City of Oakland
Human Services Department
Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

Meeting of the Planning and Oversight Committee

July 7th, 2021 ▪ 6:00pm-9:00pm
Zoom Teleconference
https://zoom.us/j/98966327201

Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, all members of the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Planning and Oversight Committee (POC) as well as city staff will join the meeting via phone/video conference and no teleconference locations are required.

TO OBSERVE:
1) To view the meeting by Zoom video conference, please click on this link: https://zoom.us/j/98966327201 at the noticed meeting time.
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TO COMMENT:
1) To comment by Zoom video conference, you will be prompted to use the "**Raise Your Hand**" button to request to speak when Public Comment is being taken on the eligible Agenda item. You will then be unmuted, during your turn, and allowed to make public comments. After the allotted time, you will then be re-muted.

2) To comment by phone, you will be prompted to "**Raise Your Hand**" by pressing "*** 9**" to request to speak when Public Comment is being taken on the eligible Agenda Item. You will then be unmuted, during your turn, and allowed to make public comments. After the allotted time, you will then be re-muted.

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1) Instructions on **how to join a** meeting by video conference is available at: **https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193 - Joining-a-Meeting#**

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3) Instructions on **how to "Raise Your Hand"** is available at: **https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205566129 - Raise-Hand-In-Webinar**

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
    - *Roll Call, Introductions & Announcements*
    - *Review of Agenda*

2. **Open Forum**

3. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes from June 23rd, 2021**   *action*

4. **Recognition of Youth POC Members at the End of their Annual Term**   *Informational*

5. **Approval of OFCY Funding Strategies for FY 2022-2025**   *action*

6. **Administrative Matters**
    - *General Announcements*
    - *Upcoming Meetings*

7. **Adjournment**

June 23, 2021 - 6:00pm-9:00pm
Zoom Teleconference

Committee Members present: Bill Riley, Anthony Bibiano, Peter Lê, Dwayne Davis, Pecolia Manigo, Tasion Kwamilele

Committee Members absent: Sofia Guerrero, Kimberly Aceves, Langston Buddenhagen, Anakarita Allen, Jorge Velasco

Staff Members present: Sandra Taylor, OFCY Director; Mike Wetzel, Program Planner; Scott Kim, Program Analyst; Kaitlin Forgash, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by POC Co-Chair Tasion Kwamilele.

2. Open Forum

There were no speakers for Open Forum.

3. Director's Update on Strategic Planning

OFCY Director Sandy Taylor presented on the recent strategic planning activities conducted in May and June. This included a community engagement event held by Bright Research Group for OFCY, and the revised Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis prepared by Hatchuel Tabernick & Associates. Director Taylor thanked the members of the Ad hoc Strategic Planning Subcommittee for their months of work on the plan for the next funding cycle.

4. Approval of Revised OFCY Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Co-Chair Kwamilele introduced the revised OFCY Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles. Member Pecolia Manigo appreciated that the guiding principle for Racial, Social, and Economic Equity lists both equity and justice. Co-Chair Kwamilele called for a motion to approve the revised OFCY vision, mission, and guiding principles, with the following amendments: the vision statement will read "All children and youth in Oakland are supported by community to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives," and the guiding principle on community will read "OFCY strengthens children, youth, and families within our communities to make our children and our city healthy and strong." Member Manigo so motioned and Member Lê seconded. A roll call of the vote followed and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Presentation on Draft Strategies for FY 2022-2025

Director Taylor and Mike Wetzel, Program Planner, presented OFCY's draft strategies in four funding areas: Healthy Development of Young Children, Children's Success in School, Youth Development and Violence Prevention, and Transitions to Adulthood. Staff highlighted the shift in strategies to an emphasis on children and youth's social and emotional wellbeing and primary violence prevention. Staff plans to present a revised draft of the strategies for approval at the next POC meeting on July 7.

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED
Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (*OFCY*)
Planning and Oversight Committee (POC) Meeting

June 23, 2021 - 6:00pm-9:00pm
Zoom Teleconference

There were four public comments. Myra Estrada and Jessica, both Oakland High School students and Youth Leaders with East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), advocated for OFCY funding for wellness centers in Oakland's high schools. John Tran, EBAYC staff at the Shop 55 Wellness Center, spoke to the effectiveness of wellness centers and the benefits of creating more centers. Kim Johnson, Executive Director of BANANAS, spoke about the work of BANANAS' Havenscourt Cubhouse, which is a family resource center for families with children ages birth to five years.

6. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes from May 5, 2021

Co-Chair Kwamilele called for a motion to accept the prior minutes from May 5, 2021 as submitted. Member Lê so motioned and Member Manigo seconded. A roll call of the vote followed and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Administrative Matters

The next POC meeting will be held on July 7.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

DRAFT OFCY Funding Strategies and Allocation by Goal Area for FY2022-2025

FUNDING STRATEGY	$ by Goal Area	% by Goal Area
1. Social-emotional Well-Being in Early Childhood	$3,000,000	16.7%
2. Family Resource Centers and Parent Engagement		
3. Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Elementary Schools	$6,500,000	36.1%
4. Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Middle Schools		
5. Middle School Engagement, Wellness, and Transitions		
6. High School and Post-Secondary Student Success		
7. Youth Leadership and Development	$5,650,000	31.4%
8. Summer Academic and Enrichment Programs		
9. Violence Prevention Programming		
10. Career Access and Employment for Opportunity Youth	$2,850,000	15.8%
11. Career Access and Employment for Youth in School		
Estimated Grant Funding for FY 2022-2023	$18,000,000	100.0%

Current OFCY Funding Strategies and Allocation by Goal Area

FUNDING STRATEGY	OFCY Funding FY21-22	% by Strategy	$ by Goal Area	% by Goal Area
1. Socioemotional Well-Being in Preschool and Early Childhood Education Settings	$888,600	5.0%		
2. Parent Engagement and Support	$1,361,800	7.7%	$3,330,800	18.8%
3. Family Resource Centers	$1,080,400	6.1%		
4. Comprehensive Afterschool Programs	$5,060,800	28.6%	$5,606,800	31.7%
5. Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students	$546,000	3.1%		
6. Summer Programs	$1,131,100	6.4%	$5,237,200	29.6%
7. Youth Development and Leadership	$4,106,100	23.2%		
8. High School and Postsecondary Student Success	$1,164,300	6.6%	$3,516,100	19.9%
9. Career Awareness and Employment Support	$2,351,800	13.3%		
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING (FY2021-2022)	$17,690,900	100%	$17,690,900	

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

DRAFT

Strategic Investment Approaches

2021

Strategic Investment Approaches

I. Funding Area: Healthy Development of Young Children

1. STRATEGY: Social-emotional Well-Being in Early Childhood

Strategy Description: Programs funded under the Social-Emotional Well-Being in Early Childhood Strategy provide support for parents and caregivers to promote healthy emotional and social development of young children. This investment supports the wellness and developmental needs of young children – especially low-income, children of color who have been historically underserved. It may provide individualized or group wellness or mental health services and referrals for children and families, and it helps parents/caregivers support the well-being of their children. The strategy may also offer support in-classroom settings, including child observations and screenings (e.g., developmental, Adverse Childhood Experiences[1]), and emphasizes direct services to children and families. These may include but are not limited to: infant/toddler play and learn groups, parenting workshops, family and group therapy, and other mental health supports for young children and their parents/caregivers, as well as resources, referrals, and connections to basic needs and mental health support services.

Supported Programming
- Mental Health Developmental Consultations
- Play and Learn Therapy Groups
- Parenting Workshops
- Family and Group Therapy
- Screening/Referral to Services
- Parents as First Educators

Intended Impact
- Improved access to culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed mental health services for children, parents/caregivers, and families
- Early literacy
- Kindergarten readiness
- Teacher confidence at Head Start and State Preschool programs

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[1] Koita K, Long D, Hessler D, Benson M, Daley K, Bucci M, et al. (2018) Development and implementation of a pediatric adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other determinants of health questionnaire in the pediatric medical home: A pilot study. PLoS ONE 13(12): e0208088. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0208088

- Families are connected to resources (e.g., basic needs and mental health services)

Priority Populations
- Young children (0-5)
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) children (0-8) and their families in underserved communities and their early childhood educators

Rationale

Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments are essential to prevent early adversity and to assure that all children reach their full potential.[2] Risk and protective factors - geographic, socioeconomic, social determinants of health, exposure to adverse childhood experiences and structural racism - result in health and mental health inequities.[3] This growing body of scientific literature clearly reflects the disparate treatment of BIPOC children, particularly Black children, in many aspects of behavioral health services from assessment to treatment, gaps that can be largely attributed to structural racism.[4] Supporting the healthy development of young children is the foundation for their success in school and beyond.[5] Child development research also underscores the importance of early childhood programming and the inclusion of parents and caregivers, which speaks to the need for a wholistic family-centered approach to supporting the social-emotional well-being of young children.[6]

In our recent community engagement efforts, some community members and stakeholders encouraged OFCY to fund a whole-child, whole-family, community-driven approach to support the social emotional well-being of young children.[7] These stakeholders strongly encouraged a change from a top-down individual child case management approach toward a more family-centered and strength-based approach that is culturally- and linguistically-aligned with the communities being served. One parent shared, *"If OFCY wants to support children and youth, they need to support the entire family and engage parents and family members as partners in creating an Oakland where children, youth, and families thrive."* Child development research

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[2] Essentials for Childhood, Creating Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for All Children. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. March 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/essentials/index.html

[3] Gee, Gilbert C., and Chandra L. Ford. "Structural racism and health inequities: Old issues, New Directions1." *Du Bois review: social science research on race* 8.1

[4] Trent, Maria, Danielle G. Dooley, and Jacqueline Dougé. "The impact of racism on child and adolescent health." *Pediatrics* 144.2 2019.

[5] Bath E, Njoroge WFM. Coloring Outside the Lines: Making Black and Brown Lives Matter in the Prevention of Youth Suicide. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. January 2021.

[6] OFCY Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report. 2021.

[7] OFCY Stakeholder Interviews Spring 2021

also highlights the importance of early childhood programming and the inclusion of parents and caregivers.[8]

The OFCY 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report informs the development of this strategy by looking at young children's kindergarten readiness status (i.e., preschool experience, language and cognitive development, communication and general knowledge, emotional maturity, physical health and wellbeing, social competencies) - across racial and ethnic groups, Free and Reduced Price Meal status, and neighborhoods to assess concentrated areas of need. Areas of East and West Oakland, Fruitvale, and San Antonio neighborhoods are among those with the highest level of need in these domains. Language and cognitive development is the domain where the most young Oaklanders are not ready for Kindergarten, as well as the domain with the biggest losses between 2017 and 2020.

Alignment

This strategy aligns with other Oakland initiatives to support the healthy development of young children. This includes initiatives headed by our partners at Oakland Thrives, the City of Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start, First 5 Alameda County, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), among others, including directly aligning with OUSD and Oakland Thrives' respective Early Literacy strategies, and the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong collaborative. There are new and increased public funding streams for early childhood programming in Oakland and OFCY will work with our partners in early childhood development, education, health, and social services to leverage and align resource allocation in an equitable way.

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[8] OFCY Community Needs Assessment, 2021, p 16

2. STRATEGY: Family Resource Centers and Parent Engagement

Strategy Description: This strategy continues a commitment to parent engagement and support efforts and Family Resource Centers (FRCs) - thereby increasing accessibility, navigation, and comprehensive services for parents/caregivers of young children to strengthen their capacity to support the healthy development of their children.

This strategy will continue to provide funding to engage families in a range of programming that promotes parent confidence in parenting skills in safe community-based spaces. Programs may encourage parent and child activities, support children's health and social emotional development, include literacy and early learning approaches, promote parent leadership in program design and community, connect parents/caregivers to resources, and generally promote kindergarten readiness and parent advocacy for children's success in school.

Comprehensive FRCs provide a hub for services and programs in priority neighborhoods. Services offered at FRCs vary because they are designed to address the unique needs and build upon the assets of the neighborhoods they serve, including culturally or linguistically relevant services and approaches. FRCs are inherently collaborative in design, philosophy, and practice and should provide a safe space for a wide array of services offered by both public and private organizations. They promote partnerships, mutual aid, and peer-based services. FRCs leverage funding to augment the resources available to lead agencies and core partners.

Supported Programming
- Peer support and social connection
- Infant/toddler play and learn groups
- In-home support
- Resource navigation
- Referrals to support services
- Computer access
- Legal rights assistance
- Support for basic needs assistance and referral
- Economic supports
- Parent and family activities
- Other linguistically and culturally relevant family supports

Intended Impact
- Children are ready for Kindergarten
- Increased parent confidence, leadership, and self-advocacy

- Children and parents/caregivers participate in developmentally supportive activities
- Families are connected to resources (i.e. basic needs, trauma informed social services)
- Improved access to culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed mental health services for children, parents/caregivers, and families
- Improved access to early literacy support

Priority Populations
- BIPOC children ages 0-8 and their families and caregivers in underserved neighborhoods.

Rationale

FRCs are an asset-based approach promoting parental resilience, social connection, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children. FRCs can help reach and provide needed services to priority populations, including families with young children, newcomer and immigrant families, families who do not speak English (with culturally and linguistically-relevant services).

In our recent community engagement efforts, parents who attended a community workshop pointed to the diversity, resourcefulness, and strong network of community-based organizations as unique strengths in Oakland, and emphasized the need to support the whole family and engage parents and family members as partners in creating an Oakland where children, youth, and families thrive. Oakland parents, caregivers, educators, community members, and service providers have emphasized how the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered the true extent of disparities between families in highly stressed, low-income neighborhoods and those in higher income communities. This finding is confirmed by Oakland's Stressor Maps and the 2021 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis.[9] Investment in parenting and quality child-focused programming likewise responds to community voices that OFCY heard during community engagement – emphasizing the importance of investing in a whole-family approach to supporting the healthy development of young children.[10] Quality child-focused programming provides children and youth with opportunities to develop social-emotional and cognitive skills and prepares them for school readiness and later success in life.

OFCY will continue to support FRCs as part of the network of centers that provide critical services to meet the diverse needs of families in Oakland with particular attention to equity in

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[9] OFCY Community Needs Assessment, 2021, p 16

[10] Using Family Resource Centers to Support California's Young Children and Their Families, UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, pp. 15-15, August 2001

place by focusing on priority populations and geographic areas/neighborhoods.[11] Our community engagement efforts and racial and equity analysis both link young children's developmental outcomes and school readiness with a place-based approach to building on family strengths and community resources. The 2021 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis includes data from the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Early Development Instrument to illustrate disparities across Oakland neighborhoods along five indicators of child development and kindergarten readiness, demonstrating the need to address equity for young children and their families in place.[12]

Alignment

This strategy aligns with other Oakland initiatives in early childhood, which tend to be focused on preschool quality, by engaging with families with young children to support parents and caregivers in the healthy social and emotional development and learning of young children - particularly for the many children who are not enrolled in formal preschool programs and those who come from hard-to-reach (e.g., immigrant, non-English-speaking) families. This strategy aligns with other Oakland initiatives to support the healthy development of young children. This includes initiatives headed by our partners at Oakland Thrives, the City of Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start, First 5 Alameda County, Oakland Unified School District, among others, including specifically OUSD and Oakland Thrives' respective Early Literacy goal areas. There are new and increased public funding streams for early childhood programming in Oakland and OFCY will work with our partners in early childhood development, education, health, and social services to leverage and align resource allocation in an equitable way.

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[11] OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis, 2001, pp 16-18, 2021
[12] Ibid., pp 15-16

II. Funding Area: Children's Success in School

3. STRATEGY: Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Elementary Schools

Strategy Description: OFCY has continued to invest in an elementary afterschool strategy for over two decades, funding the coordination of comprehensive academic and enrichment activities at Oakland public elementary school sites (grades K-5). This strategy will continue to fund partnerships between lead community-based organizations, the OUSD Expanded Learning Office, school site leadership, and OFCY in order to support student connections and success in school. In the 2019-2020 SY comprehensive elementary and middle school's 61 funded afterschool programs served 8,839 students with an average of 354 hours per child - a total of 3,144,515 hours overall. These partnerships leverage State ASES funding to support expanded learning opportunities that provide safe, culturally-affirming spaces and enriching programming which can increase students' motivation to learn, teach academic and social-emotional skills that help students succeed in school, and foster positive relationships between peers and between students and caring adults.

Supported Programming
- Safe, school-based, afterschool programs that provide academic enrichment (literacy and numeracy) in coordination with school leadership and the District
- Programming focusing on youth development and joyful enrichment, such as visual and performing arts, hands-on science, recreation, and culturally affirming activities
- Programs that integrate with the school day as well as provide consistent programming in afterschool hours
- Activities that build foundational social emotional skills

Intended Impact
- Improving school attendance
- Increasing connection to and engagement with school
- Improving connections to peers and caring adults
- Increasing opportunities for enrichment including cultural events, participating in creative pursuits, and engaging in hands-on science and technology

Priority Populations
- Children attending Oakland public schools in grades K-5 where 50% or more students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals (FRPM).

- Children with special needs or other challenges. such as experiencing housing and food insecurity, foster care, and exposure to trauma, who are recommended by teachers and/or Coordination of Services Teams (COST) for afterschool participation to gain additional opportunities for academic and social-emotional growth

Rationale

Participation in afterschool programs is linked to safety as well as better academic outcomes and school persistence, as it gives students an opportunity to receive extra academic support and interact with caring adults in a stimulating environment after the school day has finished. Research indicates that "Students who regularly participate in Community Learning Centers improved their school attendance, school engagement, and math and reading achievement.[13]" A large body of evidence shows that afterschool programs can help children and youth develop an attachment to school, strengthen academic achievement, improve attendance, and prevent juvenile crime. Local community and stakeholder input also emphasized the importance of opportunities for enrichment and learning after school, and they cited safety[14] as a key reason they appreciate afterschool programs, particularly in communities where students may experience more trauma and high stress. With a long history of utilizing this strategy to achieve results in shared goals for Oakland youth, the 2019-20 Evaluation Report shows that afterschool programs continue to be in high demand, exceeding program enrollment goals by 24% and achieving 90% of average daily attendance goals.

Afterschool programs address wealth disparities by providing low or no cost safe and supportive academic and youth development opportunities for low-income families across Oakland's high priority neighborhoods. In 2019-20, 80% of OFCY's elementary and middle school afterschool participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American. These programs also make a significant contribution to the overall school community, with afterschool programs serving a third (34%) of the students at their host schools. They can therefore serve as effective hubs to meet whole-child and whole community needs for priority students and schools.

Alignment

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)'s Strategic Plan notes that community partners are critical in the OUSD plan to "Redesign schools to be places of joy, inclusion, and beauty" (Initiative #3). Afterschool programs have been a key source of leadership in schools across the District for integrating social-emotional learning, and contribute directly to positive school

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[13] Neild, R.C., Wilson, S.J., & McClanahan, W. (2019). Afterschool programs: A review of evidence under the Every Student Succeeds Act

[14] Ibid., pp 27-28

culture, and OFCY's support of these programs aligns directly with this goal. This strategy also aligns with the OUSD Community School initiative by helping to access additional resources such as mental/physical health, basic needs, and economic development for parents. Additionally, community based organizations can be critical players in achieving OUSD's goal of Literacy by 3rd Grade (Initiative #1) through the academic enrichment activities offered in afterschool programs integrated with school communities.

4. STRATEGY: Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Middle Schools

Strategy Description: The middle school programs funded under OFCY's School-Based Afterschool Strategy leverage state ASES funding and partnerships with OUSD and community-based organizations. The program is designed to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities at Oakland public schools for students in grades 6-8. The middle school afterschool program provides opportunities for students to engage in leadership activities to build their self-confidence, growth mindset, and agency. To better ensure equitable outcomes, this strategy supports low income families by providing safe, high quality, afterschool opportunities free of charge. The strategy supports afterschool programs at schools where the majority of students qualify for free or reduced price meals (FRPM). To put this into context, the income level for a family of four to qualify for FRPM is $34,060 – in contrast to the living wage for the same family in Alameda County which is $93,932.

This strategy provides a laser focus on the key middle school years and provides support for student wellness and success in a way that effectively meets the unique needs of middle school age children and youth. Middle school students are more independent than elementary school students, and participation in middle school afterschool programs is not as consistent as at the elementary school level. Recruitment and retention of middle schoolers benefits from a wider variety of specialized programming on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis. Middle schoolers are typically looking for programs that engage them in enjoyable activities such as performing and visual arts, sports, hands-on science, socialization with peers. Afterschool programs can also support academic achievement in a variety of ways, such as homework help, mentoring, life coaching, and experiential learning approaches. OFCY is interested in strong partnerships and thoughtful design of programs for this population.

Supported Programming
- Safe and joyful school-based afterschool programs that support academic and enrichment programs for middle school students
- Support for successful transitions into high school
- Programming for the unique needs of middle school students (see above)
- Support for leadership and youth development (see above)
- Social Emotional Learning skills
- Mentoring opportunities

Intended Impact
- Improvement in school day attendance

- Increased caring relationships with peers and adults
- Greater access to enrichment opportunities such as arts, STEM, sports, and recreation.
- Improved connectedness to school

Priority Populations
- Children and youth enrolled in 6th-8th grades at Oakland public schools where more than 50% of students are eligible for FRPM.
- Children with special needs or other challenges including experiencing housing and food insecurity, foster care, and exposure to trauma and who are recommended by teachers and Coordination of Service Teams (COST) to participate in afterschool programs to enhance their safety and to gain additional opportunities for academic and social emotional growth.

Rationale

As shown in the Community Needs Assessment, many middle school students living in high stress communities are experiencing trauma on a regular basis. Middle school students in OUSD are more likely to be suspended from school than students in elementary or high school.[15] They need help managing their feelings, learning communication skills, taking responsibility for their younger siblings, dealing with the effects of poverty, and many other adolescent challenges.

A salient issue that arose in both parent and student focus groups was safety. Many Oakland children and youth live with constant stress and trauma. Oakland parents and young people are worried and afraid about neighborhood crime, violence, and their own safety. Many Oakland youth report they seldom feel safe outside, most commonly highlighting gun violence, fears of being the victim of a crime, and overly aggressive behavior of police toward young people. For some parents, fears of anti-immigrant violence, mass shootings, and hate crimes against people in their families and communities keep them and their children from leaving the house. Young women of color in particular said they do not feel safe because of experiences with catcalling and other gender-based violence. Many youth feel socially isolated, anxious, depressed or unsafe at school. This is especially common among LGBTQ+ youth.[16] In addition to increasing students' safety between the crucial hours of 3 – 6 pm, participation in afterschool programs has been shown to increase students' sense of agency during the school day and in other aspects of their lives.

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[15] Oakland Unified School District Data Dashboard 2019
[16] OFCY Community Needs Assessment youth focus groups, 2021

Students who develop positive social bonds with their school are more likely to perform better academically and are less likely to be involved in misconduct and other challenging behavior. School connectedness refers to the academic environment in which students believe that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals. For many years, research has shown that by high school, significant percentages of students are chronically disengaged from school[17].

Afterschool programs are uniquely positioned to engage middle school students because of their emphasis on youth development, youth leadership, student agency, enjoyment, and the diversity of afterschool staff. Due to their flexibility and willingness to bring in other providers to deliver a wide array of programming, afterschool programs are also effective in supporting students who are struggling with social emotional challenges, academic issues, and difficult peer relationships. Afterschool staff are often able to reach out to teachers and counselors to discuss strategies for individual students, often in the Coordinated of Service Teams (COST). This approach allows coordinated efforts which can be effective in meeting diverse student needs, and it can also allow students to form mentoring relationships with broader and more diverse staff. Participation in high quality afterschool programs provides a safe environment for thousands of Oakland students each school day.

Alignment

The afterschool partnership between OUSD, community partners, and OFCY addresses one of the District's priority Initiatives (#3) "Redesign schools to be places of joy, inclusion and beauty".[18] The Afterschool programs have been a key source of leadership in schools across the District for integrating social-emotional learning, and contribute directly to positive school culture, and OFCY's support of these programs aligns directly with this goal.

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[17] Klem and Connell, 2004, p 262
[18] Strategic Plan Draft 2020-23https://www.ousd.org/strategicplan

5. STRATEGY: Middle School Engagement, Wellness, and Transitions

Strategy Description: This strategy would encourage the field to develop culturally-fluent programming that helps middle school students thrive. This strategy will increase the availability of wellness supports, mentoring relationships, wraparound services, restorative circles, recreation and leadership opportunities, and ancillary academic supports, as well as promote innovative approaches that engage middle school students during this transitional time. Those funded under this strategy will utilize a positive youth development approach that offers safe, accessible, and culturally-affirming programming, which can be delivered during or after school, at school sites or in the community. This programming would be developmentally appropriate for this age group and designed to expose middle schoolers to a variety of new opportunities, or address wraparound needs.

Supported Programming
- Safe, enjoyable, culturally-affirming programming that is developmentally appropriate for middle school students, located in accessible community-based or school-based settings
- Building positive relationships among middle school youth and between middle school youth and adults
- Support for wellness and academic success
- Support for families that promotes the whole-child success of middle school students
- Sports and recreation programs
- Youth leadership development opportunities, including youth-driven program design and implementation
- Mentoring, peer-to-peer support, and group-based activities (e.g., grief, substance use, mental health, and restorative justice)

Intended Impact
- Academic improvement
- Reduced suspensions
- Improved school climate
- Increased caring relationships with peers and adults
- Youth and families report improved relationships
- Improved school attendance
- Readiness for high school transition

Priority Populations
- Children and youth in grades 6-8 with special needs or other challenges, including experiencing housing and food insecurity, foster care, and/or exposure to trauma.

- Families living in "high stress" neighborhoods, including those in East and West Oakland, Fruitvale, and San Antonio

Rationale

Enhanced investment in middle school engagement will provide students with opportunities for peer leadership, mentoring, community building, and holistic or wellness supports. Children and youth in grades 6-8 are in early adolescence and are experiencing many changes in their growth and development. The transition from elementary school into middle school is a challenging time where children and youth feel less connected to their school and peers than they do in elementary and high school. During this time, middle school students may be struggling with trauma and mental health challenges and may develop numerous challenging behaviors including substance use, school misconduct and absenteeism that can impact their success in school and life. The most recent California Healthy Kids Survey data show that more than a third (36%) of 8th grade students experienced chronic sadness or hopelessness in the past year, rising steadily from 6th to 8th grade.[19] Rates of reported alcohol and drug use more than double from 6th to 8th grade.[20]

Youth in recent community workshops expressed their feelings of social isolation, depression, and anxiety that present sharply among middle school students. They also expressed the need for access to moral and social support, as well as school and community-based supports that help them navigate intergenerational differences with their parents and their stress and anxieties. Young people attending the community workshops shared their appreciation for affinity spaces that promote a sense of belonging, spaces that welcome and respect cultural diversity and traditions, and gender-specific spaces. They emphasized how important it is for youth to have places outside their homes where they can connect with friends and trusted adults.

Early exposure to thoughtful and engaging programming will provide students with healthy problem-solving strategies and social-emotional assets that can be sustained and used throughout their lives. Targeted programs during or after school can provide opportunities for counseling, mentoring, wraparound services, and other ways to promote youths' agency, self-esteem, and growth mindset.

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[19] *CDE & WestEd. California Healthy Kids Survey. Oakland Unified Elementary and Secondary. 2019-2020 Main Reports. (pre-COVID)*
[20] Ibid

Alignment

Support for services that address student mental health and wellness align with other investments in OUSD Full Service Community School models, peer to peer mentoring or counseling models, or holistic family supports to address the needs of middle schoolers. OFCY's strategy can augment instructional funds to support struggling students in successfully transitioning to and from middle school. Investments in the strategy also align with OUSD's Strategic Plan initiative focused on redesigning schools as places of joy and inclusion, centering student voice and empowerment. Additionally, this strategy aligns with Oakland Park, Recreation, and Youth Development's range of sports, recreation, performing arts, and other age-appropriate initiatives. OPRYD is also a key partner for this and other strategies because it may provide safe spaces that support programming and collaboration with other agencies.

6. STRATEGY: High School and Post-Secondary Student Success

Strategy Description: OFCY will focus its investments for high school and postsecondary age young adults (ages 16-21) on student well-being and on enhancing student transitions to college, postsecondary opportunities, and persistence. Funding may include support for Wellness Centers or programs at Oakland public high schools and culturally specific programs to address equity for students who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). Wellness Centers provide an integrated hub of services designed to promote student health and to facilitate intentional healing and restorative spaces.

In addition to a focus on high school student wellness, OFCY would also support local college and university success for BIPOC students and for other priority youth such as immigrants, foster youth, homeless and students with disabilities. Academic support may take the shape of mentoring, academic advising, study groups, peer support, and tutoring. Culturally affirmative and targeted programs can support access to and persistence in postsecondary opportunities through innovative strategies for success for Black, Latinx and Indigenous youth.

Supported Programming

- Wellness programs where organizational culture, program services, and working relationships are youth-led, culturally-responsive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered.
- High school success programming that provides peer leadership, life coaching, mentoring, community building, and other academic and social supports to engage youth in school and career.
- Postsecondary access and success programming that provides college and postsecondary preparation; as well as persistence support.
- Conflict resolution and restorative justice programming that works to address and reduce student conflict, offer healing circles and healing centered approaches to conflict, and advance positive school culture and community.

Intended Impact

Supports high school and post-secondary student success by:
- Increasing supports for youth in high school
- Increasing access to programming that supports college readiness and post-high school planning
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Improving postsecondary matriculation and persistence

Priority Populations

Oakland youth, ages 14–21 with barriers to high school and postsecondary attendance and success, with services focused on public high schools and colleges with high levels of environmental stress.

Rationale

OFCY recently convened parents, older youth, and community providers to discuss the needs of transition age youth (TAY) in Oakland. Since these information gathering efforts were being done during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, they took place virtually in almost all cases. The older youth were very candid about their needs for support for the transition from high school to college. They also displayed their resiliency and desire for success whether that be in college or other career paths.

Parents of older youth expressed a wide range of perspectives and hopes for their older children; many shared the hope that their children would find a living-wage job and attend college. Some expressed that they came here first for economic opportunity but have learned that this country offers unique educational opportunities and that they want their children to access a four-year-college education. These parents experience tension with their children when it comes to their educational and career goals.

Parents are looking for resources that can help them navigate the college application process with their children, help them pay for college, and that can help their children understand the requirements for college entry.

Providers noted a need for programs to support college readiness to prepare them for the academic, social, and cultural experiences of a university setting. There is a sense that supporting students up to the "entry point" of employment or higher education is not enough to help them succeed. Students need wraparound support with a focus on technology, financial education, career preparation, and life skills.[21]

In 2004, the State of California established the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (pursuant to Proposition 63) which has a multi-year plan for transforming schools into centers for wellness. It has released a report, "Every Young Heart and Mind" as a guide for how to accomplish this goal. OUSD was spotlighted in the document, specifically as it pertains to Racial-Ethnic Disparities.

"This data represents real children in our communities – children impacted by poverty, racism, isolation, violence and lack of opportunity and access to quality preschool education and other

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[21] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 69.

critical health, mental health and human services" – Chief of Staff, Oakland Unified School District.

Challenges facing high school and college age students in Oakland, especially BIPOC students are as follows:

- In 2018-19, over 60% of all rising 9th grade students attending Oakland public schools were determined to be "not ready for high school", with significant disparities by race and ethnicity, disproportionately felt by African American, Latinx, and Pacific Islander students. [22]
- Graduation rates among students attending Oakland public schools are 10.7% lower than the Alameda County average, with highest dropout rates among Latinx students and students not reporting their race/ethnicity. [23]
- Just 30% of high school juniors attending public schools met or exceeded standards on state testing for English Language Arts, and just 12% did for math. Disparities in these test scores, which influence plans after high school, were particularly felt among Latinx, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, economically disadvantaged, and English Learner students. Students who were economically disadvantaged achieved scores that were approximately 15% lower than their peers. [24]
- 11% of students attending public schools in Oakland reported in 2019 that they had skipped at least one day of school because they felt unsafe.[25]
- Black/African American students are 7-10x more likely to be suspended than their white and Asian peers.[26]

As noted above, OFCY engaged with multiple stakeholders - individually, in focus groups, in townhalls, and in forums, and respondents increasingly identified the need for wellness and holistic services to support the mental health and well-being of high school and postsecondary youth. In addition to the effects of Covid-19 (such as loss/grief, social deprivation, and trauma) a number of factors and environmental stressors are affecting youth mental health. In 2021 the OUSD Board of Education adopted a resolution to prioritize "Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic"[27]. The resolution highlights that, even prior to the pandemic, a mental health crisis existed among Oakland's children and youth.

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[22] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 39.
[23] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 41
[24] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 42
[25] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 26
[26] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 36
[27] Board of Education Resolution No. 2021-0046, Aimee Eng and Jessica Ramos, April 14, 2021

With the advent of the pandemic, beginning in April, 2020 to October of 2020, mental health related visits for adolescents aged 12-17 increased by 31%. The effects of this pandemic cast a long shadow over the wellbeing of youth and families. OFCY has therefore heightened its focus on addressing mental health issues over the next three-year funding cycle.

Academic achievement and its relationship to wellness and mental health are no longer questioned. Health is now seen as one of the key factors that influence academic performance. The importance of academic achievement is emphasized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by stating that "CDC recognizes that the academic success of youth is strongly linked with their overall health. In turn, academic success is an excellent indicator for the overall well-being of youth, and is a primary predictor and determinant of adult health outcomes." Other studies have found that the health services provided at school can ameliorate problems such as absenteeism, late-coming and unruly student behavior, and these services also help to increase graduation rates.[28]
Findings in a longitudinal study in the United States revealed that, aside from family characteristics, adolescents with poorer general health were found less likely than healthier students to graduate from high school on time and attend post-secondary education. The findings were substantiated in an extensive study conducted by the California Department of Education in 2005.[29]

Wellness therefore has a proven impact on academic achievement. Not only does it affect emotional health but there is significant influence on many other aspects of students' lives including social interactions and educational attainment. The connection of quality wellness and social emotional health versus the lack of such, has been demonstrated as a cause for difficulties with academic work, social integration, adjustment to school, behavior regulation and attention and concentration.[30]

Developing more seamless pathways for students and increasing awareness and access to them through our 6-12 schools will benefit students and families. OFCY and OUSD have access to several community assets and a multitude of opportunities available to students through local businesses and community-based organizations. Career and Technical Education programs and collaboration with community colleges provide students with opportunities to explore various careers through courses, internships, and on-the-job apprenticeships. Collaboration among K-

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[28] Haas AS, Fosse NE. Health and the educational attainment of adolescents: Evidence from the NLSY97. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. 2008;49:178-192
[29] California Department of Education. Getting Results: Developing Safe and Healthy Kids Update 5: Student Health, Supportive Schools, and Academic Success. 2005, www.getting results.org. Accessed June 2020
[30] DeSocio J, Hootman J. Children's mental health and school success. The Journal of School Nursing. 2004; 20:189-196

12 schools, community colleges and universities, business and industry, local and state governments, and communities lend enough support to make this strategy a high priority.

At the Oakland Thrives Health Impact Table, the focus on adolescent mental and behavioral health identifies evidence-based strategies to promote resilience and opportunities to strengthen the system of care and support. The Health Impact Table has identified the need for expanded treatment opportunities including: 1) screening for adverse childhood events (ACES); 2) individual check-ins from caring and supportive adults; 3) professional development in trauma informed care; 4) addressing access issues through targeted approaches for reaching and supporting those who aren't aware of their health needs; 5) more clinicians in schools and in community, and 6) comprehensive supports that include meaningful economic opportunities for youth, holistic family supports, culturally responsive therapies (i.e. ecotherapy, drumming, visual arts etc.) and peer to peer mentorship. Alignment with other systems to support the development of more integrated care approaches to adolescent behavioral health can dramatically reduce stigma and promote a culture of health, well-being and connection to school and peers.

Alignment

OFCY funding for high school and postsecondary success builds on longstanding partnerships with OUSD, the Peralta Community College District, the Oakland Workforce Development Board (OWDB), and Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE). The OFCY partnership with OUSD addresses the Districts' Initiative #2 Develop essential skills to secure postsecondary success and #3 Redesign schools to be places of joy, inclusion, and beauty. The Peralta Community College District has partnered with OUSD for many years to support high school graduation and college success, in particular through the Career Technical Education initiative, which also engaged ACOE youth in detention and those in a variety of alternative high school programs. Oakland Promise and Peralta have since 2016 partnered to pledge that every Oakland child entering kindergarten in OUSD had a college savings account opened in their name though Oakland Promise. Through this universal college savings program, all four Peralta Colleges will offer all eligible Oakland students a free first semester with no tuition and no fees. Another relevant partnership is that between the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) and OUSD to provide school-based health centers in several Oakland high schools. These health centers leverage Medicaid funds to provide an array of physical and mental health services in a safe and confidential setting.

III. Funding Area: Youth Development and Violence Prevention

7. STRATEGY: Youth Leadership and Development

Strategy Description: The Youth Leadership and Development strategy will provide children and youth with access to asset based, positive youth development programs that recognize, utilize, and enhance youths' strengths and promote positive outcomes for young people. This strategy will offer youth opportunities for new experiences, foster positive relationships including connections to caring adults and mentors, and support enriching activities and safe spaces in community settings. The strategy includes cultural and political programming, along with empowerment opportunities for youth to build agency and self-efficacy along with fundamental civic, social and leadership skills. A broad range of programming will be supported, with particular focus on:

- **Arts, Recreation, and Cultural Enrichment** programs that will support youth development including but not limited to STEAM programming, such as visual and performing arts, coding and computer science, and recreational activities that support community, creativity, wellness, and healing. Programming may also support physical health, nutrition, and improved access to the many benefits of physical activity and sports. This strategy leverages public assets, such as expanded partnership with Oakland's Parks, Recreation & Youth Development Department to increase access to recreational, outdoor and other physical spaces.
- Supporting and expanding Safe **Community Spaces** in community settings, particularly in underserved, high need neighborhoods and for marginalized groups, including but not limited to homeless students, black, indigenous and children and youth of color, commercially sexually exploited children, and LGBTQ+ students.
- **Youth Leadership, Organizing and Advocacy, and Civic Engagement** that supports youth to develop skills, experience, and agency in civic participation, community advocacy, and leadership with emphasis on racial, social, and environmental justice.

Supported Programming

Supported programming will provide youth with enriching activities, skill building, connections to caring adults, and opportunities for direct mentorship. Particular focus may be given to:

- Arts, music, and recreation enrichment programs that provide youth with opportunities to explore personal and cultural identity through arts, literature, or other forms of expression, sports, gender-specific or cultural programming, and to build their social-emotional, cultural, physical, and cognitive skills.
- Population-specific programming that is culturally relevant, asset-based, trauma-informed, and provides social, emotional, and physical support for vulnerable

populations such as LGBTQ+ youth, black, indigenous children and youth and children and youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth, and youth experiencing homelessness or other populations facing disparate health, academic, and social challenges. Through the delivery of comprehensive services and supports to young people, programming will provide positive youth development, empowerment opportunities, and family support.

- Peer leadership programming that provides youth with leadership skills and experiences such as peer mentoring, community advocacy, or other opportunities to practice leadership and hold roles of responsibility. Investments will focus on programming that includes youth in program design and delivery, empowering them to experience leadership that can boost their self-efficacy, educational achievements, and sense of community.

Intended Impact
- Increasing caring relationships with peers and adults
- Increasing opportunities for leadership and connection to community
- Increasing access for low-income children and youth to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
- Expanding access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment
- Improving youth activity levels, fitness, and overall physical wellness
- Increasing the number of safe, supported spaces for vulnerable, high priority youth populations
- Increasing youth agency and self efficacy

Priority Populations
- Children and youth (ages 5–21) in Oakland

Rationale
Youth Development and Leadership have been long standing and effective strategies supporting Oakland's children and youth. OFCY's recent community engagement and community needs assessment process surfaced a crisis in well-being and dramatic disparities in outcomes, opportunities, and conditions among children and youth. This strategy responds to the need for focused support for safe, nurturing, inspiring, and empowering programming for children and youth who are struggling to overcome these obstacles. Youth development and leadership strategies are affirming and positive and will enhance the connection of children and youth to school and support them to be present and participating[31]. This strategy provides opportunities for youth to increase their physical activity, enhance individual agency, and increase wellness – thereby encouraging their success, reducing anxiety, supporting well-being, and fostering community and a sense of belonging. These activities also build equity by focusing

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[31] Bright Research Group, Stakeholder Interview Notes, April 2021

on youth who may have had adverse experiences and are otherwise unlikely to have opportunities to participate in these supportive activities.

Alignment

This strategy is aligned to the work of the City's Department of Violence Prevention/Oakland UNITE, the Department of Parks, Recreation & Youth Development, the Human Services Department homeless services, and the policies of the Oakland Youth Commission in supporting vulnerable populations, including youth experiencing homelessness and commercially sexually exploited minors.

8. STRATEGY: Summer Academic and Enrichment Programs

Strategy Description: OFCY's Summer Program strategy supports high quality school-based and community-based summer programs – providing diverse opportunities for enrichment, confidence building, and new experiences over the summer months. These programs use a positive youth development framework that promotes learning, leadership, and peer-to-peer social connections – helping youth stay academically engaged while having fun, developing new academic and employment skills, and building social connections.

Supported Programming
- School-based summer programs at school sites that provide programming that promotes social-emotional skills development, culture, health and wellness, and cognitive development.
- Community-based summer programs that provide opportunities for learning and new experiences in areas such as the arts, STEM, and youth and community development, as well as field trips and explorations of nature.

Intended Impact
Supports children and youth in the summer months with the intention of:
- Retaining academic skills and knowledge over summer months
- Increasing caring relationships with peers and adults
- Increasing access for low-income children and youth to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
- Expanding access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment
- Improving youth physical activity levels, fitness, and overall physical wellness

Priority Populations
- Children and youth (ages 5–14)

Rationale
Out of school time, including Summer, has a significant impact on school success. Longitudinal studies of students[32] have shown that low-income children made comparable grade equivalent gains in reading and math during the school year as did middle-income children. The so-called "summer slump" has been shown to result when children and youth are not able to access enriching, experiential summer activities. This phenomenon causes a gap in achievement

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[32], Alexander, Entwistle and Olson (2001) a longitudinal study of children in Baltimore schools.

between the low- and middle-income students and can widen across school years, due to significant differences in out-of-school learning time. Summer programming provides a substantive opportunity to level the playing field in academic achievement and the significant benefits of positive youth development[33]. OFCY support allows children to participate in high-quality enriching summer activities that may otherwise not be accessible to Oakland families due to costs.

Alignment

The OFCY Summer program aligns with the new OUSD strategic plan, Initiative #2 - Develop essential skills to secure postsecondary success. This provides opportunities for our priority population to maintain and advance their academic and social skills over the summer. The summer program also partners with the Parks, Recreation and Youth Development department which provides safe spaces and programming for the elementary and middle school students in OFCY programs. The summer programming would not be possible without the expertise and effort of a number of nonprofit, community organizations.

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[33] University of Minnesota, Research on Factors for School Success, https://extension.umn.edu/research/research-factors-school-success#out-of-school-time-434713, accessed June 2021

9. STRATEGY: Violence Prevention Programming

Strategy Description: For many years, OFCY's investments in a range of youth development programming have contributed to the prevention of violence and gang involvement for youth by promoting a strengths-based foundation and ecosystem for youth engagement and opportunities for connection, culture, joy, and leadership in Oakland communities. OFCY is identifying a specific strategy to directly promote violence prevention services, restorative justice, and healing practices that build anti-violence and positive youth culture. This strategy may contribute, in coordination with the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP), to a system-integrated restorative justice effort or network as recommended by the "Reimagining Public Safety Task Force", and will address prevention programming that emphasizes youth leadership, education and training, conflict management, peer-to-peer and other mentoring programs to support youth. It can also support opportunities to coordinate with DVP on expanding restorative justice and diversion models, or programming specific to high-priority youth ages 11–21.

Supported Programming
- Restorative justice programming
- Targeted youth violence prevention programming
- Violence prevention training
- Peer and adult mentoring programs

Intended Impact
- Reduction in youth-involved violence including involvement in juvenile justice system, detention, expulsions, suspensions, and other disciplinary actions

Priority Populations
- Youth 11-21 years of age who are involved in the juvenile justice system
- Youth exposed to trauma and other adverse childhood experiences
- Youth living in neighborhoods with high levels of violence and youth involvement in the juvenile justice system

Rationale
Youth in community engagement forums voiced concerns for their own safety and their families, the stress of community violence and the threat or prevalence of gender-based violence. Community stakeholders emphasized that the past year of pandemic-related restrictions further exacerbated the already existing trauma and has had a marked impact on domestic and gender violence, as well as violent street crime. Stakeholders also recommended

wraparound models and a holistic approach to working with high-need and/or opportunity youth and their families.

City-wide goals to reduce violence are strengthened by expanded funding under the leadership of the DVP. OFCY funding would support primary prevention efforts aligned with but distinct from the more targeted and violence interruption strategies of the Department of Violence Prevention. OFCY can align with citywide goals by focusing on opportunities to advance violence prevention utilizing youth leadership, peer to peer and educational approaches to address positive culture and safe, nurturing and stable environments for youth.

Alignment

The OFCY violence prevention strategy is carefully aligned with the DVP plan which continues to shift as it takes on more resources and responsibilities. In addition, OUSD has discontinued its police force which has an impact on violence prevention. This work includes the Oakland Human Service Department, Juvenile Probation, the County Office of Education, as well as Oakland Thrives' Safety Impact Table.

IV. Funding Area: Transitions to Adulthood

10. STRATEGY: Career Access and Employment for Opportunity Youth

Strategy Description: This strategy will support holistic and sustainable opportunities for employment and transitions to adulthood for older youth ages 16-21 who are disengaged from school and work. The strategy focuses on connecting these opportunity youth to supported training and employment with wraparound supports and workforce skill building opportunities alongside academic or educational support. Programs may include apprenticeships, subsidized employment, internships, and direct job placement. Supported services include pre-employment and life skills training, along with incentives for continued program retention and other foundational supports required to help prepare young people with barriers as they prepare for adulthood.

Supported Programming
- Programming for opportunity youth ages 16-21 who are not in school or employed
- Comprehensive, supported work experiences for youth who face high barriers to self-sufficiency.
- Employment experience including paid apprenticeships
- Support for academic achievement, alternative educational pathways, and holistic supportive services.
- Programs that incorporate financial literacy and financial access into their program design.

Intended Impact
Supports disconnected older youth transition to adulthood by:
- Increasing experience with and awareness of job and career options
- Supporting the completion of a successful transition to self-sufficiency by providing wraparound support to address multiple barriers faced by opportunity youth
- Improving employment outcomes for opportunity youth
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Improving postsecondary matriculation and persistence

Priority Populations
- Opportunity Youth (ages 14–21)

Rationale

Employment is an essential part of the transition to adulthood for opportunity youth and is an essential ingredient to address the high barriers they face to achieve stability (e.g., physical and behavioral health, housing, financial stability, food insecurity, exposure to violence, and contact with the justice system[34,35]). Opportunity youth need more intensive wraparound supports to succeed and reach stability in all the aforementioned aspects of their lives. Unfortunately, many opportunity youth are also disconnected from basic services and supportive networks that are instrumental in helping them to thrive[36]. Recognizing the lasting importance of the successful transition to adulthood, OFCY is one of the largest City investors in youth workforce funding. Broad input from multiple stakeholders also emphasized **paid** youth jobs and employment as a solution that addresses both equity and violence in Oakland.

Alignment

This strategy closely aligns with the Oakland Workforce Development Board (OWDB) and City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention's focus on re-engaging disconnected youth into supportive programs. In the last round of OFCY and OWDB funding, these two organizations issued a joint RFP for funding. This approach helped to reduce the administrative burden on providers and to strengthen collaboration system-wide. Additionally, this strategy aligns with Oakland Thrives' initiative to increase youth employment.

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[34] Lewis, K., & Burd-Sharps, S. (2015). Zeroing in on place and race: Youth disconnection in America's cities. Measure of America.
[35] Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2019). 2019 KIDS COUNT data book: State trends in child well-being
[36] OFCY Community Forum, May 2021

11. STRATEGY: Career Access and Employment for Youth in School

Strategy Description: This strategy strives to ensure equitable opportunity for high school students through Summer Youth Employment programs that provide youth with subsidized employment to build job experience and skills. The strategy also supports linked learning and career pathways operating year-round in order to build pre-employment skills, experience and knowledge connected to identified industry sectors. This strategy aligns closely with the goals of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) career academies as well as the Oakland Workforce Development Board's support for key Oakland industry sectors.

Supported Programming

- Programs for youth enrolled in high school that provide youth with career exposure, internship opportunities, and/or work experience during the school year and in summer months.
- Programming that focuses on helping youth learn about various occupations and industry sectors as well as acquire real, on-the- job experience as a means of encouraging and motivating students to complete high school and pursue postsecondary training.

Intended Impact

Supports older youth transition to adulthood by:
- Increasing awareness of job and career options
- Improving access and connection to internships and other work-experience opportunities that offer tangible work-skills and job readiness
- Increasing the number of youth who participate in the City's Summer Youth Employment program
- Youth will be able to earn a stipend or wages.
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Improving postsecondary matriculation and persistence

Priority Populations

- BIPOC youth ages 16-21

Rationale

The Community Needs Assessment and community engagement process underscored the importance of this strategy. Parents emphasized the importance of access to training programs that prepare students for living wage jobs, not just entry level jobs. Youth stakeholders expressed the desire to have training and leadership opportunities to build their resumes and emphasized experiential leadership and career exploration opportunities. Mentors and paid

internships also were mentioned as playing an important role in youths' ability to learn about work opportunities and job exploration. Providers echoed these same issues and underscored the role that many students play in contributing financially to their families' basic needs. They called for the need to support students not just to the entry point of employment or higher education. but the need to go further to help young people to succeed.[37] Additionally, in the most recent California Healthy Kids Survey of students attending Oakland public schools, 39% of students in grades 9-12 agreed that school has given them the skills and knowledge needed to get a job after high school, get job training, and/or go to college, while 29% disagreed.[38]

Alignment

This strategy aligns directly with the Oakland Workforce Development Board's PY 21-24 WIOA Local Plan, Oakland Thrive's Employment strategy, and the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)'s Success After School strategy, each of which prioritizes coordination among resources and investments for youth workforce development programs that prepare high school students and transitional aged youth to prepare for careers and post-secondary education.

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[37] Bright Research Group, Community Workshops Summary of Findings Report, April 2021
[38] 2021 Community Needs Assessment & Racial Equity Analysis Report, p. 47

Community Needs Assessment Summary of Findings

➕ **There are Dramatic Racial and Geographic Disparities in Access to Resources**

= Longstanding disparities persist, especially between racial/ethnic groups and between neighborhoods in the Oakland Hills and East and West Oakland. These disparities are reflected in outcomes related to readiness for and success in school, mental health, suspensions, experiences of safety and violence, and transitions to adulthood.

= Schools located in neighborhoods with high levels of environmental stressors are more likely to serve students and families experiencing those same stressors, often with fewer resources available to do so. Schools are important anchor institutions, particularly in neighborhoods experiencing high levels of stress. They often play a role well outside of the scope of academics, providing a setting for families to meet, form community, and share resources; offering wraparound services such as health care, navigation for families, food pantries, extended learning, and other critical supports.

People of color are 2-3x more likely to experience poverty than white people

Native American and Black/African American individuals are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness by 4 x

= Gentrification is contributing to significant demographic shifts in the city, affecting communities of color and most significantly Black/African American, Latinx, and Native American populations. A decade ago, one in three Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students was Black/African American. Now, it's one in five.

= Immigrating children, as well as U.S.-born children of immigrants, often bear a disproportionate share of the burden for navigating their new environment. Monolingual families have less access to information and resources that could support them in meeting their needs and advocating effectively for their children and family.

Over 90% of OUSD students qualify for free/reduced price meals at some schools in East/West Oakland, compared to 72% district-wide

More Data Highlights on Racial Inequity

- Oakland families that are **housing burdened** (paying more than 35% of their income on rent) are most likely to live in East Oakland and be Black or Latinx.
- 23% of kindergarteners in low-income households did not **attend preschool**, compared to 9% of kindergarteners from higher-income households.
- 40% of children over age five are growing up in a household that **speaks a language other than English**, and in some areas, more than two thirds of children do

➕ **Many of Oakland Children and Youth Live in Constant Stress and Trauma**

= Oakland parents and young people are worried and afraid about neighborhood crime, violence, and their own safety. Many Oakland youth report they seldom feel safe outside, most commonly highlighting gun violence, fears of being the victim of a crime, and overly aggressive behavior of police toward young people. For some parents, fears of anti-immigrant violence, mass shootings, and hate crimes against people in their families and communities keep them and their children from leaving the house.

- Young women of color in particular said they do not feel safe because of experiences with catcalling and other gender-based violence, citing fears of harassment, assault, or sexual exploitation.
- Many youth feel socially isolated, anxious, depressed, or unsafe at school. This is especially common among LGBTQ+ youth.
- Juvenile arrests are concentrated in several neighborhoods, primarily in East Oakland, and concentrated with dramatic disproportionality on Black/African American males.
- Youth also have powerful insights into what would make them safer, including more extensive restorative justice efforts and community-based supports.
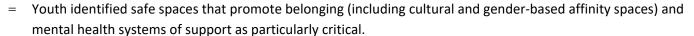- Youth identified safe spaces that promote belonging (including cultural and gender-based affinity spaces) and mental health systems of support as particularly critical.

Black/African American students are 7-10x more likely to be suspended than their white and Asian peers

81% 81% of youth detained in Oakland were Black/African American. Nearly all of the other arrests (18%) were Latinx youth. Less than 1% were any other race/ethnicity. 85% were male.
In April 2019-March 20

More Data Highlights on Oakland Children and Youth's Mental Health

- Between 31% and 39% of students in grades 5-12 in OUSD, depending on the grade, report that at least one friend or family member has **died by violence**.
- One in three **OUSD students report feelings** of chronic sadness and hopelessness, with a peak among 8th graders.
- 56% of LGBTQ+ youth report **experiencing chronic depression** – more than twice the rate among youth identifying as straight (24%).
- 11% of high school students reported that they **skipped at least one day of school** because they felt unsafe.

Massive Disparities Persist in Children and Youth's Readiness for, Engagement, and Success in School
- Academic outcomes are generally below state standards for OUSD students, with severe disparities based on race and socioeconomic, homeless, and foster status.
- Chronic absenteeism and suspensions are extremely disproportionate by race, gender, socioeconomic status, school, and special needs status. These are a major factor in measures such as "ready for high school" and "ready for college", meaning that students who are chronically absent or are suspended at disproportionately high rates (Black/African American and Pacific Islander, primarily), experience compounded impact on their success in school and transitions to adulthood.

17% of all OUSD students were chronically absent in 2019-20 compared to 10.1% statewide

Pacific Islander, Black/ African American, and Native American students were 3-4x more likely to be chronically absent than their white and Asian peers.

- There are strong needs for culturally-responsive resources and approaches to services, rooted in racial equity and utilizing that lens, in order to tackle the racial, linguistic, and class disparities evident in academic achievement gaps and experiences with school systems.
- Native American/Alaska Native students are often excluded or overlooked in discussions about school success and identifying student needs.

Latinx, Pacific Islander, and African American 3rd graders were 2-3x more likely to be reading below grade level compared to their white peers

More Data Highlights on Children and Youth's Success in School

- **Kindergarteners in parts of East Oakland** are only half as likely as their peers in the Oakland hills to be "on track" in their academic and social development.
- Over 60% of all rising 9th graders in OUSD were deemed **not ready for high school**, with major disparities: just 23% of Black/African Americans were considered ready for high school, compared to 70% of Asians.
- **Students whose parents are college graduates** are twice as likely to be proficient in ELA or Math than their peers whose parents are not high school graduates.
- Less than 3% of English Learners in 11th grade **meet standards in ELA or Math**.
- Low-income Black/African American students with an Individualized Education Plan **are 29 times more likely to be suspended** than students who are not low-income, not African American, and do not have an IEP.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities in income, housing status, access to resources, and outcomes for Oakland children, youth, and families.**
- Service providers reported that during their professional careers they had not experienced the level of crisis the COVID-19 pandemic brought both to their organizations and to the families, children, and youth they serve in Oakland.
- The pandemic only widened educational gaps for students who were already facing disparate access to education. Wealthier families have the space and resources to ensure that their children stay on track, and providers are concerned that the achievement gap between low- and high-income youth has grown during the past year of remote learning.
- Youth reported an increase in their levels of anxiety, stress and depression, social isolation, and concerns about their physical safety and/or their home environment as a result of sheltering in place and the COVID-19 pandemic.

> *"It was a terrible year for young people in high school. They were out of school, depressed, disconnected from their friends."*
>
> - *Stakeholder interview*

- **Transition-aged youth (TAY) balance competing priorities in their transition to adulthood as they strive to take care of themselves and their families, while getting on a path to self-sufficiency**
- Supporting students up to the "entry point" for college and career is not always enough to help them succeed. As they age out of the school system (and/or foster care system), many students struggle to succeed in their first year of continuing education or career without wraparound supports such as financial literacy, workplace readiness skills, and a safety net.

- Many older students need to support their families financially while in school and/or immediately after. Youth find themselves facing a competitive job market and frequently take jobs that are not on career-building pathways to living wage employment.
- There are many complex factors that can contribute to becoming "disconnected/opportunity youth" who are not in school and not working. These can range from growing up in families with low economic resources or educational attainment, having a disability, living in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and racial segregation, being involved in the foster care or criminal justice system, and having caregiving responsibilities at home, among others. It is clear, however, that without connecting to school and work, these young people will be at high risk of experiencing poverty, unemployment, homelessness or incarceration during their adult lives.

More Data Highlights on TAY Transition to Adulthood

- 39% of OUSD high schoolers said they thought their **school gave them the skills and knowledge** needed to get a job after high school and/or pursue higher education or vocational training.
- There were an estimated 20,695 **youth ages 16-19 not in school and not working (disconnected**) in 2019 – a rate of 6.5% which is higher than the state average. This rate was double (13%) for African American youth, and lower (4%) for Latinx youth.
- Among TAY 18-24 in the SF-Oakland-Berkeley metro area, **47% live below the poverty line**.
- 75% of **TAY experiencing homelessness** were unsheltered.

There is a need to center family and community to support thriving children and youth
- Community members and families provide irreplaceable knowledge in decision making.
- There is a lack of representation among teachers that reflect the demographics and experiences of youth.
- There is a lack of data that capture the nuances and experiences of many youth, notably including Native American/Alaska Native and the African American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander diasporas.
- In order to effectively address inequities, there needs to be a strong partnership between OFCY and providers. With this partnership, there is a need for a clear structure so initiatives can be successful.
- Providers expressed a clear need to create a network among themselves to be able to better assist children, youth and their families by linking them to services. A community hub model also gives providers the opportunity to collaborate on new methods of service and care.

Photo courtesy of BANANAS Inc.

Defining OFCY Priority Populations & Areas

The strategic investment approaches described in this document reference "priority populations" and "high priority areas" throughout, which all 11 strategies aim to address. Each strategy may highlight specific subsets or populations of focus in addition to those described below. The 2021 Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis report describes these priorities, including how they were determined, in more detail.

Priority Populations
- Children, youth, and families living in or near poverty
- Children and youth living or going to school in high-priority neighborhoods (see below)
- Children and youth of color
- Foster youth
- Children and youth experiencing homelessness
- Newcomer and immigrant children, youth, and their families
- LGBTQ+ children and youth
- Children and youth with disabilities
- Commercially-sexually exploited children and youth
- Children and youth involved in the criminal legal/justice system (direct or family involvement)

High-Priority Neighborhoods
High-priority neighborhoods are those where residents experience chronic stressors across a range of domains, including poverty, education, housing, health and environment, and criminal justice involvement. The Oakland Stressors Map below illustrates neighborhoods referred to as "high priority" for their frequent community-level stressors.[39]

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[39] City of Oakland. Oakland Community Stressors Index. https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/oakland-community-stressors-index

Oakland Community Stressor Map - Overall Rank (2019)

"Community stress is the experience of chronic stress, violence, and trauma that has serious negative consequences on communities and individuals. It leads to lower social capital and decreased collective efficacy and impacts the psychological development, health, and well-being of individuals." - Oakland Community Stressor Index

Choose a Stressor to display on the map:

- ○ Adult Probationers
- ○ Arrests Among Adults, Age 18+
- ○ Arrests Among Youth, Age 12-17
- ○ Burglaries
- ○ Chronic Absenteeism
- ○ Did Not Complete High School
- ○ Domestic Violence
- ○ Food Retail Environment
- ○ Food Stamp Recipients
- ○ Homicides
- ○ Housing Affordability
- ○ Housing Cost Burden (Rank)
- ○ Juvenile Probationers, Age 12-17
- ○ OPD Stops
- ⦿ Overall Rank
- ○ Shootings
- ○ Students Below 3rd Grade Reading Level
- ○ Students Eligible for F/R Lunch
- ○ Suspensions
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Unsheltered Homeless

Color Legend: Rankings (1=Most Stressed)

| 1-15 | 16-31 | 32-47 | 48-63 | 64-79 | 80-95 | 96-111 |

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