Statistics,” National Human Trafficking Hotline, Polaris Project, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/california>

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Police Department, “Special Victims Unit,” San Francisco Police Department, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/units/special-victims-unit>

officers and eight civilian staff, marking the lowest staffing level in the unit’s modern history.<sup>5</sup> Within that structure, only a very small number of officers are specifically assigned to human trafficking investigations, meaning that trafficking cases must compete for investigative attention alongside other high-priority violent crimes.<sup>6</sup> As a result, complex cases may be delayed or “triaged” when detectives are unavailable, limiting timely follow-up and survivor-centered intervention. A 2019 city-commissioned staffing analysis recommended at least 50 investigators for SVU, underscoring that the current staffing model falls substantially below the identified need.<sup>7</sup>

Survivor support infrastructure faces similar capacity constraints. San Francisco voters approved Proposition D in June 2022, establishing the Mayor’s Office of Victim and Witness Rights to coordinate services and ensure accountability for victims of crime.<sup>8</sup> However, according to publicly available information, the office has operated with a very small staff and has faced challenges filling roles, limiting its ability to conduct robust oversight, coordinate across departments, and provide meaningful systems-level reform.<sup>9</sup> While the District Attorney’s Victim Services Division plays an essential role and reports serving over 9,000 victims of violent crime in 2022 and more than 5,000 in 2023, its services are not trafficking-specific and must support all victims of violent crime citywide.<sup>10</sup>

The San Francisco Public Defender’s Office plays a critical role in identifying and representing survivors of human trafficking who have been criminalized through exploitation-related offenses, including those seeking post-conviction vacatur or diversion. Public defenders are often the first legal professionals to recognize signs of coercion among clients charged with survival-based crimes, making access to specialized advocacy essential for long-term stability. In California, legal protections such as California Penal Code § 236.14 allow trafficking survivors to petition for vacatur of convictions directly resulting from their exploitation, which can be crucial for access to housing, employment, and immigration relief.<sup>11</sup> Despite this need, the Public Defender’s Office faces significant staffing and caseload pressures that limit its ability to provide specialized trafficking advocacy, immigration coordination, and trauma-informed legal services.<sup>12</sup>

At the state level, California lawmakers have taken steps to address human trafficking through economic and regulatory policy. In February of 2025, Assemblymember Catherine Stefani, who represents parts of San Francisco in the 19th Assembly District, introduced AB 1245, which strengthens anti-trafficking protections in public contracting by requiring state contractors and subcontractors to implement compliance plans, monitor supply chains, and disclose or remediate any forced labor or trafficking violations.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Joe Eskenazi, “SFPD Special Victims Unit Staffing at Lowest Level,” *Mission Local*, February 2024, <https://missionlocal.org/2024/02/sfpd-special-victims-unit-staffing-lowest-level>

<sup>6</sup> Jonah Owen Lamb, “San Francisco Human Trafficking Investigations Hampered by Police Staffing,” *The San Francisco Standard*, 2024, <https://sfstandard.com/criminal-justice/san-francisco-human-trafficking-investigations-police-staffing/>

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Police Department, SFPD Staffing Analysis Report (San Francisco: San Francisco Police Department, 2019), <https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/SFPDStaffingAnalysisReport2019.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ballotpedia, “San Francisco, California, Proposition D, Create an Office of Victim and Witness Rights Measure (June 2022),” Ballotpedia, accessed February 25, 2026, [https://ballotpedia.org/San\\_Francisco,\\_California,\\_Proposition\\_D,\\_Create\\_an\\_Office\\_of\\_Victim\\_and\\_Witness\\_Rights\\_Measure\\_\(June\\_2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco,_California,_Proposition_D,_Create_an_Office_of_Victim_and_Witness_Rights_Measure_(June_2022))

<sup>9</sup> SF Standard, “*San Francisco victim-witness office staffing*,” <https://sfstandard.com/politics/san-francisco-victim-witness-office-staffing/>

<sup>10</sup> San Francisco District Attorney’s Office, “Reports and Resources,” *San Francisco District Attorney*, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://sfdistrictattorney.org/resources/reports/>

<sup>11</sup> California Legislature, “California Penal Code § 236.14,” California Legislative Information, accessed February 25, 2026, [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=236.14.&lawCode=PEN](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=236.14.&lawCode=PEN)

<sup>12</sup> Joe Eskenazi, “SFPD Public Defender Workload Crisis,” *Mission Local*, February 2024, <https://missionlocal.org/2024/02/sfpd-public-defender-workload-crisis/>

<sup>13</sup> California Legislature, “Assembly Bill 1245 (2023–2024 Reg. Sess.),” California Legislative Information, accessed February 25, 2026, [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB1245](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1245)

## Community-Based Organizations Addressing Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence

San Francisco's response to human trafficking and sexual violence relies heavily on a network of community-based organizations that provide prevention education, crisis intervention, survivor advocacy, housing navigation, and long-term stabilization services. These organizations form the backbone of San Francisco's anti-trafficking and anti-violence ecosystem, yet many operate with limited and unstable funding.

The San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFCaHT) serves as a citywide coalition coordinating prevention, public awareness, and survivor referral efforts. SFCaHT operates a 24/7 confidential hotline and partners with service providers, law enforcement, educators, and youth leaders to strengthen cross-sector collaboration.<sup>14</sup> Through its Student Alliance and community outreach initiatives, SFCaHT engages youth in peer education, campaign development, and awareness programming designed to prevent exploitation before it occurs. In addition to direct referrals, SFCaHT convenes task forces and stakeholder meetings that help align City agencies with nonprofit providers.

The Domestic Violence Consortium represents a collective of numerous San Francisco-based organizations working to prevent domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and human trafficking.<sup>15</sup> Member organizations provide emergency shelter, restraining order assistance, immigration legal support, crisis counseling, case management, and housing stabilization services. Collectively, consortium members serve thousands of survivors annually, many of whom are youth and transitional-age young adults experiencing housing instability, economic insecurity, or system involvement. Within this network, Black Women's Revolt Against Domestic Violence provides culturally specific crisis intervention, safety planning, shelter referrals, and long-term case management focused on Black women and girls impacted by violence and exploitation, and San Francisco's Asian Women's Shelter offers multilingual, culturally responsive emergency shelter, legal advocacy, and housing support to immigrant and Asian survivors of domestic violence and trafficking. Despite this coordination structure, many member agencies rely on short-term, competitive grants through City RFP processes that do not guarantee continuity of services, limiting their ability to expand shelter capacity or invest in long-term prevention programming.

## Preparing for Major 2026 Events

As San Francisco and the greater Bay Area prepare for major international sporting events, including the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup and related tourism surges, the City must take a precautionary approach because large-scale events have historically been associated with increased vulnerability to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Specifically, San Francisco serves as a hub for travel along the West Coast, with high passenger volume through San Francisco International Airport and major interstate corridors that traffickers exploit to move victims. While trafficking is a year-round crime, research and enforcement reporting show that major events can create conditions that increase exploitation risk due to surges in temporary labor demand, tourism-driven commercial sex markets, and short-term housing shortages. For example, research analyzing Super Bowl host cities found that online escort advertisements, often used as a proxy

<sup>14</sup> San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking, "Home," *SFCaHT*, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://sfcaht.org/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> Tides Foundation, "San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium," *Tides*, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.tides.org/partner/san-francisco-domestic-violence-consortium/>

indicator for trafficking-related commercial sex activity, increased by approximately 136 percent during the 2011 Super Bowl in Dallas, Texas.<sup>16</sup> Regional law enforcement data also demonstrates heightened enforcement and rescue activity during major events; for example, the Santa Clara County Human Trafficking Task Force reported recovering 73 trafficking victims, including 10 minors, and arresting 29 traffickers during operations tied to Super Bowl LX regional preparations.<sup>17</sup> Youth and young adults working or participating in these sectors, as well as youth navigating public transit hubs, hotels, and entertainment districts, face heightened exposure to recruitment and coercion tactics. These patterns demonstrate that large tourism events create environments where exploitation can be easier to conceal and more difficult to detect. As a result, San Francisco must proactively expand interagency coordination, survivor services capacity, and frontline training to ensure that prevention and response systems can manage increased demand during major international events.

### **Sexual Harassment in Schools**

Sexual harassment and assault cases have been an ongoing issue in SFUSD. Over the span of 8 years, there have been credible accusations against more than 20 district employees, ranging from counselors to paraeducators.<sup>18</sup> Many of these employees were allowed to resign quietly without further action taken. Reports from 2023 state that while there have been over 50 sexual assault cases against Bay Area school districts, only eight of those have been reported.<sup>19</sup> Although these cases may be different, some patterns and procedures must be taken into account to ensure San Francisco students are safe from sexual violence.

### **Reinforcing Title IX Education**

Title IX is a landmark federal law from 1972 that prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.<sup>20</sup> All federal agencies that provide grants of financial assistance are required to enforce Title IX's nondiscrimination mandate.<sup>21</sup> Examples of the types of discrimination that are covered under Title IX include but are not limited to: sex-based harassment; sexual violence; pregnancy discrimination; the failure to provide equal athletic opportunity; sex-based discrimination in a school's science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses and programs; discriminatory application of dress code policies and/or enforcement; and retaliation.<sup>22</sup> Although Title IX prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, students still face cases related to sexual harassment or violence. Research reflects that 1 in 9 female high school students and 1 in 36 male students report experiencing dating violence in the past year.<sup>23</sup> In a survey of 27 universities, more than 23% of female undergraduate students reported sexual assault or misconduct, and 11.7% of all students experienced nonconsensual

<sup>16</sup> Anti-Trafficking Review, "Article 404," *Anti-Trafficking Review*, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/404/336>

<sup>17</sup> Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, "Super Bowl Anti-Human Trafficking Operations Net Almost 30 Traffickers and Recovery of 73 Victims," Santa Clara County District Attorney, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://da.santaclaracounty.gov/super-bowl-anti-human-trafficking-operations-net-almost-30-traffickers-and-recovery-73-victims>

<sup>18</sup> Vosf Staff and Vosf Staff, "SFUSD Safety: Sexual Assault and Harassment," *The Voice of San Francisco*, December 31, 2025, <https://thevoicesf.org/sfusd-safety-sexual-assault-and-harassment/#:~:text=Since%202017%2C%20at%20least%20disclosing%20the%20reason%20for%20separation.>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/schools-sexual-abuse-list-cases-18353656.php>

<sup>20</sup> "Title IX and Sex Discrimination," U.S. Department of Education, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination>.

<sup>21</sup> "Title IX and Sex Discrimination," U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>22</sup> "Title IX and Sex Discrimination," U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>23</sup> "Sexual Misconduct in Schools," AAUW Action Fund, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://www.aauw.org/issues/education/sexual-misconduct/>.

contact.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, 1 in 10 female graduate students report being sexually harassed by a faculty member.<sup>25</sup> According to the San Francisco Youth Commission’s “Address Sexual Assault and Harassment in Schools” budget and policy priorities, sexual assault and harassment have continued to impact schools across San Francisco severely. The City must make necessary changes to address this systemic issue that continues to impact and harm San Francisco youth. 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. Further, age-appropriate sexual violence education can teach K-12 students to help identify, prevent, and report sexual violence.

Helping children learn to identify and prevent sexual violence is particularly important when many children are socially delayed from school closures during the pandemic.<sup>26</sup> Along with this, teaching students about sexuality and sexual health equips children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that help them to protect their health, develop respectful social and sexual relationships, make responsible choices, and understand and protect the rights of others.<sup>27</sup> Evidence consistently shows that high-quality sexuality education delivers positive health outcomes, with lifelong impacts.<sup>28</sup> Young people are more likely to delay the onset of sexual activity—and when they do have sex, to practice safer sex—when they are better informed about their sexuality, sexual health, and their rights.<sup>29</sup> Sexuality education also helps them prepare for and manage physical and emotional changes as they grow up, including during puberty and adolescence, while teaching them about respect, consent, and where to go if they need help.<sup>30</sup> This in turn reduces risks from violence, exploitation, and abuse.<sup>31</sup>

SFUSD must reinforce its Title IX curriculum, so students are aware of their rights and how to file reports within SFUSD. In 2021, hundreds of SFUSD students organized a walkout to protest against SFUSD’s management of student sexual assault reports and Title IX complaints. Many students felt unsupported with their Title IX complaints and said administrators often dismissed their reports.<sup>32</sup> Because students were aware of their rights, they were able to speak out on areas SFUSD could improve on. A well-rounded health curriculum in SFUSD should highlight and take time on the Title IX lessons already established. This includes hands-on, real-life activities such as learning how to file a Title IX report and educating students on their schools’ Title IX coordinators. Hands-on activities that apply to real-life scenarios reinforce student learning and help with long-term retention. Students can retain up to 90% of information taught to them by applying these lessons.<sup>33</sup> By incorporating hands-on Title IX lessons, students are able to effectively learn their rights and retain that information to create a safer school environment.

<sup>24</sup> “Sexual Misconduct,” AAUW Action Fund.

<sup>25</sup> “Sexual Misconduct,” AAUW Action Fund.

<sup>26</sup> Melanie Bennett, “Train Children on Sexual Violence Preexploitationvention,” *United Educators*, last modified March 2024, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/sexual-assault-and-misconduct/train-children-on-sexual-violence-prevention/#:~:text=Age%2Dappropriate%20sexual%20violence%20education,school%20closures%20during%20the%20pandemic.>

<sup>27</sup> “Comprehensive Sexuality Education,” World Health Organization, last modified May 18, 2023, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/comprehensive-sexuality-education#:~:text=Sexuality%20education%20equips%20children%20and,protect%20the%20rights%20of%20others.>

<sup>28</sup> “Comprehensive Sexuality,” World Health Organization.

<sup>29</sup> “Comprehensive Sexuality,” World Health Organization.

<sup>30</sup> “Comprehensive Sexuality,” World Health Organization.

<sup>31</sup> “Comprehensive Sexuality,” World Health Organization.

<sup>32</sup> Madeleine Johnston, “Demanding a Difference,” *The Lowell*, n.d., <https://thelowell.org/10619/features/demanding-a-difference/#:~:text=In%20the%20fall%20of%202021,show%20solidarity%20for%20SOTA's%20cause.>

<sup>33</sup> Juan Siliezar, “Study Finds Students Learn Better through Physical Participation,” *Harvard Gazette*, October 1, 2021, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/10/study-finds-students-learn-better-through-physical-participation/>.

## SFUSD Cases

In 2025, SFUSD settled a lawsuit involving a former Lowell High School student and a school counselor on a case of sexual abuse for 1.5 million dollars.<sup>34</sup> Multiple reports had been made against the counselor to school officials, yet none were taken into account. The counselor was able to work for over 9 years in SFUSD until he left in 2013, and was later arrested for similar charges in 2014. This case wasn't an exception. Sexual assault cases in SFUSD in recent years have similar patterns. In November 2025, an SFUSD paraeducator was arrested on charges of continuous child sexual assaults.<sup>35</sup> He was able to work in over eight elementary and middle schools. In 2023 to 2024, an investigation regarding a Lowell High School teacher took place, involving sexual misconduct with "inappropriate behavior" through quid pro quo favors with students.<sup>36</sup> The educator was reprimanded with a 10-day suspension and returned to teaching soon after. Although he had other allegations raised against him from multiple other students during the #MeToo movement, no further discipline was taken.

## Efforts to Reduce Misconduct

More than 20 SFUSD employees with sexual misconduct allegations have been able to quietly resign in recent years, in a practice called "pass the trash".<sup>37</sup> This confidentiality agreement prevents future employers, such as other districts, from seeing the employee's past records. Many of these educators have gone on to teach in other districts or agencies, causing an extreme safety issue for other cities and California students. In 2017, after a former George Washington High School athletic director was able to quietly resign after a 4.5 million dollar settlement in a sexual assault case against two students, he was able to find employment at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.<sup>38</sup> The former Lowell High School counselor previously mentioned was able to continue working for SFUSD at the Academy of Arts and Sciences after leaving the high school.<sup>39</sup>

On October 7th, 2025, Governor Newsom signed School Employee Misconduct: Child Abuse Prevention Act (SB 848), which aims to combat this practice, now making "pass the trash" illegal in California.<sup>40</sup> The act also creates child safety obligation laws that must be implemented in California private schools, which have been routinely mandated in public schools. For SFUSD, this means that starting January 1st, 2026, they are legally required to disclose an employee's misconduct record to both public and private school employers. It is now mandatory for all schools to perform hiring checks.<sup>41</sup> Data from other states that have already implemented similar laws, such as the Act (SB 848), have had tangible impacts. In these states, there has often been a drastic

<sup>34</sup> Cerri, Boskovich & Allard, "San Francisco Unified School District Reaches \$1.5 Million Settlement in 20-Year-Old Lowell High School Sexual Abuse Case," Cerri, Boskovich & Allard, May 13, 2025, <https://www.cbalegal.com/news/san-francisco-unified-school-district-reaches-1-5-million-settlement-in-20-year-old-lowell-high-school-sexual-abuse-case/>.

<sup>35</sup> Vosf Staff and Vosf Staff, "SFUSD Safety: Sexual Assault and Harassment," The Voice of San Francisco, December 31, 2025, <https://thevoicesf.org/sfusd-safety-sexual-assault-and-harassment/>.

<sup>36</sup> Ida Mojadad and Matthew Kupfer, "Lowell High School teacher accused of trading college recommendation letters for a favor," The San Francisco Standard, June 22, 2023, <https://sfstandard.com/2023/06/22/lowell-high-school-teacher-misconduct-harassment-favor/>.

<sup>37</sup> Vosf Staff and Vosf Staff, "SFUSD Safety: Sexual Assault and Harassment," The Voice of San Francisco, December 31, 2025.

<sup>38</sup> Cerri, Boskovich & Allard, "San Francisco Unified School District Reaches \$1.5 Million Settlement in 20-Year-Old Lowell High School Sexual Abuse Case."

<sup>39</sup> Cerri, Boskovich & Allard, "San Francisco Unified School District Reaches \$1.5 Million Settlement in 20-Year-Old Lowell High School Sexual Abuse Case."

<sup>40</sup> "Governor Newsom Signs Senator Pérez's SB 848, the Safe Learning Environments Act, to Protect Students from Sexual Misconduct by School Employees," Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, October 8, 2025, <https://sd25.senate.ca.gov/news/governor-newsom-signs-senator-perezs-sb-848-safe-learning-environments-act-protect-students>.

<sup>41</sup> Allison Berquist and Julie Strom, "Governor Signs Law Requiring Expanded Child-Abuse Prevention Policies in California Private Schools," *Liebert Cassidy Whitmore*, October 8, 2025, <https://www.lcwlegal.com/news/governor-signs-law-requiring-expanded-child-abuse-prevention-private-school/>.

increase in civil sexual cases reported to the Office of Civil Rights, not depicting an increase in the number of sexual assault cases, but rather an increase in those speaking out and action being taken against such cases.<sup>42</sup> Act (SB 848) aims to combat these actions and create a safer environment for all those who attend both public and private K-12 schools in California

## Youth Impact and Response

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), adolescents are the age group with the highest risk of sexual assault. A study conducted by the National Institute of Health showed 47% of teenagers seek mental health support a year before they were assaulted; this increased to 80% a year after the assault.<sup>43</sup> An increase from 65% to 82% of adolescents seeking healthcare services after the assault was also reported. The consequences were also shown in academic performance. Absences from school more than doubled, which led to an increase in poor performance in school. These impacts create a bigger need for change in addressing sexual assault and harassment cases within SFUSD.

In 2021, students from over eight San Francisco schools walked out to advocate for support for victims of sexual violence, protesting against the district's poor response to allegations.<sup>44</sup> Youth action is not limited only to walkouts but also through their work in youth councils. The Title IX Student Advisory Group has done work advising SFUSD on district policies that include prevention, support, and student empowerment.<sup>45</sup> Through their mission, they have been able to provide student feedback for SFUSD Board Policies updates on gender based harassment policies in schools. They have also increased awareness on how to file Title IX reports within the district and helped create peer-led resources to help victims of gender-based violence.<sup>46</sup> They must reconvene for the next school year and remain active to continue working towards a safer school district. A safer school district ensures a comfortable and inclusive learning environment.

## Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Support and Impact

The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development funds around 8 million dollars in grants for CBOs that support youth and adults on gender based violence. Some of these CBOs have programs specializing in youth advocacy, such as the Community Youth Center's Young Asian Women Against Violence Project (YAWAV). This project focuses on empowering and teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander young women on sexual violence and safety through hands-on workshops and lessons. Every year, YAWAV educates 550 San Francisco youth in over six content areas.<sup>47</sup> San Francisco Woman Against Rape, another CBO under this grant, holds educational youth services such as bilingual community presentations and the Students Talking About Non-Violent Dating Program (STAND). STAND is San Francisco's "oldest youth sexual and dating violence prevention project", dating back to 1997.<sup>48</sup> It provides youth with violence

<sup>42</sup> "OCR Receives Record Number of Complaints," Inside Higher Ed, <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2016/12/09/ocr-receives-record-number-complaints>.

<sup>43</sup> Venetia Clarke et al., "Medium-Term Health and Social Outcomes in Adolescents Following Sexual Assault: A Prospective Mixed-Methods Cohort Study," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 58, no. 12 (2023): 1777–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-021-02127-4>.

<sup>44</sup> Holly McDede, "Hundreds of SF High School Students Walk Out of Class, Demanding More Support for Sexual Assault Survivors," KQED, March 16, 2022, <https://www.kqed.org/news/11895886/hundreds-of-sf-high-school-students-walk-out-of-class-demanding-more-support-for-sexual-assault-survivors>.

<sup>45</sup> "Title IX Student Advisory Group (SAG) | SFUSD," n.d., <https://www.sfusd.edu/title-ix-student-advisory-group-sag>.

<sup>46</sup> "Title IX Student Advisory Group (SAG) | SFUSD," n.d., <https://www.sfusd.edu/title-ix-student-advisory-group-sag#56658-tixsag-mission-2022-2023>.

<sup>47</sup> Community Youth Center of San Francisco, "Young Asian Women Against Violence (YAWAV) | Community Youth Center," Community Youth Center, August 20, 2025, <https://www.cycsf.org/program/yawav/>.

<sup>48</sup> SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN AGAINST RAPE, "Community Initiatives - SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN AGAINST RAPE," March 23, 2021, <https://sfwar.org/programs-services/community-initiatives/>.

prevention education and training, facilitates support groups, and assists SFUSD in policy development to reduce youth violence.

Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) is a community organization that aims to provide care services and education for Black survivors of abuse. They are California's first Black Women-centered Family Violence Resource Center.<sup>49</sup> They have co-sponsored California Senate Bill (SB1228), a law passed in 2022 that prohibited law enforcement from prosecuting victims of sexual assault through rape survivor DNA kits in unrelated criminal cases.<sup>50</sup> Their youth outreach through advisory councils and advocacy training has helped increase awareness and education for communities across San Francisco, breaking the cycle of violence. San Francisco's Asian Women's Shelter (SFAWS) works to combat domestic violence, specifically from immigrant and marginalized communities, through programs such as shelter housing, support lines, case management, and community outreach. Their Multi-Lingual Access Model (MLAM) Program is nationally recognized and provides services in over 40 languages. AWS is the lead agency of San Francisco's MLAM program, which also provides services to seven other anti-violence CBOs.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, their shelter houses around 50 families yearly, providing support for victims of violence.<sup>52</sup> These CBOs must receive the financial support necessary to continue providing these services to all of San Francisco's youth.

## Recommendations

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

- 1. Expand Youth-Centered Prevention & Education:** The City and County of San Francisco should partner directly with SFUSD, youth-serving departments, and community-based organizations to implement a standardized, trauma-informed human trafficking prevention curriculum across middle and high schools. This curriculum should:
  - a. Include instruction on online recruitment tactics, grooming behaviors, labor trafficking indicators, and safe digital practices.
  - b. Be integrated into existing health education, wellness, or advisory curricula.
  - c. Be developed and delivered in partnership with community-based experts, including the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking, the Domestic Violence Consortium, and Black Women's Revolt Against Domestic Violence, to ensure content reflects lived experiences and community realities.
  - d. Provide annual professional development training for educators, school social workers, and administrators to identify warning signs and respond using survivor-centered protocols.
  
- 2. Strengthen Reporting & Response Infrastructure Ahead of 2026 Major Events:** In preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and related regional tourism surges, the City should proactively expand interagency coordination and frontline training by:
  - a. Establishing a temporary interagency Human Trafficking Response Task Group for 2025-2026 that includes SFPD SVU, the District Attorney's Office, the Public

<sup>49</sup> "Who We Are — Black Women Revolt," Black Women Revolt, n.d., <https://blackwomenrevolt.org/who-we-are>.

<sup>50</sup> "Bill Text - SB-1228 Criminal Procedure: DNA Samples," n.d., [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220SB1228](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB1228).

<sup>51</sup> "Programs — Asian Women's Shelter," Asian Women's Shelter, n.d., <https://www.sfaws.org/programs>.

<sup>52</sup> "FAQs — Asian Women's Shelter," Asian Women's Shelter, n.d., <https://www.sfaws.org/faqs>.

Defender's Office, MOVR, SCAHT, the Domestic Violence Consortium, hotel associations, transit agencies, and youth representatives.

- b. Institutionalizing structured collaboration between SFPD and the District Attorney's Office through recurring joint training, coordinated review of trafficking cases, and shared accountability metrics.
  - c. Integrating public health and labor enforcement systems such as the Department of Public Health and Office of Labor Standards Enforcement more intentionally into the anti-trafficking response, including strengthened healthcare screening.
- 3. Increase and Stabilize Survivor-Support Funding:** The City should increase and stabilize funding for survivor-centered services by:
- a. Providing non-competitive funding allocations to members of the Domestic Violence Consortium and trafficking-specific service providers to ensure continuity of shelter beds, case management, and prevention programs.
  - b. Allocating dedicated funding to the Public Defender's Office for specialized trafficking advocacy, including support for vacatur petitions under Penal Code § 236.14.
  - c. Strengthening staffing and oversight capacity within the Mayor's Office of Victim and Witness Rights (MOVR) to improve accountability across departments serving trafficking survivors.
  - d. Investing in economic security supports for survivors, including expanded housing subsidies, debt relief assistance, legal and medical fee support, and flexible financial assistance to promote long-term independence and stability.
- 4. Improve Data Transparency, Coordination & Accountability:** San Francisco should improve transparency and cross-sector accountability by:
- a. Establishing standardized, confidentiality-protected data-sharing agreements and securing a coordination platform that allows agencies and community-based organizations to reduce duplication, streamline referrals, and improve real-time service coordination.
- 5. Support School Employee Misconduct: Child Abuse Prevention Act (SB 848):** This law expands child abuse prevention policies in both public and private schools, requiring school employers to check employees' background when hiring. This fights back against previous district practices that have allowed offenders to quietly resign and work in other city departments or local districts. Many district complaints included the confidentiality that offenders were allowed when resigning from their employment at SFUSD schools. This law fixes these issues and creates transparency between schools, students, and families.
- 6. Recommend SFUSD renew the Title IX Student Advisory Group:** Title IX Student Advisory Group advises the district on school policies to address sexual violence in SFUSD. They have helped provide feedback on gender-based violence policies for SFUSD Board Policy updates and raise awareness on sexual violence in schools from the perspective of SFUSD students. We urge the Board of Supervisors to support a renewal for the advisory group and work alongside them to continue creating policies against gender-based violence.

7. **Continue grants for CBOs that offer youth services against violence:** San Francisco’s Gender Based Violence Prevention and Intervention Grants Program provides essential funding to CBOs supporting adults and youth in areas such as sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, and trafficking through services from emergency shelters, hotlines, and legal services. These partner agencies also provide services to marginalized communities in our city through these grant fundings. Without these funds, many of the programs these CBOs offer would be cut. It’s essential to maintain and continue providing these grants to ensure a safer community for all in San Francisco.
  
8. **Implement curriculum in SFUSD schools that teaches students about sexual assault, Title IX, and sexual health:** Educating students about sexual health as early as kindergarten is vital to instilling what it means to be in a safe and consensual relationship with another. Knowing what this means dramatically reduces sexual assault and harassment cases among teenagers and college students. United Educators provides a structure of sexual health education among K - 12 schools<sup>53</sup>:
  - a. Kindergarten - 5th Grade:
    - i. Learning about bodily autonomy, the right to say “no”, the definition of consent, and where or to whom to report anyone who violates bodily autonomy.
  - b. Sixth - Eighth Grade:
    - i. State-specific definitions of consent and statutory rape.
    - ii. Examples of what is and what isn’t consent in the context of sexual activity.
  - c. Ninth - Twelfth Grade:
    - i. When a person is incapable of giving sexual consent due to age, incapacitation, or intellectual disability.
    - ii. Consider covering the difference between intoxication and incapacitation.
  
9. **Increase high school curriculum on Title IX:** Extending the curriculum on Title IX by spending more time on Title IX hands-on and scenario-based activities. Curriculum on Title IX should also include incorporating information on mandated case reporters in each SFUSD school and a step-by-step process on how to file a Title IX complaint through the school and district.

<sup>53</sup> Melanie Bennett, “Train Children on Sexual Violence Prevention,” March 7, 2024, <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/sexual-assault-and-misconduct/train-children-on-sexual-violence-prevention/>.

## CONTINUE IMPLEMENTING EFFORTS TO PROTECT NEWCOMER FAMILIES AND SUPPORT LANGUAGE ACCESS

*The Youth Commission urges the City & County 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 support the improvement of language accessibility.*

### Background

Nationally, newcomers represent a significant portion of the United States population and play a central role in the nation’s economy and society. As of June 2025, about 51.9 million newcomers lived in the U.S., comprising roughly 15.4 % of the total population, one of the highest proportions in decades.<sup>1</sup> Federal immigration law and policy, including asylum access, deportation enforcement, and work authorization, remain highly contested, affecting newcomers’ access to healthcare, education, legal protections, and social services. Limited English proficiency and uneven access to legal support further impede many families’ ability to assert their rights and navigate complex systems, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion.

At the local level, many cities and counties across the United States have enacted policies to protect newcomer communities and expand access to services beyond what federal law requires. “Sanctuary” or “welcoming” policies, for example, limit local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, ensuring that residents can access public services without fear of deportation. Local governments also increasingly provide funding for legal aid, multilingual services, and community-based organizations that support newcomer families, particularly those with limited English proficiency. These efforts help bridge gaps created by federal enforcement priorities and systemic barriers, enabling newcomers to participate more fully in civic, economic, and social life.

San Francisco continues to serve as a critical point of entry for newcomer and refugee families. In recent years, San Francisco has experienced a significant increase in newcomer households navigating public education, healthcare, housing, and workforce systems: often while facing language barriers. Despite longstanding commitments to language access and newcomer-protection policies, implementation gaps persist in legal literacy. Therefore, youth in newcomer families face barriers to academic success and wellbeing, frequently assuming translation responsibilities for their households when translation, interpretation, and culturally responsive services are inconsistent. As federal newcomer policy remains uncertain, continued local investment in language access programs and newcomer stabilization services is essential to uphold San Francisco’s commitment to all families.

Historically, undocumented youth rights, newcomer pathways, and language access have been topics in the Youth Commission Budget and Policy Priorities from 2010-2016, 2018-2019, and 2023-2025. In the 2024-2025 term, Commissioners Fong and Listana authored a statement (Motion No. 2425-AL-35) on ICE Raids on the Undocumented Community in San Francisco, and

<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Kramer and Jeffrey S. Passel, “What the Data Says about Immigrants in the U.S.,” Pew Research Center, August 21, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/08/21/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>

Commissioner Dang passed Motion No. 2425-AL-29 to Submit Letters of Support for Immigration Bill SB 48<sup>2</sup>.

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.

### **Newcomer Protections and Legal Literacy**

In San Francisco, multiple community-based organizations provide increasingly important, critical services to newcomers, given the mounting aggression of immigration enforcement at the federal level. These include resources like legal representation, emergency shelter, know-your-rights training, and family support. The operation of the organizations providing these services, though, is largely contingent on funding from the City and County of San Francisco: many of these services continue to be at risk given budget shortfalls and deficits at the city level.

Legal literacy remains a critical but under-resourced component of newcomer protections. Many newcomer families are unaware of their rights during interactions with immigration enforcement, housing authorities, schools, or law enforcement, which increases vulnerability to misinformation, fraud, and coercion. Community organizations frequently conduct “Know Your Rights” training, but these efforts are often reactive and dependent on short-term funding. Strengthening legal literacy empowers youth and families to make informed decisions, reduces panic during enforcement actions, and reinforces San Francisco’s commitment to protecting all residents regardless of newcomer status.

In recent budget cycles, the City has systematically underprioritized justice and legal access for newcomers. Funding for critical legal services has been cut or left unrenewed, including both newcomer representation and general civil legal services. For example, a one-time \$878,000 city grant that previously supported local newcomer legal organizations through the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development was not renewed, leaving groups like CARECEN without funding amid rising newcomer cases.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the 2025 proposed budget reduced roughly \$250,000 from the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, cutting nonprofit contracts that provide legal assistance, housing, and other support for newcomer families.<sup>4</sup> These cuts have compounded existing challenges: San Francisco ranks among the worst counties in the state for access to legal representation, with only 57.8% of newcomers receiving counsel in court, leaving many vulnerable to detention, deportation, or exploitation.<sup>5</sup> Research by the American

<sup>2</sup> Skylar Dang, “250687 - YC Motion No. 2425-AL-29 061625,” SF.Gov, June 16, 2025, <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14306171&GUID=78A0BAA0-3158-4B6F-8ADD-4F55C5ACFF80>.

<sup>3</sup> Io Yeh Gilman and Xueer Lu, “S.F. to Give \$3.5M More to Immigration Services After Trump Threat,” Mission Local, October 23, 2025, <https://missionlocal.org/2025/10/sf-additional-immigration-funding-connie-chan/>

<sup>4</sup> Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez and Josh Koehn, “Lurie’s Budget Cuts Immigrant Services in ‘Time of Crisis,’” *The Standard*, June 13, 2025, <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/13/san-francisco-ice-arrests-daniel-lurie-budget-cuts/>

<sup>5</sup> Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, *Too Few Immigration Attorneys: Average Representation Rates Fall...*, TRAC Report no. 736, accessed via TRAC (January 24, 2024), <https://tracreports.org/reports/736/>

Immigration Council shows that newcomers with attorneys are four times more likely to be released from detention, more likely to apply for relief, and more likely to succeed in court.<sup>6</sup>

One of the largest protectors of newcomers in San Francisco, Mission-based La Raza Community Resource Center offers free family-based legal aid (including for naturalization, DACA, asylee petitioning, and green card renewal purposes), deportation defense services (including representation in removal proceedings and in special Immigrant juvenile status cases), and a food pantry program providing free groceries to low-income families on a twice-per-week basis<sup>7</sup>. La Raza also provides housing and rental subsidies to families in need, and, in collaboration with DAHLIA Housing and San Francisco's Emergency Rental Assistance Program, submits over 800 affordable housing applications on behalf of low-income families.

Open Door Legal provides free immigration legal representation to low-income families, including deportation defense aid, representation in asylum proceedings, relief for domestic violence survivors, in addition to an expansive housing assistance program<sup>8</sup>. With four main locations in the city, offices in the Bayview, Excelsior, the Sunset, and Western Addition, the organization's services are broad, especially in San Francisco's southeast. According to Open Door Legal, 1 in 5 families in the Bayview sought help from the organization within its first decade of operation (2013-2023). As of May 2024, they have served over 10,000 individuals and estimate having obtained upwards of \$270,000,000 in non-cash outcomes (the value of keeping one's home, becoming safe from violence, obtaining immigration status, and more).

San Francisco's Latino Task Force (LTF) is a grassroots organization providing direct services to Latino, Black, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and Newcomer communities in San Francisco's Mission District. Acting on reports of ICE raids, LTF conducts multi-language know-your-rights raids and referrals to legal services<sup>9</sup>. They partner with various city departments, commissions, and agencies, most notably the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigration Affairs, the Human Rights Commission, SFUSD, and the San Francisco Public Library.

In October 2025, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$10.5 million for immigrant legal aid. An additional 4.2 million dollars were allocated towards immigrant and domestic violence survivor legal aid in the General Civil Legal Fund in Mayor Lurie's finalized 2025 budget.

Furthermore, the protection of newcomers has been a top priority within the school district. Among the bargaining terms in its historic February 2026 strike, United Educators of San Francisco (UESF), SFUSD's educator union, sought sanctuary protections for newcomers in San Francisco's Public Schools—including formally designating all campuses as sanctuary spaces, prohibiting cooperation with ICE by staff (without a criminal warrant), and policy training for staff<sup>10</sup>. Besides critical concessions by the school district, the final contract between UESF and SFUSD includes newcomer protection through binding sanctuary-designation language in district policy, and, notably, a commitment by SFUSD to preserve the Stayover program, which provides emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness (the school district has previously considered cutting this program).

<sup>6</sup> American Immigration Council, *Access to Counsel in Immigration Court*, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/access-counsel-immigration->

<sup>7</sup> "Our Offerings," La Raza Community Resource Center, <https://www.larazaarc.org/programs-services>.

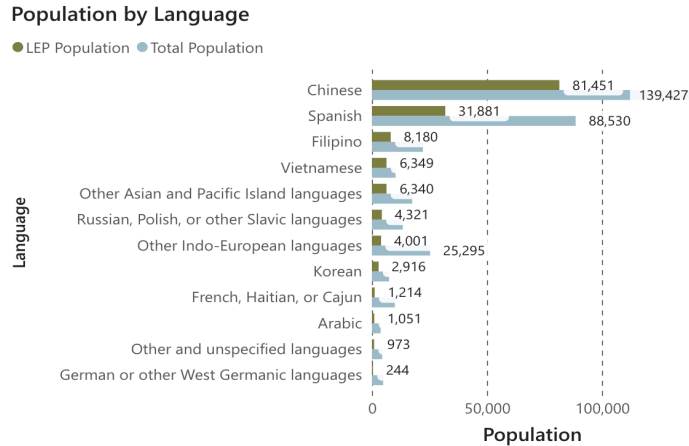
<sup>8</sup> Open Door Legal, *Our Solution*, May 22, 2020, <https://opendoorlegal.org/our-solution/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Latino Task Force San Francisco | Community Support & Services," Latino Task Force, <https://www.ltfrespuestalatina.com>.

<sup>10</sup> "Bargaining Updates," *United Educators of San Francisco*, n.d., <https://uesf.org/news/bargaining-updates/>.

## Language Access

In San Francisco, the total Limited English Proficient (LEP) population is 149,000+. The term, Limited English Proficient refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and therefore have a limited ability to read, write, or understand English. Among LEP residents, Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese) is the most widely spoken language (81,451), followed by Spanish (31,881), Tagalog (8,180), and Vietnamese (6,349).



The San Francisco Language Access Ordinance (LAO) was enacted in 2001 to require public-facing City departments to provide equal access to information and services for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The LAO was amended in 2024 to strengthen its provisions, increase accountability, and expand language access. Furthermore, to meet the growing need from Vietnamese communities for language access support, the 2024 Language Access Ordinance (LAO) amendments adjusted the Substantial Number of Limited

English Proficient (LEP) Persons threshold required to certify Vietnamese in the city. This threshold changed from 10,000 to 6,000 LEP individuals, effective January 1, 2026. This amendment now requires all City departments to provide interpretation services and translated materials in Vietnamese. To support the implementation of language access for threshold languages in City departments, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs has a team of Language Specialists that provides departments with support in meeting their compliance benchmarks, along with supplementary services for translation and interpretation. While there are language specialists for Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino, there is currently not one for Vietnamese.

According to OCEIA’s 2026 Language Access Compliance Summary Report, they found that for the 2024 - 2025 Fiscal Year, LEP client interactions reached a record high of 1,754,088, an 11% from the year before and a 36% increase from the five-year-average (FY 2020-2021 to FY 2024-2025) of 1,286,434. With the advent of Vietnamese becoming a threshold language, LEP client interactions grew by about 115% compared to the previous fiscal year, totaling 60,823, almost doubling the average of 31,413 LEP contacts per year for the past five years. LEP client interactions in Filipino, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Cantonese also saw substantial increases, with Mandarin most notably experiencing a 682% increase from the previous fiscal year.

The number of translated materials in these languages also experienced a record high, from almost 2,500 in FY 2023-2024 to about 55,200 in FY 2024-2025, a 2,123% growth. The most notable growth was Vietnamese, which saw a 3,636% rise in the quantity of translated materials. This pattern continues with telephonic language services, which experienced a 400% increase in total

volume from the previous fiscal year, and in-person language services, which experienced a 228% increase.

Bilingual staffing also saw a 52% increase, with Departments reporting about 3,960 bilingual employees. Lastly, City Departments also spent a record \$22.94 million on language services, with the greatest percentage increases in language services budgets being seen in the County Clerk, Department of Public Health, Treasure Island Development Authority, Port of San Francisco, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families.

To further advance language access, especially for non-threshold languages, OCEIA's Language Access Community Grants fund community initiatives to meet the language access needs of San Francisco's underserved monolingual and Limited English Proficient (LEP) community members. During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, Grantees educated and informed over 10,700 PEP residents about their language access rights. They distributed more than 15,630 educational written materials and organized a total of 250 events and workshops about language access. Grantees provided 2,945 people with language assistance through over 2,994 hours of interpretation services. Over 80% of these interpretation hours were related to helping community members access City services. OCEIA's Language Access Grantees are Asociación Mayab, Self-Help for the Elderly, Southeast Asian Community Center (SEACC), South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), and the Language Access Network (LANSF). LANSF is a coalition of organizations that serve newcomer communities in San Francisco, which consists of Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), African Advocacy Network (AAN), Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC), Central American Resource Center of San Francisco (CARECEN SF), People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER), and South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN).

As newcomer communities navigate fear, misinformation, and shifting federal policies, it's critical that the city fully leverages its robust language access protections to uphold the city's "City and County of Refuge" status and ensure newcomers can access support safely. As language access protections face growing challenges nationwide, strong local action is more important than ever. Language access helps residents feel safe accessing services, reporting concerns, and participating in civic life, which strengthens safety, inclusion, and opportunity within newcomer communities.

### **Community Ambassador Program**

The Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs launched the Community Ambassadors Program in 2010 in the Bayview and Visitacion Valley neighborhoods as a response to cultural and linguistic tensions, increased violence, and the need for better community safety options<sup>11</sup>. For instance, in 2010, the Bayview saw four high-profile MUNI-related attacks on Asian people, one resulting in the death of 83-year-old Huan Chen<sup>12</sup>. Since the inception of the program, the Community Ambassadors program has expanded its coverage to the Sunset, District 5, Chinatown, Mission, Bayview/Visitacion Valley, and Mid-Market/Tenderloin neighborhoods.

<sup>11</sup> "Community Ambassadors Program | SF.Gov," <https://www.sf.gov/community-ambassadors-program>.

<sup>12</sup> Anrica Deb, "Riding MUNI's Third Street Line," *Mission Local*, April 30, 2010, <https://missionlocal.org/2010/04/the-risks-of-riding-munis-third-street-line/>.

The Community Ambassadors program trains trusted community members to provide crisis response and intervention, safety and wellness services, and neighborhood support, while also serving as a visible, reliable, non-law enforcement safety presence. During the 2025-2026 fiscal year, Community Ambassadors interacted with community members 67,363 times, providing critical field services such as 24,000+ wellness checks, 19,000+ merchant visits, 8,576 service referrals (including to a shelter bed or a newcomer legal service), and 1,134 safety escorts<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, a unique aspect of the program is that it works to support newcomer communities with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), with its team speaking over 20 languages, including Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Russian, Vietnamese, and Samoan<sup>14</sup>.

This model responds to a clear trust gap in traditional policing. During a 2023 City Survey on Safety and Policing, residents were asked to grade both their trust in the police and the quality of police services in their neighborhood on an A to F scale, with the average of the two grades becoming the overall police rating<sup>15</sup>. The survey found that, on average, across neighborhoods and a wide array of demographics, the police received a grade of C+. Meanwhile, increased interior newcomer enforcement, both nationally and locally, has deepened fear and mistrust in newcomer communities, heightening concerns about contact with law enforcement and reducing willingness to access basic safety and support services.

Unfortunately, in the past budget cycle, to meet the City Administrator's Office's General Fund Reduction Target of \$20 million, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs' budget was slashed by \$2.6 million, with their grant budget being reduced by \$250,000 and their outreach budget being reduced by \$383,000<sup>16</sup>. The additional \$2 million reduction came in the form of sunseting the Community Ambassadors Program. The program has already ended coverage in the Sunset, District 5, and Chinatown neighborhoods, and will fully end in 2027, leaving the Mission, Bayview/Visitacion Valley/Portola, and Mid-Market/Tenderloin neighborhoods without coverage.

As federal newcomer enforcement intensifies, we must ensure newcomer communities in San Francisco have reliable access to services and accurate information, while also equipping residents with practical training to strengthen safety and trust across their neighborhoods.

## **Language Education**

ESL and foreign language classes have proven to be useful for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) speakers, but they are often difficult to access. ESL and foreign language classes are especially important in a city like San Francisco, as there are approximately 109 unique languages are spoken in the city.

Foreign language classes in San Francisco have been at risk of receiving budget cuts or being cut entirely. For example, in 2021, the Cantonese program at City College was at risk of elimination from the college's provided classes. This was due to a lack of enrollment due to the Cantonese classes not offering certificates upon completion. Cantonese remains one of the most widely

<sup>13</sup> "Community Ambassadors Program Data | SF.Gov," <https://www.sf.gov/data--community-ambassadors-program-data>.

<sup>14</sup> "Community Ambassadors Program | SF.Gov.," <https://www.sf.gov/information--community-ambassadors-program>.

<sup>15</sup> "City Survey: Safety and Policing," SF.Gov, February 18, 2025, <https://www.sf.gov/data--city-survey-safety-and-policing>.

<sup>16</sup> Carmen Chu, City Administrator, "FY 2024-2026 Budget Overview," June 12, 2024, <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13018293&GUID=A39698F2-5518-4D38-8A70-F94013940ACB>.

spoken languages among San Francisco’s Chinese community, particularly among newcomer families. According to former City College Trustee Alan Wong, “Saving the Cantonese program is not only about protecting Chinese culture, language, and history. It is also about the very practical need to ensure that our very large Cantonese-speaking Chinese community has access to public safety, health care, and social services”. In 2022, through community advocacy with the “Save Cantonese at CCSF” movement, City College approved a Cantonese certificate program. However, in early 2023, the City College Board of Trustees voted to withdraw the certificate program due to concerns of enrollment and program viability, prompting public outcry and subsequent reconsideration. Then, in July of 2023, the Board reversed its decision and reinstated the Cantonese certificate program. This sequence highlights the ongoing instability of heritage language programs and the need for sustained, stable funding to prevent recurring threats to language instruction<sup>17</sup>.

The Longfellow Elementary Tagalog program provides another example of foreign language classes at risk. In 2022, the Tagalog program was at risk of severe downsizing by combining the Kindergarten and 1st Grade classes, essentially cutting the number of spots in the program in half, which would not have been able to accommodate the large Filipino American population at Longfellow. Furthermore, only two elementary schools provide Tagalog instruction in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Bessie Carmichael and Longfellow, and with the downsizing of the Tagalog program at Longfellow, access to Tagalog instruction for youth would also dwindle. According to Nikki Santiago, an SFUSD parent, newcomer, and community organizer, “This program has really helped my child blossom into the person that she is<sup>18</sup>. She used to be very, very reserved, and now she’s not just a proud American, but she’s a proud Filipino”. Additionally, Longfellow Elementary alumnus Matthew James Mingo shared, “I learned a lot about my history and culture from all the after-school programs and from WLES”. This program not only teaches about Filipino history, culture, and language but also helps connect Filipino students to their roots and their newcomer families. With parents, teachers, and community members urging SFUSD to revisit the cap to preserve equitable access, the cap on the program was lifted, allowing more students to have access to this life-changing program. As of the latest SFUSD program listings, Longfellow’s Filipino Foreign Language in Elementary School program remains active<sup>19</sup>.

Balboa High School, an SFUSD school located in the Excelsior District, is one of the very few high schools in the country to provide a Filipino world language program. The program provides Filipino 1-3, which all students can enroll in while fulfilling the SFUSD world language A-G requirements. According to a Balboa student who was enrolled in the program, this program teaches students about different dialects of the Philippines, but with Tagalog being the most common, most of the material is taught in Tagalog. Students in this program also participate in field trips that dive into Filipino culture and history, such as going into the SOMA District to learn about historical Filipino landmarks and figures. At the end of the year, the program traditionally holds a Kamayan, a gathering of people eating, which is a popular hand-in-hand celebration in the Philippines, to bring all of the classes together. Many Balboa students have expressed their gratitude for this program and wish to have it offered in other schools as well.

<sup>17</sup> Helena Alexandra Getahun-Hawkins, “City College Board Apologizes to Community after Canceling Cantonese Certificate Course,” *Local News Matters*, July 24, 2023, <https://localnewsmatters.org/2023/07/24/city-college-board-apologizes-to-community-after-canceling-cantonese-certificate-course/>.

<sup>18</sup> Julia McEvoy, “SF Filipino Community Mobilizes to Preserve Unique Elementary School Language Program | KQED,” July 1, 2022, <https://www.kqed.org/news/11918252/sf-filipino-community-mobilizes-to-preserve-unique-elementary-school-language-program>.

<sup>19</sup> “Filipino Language Programs | SFUSD,” <https://www.sfusd.edu/learning/language-pathways-language-updates-progress/filipino-language-programs>.

## Recommendations

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

### Newcomer Protections

- 1. Reaffirm and strengthen San Francisco’s “City and County of Refuge” ordinance.** The city should strengthen zero-tolerance policies through language in city contracts and written policy—except when justly warranted or required by law—that prohibit aiding federal immigration officials and outline consequences for doing so. By working with the school district, the city should also extend the policy to all San Francisco public schools.
- 2. Enhance and expand funding to community-based organizations serving and aiding newcomer communities in San Francisco.** Through grants and inclusion in city fiscal budgets, the City should continue to fund the services of community-based organizations and legal centers dependent on city funding. In addition, the city should guarantee multi-year funding contracts to community-based organizations.
- 3. Hold those violating San Francisco’s “City and County of Refuge” ordinance accountable.** The City should pursue consequences for those found assisting federal newcomer enforcement on behalf of city departments and agencies, including law enforcement officers.
- 4. Integrate “Know Your Rights” Training Across City Services.** The City should require “Know Your Rights” training for all city employees and explore expanding it to contractors providing city services. This would ensure that newcomer youth and families, as well as staff who interact with them, understand legal protections and how to access trusted services.

### Language Access and Education

- 1. Budget for language services and plan for the implementation of a new required language.** City departments should receive adequate funds to plan and budget for delivering language access services, especially for the progressive implementation of Vietnamese. Additionally, departments should plan for working towards meeting compliance benchmarks for Vietnamese, including translating vital information, providing telephonic and in-person interpretation services, and updating their respective language access policies.
- 2. Provide funding for OCEIA’s Language Access Community Grants and support City and community-based language access services.** The city should not only ensure grantees continue to receive funding for the next two fiscal years to meet this demand, but should also implement strategies to overcome barriers to City services and ensure City information and programs reach all San Franciscans in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.

- 3. Recruit and retain bilingual staffing.** City departments should continue to hire and retain bilingual staffers, especially those with Vietnamese language skills. Additionally, OCEIA should receive additional funding to hire a Vietnamese language specialist who can support City departments in implementing Vietnamese language access services.
  
- 4. Provide increased financial support for ESL and foreign language programs in both SFUSD and CCSF.** Allow schools to better address the educational, cultural, and linguistic needs of San Francisco's newcomer communities by allocating funding for foreign language programs, teaching positions, translators, and interpreted materials.

# ADDRESS HOUSING IN SAN FRANCISCO

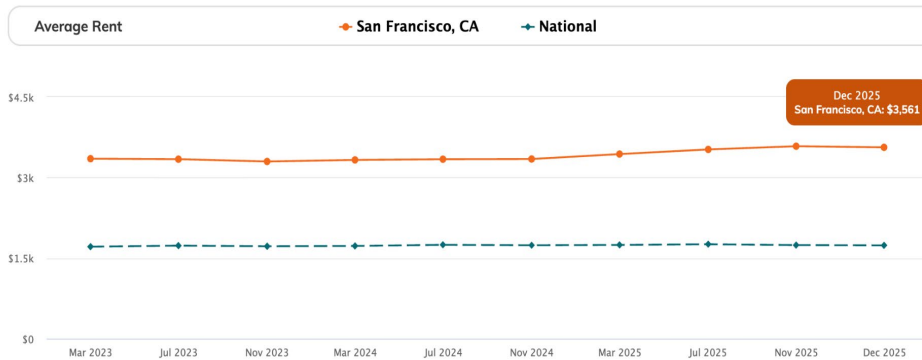
*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to accelerate the development of housing that supports low-income individuals, families, and transitional-aged youth (TAY) through targeted financial investments, equitable distribution of new units, implementation of State housing laws, and strengthened anti-displacement protections.*

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

### Background

Only 13% of San Francisco’s population is under 18 because families cannot afford to live in the City. With a median home price of \$1.39 million, San Francisco is the second-most expensive city to live in the United States.<sup>1</sup> For a majority of youth and families, home ownership is unattainable as market-rate prices continue to increase and the relative supply of housing remains roughly the same. Unable to own homes, many San Franciscans are forced to pay extremely high-priced rent

San Francisco, CA rent trends



or are eventually pushed out of the city altogether, finding homes in neighboring Bay Area cities. In San Francisco, 65% of residents are renters. The median rent price for a one-bedroom apartment is \$3,561.<sup>2</sup> Notably, the cheapest rent in San Francisco is 88% higher than the

national average. Currently, to afford rent while staying within the 30% affordability guideline, meaning an individual should spend no more than 30% of their gross monthly income on housing expenses, one must make at least \$113,000. Lack of affordability results in displacement, and in certain cases, can push individuals and families to homelessness. According to the San Francisco 2024 Youth Homelessness Point-In-Time Count, there are a total of 8,323 homeless individuals in San Francisco. Many families are at risk of becoming homeless because of the rising costs of living in the city, especially because 2-3 bedroom units can cost over \$4,500 per month. In terms of affordable housing, compared to the national standard, San Francisco should build roughly 5,000 new housing units/year, but has averaged only about 1,500/year.<sup>3</sup> Addressing this 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

<sup>1</sup> Kasia Pawlowska, “Only One US City Passes SF in This Troubling New Ranking,” SFGATE, September 3, 2025, <https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/san-francisco-most-expensive-city-bay-area-again-21029505.php>.

<sup>2</sup> Scott Budman and Faiza Ashar, “1 Bedroom Apartment Now Costs over \$3,400 to Rent in San Francisco,” *NBC Bay Area*, August 27, 2025, <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/bay-area-rent-prices-apartments-2/3939599/>.

<sup>3</sup> J. K. Dineen, “S.F. Hits 12-Year Low on Housing Production, but Is the City Set for the next Boom?,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 4, 2024, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/san-francisco-housing-goal-19946190.php>.

crisis today. Currently, San Francisco collects a Jobs-Housing Linkage fee from developers to fund affordable housing, though these funds are distributed citywide rather than targeted to neighborhoods most affected by new construction.

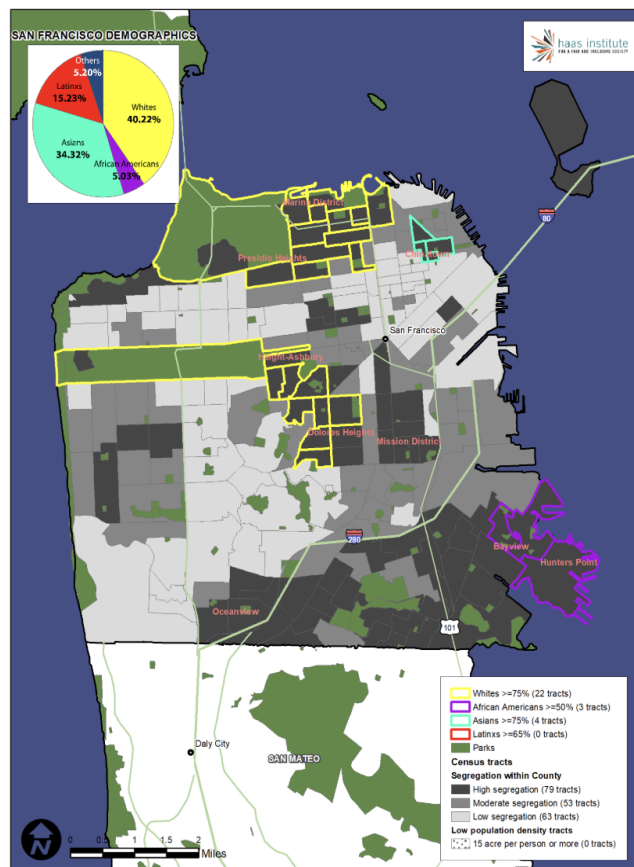
Last year, Youth MOJO collected signatures from 759 San Francisco youth about their housing priorities and found that youth want:

- “Truly affordable housing for very low-income families in our city.”
- “A voice in how city money is spent on housing.”
- After passage of the Family Zoning Plan, consideration of “what makes housing truly affordable and to prioritize deep affordability moving forward.”

### Housing Shortage, Zoning Capacity, and Development Constraints

San Francisco must plan for 82,069 new housing units by 2031 to continue receiving state funding and avoid court-ordered fines.<sup>4</sup> Expanding housing will contribute to the growth of San Francisco by protecting and drawing families to the City with lower housing costs, adding diversity to neighborhoods, revitalizing small businesses, and increasing transit ridership. With the passage of the Family Zoning Plan in December 2025, a plethora of opportunities for housing development and construction are now available. Although the plan creates housing capacity, the City must offer incentives to build units and meet the goal of 82,069 units. San Francisco must take immediate action to reverse the effects of the severe housing shortage, especially considering the extensive permitting processes and construction costs.

More than 44,000 entitled housing units remain unbuilt due to the expensive construction costs in San Francisco.<sup>5</sup> In 2022, California Senate Bill 432 eliminated the discretionary-review phase of the housing appeals process, and similar laws have made it increasingly easier to build fourplexes and tall buildings. In San Francisco, as of 2025, zero fourplexes have been completed since its passage. Only 11 applications have been submitted: 1 was canceled, 2 were stalled, 6 are under



<sup>4</sup> “A Primer on RHNA - How Much Housing Do We Need?,” SF Planning, <https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/citywide/housing-choice/RHNA-Primer.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Max Harrison-Caldwell, “The Tide Has Changed in SF’s Housing Wars,” The San Francisco Standard, June 8, 2025, <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/08/sanfrancisco-housing-wars/>.

review, and 1 was approved but later appealed under the California Environmental Quality Act.<sup>6</sup> These delays in permitting significantly increase the cost of construction. Currently, every additional year in permitting increases per-unit costs, making family units the first to be cut from affordable housing project plans.<sup>7</sup> These housing construction and execution delays continue to contribute to the growing housing shortage in San Francisco and will result in increased inaffordability and displacement of residents.

San Francisco faces a severe shortage of accessible family housing due to a decade-long production shortfall of roughly 700,000 units, resulting in high costs that price out families and encourage displacement within communities. About 85% of the city is zoned primarily for single-family homes, prohibiting the construction and development of denser, more affordable family housing in most neighborhoods. San Francisco's restrictive single-family zoning reinforces geographic, racial, and economic discrimination. In the Bay Area, white residents occupy 64% of single-family zoned areas and Asian residents 23%, while Black and Hispanic residents represent only 10%.<sup>8</sup> Along with San Francisco's zoning plan aiming to address the severe housing shortage, while complying with city zoning plan deadlines to avoid penalties or any unnecessary fees, San Francisco must speed up the process and simplify it to make it financially practical to build affordable housing that residents need, rather than stalling on huge city projects for housing development/zoning.

In 2025, the San Francisco Youth Commission voted in favor of the Family Zoning Plan to bring more families into transit-accessible neighborhoods and to increase diversity within the city. Ensuring that affordable housing initiatives and plans are actively being implemented is of significant importance to the Commission. Pushing for accelerated construction by supporting non-profit developers, specialized private firms, and public-private partnerships through government subsidies, voter bonds, and capital planning is vital to San Francisco's urbanization. In addition, it will be important that new housing is truly affordable for families with rent control and low- to middle-income housing.

## **Equitable Housing Development and Distribution**

Current affordable housing is heavily concentrated in dense areas rather than equitably distributed across the city, reflecting patterns of housing segregation and limiting access for families to high-resource neighborhoods with stronger schools, safer environments, and greater economic opportunities. Since 2015, nearly two-thirds of affordable housing projects built are concentrated in District 10 (Bayview, Potrero Hill, Visitacion Valley) and District 6 (South of Market, Mission Bay).<sup>9</sup> According to the 2020 Census, 23.5% of District 10 residents identify as Black/African American, and 17-21% identify as Hispanic/Latino, compared to San Francisco's average of 5.2% Black/African American residents and 15.6% Hispanic/Latino residents.<sup>10</sup> The highest

<sup>6</sup> Aldo Toledo, "S.F. Made It Easier Three Years Ago to Build Fourplexes. None Have Been Built as a Result," San Francisco Chronicle, April 11, 2025, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/fourplex-legislation-housing-20257151.php>.

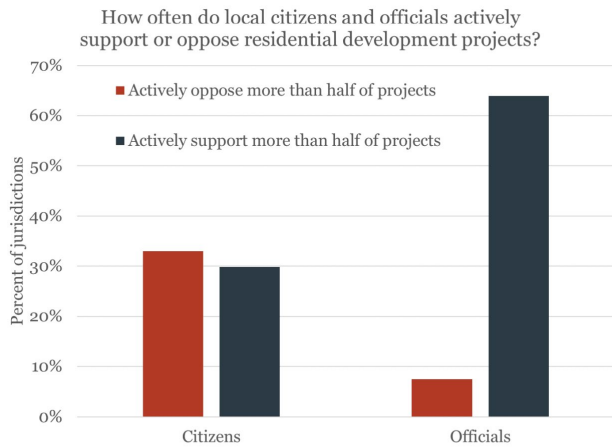
<sup>7</sup> Cameron Rifkin, "Increasing the Housing Supply by Reducing Costs and Barriers," National Conference of State Legislatures, June 7, 2024, <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/increasing-the-housing-supply-by-reducing-costs-and-barriers>.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Menedian et al., "Belonging-Racial-Segregation-San-Francisco-Bay-Area-Part-5," Othering & Belonging Institute, August 11, 2020, <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/racial-segregation-san-francisco-bay-area-part-5>.

<sup>9</sup> "Housing Element Update 2022 | SF Planning," <https://sfplanning.org/project/housing-element-update-2022>.

<sup>10</sup> David Mamaril Horowitz Jarrett Will, "2020 Census: As San Francisco Grew, the Ethnic Makeup of Its Neighborhoods Changed. Here's How.," *Mission Local*, September 27, 2021, <https://missionlocal.org/2021/09/census-2020-as-san-francisco-grew-the-ethnic-makeup-of-its-neighborhoods-changed-heres-how/>.

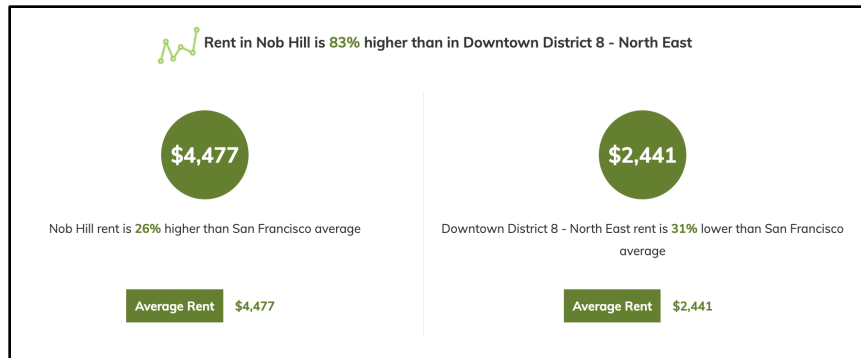
**Figure 10. Public Opposition and Support**



concentrations of Black and Hispanic residents live in Districts 6 and 10, reflecting layers of historical and current structural oppression. Additionally, the density of housing projects in certain neighborhoods significantly decreases access to equitable resources and living throughout the city. This past year, a 70-unit affordable housing project at 3333 Mission St. in Bernal Heights was delayed after residents filed an appeal. Although the project received state-level approval, opponents employed a loophole to challenge a “tentative parcel map” approval issued by the Department of Public Works in November 2025. The appeal stalled the

project for nearly three months and caused “tens of thousands of unplanned expenses” while jeopardizing crucial funding.<sup>11</sup> Primarily, high-income neighborhoods have seen comparatively less affordable housing development, especially with legal loopholes and struggles such as these.

In response to these inequities, San Francisco’s Jobs-Housing Linkage Program<sup>12</sup> requires developers to pay a fee when building or expanding commercial spaces, with funds that are intended to support affordable housing for low-income/moderate-income residents. However, currently these funds are



centralized citywide and distributed through the city’s annual priorities, often bypassing the neighborhoods where construction specifically occurred. Instead, funds should be geographically prioritized to benefit neighborhoods affected by construction to ensure that long-standing

residents, who are at the highest risk of displacement, are primary beneficiaries. This prevents displacement by stabilizing housing costs around new developments, ensuring that as neighborhoods grow, the original community can afford to stay.

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges increasing diversity in neighborhoods, particularly in high-resourced and low-density communities, to undo the historical effects of housing segregation on San Francisco youth. Addressing procedural delays, improving financial feasibility,

<sup>11</sup> Adam Brinklow, “How To Delay Affordable Senior Housing in SF, Despite a Law That Blocks Appeals,” *The Frisc*, January 30, 2026, <https://thefrisc.com/how-to-delay-affordable-senior-housing-in-sf-despite-a-law-that-blocks-appeals/>.

<sup>12</sup> “Increasing the Jobs-Housing Linkage Fee: Economic Impact Report,” SF Controller, October 21, 2019, [https://sfcontroller.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Economic%20Analysis/190548\\_Economic%20Impact\\_final.pdf](https://sfcontroller.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Economic%20Analysis/190548_Economic%20Impact_final.pdf).

and ensuring equitable geographic distribution of housing are essential in solving the impending housing crisis.

## **Financing and Investing in Housing Infrastructure**

The primary barrier to affordable housing development in San Francisco is financing, considering the construction costs, high interest rates, and fragmented funding sourcing, making many proposed projects unfeasible. In order to meet affordable housing targets by 2031, the City will need approximately \$19 billion in funding, aiming for \$517 million per year.<sup>13</sup>

Created through a 2024 charter amendment and associated with Proposition G on the November 5, 2024, ballot, the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund targets extremely low-income seniors, families, and people with disabilities.<sup>14</sup> Administered through the Mayor’s Office of Housing & Community Development (MOHCD), this fund allows for the accumulation of various funding sources, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits and regional housing funds, creating “gap funding.” Expanding this fund would allow San Francisco to maximize external funding opportunities, in addition to the housing bonds that allow for this infrastructure to be built.<sup>15</sup> Dedicated funding through this program would support housing stability for low-income families and transitional-aged youth (TAY), while ensuring projects remain financially viable.

## **Tech & AI Influence**

While San Francisco has always been an expensive city, in recent years, the growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly reshaped the tech industry and subsequently increased housing demand. AI-skilled tech workers have increased by more than 50% between 2024 and 2025<sup>16</sup>, driving increased housing unaffordability with the surge of high-income tech employees living in the City. Many companies, such as Google, Microsoft, and Salesforce, have started incorporating AI, reinforcing the city's rapid growth in technology workers. Reports show the AI tech workers in San Francisco earn well above the median household income: an average salary is in the low to mid \$200,000s, with high-paying roles paying \$300,000+ annually<sup>17</sup>. As a result, areas of San Francisco have experienced year-over-year growth of approximately 13.3% per apartment. By January 2026, the city’s median rent was \$3,160 for one-bedroom apartments and \$3741<sup>18</sup> for two-bedroom apartments, reflecting San Francisco’s housing crisis. Much of the recent growth in AI-related employment consists of high-income workers who are less likely to have families, shifting housing demand toward smaller, high-cost units rather than family-sized housing. This imbalance disadvantages families, as the housing market increasingly prioritizes high earners over long-term

<sup>13</sup> “Housing Affordability Strategies | SF Planning,” SF Planning, <https://sfplanning.org/housing-affordability-strategy>.

<sup>14</sup> “San Francisco Prop G - Affordable Housing | SPUR,” October 8, 2024, <https://www.spur.org/voter-guide/2024-11/sf-prop-g-affordable-housing>.

<sup>15</sup> “Final Digest - Funding Rental Subsidies for Affordable Housing Developments Serving Low Income Seniors, Families, and Persons with Disabilities,” SF.Gov, July 26, 2024, <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/Final%20Digest%20-%20Funding%20Rental%20Subsidies%20for%20Affordable%20Housing%20Developments%20Serving%20Low%20Income%20Seniors%20C%20Families%20and%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Diana Olick, “AI Tech Talent Is Juicing These Real Estate Markets,” CNBC, September 9, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/09/09/ai-tech-talent-real-estate-markets.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Chase DiFelicianantonio, “How Well Do AI Jobs Pay in San Francisco? The Answer May Surprise You,” San Francisco Chronicle, March 7, 2024, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/ai-pay-job-salary-18694629.php>.

<sup>18</sup> Kasia Pawlowska, “San Francisco Rents Surge at Fastest Pace in the Nation,” SFGATE, January 30, 2026, <https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/san-francisco-rent-surge-21322840.php>.

residents with children. This pushes families with children out of San Francisco, leading to frequent relocations that disrupt youth stability and educational continuity.<sup>19</sup>

Much of recent housing development has been concentrated in urban, tech-influenced areas, such as South of Market (Soma) and Mission Bay, close to jobs and transit. In neighborhoods like Soma, which has been historically home to low-income immigrant families that are predominantly Filipino, rising rent and redevelopment pressures have caused significant housing displacement for long-standing residents. While Mission Bay has largely developed residential areas, the concentration of high-income housing has caused neighboring communities to be affected by unaffordability. Rising housing costs have not only affected affordability but also racial diversity in San Francisco. Underrepresented groups like Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color now make up 5.1% of San Francisco's population<sup>20</sup>, down by 8.2% since the 2000s. This reflects San Francisco's broader changes connected with housing cost pressures and displacement patterns in places that used to be affordable, but have seen rising rent and property value, and constant development as tech workers increase the demand for housing.

## Rent Control

San Francisco has become one of the most expensive cities to live in, and young people feel this pressure the most. Students, service workers, and other young professionals are all trying to build their futures here. One of the main reasons this is possible is because of rent control. 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>21</sup> Any units (excluding most single-family homes) built before the passage of the Rent Ordinance are protected with rent control.<sup>22</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. That means thousands of young renters are protected from sudden, extreme rent increases. For rent-controlled units, the allowable rent increase amount was set at 1.6%<sup>23</sup> annual increase in effect from March 1st, 2026, through February 28, 2027. 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>24</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. Additionally, San Francisco's Rent Ordinance includes Just Cause eviction protections, which prevent landlords from evicting tenants without legally recognized reasoning and have reduced the possibility of displacement; for example, the total eviction filings with the rent board decreased 41% from 1171 to 695 filings between the years of 2023-2024.<sup>25</sup> This is especially important to young people who may not have savings or family support if sudden housing displacement occurs. 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

<sup>19</sup> Sophia Rerucha, "AI Is Pushing S.F. Rents Higher and Higher. Here's How Tenants Are Dealing.," Mission Local, February 24, 2026, <https://missionlocal.org/2026/02/san-francisco-rents-ai-boom-tenants/>.

<sup>20</sup> "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: San Francisco City, California," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanfranciscocitycalifornia/PST040225>.

<sup>21</sup> Roland Li, "Mayor Lurie Launches Initiative to Speed up S.F.'s Slow Permitting Process," San Francisco Chronicle, February 13, 2025, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/sf-permits-lurie-20165597.php>.

<sup>22</sup> "Rent Control," San Francisco Tenants Union, <https://sfu.org/rent-control/>.

<sup>23</sup> "Annual Rent Increase for 3/1/26 - 2/28/27 Announced," SF.Gov, January 14, 2026, <https://www.sf.gov/news--annual-rent-increase-3126-22827-announced>.

<sup>24</sup> "Learn about San Francisco Rental Laws," SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/learn-about-san-francisco-rental-laws>.

<sup>25</sup> San Francisco Rent Board, *Rent Board Annual Statistical Report FY2023-2024* (n.d.), [https://media.api.sfgov.com/documents/Rent\\_Board\\_Annual\\_Statistical\\_Report\\_FY2023-2024-Web\\_Final.pdf](https://media.api.sfgov.com/documents/Rent_Board_Annual_Statistical_Report_FY2023-2024-Web_Final.pdf).

2023 housing ordinance passed with amendments from Supervisor Rafael Mandelmann protecting rent-controlled units from being demolished and replaced with market-rate units.<sup>26</sup> In San Francisco, 21,630 low-income renter households still lack access to an affordable home, the 60% of extremely low-income (ELI) households are severely rent burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing; only 1% of moderate-income households face similar stress. In addition, renters' wage requirements in San Francisco to afford the median rent continue to remain extremely high; recent estimates place the needed hourly wage at about \$70.98 per hour, roughly 3.8 times the city's minimum wage, to afford the average rental prices of \$3691.<sup>27</sup> Given these challenges, it's important to protect policies such as rent control that enable thousands of residents to live in San Francisco without it being a financial burden. As housing costs continue to rise and income inequality persists, rent control remains one of San Francisco's most effective tools for preventing displacement and expanding cultural diversity in neighborhoods. Protecting and strengthening these policies will be essential if young people are the future of San Francisco so it remains a city where working families, not just the wealthy, can afford to live.

## Recommendations

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

- 1. Accelerate affordable housing construction projects** through the Family Zoning Plan:
  - a. Expand subsidy & grant support for construction projects that include family unit housing, especially prioritizing multifamily housing units (2+ rooms; multifamily properties).
- 2. Expand General Fund and Housing bonds to reach infrastructure goals**
  - a. Establish permanent revenue sources for AHOF (luxury property taxes, vacancy taxes, housing bonds, etc.).
  - b. Expand the use and qualifications for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.
  - c. Invest additional General Fund resources into MOHCD programs.
- 3. Create geographic & anti-discrimination zoning and construction requirements**
  - a. Require a portion of new affordable housing to be located in high-resource neighborhoods.
  - b. Audit zoning practices for discriminatory impacts.
- 4. Housing Impact Mitigation Fee**
  - a. Funds should be geographically prioritized, which are directly impacted by new construction, ensuring that these communities are the primary beneficiaries.
  - b. Funds should not be gathered into the general city budget or annual priorities unrelated to the affected community.
  - c. Funds should be used for local neighborhood projects that address displacement pressures, rising rents, and provide tenant protections and housing assistance.
  - d. Funds should serve as a way to give back to communities for the social and economic harm caused by new development, ensuring that residents benefit from growth rather than being pushed out.

<sup>26</sup> J. K. Dineen, "Faced with 'Builder's Remedy' Threat, S.F. Supes Advance Housing Development Legislation," San Francisco Chronicle, November 28, 2023, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/s-f-builder-s-remedy-housing-legislation-18517453.php>.

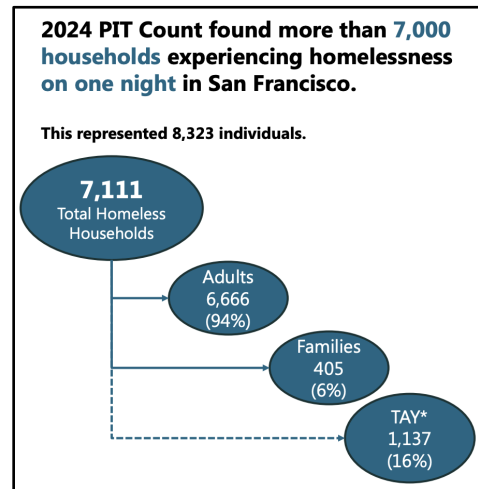
<sup>27</sup> "San Francisco County 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report," California Housing Partnership, May 2025, [https://calhousingpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/San-Francisco\\_Housing\\_Report\\_fixed.pdf](https://calhousingpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/San-Francisco_Housing_Report_fixed.pdf).

## REDUCE YOUTH & TRANSITIONAL-AGED YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

*The Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to invest in youth housing options in safe neighborhoods outside the Tenderloin that are close to public transit and colleges, create a youth-specific housing assessment and placement process, protect funding for high-impact Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that provide resources for homeless youth, expand collaboration between public and private organizations to create a coordinated support system, and expand youth outreach to ensure access to information about resources for unhoused youth.*

### Background

Youth and transitional-aged youth (TAY) represent 19% (4,434 individuals) of the total unhoused population in San Francisco (23,561 individuals).<sup>1</sup> On a given night in the City, 7,000 households including 405 youth and 1,137 TAY experience homelessness, according to the 2024 Point-In-Time Count. The homeless crisis in San Francisco is deepening: between 2022-2024, homelessness increased by 7%. For every individual that exits homelessness, approximately three more become homeless. Critically, family homelessness grew by 82% and TAY homelessness by 11% during this two-year time period. With emergency shelter and transitional housing beds available for just 50% of people in need (4,440 total beds), the City must pursue immediate and innovative steps to address this crisis.<sup>2</sup> The San Francisco Youth Commission has consistently advocated for youth and TAY housing resources in each annual budget and policy priority report. Youth need youth-specific housing intake assessments, rapid rehousing, wraparound resources, and long-term stabilization plans.<sup>3</sup>



Addressing youth homelessness is key to reducing the City’s homelessness crisis in the long-term as 50% of homeless adults first became unhoused under the age of 25.<sup>4</sup> Reducing youth homelessness, and ultimately homelessness overall, could have major positive impacts on the City given San Francisco spends \$1 billion on homeless resources each year.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, 44% of drug overdose calls come from unhoused people, expending City resources and tragically resulting in deaths.<sup>6</sup> In addition, 4.2% of SFUSD students experience homelessness.<sup>7</sup> These youth are 8-9x

<sup>1</sup> City and County of San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, *Home by the Bay: An Equity-Driven Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in San Francisco (2023-2028) Youth Addendum Report* (2025), [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/HBTB\\_Youth\\_Addendum\\_FINAL\\_11.21.25.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/HBTB_Youth_Addendum_FINAL_11.21.25.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment,” December 10, 2025, [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2025\\_Homelessness\\_Needs\\_Assessment.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2025_Homelessness_Needs_Assessment.pdf).

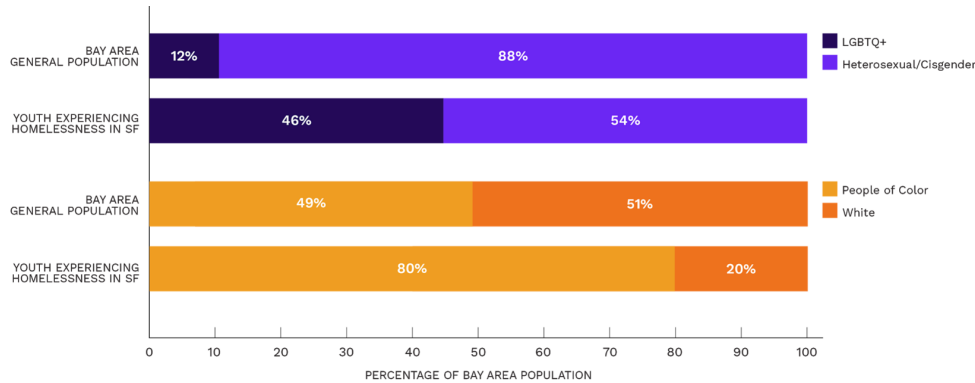
<sup>3</sup> “2023 Larkin Street Policy Brief - Larkin Street Youth Services – Ending Youth Homelessness,” Larkin Street, June 8, 2023, <https://larkinstreetyouth.org/2023-larkin-street-policy-brief/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report* (2024), <https://risingupsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rising-Up-Report-January-2024.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Lee Ohanian, “Despite Spending \$1.1 Billion, San Francisco Sees Its Homelessness Problems Spiral Out Of Control,” Hoover Institution, May 10, 2022, <https://www.hoover.org/research/despite-spending-1-1-billion-san-francisco-sees-its-homelessness-problems-spiral-out>.

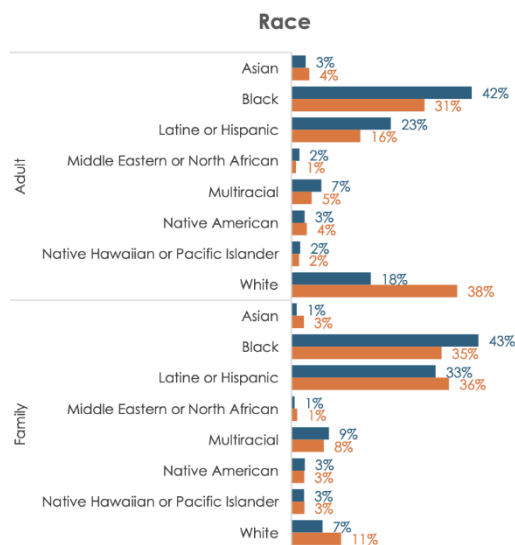
<sup>6</sup> Larkin Street, “2023 Larkin Street Policy Brief - Larkin Street Youth Services – Ending Youth Homelessness.”

<sup>7</sup> Larkin Street, “2023 Larkin Street Policy Brief - Larkin Street Youth Services – Ending Youth Homelessness.”



Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report.

Homelessness is driven by systemic issues, including transphobia, homophobia, racism, economic inequality, and barriers to employment, education, and healthcare access. As a result, homeless youth are disproportionately black, multiracial, LGBTQ+, female, have a disabling physical or mental health condition, and/or have been a foster youth or involved in the juvenile justice system.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, homeless youth are twice as likely to have asthma, infections, and other chronic illnesses.<sup>10</sup> Resources for homeless youth must be tailored to the specific and diverse needs of this population.



Incomplete for 2% of clients

City and County of San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Home by the Bay: An Equity-Driven Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in San Francisco (2023-2028) Youth Addendum Report.

Key:

Orange = unoused youth and TAY  
Blue = all other unoused individuals

more likely to repeat a grade and 4x more likely to drop out of school entirely.<sup>8</sup>

Reducing youth homelessness can improve the City’s budget deficit, drug crisis, and school system.

Barriers to permanent stable housing include limited availability of permanent housing options, long waiting lists, ineligibility due to lack of income, newcomer status, criminal background, lack of childcare, substance use, mental health disorders, chronic health conditions, high housing costs, and domestic violence.<sup>11</sup> Multiple compounding issues contribute to homelessness, and therefore addressing homelessness requires comprehensive, wraparound services.

### Unoused Families

Unoused families represent 6% of the City’s unoused population.<sup>12</sup> While the City provides 1,009 temporary family housing beds and 5,188 permanent family housing beds, over 300 families remained on the shelter waiting list in 2024.<sup>13</sup>

Unoused families are more likely to be Black

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sf.gov/mayor-lurie-launches-innovative-program-to-prevent-family-homelessness>.

<sup>9</sup> Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report.

<sup>10</sup> “Mayor Lurie Launches Innovative Program to Prevent Family Homelessness,” SF.Gov, March 4, 2025, <https://www.sf.gov/mayor-lurie-launches-innovative-program-to-prevent-family-homelessness>.

<sup>11</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>13</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>14</sup> SF.Gov, “Mayor Lurie Launches Innovative Program to Prevent Family Homelessness.”

(40%) or Hispanic/Latine (28%) with parents ages 18-34, 85% female, and often survivors of domestic violence.<sup>15</sup>

Mayor Lurie launched the Family Homelessness Prevention Pilot between January 2025-June 2026. The initiative partners with Tipping Point Community to invest \$11 million to financially support 1,500 families and offer employment support, legal services, and other safety-net resources to help families stay housed. It also aims to increase coordination and collaboration between homeless service providers and CBOs that provide employment, childcare, etc. If successful, the program will be scaled to reach more families.<sup>16</sup>



## Unhoused TAY

TAY represent 16% of the City’s unhoused population.<sup>17</sup> Homeless TAY are most likely to be LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and/or have a physical or mental health condition. TAY-dedicated emergency shelter and transitional housing beds represent 6% of the 4,844 total temporary housing beds provided by the City and 4% of the 19,738 permanent housing beds in the homelessness response system.<sup>18</sup> In total, the City provided 315 temporary youth housing beds and 847 permanent youth housing beds in 2024.<sup>19</sup> The main youth access point is the Transitional Age Youth Navigation Center located at 700 Hyde Street. It offers a range of services tailored to youth including medical and mental health services, workforce development support, and paid career training opportunities. According to the center’s 2023 report, they have served 1,825 youth, with 600 placed in affordable housing.<sup>20</sup>

Many CBOs provide critical services for homeless TAY. Larkin Street Youth Services has supported 80,000 young people, offering the Lark Inn for Youth and Diamond Youth Shelter with showers, meals, hygiene supplies, computer/web access, housing intake and problem solving, education and employment programs, medical care, case management, counseling, and youth

<sup>15</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>16</sup> SF.Gov, “Mayor Lurie Launches Innovative Program to Prevent Family Homelessness.”

<sup>17</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>18</sup> City and County of San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, *Home by the Bay: An Equity-Driven Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in San Francisco (2023-2028) Youth Addendum Report*.

<sup>19</sup> Office of the Controller, City Performance, “2025 Homelessness Needs Assessment.”

<sup>20</sup> 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, “Expanding Horizons Annual Report FY2022-2023,” in *Canva*, n.d., <https://www.canva.com/design/DAGCI-W2Xno/mmC5U7-sEQHJszDCK3g9XQ/view>.

leadership programs.<sup>21</sup> Other CBOs include the 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, Homeless Youth Alliance, Huckleberry Youth Programs, LYRIC SF, Castro Youth Housing Initiative, Assisted Care/Aftercare, and LEASE. Many of these organizations' programs rely on funding from the City, including the Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families.

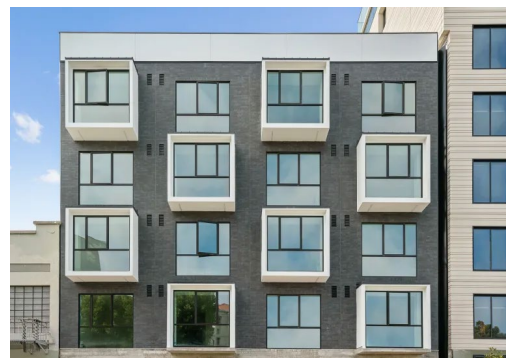


*" Larkin Street Youth Services | Dropbox Foundation. "*

In January 2019, Mayor Breed launched Rising Up, a \$50 million initiative to cut the population of homeless youth in half by 2023. The initiative is a public-private partnership between the Department of Homelessness and CBOs. Rising Up provided young people with a \$27,000 rent subsidy for three years, support to find a home, move-in assistance, job-finding and education support, and access to health services.<sup>22</sup> The program successfully rehoused 92% of participants, resolving homelessness for 228 youth through problem-solving and securing housing for 450 youth. A critical component of the program's success was the integration of multiple organizations and their specialized resources.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, youth faced long wait times (an average of 60 days between referral and housing application and an average of 125 days between housing application and receipt of housing assistance), low-funded program staff, and high housing costs that led to subsidies lasting less than three years and rehousing of 75% of youth outside the City.<sup>24</sup>

In August 2023, the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and Google launched the Trust Youth Initiative, a two-year pilot program to help unhoused young people ages 19-24. It provided monthly \$1,500 payments to youth, enabling 8 out of 10 participants to find permanent housing and improve their mental health.<sup>25</sup>



*42 Otis Street, image via Vanguard Properties*

The City is currently implementing Home by the Bay, a plan to prevent and end homelessness in San Francisco between 2023-2028.<sup>26</sup> In addition, this November, Mayor Lurie announced the opening of 24 studio apartments at 42 Otis Street for young people exiting homelessness.<sup>27</sup> It will be important that these initiatives reach out to youth of different demographics and receive feedback from youth through listening sessions and surveys.

<sup>21</sup> "Welcome - Larkin Street Youth Services – Ending Youth Homelessness," Larkin Street, January 23, 2026, <https://larkinstreetyouth.org/>.

<sup>22</sup> *Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report*.

<sup>23</sup> Pear Moraras et al., *Evaluation of Rising Up*, November 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Pear Moraras et al., *Evaluation of Rising Up*, November 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Natalia Gurevich, *Homeless SF Youths Say Cash-Assistance Program 'a Lifesaver'*, January 6, 2026, [https://www.sfoxaminer.com/news/the-city/sf-homeless-cash-assistance-larkin-street-youth-services/article\\_21d18792-202d-4bd4-b2a6-690227de03aa.html](https://www.sfoxaminer.com/news/the-city/sf-homeless-cash-assistance-larkin-street-youth-services/article_21d18792-202d-4bd4-b2a6-690227de03aa.html).

<sup>26</sup> City and County of San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, *Home by the Bay: An Equity-Driven Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in San Francisco (2023-2028) Youth Addendum Report*.

<sup>27</sup> "Mayor Lurie Announces Opening of Housing for Young People Exiting Homelessness," SF.Gov, November 5, 2025, <https://www.sf.gov/news-mayor-lurie-announces-opening-of-housing-for-young-people-exiting-homelessness>.

## Housing Intake Process

There are currently two forms of housing assessment in San Francisco: the family housing assessment and adult/young adult assessment.<sup>28</sup> The latter combines both adults and

### 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	

*Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, "San Francisco ONE System: Adult/Youth Primary CE Assessment."*

young adults, even though these populations need distinct resources. Moreover, the form includes questions such as: "how long have you been homeless?", "how many times in the past three years have you lived in a shelter, outdoors, in a vehicle, or other place not meant for people to live?", "How long in total have you lived in an emergency shelter or place not meant for people to sleep, including today?" These questions place younger people at a disadvantage because they have been homeless for a shorter period than adults, even though youth are at a critical point in their lives when rapid rehousing can prevent years of future homelessness.<sup>29</sup> After completing the intake process, respondents commonly waited 1-3 months or over 1 year to move into housing. Also, the majority of respondents said they did not receive a problem-solving conversation and/or were not listened to.

Lastly, outreach to diverse youth is the first step to accessing housing resources. Youth aged 18-29 are about one-third less likely to know where to go for help when unhoused than other age groups. As a result, it is important that outreach targets youth, for example, translating materials and locating information in third spaces where youth convene.<sup>30</sup>

## Recommendations

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

### Short-Term

- 1. Invest in housing for youth** in a range of neighborhoods outside of the Tenderloin, including but not limited to the Haight and Mission, in neighborhoods that are close to public transit and colleges.
- 2. Create a youth-specific housing assessment and placement process** that does not compare a youth's duration of homelessness to an adult's duration of homelessness. Build geography and age preference into housing assessments to ensure youth are placed in neighborhoods and housing communities that meet their needs.

<sup>28</sup> "Coordinated Entry," SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/resource--2024--coordinated-entry..>

<sup>29</sup> "San Francisco ONE System: Adult/Youth Primary CE Assessment," Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Adult\\_CE\\_Housing\\_Primary\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_Updated\\_3.2025.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Adult_CE_Housing_Primary_Assessment_Final_Updated_3.2025.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/San-Francisco-Coordinated-Entry-System-Evaluation-Qualitative-Findings.pdf>.

3. **Protect funding for CBOs** with demonstrated high impact that provide vital resources for unhoused youth to ensure they can continue running full programs and sustaining staff.
4. **Building on the success of Rising Up**, expand collaboration between public and private organizations to create a coordinated support system. Integrate the resources that different organizations offer, including workforce development opportunities, mental health resources, financial literacy, and tenancy education.
5. **Expand outreach to youth, especially newcomer youth**, to ensure equitable access to information about the resources available to them (e.g., through billboards and Muni/BART advertisements).

### **Long-Term**

1. **Expand the diversity of TAY housing options**, especially by designating more housing communities for specific demographics of youth (e.g., newcomer or LGBTQ+ TAY housing).
2. **Reduce wait times** between housing intake, application, and placement and **establish a three-month maximum wait time before youth can reapply for housing** because of the urgency of restabilizing youth and because their interim housing situations can often be unstable and change quickly.

# EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES IN SFUSD AND SAN FRANCISCO

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to create more mental health initiatives in San Francisco and in SFUSD schools.*

## Background

Over the last several years, children and adolescents aged 5 to 14 have experienced a sharp incline in worsening mental health challenges. Contributing factors include the lasting impact of COVID-19, academic pressure, increased social media use, and limited access to early mental health intervention<sup>1</sup>. As further evidence of the effects of COVID-19, a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine on nearly 600 young people found high levels of clinical depression (48%), anxiety (51%), and loneliness among participants.<sup>2</sup> In short, although the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, its effects on youths' psychological and emotional well-being have not. Similarly, the growing consumption of social media is reported to be significantly associated with increased depression among young adults. As seen in a study piloted by the National Institute of Mental Health, participants with the highest daily social media use had 1.66 times higher odds of depression compared to those with the lowest usage.<sup>3</sup> As a result of these factors, several elementary and middle school students are navigating anxiety, depression, and emotional distress without consistent support. The lack of early intervention from both families and schools allows challenges to escalate into larger problems, resulting in crisis-level needs during adolescence.<sup>4</sup>

## SFUSD Intervention

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) serves 122 schools, comprising 64 elementary, 13 middle, and 14 high schools.<sup>5</sup> School counselors, social workers, and Coordinated Care Teams (CCTs) collaborate to identify student needs by providing mental health support, addressing basic needs, and fostering safe, equitable school environments. Thirty-five SFUSD campuses provide wellness centers that offer counseling, crisis intervention, and health education directly on campus.<sup>6</sup>

However, access to resources is uneven. San Francisco Wellness Centers operate in 35 of SFUSD's 112 schools, primarily serving high school and middle school students. The Wellness program helps youth strengthen their ability to cope with and respond to challenges such as stress, trauma, suicide, bullying, depression, self-esteem struggles, substance use, and sexual health and

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health by the Numbers, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 2026, <https://www.nami.org/mental-health-by-the-numbers>

<sup>2</sup> Bell IH, Nicholas J, Broomhall A, Bailey E, Bendall S, Boland A, Robinson J, Adams S, McGorry P, Thompson A. The impact of COVID-19 on youth mental health: A mixed methods survey. *Psychiatry Res.* 2023 Mar;321:115082. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2023.115082. Epub 2023 Jan 28. PMID: 36738592; PMCID: PMC9883078.

<sup>3</sup> Lin LY, Sidani JE, Shensa A, et al. Association between social media use and depression among U.S. young adults. *Depress Anxiety.* 2016;33(4):323–331. doi:10.1002/da.22466.

<sup>4</sup> O'Reilly et al., "School Engagement and Early Identification of Mental Health Difficulties in Adolescents," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 12 (2021): 690917, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.690917>.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, Facts about SFUSD at a Glance (last updated February 19, 2025), <https://www.sfusd.edu/about-sfusd/facts-about-sfusd-glance>.

<sup>6</sup> "SF Wellness Programs," SFUSD, [https://www.sfusd.edu/services/health-wellness/sfwellness-initiative#:~:text=The%20San%20Unified%20School%20District%20\(SFUSD\),their%20overall%20health%2C%20well%2Dbeing%2C%20and%20academic%20successstrengthen](https://www.sfusd.edu/services/health-wellness/sfwellness-initiative#:~:text=The%20San%20Unified%20School%20District%20(SFUSD),their%20overall%20health%2C%20well%2Dbeing%2C%20and%20academic%20successstrengthen).

relationship concerns.<sup>7</sup> Since the implementation of this program, an additional 38,000 services have been provided to middle school students.<sup>8</sup> Despite this measured increase being significant, thousands of students from ages 5 to 11 continue to attend school without this comprehensive, on-site mental health support. This disparity is evident, excluding elementary-level students, despite this being a critical period of development.

Concerns about access are further intensified by SFUSD's recent staffing proposal, which initially suggested cutting 45 of the district's 99 school-site social workers.<sup>9</sup> Although funding was ultimately secured for the 2026-27 school year to prevent those cuts, the proposal highlights the ongoing strain on school counselors and mental health staff. Even without the reductions being implemented, limited staffing resources mean that existing counselors are stretched thin, making it difficult to provide consistent early-intervention support.

In the United States, 50% of all mental health disorders show their first signs by the age of 14 years old. The consequences of unmet mental health needs are severe, and reducing or straining school-based mental health services poses significant long-term risks.<sup>10</sup>

### **Effects of the SFDPH Cuts on Mental Health Services**

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is the City's agency responsible for protecting and promoting the health of all San Francisco residents.<sup>11</sup> As of February 2026, SFDPH is moving forward with more than \$17 million in proposed cuts to community-based organizations' contracts.<sup>12</sup> These cuts are disproportionately affecting underserved communities, including those supported by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Francisco.<sup>13</sup>

Notably, NAMI SF's programs have been eliminated.<sup>14</sup> NAMI SF focused on expanding mental health access and cultivating peer leadership in the African American community through support groups, faith centers, and affordable housing sites.<sup>15</sup> These culturally responsive, peer-led services reached individuals who face significant barriers to traditional behavioral health care.<sup>16</sup> Their elimination threatens to deepen existing mental health disparities and undermine efforts to create equitable mental health support in San Francisco.

The proposed cuts to SFDPH extend beyond their impact on NAMI and directly affect students within SFUSD. SFUSD's Wellness Program is the only school-based program for adolescent health. It operates in partnership with SFDPH, DCYF, and SFUSD private donors. By using funding from each agency, the program addresses student mental health needs through a citywide

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Unified School District. "SFUSD Wellness Initiative." SFUSD Health & Wellness. <https://www.sfusd.edu/services/health-wellness/sfwellness-initiative>

<sup>8</sup> Nam, Sooji. "Student wellness centers at San Francisco middle schools at risk of closing." CBS San Francisco, December 17, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Weiss, Bari. "SFUSD Social Workers Targeted for Deep Cuts." San Francisco Standard, December 15, 2025. <https://sfstandard.com/2025/12/15/sfusd-social-workers-school-cuts/>

<sup>10</sup> "Mental Health in Schools," National Alliance on Mental Illness, last modified April 8, 2021, <https://www.nami.org/advocacy-at-nami/policy-positions/imtaken-the-proving-health/mental-health-in-schools/#:~:text=How%20We%20Talk%20About%20It,get%20the%20help%20they%20need>

<sup>11</sup> "Department of Public Health," SF.gov, <https://www.sf.gov/departments--department-public-health>.

<sup>12</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "SF Department of Public Health Moves Forward on \$17 Million in Budget Cuts Primed to Devastate LGBTQ+, African American, and Chinese Communities Health Equity and Economic Recovery," San Francisco AIDS Foundation, last modified February 2, 2026, <https://www.sfaf.org/collections/breaking-news/sf-department-of-public-health-moves-forward-on-17-million-in-budget-cuts-primed-to-devastate-lgbtq-african-american-and-chinese-communities-health-equity-and-economic-recovery/>.

<sup>13</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "SF Department," San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

<sup>14</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "SF Department," San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

<sup>15</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "SF Department," San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

<sup>16</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "SF Department," San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

approach rather than placing the troubles solely on schools.<sup>17</sup> However, reductions in SFDPH's budget threaten the stability of this partnership. Cuts to public health funding limit the availability of on-campus counselors and preventative mental health support. As a result, SFUSD students face reduced access to the mental support that they need and experience longer wait times when seeking it out.

## **Global Approaches to Addressing Mental Health**

Many countries around the world have taken the initiative to address adolescent mental health issues as health concerns and have launched campaigns and coalitions in countries such as Australia, Denmark, and the United Kingdom to raise awareness.<sup>18</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>19</sup> Examples include:

- Japan passed an important piece of legislation this year: the 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.
- 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 European Union has launched a five-point plan to tackle mental illness, which it says currently affects one in ten people in Europe.<sup>20</sup>
- 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>21</sup>

## **Recommendations:**

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

### **1. Recommend the following budget priorities to SFUSD:**

- a. Strengthen and Expand the Wellness Programs** – SFUSD should prioritize strengthening and expanding its internal wellness infrastructure by securing stable, multi-year funding to protect school-site social workers, counselors, and Wellness Center staff from recurring budget threats. The district should also expand Wellness Centers to more elementary campuses, recognizing that early intervention during ages 5–11 is critical for long-term mental health outcomes. Strengthening infrastructure means improving staff-to-student ratios, reducing counselor caseloads, and ensuring each school has consistent access to trained mental health professionals.

<sup>17</sup> "SF Wellness," SFUSD.

<sup>18</sup> Novotney, A. American Psychology Association.

<sup>19</sup> Novotney, A. American Psychology Association.

<sup>20</sup> Watson R. EU launches plan to tackle mental illness and reduce number of suicides. *BMJ*. 2008 Jun 21;336(7658):1394. doi: 10.1136/bmj.a381. PMID: PMC2432147.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Cann, "How Communities Around The World Are Connecting Social Isolation and Health," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, last modified December 6, 2023.

- b. Maintain current CBO/City partnerships with SFUSD** – San Francisco should strengthen partnerships between CBOs and SFUSD to better support students academically, socially, and mentally. Many CBO’s host events, workshops, and youth development programs to bring communities together, providing connections among youth. To make partnerships sustainable, the Mayor and Board of Supervisors should increase funding to CBO’s, particularly organizations that provide mental health services and crisis support. Groups such as NAMI San Francisco play a critical role in offering mental health support that would complement the school - based services SFUSD offers.
- 2. Model SF’s Response(s) on Successes 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 adolescent mental health issues, especially those around preventing the spread of social isolation, which has been a mental health issue for many adolescents after COVID - 19.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Protect SF Department of Health’s Funding for Mental Health Services** – City leaders should prioritize restoring and safeguarding SFDPH funding to ensure continued access to critical mental health services, particularly for underserved communities. This includes reinstating contracts with organizations like NAMI San Francisco, whose peer-led, culturally responsive programs provide essential support to populations facing barriers to traditional behavioral health care. Protecting this funding will help reduce mental health disparities, sustain community-based prevention and intervention programs, and ensure that all residents have equitable access to supportive, culturally informed mental health resources.

## **EXPAND PROTECTED BIKE LANES, PEDESTRIANIZATION, AND PROTECT MUNI PROGRAMS TO ENSURE YOUTH STREET SAFETY**

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to allocate funds for the protection of bike lanes to create a safe citywide network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to prevent injuries to bikers and promote transportation mobility for youth, and to consider the pedestrianization of Valencia Street. The Commission also urges the expansion of No Turn on Red infrastructure, the continued monitoring of speed limits in high-injury networks, and the maintenance of the slow streets program to reduce the number of street-related injuries and deaths and promote outdoor recreation and safety. Lastly, the Commission urges for the protection of funding for youth-related safety programs, improve conditions at Muni stops and stations, and ensure reliable services for youth riders.*

### **PROTECTED BIKES LANES**

#### **Background**

Transportation by bike in San Francisco too often feels dangerous. For many San Franciscan youth, biking is the most affordable and sustainable way to get to school, work, and see friends, but it only works if bike lanes and bikers are protected. The ability to move safely, no matter the type of transportation, is crucial to having a functioning and thriving city. As youth bicycle usage continues to rise, ensuring safety becomes even more urgent. Between 2024 and 2025, it was reported that youth bicycle usage in the United States increased from 49% to 56%, a stark difference from its historical decline since a study in 2018.<sup>1</sup> With more young people choosing to bike, it's crucial that safety measures are implemented to preserve this trend and protect the mobility, health, and environmental benefits that biking provides.

However, when biking is unsafe, it becomes inaccessible to youth. SFMTA reports that between 2020 and 2024, there were over 2,100 bicycle injuries in San Francisco, or over 500 per year.<sup>2</sup> This number does not include fatalities. These injuries represent not just statistics, but barriers to safe and equitable mobility for young people across the city. Youth are particularly vulnerable road users due to their physical size, developing spatial awareness, and limited access to alternative transportation options, especially when commuting to and from school.<sup>3</sup>

In October of 2024, a father and son, Nick and kindergartener Bowie, were hit by a car while riding their cargo bike and hospitalized.<sup>4</sup> If a child is able to be injured to the point of hospitalization while riding on the back of a bicycle with an adult, they are even more vulnerable to being injured on their own.

Safe bike lanes communicate that everyone, regardless of their age, income, or background, has the right to move freely, safely, and sustainably around San Francisco. They ensure people like

<sup>1</sup> Ryan Birkicht, "More Americans Rode a Bike Than Ever Before in 2024," PeopleForBikes, April 11, 2025, <https://www.peopleforbikes.org/news/bicycling-participation-report-2024>.

<sup>2</sup> Ricardo Olea, "2023-2024 San Francisco Traffic Crashes Report," SFMTA, August 20, 2025, <https://www.sfmta.com/media/42796/download?inline>.

<sup>3</sup> "Road Traffic Injuries: Children," World Health Organization, December 3, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/road-traffic-injuries-children>.

<sup>4</sup> "Prioritizing Safer Streets for San Francisco's Children," San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, November 1, 2024, <https://sfbike.org/news/prioritizing-safer-streets-for-san-franciscos-children/>.

Nick and Bowie are able to safely enjoy their neighborhood via bicycle. They help connect communities that have been historically disconnected, and they help our neighborhoods flourish. Additionally, they act as a reliable form of transit for those who don't have a driver's license, something that is both expensive and age-restricted. Biking is one of the few independent transportation options available, but without safe infrastructure, even that independence is limited.

Beyond mobility and safety, biking has also proven to be an easy and accessible way to reduce one's carbon footprint. UCLA Transportation and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report that choosing a bike over a car only once a day can reduce the average person's carbon emissions from transportation by 67%.<sup>5</sup> By investing in safe biking infrastructure, the City not only protects youth riders today, but it also supports environmental sustainability for future generations.

San Francisco already demonstrates its support for cycling through its partnership with Lyft to provide Bay Wheels community bikes, a system that in 2024 recorded 3.3 million rides. This partnership reflects the City's endorsement of biking as a legitimate and encouraged form of transportation. Ensuring that streets are safe for riders, including through protected bike lanes and the potential pedestrianization of high traffic corridors like Valencia Street, is a necessary extension of that commitment.

## **Valencia Street Pedestrianization**

In 2024, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-06, supporting the removal of the center bikeway on Valencia Street and the construction of curbside-protected bikeways.<sup>6</sup> As of 2026, the center bikeway has been removed and replaced. Valencia Street is a prominent location for frequent vehicle-related injuries in the city, as at least three pedestrians have been killed there since 2020.<sup>7</sup> Unsafe turning, misuse of bike lanes, double parking, and speeding cause many collisions, discouraging people from walking or biking, thus harming local businesses and recreational activities.

A pedestrianized, or car-free, Valencia Street, where people can walk and bike safely, with only vehicles permitted for commercial deliveries and residents, would greatly benefit the city. More than 2,400 cyclists use Valencia Street bike lanes per day, signaling high usage and popularity<sup>8</sup>. According to SFMTA's evaluation of the center bikeway project, the number of bikers went down 53% after its implementation, due to the center bikeway making cyclists feel unsafe.<sup>9</sup> Since then, the bike lane has been removed and restructured, but a pedestrianized Valencia Street would bring more cyclists and pedestrians back, cause fewer vehicle-related deaths and injuries, and result in an environmentally friendly, economically thriving Valencia Street in the heart of the Mission District. The Youth Commission believes that a plan to fully create pedestrianized Valencia Street should be explored, funded, and developed with the opinions of local businesses, neighbors, schools, and the public in mind.

<sup>5</sup> Karen Halisey, "How Riding A Bike Benefits the Environment," UCLA Transportation, May 11, 2022, <https://transportation.ucla.edu/blog/how-bike-riding-benefits-environment>.

<sup>6</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.

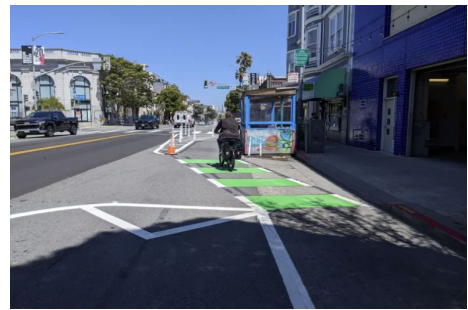
<sup>7</sup> Ricardo Olea, "2017-2022 San Francisco Traffic Crashes Report," SFMTA, May 8, 2023, [https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/reports-and-documents/2023/05/san\\_francisco\\_collisions\\_report\\_2017\\_2022.pdf](https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/reports-and-documents/2023/05/san_francisco_collisions_report_2017_2022.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Kyle Grochmal, "New Data Shows People on Bikes Have Returned to Valencia," Kid Safe SF, <https://kidsafesf.com/blog/valencia-bike-counts>.

<sup>9</sup> "Valencia Bikeway Improvements," SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/valencia-bikeway-improvements>.

## Curbside Protected Bike Lanes

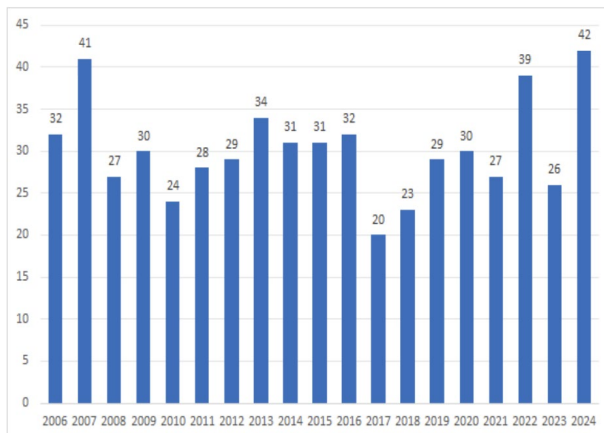
Other than the full pedestrianization of streets, curbside protected bike lanes alone can greatly benefit the city’s pedestrians, bikers, and drivers. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, separated, protected bike lanes can reduce vehicle-bicycle crashes by up to 53%.<sup>10</sup> Protected bike lanes reduce the risk of collisions while encouraging people to ride bikes, making them more accessible for less experienced riders. 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. Additionally, increased bicycle popularity means fewer cars fighting for space, allowing for reduced congestion on the road. The Youth Commission encourages the City of San Francisco to expand curbside protected bike lanes by implementing them as standard across the city.



The Youth Commission firmly urges the City of San Francisco to collaborate with organizations such as the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and the Street Campaigns project to identify and evaluate areas throughout the city where pedestrian and vehicular safety can be improved. Through these partnerships, the City should explore and implement targeted changes that enhance street safety through curbside protected bike lanes and beyond, to better protect San Francisco’s biking community.

## ENSURING STREET SAFETY

### 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>11</sup>. Mistakes are bound to occur 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.

<sup>10</sup> Becky Crowe, *Innovator Newsletter*, March/April 2024, *Separated Bike Lanes—Making Roads Safer for Bicyclists*, (Washington, DC) 17, no. 101 (n.d.): 4–5, <https://doi.org/10.21949/1521775s>.

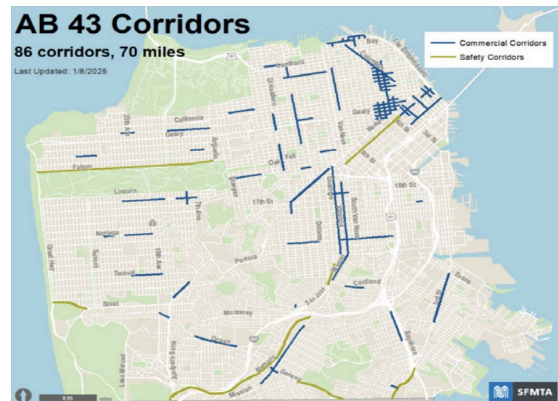
<sup>11</sup> “Vision Zero SF,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/walk/vision-zero-sf>.



While an evaluation report of traffic fatalities this year dropped from 43 to 25, there is still room for improvement<sup>12</sup>. According to studies done by Vision Zero SF, 68% of severe and fatal traffic collisions occur on just 12% of streets in San Francisco, which are identified as high-injury networks (as shown in the visual)<sup>13</sup>. The San Francisco Youth Commission firmly believes that infrastructure and programs centered around street safety should be continued and improved throughout the city, especially in high-injury networks.

### No Turn on Red and Speed Limits

In 2023, the Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-07<sup>14</sup>, supporting the expansion of the No Turn on Red (NTOR) program. Currently, drivers in San Francisco are permitted 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 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 five 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>15</sup>.



On top of NTOR, lower speed limits can greatly decrease the number 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>16</sup>.



<sup>12</sup> “Press Release - San Francisco Traffic Fatalities Drop by Nearly Half in 2025 | SFMTA,” SFMTA, January 8, 2026, <https://www.sfmta.com/press-releases/press-release-san-francisco-traffic-fatalities-drop-nearly-half-2025>.  
<sup>13</sup> Devan Morris and Leilani Schwarcz, “2017 High Injury Network Update,” n.d., <https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/agendaitems/2017/7-21-17%20PAG%20Item%206%20High%20Injury%20Network%20Update.pdf>.  
<sup>14</sup> Jason Fong and Chloe Wong, “No Turn on Red Policy: RESOLUTION NO. 2324-AL-07,” San Francisco Youth Commission, November 27, 2023.  
<sup>15</sup> “Tenderloin Speed Limits and No Turn on Red,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/tenderloin-speed-limits-and-no-turn-red>.  
<sup>16</sup> “Speed Management,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/walk/speed-management>.

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

## 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>17</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>18</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.

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

## ENSURE STREET & MUNI SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR YOUTH

### Background

Public transportation is an essential aspect of urbanized culture, connecting residents with the City daily. For many youth, Muni is the primary mode of transportation for commuting to schools, after-school programs, part-time jobs, and other essential activities. Most San Francisco Unified (SFUSD) students depend on Muni, with some surveys reporting usage rates up to 70% among high school students.<sup>19</sup>



When the safety or reliability of Muni services is compromised, youth are disproportionately impacted. As of 2024, there are roughly 13.9 Muni-related incidents reported daily, 54.4% of which are minor crimes, infractions, and disturbances. Peak frequencies of Muni trouble occur between 2-4 PM and 6-9 PM, which are key school commute times for students. When youth feel unsafe on Muni, this may result in avoidance of certain routes and times, missing school, arriving late, skipping after-school programs, and turning down jobs and various opportunities that require consistent transit. This disproportionately affects low-income youth, youth without access to

<sup>17</sup> Hayden Miller, “Supporting a Permanent Slow Streets Program: RESOLUTION NO. 2223-AL-03,” San Francisco Youth Commission, November 14, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> “Slow Streets Evaluation 2023,” SFMTA, 2023, <https://www.sfmta.com/media/35298/download?inline>.

<sup>19</sup> “Young People to Ride Muni for Free,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/blog/young-people-ride-muni-free>.

private vehicles, and youth who work late or attend schools far from home. Under 50% of riders reported feeling “always” or “almost always” safe in recent surveys, and riders under the age of 25 feel the least safe on transportation compared to other age groups.<sup>20</sup> Concerns regarding harassment, drug usage, and assault are common, particularly for women, people of color, and those with disabilities. This forces families with access to cars to prioritize driving, increasing traffic congestion and our carbon footprint daily.

The Youth Commission is aware of the ongoing budget deficit that Muni is facing. That being said, the corresponding service cuts and delays have led to overcrowding, longer stop waits, and reduced staff presence throughout the system. These factors compound existing safety issues and undermine public trust in Muni as a reliable, safe form of transportation.

### **SFMTA Youth Safety Programs**

Over the past several years, the SFMTA has worked to ensure youth safety in San Francisco through their various School Safety Programs. The Crossing Guard program has had approximately 195 crossing guards assisting students at various schools daily, and the Safe Routes to School initiative has ensured that walking and biking to schools is more accessible for all San Francisco students.<sup>21</sup> The SFMTA is also preparing to work with schools and youth programs to paint streets around schools for increased visibility and slower streets, funding safety projects for youth around San Francisco.

In Summer 2025, Muni implemented service cuts of about 2% of total service to help close about \$50 million budget gap. SFMTA is preparing to continue with various service cuts, hoping to reach a 5-7% cut of total service if enough funding is not generated. In preparation, they’ve listed several services, including suspending cable cars and historical trains, eliminating fare subsidies for low-income travelers, and cutting various youth safety programs.<sup>22</sup> Although these service cuts are necessary to continue aiding the fiscal crisis, eliminating or reducing essential youth safety services will discourage youth from comfortably accessing education and resources across the city, while also making the city more inaccessible for Muni users. Not funding Muni affects more than just riders; it increases foot traffic, street traffic, and carbon emissions, as people begin to resort to car usage and walking.

### **Recommendations**

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

#### **Protected Bikes Lanes**

- 1. Expand curbside protected bike lanes** as the standard San Francisco bike lane to protect bikers and pedestrians, ensuring that biking is a safe option for San Francisco youth. Prioritize expansions in areas near schools, parks, and other locations highly frequented by youth.

<sup>20</sup> Corey, Canapary & Galanis, “MTC Snapshot Survey 2023-2024 Management Summary Report,” Metropolitan Transportation Commission, August 24, 2024, [https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-08/MTC\\_Snapshot\\_Survey\\_Summary\\_Report08-28-2024.pdf](https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-08/MTC_Snapshot_Survey_Summary_Report08-28-2024.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> “SFMTA School Safety Programs,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/sfnta-school-safety-programs>.

<sup>22</sup> “Summer 2025 Muni Service Cuts,” SFMTA, January 25, 2025, <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/summer-2025-muni-service-cuts>.

2. Bring together local businesses, bicycle advocacy groups, and the SFMTA's Slow Streets program to discuss and work towards a **fully pedestrianized or slow Valencia Street**.
3. **Partner with local community organizations** like the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition to better understand high-risk biking routes and implement necessary changes.

### **Pedestrian Street Safety**

1. **Create and commit to a new 10-year Vision Zero goal.**
  - a. 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 2035.
2. **Expand the No Turn on Red program.**
3. **Continue to monitor and expand reduced speed limits citywide**, especially in areas located in the high-injury network.
4. **Maintain the Slow Streets Program.** Provide funding and support for the SFMTA to fully implement, maintain, and expand the permanent Slow Streets program infrastructure.

### **Muni Safety Programs**

1. **Protect SFMTA funding for youth-related safety programs.**
  - a. Ensure the Crossing Guard Program, Safe Routes to School, and general transit safety are minimally compromised.
2. **Support and expand revenue-generating initiatives to ensure Muni funding.**
3. **Invest in lighting, security cameras, and emergency call stations at high-traffic Muni stops during school commute hours and nighttime (3-6 PM and 8 PM-5 AM).**
  - a. Consider stops near schools, residential neighborhoods, and other busy urban areas.
4. **Include all youth in the annual youth ridership surveys** to better understand youth safety on transit and inform resource allocation.
  - a. Partner with youth programs and private schools to survey a broader scope of youth (ex, Boys and Girls Club, Opportunities for All, etc.).

## STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO COMBAT 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 maintaining full funding for the San Francisco Environment Department (SFE), finding creative ways to generate funding to meet Climate Action Plan goals, maintaining funding for youth climate internships and fellowships through SFE, supporting and increasing teacher training for climate education, and dedicating a district wide-climate action day for the annual Climate Action Youth Summit organized by SFE.*

### Background

Climate change will not wait for a better fiscal year. The climate crisis poses a threat to San Francisco youth in both 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> Already, more than 40 million children globally experience disruptions in their education each year because of climate disasters.<sup>3</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 40-90 more extreme heat days and 3-6 feet of sea level rise.<sup>4,5</sup> With last fiscal year's cuts to the San Francisco Environment Department (SFE), the City must commit to restoring and protecting funding to mitigate climate change.

### San Francisco Environment Department Budget Cuts

SFE leads climate action in the City, spearheading efforts to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. With leadership from the department, the City has reduced 48% of its carbon footprint between 1990 and 2022.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the department's education programs have engaged over 20,000 youth in classroom visits, field trips, and the annual Climate Action Youth Summit.<sup>7</sup>

SFE receives just 2% of their budget from the General Fund. As a result, 90% of funding is obtained through outside grants that are time-limited and tied to specific topic areas and deliverables, limiting their programs. For every \$1 dollar invested, SFE has turned it into \$29 through external funding, receiving \$84 million in grants since November 2022.<sup>8</sup> Despite the department's impact and success in finding alternate sources of funding, they are facing significant

<sup>1</sup> David Ackerly et al., *San Francisco Bay Area Region Report*, nos. CCCA4-SUM-2018-005 (California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, 2018), [https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Reg\\_Report-SUM-CCCA4-2018-005\\_SanFranciscoBayArea\\_ADA.pdf](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Reg_Report-SUM-CCCA4-2018-005_SanFranciscoBayArea_ADA.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Coalition for Healthier Schools, "Support Federal Healthy Schools Programs - A Transition Plan for US EPA and Other Agencies - Improve Kids' Health and Learning and the Well-Being of Working Parents," Healthy Schools, January 14, 2025, <https://healthyschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/TRUMP-TRANSITION-US-EPA-Healthy-Children-Healthy-Schools-Jan-2025.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *The Climate-Changed Child: A Children's Climate Risk Index Supplement* (UNICEF, 2023), <https://www.unicef.org/media/147931/file/The%20climate-changed%20child%20-%20Report%20in%20English.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> David Ackerly et al., *San Francisco Bay Area Region Report*.

<sup>5</sup> "Sea Level Rise Adaptation | SF Planning," <https://sfplanning.org/sea-level-rise-action-plan>.

<sup>6</sup> "San Francisco's Carbon Footprint," San Francisco Environment Department, <https://www.sfenvironment.org/carbonfootprint>.

<sup>7</sup> Sraddha Mehta, "SFE Budget and Priorities for FY 2026-2027 and FY 2027-2028," February 2, 2026,

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RMXo6ngIdStAZ1QMpBjLht4Mens\\_2L-Z/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RMXo6ngIdStAZ1QMpBjLht4Mens_2L-Z/view).

<sup>8</sup> Sraddha Mehta, "SFE Budget and Priorities for FY 2026-2027 and FY 2027-2028."

budget cuts that will delay the City’s progress toward Climate Action Plan goals. In parallel, many of their federal grants have been terminated or stalled, making City funding for SF Environment especially critical.

This fiscal year (2025-2026), SFE lost three positions focused on community outreach and engagement for electrification efforts. Under current budget projections, the department is expected to lose an additional eight positions, which will directly impact clean transportation and electrification, equitable building decarbonization, Climate Action Plan accountability, and biodiversity efforts:

- Clean Transportation: 3.7 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents).
- Climate Equity Hub (building decarbonization): 2.5 FTEs.
- Climate Action Plan: 1.2 FTEs.
- Healthy Ecosystems: 0.65 FTEs.<sup>9</sup>

These staffing cuts will affect low-income communities most by impacting SFE’s programs that support equitable electrification initiatives. In addition, cutting staff positions has a snowball effect: fewer staff means lower capacity to pursue outside grants that provide the majority of SFE’s budget, likely resulting in even more staffing cuts.

The Youth Commission strongly supports SFE’s request of at least \$3.4 million to restore full department staffing and prevent additional staffing cuts. The Youth Commission also urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to find creative ways to create funding for SFE to keep the City on track to meet Climate Action Plan goals, following recommendations in the Center for Law, Energy, & Environment’s report on sources of funding for San Francisco’s Climate Action Plan. One example might include proposing bonds for building decarbonization, housing, and transportation.<sup>10</sup>

## **Electrification**

To reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions, San Francisco must electrify transportation and buildings, which each account for 44% (88% total) of the City’s annual emissions.<sup>11</sup> Based on current and projected electric vehicle (EV) ownership, the City needs 5,000 EV charging ports by 2030.<sup>12</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 zero-emission by 2035, a target that could reduce California’s greenhouse gas emissions by 35%.<sup>13</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>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Sraddha Mehta, “SFE Budget and Priorities for FY 2026-2027 and FY 2027-2028.”

<sup>10</sup> Louise Bedsworth et al., *Funding San Francisco Climate Action* (Berkeley Law | Center for Law, Energy, & the Environment, 2022), <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/archive/2022/11/Funding-San-Francisco-Climate-Action-Nov.-2022.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> “Climate Action at the SFMTA,” SFMTA, <https://www.sfmta.com/sustainability-and-climate-action>.

<sup>12</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, 240270 (2024), <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13035126&GUID=617B05EC-DB39-4058-9431-61587AF1F4C5>.

<sup>13</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 Gavin Newsome, September 23, 2020, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/09/23/governor-newsom-announces-california-will-phase-out-gasoline-powered-cars-drastically-reduce-demand-for-fossil-fuel-in-californias-fight-against-climate-change/>.

<sup>14</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, 240270.

The San Francisco Department of Environment has received over \$50 million through eight federal and state grants to support 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>15</sup> In April 2025, SFE and SFMTA installed the first public curbside EV chargers in San Francisco as a part of the public Curbside EV Charging Pilot Program. With data from these pilot chargers, it is important that the City quickly develops a large-scale public EV charging program. The City must also plan for chargers in off-street parking, given the limited available curbside space as well as level 3 chargers. Moreover, it is important to consider the equitable placement of chargers, for example, locating them near spaces that serve youth and their families, such as libraries and parks. Implementation of electrification relies on SFE staff positions that have been and are at risk of being cut.

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>16</sup> In August 2025, San Francisco passed the All-Electric Major Renovations Ordinance, which will require that buildings convert to all-electric appliances during certain major renovations. Former Mayor Breed launched a series of programs to offer discounts and rebates for electric appliances for low-income residents.<sup>17</sup> Currently, the SF Environment Climate Equity Hub offers free heat pump water heaters for low-income families whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by climate change. However, staff cuts to the Climate Equity Hub and electrification outreach team may reduce the number of households reached by these programs.

Expanding electrification infrastructure across the City must begin with community outreach, especially in low-income neighborhoods on the environmental justice map. Youth should play an active role in these efforts, given that they are directly impacted by climate change and can provide insights into addressing community-specific concerns to ensure the implementation of electric infrastructure.

## **Climate Education**

Since 2023, the San Francisco Environment Department has hosted a citywide Climate Action Youth Summit (CAYS), led by youth for youth. At their most recent 2025 summit, which focused on Climate Across Careers, over 3,000 youth gathered to learn how they could transform their passions and interests into environmental action. Students showcased school projects, youth-led initiatives, a climate fashion show, and more. For example, students from Jefferson Elementary shared their experiences tackling plastic waste in school lunches.<sup>18</sup>

Due to SF Environment's current monetary constraints, 45% of its budget comes from the Solid Waste Impound Account. The Environmental Education team derives most of its funding from the Impound Fund, limiting them to providing lessons related to zero-waste. This leaves out

<sup>15</sup> "San Francisco Wins \$15 Million Grant to Meet Growing Demand for EV Charging Throughout City," San Francisco Environment Department, January 14, 2025, <https://www.sfenvironment.org/press/san-francisco-wins-15-million-grant-meet-growing-demand-ev-charging-throughout-city>.

<sup>16</sup> "All-Electric New Construction Ordinance," SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/all-electric-new-construction-ordinance>.

<sup>17</sup> "Mayor London Breed Announces New Programs to Reduce Carbon Emissions and Promote Equitable Access to Clean Energy," SFPUC, April 7, 2022, <https://www.sfpuc.gov/about-us/news/mayor-london-breed-announces-new-programs-reduce-carbon-emissions-and-promote>.

<sup>18</sup> SFGovTV, *Environment Youth Summit 2025*, 2025, 05:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCZHXC7qICk>.

information central to understanding our environment, including biodiversity, conservation, and clean energy.

Even with financial constraints, SFE has provided educational programming to 100+ schools in San Francisco over the past year.<sup>19</sup> This impact includes 27 Title I schools, most of them located in designated Environmental Justice communities (Oceanview/Merced/Ingleside, Outer Mission, Excelsior, Bayview-Hunter's Point, Potrero Hill/Mission Bay, the Mission, South of Market, the Tenderloin, Western Addition, and Chinatown). They have also provided 11 lessons in Chinese and 18 lessons in Spanish. Even still, their lesson plans are limited to zero-waste and water, even environmental justice communities are impacted by a range of environmental issues. It is important to diversify climate education to resonate with youth experiences in different communities. Recently, a federal grant that awarded SFE \$1 million for environmental justice was terminated. \$0.5 million was intended for youth engagement. Due to these circumstances, SFE's youth outreach is becoming especially uncertain, further impacting communities that already face limited climate knowledge and resources.

Beyond understanding the science behind climate change, a comprehensive climate education must prepare youth to make sustainable choices for their futures.<sup>20</sup> For example, the Climate Action Youth Summit highlights tangible climate solutions, green jobs, and cross-disciplinary connections to climate change.

Under the current San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Next Generation Science Standards High School curriculum, connections to climate change are integrated within classes such as Chemistry, Biology, and Physics. However, results from the 2024 Youth Commission High School Climate Literacy Feedback Form, gathering 415 responses from SFUSD students and faculty, reveal that the curriculum does not fully meet NOAA standards. When asked, "On a scale of 1-5, how empowered did you feel to take climate action after learning about climate change?" 42.2% of respondents answered with 3/5, suggesting that students are currently only moderately empowered by existing climate change instruction. Only 9.2% responded with 5/5. Additionally, only 17.6% 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 reflect that SFUSD students want the curriculum to highlight local impacts of climate change and connect them to subjects beyond science. Students also want to explore climate change beyond the classroom, 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: "more community involvement, learning days like more field trips." Students from Wallenberg's Environmental Science, Engineering, and Policy Pathway would like "more projects regarding climate change and presenters to work with in solving climate change."

SFUSD currently runs a paid, 4-month Climate Action Fellowship, funded by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, that gives high school participants support to launch climate action projects and gain exposure to professional development opportunities, while earning high school credit. Initiatives, including the SFUSD Climate Action Fellowship, directly give public education

<sup>19</sup> SFE Education, "2024-2025 Schools Served," February 9, 2026, Map, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1bpo4FPFv4VBxp0EZDpW8DIwrAY8BQc>.

<sup>20</sup> "Key Definitions and Literature Cited," NOAA Climate.Gov, <https://www.climate.gov/teaching/climate/key-definitions-and-literature-cited>.

students greater access to hands-on climate education, leadership opportunities, and pathways into green careers<sup>21</sup>.

Strengthening climate education requires sufficient staffing and climate literacy training. SFUSD has offered several professional development initiatives to train teachers 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>22</sup> the Climate Justice & YOU series in Spring 2022, and a year-long professional development program for elementary school teachers, Scientific Literacy through Climate Justice.<sup>23</sup> Teacher training fellowships must continue to receive support from the school district and expand the number of teachers who can access them. 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 to others across the district.

### **Climate Internships and Fellowships**

Every job can be a green job. In San Francisco, programs like Project Pull employ youth with internships in City and County departments, where they gain hands-on experience in fields such as environmental planning, engineering, public health, and communications.<sup>24</sup> The Rising T.I.D.E.S. program, run by the Port of San Francisco, connects young people to work in areas like maritime operations, infrastructure, and environmental compliance. They learn about how port activities intersect with climate resilience, clean energy, and sustainable development.<sup>25</sup>

In partnership with Enterprise for Youth and San Francisco Youth Works, SFE has created summer internships for high schoolers. These internships have increased youth awareness of climate justice across careers and youth leadership of climate action projects. Kate Ozaeta, a senior at Saint Ignatius High School and 2025 SFE Summer intern, reflects: “Through my internship with SFE, I had the unique opportunity to launch an initiative around my school’s waste-sorting with the support of a mentor. SFE provided me with so many resources and opportunities to expand my initiative and even present at a Commission on the Environment meeting in City Hall. Months later, this internship connected me with so many people that have played a role in my climate journey. Working both online and in-person, I learned about the work of a city department, further developed my communication skills, and recognized the importance of mentorship.”

Prioritizing workforce programs like Enterprise for Youth Enterprise, San Francisco Youth Works, and Project Pull, which provide green career exploration, is critical for expanding access to climate literacy. These programs not only expose young people to potential career paths but also equip them with hands-on experience, mentorship, and professional skills.

<sup>21</sup> “Climate Action Student Fellowship Application Due Sept. 8 at 8 a.m. | SFUSD,” September 2, 2025. <https://www.sfusd.edu/announcements/2025-09-02-climate-action-student-fellowship-application-due-sept-8-8-am>.

<sup>22</sup> “Environmental Literacy and Sustainability,” San Mateo County Office Of Education, accessed May 11, 2026, <https://www.smcoe.org/for-educators/environmental-literacy-and-sustainability>.

<sup>23</sup> “SFUSD Teaches Environmental Literacy and Climate Justice to All K-12 Students,” SFUSD, April 15, 2022, <https://www.sfusd.edu/about-sfusd/sfusd-news/press-releases/2022-04-15-sfusd-teaches-environmental-literacy-and-climate-justice-all-k-12-students>.

<sup>24</sup> “Project Pull,” SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/information--project-pull>.

<sup>25</sup> SF.Gov, “Project Pull.”

## **Recommendations:**

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

### **Short-Term:**

- 1. Allocate \$3.4 million to SFE from the General Fund** to prevent the loss of 8 additional staff members. This funding will ensure that clean transportation and electrification, equitable building decarbonization, Climate Action Plan accountability, and healthy ecosystems efforts remain prioritized.
- 2. Protect funding for SFE's education program.**
- 3. Find creative ways to generate funding for SFE** to ensure that the City has a financial plan to meet its Climate Action Plan goals, for example, City bonds for building decarbonization, housing, and transportation, and more public-private partnerships.

### **Long-Term:**

- 1. Expand funding for the San Francisco Environment Department's education program** to enable their curriculum to include topics such as biodiversity loss and environmental justice in addition to current materials about Zero Waste and Clean Water that are limited in content because of their funding sources.
- 2. Urge SFUSD and SFE to dedicate a District-wide Climate Action Day** to enable all students to attend the Climate Action Youth Summit.
- 3. Secure permanent funding for the SFUSD Climate Action Fellowship.**
- 4. Secure stable funding for climate internships and fellowships** through City departments to increase access to green job opportunities for students.

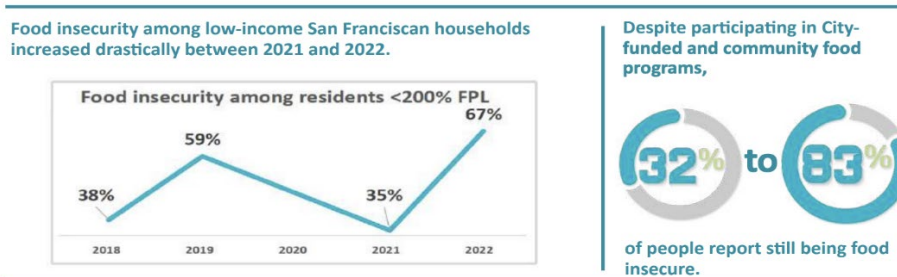
## PROTECT FOOD INSECURITY PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL MEALS

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor to recognize school meals and nutrition programs as essential components for youth health, education, and long-term public health outcomes, and to fund nutritional health education and food security services.*

### Background

Food insecurity, a household-level economic and social limitation to adequate, healthy food, 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 the San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership (SFHIP), not meeting dietary recommendations is associated with low-income, Hispanic, and African Americans, and neighborhoods of Southeastern San Francisco, in particular.<sup>1</sup> Further, a 2024 report from the San Francisco Food Security Task Force reveals that “In 2021, food security among this population was 32%, and by 2022 increased to 67% (about 116,886 residents) - an increase of 109%.”<sup>2</sup> These disparities reflect long-standing inequities in access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of low-income families and immigrant households. As a result, youth food insecurity in San Francisco is concentrated in communities already facing disproportionate health and educational burdens.



According to Feeding America, childhood food insecurity also leads to poorer academic performance.<sup>3</sup> 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 San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)’s already-tightened budget revolves around Average Daily Attendance (ADA), it is critical to ensure that students’ nutrition needs are met.<sup>4</sup>

For SFUSD students, access to nutritious food is inseparable from access to education. Higher absenteeism linked to food insecurity translates into missed learning opportunities and weaker

<sup>1</sup> “Nutrition – SFHIP,” n.d. <https://sfhip.org/chna/community-health-data/nutrition/>.

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Food Security Task Force, “2024 Year Report”, n.d. [https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/FSTF%202024%20FSTF%20Recommendations\\_FINAL%206.4.24-compressed.pdf](https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/FSTF%202024%20FSTF%20Recommendations_FINAL%206.4.24-compressed.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Feeding America, “Child Hunger in America | Feeding America,” n.d. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/child-hunger-facts>.

<sup>4</sup> Canbolat, Yusuf, Leslie Rutkowski, and David Rutkowski, “Empty Plates, Empty Seats: Food Insecurity and Student Absence in the US and Across the Globe.” EdWorkingPaper 24-1106, Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute at Brown University, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.26300/nzy0-jy50>.

academic outcomes, particularly for students already facing economic hardship. Ensuring that robust, high-quality school meals and nutrition education are therefore essential to supporting student success and sustaining SFUSD’s capacity to serve its most vulnerable communities.

## **SFUSD School Meals**

In 2019 and later in 2023, SFUSD District 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 its 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.

For many low-income and housing-insecure students, school breakfast and lunch are their most reliable nutrition sources. Reducing meal quality, access, or nutrition education harms students’ physical health, academic success, and overall well-being. Nutrition education also fosters lifelong healthy habits, with school and community programs shown to improve food literacy and increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

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 (23-24 and 24-25 Budget Policy Priorities, Resolution No. 2526-AL-01, Resolution No. 2425-AL-03). 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.

Under the current Student Nutrition Guidelines, all meals must adhere to strict guidelines set by the US Department of Agriculture and California Department of Education for each specific age group. Menus must also reflect the USDA MyPlate model, including vegetables, lean protein, fruits, dairy like low-fat or fat-free milk, and whole grains.<sup>5</sup> SFUSD also maintains additional requirements that can limit flexibility in menu experimentation, such as ensuring at least 50% of grains are whole-grain rich and prohibiting par-fried foods like french fries.<sup>6</sup>

Traditionally, SFUSD has partnered with Revolution Foods, whose team includes a Certified Child Nutritionist, the Executive Director, students through tastings and feedback, and a dedicated menu development team. Together, they produce quality-controlled menus that are both nutritious and appealing. All meals are pre-packaged and delivered daily to school sites from Revolution Foods’ facility in San Lorenzo, California.

Recently, SFUSD began working with Refresh, which develops meals exclusively for schools with on-site kitchen facilities. These meals are prepared fresh using locally grown, small-business-sourced ingredients. Currently, only 40% of SFUSD students—spread across 11 middle schools

<sup>5</sup> Community Vitality & Health. “Are Healthy Foods Really More Expensive?,” January 17, 2024. <https://uwyoextension.org/uwnutrition/newsletters/are-healthy-foods-really-more-expensive/>.

<sup>6</sup> SFUSD Nutrition Services. “Attachment 15 SFUSD Nutrition Guidelines.pdf,” n.d. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oUPj0HNZ0-EICjSrqirzIS8cf1V-Y7Yf/view>.

and 8 high schools—receive Refresh meals. All other schools in SFUSD get their meals from Revolution Foods.<sup>7</sup>

Given these constraints, new recipes have become delayed in their development process. The SFUSD Student Nutrition team has also mentioned that supply does become an obstacle at times. Therefore, when supply for a new product pops up, they try to move quickly to adapt, test, and implement new recipes.

## Community-Based Organizations

Despite their reach, SNS continues to engage youth in their menu tasting at community events and school site visits. Local community organizations, particularly those funded by the Sugary Drinks Distribution Tax (SDDT), play a critical role in addressing barriers such as cultural relevance, language accessibility, and community trust, helping ensure that nutrition education and food security reach populations that SFUSD alone may not fully serve. Beyond supporting students, these organizations provide essential health and wellness information to the broader community.

Protecting SDDT funds is essential to providing a dedicated revenue stream that directly supports preventative health initiatives in communities disproportionately impacted by diet-related illnesses. The soda tax funds programs regarding nutritional security, physical activity, water access, oral health, workforce development, and community building.<sup>8</sup> For example, Fa’atai Youth Services, All My Usos (AMU), and Florence Fang Community Farm<sup>9</sup> are SDDT-funded programs that empower their local communities through the cultural relevance of their work and direct food support. Therefore, preserving these funds safeguards not only youth-focused programming but also the broader public health foundation that strengthens communities across San Francisco.

## School Meals for All Program

California’s School Meals for All program guarantees free nutritious breakfast and lunch to every public school student. SFUSD Student Nutrition Services provides over 37,000 meals per day to students across 136 schools during the school year through the School Meals for All program.<sup>10</sup> In 2025, the federal administration cut \$660 million for the Local Food for Schools program, which eliminated access to free or reduced-price school meals and terminated funding to locally source ingredients for school meals through the Community Eligibility Supports Program.<sup>11</sup> In California, 6,425 schools serving 3,627,6709 children were affected by this school lunch program, with 82 schools serving 42,575 students in SFUSD<sup>12</sup>. Due to these cuts, California deferred to Proposition 98 funds to ensure free or reduced-price school meals stay accessible. SFUSD has reduced staffing and ingredients to innovate new recipes.

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Unified School District. *Transforming the Student Dining Experience*, San Francisco: San Francisco Unified School District, October 2024.

<sup>8</sup> “Soda Tax Programs | SF.gov,” n.d. <https://www.sf.gov/soda-tax-programs>.

<sup>9</sup> San Francisco Public Health Foundation (SFPHF). “SDDT Past Funded Entities,” August 2025. [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/SDDT\\_Past\\_Funded\\_List\\_August\\_2025.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/SDDT_Past_Funded_List_August_2025.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> LeBarre, Jennifer. “Why School Meals for All Is Essential for San Francisco Students - School Meals for All,” n.d. <https://www.schoolmealsforall.org/news/why-school-meals-for-all-is-essential-for-san-francisco-students/>.

<sup>11</sup> Prothero, Evie BladArianna. “Congressional Budget Cuts Threaten Free School Meals for Millions.” *Education Week*, March 13, 2025. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/congressional-budget-cuts-threaten-free-school-meals-for-millions/2025/03>.

<sup>12</sup> Food Research & Action Center. “Eligibility for Community Eligibility Provision Database,” 2024. [https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Community-Eligibility-Provision-Fact-Sheets\\_CA5.pdf](https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Community-Eligibility-Provision-Fact-Sheets_CA5.pdf).

Additionally, hundreds of thousands of students across the state risk direct eligibility status for federally funded school meal programs, like the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Both programs limit income eligibility at 130% and 185% below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), respectively. SFUSD is part of both. In California, a family of four must earn no more than \$39,000 per year for their children to receive free school meals, and no more than \$55,500 to qualify for reduced-price meals this school year. However, 44% of families in the state did not meet the eligibility requirements for federal meal assistance, even though they continue to face high living expenses.<sup>13</sup>

The effects of food insecurity are particularly significant in San Francisco, where the median income for a family of four is \$155,850<sup>14</sup> and the federal low-income threshold is \$32,150.<sup>15</sup> The cost of housing, childcare, and basic necessities far exceeds national averages. However, in order for families to qualify for federal meal programs, like SNAP, a family of four must earn less than \$57,000 per year to qualify. A family of four making \$58,000, considered acutely low-income in San Francisco, may be ineligible for assistance under federal metrics, despite struggling to cover basic needs. Near eligibility should not prevent families from having a nutritious meal for dinner or force them to choose between groceries and healthcare.

## **Local responses to SNAP Halts & Federal Government Shutdown**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest anti-hunger program in the United States, serving as a critical safety net for many low-income families. By providing monthly benefits to purchase groceries, SNAP helps millions of households access consistent, nutritious food. In high-cost cities like San Francisco, SNAP plays a vital role in reducing food insecurity, supporting child development, and stabilizing family expenditures. Beyond alleviating hunger, SNAP also strengthens local economies as benefits are spent directly at neighborhood grocery stores.<sup>16</sup>

About 62% of SNAP participants are in families with children, with approximately 40% of SNAP recipients under age 18, and around 20% are older than 60—groups especially vulnerable to food insecurity.<sup>17</sup> According to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, SNAP has shown to reduce food insecurity by helping families afford nutritious foods that support healthy diets and development. In fact, public health experts note that SNAP participation is associated with lower food insecurity and even reduced healthcare costs for conditions such as heart disease and hypertension, while deep funding cuts threaten to reverse decades of progress against health disparities.<sup>18</sup>

In late 2025, a prolonged federal government shutdown and funding cuts threatened to halt SNAP benefits for millions of families. Since SNAP is federally funded, lapses in funding can interrupt

<sup>13</sup> California Budget & Policy Center. “Universal School Meals Help All California Children Thrive - California Budget & Policy Center,” December 17, 2024. <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/universal-school-meals-help-all-california-children-thrive/>.

<sup>14</sup> San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development. “MAXIMUM INCOME BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE.” Report, April 1, 2025. [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2025\\_AMI-IncomeLimits-HMFA\\_08Rw8dU.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2025_AMI-IncomeLimits-HMFA_08Rw8dU.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> HealthCare.gov. “Federal Poverty Level (FPL) - Glossary,” n.d. <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>.

<sup>16</sup> Center for Rural Affairs - Building a Better Rural Future. “SNAP Economic Multiplier Effect,” January 6, 2026. <https://www.cfra.org/publications/snap-economic-multiplier-effect>.

<sup>17</sup> David W. Chen. “42 Million People Are Enrolled in SNAP. Who Are They?” San Francisco Examiner, November 12, 2025. [https://www.sfxaminer.com/42-million-people-are-enrolled-in-snap-who-are-they/article\\_69a71fca-3bdf-5552-a0ae-09859d1c4450.html](https://www.sfxaminer.com/42-million-people-are-enrolled-in-snap-who-are-they/article_69a71fca-3bdf-5552-a0ae-09859d1c4450.html).

<sup>18</sup> Todd Datz. “SNAP Funding Cuts Threaten Food Security, Health | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.” Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, August 21, 2025. <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/snap-funding-cuts-threaten-food-security-health/>.

the delivery of monthly food assistance, leaving families without grocery support they heavily rely on. In response to this crisis, San Francisco leaders took local action as Mayor Daniel Lurie signed legislation authorizing \$9.1 million in city funds, in partnership with Crankstart, to support nearly 112,000 San Francisco children, families, and workers whose benefits were disrupted by the shutdown.<sup>19</sup> San Francisco residents enrolled in SNAP received instructions to access pre-loaded grocery cards so residents could continue buying groceries.

Ultimately, SNAP is a program that children, families, and seniors across our city rely on for consistent access to nutritious food to thrive. For families living paycheck to paycheck, even a short delay in SNAP benefits can result in difficult trade-offs between food, rent, and healthcare. Ensuring reliable federal support, alongside strong local programs, affirms that food security is foundational to the community.

## **Recommendations**

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

- 1. Protect School Meals for All State nutrition programs.** The School Meals for All program is imperative to providing fresh meals for students across California’s public education system. Given last fiscal year’s federal budget cut risks to school meals, preserving the program is especially important to ensure student access to nutritious food during school.
- 2. Support the Sugary Drinks Distributor Tax Advisory Committee Budget Recommendations.** In light of SNAP benefit cuts, lessening the impact of food insecurity means maintaining HSA funding for immediate food security services. Sustained funding for SDDT community organizations, particularly serving AAPI and BIPOC communities, providing food assistance, nutrition and health education, and outreach, is critical to protecting residents’ health and well-being.
- 3. Recommend SFUSD to maintain current staffing within SFUSD Student Nutrition Services Team and crucial services** such as menu development, emphasizing student feedback, and implementation.
- 4. Maintain current staffing within the Food Security Task Force and the San Francisco Department of Public Health** staff focused on food insecurity data collection. Given that the current federal administration has concealed and expressed termination of FPL, FRAC, and Federal census data, local metrics, including local censuses for food insecurity, are more imperative to understanding constituent behavior for food insecurity to inform policy needs.
- 5. Engage in research and case studies about food insecurity in comparison to other national metropolitan cities.** Given that a significant number of residents experiencing food insecurity do not fit traditional profiles of homelessness and federal requirements for poverty, real-time assessment is challenging but also critical in supporting other cities.

<sup>19</sup> “Mayor Lurie Signs Legislation to Support San Francisco Families After Federal Government Shutdown Disrupts SNAP Benefits | sfhsa.org.” November 10, 2025. <https://www.sfhsa.org/about/announcements/mayor-lurie-signs-legislation-support-san-francisco-families-after-federal-government-shutdown-disrupts-snap-benefits>.

## YOUTH TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to enhance youth transit accessibility by working with the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency to continue funding the Free Muni for Youth (FMFY) program, explore expanding the program to include Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) ages 19-24, and build on the success of the FMFY program and work with BART to establish a similar Free BART for Youth program. Additionally, the San Francisco Youth Commission recommends allocating funds for the advertisement of the Clipper START program.*

### PROTECT AND ENHANCE FREE MUNI FOR ALL YOUTH

#### Background

The Youth Commission has consistently advocated for Free Muni For All Youth (FMFAY). This advocacy began in 2010 with RESOLUTION NO. 1011-AL-041 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 FMFAY 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 and was a partial response to SFUSD school bus cuts. The means-tested pilot program became permanent in 2015.<sup>1</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>2</sup>

The 2019-2020 Youth Commission passed RESOLUTION NO. 1920-AL-144, where it was 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. 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.

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>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> KQED News Staff and Wires, "Google to Fund San Francisco's Free Muni for Youth Program | KQED," KQED, February 28, 2014, <https://www.kqed.org/news/127970/google-to-fund-san-franciscos-free-muni-for-youth-program>.

<sup>2</sup> "Young People to Ride Muni for Free," SFMTA, accessed May 10, 2026, <https://www.sfmta.com/blog/young-people-ride-muni-free>.

<sup>3</sup> SFMTA Citizens Advisory Council, "FY 2023 & 2024 Consolidated Budget FY 2023 – 2027 Capital Improvement Program," March 17, 2022, [https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/reports-and-documents/2022/03/sfmta\\_-\\_fy\\_23\\_24\\_consolidated\\_budget\\_cip\\_update\\_3.17.2022\\_cac.pdf](https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/reports-and-documents/2022/03/sfmta_-_fy_23_24_consolidated_budget_cip_update_3.17.2022_cac.pdf).

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

Following the implementation of free Muni fares for all youth in 2013, ridership among young passengers has increased significantly, demonstrating that eliminating fare barriers substantially improves access to public transportation and encourages greater transit use.<sup>4</sup> SFUSD's most recent travel tally survey found that 60% of SFUSD 9th graders use Muni on any given day.

The FMFAY program is critical in removing the financial burden of fares for youth and 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. The program also decreases absences in schools, encourages youth to spend more time outside and participate in the local economy, and enables youth to hold local jobs to support the community.

## **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>5</sup>

One possible solution is making physical or online student ID cards also function as Clipper Cards. Currently, San Francisco State University ID cards already act as Clipper cards.<sup>6</sup> The SFMTA could collaborate with the SFUSD and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to explore modeling SFUSD ID cards after the SFUSD ID cards' Clipper capabilities.

## **EXPAND FREE MUNI FOR ALL YOUTH TO INCLUDE TRANSITIONAL-AGED YOUTH (19–24)**

### **Background**

Transitional-aged youth, which is defined as youth ages 18 to 24, experience a sudden loss of much of the public support they relied on during childhood. Yet, that is exactly when society expects them to start college, find jobs, live on their own, and contribute to their household income. Living in San Francisco is challenging for TAY, as high rents and daily expenses strain their finances. Even getting around the city becomes a challenge, since transportation costs can stand in the way of getting to school, work, health care, or other essential destinations.

Most young adults between 19 and 24 do not own their own cars and rely heavily on public transportation, such as Muni. Access to Muni is critical to their ability to attend school and maintain employment. Research shows that young people are less reliant on private automobiles than previous generations. Between 2001 and 2009, miles driven by people ages 16 to 34 dropped by 23 percent, while public transit use increased by 40 percent. These trends demonstrate that

<sup>4</sup> "Free Muni for All Youth (18 Years and Younger)," SFMTA, accessed May 10, 2026, <https://www.sfmta.com/fares/free-muni-all-youth-18-years-and-younger>.

<sup>5</sup> Danielle Echeverria, "Muni Is Cracking down on Fare Evasion. Tickets Have Hit a High," San Francisco Chronicle, November 18, 2024, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/muni-fare-evasion-citations-19919332.php>.

<sup>6</sup> "Clipper Card Transit Benefits | OneCard," San Francisco State University, <https://onecard.sfsu.edu/clipper-card-transit-benefits>.

affordable and accessible public transportation is central to how young adults move through cities like San Francisco.

Transportation costs place a significant burden on community college students. The average full-time community college student spends \$1,760 per year on transportation, which is nearly half of the national average tuition for such a student. Community college students also spend more on transportation than their counterparts at both public and private four-year institutions. This research shows that transportation is not a minor expense but can add up to be a significant cost burden for students who are already financially vulnerable.

Turning 19 does not eliminate these challenges. Many 19 to 24-year-olds are juggling classes at community college, working jobs, helping their families pay the bills, or figuring out college on their own as first-generation students. They are expected to function independently while often lacking stable wages or long-term financial security. For these young adults, the cost of daily transit can directly affect whether they are able to attend school consistently, maintain employment, or access services that support long-term stability.

### **Evidence of Need and Equity Impact**

This problem hits City College of San Francisco (CCSF) students especially hard, as many are in that 19-to-24 age group. Nearly half of CCSF students come from low-income backgrounds and rely on grants and scholarships from the school or the government to pay for school, and almost a third of the students are the first in their families to attend college. Many also belong to groups that have historically faced barriers to higher education.

Unlike four-year institutions such as San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley, which provide institutional transit access programs for their students, CCSF students do not receive guaranteed transit support despite facing higher rates of financial insecurity. Many CCSF students travel long distances to get to class, sometimes moving between different campuses in a single day, all while juggling jobs or family responsibilities. For those commuting five days a week, the cost of Muni fares can quickly add up, sometimes to hundreds of dollars a semester. When so many students are already stretching their budgets, these extra expenses can impact whether they enroll, how many classes they take, and their attendance.

Expanding Free Muni to include Transitional-Aged Youth would recognize that early adulthood remains a period of economic vulnerability. Access to reliable and affordable transit supports educational persistence, workforce participation, and long-term stability.

### **Building on an Existing Model**

San Francisco has already shown that making transit free really does make a difference for young people. With the Free Muni for All Youth program, the city made it easier for kids and teens to hop on a bus or train, no paperwork or complicated sign-ups, just accessible rides.

Regional findings from the Clipper BayPass pilot program show that individuals with unlimited transit access took 30 to 35 percent more transit trips after receiving access. Students in the

program were more likely to stay in school and said it was easier to get to work, classes, and other important places. In short, when the cost of transit goes away, more people ride, and it helps them continue school and work.

Expanding Free Muni from age 18 up to 24 would build on what is already working, giving more young adults the chance to get around without worrying about the cost. The city could use the same system it already has, so the process stays simple and easy for everyone.

## **EXPAND FREE YOUTH TRANSIT TO INCLUDE BART IN SAN FRANCISCO**

### **Building on Free Muni for Youth**

San Francisco has already demonstrated the effectiveness of fare-free access to public transportation for youth. According to survey responses, over 76% of youth combined to agree or highly agree that the Free Muni for Youth Program was helpful for young people in San Francisco.<sup>7</sup> A 2019 study on transportation innovation suggests that, as cities consider the future of transport, they should consider expansion of youth policies that reduce barriers to transit access to invest in the future of transit riders.<sup>8</sup>

The Free Muni for Youth program was piloted in 2013 to include a subset of San Francisco youth based on socioeconomic status and was later extended universally to all youth in 2021, estimating that 100,000 youth would make use of the services at the time. In 2021, an additional \$2M was allocated towards the expansion of the program.<sup>9</sup> Since then, the program continues to enable youth of all socio-economic backgrounds to move around the city for school, work, and recreation with minimal transportation barriers. For the city of San Francisco, this program has also helped address broader issues like the politics of austerity, budget cuts, and the affordability crisis confronting San Francisco's working class and immigrant communities.<sup>10</sup>

### **A Case for Free Access to BART in SF**

Expansion of a fare-free program for youth to include BART stops within the city would be a significant enhancement. San Francisco has eight BART stops serving diverse communities and youth populations. These stations connect neighborhoods that are often less connected by MUNI, and transit. Currently, a youth traveling from Mission to Downtown would have free access to Muni, but riding BART would cost them at least \$2.50 one way. For many youth, travel cost is a deterrent to accessing other city programs, services, and recreational activities that would enhance their civic participation, enable connections with other youth, and even increase physical activity.

If the city is moving towards an integrated transit system,<sup>11</sup> to make transit more accessible and to achieve environmental and climate goals through reduction in car dependence, then piloting this

<sup>7</sup> Riggs, William and Escobar, Jesse, Opportunities to Expand Transit Ridership Among Youth: Lessons from San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (December 31, 2021). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3998565> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3998565>

<sup>8</sup> Riggs, W. *Disruptive Transport: Driverless Cars, Transport Innovation and the Sustainable City of Tomorrow*. Routledge, London, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Bay City News, "Expanded Free Muni for Youth Program to Start Aug. 15," NBC Bay Area, July 12, 2021, <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/free-muni-for-youth-program-to-expand-to-include-youth-19-and-under/2592246/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Free MUNI for Youth," Urban Habitat, <https://urbanhabitat.org/campaigns/free-muni-youth/>.

<sup>11</sup> Sebastian Petty, "Three Years of Progress Toward a More Integrated Transit System," SPUR, January 21, 2026, <https://www.spur.org/news/2026-01-21/three-years-progress-toward-more-integrated-transit-system>.

system integration by extending free BART access within SF to youth would be a way to test out this idea.

BART already offers reduced youth fares, recognizing that youth need lower costs. The infrastructure already exists as Youth Clipper cards are currently used systemwide. The Clipper card is already designed to include a monthly option that offers unlimited access to Muni and BART within city limits.<sup>12</sup> It would also be important to consider the equity and opportunity benefits as well as to see this as an investment in future ridership and system sustainability.

Mobility within one's own city should not depend on which transit agency operates the service. Youth should be able to choose the most efficient route without economic penalty. True transportation equity means youth can move throughout San Francisco without cost barriers on any public transit system.

## ADVERTISE SUBSIDIZED CLIPPER CARDS

### Background

Clipper START is a program under SFMTA that allows riders ages 19-64 with an annual income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty level to receive a 50% discount on all Clipper single fare rides. However, the program is not well-known across the city and could benefit from campaigns to reach those who are eligible for it. By advertising this pre-existing program, San Francisco has the opportunity to support those in need, strengthen SFMTA's user base, and help curb fare evasion.

In particular, this program could benefit Transitional Aged Youth, or TAY. This age group spans the transition between childhood and adulthood and carries the responsibilities that come with it, such as entering the workforce and securing housing.<sup>13</sup> TAY in San Francisco are often unsupported in city measures, with more recent advocacy leading to more TAY-centered housing and healthcare. Transit is not an area where they have received support thus far.

In November, SFMTA reported ridership to be at 82%<sup>14</sup> of pre-pandemic levels, an incredible improvement in recent years. At the same time, the numbers of adult passes purchased have not risen simultaneously. In 2024, SFMTA reported that pre-pandemic levels of fare evasion were around 12%. In 2024, they were calculated around 20%<sup>15</sup> and were still growing. According to Mission Local,<sup>16</sup> some riders choose not to pay due to a sense of culture; others are not able to afford adult passes. Clipper START and other subsidized Clipper Cards specific to age are viable solutions to encourage more people to pay.

<sup>12</sup> "Fares," SFMTA, accessed May 10, 2026, <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/muni/fares>.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Gómez, MSW and Mark Courtney, PhD, *Employment and Earnings Outcomes Among Transition-Age Youth in Care* (University of California, Berkeley, 2024), <https://ccwip.berkeley.edu/TAY/articles-memos/TAY-Hub%20Employment%20and%20Earnings%20Outcomes%20-%20Report%202.14.24.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Kasia Pawlowska, "SF Muni Is Making a Comeback," SFGATE, November 5, 2025, <https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/sf-muni-ridership-nears-pre-pandemic-levels-21140811.php>.

<sup>15</sup> Melissa Culross, "Paying Our 'Fare' Share: Fare Compliance and Enforcement on Muni," SFMTA, May 10, 2024, <https://www.sfmta.com/blog/paying-our-%E2%80%9Cfare%E2%80%9D-share-fare-compliance-and-enforcement-muni>.

<sup>16</sup> Christina A. Macintosh, "Has Fare Evasion on Muni Become the New Norm?," Mission Local, March 14, 2023, <https://missionlocal.org/2023/03/has-fare-evasion-on-sfs-muni-become-the-new-norm/>.

## **Impact of Free & Subsidized Transit**

Since the start of the Free Muni for All Youth program, SFMTA has found<sup>17</sup> that exposure to public transportation from an early age decreases later car dependency and leads to continued use of public transportation later in life. By making public transportation free for youth, and therefore more accessible, San Francisco has effectively created a legacy of future users. After Bart and AC Transit upped their Clipper START discount from 20% to 50%, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission reported that both saw sharp upticks in usership, increasing ridership and accessibility.<sup>18</sup>

## **Recommendations**

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

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

1. Provide funding for Free Muni for All Youth for FY 2026-2027 and FY 2027-2028.
2. Find a permanent source of funding for Free Muni for All Youth, including FMFAY in the SFMTA baseline budget.
3. Explore making San Francisco Unified School District student identification cards compatible with Clipper.
  - a. 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 with proof of fare.

### **Expand Free Muni for All Youth to include Transitional-Aged Youth (19-24)**

1. Urge SFMTA to conduct a TAY ridership survey and fiscal study to evaluate the potential impact of expanding Free Muni for All Youth eligibility to include Transitional-Aged Youth ages 19 to 24.
2. Pilot or phase in expansion by increasing the eligible age cap, beginning with 19-year-olds and incrementally increasing eligibility to age 24, while maintaining the simplicity and accessibility of the current program.
3. Implement eligibility through automatic age verification using government-issued or school-issued identification, allowing youth to access benefits via physical Clipper cards or digital wallet platforms, including Apple Pay and Google Pay.

### **Expand Free Youth Transit to include BART in San Francisco**

<sup>17</sup> SFMTA, "Young People to Ride Muni for Free."

<sup>18</sup> RNM Council, "Clipper START Program Update," August 25, 2025,

[https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/meetings/attachments/6406/3a\\_25\\_1060\\_2\\_Presentation\\_ClipperSTARTUpdate\\_0.pdf?cb=4297faca](https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/meetings/attachments/6406/3a_25_1060_2_Presentation_ClipperSTARTUpdate_0.pdf?cb=4297faca).

1. In the short term, BART could pilot this free program to enable a fiscal assessment of the actual cost of extending free access to youth within San Francisco.
2. Urge the BART Board of Directors to establish universal free BART access for youth at all San Francisco stations and amend San Francisco’s transportation equity policies to provide fare-free BART access for all youth 18 and under at the eight BART stations within San Francisco city limits.
3. Urge the BART Board of Directors to integrate free BART into the existing youth Clipper card system through an automatic enrollment process for youth 18 and under, consistent with the Free Muni model adopted in 2021.
4. Urge the BART Board of Directors to pilot this integrated transportation system with youth with clear metrics for identifying success, such as assessing youth BART ridership overall and by home neighborhood, and tracking mobility patterns and travel times to schools, programs, and other opportunities.

### **Advertise Subsidized Clipper Cards**

1. **Urge the SFTMA to partner with the San Francisco Human Services Agency** to advertise Clipper START and age-specific Clipper Card subsidies across their nine offices and in support centers such as:
  - a. Soup kitchens
  - b. Homeless shelters
  - c. Food pantries
  - d. Drop-in centers
  - e. TAY-specific centers and shelters
  - f. Other non-profits that serve families
2. **Urge the SFMTA to advertise Clipper START and age-specific Clipper Card subsidies**<sup>19</sup>
  - a. On Queen, Tail, and Interior Car Card locations on city buses, as well as in transit shelters and Muni stations;
  - b. At City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and the University of San Francisco.
  - c. In low-income neighborhoods through mail advertisements, billboards, and posters.

<sup>19</sup> “Advertise on Muni,” SFMTA, accessed May 10, 2026, <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/muni/advertise-muni>.

## IMPROVE SFUSD EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to address the educational outcomes within San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) while strengthening comprehensive sexual health education. Academic inequities and short-term sexual health instruction continue to affect all students in San Francisco, especially those in low-income communities.*

### Background

Education has been failing students, not just in San Francisco and California, but nationwide. As of 2022, 40% of 4th graders and nearly a third of 8th graders are reading below the “basic” level, meaning that they struggle to understand the meaning of basic words, have a hard time answering simple factual information presented in the written text, and cannot read with enough fluency to get through the material on time and answer questions.<sup>1</sup> About 39% of 4th graders, 28% of 8th graders, and 22% of 12th graders were considered proficient or advanced in math in 2024.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a report from *It's On Us* found that just 45% of college men received sexual assault prevention training, and only 24% learned about dating, sex, and relationships in their K - 12 education.<sup>3</sup> In California, only 45% of its 48,000 students meet grade-level expectations (just 11% of Black students and 17% of Latino students are at grade level in math). Despite those low numbers, it's actually doing *better* than the state average, where only 36% of students are at grade level in math.<sup>4</sup> Although addressing national educational disparities is beyond our reach, strengthening educational opportunities in SFUSD schools can improve student outcomes.

### SFUSD's Accountability

Even though these statistics are alarming, SFUSD has taken steps to improve the education it provides for students in grades K-8. Recently, they implemented Math (Imagine Learning Illustrative Math), which focuses on problem-based learning, conceptual understanding (the why), real-world application, digital tools, and collaboration. Secondly, SFUSD has implemented Literacy (Intro Reading / EL Education), a research-backed program that builds foundational skills and vocabulary through daily reading and writing. The new curriculum is a shift toward a proven, evidence-based approach to instruction.<sup>5</sup> After piloting the curriculum in 2023, in middle and elementary schools, SFUSD saw real results: Students using the new curriculum outperformed those using the old curriculum on standardized tests.<sup>6</sup> Lisa Levin, Supervisor of Elementary English Language Arts at SFUSD, states that SFUSD “wants every student to have similar access to knowledge. It shouldn't be dependent on how long a teacher has been teaching or whatever

<sup>1</sup> "State Achievement - Level Results," The Nation's Report Card, <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/mathematics/states/achievement/?grade=8>.

<sup>2</sup> "What Percentage of Students in the US Are Proficient in Math?," USAFacts, <https://usafacts.org/answers/what-percentage-of-students-in-the-us-are-proficient-in-math/>.

<sup>3</sup> Nadra Nittle, "'They're Just Not Enough': Students Push to Improve Sexual Assault Prevention Trainings for College Men," The Hechinger Report, last modified October 27, 2023, <https://hechingerreport.org/theyre-just-not-enough-students-push-to-improve-sexual-assault-prevention-trainings-for-college-men/evidence-basedresearch-backed>.

<sup>4</sup> "New Math Curriculum Approved by SFUSD, Where Just 45% Are at Grade Level," grow SF, last modified August 8, 2025, <https://growsf.org/news/2025-08-08-sfUSD-math/>.

<sup>5</sup> Maria Su, "SFSUD Focused on Fundamentals as School Year Begins," *San Francisco Examiner*, last modified August 17, 2025, [https://www.sfoxaminer.com/forum/sfUSD-focused-on-fundamentals-as-2025-26-school-year-begins/article\\_etc347c8-03ae-4ff8-81ab-cde4ba9c0863.html](https://www.sfoxaminer.com/forum/sfUSD-focused-on-fundamentals-as-2025-26-school-year-begins/article_etc347c8-03ae-4ff8-81ab-cde4ba9c0863.html).

<sup>6</sup> Su, "SFSUD Focused," *San Francisco Examiner*.

resources are present in a certain school.”<sup>7</sup> This new curriculum has proven to be effective and has dramatically improved students' test scores.

Along with switching the SFUSD curriculum, Mayor Lurie and SFUSD recently announced that SFUSD children will have more access to one-on-one tutors. SFUSD is now expanding tutoring reach to over 2,700 students, trying to improve third-grade literacy. Access to one-on-one tutors for students is effective. In one-on-one sessions, tutors devote nearly all instructional and relational interactions to a single student.<sup>8</sup> Research finds that one-on-one tutoring nearly doubled impacts on literacy outcomes compared to tutoring two students at a time.<sup>9</sup> Research also reveals that one-on-one tutoring supports personalization, providing greater customization to students' academic needs, and increased use of encouragement.<sup>10</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

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

- 1. Support SFUSD's newly rolled out curriculum** – SFUSD is improving its curriculum to inclusively and effectively teach foundational skills to its diverse student body.<sup>11</sup> The Mayor and Board of Supervisors can support this effort by allocating city funding to ensure schools have updated instructional materials and technology needed for implementation. They can fund professional development, so teachers receive high-quality training on the new curriculum, particularly in literacy and math instruction. This will allow for students in SFUSD to perform to the best of their academic ability.
- 2. Support SFUSD's new 1:1 tutoring program and advocate for equity guardrails** – 1:1 tutoring has proven to be effective for all students, and with SFUSD's new implementation of 1:1 tutoring for their students will greatly impact children's learning and overall education as tutoring is customized to support an individual student's needs. We can further support this by advocating for equity-focused implementation, increased student awareness, better resources for multilingual students, and 1:1 tutoring access during the school day.
- 3. Support the expansion of on-site CBO partnerships that offer academic support through increased funding** – On-site community-based organizations, such as the Community Youth Center (CYC), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and the Richmond Neighborhood Center, provide accessible tutoring, mentoring, and academic resources. Expanding these partnerships by increasing city contracts with CBOs to staff school campuses, ensuring that students have consistent support during school as well as after school.

<sup>7</sup> "SFUSD Adopts," Spark SF Public Schools

<sup>8</sup> Stanford Graduate School of Education, "Why One - on - One Tutoring Works," Stanford, Scale Initiative Accelerator for Learning, last modified January 16, 2026, <https://scale.stanford.edu/news/why-one-one-tutoring-works>.

<sup>9</sup> Stanford Graduate School of Education, "Why One - on - One Tutoring," Stanford, Scale Initiative Accelerator for Learning.

<sup>10</sup> Stanford Graduate School of Education, "Why One - on - One Tutoring," Stanford, Scale Initiative Accelerator for Learning.

<sup>11</sup> SFUSD Adopts a New Literacy Curriculum," Spark SF, the Public Schools, <https://www.sparksfpublicschools.org/new-page-5>

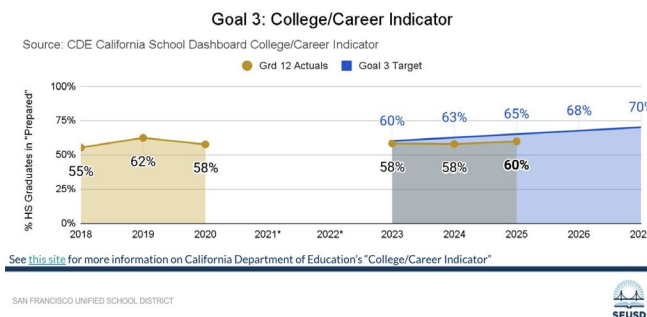
## INCREASING COLLEGE ACCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND TRANSITIONAL-AGE YOUTH

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to sustain funding for existing community-based organizations providing college support, grants for community colleges, and resource centers for transitional-aged youth. Additionally, the San Francisco Youth Commission calls on the City and County of San Francisco to urge SFUSD to maintain staffing for College Ambassadors to ensure critical support for first-generation and low-income students.*

### Background

Under the San Francisco Unified School District’s Vision, Values, Goals, and Guardrails (VVG), SFUSD has a goal for all 12th graders to reach 70% of college/career readiness by June 2027.<sup>1</sup> College/Career readiness is measured by completing UC/CSU A-G requirements with a “C” or higher completion, in Dual Enrollment, Career Technical Education (CTE), Advanced Placement (AP), State Seal of Biliteracy, Special Education, and Work-Based Learning, JROTC, or Apprenticeship.<sup>2</sup> These metrics are established by the California Department of Education.<sup>3</sup> On February 24, 2026, SFUSD updated that 60% of 12th graders, which is deemed as “off track” in their VVG goal. The VVG framework tracks readiness across grade levels, encouraging early exposure to college and career pathways in middle school, monitoring progress toward A–G completion and career exploration in grades 9–10, and supporting advanced coursework, dual enrollment, and postsecondary planning in grades 11–12.<sup>4,5</sup>

Achieving college/career readiness requires the necessary funding for college access programs and academic support. Low-income communities lack access to college preparation support, including academic advising, college counseling, and college exploration, which creates disproportionate impacts on graduation rates. In San Francisco, Chinatown has a 23% college graduation rate, Bayview–Hunters Point 27%, and the Tenderloin 36%.<sup>6</sup>



In 2023, SFUSD had a graduation rate of 88.3%, where 20% of the class of 2023 enrolled in one University of California (UC) college; 60% of the UC student body is first-generation and low-

<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “SFUSD Progress Monitoring Report Goal 3 College and Career Readiness Measures,” San Francisco Unified School District, February 25, 2025

<sup>2</sup> SFUSD. “CCR SFUSD Monitoring Report April 2023.PDF.” Google Drive, April 2023. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v-r4Yvq2cYTufQnE5q78wy3oOPZ\\_hGo5/view?pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v-r4Yvq2cYTufQnE5q78wy3oOPZ_hGo5/view?pli=1).

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Education, “College/Career Indicator,” California School Dashboard and System of Support, accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardccr.asp>

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “2026 Progress Monitoring Report – Goal 3: College and Career Readiness,” Board of Education presentation, February 24, 2026, [https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/files/DRG25S0089EA/\\$file/%5BBOE%20Final%20-%2020260219%5D%2020260224%20PMR%20-%20Goal%203.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/files/DRG25S0089EA/$file/%5BBOE%20Final%20-%2020260219%5D%2020260224%20PMR%20-%20Goal%203.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Unified School District, “2026 Progress Monitoring Presentation – Goal 3: College and Career Readiness,” Board of Education presentation, February 24, 2026, [https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/files/DRG25P008780/\\$file/%5BBOE%20Final%20-%2020260219%5D%2020260224%20PMR%20Presentation%20-%20Goal%203.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/sfusd/Board.nsf/files/DRG25P008780/$file/%5BBOE%20Final%20-%2020260219%5D%2020260224%20PMR%20Presentation%20-%20Goal%203.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Jiyun Tsai, “One in Three Homes in This San Francisco Neighborhood Lives Below the Poverty Line,” The San Francisco Standard, December 8, 2022

income.<sup>7</sup> For SFUSD’s Class of 2025, 41% of students attended a four-year college. Below is the breakdown for students who attended different types of colleges:

- 2-year; 1,094 students
- 4-year in-state public; 1,412 students
- 4-year in-state private; 96 students
- 4-year out-of-state public; 82 students
- 4-year out-of-state private; 101 students

Being first-generation means that neither of a student’s parents has graduated from college, and low-income status indicates that a student’s household income is below 200% of the federal poverty line. In SFUSD, 48.6% are low-income, but only 40.2% of students have “college readiness.”<sup>9</sup> College readiness means completing UC/CSU A-G requirements with a “C” or higher completion, in Dual Enrollment, Career Technical Education (CTE), Advanced Placement (AP), State Seal of Biliteracy, Special Education and Work Based Learning, JROTC, or Apprenticeship.<sup>10</sup> College access disparities reflect the need for focused high school support, especially in low-income communities of color. Community organizations, SFUSD, individual schools, colleges, and city departments such as DCYF need sustained funding to support student-centered programs that expand college preparation, advising, and awareness.<sup>11</sup>

## High School Support

In SFUSD, high school counselors face incredibly demanding caseloads. While the American School Counselor Association recommends a student-to-counselor/head counselor ratio of 250:1, for the 2025-2026 School Year, the average SFUSD high school student-to-counselor/head counselor ratio is 288:1. This does not include alternative/county schools. For the 2026-2027 School Year, shifts will cause increased caseloads for counselors. The contractual student-to-counselor/head counselor ratio is up to 450:1.<sup>12</sup> For every student, counselors provide support with class advising, scheduling, credit recovery, truancy, graduation, college applications, in addition to attending school-based events and working beyond their paid hours to support students. In high schools like Washington and Lowell, counselors don’t get paid for their college and career guidance since these responsibilities fall outside of their contracts. Yet, students need college support, so staffing shortages force counselors to take on excessive workloads, which can lead to burnout and fatigue.<sup>13</sup> In addition to high school counselors, several high schools have active college and career rooms or centers, where staff from community-based organizations such as the Japanese Community Youth Council or community volunteers provide career mentoring, college essay writing support, and financial aid support.

Additionally, 12 of 17 high schools, have college ambassadors, which is a paid position by SFUSD to support low-income, youth of color with college applications, post-high school options, financial aid, scholarships, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) dual enrollment classes, and

<sup>7</sup> SFUSD Cuts, Closure Talk, and a Strike Threat: Here Comes 2026, The Frisc (Dec. 19, 2025), <https://thefrisc.com/sfusd-cuts-closure-talk-and-a-strike-threat-here-comes2026/>

<sup>8</sup> Admissions by source school, University of California Information Center (updated Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/admissions-source-school>

<sup>9</sup> California School Dashboard – Academic Engagement Report (2023), California Department of Education, <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/3868478000000/2023/academic-engagement>

<sup>10</sup> SFUSD. “CCR SFUSD Monitoring Report April 2023.PDF.” Google Drive, April 2023. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v-r4Yvq2cYTufQnE5q78wy3oOPZ\\_hGo5/view?pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v-r4Yvq2cYTufQnE5q78wy3oOPZ_hGo5/view?pli=1).

<sup>11</sup> FirstGen, University of California Student Success (updated 2025), <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/student-success/firstgen>

<sup>12</sup> “School Counselor Roles & Ratios - American School Counselor Association (ASCA),” n.d. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/about-school-counseling/school-counselor-roles-ratios>.

<sup>13</sup> TaRael Kee, “Protecting Your Mental and Physical Health to Avoid Burnout,” *American School Counselor Association Newsletter*, April 2020, <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Newsletters/May-2020/Protecting-Your-Mental-and-Physical-Health-to-Avoi?st=NE>

anything else college/postsecondary access related. SFUSD prioritizes placing College Ambassadors at school sites with few (or none) community-based organizations supporting students with college access, such as Wallenberg. SFUSD also prioritizes higher percentages of historically underrepresented college-bound students, including pregnant/parenting students at Hilltop High School.

## TRIO Programs

TRIO Programs are federal outreach and student service programs that support youth in right sectors, including low-income individuals and first-generation college students. Since 1995, the TRIO Upward Bound grant has funded the Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC) to serve students in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).<sup>14</sup> JCYC serves 150 high schoolers through the Upward Bound program, and 1,865 students through the Education Talent Search Program. Both programs serve four SFUSD high schools. The \$2.6 million in TRIO grants supports services across 13 SFUSD High Schools, supporting 3,000 first-generation, low-income students. JCYC ETS covers approximately one-third of the senior class.<sup>15</sup>



At schools, JCYC programming aims to reach as many students as possible. TRIO funding enables JCYC staff to organize events such as financial aid workshops that deliver critical information and support for federal aid like the FAFSA and CSS Profile; provide merit scholarship opportunities; and lead college field trips—an integral part of the college exploration process that helps students identify their best-fit in college beyond name recognition or geographical familiarity.<sup>16</sup> Survey data reveal that around 69% of high school students who visit a campus and enjoy their experience significantly increase their interest in college.<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup>

In October 2025, the federal administration’s DEI team closed 120 grants for TRIO programs, affecting 43,600 students nationwide.<sup>19</sup> While JCYC has not been affected, future federal funding threats are possible. Due to their current limited budget, they have collaborated with other CBOs to increase their college access programming.

In the long term, the Japanese Community Youth Council Educational Talent Search Program hopes to onboard more staff to continue providing grade-specific college access programming, college matriculation services for graduating seniors, and connecting students to JCYC's workforce development programming. Some staff have also expressed hopes to attain free CSU waivers for non-qualifying students. These efforts would encourage students who are right on the cusp of being four-year eligible to apply.

<sup>14</sup> *Our Impact*, JCYCC College Access, <https://www.jcyccollegeaccess.org/our-impact>

<sup>15</sup> *About JCYC*, The College Center (JCYC), <https://sites.google.com/jcyc.org/thecollegecenter/about-jcyc>

<sup>16</sup> *Journey to College: Why Visiting Colleges is a Critical Piece of the Application Process*, Student Leadership Network, <https://www.studentleadershipnetwork.org/journey-to-college-visiting-colleges/>

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Smith, Jessica Howell, and Michael Hurwitz, *The Impact of College Outreach on High Schoolers’ College Choices: Results from Over One Thousand Natural Experiments* (College Board, 2022), <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Impact%20of%20College%20Outreach%20on%20Student%20Choices.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Niche, “Effectiveness of Recruiting Travel and Campus Visits in 2023,” Niche Instant Insights, 2023, <https://www.niche.com/about/enrollment-insights/effectiveness-recruiting-travel-campus-visits-2023/>

<sup>19</sup> Johanna Alonso, *Trump’s DEI Crackdown Closes 120 TRIO Programs*, Inside Higher Ed (Oct. 27, 2025),

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/traditional-age/2025/10/27/trumps-dei-crackdown-closes-120-trio-programs>

For Transitional Age Youth (TAY), TRIO programs offer vital, all-encompassing support to tackle systemic and academic obstacles to college persistence and access. At San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco, TRIO provides stable mentorship, personalized advising, and support with financial aid, enrollment, and academic planning for TAY youth who may lack consistent family or institutional guidance. These services support students in establishing long-term learning objectives and accessing resources like professional development that help them succeed in college.

## **Student Success Fund**

The San Francisco Student Success Fund (SSF), a city-created grant program established by voters under Prop G in 2020, intended to improve student outcomes through academic support, social-emotional interventions, and strategies that address challenges related to poverty and trauma. While the SSF is not exclusively for college preparation programming, increasing language in the fund to support college readiness initiatives are important component of academic support and strategies to address poverty.

## **Increased Support for Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Students**

SFUSD high school students can enroll in college-level courses and earn transferable credits before graduation through dual and concurrent enrollment, effective college preparation tactics.<sup>20</sup> Dual enrollment provides many students, particularly those from first-generation or low-income families, with an early introduction to college expectations, academic rigor, and campus procedures. Concurrent enrollment enables high school students to take CCSF courses in addition to their coursework, asynchronously and in-person. Completing these courses successfully reduces the time and expense needed to obtain a college degree while also boosting academic skills and confidence. During the 2024-2025 school year, 1,265 SFUSD students registered for Dual Enrollment courses, and 1,159 completed them.

To effectively support youth in continuing and completing dual and concurrent enrollment, schools and partner organizations can provide clear incentives and structured support. Academic advising to help students choose suitable courses, frequent progress checks, study assistance or tutoring for difficult assignments, and a stipend that recognizes the extra work needed to juggle high school and college coursework are all included. To keep students from becoming overwhelmed, it's also essential to provide them with guidance on navigating college platforms, deadlines, and credit transfers.<sup>21</sup>

## **CCSF Free City Program**

Established by San Francisco voters by Prop W in 2016, the City College Free City Program was launched in 2017 and has enabled all San Francisco residents to have free tuition and admission to City College.<sup>22</sup> In 2019, Free City was renewed for full funding for the next 10 years.<sup>23</sup> Eligible

<sup>20</sup> City College of San Francisco, "Concurrent Enrollment," accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.ccsf.edu/academics/high-school-programs/concurrent-enrollment>

<sup>21</sup> *College Access Team*, San Francisco Unified School District, <https://www.sfusd.edu/college-access-team>

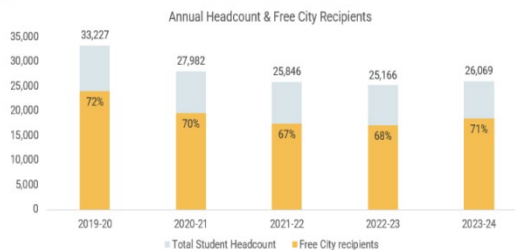
<sup>22</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Free City Annual Report 2023–2024 (San Francisco: Free City College Program Oversight Committee, October 29, 2024), <https://media.api.sfgov.org/documents/Free-City-Annual-Report-FINAL-10.29.24.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Memorandum of Understanding – San Francisco Community College District: Use of San Francisco City College Enrollment Fee Assistance Fund, Not to Exceed \$11,233,904, Resolution (File No. 171069), Board of Supervisors, passed November 22, 2017, accessed March 1, 2026, <https://sfgov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3180622&GUID=9FDB5CE4-8C43-4378-B236-D7174D689177>

students can also access the California College Promise Grant and receive Free City Cash each semester to help cover textbooks and essential expenses, reflecting CCSF’s commitment to financial equity.<sup>24,25,26</sup>

In 2023–2024, more than 26,000 students enrolled for credit at CCSF, including 18,500 Free-City eligible students (representing 92% of the student body). Participation rates were especially strong among students identifying as non-binary (96%) and female (93%), exceeding the college-wide average. The program also reaches historically under-resourced neighborhoods, including Ingleside, Excelsior, Crocker-Amazon (14%), Visitation Valley, Sunnyside (7%) and Bayview–Hunters Point (7%).<sup>27</sup>

### Annual Headcount



### Top Zip Codes of Free City Students

San Francisco zip/Neighborhood	% of Free City Students in the zip code
94112 - Ingleside/Excelsior/Crocker-Amazon	14%
94110 - Inner Mission/Bernal Heights	9%
94134 - Visitation Valley/Sunnyside	7%
94124 - Bayview/Hunters Point	7%
94122 - Sunset	6%
94116 - Parkside/Forest Hill	5%
94103 - South of Market	5%
94121 - Outer Richmond	4%
94109 - Polk Gulch/Russian Hill/Nob Hill	4%
94132 - Lake Merced/Stonestown	4%
94102 - Hayes Valley/Tenderloin/North of Market	4%
94118 - Inner Richmond	4%

Note: Remaining zip codes have less than 2% each

Figure 7. Proportion of Free City Participants by San Francisco Zip Code, 2022-2023

### Free City Participation among New, Continuing, Returning Students by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	New	Continuing	Returning
American Indian or Alaska Native	--	--	--
Asian	92%	96%	92%
Black or African American	84%	94%	88%
Filipino	93%	97%	90%
Latino/a/x	87%	94%	90%
Middle Eastern	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	90%	98%	77%
Two or more races	89%	96%	90%
Unknown/ Not reported	89%	97%	89%
White	90%	96%	82%

In 2030, the program is up for renewal. Setting aside city funding from the general fund is vital support in bridging higher educational pathways for San Franciscans.

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programming

City College offers a wide range of CTE programs. One such program is CityBuild, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, which trains students for careers in the building trades. Additionally, Crankstart, a community organization, is funding \$1.5 million over two years for a pilot program aimed at SFPD pre-academy training and construction pre-apprenticeship programs.<sup>28</sup>

CCSF also offers specialized CTE programs in biotechnology, providing students with hands-on training in lab technician and assistant roles in the Bay Area. The programs include an A.S. degree, certifications, and the "Bridge to Bioscience" program for beginners. Expanding funding from

<sup>24</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Ordinance No. 175-19: Administrative Code – City College Financial Assistance Fund (File No. 190730, amended in committee July 8, 2019), <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/o0175-19.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> City and County of San Francisco, “Board of Supervisors Unanimously Passes Legislation from Mayor Breed and Supervisor Gordon Mar to Fully Fund Free City College,” press release, July 17, 2019, <https://www.sf.gov/news--board-supervisors-unanimously-passes-legislation-mayor-breed-and-supervisor-gordon-mar-fully>

<sup>26</sup> City College of San Francisco, “Free City,” accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.ccsf.edu/free-city>

<sup>27</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Free City Annual Report 2023–2024 (San Francisco: Free City College Program Oversight Committee, October 29, 2024), <https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Free-City-Annual-Report-FINAL-10.29.24.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> City College of San Francisco, “CityBuild Academy,” accessed March 1, 2026, <https://www.ccsf.edu/academics/career-education/citybuild-academy>

local tech companies, especially those in San Francisco's financial district, could allow more youth to gain access to these opportunities.

In January 2026, Mayor Lurie signed the Family Opportunity Agenda, a plan to expand programs for families such as child care, education, and economic recovery. Specifically, in partnership with SFUSD, high school juniors earn associate degrees and industry certifications in City College for free. Beyond SFUSD High School Pathways, students gain hands-on career exploration and early exposure to college education rigor. Sustaining CTE programs enable youth to have more career exploration and workforce pipeline opportunities.

## Community-Based Organizations

In the Excelsior and Mission, Mission Graduates provides academic development and college preparation for low-income Latinx, Black, and newcomer youth.<sup>29</sup> However, they are operating only on one grant from DCYF – their only source of funding – to support hundreds of youth.

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

Breakthrough Summerbridge provides middle school students with a tuition-free summer program to strengthen skills in math, humanities, and science while building social-emotional growth. The program offers high school students opportunities to explore electives, participate in enrichment workshops, and engage in college-prep activities to support long-term academic success.



Despite all three programs' impact, they received \$0 in RFP funding.<sup>30313233</sup>

## Recommendations

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

### High School Support:

- Maintain funding for community-based organizations** such as the Japanese Community Youth Council, Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, and Cal-SOAP; Mission Graduates; Boys and Girls Club; Breakthrough San Francisco and Breakthrough Summerbridge; and CollegeTrack that work closely with youth in communities that are

<sup>29</sup> "Mission Graduates | Making College the Expectation for Mission Youth and Families," Mission Graduates, January 4, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Children, Youth, and Families. "DCYF Request For Proposals." SF.gov, 2023. <https://www.sf.gov/resource--2024--dcyf-request-proposals>.

<sup>31</sup> DCYF. "Proposal Score Report: Breakthrough Summerbridge." Proposal Score Report, 2023. <https://apps.dcyf.org/proposals/57437429.html>.

<sup>32</sup> DCYF. "Proposal Score Report: Boys and Girls Club College Prep." Proposal score report, 2023. <https://apps.dcyf.org/proposals/57189792.html>.

<sup>33</sup> DCYF. "Proposal Score Report: Student Success Coaches Mission Graduates." Proposal score report, 2023. <https://apps.dcyf.org/proposals/57386031.html>.

predominantly low-income and people of color. To prepare for potential federal cuts to TRIO programs, organizations like JCYC need expanded staffing capacities and resources to continue providing necessary grade-specific college access programming and college matriculation services for graduating seniors. When fiscally responsible, community organizations can further fund incentives for higher education, like CSU waivers for non-qualifying students.

2. **Recommend DCYF to expand funding for school counseling support through the Student Success Fund.** Funding materials, material outreach, and school-based initiatives that encourage college access enables students across SFUSD, particularly those from low-income communities and communities of color, to receive crucial support in persisting and navigating through the college admissions process. Expanding the Student Success Fund criteria for college-related items would stabilize and sustain essential school-based and community-based supports that directly impact postsecondary outcomes.
3. **Recommend SFUSD with the following budget priorities:**
  - a. **Increase and prioritize funding for counseling staff positions across all SFUSD High Schools.** Counselors are central to high school operations. The current 288:1, and possible 450:1 student-to-counselor/head counselor ratio does not give flexibility for students to get individualized support and can incredibly burn out counselors, as they often work outside of their working hours to meet deadlines for college reports, recommendations, and tracking school-site specific education goals. By increasing counselor positions, students can gain individualized college support to make informed decisions for their educational future.
  - b. **Address contracting responsibilities within SFUSD staff that provide college and career funding.** Counselors should not have to take on college and career support responsibilities unpaid. They should be compensated for all their duties in their contracts.
  - c. **Maintain funding for SFUSD High School Ambassadors** to ensure that underrepresented communities like low-income, first-generation, and parental youth can have continuous staffing, community events, and outreach relating to college access.

#### **TAY Support:**

4. **Protect the CCSF Free City Program.**
5. **Protect CTE and Trade Programs in CCSF**
  - a. Maintain funding for the **CityBuild Program, Crankstart grant funding SFPD pre-academy and construction pre-apprenticeship,** and Biotechnology CCSF pathways.

## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: 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, financial literacy education, employment opportunities, and workplace protections, 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. 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 programs are funded through the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

The Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) funds and coordinates programs that support the academic, social, and economic well-being of children and youth across San Francisco. They support youth employment initiatives such as the Youth Workforce Development,

<sup>1</sup> Jiyun Tsai, "One in Three Homes in This San Francisco Neighborhood Live Below the Poverty Line According to New Census Data," The San Francisco Standard, December 8, 2022, <https://sfstandard.com/2022/12/08/san-francisco-neighborhood-new-census-data-maps/>.

High School Partnerships, and the Mayor’s Education and Employment Program (MYEEP). These programs are essential for not only providing income for youth, but to prepare young people for the workforce by building job readiness, soft skills, and professional communication abilities. Organizations like the Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC) play a critical role in implementing these goals through mentorship and workshops. JCYC creates supportive spaces where youth can learn workplace expectations, develop resumes, and gain hands-on experience.

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.<sup>2</sup> Many programs experienced major budget cuts or even had to stop programming as a result of their lack of funding.

In January 2025, 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>3</sup> This directive has already caused temporary pauses in job postings for youth positions such as summer camp internships and counselor roles with the Recreation and Parks Department. While some postings were ultimately reinstated following review, there is still uncertainty surrounding how much these new hiring measures will impact youth internships and jobs with city departments. With the city continuing to confront shortfalls and departments facing constrained staffing and potential layoffs, there is real risk that future youth jobs, internships, and entry-level programs will be prioritized less, undermining opportunities for young people to gain work experience. Therefore, ensuring stable funding for youth-oriented programs is not only an investment in wellbeing, but a safeguard against the deprioritization of youth job opportunities under fiscal difficulties.

## 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>4</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>5</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

<sup>2</sup> “DCYF 2024-2029 Request for Proposals | SF.gov,” October 11, 2023. <https://www.sf.gov/resource--2024--dcyf-request-proposals>.

<sup>3</sup> Eskenazi, Joe. “San Francisco’s Citywide Hiring Freeze Is Neither Citywide, nor a Hiring Freeze.” Mission Local, January 28, 2025. <https://missionlocal.org/2025/01/citywide-hiring-freeze-daniel-lurie-san-francisco/>.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Hoffman and Robert Schwartz, *Gold Standard: The Swiss Vocational Education and Training System - International Comparative Study of Vocational Education System* (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015), [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-eMZmvgNwLa9jnlNBxI-zcmLmsVs3q6/view?usp=sharing&usp=embed\\_facebook](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-eMZmvgNwLa9jnlNBxI-zcmLmsVs3q6/view?usp=sharing&usp=embed_facebook).

<sup>5</sup> Sally Weale, *Reforms Announced to Vocational T-Levels in England after Slow Uptake*, December 2, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/dec/02/reforms-announced-to-vocational-t-levels-in-england-after-slow-uptake>.

healthcare trades. Approximately 31% of all jobs in San Francisco consist of trade jobs such as construction, transportation, manufacturing, education, and health services.<sup>6</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>7</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.

## **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 their future career. However, those in underserved communities like Hunters Point-Bayview, Mission, Alice & Griffith, Sunnydale, 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>8</sup> To re-emphasize San Francisco's hiring freeze, TAY has been impacted by having difficulty affording the cost of living in San Francisco.

## **Financial Literacy**

Financial literacy is a critical yet often overlooked component of youth workforce development and long-term economic stability. Many young people in San Francisco, particularly BIPOC youth, immigrant youth, foster youth, and youth from low-income and low-wealth households, enter adulthood without access to culturally relevant financial education or practical tools to manage income, credit, savings, and debt. Nearly 30% of SF youth live in families earning below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level, and nearly 47% of families have less than \$2,000 in savings, leaving youth vulnerable to financial insecurity and long-term poverty.<sup>9</sup> Financial insecurity is widespread: nearly 47% of San Francisco families have less than \$2,000 in savings, making it difficult for youth to build financial resilience.<sup>10</sup> While programs like Bank On San Francisco have

<sup>6</sup> "Jobs by Industry - Vital Signs - SF Bay Area," n.d.

<sup>7</sup> "DCYF Community Needs Assessment | SF.gov," January 1, 2022

<sup>8</sup> "2024 Point-in-Time Count | SF.gov," September 6, 2024

<sup>9</sup> City and County of San Francisco, "January 2022 DCYF Community Needs Assessment," City and County of San Francisco, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.sf.gov/reports-january-2022-dcyf-community-needs-assessment>

<sup>10</sup> J.D. Morris, "Nearly Half of San Francisco Families Are Financially Insecure," KQED News, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.kqed.org/news/11785910/nearly-half-of-san-francisco-families-are-financially-insecure>

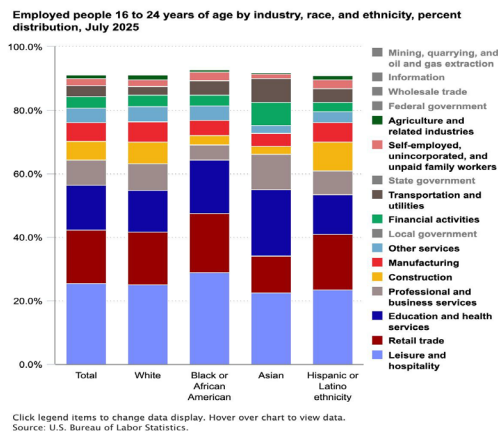
reduced unbanked rates from 15–20% in 2005 to around 5% citywide, disparities persist in low-income communities of color.<sup>11</sup>

In 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 2927, which will require California high schools to offer a semester-long personal finance course beginning in the 2027-28 school year and make that course a graduation requirement by the 2030-31 school year, aiming to give all students essential financial literacy skills before entering adulthood.<sup>12</sup> Local efforts have followed suit: San Francisco based nonprofit MyPath, alongside other community-based organizations such as Mission Asset Fund (MAF), Bay Area Financial Education Foundation (BAFEF), and Junior Achievement, addresses these gaps by providing youth-centered financial education, coaching, banking access support, and tax assistance programs. Through its Youth Economic Bill, MyPath outlines a set of Youth Economic Rights that recognize financial knowledge and economic opportunity as fundamental rights rather than privileges.<sup>13</sup> These rights include the right to a guaranteed income paired with financial education, eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), access to a national model for youth banking, easily accessible credit reports, and quality financial education and coaching embedded within youth employment programs. MyPath’s policy framework emphasizes that financial literacy must be paired with structural support. Integrating financial capability education into youth employment programs allows young people to translate wages into long-term economic stability and wealth-building.

Despite the effectiveness of these approaches, financial literacy programming in San Francisco remains fragmented and underfunded, and is not consistently embedded within schools or workforce development initiatives. Increased investment in youth-centered financial education, particularly through partnerships with the community-based organizations listed above, is necessary to ensure that young people are equipped to manage income, avoid financial harm, and build economic security for themselves, their families, and their communities.

## Workplace Protections

Employment is a critical source of income and financial independence for young people, particularly those supporting themselves or contributing to household expenses. Many youth work part-time during the school year and increase their hours in the summer, when youth employment typically peaks. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 53.1% of 16 to 19-year-olds were employed in July 2025.<sup>14</sup> As of December 2025, 36.6% of workers across the nation are 16–19-year-olds.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>11</sup> City and County of San Francisco Office of Financial Empowerment, *Barriers to Banking Report* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, December 2020), [https://www.sf.gov/ofe/sites/default/files/2020-12/TTX%20Barriers%20to%20Banking%20Report\\_v4.pdf](https://www.sf.gov/ofe/sites/default/files/2020-12/TTX%20Barriers%20to%20Banking%20Report_v4.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, “California to Add Financial Literacy as a Requirement to Graduate High School,” State of California, June 27, 2024, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/06/27/california-to-add-financial-literacy-as-a-requirement-to-graduate-high-school/>

<sup>13</sup> MyPath, “Home,” MyPath US, accessed February 25, 2026, <https://mypathus.org/>

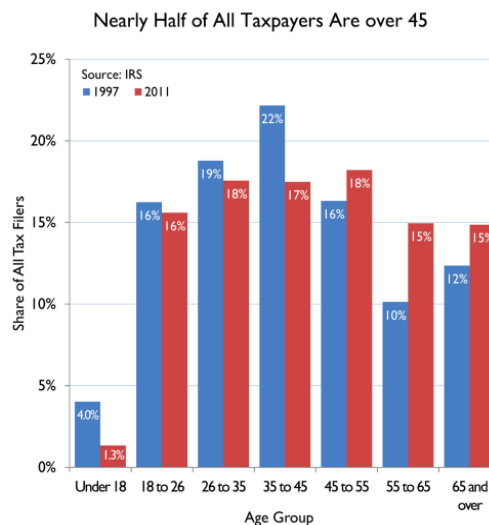
<sup>14</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “For Release 10:00 a.m. (ET) Thursday, August 21, 2025.” News Release Bureau of Labor Statistics US Department of Labor, August 21, 2026. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/youth.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> “Transmission of Material in This News Release Is Embargoed until USDL-26-0169.” News Release Bureau of Labor Statistics US Department of Labor, February 11, 2026. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>.

Under California Law, minors under the age of 18 must have a work permit issued by their schools in order to work.<sup>1617</sup> However, community members have reported incidents of wage theft and inappropriate working conditions, such as mistreatment from employers, including sexual harassment; violations of paid sick leave, overtime protections, and minimum wage laws. Youth workers, many of whom are employed in part-time, seasonal, or summer jobs, often work in industries with high turnover and high rates of labor violations, such as food service and retail. Despite making up a significant portion of the workforce, young workers frequently face unsafe, exploitative conditions. Further, newcomer youth and protections concerning their legal status bars access to safe working conditions.

The Office of Labor Standards Enforcement Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 has limited data about underpayment and workplace protections for youth<sup>18</sup>, which makes it more difficult to track reported cases of workplace violations, risking youth from continued wage theft, unsafe working conditions, and retaliation without adequate oversight or accountability. Additionally, while the OLSE enforces many labor laws<sup>19</sup> including workers' rights<sup>20</sup>, none of them have any specific definitions or mentions of the employee's age.

Filing taxes is another issue youth face in the workplace. Despite holding multiple jobs, tax return services are mainly accessible through community organizations. Even then, the lack of outreach and education is a major issue. Filing taxes has barred many low-income individuals from accessing critical tax benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit. 80% of youth get tax advice from social media, which can mislead youth to make financial decisions.<sup>21</sup> Despite youth making up 13.5% of the U.S. labor force, only 1.3% of people ages 18 and under filed their taxes<sup>22</sup>, resulting in earned income tax credit and withheld wages that eligible young workers could have recovered.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, employee education about filing taxes is a critical component of workplace education.



## Formula Retail

A Formula Retail Establishment is a business with at least 40 stores worldwide and 20 or more employees in San Francisco. In 2014, the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors passed the

<sup>16</sup> California Department of Education. "Frequently Asked Questions: Work Permits." Frequently Asked Questions: Work Permits - Work Experience Education (WEE) (CA Dept of Education), n.d.

<sup>17</sup> California Department of Industrial Relations, State of. "Information on Minors and Employment." Information on minors and employment, December 2020. bar

<sup>18</sup> Office of Labor Standards Enforcement. "CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO Office of Labor Standards Enforcement ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 2025." FY24-25\_OLSE\_Annual\_Report, February 2026. [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Six-Month\\_Report\\_FY24-25\\_FINAL.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Six-Month_Report_FY24-25_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> City and County of San Francisco. Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, n.d. <https://www.sf.gov/departments--office-labor-standards-enforcement>

<sup>20</sup> Office of Labor Standards Enforcement. "Worker Rights in San Francisco." SF.gov. Accessed February 22, 2026. <https://www.sf.gov/worker-rights-san-francisco>.

<sup>21</sup> Jones, Douglas. "Experts Warn Almost 80% of Youth Get Tax Advice from Social Media." Scripps News, March 30, 2023.

<https://www.scrippsnews.com/business/finance/almost-80-of-youth-use-social-media-for-tax-advice>.

<sup>22</sup> English, Jessica. "Question of the Day: How Many Teenagers File Tax Returns?" Question of the day: How many teenagers file tax returns? - blog, April 13, 2015.

<https://www.ngpf.org/blog/question-of-the-day/question-of-the-day-how-many-teenagers-file-tax-returns/>.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, Kathryn Anne, and Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. Economic Policy Institute, April 7, 2010. <https://www.epi.org/>.

Retail Workers' Bill of Rights (RWBOR), also known as Formula Retail Employee Rights Ordinances (FRERO); the city has still not supported specific industry-level implementation efforts. While FRERO establishes protections for workers, such as safeguarding against dismissal, harassment, and other violations, compliance relies heavily on employer initiative.<sup>24</sup> Violations of the RWBOR, including the dismissal of work permits and workplace harassment, can result in youth losing employment opportunities. From community outreach, the consequences of job loss discourage them from reporting unsafe work conditions. Because many employers are motivated by avoiding fines and protecting their business licenses, consistent, proactive oversight, such as random audits of businesses at the state and local levels, can help increase compliance without relying solely on individual complaints.

While work permits are heavily emphasized in locally funded youth employment programs like JCYC and SFUSD-partnered internships and job opportunities, private entities, especially small businesses and food-service sectors (like boba shops), are especially undermonitored. Employers often neglect work permits and workplace protections for youth employees. When employees retaliate by speaking up, employers have responded by cutting hours, reducing shifts, treating workers in a hostile manner, or terminating employment altogether. However, there is a lack of public data on labor enforcement for youth working independently in private entities.

Recently, the passage of California Labor Code 6311 protects workers by shifting the burden of proof on workplace violations from the employee to the employer. Previously, if a worker filed a claim that the boss retaliated, the worker must prove retaliation. Now, if a worker files retaliation, the boss has to prove that they didn't retaliate. Under the new law, workers can refuse to perform work that violates workplace safety standards and prohibit employers from laying off or discharging employees for exercising this right; workers who are retaliated against have the right to recover lost wages.<sup>25</sup>

Community programs that facilitate relationships with OLSE are pivotal in advocating for workers' rights. With the OLSE, the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) advocated with workers to recover \$108,000 in stolen wages from boba and noodle shops. CPA's worker organizing team supported low-income Chinese workers at Little Sweet experiencing unpaid overtime, improper tip distribution, lack of paid sick leave, inadequate breaks, and unsafe working conditions by offering consultations and explaining legal options when filing claims. Ultimately, the choice to take action remained with the workers, and pursuance of complaint filing is rare.<sup>26</sup> They have called for expanded anti-retaliation laws on the local level to ensure that young workers feel safer asserting their rights without fear of losing their jobs. To many workplace organizations, an ideal workplace for youth workers includes clear communication of rights, transparent payroll documentation, safe working conditions, and protection from retaliation. Employers should be aware of youth protections and be required to educate workers about their rights including minimum wage, overtime, and paid sick leave under state and local policies. CPA has noted that workers are especially unaware of sick leave—for every 30 hours worked, workers accrue one hour of paid sick leave.

<sup>24</sup> Office of Labor Standards Enforcement. "Formula Retail Employee Rights Ordinance." SF.gov, 2016. <https://www.sf.gov/information--formula-retail-employee-rights-ordinance>.

<sup>25</sup> FindLaw Staff. "California Code, Labor Code - Lab § 6311.5 | Findlaw." California Code, Labor Code - LAB § 6311, January 1, 2025. [https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/labor-code/lab-sect-6311-be\\_5/](https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/labor-code/lab-sect-6311-be_5/).

<sup>26</sup> Chinese Progressive Association. "Worker Victory: Boba Chain and Noodle Factory Workers Win Back Stolen Wages." Chinese Progressive Association, July 7, 2025. <https://cpasf.org/updates/worker-victory-boba-chain-and-noodle-factory-workers-win-back-stolen-wages/>.

## **The Workers Rights Community Collaborative**

The Workers Rights Community Collaborative is a network of nonprofit organizations that receive city grants to conduct community-based outreach and education on labor rights, including minimum wage and paid sick leave protections. Organizations such as the Chinese Progressive Association are members of this collective and regularly collaborate with OLSE on worker complaints and case support. However, in past fiscal cycles, including Fiscal Year 25-26, the City Administrator’s Office targeted this grant and related contracts for reductions. In Fiscal Year 25-26, the Office of Labor and Standards Enforcement (OLSE) reduced funding for this program by nearly \$400,000, which was roughly half its budget.<sup>27</sup>

Protecting funding for the Workers Rights Community Collaborative is imperative. Contracted community organizations conduct essential outreach to inform workers of their rights in language accessible and culturally relevant ways. This direct partnership also ensures that urgent cases of workplace violations can be addressed efficiently. The Little Sweet boba wage theft case, for example, was a result of coordinated efforts of the Workers Rights Community Collaborative between CPA and the OLSE. Their partnership ensured that worker files, updates, and necessary enforcement steps moved forward.

## **The Office of Labor Standards Enforcement and Youth Outreach**

While the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE) in San Francisco is the city agency responsible for enforcing local labor laws and protecting workers’ rights. They enforce labor laws through investigations of policy violations, audits, and presenting at hearings; public annual fiscal reports; conduct outreach about workers' rights; and negotiate settlements between workers and employees.<sup>28</sup> Since its founding, OLSE has collected approximately \$150 million in worker restitution since its founding.<sup>29</sup> In their past fiscal report, OLSE has resolved 454 cases, affected 17,767 workers, and collected \$21.6 million in wages, benefits, penalties, and restitution, which was returned directly to workers whose rights were violated.<sup>30</sup>

Currently, all of OLSE’s local labor laws are not youth specific. Integrating youth-focused workplace outreach for 16- to 17-year-olds is critical because this age group often enters the workforce without understanding their rights. In conversations with OLSE, with adequate funding, their fully staffed capacity can integrate 16 to 17-year-old youth-focused workplace outreach within their team and in collaboration with organizations in the Workers Rights Community Collaborative. With consistent funding, they can produce outreach materials, coordinate educational events, and review more claims of youth facing workplace violations.

The Mayor’s Youth Education and Employment Program, housed under the Japanese Community Youth Council, provides a strong model for youth workplace safety. MYEEP mandates employee

<sup>27</sup> Rodriguez, Joe Fitzgerald, and Noah Baustin. “Nonprofits Brace for Blood Bath as Lurie Slashes Grant Funding.” The San Francisco Standard, June 5, 2025. <https://sfstandard.com/2025/06/05/daniel-lurie-budget-cuts-san-francisco-nonprofit-grants/>.

<sup>28</sup> City and County of San Francisco. Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, n.d. <https://www.sf.gov/departments--office-labor-standards-enforcement>.

<sup>29</sup> Office of Labor Standards Enforcement. “About the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement.” San Francisco city seal. Accessed February 20, 2026. <https://www.sf.gov/departments--office-labor-standards-enforcement--about>.

<sup>30</sup> Office of Labor Standards Enforcement. “CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO Office of Labor Standards Enforcement ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 2025.” FY24-25\_OLSE\_Annual\_Report, February 2026. [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Six-Month\\_Report\\_FY24-25\\_FINAL.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Six-Month_Report_FY24-25_FINAL.pdf).

and employer education through its handbook (pages 9-13 and p. 20-23),<sup>31</sup> which outlines key youth compliance policies, general safety issues, and the safety checklists. Additionally, their programming includes Job Readiness Training (JRT) workshops,<sup>32</sup> which are delivered to MYEEP participants during the school year. JRT workshops prepare youth workers to recognize unsafe conditions, understand their workplace rights, and report incidents appropriately. Adopting similar safeguards, like MYEEP’s handbook and JRT workshops for employee and employer training, especially in Formula Retail stores, can significantly protect young workers.

## Recommendations

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

- 1. Establish defined pathways for youth who are transitioning to employment in the following ways:**
  - a. Create and strengthen partnerships with SFUSD high schools, career-focused programs or courses in community colleges, trade/vocational schools, and industry employers
  - b. With the Office of Workforce Development, produce reports on youth employment opportunities and outreach and continue hosting youth-focused job fairs with launching new internships, entry-level employment, and apprenticeship opportunities.
- 2. Prioritize Equity into Workforce Development** – Funding workforce programs such as SF Youth Works, MYEEP, and OFA enables them to increase outreach to underserved schools and neighborhoods. As such, youth will have more access to programs that deliver culturally responsive workforce preparation that reflects the unique needs of BIPOC, newcomer, LGBTQ+, and disabled youth.
- 3. Address and dissolve the systemic barriers that prevent youth from reaching employment** – By increasing funding for workforce development wrap-around services, including transportation access, transitional housing, and other barriers that hinder youth employment, youth can have more access to job opportunities. Additionally, expanding funding and partnerships between the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, community-based organizations like MyPath, Project Rebound, YCD, Mission Asset Fund (MAF), Bay Area Financial Education Foundation (BAFEF), and Junior Achievement, and banks like SF Federal Credit Union is imperative to provide culturally responsive financial education and wealth-building resources.
- 4. Prioritize the Workers Rights Community Collaborative**—Outreach and education about workers rights is critical for raising complaints about workplace violations. Community organizations who do this work often bridge language barriers and cultural understanding to restore wage thefts and address workplace violations, fostering stronger workplace environments.

<sup>31</sup> Mayor’s Youth Employment and Education Program, WORKSITE SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK 2025-2026, Mayor’s Youth Employment and Education Program, 2025, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G9mUx7ttgMzZLpmMuqzwaUoXH4vSBn8u/view>

<sup>32</sup> Mayor’s Youth Education and Employment Program, *Keeping The Workplace Safe*, Mayor’s Youth Employment and Education Program, 2020. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u8xJ\\_yh6XQLI3r-oLKetGds5U-qpj1h/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u8xJ_yh6XQLI3r-oLKetGds5U-qpj1h/view)

5. **Recommend the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement to strengthen workplace protection accountability for youth workers by planning and implementing the following:**
  - a. **Gather data to produce a comprehensive report on youth workplace protection violations** affecting youth employed in formula retail, small businesses, and boba shops. The report, written in partnership with community organizations, employers, and youth, should identify strategies to protect young workers and prevent future violations; and include outreach metrics.
  - b. **Mandate Employer training and compliance training on youth-specific trauma-responsive harassment prevention and anti-discrimination workplace protections** to ensure employers are prepared to responsibly and safely work with youth employees. Consider using the MYEEP handbook and workplace safety checklists as a model to create employer training modules.
  - c. **Mandate Employee training about workplace protections** to ensure youth workers are aware of their rights and have the knowledge to advocate for any workplace violations. Training should be language accessible and include information about local and state labor laws; emphasize work permits and workplace communication; and include instructions on how to file a claim. Consider using MYEEP’s workplace safety training to create employee training.
  - d. **Establish work permit verification and oversight for all youth workers** in annual compliance reviews.
  - e. **Expand outreach to 16-17-year-olds.** As a fully staffed office, members of OLSE have expressed interest in expanding workplace protection outreach materials to 16-17 year olds. By integrating youth-friendly outreach, the hope is for more youth to better understand their rights and help prevent workplace violations.
  
6. **Strengthen Formula Retail Workplace protections in the following ways:**
  - a. **Enforce California Labor Code §6311 with youth input and pass Anti-Retaliation Laws in San Francisco**—Given positive responses from community organizations about state law protections, enforcing Anti-Retaliation laws on the local level to emphasize Anti-Retaliation can significantly encourage workers to report complaints.
  - b. **Hold a hearing on the implementation of local FRERO laws** to ensure that retail businesses are compliant with protecting workers, especially youth workers.

# ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN LABOR, POLICING & EDUCATION

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and city agencies to plan for the exponential growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including generative video, photo, and audio models in the coming months, and ethically govern AI, including through regulatory policy, with state legislators. In so doing, the Youth Commission urges the city to monitor AI implementation in labor, employment, and education, while addressing impacts on San Francisco's youth and systemically marginalized communities.*

## Background

Though a concept since the dawn of computing, Artificial Intelligence has only recently materialized in the 2010s and become a commodity post-2022. Tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Grok now empower hundreds of millions of people to generate text, visual, and audio content near-instantly and at no cost. As of February 2026, AI tools can generate material in all three domains that are virtually indistinguishable from reality.<sup>1</sup>

Exponential leaps in AI capabilities are so grand that the world's top experts warn we're on a trajectory to Artificial Intelligence systems that would supersede human intelligence in practically all tasks. Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), as coined by experts, describes AI systems with reasoning at or above human-level—superintelligence—something that CEOs like Sam Altman of OpenAI, Dario Amodei of Anthropic, and Demis Hassabis of Google DeepMind predict as tangible in the next five years.<sup>2</sup>

With the lack of regulation at the state and federal levels, AI capabilities are advancing faster than legislation can respond. San Francisco sits at the epicenter of this transformation, given its location near Silicon Valley and as the home of companies driving global AI development like OpenAI, Anthropic, Meta, Salesforce, Google, and more (these companies either have headquarters or substantial operations in San Francisco). Decisions made by our policymakers, therefore, have the potential to shape how AI is deployed worldwide.

AI often embeds the biases of developers—frequently white, male, cisgender, and of elite educational backgrounds—meaning that these systems are prone to exhibiting disproportionate biases towards the marginalized, including low-income residents, communities of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ residents, immigrants, and young people. In their 2019 study *Discriminating Systems: Gender, Race, and Power in AI*, researchers at New York University warned that the lack of diversity within the AI sector, termed by them as a diversity crisis, would reflect itself as grim biases within AI used for classification and detection of race and gender.<sup>3</sup> These systems may be as fundamentally flawed as their creators.

<sup>1</sup> Nestor Maslej et al., "The AI Index 2025 Annual Report," AI Index Steering Committee, Institute for Human-Centered AI, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, April 2025, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2504.07139>.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Kokotajlo, Scott Alexander, Thomas Larsen, Eli Lifland, and Romeo Dean, *AI 2027* (AI Futures Project, April 3, 2025), PDF, <https://ai-2027.com/ai-2027.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Myers West, Meredith Whittaker, and Kate Crawford, "Discriminating Systems: Gender, Race and Power in AI" (New York: AI Now Institute, April 2019), <https://ainowinstitute.org/discriminatingystems.html>

For today’s young people, it is undeniable that Artificial Intelligence will play a lifelong role. Today in San Francisco, AI transcends content generated by Large Language Models or Text-to-video models online: it’s present physically, is changing the fabric of school and work, and enables granular surveillance by law enforcement. AI brings both harm and benefit, depending on real-world applications and the extent to which it replaces human output, from manual labor to policymaking within government, institutions, and organizations.

## **AI IN LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT**

AI-driven automation is changing the size and scope of the workforce, including manual labor jobs that working-class San Franciscans depend on. For young people, AI threatens to eliminate entry-level positions that have historically served as economic pathways.

In recent years, for instance, Autonomous Vehicle companies have begun commercially operating in San Francisco. Though Autonomous Vehicles are overwhelmingly safer than human drivers, concerns lie in Autonomous Vehicles as a means to replace rideshare and delivery drivers. Because of their accessibility and low barrier to entry, such positions provide flexible income for groups that depend on them, including immigrants, students of working age, and those with limited English proficiency.

Automation is nothing new. As early as the 2000s, however, many have issued warnings about disparities in the distribution of *what* jobs are susceptible to automation, *who* depends on them, and *who*, therefore, is impacted the most by AI-driven automation (and the progression of machine learning).

At the start of 2019, policy analysts at the Brookings Institution asserted that while AI-driven automation will affect all groups of workers, these impacts will happen at varying intensities, especially towards young workers, men, and underrepresented communities—these are precisely the groups holding the most automatable occupations.<sup>4</sup> Young people in particular, according to them, face the most risk of job automation due to their overrepresentation in the food preparation and serving industry (fast food).

Automation puts jobs that young people have historically depended on and entered the workforce with—like associates in retail and in grocery, within fast food preparation, tutoring, and delivery—at risk.

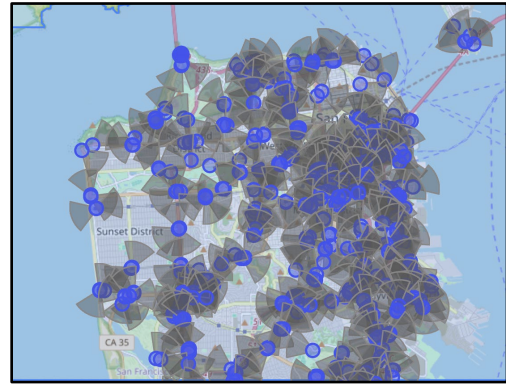
## **AI IN POLICING**

Since 2024, the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) has adopted the use of AI to police, to surveil, and as policing algorithms through Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs or LPRs), Flock Safety cameras, drones, and predictive formulas.<sup>5</sup> Many regard these measures as a foundation for mass surveillance, citing privacy concerns and potential disproportionate impacts on San Francisco’s eastern neighborhoods and communities of color.

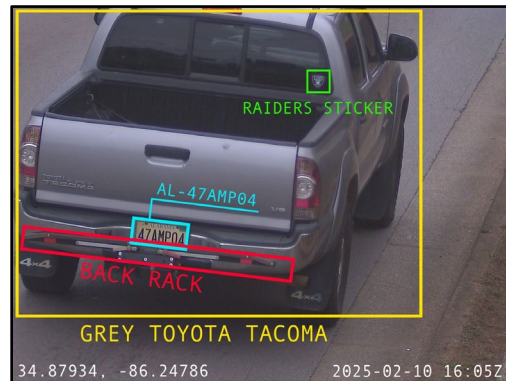
<sup>4</sup> Muro, Mark, Robert Maxim, and Jacob Whiton. “Automation and Artificial Intelligence: How Machines Are Affecting People and Places.” bibbase.org, January 2019. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019.01\\_BrookingsMetro\\_Automation-AI\\_Report\\_Muro-Maxim-Whiton-FINAL-version.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019.01_BrookingsMetro_Automation-AI_Report_Muro-Maxim-Whiton-FINAL-version.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> MacColl, Margaux, and George Kelly. “SFPD Plants High-Tech Crime-Fighting Hub Downtown as Foot Traffic Rebounds.” San Francisco, CA: SF Standard, December 3, 2025. <https://sfstandard.com/2025/12/03/sfpd-plants-high-tech-crime-fighting-hub-downtown-as-foot-traffic-rebounds/>.

Mapped by activist groups like deflock.org (right), there exist upwards of 200 LPRs located throughout all of San Francisco's districts. Their disproportionate distribution is visible in mapped data: predominant in neighborhoods like Bayview-Hunters Point, the Mission District, the Portola, and SoMa, San Francisco's eastern neighborhoods are overburdened by LPR placement relative to the city's west side.



LPRs capture images of passing vehicles, recording data points like license plates, dents, marks, and other identifying features, along with location, date, and time. SFPD policy maintains that LPR or drone data is not enough of a basis to issue warrants, pursue, apprehend, or stop an individual, but remains in a searchable database for up to 1 year (or up to 5 years when relating to a criminal investigation) accessible to in-state law enforcement agencies.<sup>6</sup> Journalists have uncovered, however, that between 2024 and 2025, agencies from Texas and Georgia ran over 1.6 million searches of SFPD LPR data, including to aid Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.<sup>7</sup>



There is no doubt that LPRs, drones, and similar technology *can* and *do* fight crime, especially as it relates to petty theft, car break-ins, auto theft, and sting operations (where this technology proves critical), but placement and biases within algorithms can be problematic. Besides, with potential future (and extension of current) contracts between the SFPD and surveillance companies, many people insist that the former is ushering in a new era of AI-powered, bias-prone surveillance under which civil liberties and privacy are threatened.

## AI IN EDUCATION

It's an understatement to say that AI is transforming the educational landscape in San Francisco and beyond, creating both opportunity and risk for students. For one, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has begun to embrace AI—including, the district asserts, for literacy rate improvement—but the district must also grapple with concerns about student privacy, academic integrity, and corporate influence.

In January 2026, a technology officer on behalf of SFUSD signed a contract with OpenAI to grant 12,000 subscriptions to ChatGPT EDU, an educational version of ChatGPT, which included access to higher-end models and suppressed usage limits.<sup>8</sup> Problematically, this move came without the

<sup>6</sup> San Francisco Police Department. "Surveillance Technology Policy: Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR)." San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Police Department, September 10, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> Chien, Tomo. "SFPD Let Georgia, Texas Cops Illegally Search City Surveillance Data on Behalf of ICE." *San Francisco Standard*, September 8, 2025. <https://sfstandard.com/2025/09/08/sfpd-flock-alpr-ice-data-sharing/>

<sup>8</sup> SFUSD Technology Services Office. *SFUSD-OpenAI Order Form / Agreement*. Signed January 22, 2026. Google Drive document. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QT3TOvzOfbldvvh0Wuq30sDfn0FFsqQ/view>


approval of the school board *and* was only placed on the school board’s consent calendar after the fact (in February), meaning that it could have been approved without public discussion and in a quick manner. The publicized version of the contract redacts pricing, scope, and limitations of the agreement, making it unclear what the district had agreed to.<sup>9</sup>

The district’s AI policy and the board’s handling of it were among the leading points of contention leading up to the United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) strike in February. As part of its labor negotiations (and in addition to demands including upholding sanctuary status, staffing and pay improvements, and healthcare improvements) in its first strike since 1979, UESF demanded “protections from negative impacts of Artificial Intelligence”.<sup>10</sup>

Protections, as pushed for by UESF, include transparency, where the details of AI tools and implementation are disclosed to staff before they happen; oversight, where human review is part of learning and grading processes (and this is not just “left” to AI); job protection in that AI is not used to reduce or eliminate positions; and development, where educators are trained on AI tools when expected to use them.

In its educator-facing guide *Using Generative AI: Growthrails for Staff*, the district recommends applications for AI tools within the classroom while suggesting dangers and benefits.<sup>11</sup> It suggests using AI for differentiating texts to cater to students’ specific needs, generating (in conjunction with human input) lesson plans, and increasing productivity over written communication. The document concedes, however, that there exist limitations and dangers, such as privacy concerns, conversations used as training data, hallucinations, and biases. The data on which AI tools are often characterized by an absence of underrepresented groups and racial and gender stereotypes.

The privacy of data is *especially* important when it pertains to the personal information of students—young people—that they might share during conversations. As seen when LPR data finds itself in the hands of federal immigration agents, the mishandling of sensitive information has negative consequences, which, for San Francisco’s most vulnerable students, are possibly life-altering. If a student who is undocumented, for instance, or with undocumented parents shares their familial situation with ChatGPT, these details become jeopardized; LGBTQ+ students may be at risk in unsupportive households when discussing gender or sexuality with AI; students experiencing abuse or neglect can develop unhealthy overreliance on AI tools as opposed to trained professionals.



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OpenAI OpCo, LLC  
1455 3rd Street  
San Francisco, California 94158  
United States

**BILLING INFORMATION**

Bill to: San Francisco Unified School District  
Billing contact: ngooe@sfsud.edu

Ship to: 555 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, United States  
Primary contact: znd\_90@hotmail.com

**CHATGPT SERVICES**

Service	Quantity	Net Unit Price	Start Date	End Date	Net Total
ChatGPT EDU	12,000 End Users	[REDACTED]	February 2, 2026	February 1, 2027	[REDACTED]
Net Amount					[REDACTED]

**CHATGPT ADDITIONAL TERMS**

- Billing Schedule.** Customer will be invoiced annually upfront for the Net Amount on the Start Date pursuant to the Payment Terms table below.
- Additional End Users.** Customer may increase the number of End Users (the “Additional End Users”) at any time during the Term through its designated Administrator(s). Customer will be billed on a quarterly basis in arrears for each Additional End User exceeding the End Users already paid for, prorated through the remainder of the Term.
- Pooled Credits.** The Exhibit: ChatGPT Platform Pooled Usage Credit Pricing attached to this Order Form will apply to Customer’s usage of ChatGPT Enterprise (Platform) and Pooled Credits.
- Enterprise API.** Customer’s use of the API, if any, is subject to the Agreement and the pricing set forth at <https://openai.com/pricing>, unless otherwise agreed in writing by both parties. API usage is invoiced on a monthly basis in arrears according to the Payment Information below.
- Student DPA.** The OpenAI Student Data Privacy Agreement set forth at <https://cdn.openai.com/oa/openai-sdpa.pdf> will apply to use of the Services.
- Local Storage.** The ChatGPT Services will permanently store Customer Content at rest in US (the “Region”) in accordance with Exhibit: ChatGPT Storage Addendum attached hereto.

**PAYMENT TERMS**

Payment Term:	Net 30	PO required?	No
Currency:	USD	PO Number:	N/A
Payment Method:	ACH	VAT/GST number:	N/A

<sup>9</sup> Sylvie Sturm, "School District Approves OpenAI Contract, Bypassing Board and Raising Student Privacy Concerns," *San Francisco Public Press*, February 5, 2026. <https://www.sfpublishpress.org/school-district-approves-openai-contract-bypassing-board-and-raising-student-privacy-concerns/>

<sup>10</sup> United Educators of San Francisco. *UESF AI Proposals / Labor Negotiation Documents, 2023–24*. Google Drive document. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i4to5L\\_wYmG3xDrQH0HBVTsvtG2YUINm/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i4to5L_wYmG3xDrQH0HBVTsvtG2YUINm/view)

<sup>11</sup> San Francisco Unified School District. *Using Generative AI: Growthrails for Staff — Educator Recommendations for AI Use in SFUSD*. Google Docs. Accessed February 2026. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13YbL1tvrhxYLRogW13UkszdC7rLNh1uSk6iHFPHz7g/preview?tab=t.0#heading=h.si3zhdu75dqoo>

In 1974, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was codified into law to govern the protection of students' data within schools. Though amended multiple times since, it hasn't been meaningfully updated for the rise of AI in education; AI companies can exploit loopholes therein. If data are "de-identified" (names and personal attributes stripped), companies can still use them for research, product development, and commercial purposes. In 2019, researchers alarmingly estimated that, even in anonymized data sets, up to 99.98% of Americans could correctly be identified.<sup>12</sup> Hypothetically, therefore, if a group of 50,000 SFUSD students had substantial data about them collected through AI, all but 10 would be identified.

In terms of applications, the district reports positive results nonetheless.

In August 2024, SFUSD launched *Ready, Set, Read!*, a citywide program to increase literacy levels and transform writing and reading instruction with nonprofit SPARK SF Public Schools. As part of its initiative, *Ready, Set, Read!* uses Amira, an AI tutoring tool where students read aloud and receive real-time feedback on pronunciation and comprehension. According to an SFUSD press release<sup>13</sup>, in the first year after the program's inception, reading proficiency has improved:

- Among kindergarteners, from 65% to 69%
- Among first graders, from 55% to 62%
- Among Black and Pacific Islander kindergarteners, from 39% to 53%

In its year 1 *Ready, Set, Read!* impact report,<sup>14</sup> SPARK SF Public Schools delineated that 1,484 elementary teachers were trained on *Into Reading*, SFUSD's new literacy curriculum, and impacted over 20,000 students citywide—though SFUSD officials acknowledge that growth in literacy levels was not as dramatic for second and third graders.<sup>15</sup>

Drawbacks of implementing AI exist despite reported successes. Academic integrity, the ability to effectively preserve it, *and* the ability to detect academic dishonesty remain challenges—AI detection tools like GPTZero and Turnitin often produce false positives and disproportionately flag non-native English speakers, African American Vernacular English, and neurodivergent students. In 2023, Stanford researchers found not only that popular AI detectors "consistently misclassify non-native English writing samples as AI-generated," but that simple strategies can bypass detection altogether.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, in October 2025, the Washington D.C.-based nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology surveyed 1,030 high schoolers, 806 middle and high school teachers, and 1,018 parents: they found that 85% and 86% and teachers and students reported using AI during the 2024-25 school year, respectively.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Luc Rocher, Julien M. Hendrickx, and Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye. "Estimating the Success of Re-identifications in Incomplete Datasets Using Generative Models." *Nature Communications* 10, no. 3069 (July 23, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-10933-3>

<sup>13</sup> San Francisco Unified School District. "Ready, Set, Read!: SFUSD's New Literacy Effort Delivering Results After First Year." Press release, October 3, 2025. <https://www.sfusd.edu/about-sfusd/sfusd-news/press-releases/2025-10-03-ready-set-read-sfusd-s-new-literacy-effort-delivering-results-after-first-year>

<sup>14</sup> Spark SF Public Schools. *Ready, Set, Read! Year 1 Impact Report*. October 2025. AnyFlip. <https://anyflip.com/odnzj/bmrk/>

<sup>15</sup> Greg Wong, "SF School Leaders Credit AI Tool for Improved Literacy," *San Francisco Examiner*, October 2, 2025.

[https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/education/sf-school-leaders-credit-ai-tool-for-improved-literacy/article\\_51925a25-e4b7-4342-bac9-64e687170b31.html](https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/education/sf-school-leaders-credit-ai-tool-for-improved-literacy/article_51925a25-e4b7-4342-bac9-64e687170b31.html)

<sup>16</sup> Weixin Liang, Mert Yuksekogunul, Yining Mao, Eric Wu, and James Zou. "GPT Detectors Are Biased Against Non-Native English Writers." arXiv:2304.02819v3 [cs.CL], July 10, 2023. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2304.02819>

<sup>17</sup> Center for Democracy and Technology. *Hand in Hand: Polling on AI, Education, and Student Privacy*. October 2, 2025. <https://cdt.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/FINAL-CDT-2025-Hand-in-Hand-Polling-100225-accessible.pdf>

The people surveyed maintain top concerns about data breaches, AI-enabled sexual harassment and bullying, and troubling interactions, especially regarding mental health. Of all surveyed students,

- Half say the AI use in classrooms creates a disconnect from teachers;
- 42% said they've interacted with AI for mental health counseling;
- 19% said they have pursued romantic relationships with AI;
- 31% worry that AI will treat them unfairly;
- and 35% said that they've been exposed to extreme or radical views.

Students falsely accused of AI report lasting psychological harm, such as anxiety and self-doubt. Other AI-induced harm may come from students seeking romantic or parasocial relationships with AI chatbots.

## Recommendations

San Francisco lawmakers have an opportunity to set a national precedent for regulating AI without hindering innovation.

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

- 1. Establish a city-level Board or Commission to oversee the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence.** In addition to monitoring AI implementation in employment and policing, especially where privacy concerns are prevalent, this body should oversee the implementation of AI in San Francisco's public schools.
- 2. Work with State and Federal Legislators** to regulate Artificial Intelligence growth, including mandating watermarks, usage limits, and means of identification for AI-generated content, especially video, photo, and audio.
- 3. Work with State and Federal Legislators** to uphold the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the safeguards for student privacy therein, and explore adapting FERPA to protect student privacy in the AI era.
- 4. Explore private-public partnerships focused on bolstering student learning.** Working with professionals across industries to bridge gaps in student literacy can enhance classroom learning, given the success of SFUSD's *Ready, Set, Read!* Program.
- 5. Consider local legislation that protects student and staff privacy in classrooms during the implementation process of AI usage,** especially to uphold FERPA and California's Student Online Personal Information Protection Act.
- 6. Protect teacher jobs and paraeducators from Artificial Intelligence replacement** in collaboration with United Educators of San Francisco.

## EXPAND ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL SPACES FOR INCREASED COMMUNITY, HEALTH, AND WELLNESS

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges increased utilization of public spaces, particularly parks and libraries, to promote programming and opportunities for mental and physical well-being while fostering a sense of community in all San Franciscans.*

### Background

A National Institutes of Health study conducted by the *Lancet Commission* and the *Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents* concluded that investing in adolescent health and wellbeing will yield a “triple benefit” – today, into adulthood, and for the next generation.<sup>1</sup> This study states that while a decrease in adolescent disease burden has been observed in many countries over the last 25 years, almost one in five (324 million [18%]) adolescents globally now have overweight or obesity, and there is an increasing burden of adolescent mental health disorders (including depression and anxiety).<sup>2</sup> Among the solutions and strategies recommended to improve adolescent health and well-being based on extensive multi-city data are improvements to urban environments to facilitate physical activity for transportation and recreation, and the multi-utility design of the urban environment.

To this end, the Youth Commission has consistently advocated for access to recreational facilities and expanded programming for youth across San Francisco. The city is ranked 7th in the country in the 2024 Trust for Public Land ParkScore rankings with over 3,400 acres of recreation and open space owned and managed by the Recreation and Parks Department, plus over 250 acres managed by the state and another 1,600 acres of federally-owned open space, making up almost 20% of the city's total land area.<sup>3</sup> This places San Francisco among the top cities in the country in terms of parkland per resident, as 100% of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.<sup>4</sup> However, the city has consistently struggled with inequities in access by income level and racial/ethnic background. Residents in low-income neighborhoods have access to 41% less park space per person than those in the average San Francisco neighborhood, and 57% less than those in high-income neighborhoods.<sup>5</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 56% less than residents in neighborhoods with high concentrations of white people.<sup>6</sup> San Francisco ranks among the best park systems in the nation and outperforms many other major cities on access, investment, and overall acreage, but the communities that would benefit most from recreational spaces, in which children, youth, and families face the highest barriers to sports participation, have the least access to quality park space.

<sup>1</sup> Patton GC, Sawyer SM, Santelli JS, et al. Our future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing. *Lancet*. 2016;387(10036):2423–78. facilities

<sup>2</sup> van Sluijs EMF, Ekelund U, Crochemore-Silva I, Guthold R, Ha A, Lubans D, Oyeyemi AL, Ding D, Katzmarzyk PT. Physical activity behaviours in adolescence: current evidence and opportunities for intervention. *Lancet*. 2021 Jul 31;398(10298):429-442. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01259-9.

<sup>3</sup> “Recreation and Open Space Element,” San Francisco General Plan, [https://generalplan.sfplanning.org/I3\\_Recreation\\_and\\_Open\\_Space.htm](https://generalplan.sfplanning.org/I3_Recreation_and_Open_Space.htm).

<sup>4</sup> 2025 ParkScore Index | San Francisco, CA (Trust for Public Land, 2025), [https://parkserve.tpl.org/downloads/pdfs/San%20Francisco\\_CA.pdf](https://parkserve.tpl.org/downloads/pdfs/San%20Francisco_CA.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> 2025 ParkScore Index | San Francisco, CA.

<sup>6</sup> 2025 ParkScore Index | San Francisco, CA.

## Youth Access to Parks and Recreational Spaces

Despite being one of the wealthiest cities in the nation, nearly two-thirds of Bay Area young people are not engaged in physical activity more than four times a week.<sup>7</sup> Children from households earning under \$25,000 participate in sports at half the rate of those from households earning \$100,000 or more.<sup>8</sup> For example, the Tenderloin neighborhood has the highest concentration of children and youth, but a 2024 Tenderloin Youth Services Gap Analysis shows opportunity gaps, given the significant interest among youth, in age-appropriate or unstructured, low-barrier, and low-supervision recreational activities. Specifically, the interviewees indicated interest in sports and physical activities, such as soccer, basketball, and swimming. Soccer Fridays, a weekly event organized by the Tenderloin Community Benefit District and the Playground, received consistent praise from teens, often highlighted as a highly popular program.<sup>9</sup>

## Implications for Physical Health of Youth

Childhood and adolescent obesity have reached epidemic levels in the United States. Currently, about 17% of US children are presenting with obesity.<sup>10</sup> To help prevent San Francisco's young people from the increased risks of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic conditions, opportunities for physical activity are an urgent need. Parks and recreational spaces provide free, accessible venues for physical activity that don't require gym memberships, expensive equipment, or registration fees for structured programs. Habits formed in childhood shape lifetime health trajectories. Youth who lack access to safe spaces for play and movement are more likely to remain sedentary into adulthood, perpetuating cycles of health inequality that burden individuals, families, and the healthcare system. In San Francisco, the "Play Streets" initiative that targets low-income neighborhoods with high childhood obesity rates, provides essential, accessible, and low-cost spaces for physical activity.<sup>11</sup>

## Implications for Mental Health of Youth

National data shows rising rates of anxiety, depression, and social isolation among young people, trends accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and excessive screen time. Roughly 1 in 5 adolescents (20%) have a diagnosable mental health condition, with significant increases in reported anxiety and depression over the past decade.<sup>12</sup> Parks, recreational spaces, and libraries are places where youth can decompress and find respite from academic pressure and family stress. Research consistently shows that time in nature reduces stress, improves mood, and enhances emotional regulation. Access to parks becomes a mental health necessity. Public libraries offer quiet, safe spaces where youth can escape chaotic or unsafe home environments, access emotional support through reading, and connect with youth and trusted adults through youth library programs

<sup>7</sup> "2024 California Play Equity Report," LA84 Foundation, 2024, [https://la84.s3.amazonaws.com/report/2024\\_Play\\_Equity\\_Report.pdf](https://la84.s3.amazonaws.com/report/2024_Play_Equity_Report.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> "State of Play Trends of Developments in Youth Sports," The Aspen Institute | Project Play, 2019, [https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2019\\_SOP\\_National\\_Final.pdf](https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2019_SOP_National_Final.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> "Tenderloin Youth Services Gap Analysis," SF Planning, February 2024, <https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/citywide/tenderloin-community-action-plan/tcap-youth-gap-analysis-report.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Adekunle Sanyaolu et al., "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity in the United States: A Public Health Concern," *Global Pediatric Health* 6 (January 2019): 2333794X19891305, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333794X19891305>.

<sup>11</sup> Susan G. Zieff et al., "Creating Neighborhood Recreational Space for Youth and Children in the Urban Environment: Play(ing in the) Streets in San Francisco," *Children and Youth Services Review* 70 (November 2016): 95–101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2016.09.014>.

<sup>12</sup> "Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health," Children's Mental Health, CDC, June 10, 2025, <https://www.cdc.gov/children-mental-health/data-research/index.html>.

## Implications for Social Connection & Community Building Among Youth

San Francisco is increasingly segregated by income, with low-income families priced out of many neighborhoods and youth from different socioeconomic backgrounds rarely interacting. Parks, recreational spaces, and libraries are some of the public spaces where youth from diverse backgrounds can meet, play, and build relationships that break down social barriers. Accessible parks and recreation centers create opportunities for spontaneous, friendship-driven play that structured programs often can't replicate. Libraries similarly serve as gathering spaces where youth can study together, attend programs, and build community. When youth have access to well-maintained public spaces, they develop a sense of belonging to their city and neighborhood. They learn that these spaces are *theirs*, that they have a right to public resources and a stake in their community's wellbeing.

## Public Recreation Programming for Youth

With proper investment, parks, recreational spaces, and libraries truly serve all of San Francisco's youth, especially those facing the greatest barriers to access. Research shows that neighborhoods with well-utilized public spaces reported a 25% reduction in youth-related crime<sup>13</sup>. The *Parks and Recreation Department* in San Diego reported that after implementing recreational programs, local crime rates dropped by 15% over two years.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to current youth programming provided by Parks and Recreation and Public Libraries, the Youth Commission urges the city to invest in programming that increases cross-district youth engagement. For example, sports opportunities such as the SF Youth Baseball League (SFYBL), Girls in Sports Volleyball League, and after-school programming offered through parks and rec (photography, arts and crafts, and dance), and the Requity Youth Recreation Program are successful initiatives that allow for physical activity and cross-city engagement opportunities. However, these opportunities need to be expanded, particularly to parts of the city with a concentration of youth and a need for increased opportunities, as identified by youth in the 2024 Tenderloin Youth Services Gap Analysis.

## Recommendations

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

1. **Fund Low-Barrier, Drop-In Recreation Programming Across San Francisco.** Since additional programming can be resource-intensive, drop-in opportunities allow youth to engage in low-supervision, structured settings where they can participate in physical activity and connect with peers. Removing barriers like cost, registration process and strict structure makes these “low-barrier” programs more accessible. These could also be offered on weekends, such as:
  - a. Friday Night Lights Program.
  - b. The Mix (offered through SFPL)

<sup>13</sup> Pan Z, Chapman DA, Sullivan TN, Bishop DL, Kimmel AD. Healthy Communities for Youth: A Cost Analysis of a Community-Level Program to Prevent Youth Violence. *Prev Sci.* 2024 Oct;25(7):1133-1142. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11519086/>

<sup>14</sup> Sarah Erazo, “2023 Recreation Equity Report,” The City of San Diego | Parks and Recreation Department, May 1, 2023, <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/prbr20230518a-item101c.pdf>.

**2. Continue to Fund the Sunday Streets Program.**

- a. The benefits are particularly significant given that the program specifically targets "park poor" neighborhoods where low-income residents and communities of color have the least access to recreational spaces—directly addressing the equity gaps.

**3. Invest in youth service providers** to ensure safe and consistent programming for youth.<sup>15</sup>

**4. Expand recreation programs at existing public and non-profit facilities and schools.** Build on existing successful programs through the Parks and Recreation Department and the SF Public Libraries such as Greenagers and The Youth Employment Program (YEP) to ensure the City's ability to serve more youth in equity areas, increase the number of staff able to serve and accompany youth and to increase capacity of youth who can attend these programs.

**5. Increase Funding to Improve Local Parks.** 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 larger populations of communities of color. Outreach about specific park improvements and existing programs should be conducted in collaboration with local community organizations in 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 can provide input about how to improve them.

<sup>15</sup> From an interview of service providers in the Tenderloin in a 2024 report: "It takes about 2 staff for a group of 10 youth, 3 Staff for a group of 15 youth, and 4 staff for a group of 20+ youth to safely escort kids to events. Normally prepping logistics such as staffing and planning for an itinerary happens two weeks before the event"

## URGING SAN FRANCISCO TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION IN RESTORING BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT

*The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to fully remediate Bayview Hunters Point and fund comprehensive environmental studies to protect the long-term health impacts of local residents.*

In California, BIPOC communities are five times more likely to live within half a mile of a polluted site.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this injustice clearer than in Bayview-Hunters Point.

Today, Bayview Hunters Point is a majority low-income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community where Black residents comprise  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the area's population (20,000 Black residents). This demographic did not occur by accident. Before World War II, the area was largely undeveloped. During and after the war, industrial expansion transformed it into a military and shipyard operations hub. Simultaneously, Black families migrating for wartime jobs were systematically excluded from safer neighborhoods due to redlining and housing discrimination. With no access to less polluted areas, many were forced into substandard industrial Bayview housing. Generations of families have remained in this neighborhood in an extremely toxic environment.

In 1867, the U.S. Navy acquired the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.<sup>2</sup> By 1946, it became the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory (NRDL), where ships exposed to nuclear testing were decontaminated using dry-dock blasting methods, methods used to clean and prepare ship hulls.<sup>3</sup> The radioactive waste, heavy metals, petroleum fuels, and other toxic materials carried by the ships were dumped into the surrounding soil and water.<sup>4</sup> The NRDL operated until 1967, and the shipyard closed shortly after. Its closure accompanied the eradication of more than 3,000 local jobs, many of which were held by African American workers. In the decades that followed, former workers and residents have claimed to experience alarming rates of illness linked to contamination. In 1989, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated Hunters Point Shipyard a Superfund Site, American polluted locations that require long-term cleanup due to hazardous material contamination.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the EPA declared the shipyard one of the ten most polluted federal properties in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

The Navy was commissioned to clean up the site, and they proposed a \$100 million remediation plan, despite estimates placing the true cost closer to \$300 million.<sup>7</sup>

As part of their cleanup plan, the Navy divided the land into parcels for phased remediation. The Navy also contracted Tetra Tech, an engineering and environmental consulting firm, to test soil at the shipyard and remove any that is contaminated. In 2014, an internal Tetra Tech report caught

<sup>1</sup> Rosanna Xia, "More Than 400 Toxic Sites in California Are at Risk of Flooding from Sea Level Rise," Los Angeles Times, November 30, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2021-11-30/toxic-tides-sea-level-rise>.

<sup>2</sup> Dennis J. Paustenbach and Robert D. Gibbons, "Radiological Risk Assessment of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (HPNS)," *Critical Reviews in Toxicology* 52, no. 7 (2022): 499–545, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10408444.2022.2118107>.

<sup>3</sup> "Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard," United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, March 25, 2021, <https://www.nrc.gov/info-finder/decommissioning/complex/hunters-point-naval-shipyard>.

<sup>4</sup> "HUNTERS POINT NAVAL SHIPYARD Site Profile," United States Environmental Protection Agency, <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/CurSites/srchsites.cfm>.

<sup>5</sup> "Hunters Point Naval Shipyard - Learn More," SF.Gov, <https://www.sf.gov/hpns-cleanup-learn>.

<sup>6</sup> "Timeline of the Bayview-Hunters Point - Divestment and Development," Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, <https://antievictionmap.com/bayview-hunters-point>.

<sup>7</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency, "HUNTERS POINT NAVAL SHIPYARD Site Profile."

employees trying to pass off dirt from a less polluted area of the base for testing.<sup>8</sup> After further investigation, the Navy concluded that this fraud occurred from 2008 to 2012, casting doubt and contesting the cleanup's efficacy.<sup>9</sup>

By then, luxury condominiums were already built on Parcel A despite persisting contamination concerns. The land was developed before the community received full transparency or comprehensive health studies. Meanwhile, radioactive materials continue to be discovered today. In 2018, a radioactive dial was found near newly built condos and additional contamination in areas slated for further development.<sup>10</sup> In November of 2024, the San Francisco Department of Public Health found that the Navy measured levels of airborne plutonium twice the recommended levels on Parcel C of the shipyard.<sup>11</sup> However, the Navy did not inform the City of their findings for another eleven months. Repeatedly, the Navy and Tetra Tech have demonstrated a pattern of conduct that calls into serious question their capacity to execute a scientifically rigorous, ethically sound, and transparently administered remediation process.

Additionally, in their most recent five-year report, the Navy has shared that certain chemicals in the shipyard will never be able to be fully remediated.<sup>12</sup> No studies currently exist on the synergistic effects of multiple chemicals on long-term health. Residents must be alerted and aware of the potential risks that may accompany these remaining chemicals.

27% of residents live within a quarter-mile of the Shipyard, leaving a significant portion of Bayview residents vulnerable. Decades of toxic contamination have contributed to significant community health consequences. According to a 2010 government report, Bayview-Hunters Point had the highest contamination risk of any San Francisco neighborhood.<sup>13</sup> The asthma-related emergency room visit rate was 93 per 10,000 residents.<sup>14</sup> In 2021-2022, the percentage of children and teens with asthma was 1.4 times higher in the Bayview than compared to the rate found across San Francisco.<sup>15</sup> This is more than double the countywide rate of 44 per 10,000. Most concerning, from 2013-2024, the Bayview had the highest total number of infant deaths and the highest rate of preterm births in San Francisco.

Despite these alarming statistics, the City has failed to conduct a comprehensive, causation-based health study linking contamination to long-term medical outcomes. Community groups have repeatedly called for a broader, official investigation to determine whether the area is truly safe. The City has not taken sufficient initiative to do so.

Climate change compounds this crisis. On June 1, 2021, the 2021–2022 Civil Grand Jury released a report warning that rising groundwater, driven by sea level rise, could mobilize buried toxins and

<sup>8</sup> Vicky Nguyen et al., “Contractor Submitted False Radiation Data at Hunters Point,” NBC Bay Area, October 13, 2014, <https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/contractor-submitted-false-radiation-data-at-hunters-point/79399/>.

<sup>9</sup> “United States Joins Lawsuits Against Tetra Tech EC Inc. Alleging False Claims in Connection With Shipyard Cleanup,” U.S. Department of Justice, October 26, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/united-states-joins-lawsuits-against-tetra-tech-ec-inc-alleging-false-claims-connection>.

<sup>10</sup> Laura Waxmann, “Exclusive: Radioactive Objects Turn up at S.F. Site Slated to Become Huge Waterfront Neighborhood — Again,” San Francisco Chronicle, December 7, 2023, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/realestate/article/sf-shipyard-waterfront-neighborhood-18532802.php>.

<sup>11</sup> Yujie Zhou and Marina Newman, “U.S. Navy Found Elevated Plutonium in Bayview. S.F. Says It Was Kept in the Dark.,” Mission Local, October 30, 2025, <https://missionlocal.org/2025/10/navy-elevated-plutonium-bayview/>.

<sup>12</sup> *Fifth Five-Year Review Report, Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, San Francisco, California*, nos. CH2M-0007-4930–0008 (Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest, 2024), [https://media.defense.gov/2024/Aug/01/2003516226/-1/-1/0/HPNS\\_4930\\_5YR\\_FINAL.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2024/Aug/01/2003516226/-1/-1/0/HPNS_4930_5YR_FINAL.PDF).

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, “Timeline of the Bayview-Hunters Point - Divestment and Development.”

<sup>14</sup> “Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease,” SFHIP, <https://sfhip.org/chna/community-health-data/asthma-and-chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease/>.

<sup>15</sup> “Neighborhood Edition (NE) Dashboard - Ever Diagnosed with Asthma (1-17),” UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2022 2021, Map, <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/askchis-ne/askchis-ne-dashboard>.

undermine cleanup efforts. As Jury foreperson Michael Hofman stated, Hunters Point represents the largest development in San Francisco since the 1906 earthquake, yet neither the Navy nor the City is adequately preparing for the consequences of rising groundwater pushing contamination toward the surface.<sup>16</sup>

In October 2022, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 437-22 in response to the Grand Jury report. However, the Board only agreed to address a limited set of findings and recommendations (R2, R3, F4, F5, and F6). Critical recommendations, including those calling for comprehensive groundwater studies and deeper investigation into environmental harms (R1, R4, R5, F1, F2, F3), were excluded. Recommendation R7, which would have required formal reporting and coordination with federal signatories, was explicitly denied without clear justification. Instead, the Board proposed a short-term task force. However, this is an inadequate substitute for beneficial change.

Meanwhile, large-scale development plans continue. Developers, including Lennar and FivePoint, plan to build more than 10,000 upscale homes on the Shipyard. Build LLC proposes an additional 1,400 homes at another contaminated site, India Basin.

Bayview is also committing to internal efforts to mobilize the community from within. Through the Bayview Hunters Point Environmental Justice Task Force, which brings together residents, organizers, and local leaders to problem-solve ongoing pollutant complaints, and the Bayview Hunters Point Youth Environmental and Climate Justice Leadership Academy, which empowers young people to learn about and respond to the environmental challenges directly impacting their neighborhood, the community is actively working to make its voice heard and strengthen local engagement.

Community advocacy has already led to tangible progress, including the opening of the Southeast Family Health Clinic in 2022 and the Environmental Health Clinic in November 2025, both of which expand access to care and are fully covered by San Francisco Health Plan insurance. In addition, local CBOs such as Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, the Marie Harrison Community Foundation, and All Things Bayview continue to play a critical role in organizing residents, raising awareness, and holding institutions accountable.

For generations, Bayview residents have lived with the consequences of decisions made without their protection or consent. It is time for the City to give the Bayview Hunters Point residents the justice they deserve. Full transparency and remediation are long overdue.

## Recommendations

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

- 1. Fully adopt and implement the entirety of the 2021–2022 Civil Grand Jury Report** (including Recommendations R1, R4, R5, R7, and Findings F1, F2, and F3): Adopting the

<sup>16</sup> *Buried Problems and a Buried Process: The Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in a Time of Climate Change* (Civil Grand Jury 2021–2022, 2022), [https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20CGJ%20Report\\_Buried%20Problems%20and%20a%20Buried%20Process%20-%20The%20Hunters%20Point%20Naval%20Shipyard%20in%20a%20Time%20of%20Climate%20Change.pdf](https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20CGJ%20Report_Buried%20Problems%20and%20a%20Buried%20Process%20-%20The%20Hunters%20Point%20Naval%20Shipyard%20in%20a%20Time%20of%20Climate%20Change.pdf).

entirety of the 2021-22 Report ensures comprehensive oversight, climate-resilient remediation, and long-term accountability for environmental conditions at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

- 2. Fully fund and commission an independent, comprehensive environmental study of soil, groundwater, and air quality across all affected parcels and surrounding residential areas, including an assessment of long-term health impacts:** Transparent, publicly accessible information about contamination levels and associated risks is imperative towards the safety of Bayview residents.
- 3. Expand and fully fund environmental health services in partnership with community clinics, including the Southeast Family Health Center, to provide accessible screening, treatment, and long-term monitoring for residents impacted by toxic exposure:** This includes, but is not limited to, asthma, cancer, and other environmentally linked conditions.

## 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 2026 - Youth Commission Budget & Policy Priorities

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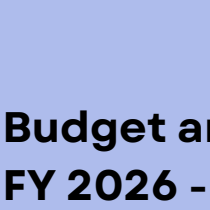
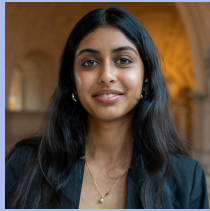


# San Francisco Youth Commission

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**Budget and Policy Priorities  
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