



# Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Strategic Investment Plan 2016–2019

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## About the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) was established in 1996 as a result of a community-led drive to create a City fund expressly for the benefit of children and youth. OFCY provides strategic funding to support Oakland's children and youth from birth to 20 years of age to help them become healthy, happy, educated, engaged, powerful, and loved community members. The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth is a program of the Human Services Department within the City of Oakland. The Planning and Oversight Committee (POC) provides direction to the Fund.

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## About Bright Research Group

This report was prepared by Bright Research Group. An Oakland-based, women- and minority-owned firm, Bright Research Group (BRG) specializes in evaluation, community engagement, and strategic planning for the public sector, nonprofit organizations, collaboratives, and private entities working to achieve greater social impact and equity.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For nearly 20 years, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) has directed over \$173 million in grants to community-based organizations and public agencies to deliver services that directly benefit children and youth from birth to age 20 in Oakland. Approved by voters in 1996, the Oakland Kids First! Initiative allocates a portion of the City's unrestricted funds to support the development of children and youth in four goal areas: Early Childhood, Student Success in School, Youth Development and Empowerment, and Transitions to Productive Adulthood. Every three years, under the direction of the Planning and Oversight Committee (POC), OFCY develops a strategic investment plan to guide grant making and fund allocation.

This Strategic Investment Plan covers the fiscal years of 2016–2019 and situates OFCY's investments within the broader landscape of other systems and investors in Oakland. OFCY undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process that began with a situational analysis and demographic data analysis, followed by a community input process. The Plan was developed with an understanding of what is changing for children and youth in Oakland, as well as for the systems that support them. OFCY also aligns strategies in the landscape of other system investors and funders to ensure that funding strategies support necessary services and maximize impact.

In recent years, Oakland has seen an increase in philanthropic and public investments to improve the quality of preschool and public education. Oakland's revitalized and growing economy has led to annual increases in general fund revenues in recent years, resulting in an increase in the funds available for OFCY investments. At the same time, more children and youth are living in poverty and the cost of living is becoming prohibitive for more families. OFCY's investments remain relevant but are increasingly considered in the context of other targeted investments for children and youth.

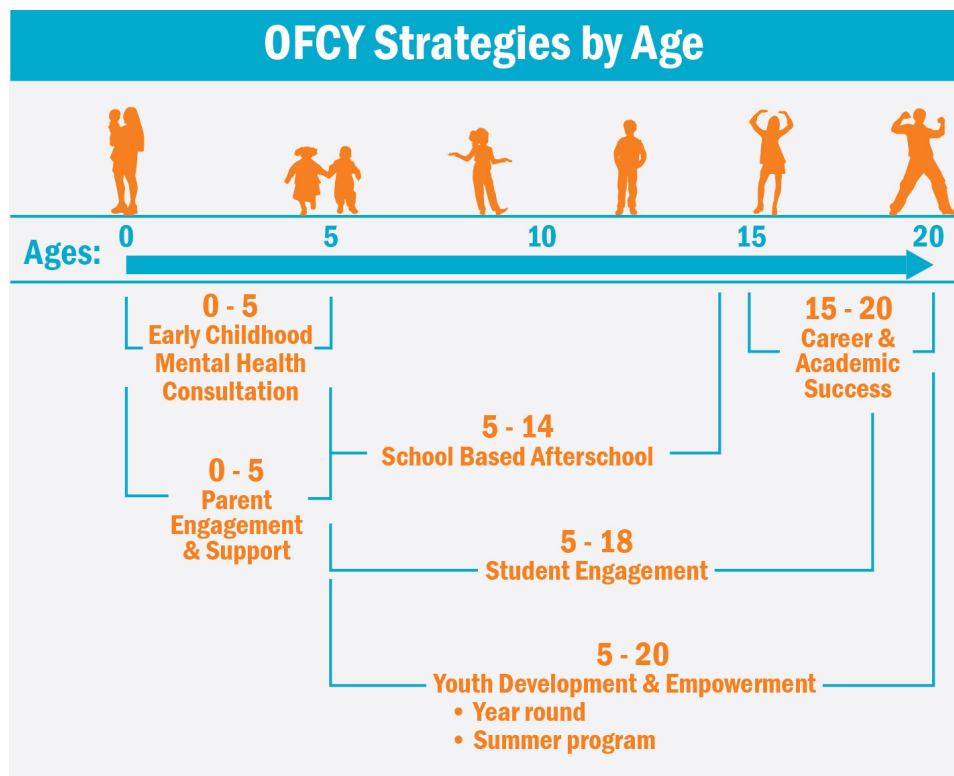
OFCY will direct investments in seven strategies across four goal areas. OFCY anticipates awarding approximately \$13.5 million in funds annually in 2016–2019. These strategies reflect OFCY's values of social and economic equity, child and youth development, and community and collaboration.

Early Childhood	2016–2017 Funding Allocation (approximate)
Strategy 1. Parent Engagement and Support	16%
Strategy 2. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	
Student Success in School	
Strategy 3. High-Quality School-Based After-School Programs	42%
Strategy 4. Student Engagement in Learning	
Youth Development and Empowerment	
Strategy 5. Youth Development and Empowerment Year-Round	28%
Strategy 6: Youth Development and Empowerment in Summer	
Transitions to Productive Adulthood	
Strategy 7: Career Awareness and Academic Support	14%
<b>Total Estimated 2016–2017 Grant Funding:</b>	<b>\$13.5M</b>

Due to Oakland's improving economy, OFCY anticipates an increase in revenues to \$14 million annually beginning in 2015–2016, and a subsequent increase in available funding for grants in the 2016–2019 grant years. Of these funds, 90% are distributed through grant-making efforts, and the remaining 10% of funds are used for administration, planning, and evaluation. Accordingly, annual funding to support programming in all goal areas will increase.

- To support Early Childhood, OFCY directs additional funding to support and expand parent engagement in early learning programming in high-priority neighborhoods and to support Family Resource Centers in partnership with other system partners and investors.
- For the School-Based After-School strategy, OFCY will increase the base allocation for each eligible school site and create a supplemental funding pool to direct additional funding to schools with the highest proportion of children on Free and/or Reduced Lunch (FRL).
- For the Youth Development and Empowerment goal area, OFCY will increase the overall allocation to this strategy to fund a wide range of positive child and youth development programming. Investments in specific populations, including LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth exposed to violence, are now held within this goal area.
- For the Transitions to Adulthood strategy, increased funding will allow for greater support for academic support and workforce exposure.

Selected investments will reach youth from birth to age 20. OFCY investments will reach children and youth in high-priority neighborhoods, which are low-income neighborhoods that have moderate to high levels of stress, as outlined in the Oakland Unite (Measure Z) stressor map. The strategies ensure that specific populations are also prioritized for funding.



## OFCY Funding Strategies for FY 2016–2019

### OFCY Strategy Area 1: Early Childhood

1. *Engage and Support Parents in the Healthy Development of their Children:* Invests in programs that are designed to meet the holistic needs of young children by building parenting skills and knowledge and providing services and supports in community locations that are accessible, safe, and desired by families. OFCY supports parent engagement, parent leadership, home visiting, and peer connection opportunities, including Family Resource Center development or programming in high-priority neighborhoods. Parent supportive programming includes efforts acknowledging the importance of financial security by supporting parents around financial skills and savings to support children's access to college, and to help parents navigate access to services supporting the basic needs of families, including child care and education, health, housing, medical or legal resources. This strategy also supports efforts to increase the school readiness of children, including summer pre-kindergarten and early literacy efforts.
2. *Strengthen Preschool Quality through Consultation with Early Childhood Educators:* Strengthens the capacity of early childhood educators and parents to meet young children's behavioral, social-emotional, and developmental needs through the delivery of mental health and developmental consultations by licensed mental health professionals. Promotes the social-emotional well-being of parents and young children through the delivery of trauma-informed and culturally relevant services and supports.

### OFCY Strategy Area 2: Student Success in School

3. *Ensure Youth Access to High-Quality School-Based After-School Programs:* Supports access to after-school programming and free or low-cost academic and enrichment programs at elementary and middle school sites. Provides local match funding to deliver programming at school sites that receive state After School Education & Safety Program (ASES) funding and where at least half the students are eligible for Free and/or Reduced Lunch (FRL). Directs supplemental funding to sites with high concentrations of low-income students.
4. *Strengthen Student Engagement in Learning:* Directs funds to programming designed to support child and youth attachment to school and achievements in learning in coordination with OUSD. Invests in culturally responsive and targeted models to meet the needs of specific populations, including youth who are at risk of not graduating or who are experiencing disparities in academic outcomes.

### OFCY Strategy Area 3: Youth Development and Empowerment

5. *Create Access to Youth Development and Empowerment Opportunities Year-Round:* Creates access to year-round activities that empower children and youth to develop leadership skills, build on their strengths, improve their connections to adults and peers, and contribute to their communities through arts, technology, entrepreneurship, sports, and other enrichment programming. Supports access to comprehensive services for specific populations.
6. *Create Access to Enrichment and Academic Support during the Summer Months:* Invests in programs that provide enrichment and academic opportunities for children and youth during the summer months to help them stay engaged in learning, retain academic skills and knowledge, develop their voice and leadership skills, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

### OFCY Strategy Area 4: Transitions to Adulthood

7. *Expand Access to Career Awareness and Academic Support for Older Youth:* Supports programming that provides older youth (ages 15–20) with career awareness, exploration, and preparation within high-priority industries, as well as college and career advising and other academic supports to facilitate the transition to and persistence in college and to a career.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## I.1 Background

In 1996, Oakland voters approved the Oakland Kids First! Initiative, which set aside a portion of the City's annual unrestricted General Purpose Fund revenues to support services that directly benefit children and youth under the age of 21. Housed in the City of Oakland Human Services Department, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) administers these funds under the direction of the OFCY Planning and Oversight Committee (POC). In 2009, Oakland voters reauthorized the Oakland



Kids First! Initiative. The updated legislation allocates 3% of the City's general fund revenues to OFCY and requires the development of a three-year strategic investment plan to guide the allocation of these funds. The Oakland Kids First! Initiative is authorized until 2020.

## I.2 About OFCY

Since 1996, OFCY has invested approximately \$173 million in services and programs that support children and youth in Oakland. As a grant maker, OFCY administers funding to community-based organizations and public agencies to provide services that support children and youth in leading safe, healthy, and productive lives. Supported programs reach approximately 25,000 children and youth a year. Guided by a child and youth development framework, OFCY aims to support high-quality programming that builds on the strengths and resiliency of children, youth, and their families and communities. OFCY partners and aligns with other key system investors in Oakland to support core programming for children and youth in Oakland.

## I.3 The Planning and Oversight Committee

The OFCY's Planning and Oversight Committee (POC) was established to provide oversight for the Oakland Kids First! Initiative and to guide strategic planning, funding recommendations, and evaluation of funded programs. The Strategic Planning Subcommittee guided the development of this Plan.

## I.4 Overview of Strategic Investment Plan for FY 2016–2019

This Strategic Investment Plan establishes OFCY's funding strategies, activities, and outcomes for the next three-year funding cycle of fiscal years 2016–2019. As required by the legislation, the Plan identifies current service needs and gaps, describes specific three-year program initiatives, and details how these initiatives are aligned with other public and private resources to achieve maximum service performance and outcomes for children and youth. A request for proposals (RFP) based on this Plan will be released in late 2015 to distribute three-year grants to qualifying organizations and public agencies.





OFCY has undertaken a comprehensive planning process to inform the development of the selected strategies. Under the direction of the POC, the process began with a situational analysis of current youth needs, outcomes of OFCY's existing investments, and a review of research, evaluation results, and

promising practices within each of the legislated goal areas. An analysis of available data about Oakland's youth population was conducted to understand what was changing for children and youth in Oakland. The *Oakland Youth Demographic Profile* summarizes these findings and is provided in the Appendix.

OFCY also conducted a community and stakeholder engagement process to hear from residents, youth, service providers, funders, and other system investors about the strengths and needs of Oakland's communities, gaps in services, and areas where OFCY could strategically target funding to maximize the benefit for children and youth. A summary of highlights and major themes from community input is included in the *Summary of Community Input* in the Appendix.

## 1.5 OFCY's Goals, Vision, Mission, and Values

The Oakland Kids First! Initiative—in Article XIII of the City Charter of the City of Oakland—establishes four key goals for OFCY funding.

Oakland Kids First! Goals	
	1. <i>Support the Healthy Development of Young Children</i> through preschool education, school readiness programs, physical and behavioral health services, parent education, and case management.
	2. <i>Help Children and Youth Succeed in School and Graduate from High School</i> by expanding access to after-school academic support and college readiness programs, arts, music, sports, internships, work experience, parent education, and leadership development, including civic engagement, service learning, and arts expression.
	3. <i>Prevent and Reduce Violence, Crime, and Gang Involvement among Young People</i> through case management, physical and behavioral health services, internships, work experience, outdoor education, and leadership development, including civic engagement, service learning, and arts expression.
	4. <i>Prepare Young People for a Healthy and Productive Adulthood</i> through case management, physical and behavioral health services, hard-skills training and job placement in high-demand industries, internships, work experience, and leadership development, including civic engagement, service learning, and arts expression.



## Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Vision, Mission, and Values

### Vision

All children and youth in Oakland will thrive and have the support of the entire community to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives.

### Mission

We provide strategic funding to support Oakland's children and youth from birth to 20 years of age to become healthy, happy, educated, engaged, powerful, and loved community members. Leveraging our efforts with partners with greater collective impact towards social and economic equity, we build the capacity of community agencies to work together to fully develop each child's potential, achieve positive outcomes, and promote the positive contributions of children and youth to Oakland's greatness.

### Values



#### ***Social and Economic Equity***

All children and youth have a fundamental right to a safe and healthy life and a quality education. We value the vigorous promotion of equality, justice, and accountability and the concerted application of our resources toward those youth in greatest need.

#### ***Child and Youth Development***

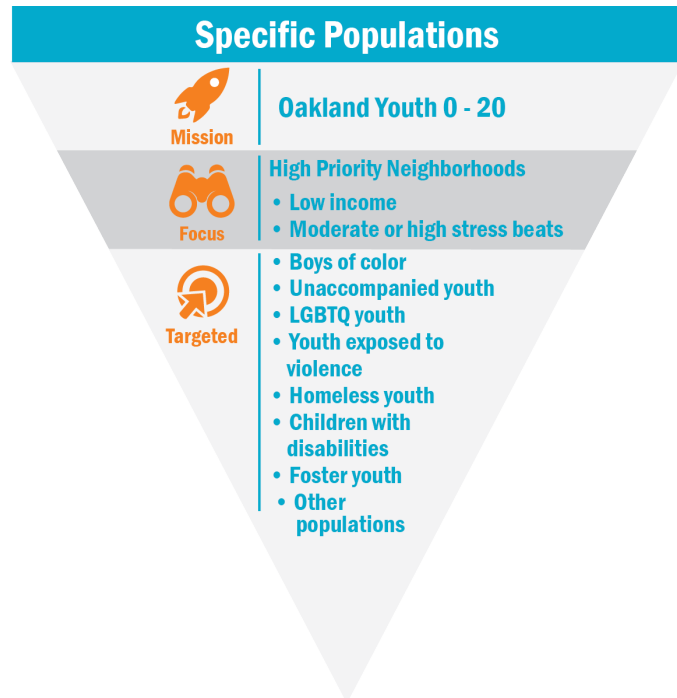
We support efforts to promote the social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual development of children to instill individual and community pride and leadership. We believe that youth development requires the collective responsibility of the community and the active engagement of family and caregivers for children and youth to achieve their full expression of potential.

#### ***Community and Collaboration***

We embrace the idea that by pooling our resources and working together, we can accomplish great things. We support strengthening families within our communities to make our children and our city strong. We see that the well-being of our youth is dependent on the strength of their families and the strength of the families is dependent on the strength of the community. Strong communities can provide stability in a time of change in the lives of children and youth and help them grow into loving and powerful adults.

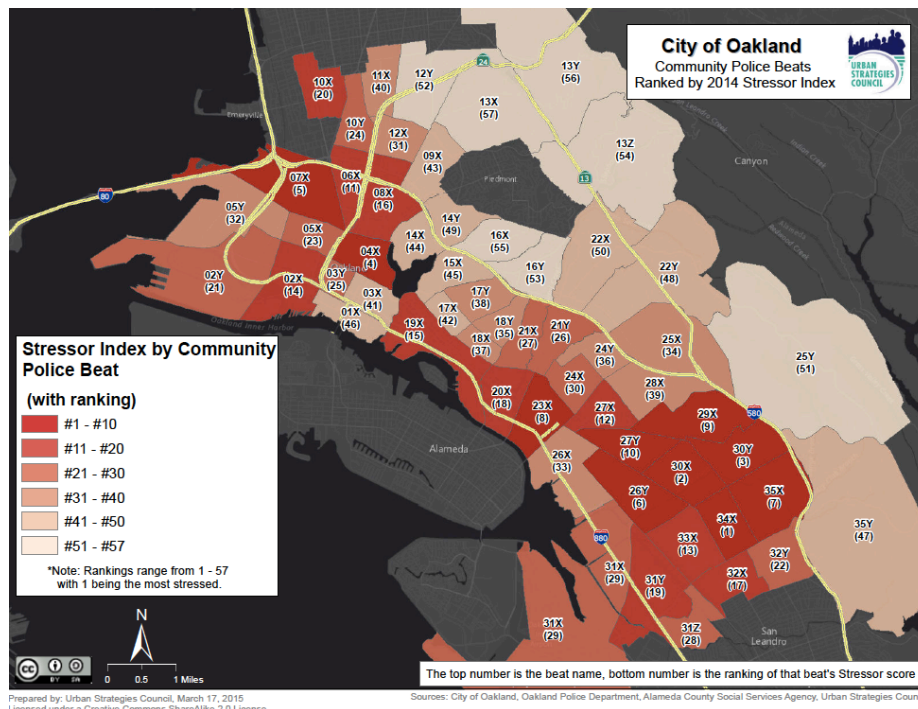
## I.6 Who OFCY Aims to Serve

OFCY seeks to support programming that benefits children from birth to 20 years of age. However, OFCY also recognizes that children and youth who live in Oakland's lowest-income neighborhoods have less access to enriching opportunities. In alignment with the Fund's guiding value of social and economic equity, OFCY directs funding to children and youth who are living in high-priority neighborhoods, while also investing in specific populations that benefit from targeted programming. High-priority neighborhoods have moderate to high levels of stress, as outlined in the Oakland Unite stressor map below.






### High-Priority Neighborhoods

The Oakland Human Services Department's Oakland Unite has developed a neighborhood stressor index. The data is based on rates of arrest, crime incidence, food stamp participation rates, youth incarceration and probation rates, rates of violent suspensions, and chronic absence among Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students. This stressor index is mapped to the City's 57 police beats to inform community policing efforts.



## 2. THE CHANGE OFCY SEEKS TO ACHIEVE

In support of the legislated goals, OFCY invests in strategies that support positive child and youth development and contribute toward achievement of the following outcomes for children and youth.

Population	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
 Young Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive the services, supports, and treatments they need to participate fully in learning.</li> <li>• Interact with early childhood educators, who are better prepared to address developmental and social-emotional growth as well as behavior.</li> <li>• Are supported by parents with the skills and capacity to promote their child's social and emotional well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>Children are safe and healthy.</p> <p>Young children are ready for school.</p>
 School-Age Children and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel safe and connected to their schools.</li> <li>• Acquire social-emotional skills.</li> <li>• Form caring relationships with peers and adults.</li> <li>• Attend school regularly.</li> <li>• Are supported academically and retain academic skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• Have meaningful opportunities for involvement and leadership.</li> <li>• Participate in challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences.</li> <li>• Develop new skills.</li> <li>• Are healthy, active, and fit.</li> </ul>	<p>Children and youth are safe and healthy.</p> <p>Children are reading at grade level.</p> <p>Children and youth thrive in positive school cultures.</p> <p>Children and youth have access to strengths-based, positive youth development activities.</p> <p>The achievement gap closes.</p> <p>Children and youth succeed in school and graduate from high school.</p>
 Older Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are aware of job and career options.</li> <li>• Access and complete internships and other work experiences, and achieve work-based skills and job readiness.</li> <li>• Have access to information about educational and career opportunities that motivate and interest them.</li> </ul>	<p>Youth graduate from high school, receive a GED, and/or enroll in postsecondary training or educational programs.</p> <p>Youth are ready for college or a career.</p> <p>Youth are able to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives.</p>

## 2.1 Investment Guidelines

The development of this Strategic Investment Plan was informed by the Fund's investment guidelines:

*Mission, Vision, and Values:* At the foundation of all funding strategies is OFCY commitment to aligning funding strategies with the Fund's mission, vision, and values and the priorities of Oakland's voters, as captured in the Oakland Kids First! Initiative.

*Building on What Works:* For nearly 20 years, children, youth, and their families have come to value and rely upon programming supported by OFCY. OFCY is committed to continuous investment in programming that yields positive outcomes for children and youth. OFCY is informed by the existing literature and research base on activities that support children and youth, as well as lessons learned from external program evaluations of OFCY investments.

*Supporting Small and Emerging Initiatives:*

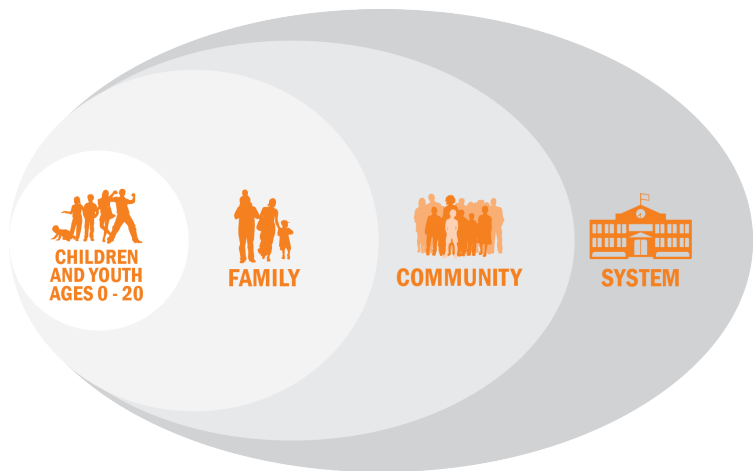
Many great ideas for supporting children and youth were started in Oakland by Oakland-based organizations with seed funding from OFCY. OFCY is committed to supporting small and emerging initiatives that bring youth new opportunities and experiences.

*The Changing Youth Population:* OFCY recognizes the shifting demographics of Oakland's children and youth and the new challenges that face them. OFCY aims to be responsive to these changes.

*Youth and Community Priorities:* OFCY is the creation and will of Oakland's voters and communities. OFCY is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for youth and community members to inform strategies and priorities. OFCY elevates the voice of youth in planning and strategy considerations to ensure that activities are supported that fulfill the self-identified needs and interests of youth.

*Context:* OFCY funds programming that directly benefits children and youth, while also recognizing that children and youth thrive in the context of their families, communities, and the public systems with which they interact. Investments aim to build the capacity of families, communities, and systems to support children and youth.

*Alignment with System Partners:* OFCY partners with other systems to expand access to high-quality experiences for children and youth. OFCY seeks to identify and meet service needs, gaps, and opportunities in alignment with other investors but does not supplant existing public-system investments and roles. OFCY works closely with other City investors, including Oakland Unite, which focuses on supporting violence intervention and targeted prevention services, while OFCY invests in violence prevention programming. OFCY investments create positive opportunities that support youth development and prevent youth exposure to violence.



*Provider Capacity:* Oakland is home to a rich network of community-based providers with deep local expertise. OFCY taps into the knowledge, resources, and capacity of providers to inform the development of strategies. OFCY also gives consideration to the landscape of partners who are available to implement high-quality services in each goal area.

## 2.2 Changes in Youth Population and Youth Needs

An analysis of data on the changing needs and demographics of children and youth in Oakland informed the development of this Strategic Investment Plan. A comprehensive *Oakland Youth Demographic Profile* summarizes the key findings of this analysis and is contained in the Appendix. OFCY uses the results of this analysis in two ways. The first is as a criterion in guiding the selection of strategies and specific populations during the strategic planning process. The second is as a factor in the selection of grantees during the RFP process.

Understanding what is changing for youth can be achieved only within the context of what is changing in Oakland more broadly and how this change impacts families. Youth represent 24% of Oakland's population in 2013, or 94,489 youth—a nearly 11% decline in their proportion of the population since 2005.<sup>1</sup> Following broader demographic shifts in California over the last 10 years, Oakland has seen growth in the Latino youth population and a decline in White and African American youth populations.<sup>2</sup> Latino youth now represent the largest ethnic group in Oakland for youth under the age of 20.<sup>3</sup>

While Oakland is experiencing economic growth, there are more children living in poverty in Oakland now than in 2005. In 2013, 30% of children in Oakland lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty level, compared to 25% in 2005.<sup>4</sup> There is a broad body of research showing that children who grow up in poverty are less successful in school, less likely to graduate from high school, and have lower lifetime earnings than children who don't grow up in poverty.

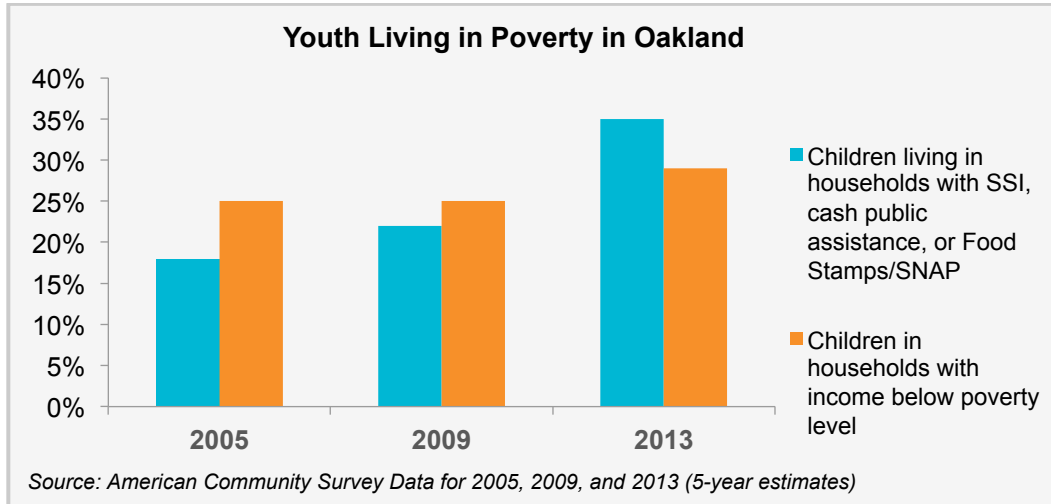
The Changing Demographics of Youth in Oakland 2005-2013			
	2005	2013	% Change
Youth as Proportion of Total Population in Oakland	27%	24%	-11%
Latino Youth Population	25%	39%	+56%
African American Youth Population	31%	27%	-13%
Youth Living Below Poverty Line	25%	30%	+16%

*Data Source: American Community Survey, 2005 & 2013 (5 year estimates)*

Since the last strategic planning process, Oakland has emerged from the recession as a place of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic revitalization. Oakland is increasingly known for its burgeoning restaurant and food culture, its thriving maker movement, and its growing arts scene. However, this economic growth has not benefited all communities and neighborhoods in Oakland.

Youth and community members have expressed concerns about the affordability of Oakland and the high level of violent crime that still affects many communities in the City. Rents are steadily increasing in traditionally working class and low-income neighborhoods, displacing families and leaving them with fewer affordable alternatives in Oakland. Between January 2014 and January 2015, average rents in

Oakland increased by 12.1%, resulting in the second highest increase in rental rates in the country, even ahead of San Francisco (at 11.6%).<sup>5</sup> Oakland's average rent for a one-bedroom apartment exceeds \$1,800 per month.<sup>6</sup> In addition, violent crime continues to affect many of these neighborhoods, exposing many youth or their families and friends to violence or other trauma.



*Indicators of Academic Success:* Children who start school with basic skills in math and reading are more likely to succeed in school, attain higher levels of education, and secure employment.<sup>7</sup> However, a minority of Oakland's children are meeting key educational milestones like proficiency in kindergarten readiness and third-grade reading level, which are predictive of future academic success.

On most metrics, the achievement gap persists when comparing African American and Latino to White and Asian students. While Oakland's graduation rate has improved in recent years to 63%, it still lags behind the average graduation rate of 80% for Alameda County and California.<sup>8</sup>

### Specific Populations

To meet the value of social and economic equity, OFCY considers the needs of specific populations in developing strategies. Selected information on high-priority populations is provided here. (Detailed information can be found in the *Oakland Youth Demographic Profile* in the Appendix.)

*Boys of Color:* Three in four males under the age of 18 in Alameda County are boys of color.<sup>9</sup> There is ample data showing that boys and men of color are less likely to meet academic milestones, such

### Child and Youth Status Report: Community Indicators

<b>Preschool Attendance</b>		<b>70%</b>
<b>Proficiency in Kindergarten Readiness</b>		<b>40%</b>
<b>Reading at Grade Level in Third Grade</b>		<b>38%</b>
	<b>White Students</b>	<b>77%</b>
	<b>African American Students</b>	<b>27%</b>
	<b>Latino Students</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Chronic Absence (all grades)</b>		<b>11%</b>
<b>High School Graduation</b>		<b>63%</b>
<b>High School Dropout</b>		<b>22%</b>

Data Source: Preschool Attendance and Proficiency in K-Readiness, Oakland Achieves 2014 Report. Third Grade Reading Level and Chronic Absence, Oakland Reads 2020 Baseline Report, released April 2014. High School Graduation and Dropout, California Department of Education 2012-2013.

as kindergarten readiness and third-grade reading levels; more likely to be suspended; more likely to be incarcerated; and more likely to be unemployed.<sup>10</sup> These disparities are particularly acute for African American boys and young men.

*Unaccompanied Minors:* From October 2013 to July 2014, more than 62,000 Central American children fled from their home countries to the United States.<sup>11</sup> Since June 2013, OUSD has enrolled over 200 unaccompanied minors in classes. Approximately 75% are in high school, 10% in middle school, and 15% in elementary school. Forty-nine percent are from Guatemala, 33% from El Salvador, and 18% from Honduras.<sup>12</sup>

*LGBTQ Youth:* National studies of adolescent youth indicate that between 3% and 6% of youth identified as LGBTQ, reported same-sex attraction, or engaged in same-sex sexual activity.<sup>13</sup> In Oakland, that estimates to approximately 1,400 to 2,700 LGBTQ youth ages 10–19. Family rejection, discrimination, low self-esteem, and homelessness are threats to the health and well-being of LGBTQ youth in Oakland.

*Foster Care Youth:* There are 247 foster youth in grades K–12 in OUSD.<sup>14</sup> There are significant gaps in academic outcomes for foster youth in Oakland. By ninth grade, 13% of foster youth at OUSD are reading at grade level, compared to 54% across the District.<sup>15</sup>





*Homeless Youth:* The most recently available data on the homeless population (2013) indicates that there were 356 homeless households with minors under the age of 17 in Oakland.<sup>16</sup> This data does not reflect the number of young people who are homeless and disconnected from their families.



## 3. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

### 3.1 Community Input Activities

As part of the development of the Strategic Investment Plan, OFCY conducted a comprehensive community, stakeholder, and youth engagement process, as outlined below. The goal of gathering community input was to solicit perspectives on the needs and opportunities for strengthening the well-being of children and youth and to identify gaps and opportunities in programming for children and youth. OFCY also used community input forums to share preliminary strategic directions and proposed strategies to solicit stakeholder ideas and feedback on these directions.

Community and Stakeholder Input Activities	
	Oakland Youth Commission Public Hearing for youth input into strategy development (in partnership with Oakland Unite)
	Community Forum for Early Childhood and Student Success Community Forum for Youth Development and Transitions
	Webinar for Youth Development Practitioners and Advocates Webinar for Transitions to Adulthood Practitioners and Advocates
	<p>Dozens of stakeholder and provider meetings, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The David and Lucile Packard Foundation Starting Smart and Strong Initiative</li> <li>• Meetings of early childhood, after-school, and youth service providers</li> <li>• Survey of after-school providers</li> <li>• Oakland Unite</li> <li>• Private philanthropy supporting child and youth development in Oakland</li> <li>• Individual and panel meetings with key stakeholders at City of Oakland, OUSD, Alameda County, First 5, Interagency Children's Policy Council, Oakland Workforce Investment Board, Peralta Community College District, and others</li> </ul>

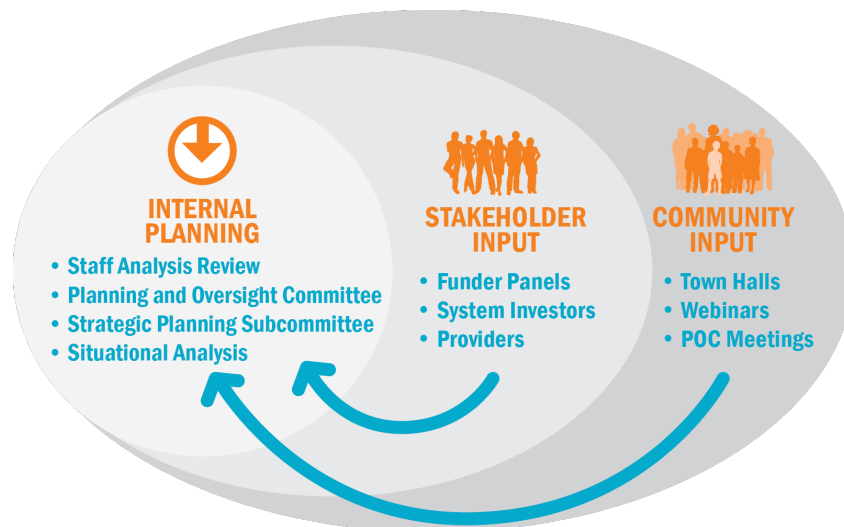


### 3.2 Key Themes

Community input from a wide range of stakeholders shaped and informed the selected strategies.

*OFCY Heard Strong Support for Building Children, Youth, and Family Strengths and Assets:* Over 120 young people attended the Oakland Youth Commission Public Hearing, which was jointly sponsored by Oakland Unite and OFCY. Young people shared their emphatic support and desire for enrichment, leadership, and youth development opportunities in their neighborhoods that build on their strengths and assets.

Young people noted that they are too often identified by their deficits rather than their assets. At community input forums, providers and community members spoke of the value of programs that strengthen families and focus on empowering youth and parents as co-creators in service design and as leaders in their communities. Other funders and system partners cited OFCY as Oakland's lead youth development funder and an important source of seed funding for innovative and emergent programs.



*Stakeholders Cited the Need for Trauma-Informed Care and Equity in Addressing the Needs of Specific Populations:* Providers and community leaders recommended that OFCY prioritize the integration of a trauma-informed approach to better meet the needs of children and young people exposed to violence. While OFCY heard about the needs of many specific populations, there was significant community input to support homeless youth, LGBTQ youth, boys of color, and unaccompanied minors.

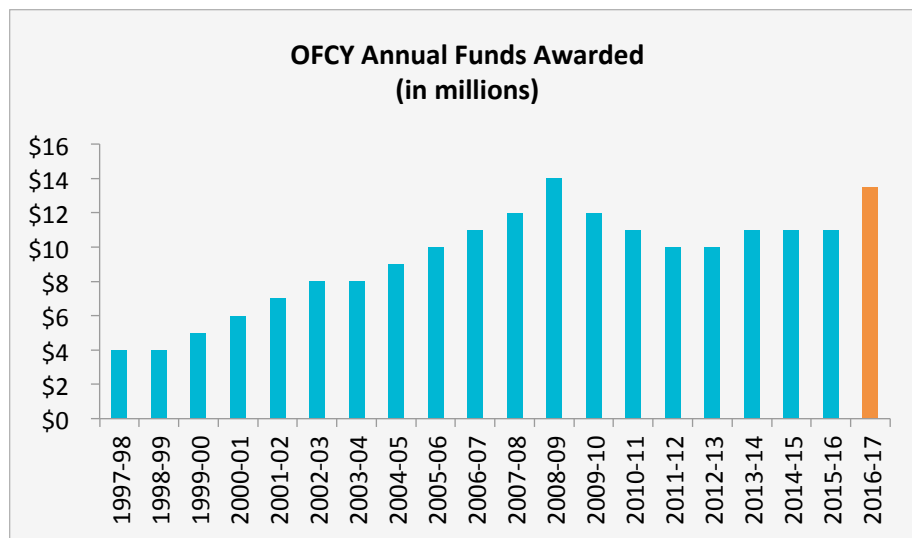
*OFCY Heard Support for Continued Collaboration and Alignment with Other Public-System Investors in Children and Youth:* Public-system investors and other funders in youth services cited OFCY's investments as critical to supporting system-level changes and also providing critical—and otherwise unfunded—programming for children and youth. Stakeholders cited the need for continued OFCY investments to ensure access to school-based after-school programming, strengthen preschool and school quality, and engage parents and families in supporting young people's success.

See the *Community Input Appendix* and each of OFCY's four goal areas for additional details on the community input process and feedback.

### 3.3 Resource Requirements

OFCY revenues have increased from less than \$5 million annually to over \$12 million in 2014–2015. Of these funds, 90% are distributed through grant-making efforts, and the remaining 10% of funds are used for administration, planning, and evaluation. Since inception in 1996, OFCY has administered approximately \$173 million dollars in grants to community-based organizations and public agencies.

Due to Oakland's improving economy, OFCY anticipates an increase in revenues to \$14 million annually beginning in 2015–2016, and a subsequent increase in available funding for grants in the 2016–2019 grant years. As a result, annual funding allocations in all goal areas will increase, with the largest increases directed to Early Childhood, School-Based After-School, and Youth Development and Empowerment programming.



## 4. EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIES

OFCY's investments in Early Childhood are guided by a wide body of research showing that strengthening families, empowering parents, and building parent capacity and connections are the most effective ways to support the social and emotional development of young children. Strong parental attachment in early childhood is critical in building protective factors, social-emotional skills, and resiliency. Building parental knowledge and skills and connecting parents with resources and supports in their communities helps young children reach developmental milestones.<sup>17</sup> Investments are also supported by research indicating that attending a high-quality preschool improves children's school readiness and enriches their family's engagement in schools.<sup>18</sup>

*Strategic Investments:* OFCY will direct investments toward engaging parents in enhancing the healthy development of their children in their neighborhoods and communities and toward supporting preschool quality through early childhood mental health consultation to early childhood educators.

Strategy	Target Population	Annual Allocation
1. Engage and Support Parents in the Healthy Development of their Children	Young children and their parents, families, and caregivers who reside in high-priority neighborhoods	\$2M–\$2.25M
2. Strengthen Preschool Quality through Consultation with Early Childhood Educators	Young children participating in Head Start, Early Head Start, Childhood Development Centers, and other informal settings	

*Alignment with Other Systems:* OFCY has directed funding to program efforts that engage and support parents in their neighborhoods. These opportunities provide parents with access to services and supports in their communities and help link families to resources provided by other agencies such as First 5 of Alameda County. State, federal, and local funding and philanthropic initiatives in support of early childhood development and learning have increased in recent years. OFCY funding strategies will complement these major investments—such as the Quality Rating Improvement System, Talk, Read, Sing Campaign, and Help Me Grow Program—to strengthen supports for young children and their families. OFCY supports the movement for higher-quality early education and kindergarten readiness by partnering with OUSD and City of Oakland Head Start programs and aligning with public and private initiatives to strengthen and improve the early care and education system in Oakland.

*Community Input:* Selected strategies were informed by the input of community members, providers, and stakeholders, who emphasized the need for services that support parents and caregivers in their neighborhoods and communities and increase parent involvement and leadership in designing programming to support families and strengthen communities. Stakeholders cited the need to build the capacity of early childhood educators to meet the behavioral and social-emotional needs of young children, as well as for trauma-informed services and vision and developmental screening to improve school readiness outcomes for young children.

## **Strategy I: Engage and Support Parents in the Healthy Development of their Children**

*Strategy:* This strategy invests in programs that are designed to meet the holistic needs of young children by building parenting skills and knowledge and providing services and supports in community locations that are accessible, safe, and desired by families. OFCY supports parent engagement, parent leadership, home visiting, and peer connection opportunities for parents to learn from and connect with other families in their communities, including Family Resource Center development or programming in high-priority neighborhoods. Parent supportive programming includes efforts acknowledging the importance of financial security by supporting parents around financial skills and savings to support children's access to college, and to help parents navigate access to services supporting the basic needs of families, including child care and education, health, housing, medical or legal resources. This strategy also supports efforts to increase the school readiness of children, including summer pre-kindergarten and early literacy efforts.

*Supported Activities:* In light of the powerful role parents play in supporting their young child's healthy development, OFCY supports parent-supportive programming to improve outcomes for young children, including the following:

- Parent and child interactive activities or playgroups in community locations that provide parents with the opportunity to play with their infant or toddler
- Supporting parents around financial skills and early savings programs to support children's access to college later in life
- Opportunities for parents to take on leadership roles and plan and/or facilitate activities and programs with program staff
- Peer connection and supports that allow parents to learn from and connect with other families in their communities and to give and receive peer support
- Home visiting services and collaborations for children's healthy development
- Coordinated services in more comprehensive Family Resource Center models and collaboration with existing services to strengthen family supports
- Supports or linkage to county or community resources, such as screening and referral, mental health and trauma-informed resources and services, or supports for special-needs children and children with disabilities
- Information and education about parenting and child development provided in accessible locations (including community sites, family resource centers, schools, medical offices)
- Summer pre-kindergarten camp for children who have not attended preschool
- Other collaborations to increase early literacy and school readiness for young children

Services and supports are delivered in schools and community locations, or at Family Resource Centers, that are accessible, safe, and frequented by parents. OFCY also invests in the development and expansion of comprehensive Family Resource Centers in high-priority neighborhoods. Funding supports efforts to develop new or to expand existing Family Resource Centers and costs associated with the delivery of specific services and supports. Programming reflects the needs, wants, and strengths of the community and spans a broad continuum, from prevention to early intervention to safety-net services.

OFCY will invest in services and supports that do the following:

- Deliver services in the community or neighborhood where parents of young children live
- Utilize a strengths-based or “Strengthening Families” approach
- Design and deliver services based on a partnership with parents and staff
- Capitalize on and leverage existing community resources and assets
- Support parents and children to develop kindergarten readiness among young children

*Target Populations:* Young children and their parents/families/caregivers who reside in high-priority neighborhoods.

*Outcomes:*

- Young children learn social skills and develop emotional literacy.
- Young children are ready for kindergarten.
- Young children receive the services, supports, and treatments they need to participate fully in learning.
- Parents are connected to and able to navigate their child’s school.
- Parents have access to information about and understand early childhood development.
- Parents access available community resources.
- Parent-and-child relationships, attachments, and interactions are strengthened.
- Parents ask for help in a time of need and give support to others during a time of need.
- Parents are connected with their peers.
- Parents experience less parental stress.
- Parents have the skills and capacity to support their child’s social and emotional well-being.
- Parents take on leadership roles.

*Rationale:* Early Childhood investments are based on the wide body of research showing that the first five years of life are the building blocks for future development. Parent/child interaction and attachment are critical factors in the healthy brain development of infants and toddlers. Research shows that providing parents with information about child development and with opportunities to connect with other parents in their community through group-learning opportunities provides parents with the skills to support the healthy development of their young child. Community-based programming engages more parents and strengthens informal community ties. Partnering with parents in the design and delivery of services results in services that are more responsive to their needs and preferences.

## **Strategy 2: Strengthen Preschool Quality through Consultation with Early Childhood Educators**

*Strategy:* This strategy strengthens the capacity of early childhood educators and parents to meet young children's behavioral, social-emotional, and developmental needs through the delivery of mental health and developmental consultations by licensed mental health professionals. OFCY investments promote the social-emotional well-being of parents and young children through the delivery of trauma-informed and culturally relevant services and supports. This strategy continues services at Head Start, Early Head Start, and OUSD Childhood Development Centers, and expands eligible sites to include informal settings.

*Supported Activities:* Supported activities consist of the provision of mental health and developmental consultations to early childhood educators; workshops for parents on early childhood development, parenting, and mental health topics; linkages to community resources, such as Help Me Grow; trauma-informed mental health services; and individual consultation and treatment for young children.

*Target Populations:* Young children participating in Head Start, Early Head Start, Childhood Development Centers, or other informal settings.

*Outcomes:*

- Early childhood educators have access to information and understand early childhood development, trauma-informed approaches, and early childhood mental health.
- Early childhood educators have the skills and capacity to address developmental, social-emotional, and behavioral challenges in the classroom.
- Parents have access to information about and understand early childhood development.
- Parents have the skills and capacity to support their child's social and emotional well-being.
- Young children receive the services, supports, and treatments they need to participate fully in learning.
- Young children learn social skills and develop emotional literacy.
- Young children develop caring relationships with their peers, teachers, and parents.
- Young children are ready for kindergarten.

*Rationale:* Attending a high-quality preschool improves children's school readiness skills and helps young children learn about the structure and routine of school, develop pre-literacy skills, and interact with their peers. Early childhood educators play an important role in preparing young children for successful entry into kindergarten by creating learning environments that support their academic, social-emotional, and developmental progress. They also face enormous pressure in responding to the diverse needs and challenges that young children and their families may be facing, including exposure to trauma, poverty, community and family violence, behavioral challenges, and undiagnosed developmental delays and/or mental health challenges. Providing early childhood educators with mental health and developmental consultation helps them acquire skills and practices that allow them to respond effectively to behavioral challenges and to support social-emotional competencies in young children. Children then receive the supports they need to participate fully in classroom learning and, if warranted, the appropriate treatment and services.

## 5. STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL STRATEGIES

OFCY's investments in this goal area aim to ensure that children and youth ages 5 to 20 are connected to and engaged at school, attend high-quality schools, and have access to safe spaces and enriching experiences during out-of-school time. At a community level, OFCY investments contribute toward students' academic and social development across their educational journey to ensure that they meet key academic milestones along the way, such as reading at grade level, coming to school regularly, and graduating from high school ready for college or a career.

*Strategic Investments:* To further the broader goal of student success in school, OFCY will direct investments toward ensuring access to high-quality after-school programming as well as efforts to engage middle school and high school students in school settings.

Strategy	Population	Annual Allocation
3. Ensure Youth Access to High-Quality School-Based After-School Programs	Elementary and middle school students (K–8) who attend public schools with Free and/or Reduced rates of 50% or higher	\$5.5M–\$5.75M
4. Strengthen Student Engagement in Learning	Children and youth enrolled in grades K–12 in Oakland. Targeted populations: boys of color, youth transitioning to high school, and other specific youth populations; parents and educators	

*Alignment with Other Systems and Investors:* OFCY's partnership with OUSD supports free/low-cost and high-quality after-school programming to 10,000 students annually. Access to high-quality after-school program contributes to OUSD's broader goal to develop high-quality schools in every neighborhood. The strategies supported through OFCY's investments in this goal area leverage school resources and align with OUSD's strategic direction toward becoming a Full-Service Community Schools district, as well as with the Oakland Reads 2020 initiative to strengthen literacy. OFCY's model of providing matching funds to schools eligible for state after-school funding expands each site's capacity to engage diverse community-based organizations that provide enriching after-school programming to students.

*Summary of Community Input:* The selected investments reflect input from community members, providers, system investors, and philanthropists. In regard to School-Based After-School programming, stakeholders concurred that OFCY investments bring community-based organizations into school sites, supporting the vision of schools as a hub for student and family needs and resources. For many, OFCY's investments reflect a recognition of the benefits of positive youth development programming in supporting student success in school. However, stakeholders noted that programs are at capacity and that the lowest-income schools have higher security costs that impact funding available for programming. Stakeholders also emphasized the needs of specific populations, particularly boys of color, who experience the greatest disparities in outcomes leading to student success, including kindergarten readiness, third-grade literacy and numeracy proficiency, and high school graduation and college readiness.

### **Strategy 3: Ensure Youth Access to High-Quality School-Based After-School Programming**

*Strategy:* This strategy supports access to school-based after-school programming and free or low-cost academic and enrichment programs at elementary and middle school sites. OFCY provides local match funding to deliver programming at school sites that receive state After School Education & Safety Program (ASES) funding and where at least half the students are eligible for FRL.

- *Base Funding:* OFCY will increase base funding from \$67,000 to \$72,000 per elementary school site and increase funding from \$82,000 to \$85,000 per middle school site.
- *Supplemental Funding:* Recognizing the higher costs and demand for services in schools with the highest FRL rates, these schools will be eligible for a supplemental funding grant of up to \$20,000.

*Supported Activities:* This strategy provides base funding to elementary schools to deliver enrichment, academic support, arts, sports, technology, literacy, and other youth development and leadership programming. Middle school funding invests in innovative after-school programming to middle school students, including science, technology, arts, sports, linked learning, and other school-based enrichment programming, which build on youth interests and assets and build a positive attachment between young people and their schools. At sites with high levels of students qualifying for FRL, supplemental funding will support enrichment programming, such as arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), literacy, and gardening; expand program capacity; and/or meet other site needs.

*Target Populations:* Elementary and middle school students (K–8) who attend schools with FRL rates of 50% or more.

*Outcomes:*

- Children and youth feel safe and connected to their school.
- Children and youth form caring relationships with peers and adults.
- Children and youth acquire social-emotional skills.
- Children and youth attend school regularly.
- Children and youth are supported academically.
- Low-income children and youth gain access to high-quality school-based after-school programming.
- Children and youth have expanded access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment.

*Rationale:* Children and youth (ages 5–15) thrive in school when they feel safe, supported, and connected to their school communities. Providing young people with access to enrichment, academic support, and recreation programming that responds to their needs, interests, and strengths helps to create a positive attachment with the school. Over time, creating a nurturing and supportive school environment fosters the development of children during their early school years and provides them with the support they need to succeed in school and later in life. Local and national studies have demonstrated that participation in high-quality after-school programs provides students with safe places to be, relationships with caring adults, and access to academic support and enrichment experiences, all of which contribute to their academic, social, and personal growth.



## **Strategy 4: Strengthen Student Engagement in Learning**

*Strategy:* Directs funds to programming designed to support children and youth's attachment to school and achievements in learning in coordination with OUSD. The strategy includes investments in culturally responsive and targeted models to meet the needs of specific populations, including youth who are at risk of not graduating or who are experiencing disparities in academic outcomes.

*Supported Activities:* OFCY invests in programming and activities designed to meet the needs of targeted groups that experience barriers to engaging in school. Supported activities include restorative justice or other programming that creates inclusive learning environments for all students (especially middle and high school youth), activities that promote successful transition to ninth grade, and other experiences that engage young people in learning and/or address early warning indicators, such as chronic absences, suspensions, and academic performance issues. OFCY also funds partnerships between community-based organizations and OUSD or school sites to engage families in supporting literacy during the elementary school years and provide literacy activities with school-age youth. Services and supports will align with school-site and OUSD priorities and aim to strengthen children, youth and families.

*Target Populations:*

- Children and youth enrolled in grades K–12 in Oakland
- Targeted populations: boys of color, youth transitioning to high school, and other specific populations

*Outcomes:*

- Children and youth feel safe and connected to their school.
- Children and youth form caring relationships with peers and adults.
- Children and youth attend school regularly.
- Students and school staff solve conflicts using restorative-justice techniques.
- Children and youth exhibit fewer early warning indicators (chronic absence, suspension, and academic performance issues) over time.

*Rationale:* Research shows that young people who eventually drop out from high school display early warning indicators in the third grade, middle school, and the ninth grade.<sup>19</sup> Students who exhibit these early warning indicators—chronic absence, at least one suspension, and/or failing a core course—are more likely to drop out of high school in the ninth grade. Partnerships between families, schools and community-based organizations can strengthen early academic achievement and mitigate early warning indicators that appear in middle school or worsen during the transition to high school. For students of color in particular, a punitive school climate can have a negative impact on their engagement, motivation, self-concept, and achievement in school. Participation in culturally relevant services leads to caring relationships between youth and adults and helps youth develop protective factors that support success in school. Developing alternatives to suspension and focusing on student assets can support an inclusive and positive school climate.

## 6. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

OFCY's investments in this goal area aim to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and youth. Youth thrive when they feel safe, develop supportive relationships with adults and peers, have meaningful opportunities for involvement and leadership, and access challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences. However, only 40% of Oakland's youth report that they have opportunities for meaningful participation in their communities.<sup>20</sup> OFCY's investments are based on a wide body of research showing that access to positive youth development programming promotes the healthy development and academic success of young people and is an effective strategy for reducing violence.

*Strategic Investments:* To contribute toward the long-term goal of supporting youth development in all domains, OFCY will direct investments toward year-round and summer programming that build on youth interests and assets delivered in community-based or school settings.

Strategy	Target Population	Annual Allocation
5. Create Access to Youth Development and Empowerment Opportunities Year-Round	Children and youth ages 5–20 and specific populations: LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth impacted by violence	\$3.6M–\$3.85M
6. Create Access to Enrichment and Academic Support during the Summer Months		

*Alignment with Other Systems:* With no dedicated state or federal funding streams to support youth development activities and a shift in private funding toward literacy and academic support over the past 10 years, OFCY is the primary funder of youth development and leadership activities in Oakland. OFCY focuses on youth development activities that increase protective factors for youth, and reduce risky behaviors and situations where they may be victims of violence. OFCY youth development investments complement the violence intervention activities that are supported by Oakland Unite. Selected strategies align with shared citywide efforts to strengthen achievement for youth and reduce summer learning loss in low-income areas and for youth impacted by trauma, boys of color, and youth with specific needs. Programs will leverage City assets such as parks and libraries to deliver community-based programming.

*Community Input:* The strategic investments in this goal area reflect input from young people regarding the need for enriching programs that build on their assets and strengths, not just their risk factors or deficits. The community and stakeholders echoed support for expanding access to enrichment programming for low-income children and youth. Stakeholders encouraged OFCY to align with community efforts designed to support literacy and mitigate summer learning loss.

## **Strategy 5: Create Access to Youth Development and Empowerment Opportunities Year-Round**

*Strategy:* This strategy creates access to year-round activities that empower children and youth to develop leadership skills, build on their strengths, improve their connections to adults and peers, and contribute to their communities through arts, technology, entrepreneurship, sports, and other enrichment programming. This investment supports access to comprehensive services and trauma-informed supports that meet the needs of specific populations, such as LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth exposed to violence.

*Supported Activities:* Programming within this strategy includes activities and experiences that build on youth interests, strengths, and assets, including academic and literacy support, arts and enrichment, youth and peer leadership, and innovation and technology. Services are delivered in the community or in school-based settings and may range from small and emerging programs to larger community collaborations. Services may leverage existing community and City assets.

Supported youth development and empowerment programming includes the following:

- *Academic and Literacy Support:* Programming that promotes positive attachment to school, provides youth with academic support, and develops literacy in alignment with the broader goals of Oakland Reads 2020.
- *Arts and Enrichment:* Programming that provides youth with opportunities to develop their voice through arts, literature, sports, or other forms of expression to promote the social-emotional, cultural, physical, and cognitive development of young people.
- *Youth and Peer Leadership:* Peer mentoring, community advocacy, or other youth leadership activities in which youth receive targeted training and development and hold roles of responsibility. OFCY will invest in programs that empower youth to participate in the design and delivery of programming to grow their leadership skills and experience, which can boost youth's career awareness and prospects.
- *Innovation and Technology:* Programming that provides experiences and exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), coding, and computer science, or that provides project-based or hands-on learning opportunities such as maker projects or do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. OFCY will invest in programming that promotes youth skills and interests in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

This strategy also invests in the delivery of comprehensive services and supports to children and young people who are impacted by trauma in their families or communities or have population-specific needs, such as LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth exposed to violence. Investments are directed to supports and services that are culturally relevant, asset based, and trauma informed, including mental health services and supports, positive youth development and empowerment opportunities, family support, and advocacy.

*Target Populations:* Oakland children and youth who are ages 5–20 from high-priority neighborhoods. Specific populations include LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth exposed to violence.

*Outcomes:*

- Children and youth form caring relationships with peers and adults.
- Children and youth have meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership.
- Children and youth participate in challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences.
- Children and youth develop new skills.
- Children and youth are healthy, active, and fit.

*Rationale:* There is a wide body of research showing that children and youth who have access to safe community spaces and meaningful opportunities for enrichment and academic support develop new skills, improve their connections to adults and peers, and make positive contributions to their communities. Young people who have experienced individual, family, or community trauma benefit from targeted, culturally relevant services and supports, which, over time, improve their social-emotional well-being and build protective factors and resiliency.

## **Strategy 6: Create Access to Academic Support and Enrichment during the Summer Months**

*Strategy:* Invests in programs that provide enrichment and academic opportunities for children and youth during the summer months to help them stay engaged in learning, retain academic skills and knowledge, develop their voice and leadership skills, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. Supported programming prevents children and youth from losing academic knowledge and skills over the summer and leaves them more prepared for a successful start to the new school year.

*Supported Activities:* Programming within this strategy includes activities and experiences that build on youth interests, strengths, and assets, including academic and literacy support, arts and enrichment, youth and peer leadership, and innovation and technology. Services are delivered in the community and may range from small and emerging programs to larger community collaborations. Services leverage available community and City assets, providing youth with access to high-quality summer activities and new experiences. Supported programming includes the following:

- *Academic and Literacy Support:* School-based services and programming that provide academic support and enrichment to promote positive attachment to school, support reading and literacy, and prevent summer learning loss.
- *Arts and Enrichment:* Programming that provides youth with opportunities to develop their voice through arts, literature, sports, or other forms of expression to promote the social-emotional, cultural, physical, and cognitive development of young people.
- *Youth and Peer Leadership:* Peer mentoring, community advocacy, or other youth leadership activities in which youth receive targeted training and development and hold roles of responsibility. OFCY will invest in programs that empower youth to participate in the design and delivery of programming to grow their leadership skills and experience, which can boost youth's career awareness and prospects.
- *Innovation and Technology:* Programming that provides experiences and exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), coding, and computer science, or that provides

project-based or hands-on learning opportunities such as maker projects or do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. OFCY will invest in programming that promotes youth skills and interests in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

*Target Populations:* Oakland children and youth who are ages 5–20 from high-priority neighborhoods. Specific populations include LGBTQ youth, boys of color, unaccompanied minors, and youth exposed to violence.

*Outcomes:*

- Children and youth retain academic skills and knowledge.
- Children and youth form caring relationships with peers and adults.
- Children and youth have meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership.
- Children and youth participate in challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences.
- Children and youth develop new skills.
- Children and youth are healthy, active, and fit.

*Rationale:* This strategy reflects the literature in the field of youth development showing that children and youth who have access to safe community spaces and meaningful opportunities for enrichment and academic support develop new skills, improve their connection to adults and peers, and make positive contributions to their communities. Summer programs that incorporate academic support and enrichment programming successfully motivate children and youth to attend school regularly by building on their interests, while supporting the retention of skills and content learned during the school year. Access to academic programming can help to offset summer learning loss and strengthen literacy.

## 7. TRANSITIONS TO ADULthood STRATEGIES

OFCY aims to support older youth in their transition to adulthood and contribute to the broader community goal that older youth graduate from high school ready for college and a career. Exposing youth to the workplace, entry-level work readiness training, and work experience enhances their employability skills and raises their awareness of careers or vocational opportunities. Work-based learning opportunities have been found to increase school attendance, decrease dropout rates, reduce school suspensions, increase school engagement, and support young people's overall growth and capacity as they develop into young adults.<sup>21</sup> Programming that offers academic support in tandem with career exposure has been effective at re-engaging opportunity youth.<sup>22</sup>

*Strategic Investments:* To contribute toward the broader goal of college and career readiness, OFCY will invest in programming that exposes young people to careers and delivers academic support to older youth to ensure that all youth graduate from high school and are able to transition to college and career.

Strategy	Target Population	Annual Allocation
7. Expand Access to Career Awareness and Academic Support for Older Youth	Youth ages 15-20 in high-priority neighborhoods in need of academic and career support, including opportunity youth (i.e., those who are disconnected from school and employment)	\$1.75M–\$2M

*Alignment with Other Systems:* Over the past year, Oakland has seen an increase in federal, state, local, and private funding intended to build career pathways, including the passage of Measure N, a parcel tax that generates nearly \$13 million annually in funding for OUSD to reduce the drop-out rate and provide Oakland high school students with real-world work and learning opportunities. OFCY's investments are influenced by recent changes in workforce funding streams; OUSD's *Pathway to Excellence 2015–2020* Strategic Plan; and Mayor Libby SchAAF's Oakland Promise Initiative. OFCY's focus on academic support and career exposure aligns with OUSD's plans to become a linked-learning district and the broader vision of ensuring that all youth graduate from high school ready for college and a career.

OFCY invests in academic support—including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other supports—that allows youth to graduate from high school and start adulthood ready for college, and builds a college-going culture among high school students. In addition, OFCY's support of youth workforce programming connects nearly 1,000 Oakland youth per year with career support, workplace exposure, paid internships, and other subsidized youth employment opportunities. While other youth workforce

funding streams in Oakland are restricted to serving specific populations (e.g. probation or foster youth through Alameda Social Services Agency use of the Title IV:E waiver, or hard-to-serve populations through Oakland Workforce Investment Board [WIB] funding), OFCY funding supports a broader

### Key System Partners and Investors

- Oakland Workforce Investment Board
- Oakland Unite
- Oakland Unified School District
- Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Peralta Community College District

population of youth throughout Oakland. OFCY will continue to partner with other public-system investors to ensure alignment of academic support, college readiness, and workforce resources.

*Community Input:* This investment reflects youth input, emphasizing the need for programming for young people who live in low-income neighborhoods and may be the first to attend college. Stakeholders and community members also noted the need to support young people within the contexts of their families and communities and to expose middle-school aged youth to career-based, project-based, and hands-on learning activities as Oakland moves toward a linked-learning school district. The Mayor's Office has launched the Oakland Promise Initiative with the vision that every child in Oakland graduates high school with the expectations, resources, and skills to complete college and be successful in the career of their choice. System stakeholders also cited the need to ensure that young people have access to supportive services that address non-academic needs such as housing and financial, legal, or family needs that may get in the way of their academic or career success.

## **Strategy 7: Expand Access to Career Awareness and Academic Support for Older Youth**

*Strategy:* This strategy supports programming that provides older youth (ages 15–20) with career awareness, exploration, and preparation within high-priority industries, as well as college and career advising and other academic supports to facilitate the transition to and persistence in college and to a career.

*Supported Activities:* The core activities supported by this strategy include the provision of academic support and career-development programming that builds on older youth's strengths and interests.

*Career Development Activities:* Supported programming includes opportunities for employment and career exploration through job shadowing, short-term paid work experience, soft-skill development, youth entrepreneurship, internships, and other career-development activities that provide exposure to the world of work and broaden their awareness of career options and possibilities. The focus of programming is on providing young people with career-exposure and career-exploration experiences that foster their interest in postsecondary training or educational opportunities. OFCY will support programs that incorporate job readiness, financial-literacy education, and employer support as program components. This strategy prioritizes programming that engages young people in key industries and career pathways supported by the City of Oakland.

*Academic Support Activities:* OFCY will invest in learning opportunities designed to help youth persist in and graduate from high school; attain a GED or diploma; continue on to college by helping youth complete high school prerequisites; navigate college enrollment; obtain assistance with the college and financial aid application process; and obtain skills that allow them to persist and succeed in college. This strategy also funds academic supports and programming offered in tandem with career exposure/employability opportunities and dropout-recovery programs, including reengagement centers that reach youth who are not currently enrolled in school or working.

*Target Populations:* Youth ages 15–20 in high priority neighborhoods in need of academic and career support, including opportunity youth (i.e., those who are disconnected from school and employment)

*Outcomes:*

- Youth are aware of job and career options.
- Youth access and complete internships and other work-experience opportunities, and achieve work-based skills and job readiness.
- Youth graduate from high school, receive a GED, and enroll and persist in postsecondary training or college.

*Rationale:* Older youth benefit from learning about the world of work and accessing experiences that help get them ready for a job or a career. Exposure to the workplace, entry-level work-readiness training, and work experience enhance employability skills and raise awareness of careers or potential employment opportunities for low-risk and at-risk youth alike. It is well demonstrated that young people who do not graduate from high school, pass the exit exam, or receive a GED have few options when it comes to getting a job or pursuing postsecondary education or vocational training. For many youth who do receive the necessary credentials, because they are often the first to attend college in their families, they need help applying for and enrolling in college or vocational programs.

In addition, students who participate in work-based learning are more likely to attend college or go to work than other peers.<sup>23</sup> Academic-support programming can help young people who are disconnected from school obtain the necessary courses, credentials, or diplomas to access future educational and employment opportunities. Learning about college-entry requirements and receiving assistance with navigating the application process can increase college-enrollment rates for low-income youth of color. For older youth who are disconnected from the workforce and educational systems (i.e., “opportunity youth”), academic support provided in tandem with career exposure can re-engage them on a career or educational path.



## 8. ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 2005 and 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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