

# OAKLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

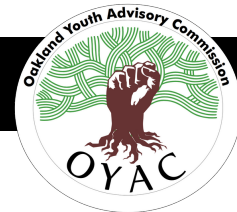
YOUTH LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

## ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018

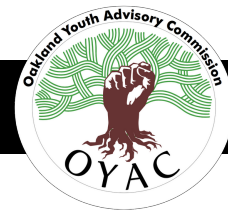


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# Open Letter to City Leaders



Dear Mayor Schaaf, City Council Members and other Oakland Leaders:

Catalyzed by the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, a powerful tide of youth activism and civic engagement is washing over our country. OYAC stands in solidarity with the community of Parkland and our own Oakland communities that are affected by gun violence every day. Several OYAC members are providing inspired youth leadership to the local movement and continue to advocate around issues of gun violence.

We write this letter during a critical time in our nation, when youth issues are at the forefront and youth voice is being recognized as key to unlocking the solutions. Young people are entering college under-prepared and those entering the workforce face one of the worst labor markets in a generation. In urban cores like Oakland, regional issues, such as the effects of gentrification, have become epidemic in nature. Young people have and will continue to be hugely affected by these issues, as well as, the narrow-minded decisions of the current federal administration. Projected to be the largest voting bloc in 2020, current youth will play a significant role in working to keep our democracy and community strong.

Oakland has long been a city that recognizes the power of youth, lifts up youth voice and invests in the healthy development of its young people. However, even in a culture where youth voice is valued, opportunities for youth to truly impact decisions in an adult occupied space can be limited. Meaningful youth-adult partnerships can only be developed through investing in the intentional application of positive youth development frameworks within the institutions that serve young people.

On average, California youth of today understand the importance of equity, diversity, inclusion, as well as, intersectionality and are therefore primed for the task of leadership and disrupting old and outdated systems. However, we must create more opportunities for youth that demystify public systems, and teaches young people how to effectively navigate and influence them.

Today, we ask that Oakland leaders double down on their support and investment in youth leadership and civic education and to create more spaces that engage youth in co-owning and co-creating solutions to the issues that affect them. After all, those closest to the problem are often closest to the solution.

Since its inception, OYAC has made and will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our City's children and youth. The Oakland Youth Advisory Commission remains dedicated to youth leadership development, civic education/engagement and lifting up the voices of Oakland youth.

With Oakland Love,  
Oakland Youth Advisory Commission (OYAC)  
2017-2018

The Oakland Youth Advisory Commission (OYAC) is comprised of young people ages 13 to 21 who advise the Mayor, City Council and other City officials on issues affecting youth in Oakland. OYAC provides a platform for young people to enter the public arena and be involved in the City's decision making process. OYAC is a youth leadership and development program that empowers Oakland youth with training and civic education. These skills and lived experiences as young Oaklanders are then applied to analyze policies, conduct field and academic research and meet with community members to learn about the diverse needs of Oakland youth.

In this **Annual Report**, you will learn about the many activities and accomplishments of the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission in the 2017–2018 term year. Seven returning members welcomed 14 new members. Structurally, we took steps to build a solid foundation because we quickly realized that our success would be defined by the strength of our team. Operationally, we focused on community engagement and gathering youth/community feedback.

This term OYAC members have;

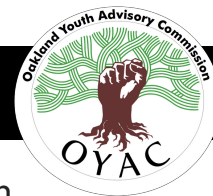
- Participated in over 75 community events across the city
- Designed a survey that was taken by nearly 700 Oakland youth and;
- Facilitated a series of forums across Oakland to identify youth needs and stakeholder solutions.

OYAC used the findings from these methods to help develop a series of policy and program recommendations related to Youth Homelessness, Alternatives to Youth Incarceration, Law Enforcement–Community/Youth Relations, CSEC and Post–Secondary Readiness.



It is an honor for OYAC to serve as the City of Oakland's official youth advising body and to uphold the longstanding Oakland tradition of advocating for youth and community change. OYAC members are proud to be a part of the growing movement to bridge the gap between youth and government and to continue showing decision makers that young people have a significant contribution to make to the City.

# WHO WE ARE



OYAC is housed in the Human Services Department, Children & Youth Services Division.  
Support Staff: Lindee Lane, Youth Leadership & Development Coordinator.

## 2017-2018 OYAC Members

Addison Duchin  
District 4  
Oakland Tech HS

Daren Barron  
District 4  
Merritt College

Enasia Mc-Elvaine  
District 3  
McClymonds HS

Grecia Jackie Palma  
District 5  
Merritt College

Rachel Dharmapalan  
District 2  
OSA

Shai Aikens  
District 5  
Laney College

Bethania Tadesse  
District 6  
International HS

Darrell Edwards, Jr.  
District 6  
Bentley K-12

Ericson Amaya  
District 7  
SF State

Ivan Garcia  
District 5  
Head-Royce School

Roxana Perez  
District 7  
Aspire Golden State Prep

Yota Omo-Sowho  
District 3  
Oakland HS

Buna Poeng  
District 4  
Oakland HS

Davone Riddick  
District 4  
Freedom School

Esmeralda Cortez  
District 7  
UC Berkeley

Maxwell Stern  
District 4  
Oakland Tech

Ryan Hunt,  
District 1  
Bishop O'Dowd

Daniel Lopez  
District 7  
SF State

Elena Larsen  
District 4  
Oakland Tech HS

Giovanni Hernandez  
District 7  
San Leandro HS

Natalie Dharmapalan  
District 2  
OSA

Sepideh Kiumarsi  
District 2  
American Indian Public HS

## OYAC Principles

### Civic Engagement

We believe that participating in local government is one of the surest pathways to influence positive lasting change for youth in our community.

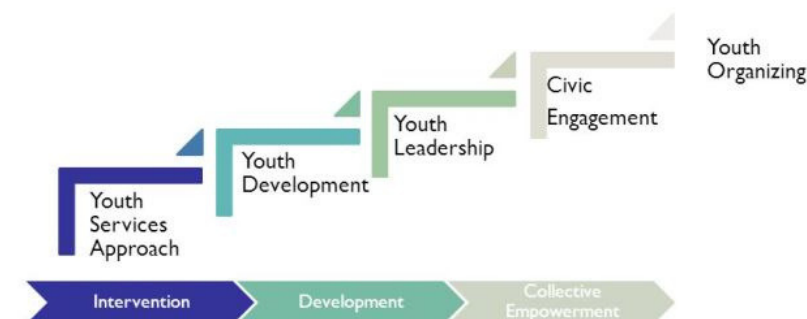
### Leadership

We are committed to identifying and providing opportunities for youth to better understand and engage in local government.

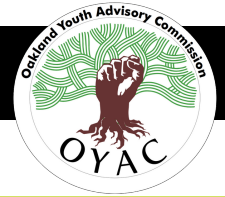
### Advocacy

We believe that young people know what's best for young people and as a unified voice, with the support of Adult Allies, youth can and will be heard!

## Youth Engagement Continuum







## Projects

### #OYACgivesback: Youth-to-Youth Mini-Grant Program, Ad-hoc Committee

In 2017, the City of Oakland Human Services Department (HSD) launched Oakland ReCAST, an initiative focused on increasing resiliency and healing for communities that have been impacted by high levels of violence, trauma and civil unrest. Inspired by OYAC's 2015 report about improving youth-police relations, Oakland ReCAST partnered with OYAC to launch #OYACgivesback, a youth-to-youth mini-grant program that empowers an ad-hoc team of OYAC members, with the support of adult allies, to select and support innovative projects developed by their peers. There is a significant time commitment, on top of regular OYAC duties, requested of the Ad-hoc Committee, who, after receiving training on youth philanthropy, lead and/or inform the youth-to-youth mini-grant program every step of the way.

To date, the Ad-hoc Committee led the selection of 19 #OYACgivesback grantees with the common goal of increasing healing and resiliency in Oakland communities that need it most and/or to improve law enforcement-community/youth relations. All projects are created and led by youth with the support of adult allies.

Specific project highlights can be found in the Issue Based Work Group Recommendations section under Law Enforcement-Community/Youth Relations.

#### Ad-hoc Committee Members:

Bethania Tadesse, Giovanni Hernandez, Ivan Garcia, Maxwell Stern, Roxy Perez, and Sela Roach

## Gathering & Amplifying Youth Voice

To represent youth voice in Oakland effectively, OYAC understands that we must gather input from youth across the city because a sample size cannot speak for the whole. In doing so, we help facilitate a process where decisions that affect youth are more responsive to our needs and inclusive of youth voice.

### OYAC: YOUTH SURVEY

Young people take a lot of surveys, so we took the job of designing a concise and youth-friendly Oakland Youth Survey seriously. The result was a region-specific survey designed by youth for youth. Ultimately, we were able to survey nearly 700 Oakland youth, ages 13-21.

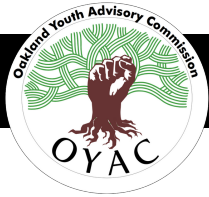
### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth's vision is that all children and youth in Oakland will thrive and have the support of the entire community to lead safe, healthy and productive lives. Since this vision is in direct alignment with our own, OYAC partnered with OFCY to co-host and facilitate their series of four community conversations across Oakland with youth, parents, service providers and concerned residents on how to best serve Oakland's young people through OFCY funding. Ultimately, we spoke with nearly 150 youth and community members to inform our priorities on the needs of Oakland youth.

### Oakland youth have spoken!

The results from our survey and findings from the OFCY community conversations, helped us refine our 2017-2018 priorities and will also inform our priorities for 2018-2019. Relevant survey results and findings have been used to support our recommendations outlined in the following recommendations section of this report.

# ISSUE-BASED WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS



The OYAC assembled three issue based work groups in the 2017–2018 term year. Work group goals are to research, review, discuss and prioritize timely issues affecting Oakland youth, and provide City officials with youth-centric program, project and policy recommendations;

## ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Focuses on matters related to environment, sustainability, public health, and housing, particularly when these matters have or could have a significant impact on Oakland youth.

Co-chairs: Esmeralda Cortez & Maxwell Stern  
Members: Grecia Jackie Palma, Ivan Garcia, Sepideah Kiumarsi, Shai Aikens

2017–2018 Priorities & Recommendations:

**YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Focuses on matters of public safety and welfare, particularly when these matters have or could have a significant impact on Oakland youth.

Co-chairs: Ericson Amaya & Yota Omo-Sowho  
Members: Daniel Lopez, Giovanni Hernandez, Natalie Dharmapalan, Rachel Dharmapalan, Roxy Perez

2017–2018 Priorities & Recommendations:

**ALTERNATIVES TO YOUTH INCARCERATION; LAW ENFORCEMENT–COMMUNITY/YOUTH RELATIONS and; COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

## EDUCATION

Focuses on issues related to the local education system and the administration thereof, that have or could have a significant impact on Oakland youth.

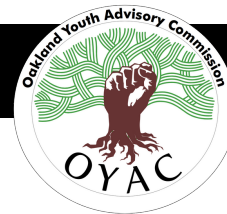
Co-chairs: Addie Duchin & Elena Larsen  
Members: Bethania Tadesse, Buna Poeng, Darrell "DJ" Edwards, Jr., Daren "DJ" Barron, Enasia Mc-Elvaine

2017–2018 Priorities & Recommendations:

**POST-SECONDARY READINESS**

For the 2017–2018 term year, work groups have conducted significant field and academic research and have developed the following policy and program recommendations.

While all of the issues and recommendations herein do not fall under the purview of Oakland City Council, in those instances, as the City's youth advisory body, we ask that you use your position and influence to lift up these issues as critical to young people in Oakland and provide strategic input about the recommendations set forth.



## BACKGROUND

Oakland has experienced a 37 percent increase in the unsheltered population over the last two years. It is important to note that the first episode of homelessness occurs between the ages of 0–24 years old. So, it is no surprise that homeless families with children make up 32 percent of the overall homeless population in Alameda County. Moreover, the number of homeless students in Oakland Unified School District has more than doubled from 400 in 2014 to 900 in 2017.

EveryOne Counts found that there were more than 900 unaccompanied transitional age homeless youth and more than 480 homeless children (72 of those children were unaccompanied) in Alameda County.<sup>2</sup> Experts in the field agree that these statistics are an undercount, especially for unaccompanied transitional age youth and children, who are somewhat hidden subpopulations of homeless individuals. Additionally, LGBTQ+ youth had 120 percent higher risk of reporting homelessness.<sup>3</sup> It is also important to note that according to Alameda Family Services, more than 80 percent of youth who end up selling their bodies for sex in exchange for food and other basic survival needs were homeless when they were first approached by their abusers.

Though homeless youth are receiving more attention both locally and nationally, as the severity of the problem becomes more evident, Voices of Youth Count says, “Everyday of housing instability represents missed opportunities to support healthy development and transitions to productive adulthood.” OYAC believes that there should be “no more missed opportunities.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

OYAC urges City Council, relevant City departments and officials, and other homeless youth partners to develop a **homeless youth policy** that includes the following and other similar policies and programs;

1. Allocate 25% of the City’s dedicated homeless funding/resources and any additional homeless funding received by the city, for youth-specific homeless programs and services, with a focus on Transition Age Youth (TAY) aged 18–24 years old and youth populations that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, such as; Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) involved youth, LGBTQ+ youth and youth aging out of the foster system.
2. Develop a city-wide policy that creates ongoing and stable funding dedicated to providing youth-specific homeless programs and services that takes a broad definition of youth homelessness, per the Mc-Kinney Vento Act.
3. Set aside a percentage of the Alameda County AI Housing Bond units and City of Oakland KK bond units for homeless Transition Age Youth (TAY) earning 20 percent or less of the area median income.
  - a. Match these housing units with operational subsidies that provide supportive services. In addition to setting aside at least 15 units specifically for youth.





4. Ensure that the regional comprehensive housing and services coordinated entry system for homeless individuals, soon to roll out, has a component that is youth inclusive with the intention of identifying and meeting their unique service needs and their full integration into society.

a. Create a North County youth-specific Housing Resource Center in Alameda, similar to the current one serving families.

b. Refine and/or develop optimal data indicators and framework to track service results.

5. Develop multi-sector partnerships designed to create workforce development opportunities, paid internships, technical and/or vocational training opportunities and job training opportunities targeted for homeless youth.

6. Create deeper collaborations with law enforcement, probation officers, school systems, and aftercare programs to identify, engage and provide services to homeless youth

7. Create a youth-specific table as part of the most appropriate City-County collaborative working on the issue of homelessness.

8. Explore deeper coordination and collaboration with Oakland Unified School District and Peralta Community College District to provide services to homeless students.

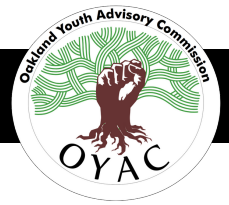
## SUPPORT

To develop these recommendations, in addition to issue based research, we met with the Director of the Human Services Department and Manager of the Community Housing Services Division and consulted with the following providers, coalitions and/or agencies working with and on behalf of homeless youth in Oakland:

First Place for Youth  
Covenant House  
EveryOne Home  
Dream Catcher Youth Services  
City of Oakland Human Services Department

We have identified the following additional providers, coalitions and/or agencies as important to confer with around this work. This is not an exhaustive list:

MISSEY  
EBHO  
EOCP  
The Village  
Beyond Emancipation  
Family Emergency Shelter Coalition  
Oakland Path Rehousing Initiative  
East Oakland Community Project - Our House



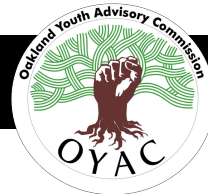
## BACKGROUND

The first institution intended to lead children towards success is the same one that can unintentionally lead them to four by four cells. It is important that we understand school to prison pipelines and the true effects that they impose on students. More than 72 percent of calls from schools to the OUSD police were to respond to allegations of “non-criminal conduct” by students or others which many times lead to students being arrested. Youth in our community are being criminalized and are more likely to face multiple risk factors as a result. This trend feeds the school to prison pipeline. Every child that enters the current juvenile correction system is a clear representation that our community has failed to address the underlying factors and root causes that led them there in the first place.

The current justice system is punitive rather than rehabilitative in nature; a system that, in California, has built one university for every 22 prisons since 1980. Youth and young adults are still in a developmental phase up to age 25; meaning more susceptible to cognitive and behavioral change and therefore better suited to benefit from rehabilitative frameworks. Communities and juvenile institutions must address the needs of youth that “act out” instead of incarcerating them which drastically increases the likelihood of them re-entering the system across their lifetime. According to the California state Division of Juvenile Facilities in 2007, 70 percent of youth paroled were re-arrested within two years.

Though Oakland does not stand alone in the national crisis of criminalizing young people, a system that disproportionately impacts boys of color, a study titled, “The Impact of Policing Oakland Youth,” looked at arrest data between 2006 and 2012 and found that African American boys made up almost 75 percent of all juvenile arrests in Oakland despite being under 30 percent of the city’s under 18 population. Moreover, according to legislative Analyst’s Office, of the youth who enter California’s juvenile justice system, an estimated 30 percent have mental health issues. The study also found that youth who have been held in detention have higher rates of attempted suicide and psychiatric disorders than youth who have not been detained. Clearly there are underlying factors that must be addressed.

For these reasons, the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission has researched and highlighted current innovative restorative and rehabilitative promising strategies along with a set of recommendations that we urge City Council and other City officials to explore, lift up and/or implement as potential alternatives to incarceration for youth in Oakland. We also encourage public officials to create space and convene stakeholders for continued conversations about this issue.



## CURRENT STRATEGIES

### Restorative Community Conferencing

Oakland-based Community Works West (CWW) has recognized the need for more restorative and rehabilitative strategies that keep people out of prison, advocate for a more humane justice system, and support healthy communities for all of us.

Programming for youth, families and communities like parenting from prison, violence prevention and restorative justice are offered in order to restore healing and accountability.

CWW's Restorative Community Conferencing (RCC), is a diversion program for young people under the age of 18 who have been arrested on low-level felony, and high-level misdemeanor charges, but have not yet gone through the judicial process. RCC is an evidence-based restorative justice practice that works in collaboration with the District Attorney to divert youth facing criminal charges from traditional juvenile justice systems into a process where they will meet the needs of those who have been harmed by their actions. Youth who agree to participate and address the harm to the victim will be given a plan for making things right. When the youth has completed the plan, the DA will not file criminal charges.

RCC is a clear example of the kind of work that is already being done to tackle this issue in Alameda County and we commend the public and community partners that work in collaboration to implement this program. RCC and similar programs have strong potential for large scale positive impact if more were available to youth in Oakland. It is unfortunate that a relatively small number of cases are currently referred to RCC for diversion.<sup>4</sup>

### Assembly Bill 1488

In 2017, while participating in the Freedom School program at Alameda County's detention camp, Camp Sweeney, a Youth Commissioner helped craft state Assembly Bill 1488. This bill proposes a transition center model for youth re-entering society after being released from juvenile correctional facilities. In partnership with State Assemblyman Tony Thurmond, the youth developed a model that would provide critical wrap-around services such as; transitional housing, education, work training, physical and mental health and family and legal services. Further, national and local public institutions, community based organizations, experts and other stakeholders including detained youth would work together to design regions specific frameworks for transitions centers that will provide critical resources and programs to best meet the needs of participants.<sup>5</sup>



## RECOMMENDATIONS

OYAC urges City Council, other relevant city officials and criminal justice partners to;

1. Support AB 1488. The Youth Commission believes that it is important for this and similar policies be implemented in order to successfully reintegrate youth back into society after their first experience in a correctional facility. We believe that investing in preventative measures like those proposed in AB 1488 is one of the best solutions to end the cycle of mass incarceration and high recidivism across a person's lifetime.

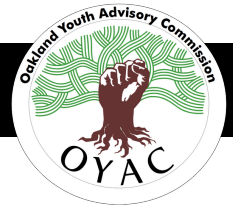
2. Invest more collaborative resources and funding into restorative and rehabilitative measures such as diversion programming as alternatives to juvenile incarceration that are inclusive of Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) between the ages of 18 to 24. TAY have unique needs and current programming is not meeting those needs sufficiently. TAY are at higher risk for recidivism than all other age groups. By providing access to diversion programs, such as RCC outlined above, for youth and young adults we can avoid conviction, criminal records and change the behavior that led to their first offense. OYAC finds it extremely important to break the cycle of mass incarceration and offer the following as it relates to diversion programs in Oakland;

a. Ensure that youth who are placed in these programs are provided with restorative justice education and do not miss out on the content that is being covered in their schools.

b. Provide resources and appropriate treatment options for youth who enter the program and are experiencing issues related to mental health and/or substance use disorders.

c. Explore a more balanced and community inclusive decision making structure when it comes to selecting cases for diversion. Currently the District Attorney exclusively holds this power.





## BACKGROUND & STRATEGIES

In 2015, responding to growing tensions between communities of color and law enforcement across the country, the Oakland Youth Advisory Commission (OYAC) brought together over 75 young people to discuss ideas and solutions for better community and police relations in Oakland. The results were outlined in OYAC's report entitled *Youth Perspective: Reforms, Solutions, and Recommendations for Accountable and Effective Policing in Oakland to Improve Relations between Law Enforcement, the Community and Youth*.

In 2017, Inspired by the 2015 OYAC report, the City of Oakland Human Services Department's Oakland ReCAST initiative partnered with the OYAC to launch #OYACgivesback, a youth-to-youth mini-grant program. Currently, there are 19 teams of youth-led projects underway with the common goal of increasing healing and resiliency in Oakland and/or to improve law enforcement-community/youth relations. Projects include; restorative justice healing circles with youth and law enforcement officers, block parties, community events and forums, as well as trainings around best practices for youth-police interaction.

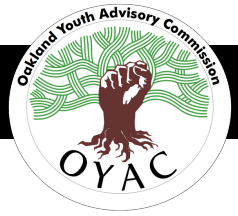
### #OYACgivesback Project Highlights

One recommendation in OYAC's 2015 report on improving youth-police relations is the creation of an official youth body that institutionalizes youth engagement and youth voice, and facilitates the implementation of additional youth recommendations. **The Oakland Police & Community Youth Leadership Council (YLC)** creates space and opportunities for youth and police to engage and collaborate. In late 2017, the YLC was seeded funding through #OYACgivesback to pilot the program. Through this structured youth leadership body, the Oakland Police Department can benefit from invaluable youth perspectives to aid in the problem-solving process around various community issues. The YLC has been meeting twice monthly since January 2018 and has done a great job of building relationship with OPD, the City and other law enforcement partners. OYAC members have been present at most meetings and have been working in partnership with YLC to develop the recommendations in this section.

Community Works West's **Project WHAT!**, is a leadership and advocacy program for youth aged 13-18 who have experienced the incarceration of a parent. Youth participants are trained by peers and adult allies who then apply those skills and lived experiences to develop and facilitate trainings for law enforcement officers, educators, social workers and other service providers on how to change behaviors, policies and practices to best interact and serve the needs of children of incarcerated parents.

It is essential for those that interact with children of incarcerated parents to better understand their experiences, especially as it relates to time of arrest protocol and supporting children through a parent's detention. Project WHAT! has successfully trained and implemented system-wide policy change in the San Francisco's police department and school district.<sup>6</sup> CWW was seeded funding through #OYACgivesback to implement Project WHAT! trainings in Oakland, starting with OPD. In May 2018, Project WHAT! successfully presented their training to a group of OPD officers, in coordination with OPD's Youth Outreach Unit (Y.O.U.) team and are currently working together to tailor the training and coordinate their first official training with OPD.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

OYAC, in collaboration with the Oakland Police & Community Youth Leadership Council (YLC) urges City Council, other relevant city officials, the Oakland Police Department (OPD) and other law enforcement partners to;

1. Invest more resources and funding into the development and implementation of trainings that seek to improve police–community/youth relations;

**For law enforcement:**

- a. Adolescent development training. Should be co-facilitated with youth
- b. Best practices when arresting parents in front of their children (Project WHAT)
- c. Restorative Justice (Tier 1 – Community Building Practices)

**For youth:**

- d. “Know Your Rights” trainings in schools co-facilitated by youth and law enforcement officers. This includes understanding police rankings and the organizational structure of OPD.

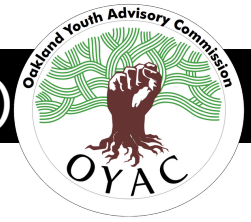
2. Invest more resources and funding into restorative justice programs within the law enforcement and criminal justice systems that serve to heal relationships between law enforcement, the community and youth.

3. Create more meaningful opportunities for law enforcement, community and youth to positively interact, heal, build trust and humanize one another.

- a. Require more community engagement of law enforcement officers with or without uniform and/or do a better job of lifting up current community engagement efforts between law enforcement and the community that intentionally seek to repair and improve relations so that the broader community is aware of these efforts and can access opportunities to participate.

- i. #OYACgivesback projects offer multiple opportunities and touch points for law enforcement, community and youth to interact positively through various community events (some described above). Cycle three of #OYACgivesback begins in September 2018 and will present new opportunities for engagement. Contact OYAC for more information.

- b. According to the February 2018 Measure Z Policing Services Evaluation report, the measure funds policing services such as Community Resource Officers (CRO) assigned to every police beat, that take a community engagement approach to policing and a community driven approach to problem solving. However, the report indicates that community members are largely unaware of CROs and their role in the community. OYAC supports the author’s recommendation to, “Continue to build OPD’s web-based media presence to; promote positive stories about Measure Z officers and other Department activities and; increase communication with residents about the CRO program...and more.”



c. Develop a social media strategy for OPD. In this technological society, social media presence is vastly important, especially when it comes to reaching young people where they are at most. OPD should designate a team to develop a social media strategy with a significant component that promotes positive community engagement and activities.

d. Increase funding and ensure sustainability of that funding, for the Oakland Police Youth Outreach Unit (Y.O.U.) and dedicate more officers for that unit. The OPD employs over 700 people, yet, there are less than a dozen officers working on specific youth engagement/development programming.

4. Identify a funding source that will enable Oakland to sustain the #OYACgivesback youth-to-youth mini-grant model that promotes positive community engagement between law enforcement and young people beyond the sunset (2020) of the current funding source.

5. Promote a more diverse pipeline of homegrown officers while continuing to promote positive youth-police interactions;

a. Allocate funding for scholarships of up to \$5,000 per year for Oakland youth who have an interest in pursuing a career in law enforcement but cannot afford transportation or to take time away from gainful employment to participate in OPD's current youth and young adult leadership and career pathway programming (Explores and Cadets).

b. Create/expand school based career pathways that focus specifically on social justice, civic education, and public safety. OPD and other relevant City departments should actively partner with these schools/career pathways.

c. Designate at least one specific youth seat on OPD hiring panels/boards of youth between 18–24 years old. The youth and community should participate in the creation of the specific questions for candidates and be actively involved in the process.



## BACKGROUND

CSEC is the forced prostitution and trafficking of underage youth. Nationally, CSEC disproportionately affects communities of color. For example, 86 percent of CSEC victims in the juvenile justice system are children of color. The disparate impact of CSEC on people of color, is largely mirrored on the local level. In Oakland, black girls represent 80 percent of CSEC victims.<sup>7</sup>

Further, there are higher risks for runaway and homeless youth, as well as children in foster care. Tragically, within 48 hours of being on the street, runaway and homeless youth will be solicited for sex. Overall, CSEC is one of the worst issues targeting the most vulnerable youth in Oakland today.

In 2013, members of the OYAC raised the issue of CSEC, an issue that was largely unnoticed but heartbreakingly prominent in Oakland. We commend City Council for hearing the voice of Oakland youth and establishing a resolution that same year to assemble the city-wide CSEC Taskforce comprised of stakeholders and charged with developing strategies to combat the issue. Since then, the City has made much progress and employed many strategies to raise awareness and combat the issue. The recent development of the Alameda County United Against Human Trafficking Advisory Council (AC United), which will assume and incorporate efforts of the city-wide CSEC Taskforce and will dedicate an Executive Council co-chair seat held by a City representative, offers a great opportunity to expand and increase impact on the issue county-wide.<sup>8</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

OYAC supports AC United with the following suggestions. OYAC urges City Council, other relevant City departments and officials, AC United and other CSEC partners to;

1. Ensure that there is at least one dedicated youth seat on each AC United committee and intentional opportunities for their input to be heard. This is the only way to ensure inclusion of youth voice; the demographic most affected by this issue.
2. Increase Community Outreach, Education and CSEC Awareness
  - a. Train youth to educate their peers about CSEC. Peer-to-peer education is an effective evidence-based approach.
  - b. Ensure that there is a dedicated staff person within OUSD to support victims of CSEC and raise awareness about the issue within the school system.
  - c. Ensure that CSEC education targets populations disproportionately impacted and lifts up male victims. This will serve to paint a holistic picture of the issue and will show male victims that they are not alone, as well as, increase the likelihood of them seeking help.

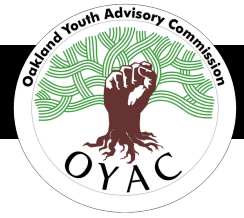


- d. Ensure that trauma informed CSEC training is provided to OPD and OUSD.
- e. Educate victims on their rights, especially as it relates to the passage of SB 1322 which prohibits victims under 18 years old from being criminalized.
  - i. Identify and invest more resources and funding into essential wraparound services that victims can opt-into before sending them back to the streets.

### 3. Address the Immediate Needs of CSEC Victims

- a. Make housing a priority. We understand that the CSEC Task Force secured around \$200,000 for emergency housing dedicated to CSEC victims which is commendable, but not enough. Unstable housing is a main factor that contributes to the issue.
- b. Establish clinics that specialize in providing services to CSEC victims and/or making sure these victims have access to free health care.
- c. Develop and invest in more strategies that support victims between the ages of 18 and 24. Transition Age Youth (TAY) have unique needs and make up a large percentage of human trafficking victims.





## BACKGROUND

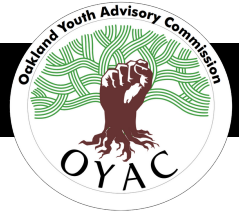
While collecting youth input, one issue that OYAC heard over and over is that students and youth across Oakland do not feel fully prepared for life after high school. Post-secondary readiness has become a topic of interest for researchers over the past decade or so spurring a multitude of definitions. We define post-secondary readiness as young people being prepared for the transition from high school to college or the workforce and the necessary life skills needed to successfully manage these new institutional cultures and independence.

Many students are graduating high school and entering college feeling unprepared for independence, managing work, and college culture. Though college enrollment has increased, students are entering college lacking the knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral attributes that are key cognitive strategies necessary to succeed. Nationally, the college graduation rate at four year universities sits at 59%, meaning that 41% do not make it to graduation.<sup>9</sup> The lack of focus on preparing students to manage the different aspects that come with college and independence causes the dropout rate to increase and leaves young people susceptible to accumulating financial debt and less able to get and sustain employment.

Secondary institutions, their partners and educators must have a holistic understanding of the different dimensions to post-secondary readiness. Students must be prepared for multiple potential pathways including college, the workforce and life. Critical life skills such as financial education, tax information, debt, house insurance, car safety, interview skills, resume writing and more are crucial. Post-secondary readiness is often neglected to be taught within schools because it does not fall under many state's mandated education criteria. This creates ongoing issues with young adults struggling to transition and navigate adulthood; skills that society assumes they know.

In Oakland, the college graduation rate is just 38.10%.<sup>10</sup> In a survey of nearly 700 Oakland youth, developed and conducted by the OYAC, we found that only 24% of participants feel prepared to succeed in college, of those planning to go straight into the workforce, only 9% feel prepared, and less than 45% of youth surveyed had any knowledge of things such as internships and financial education. In interviews with the East Bay College Fund and College Track, two organizations that help under-served students get to and succeed in college, we found that many of their students dropped out of college because they were not prepared. The current college going culture push fails to set our young folks up for success and excludes young folks who plan to enter the workforce after high school. We must prepare all of our youth with the skills they need to succeed in college, work and life after high school.





## CURRENT STRATEGIES

**Engaging Schools:** increases college access through school based models of post-secondary preparation, planning, and support. The organization was created after it was noted that external programs can only reach a small percent of low income minority youth. Engaging Schools has four types of school based models addressing post secondary preparation, planning, support that can serve students.

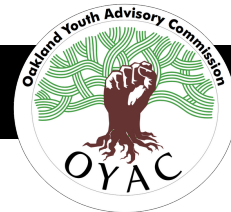
**College Readiness Key Cognitive Strategies:** began in 2000 and is an evidenced-based model that has shown positive results across different regions. For example, Plano Independent School District implemented programs starting in middle school to prepare students for college, particularly students who could be first generation. The program focuses on five categories of readiness; career, academic, personal, financial, and admissions. Sub-categories include; first steps to career readiness, career interest survey, picking a major, internships, and career-degree connections, middle school guidance, information on PSAT SAT ACT, and basic college vocabulary. Overall, it provides a model for other schools or districts to replicate with a focus on preparing all students for post-secondary life.

**College Track:** began in 1997 and focuses on creating a high school to college pathway. Domains include academics, student life and leadership. The program engages students beginning their freshman year of high school and supports students through their college careers and beyond. College Track is a national program with branches in the Bay Area including Oakland.

**Operation HOPE:** provides financial literacy education to youth and adults in the Oakland area. Clients are counseled on the language of money, and practice action plans such as: building their own businesses, raising their credit scores, buying homes, or simply making better decisions with money. Some of the programs include: credit and money management, homeownership, and entrepreneurship.

**Alternatives in Action:** offers a peer-to-peer financial literacy training model whereby financial literacy experts train youth to take on the role of educating, and preparing their peers for real world experiences such as college, career and life within a community. They focus on skill building such as public speaking and communication, and educating peers on how to be financially knowledgeable. Their presentations center around income vs wealth, bank accounts, and starting saving plans. Financial literacy teaches students how to handle money responsibly. AIA currently provides after-school programming in several Oakland based schools.

**The Unity Council - Oakland Youth Engage Program:** is designed to equip young people with the skills they need to enter the workforce such as; resume writing, interview and computer skills, and financial coaching. Youth participants increase their ability to obtain and retain internships and jobs.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

OYAC urges City Council, other relevant City officials, OUSD and other school systems and partners to;

1. Implement mandatory post-secondary preparation curriculum into Oakland high schools. Illinois recently passed a statewide Postsecondary Readiness and Workforce Act requiring high school students to take post-secondary and career expectations courses such as; career pathway endorsements, transitional math courses, and competency-based learning systems. This graduation requirement would help to ensure that all students have a foundation for how to manage the different pathways of life after high school.<sup>11</sup>
2. Invest more public and private resources and funding into programming that seeks to increase post-secondary readiness such as the strategies outlined above and other local initiatives like Oakland Promise, as well as;
  - a. Provide college and career centers that prepare and assist students with planning their post-secondary future in all Oakland high schools. In partnership with the East Bay College Fund, the Oakland Promise's Future Centers that operate at some Oakland high schools, offer a good college/career center model providing critical support and resources to students as they transition from high school to college or the workforce.
  - b. Create more opportunities for students from all socio-economic backgrounds to participate in college tours. College tours help students think with a "college mindset," as these in-depth tours provide students with knowledge and details specific to the college and campus and provides the necessary information for students to find the college culture that is right for them.
3. Conduct asset mapping to identify all local resources and programming that is addressing our broad definition of post-secondary preparation. Once this information is collected, it should be accessible to all students in a centralized hub and promoted heavily by the school system, the City and other partners.



## Strategic Partnerships

OYAC believes that to have the greatest impact we must build collaborations. Therefore, one of our focus areas this term was to build and leverage partnerships and to bridge and align our work both internally with youth-focused initiatives and externally with OUSD and community-based youth serving organizations. Part of our strategy to develop partnerships and bridge our work included OYAC members representing the youth voice and liaising with the following bodies:

- OUSD All City Council, Student Director and Secretary
- Oakland Police & Community/Youth Leadership Council, Participants
- Oakland Parks, Rec & Youth Development, TownCamp Ambassadors
- Oakland ReCAST, #OYACgivesback Youth Team
- OFCY, Youth Seat
- Oakland Promise, Ambassadors
- Mayor's Office, Intern
- Assemblymember Bonta, Intern

## Meetings & Presentations

The OYAC met with Mayor Schaaf and Vice Mayor Campbell-Washington to learn about their work on youth issues, their plans for the future and to provide input and ask questions. Mayor Schaaf also presided over OYAC's swearing-in ceremony to recognize the forthcoming service of OYAC members to the City of Oakland. The OYAC also met with representatives from the following City departments or initiatives and community-based organizations during and outside of their regular meetings:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Oakland Public Libraries, Teen Services                 | • Unity Council           |
| • Oakland Promise/Children's Initiative                   | • Girlz Talk              |
| • Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY)              | • The Village             |
| • Office of Vice Mayor, Annie Campbell-Washington         | • Women's Freedom Center  |
| • Office of Council President, Larry Reid                 | • Alternatives in Action  |
| • Office of Council Member, Lynette McElhaney             | • Connect Oakland         |
| • Office of Mayor Libby Schaaf                            | • East Oakland Collective |
| • Director of Oakland Parks, Rec & Youth Development      | • OakDOT - City Bike Plan |
| • Urban Habitat, Boards & Commission Leadership Institute |                           |
| • Western Center on Law and Poverty - Youth Justice       |                           |

## Community Building

The OYAC has been working to build our presence in the community and to understand the diverse needs of youth across Oakland. To meet this goal, we connected with local groups and organizations and through these conversations were able to broaden our perspectives on the issues and develop better informed solutions. In addition to investing over 150 hours into attending full commission and issue based workgroup meetings, and serving on other mutually-beneficial leadership bodies, OYAC members will have collectively attended, co-sponsored or facilitated nearly 75 City and community events and meetings in the 2017-2018 term year.



## Selected Community Events Attended

- Mayor's State of the City Address
- Oakland Women's March
- Oakland Natives Give Back
- Barbershop Forums (multiple)
- Restorative Justice National Conference
- Juvenile Justice Community Forum
- Oakland Promise House Parties (multiple: participated and hosted)
- Displacement and Gentrification: How did we get here and how do we stop it?
- Bay Area Women's Summit Community Engagement Session
- Stop Dumping in Our Neighborhoods - East Oakland Congress of Neighborhoods
- Oakland Fund for Public Innovation, Paint the Town Mini-grant (Selection panel)
- Ready for the World (a discussion with the OUSD superintendent)
- Sisters at the Center, hosted by the Young Women's Freedom Center
- Oakland Children's Initiative Community Advisory Council (multiple)
- Bay Area Student Activists, Sensible Gun Control Advocacy Day @ the Capitol
- Youth Going Green - Inspiring Can Crushers Conference
- YES Conference - Youth for the Environment & Sustainability (Commissioner Ivan Garcia Presented)



## Key Conferences & Trainings

OYAC met with several other Youth Commissions and youth bodies to align the work and share best practices;

**CA Youth Commission Convening:**  
Cross-sharing experiences and strategies that work (Spring 2018)

**OUSD All City Council:**  
Youth Action Planning Retreat (Summer 2017)

**OUSD All City Council:**  
#Student VoiceMatters Building Real Partnerships for Real Student Power! (Spring 2018)

OYAC members received the following trainings in the 2017-2018 term year:

- Youth-Led Research Action Planning
- Writing Policy Recommendations
- Cycle of Inquiry and Action
- Youth Philanthropy
- Policy Making Process
- Public Speaking/Testimony
- Community Building for Change
- Oakland Political Landscape
- Youth Justice Lens
- Time Management:
- Policy Issues & Priorities
- Youth-Adult Partnership



## Letter Writing & Positions

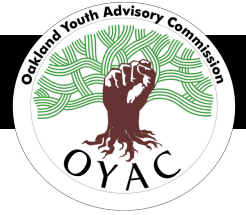
- Support Resolution Clarifying & Reaffirming Policy on Non-Cooperation w/ICE
- Support w/suggestions, Resolution to Support AC United Human Trafficking Taskforce
- Thanking Mayor for Swift Action Warning Community of Impending ICE Raids
- Condolence Regarding Parkland Shooting and Support of Gun Control
- Support AB 2925 (Bonta), Statewide Just Cause
- Support AB 1488 (Thurmond), County Juvenile Transition Centers
- Support ACA 10 (Lowe), Lowering the Voting Age
- Personal testimony LOS, AB 1974 – Primary Education Fair Debt Collection Act
- Urging congress to pass a Clean Dream Act

## Attend & Testify

- Oakland City Council, Public Safety Committee, OYAC support for the record Resolution Clarifying & Reaffirming Policy on Non-Cooperation w/ICE (1/8/18)
- Community Police Review Agency, Personal Testimony Regarding U-Visa (4/26/18)
- Attend and support Oakland Police & Community Youth Leadership Council presentation to Safety and Services Oversight Committee (4/23/18)
- Attend City Council Life Enrichment Committee meeting (January 2018)
- Attend City Council meetings (February and March 2018)







The Youth Commission requests that City Council accept this annual report and encourages Council to continue referring items to OYAC for youth input. Though there is increasing awareness of the need and effectiveness of youth voice on decision-making bodies, there is limited dedicated support and meaningful opportunities. As the City's dedicated youth advisory body, Youth Commissioners remain eager to provide policy-makers with meaningful youth input about programs and policies under development that are likely to have a significant impact on youth in our city.

Youth Commissioners look forward to meeting with each Council Member in the coming year to discuss mutually-important youth issues and receive feedback related to our specific recommendations;

- **Youth Homelessness**
- **Alternatives to Youth Incarceration**
- **Law Enforcement-Community/Youth Relations**
- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)**
- **Post-Secondary Readiness**

The Youth Commission would like to thank Mayor Schaaf and City Council Members for supporting youth commissioners and Oakland youth in general.

In Humble Service to Our Community,  
Oakland Youth Advisory Commission  
2017-2018

## CONTACT INFO:

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[Facebook.com/oakyac](https://www.facebook.com/oakyac)



[Instagram.com/oakyac](https://www.instagram.com/oakyac)

# THANK YOU!





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