



# Youth Development and Leadership

## FY2021-2022 Strategy Summary

Prepared by Social Policy Research Associates | October 2022

Programs funded under OFCY's Youth Development and Leadership (YDL) strategy are designed to help youth develop leadership skills, contribute to their community, participate in arts programming, develop their personal and cultural identities, and engage in enrichment activities including sports, technology, and nature exploration that build on youth's strengths to build positive peer and adult relationships. To summarize strategy achievements and progress to date, this report draws on participant surveys, administrative data, focus groups with staff from four programs (Teens on Target Youth Leadership, Youth Brigade, Culture Keepers, and Indigenous Youth Leadership Development Program), a staff interview with one program (Brothers, UNITE!), and a focus group with youth from one program (Teens on Target Youth Leadership).

## Strategy Results



**4,667 Youth**  
participated in  
programming



**281,601 Hours**  
of service provided



**60 Average Hours**  
per youth participant



**35 Programs**  
provided enrichment  
activities



**87% of Youth**  
are interested in what  
they do at their program



**\$4,106,100**  
awarded to programs

**“We teach our kids to express themselves, whether that expression is of confidence or confidence in the making, or fear, or worry, or whatever it may be. And also, to set goals. We teach them to set smart goals. We explain the process of making smart goals in workshops and in Zoom, in person. Make it measurable, make it timely, make it realistic.”**

**– Program Staff, Brothers, UNITE!**

Cover photo courtesy of Oakland Public Education Fund's Youth Beat.

## Funded Programs

ACCASA Mentors for Oakland Youth in Foster Care - Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

AYPAL: Building API Community Power Youth Development and Leadership - Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Brothers, UNITE! - Brothers on the Rise

Culture Keepers - American Indian Child Resource Center

CURYJ Leadership Development - Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice

DreamCatcher Youth Program - Covenant House California

Explorations in Music - Music is eXtraordinary, Inc

FLY Mentoring and Leadership Services - Fresh Lifelines for Youth, Inc.

Get Active - SAFE PASSAGES

Girls Rock Summer Camp & Girls Rock After School Program - Bay Area Girls Rock Camp

Indigenous Youth Leadership Development Program - Native American Health Center, Inc.

K-8 Year-Round Youth Development - East Oakland Youth Development Center

Leadership in Diversity - Health Initiatives for Youth

Leadership Program for Children with Incarcerated Parents - Project Avary

LGBTQ Youth Development Program - Oakland LGBTQ Community Center

LIBRE (Leading the Independence of our Barrios for Raza Empowerment) - East Bay Spanish Speaking Citizen's Foundation

Lion's Pride - East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation

Newcomer Community Engagement Program (NCEP) - Refugee & Immigrant Transitions

Oakland Leaf Internship Program - Oakland Leaf Foundation

Oakland Programming Series - The Hidden Genius Project

Peralta Hacienda Youth Programs - Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park

Project WHAT! - Community Works West

REAL HARD- Youth Leadership Program - Oakland Kids First

Rites of Passage - Dimensions Dance Theater

Sports & Recreation for Youth with Disabilities - Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program

STAR Leadership Collaborative - Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth

Teens on Target Youth Leadership - Youth Alive

The Latinx Mentoring & Achievement (LMA) - Spanish Speaking Unity Council of Alameda County, Inc.

West Oakland Legacy Project - Attitudinal Healing Connection

Young Adult Leadership Program (YALP) - First Place for Youth

Youth Beat - Oakland Public Education Fund

Youth Brigade - La Clinica de La Raza, Inc.

Youth Community Culture Builders - EastSide Arts Alliance

Youth Leadership Development Program - Youth Together

## Strategy Results

Beginning in the 2019–2022 funding cycle, OFCY adopted a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to assess its role in contributing toward city-wide goals. The RBA model is a comprehensive approach for assessing the quantity of services provided by programs, the quality of those services, and the effect of those services on the lives of children, youth, and families. It does this by addressing **three guiding questions: (1) How much did we do? (2) How well did we do it? (3) Is anyone better off?**

How much did we do?	
<b>Number of Programs Funded</b>	35
<b>Number of Youth Served</b>	4,667
<b>Total Hours of Service Provided</b>	281,607
<b>Average Hours of Service per Youth</b>	60
How well did we do it?	
<b>Enrollment:</b> Average progress toward projected number of youth served <sup>1</sup>	130%
<b>Total Service Hours:</b> Average progress toward projected total hours of service	134%
<b>Average Hours of Service:</b> Average progress toward projected average hours of service	144%
<b>Safety:</b> Youth who agreed that they felt safe in their program	91%
<b>Caring Adults:</b> Youth who agreed that there is an adult at their program who really cares about them	87%
<b>Positive Engagement:</b> Youth who agreed that they are interested in what they do at their program	87%
Is Anyone Better Off?	
<b>Community Connection:</b> Youth who agreed that they feel more connected to their community since coming to their program	75%
<b>Youth Leadership:</b> Youth who agreed that they are more of a leader since coming to their program	63%

<sup>1</sup> At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate their annual enrollment and the total number of hours of service they will provide. Progress is calculated as the actual enrollment divided by the projected enrollment.

The remainder of this report includes the following sections aligned with this RBA framework:

- 1) Overview of Programs and Participants
- 2) How much did the programs provide?
- 3) How well did programs do it?
- 4) Is anyone better off as a result of the strategy's work?

**“At the end, the culmination of our project is giving back, meaning that we're providing workshops, or we are providing education, or outreach in the community, whatever it is that we're going to be doing, it's really creating that giving back.”**

- Program Staff, Youth Brigade



Photo courtesy of Brothers on the Rise's Brothers Unite

## Programs and Participants

**YDL programs offer social emotional development and leadership opportunities to meet the diverse needs of Oakland's youth.**

During 2021-2022, **4,667 unduplicated youth participated in Youth Development and Leadership (YDL) programs.** YDL programs offered enriching experiences, social emotional development, and leadership opportunities to meet the diverse needs and interests of Oakland's youth ages five to twenty. Many programs were population-specific, offering services and activities tailored to specific groups such as boys and men of color, system-involved or high-risk youth, and Indigenous youth. Programs offered additional resources that aligned with the needs of the youth they serve. For example, the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program provided youth with access to traditional medicines, while Culture Keepers provided indigenous youth with tobacco use prevention education that incorporates the distinctions between the traditional use of tobacco in indigenous cultures and commercial use.

Programs emphasized the importance of proactive and varied outreach strategies for recruitment. For example, health educators at Youth Brigade successfully conducted in-person presentations at Coliseum College Prep Academy, which increased youth recruitment compared to virtual outreach efforts. Staff at Brothers, UNITE! employed new recruitment strategies, such as group texts and follow-up phone calls, as COVID constraints precluded tabling and other in-person recruitment methods. Programs also discussed how enrollment and retention has fallen due to COVID risk, as some

**“We see very distinct needs from our students that are oftentimes disconnected from their roots. I think in providing that space and that knowledge for them, I think that really helps them to feel safe and more secure in themselves.”**

**- Program Staff, Culture Keepers**

families were not comfortable sending their youth to programs that worked across multiple high schools.

### Program Spotlight

To inform this report, SPR conducted focus groups and interviews with staff and/or youth participants from five programs:

**Teens on Target Youth Leadership** trained and mentored East Oakland high school students to be community leaders and violence prevention peer educators. Youth leaders delivered workshops on violence prevention to other students and participated in community advocacy events, such as speaking at public forums and testifying before city leaders.

**Youth Brigade** provided leadership skills and violence prevention education to high school youth who are at risk of violence, crime, and/or gang involvement. The youth led a workshop series for middle schoolers each year to practice their skills as community leaders and violence prevention peer educators.

**Culture Keepers** offered academic support, cultural enrichment, and physical activities to support cultural identity, academic success, and resiliency among American Indian/Alaska Native youth and families.

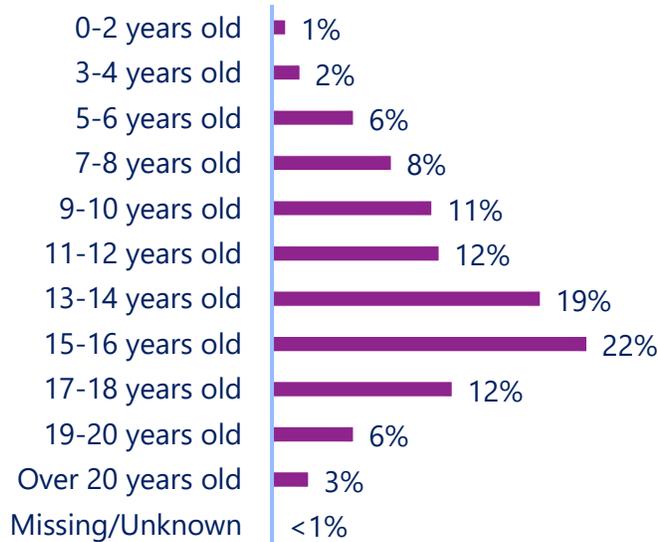
**Indigenous Youth Leadership Development Program** created a safe space for Indigenous youth to participate in various skill building activities, from art and recreation classes, Native American-specific cultural activities, and peer leadership.

**Brothers, UNITE!** offered programming for low-income Oakland males of color to build literacy, life skills and leadership through support from male peer adult mentors. Through cultural ritual, manhood training, media/arts education, fitness, community service and social action, youth developed confidence, conflict resolution and coping skills to facilitate success at school, at home and within their communities.

**About half of participants were between 13 and 18 years old.**

In line with the focus on enrichment and youth development, this strategy served youth across the age spectrum. As shown in the graph below, youth between 13 and 18 years old represented 53% of participants served by this strategy.

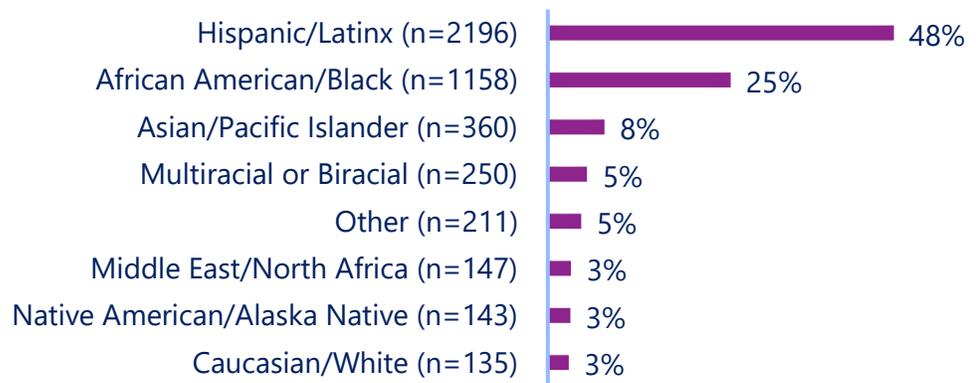
**Age of Participants**



**Almost half of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx.**

As shown in the graph below, over 70% of participants identified as African American/Black or Hispanic/Latinx, reflecting OFCY’s target population.

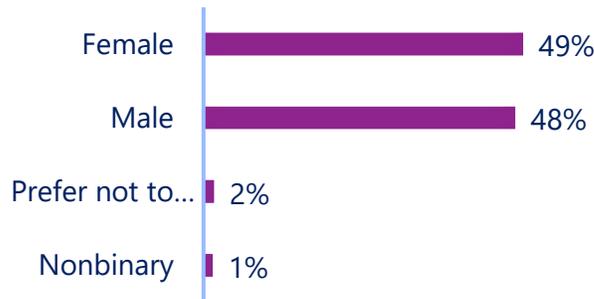
**Race/Ethnicity of YDL Participants**



**Most YDL participants lived in zip codes that experience high levels of community stress in East and West Oakland.**

Participants were evenly divided between youth who identified as female and those who identified as male. Youth who identified as nonbinary comprised one percent of youth.

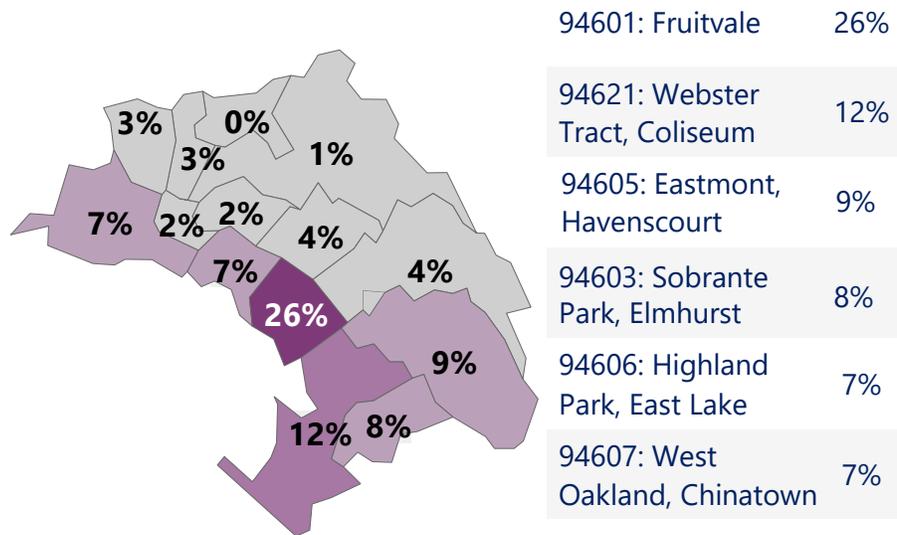
**Gender**



As illustrated below, most YDL participants lived in zip codes that experience high levels of community stress in East and West Oakland, with about one-quarter of participants living in Fruitvale (zip code 94601).

**Participants were evenly divided between youth who identified as female and those who identified as male.**

**Zipcode of Residence**



*Table lists zip codes where at least 5% of participants live. (5% of participants listed as homeless/transitioning and 5% were associated with multiple zip codes.)*

## How Much Did Programs Do?

**Programs provided 281,607 hours of service to 4,667 youth.**

In response to the ongoing pandemic, programs offered a combination of virtual, hybrid, and fully-in person activities to safely meet the needs of Oakland youth. For example, participants at Youth Brigade took part in a virtual altar workshop where youth honored loved ones who had passed and learned about healthy coping mechanisms for how to deal with grief. Participants at Brothers, UNITE! took a field trip to Point Reyes, where they conducted field biology and field chemistry, with activities such as calculating the pH and salinity of the water.

Programs such as Culture Keepers and Indigenous Youth Leadership Program discussed how Zoom fatigue led to enrollment challenges, leading them to shorten their virtual programming. At the same time, housing instability and rising living costs contributed to the ongoing displacement of families from Oakland, which reduced the number of youth available to participate in programs. To overcome these challenges, some programs partnered with schools to offer their services as part of their school day or afterschool programming. For example, Culture Keepers established a partnership with Roosevelt Middle School as part of their afterschool gardening programming.

**Programs provided virtual and modified in-person programming that focused on a wide variety of goals and activities to meet the needs and interests of Oakland's diverse youth.**

YDL programs engaged youth in a diverse array of activities to promote positive youth development and leadership. As shown below, programs provided the most hours in youth leadership and community building.

**Total Hours of Service Provided, by Type of Activity**



**Overall, YDL participants spent over 97,000 hours engaged in youth leadership and community building activities, including civic engagement activities.**

In light of the diverse needs and interests of youth served by this strategy, the amount of time youth spent in programming varied. About 40% of participants received 40 or more hours of service. On average, youth spent 60 hours in programming. Generally, youth between 13 and 18 years old spent the most time in programming.

**Hours of Attendance**



**Youth spent an average of 60 hours in YDL programming.**

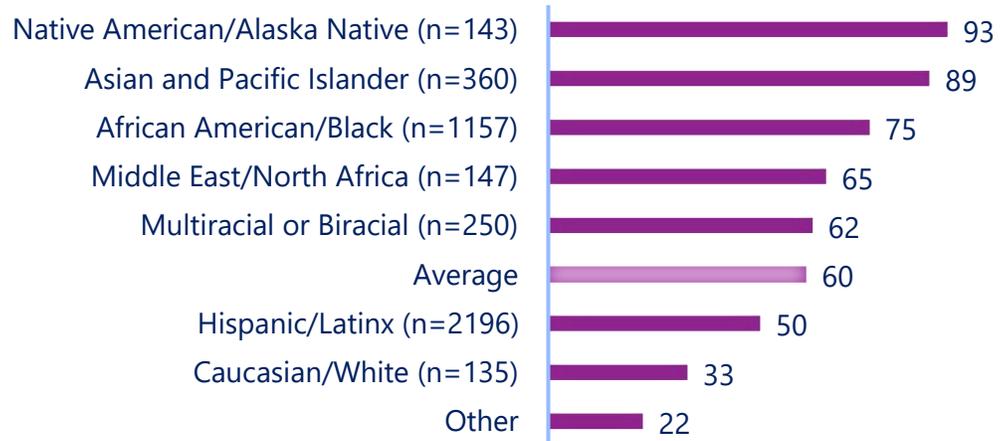
### Average Hours of Participation by Age



The number of hours spent in programming varied somewhat by race/ethnicity. As shown below, Native American/Alaska Native and Asian and Pacific Islander youth had the highest average hours of participation. White participants spent the least amount of time in programming.

**Native American/Alaska Native and Asian and Pacific Islander youth had the highest average hours of participation**

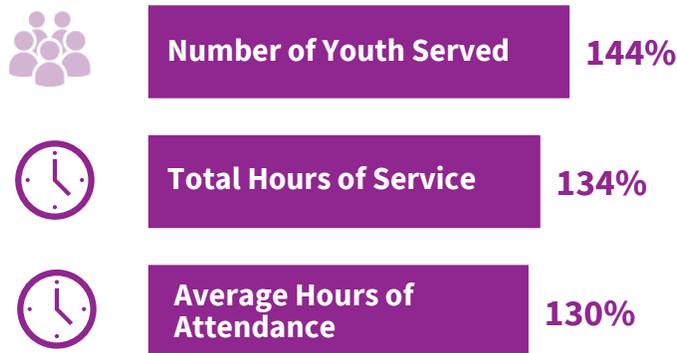
### Average Hours of Participation by Race



## How Well Did Programs Do It?

OFCY tracks a series of indicators to assess how well grantees implemented their programming. The first three indicators include progress toward projected program enrollment, total hours of service, and average hours of service per participant. **Attendance and enrollment were strong**— on average, programs enrolled over 140% of the youth they anticipated and youth received more hours of service than programs projected.

### Program Quality: Progress Toward Projections



In addition to these performance measures, OFCY uses youth survey results as indicators of program quality. As shown on the following page, the 1,100 youth who completed the survey generally felt safe, interested in their program(s), and connected to adults that cared about them in their program.

**On average, programs exceeded their enrollment and attendance targets.**

## Program Quality: Youth Survey Responses (n=1,100)

### Safety

91%

Youth who agree that they feel safe in their program.

### Caring Adults

87%

Youth who agree that there is an adult who cares about them at their program.

### Positive Engagement

87%

Youth who agree that they are interested in what they do at their program.

“We are very intentional about creating that space of like, “You can be yourself. You’re bringing your true self into this space. And let’s check in to see how you’re doing, what you need, and then let’s see what we can do to supply that need, to support that need.” We’ve even gone as far as, “What does your home need? How are things at home and what do you need at home so that you feel just at peace when you’re at home?” We’ve gone and groceries with students. They’ve been comfortable enough to express the need of food and not just for them. But, “Hey, I have little brothers and sisters.””

– Program Staff, Teens on Target

Programs fostered **a sense of safety and connections to caring staff** by hosting frequent one-on-one check-ins with youth, providing a safe space to discuss issues such as violence and the causes of violence, and meeting youth where they were, from advocating for them at school to providing them with necessities such as gym clothes and bus passes. In addition, program staff listened and responded to youth’s needs. For example, some programs helped youth address material needs, such as obtaining fresh produce and clothing.

Programs supported **positive engagement** by working to make the content engaging to youth, helping youth set achievable goals, and creating opportunities for youth to showcase what they learned, through peer mentorship or leading workshops for other students.

## Is Anyone Better Off?

As part of the RBA framework, OFCY tracks indicators of youth leadership and community connectedness to assess if YDL program participants are better off because of their participation. As shown below, most youth reported gaining the experience and skills that the strategy aims to provide.

### Participant Outcomes: Youth Survey Results (n=1,100)

#### Community Connection

75%

Youth who agree that they feel more connected to their community since coming to their program

#### Leadership

63%

Youth who agree that they are more of a leader since coming to their program.

**“I'm able to advocate for myself and for my peers. It made me more confident in me speaking to others because (before) I wasn't really a type of person to speak in front of everybody. I (had) stage-fright and stuff like that, but they pushed me out of my comfort zone. And when they did that, it was basically teaching me how to be confident on what I need to say and how to voice my own opinion, and how to have my voice heard without being silenced.”**

– Teens on Target Participant

While the majority of surveyed youth agreed that they met the strategy's desired outcomes, survey results were somewhat lower than last year, when 80% of surveyed youth agreed that they felt connected to their community and 74% agreed that they were more of a leader since coming to their program. This difference may stem from the apathy and disengagement that some OFCY-funded program staff observed in youth this year after the isolation and stress caused by COVID-19.

In addition to these RBA indicators, participant survey data and program interviews tell a more comprehensive story about the ways that YDL programs prepared youth to be leaders in their community, supported a sense of belonging, and helped youth set goals for their future.

### **Increased Leadership and Connection to Community**

**77% of surveyed middle school students agreed that they know more about what is going on their community since coming to their program.<sup>2</sup>**

Programs provided various opportunities for youth to develop as leaders and foster connections within their community. For example, youth in Teens on Target were taught a comprehensive, youth-authored violence prevention curriculum that they then presented at numerous middle school workshops throughout the year. The youth leaders led discussions on how to talk about and navigate experiences with gun violence and gang violence.

**“Another thing I like about TNT is I can become a peer mentor to other youth and kids. I can go to schools like elementary schools and middle schools, and I can teach them stuff about TNT, stuff about violence prevention, and I can also teach my little siblings and my little cousins about [violence prevention].”**

**– Teens on Target Participant**

<sup>2</sup> Elementary students received a shorter version of the survey and did not respond to all questions.

Additionally, youth learned how to speak out against violence at public forums and events. As one example, TNT leaders met with policymakers at the California State Capitol to discuss legislation about victim compensation for use of force by law enforcement. Collectively, these activities allowed youth to develop their public speaking, group management, team building and leadership skills. At Youth Brigade, youth engaged in community action and leadership training, including workshops focused on the social issues that they wanted to bring awareness to in their communities. Furthermore, youth participants in the Indigenous Youth Leadership Fellowship Program planned and facilitated presentations for younger youth on topics of their choice, as part of their preparation for college and the professional workforce.

**“TNT, it's a really good community. Everybody's always here, they're always joyful, we always have something to be proud of, we always have goals to reach. And even once we reach those goals, we help each other reach other goals that we have. And knowing the fact that we always... Even our mentors, they have our backs whenever we need anything.”**

– Teens On Target Participant

### **Sense of Belonging and Mental Wellness**

Programs leveraged their practices that support safety and connections to caring adults to build a sense of belonging and support mental well-being. For example, as part of its Circle of Courage framework, Youth Brigade encouraged youth to think about belonging as the link between themselves, their families, their ancestors, and their community, which in turn gave youth a sense of connection to their community. At the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, the Fellowship fostered a sense of belonging by focusing on indigenous cultural components, which helped youth feel like they were a part of their community. Fellows

**83% of surveyed youth agreed that they felt like they belong at their program.**

who completed the fellowship often continued to work within their Native communities. To support mental wellness, YDL programs checked in individually with participants, drew on their extensive partnership and referral networks, and provided opportunities for youth to practice social emotional skills, such as creating an open space for youth to verbalize their emotions with each other.

## Setting Goals

YDL programs incorporated different opportunities for youth to develop their decision-making capacity and ability to set goals. For example, youth at Youth Brigade set personal, social, and academic goals, which helped them develop personal responsibility and independence. The youth then worked on vision boards where they reflected on the past year and set three new goals based on self-care, mental health, and healthy relationships. At Brothers, UNITE!, program staff held resiliency workshops that centered self-expression and smart goal-setting.

## Outcomes by Youth Subgroups

An analysis of survey responses by subgroup revealed some differences in outcomes across race and age<sup>3</sup>:

**Older youth were more likely to agree that they felt safe in their program and that they had connections to caring adults than younger participants were.**

Among youth in grades 6 and above, **Asian/Pacific Islander youth reported stronger progress** than their peers in several outcome areas tied to this strategy, including for *Connection to Community, Goal Setting, Development and Mastery of Skills, Confidence and Self-Esteem, Improved*

**80% of surveyed middle school students agreed that they learned how to set goals and meet them.**

<sup>3</sup> All findings were statistically significant at  $p < .01$  and were consistent both within and across programs.

*Decision-Making, and Persistence and Resilience.*<sup>4</sup>

Asian/Pacific Islander youth of all ages were also more likely to respond positively to program quality bellwether questions related to a sense of safety, connections to caring adults, and positive engagement.

There was no statistical difference in survey results between youth who identified as LGBTQ+ on the survey (230 youth) and those who did not, indicating that LGBTQ+ youth felt as safe and engaged in programs as their peers and were just as likely to reach key outcomes.

## Conclusion

In summary, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Youth Development and Leadership Strategy continued to provide opportunities for youth to build connections to their community and with each other, develop leadership skills, and learn new skills. In fact, despite challenges around zoom fatigue, displacement outside of Oakland, and trepidation about in-person activities, programs on average exceeded their enrollment and attendance targets. In response to the ongoing pandemic, programs offered a combination of virtual, in-person, and hybrid programming to engage youth, including peer mentorship, enrichment, community building, and civic engagement activities. As a result, most surveyed youth felt more connected to their communities and reported that they felt more like leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> Because elementary students responded to an abridged survey, they did not answer all of the questions tied to these outcome areas and were not included in this analysis.