

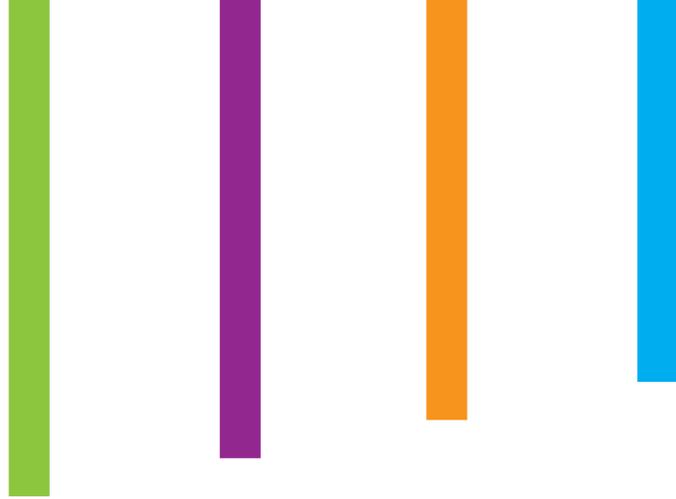


# OFCY

## OAKLAND FUND FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Strategic Investment Plan DRAFT

2019-2022



Prepared for the City of Oakland  
Planning and Oversight Committee  
Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

September 2018

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Working on behalf of the citizens of Oakland, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) has spent the last two decades investing in the city's children, youth, and families. Recognizing that Oakland's future depends on giving children and youth the foundational support they need to become the next generation of active, thriving community members, voters have twice approved Kids First! ballot measures that set aside funds for programs and initiatives that support children, youth, and families. Since 1996, OFCY has disbursed over \$200 million for programming and services that support the healthy development of young children; help children and youth succeed in school and graduate high school; prevent and reduce violence, crime, and gang involvement among children and youth; and help youth transition to productive adulthood.

Since the development of OFCY's last Strategic Investment Plan in 2015, the city of Oakland has continued to experience economic growth, attracting new families and businesses as well as the resultant benefits and challenges. These challenges include changing neighborhoods, displaced communities, concerns about gentrification, rising housing costs, and the resulting housing instability and homelessness. In addition to the most recent affordability issues, long-term persistent problems such as clear inequities in economic opportunity and health outcomes across neighborhoods and between racial groups continue to impact the community.

Oakland has a powerful voice in the national debate about what it means for a city to support social, racial, and economic justice. OFCY's strategic initiatives frequently intersect with multiple collaborative efforts by focusing resources on learning, development, and the social and emotional well-being of children and youth through age-appropriate services at critical periods along the age spectrum from birth to 21. OFCY and its partners continue to work together around a shared belief that supporting children and youth facing the greatest inequity and countering the challenges and adversity they face day-to-day with positive programming is one of the city's most important investments.

Every three years, OFCY undertakes a strategic planning process in order to ensure that funding strategies meet the current needs of the city's children, youth, and families. In the fall of 2017, OFCY began the process of developing the OFCY 2019-2022 Strategic Investment Plan. Plan development included extensive stakeholder engagement to learn how OFCY can leverage, complement, support, and lead different aspects of youth services across the city; over the course of nine months, OFCY hosted five community input events, conducted an online community survey, interviewed partners and elected officials, and held three provider focus groups. Plan development also included document and data review and took into account the results and findings from OFCY's most recent evaluations.

The process of developing the 2019-2022 Strategic Investment Plan confirmed strong support for the work of OFCY and its approach to engaging with partners and providers to invest in key services for Oakland's lowest resourced communities. At the

same time, providers, parents, and youth also expressed concern about a wide range of issues that impact families in Oakland. Concerns included violence, entrenched discrimination and racism and the resulting lack of opportunity for low income youth and youth of color, the vulnerability of immigrant youth and unaccompanied minors, as well as an extreme rise in the cost of housing (and operating youth programming). There was also a broad community awareness of how these factors and other adverse childhood experiences may lead to trauma that impacts child and youth development, and community input identifying the need for services that are trauma-informed.

What echoed throughout the engagement process was that stakeholders see OFCY as a key partner in helping address these issues, and moreover, in finding real solutions. OFCY's ongoing commitment to supporting the development of strong, productive, and loving community members strengthens the network of CBOs who serve children and youth. The Fund is a component of a vibrant dialogue across city and county departments about shared investment in Oakland's children and youth. In the 2019-2022 funding cycle, partnership with providers, institutions, and initiatives will remain a key tenet of how OFCY invests.

The 2019-2022 Strategic Investment Plan builds on OFCY's twenty-two years of experience serving the young people of Oakland, building a community of direct service providers, and working with its partners. In the 2019-2022 funding cycle, OFCY anticipates awarding between \$17-18 million each year to support the following strategies:

## 2019-2022 OFCY FUNDING STRATEGIES

- 1 Parent Engagement and Support
- 2 Family Resource Centers
- 3 Socioemotional Well-Being in Preschool and Early Childhood Education Settings
- 4 Comprehensive Afterschool Programs
- 5 Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students
- 6 Summer Programming
- 7 Youth Development and Leadership
- 8 High School and Postsecondary Student Success
- 9 Career Awareness and Employment Support

OFCY remains committed to strengthening the capacity of families, the community, and its public and nonprofit sector partners to support children and youth in reaching their full potential and leading safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

## INTRODUCTION

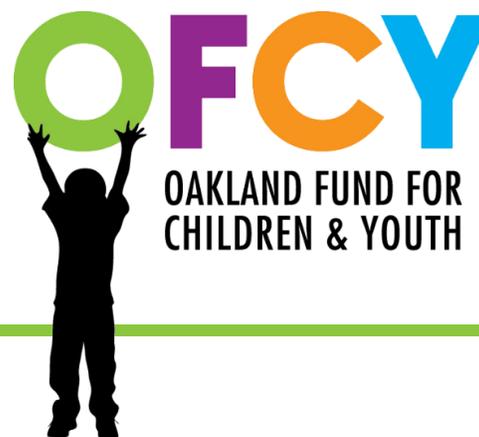
### The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

The Kids First! Oakland Children’s Fund was established by the voter-approved Oakland Kids First! ballot initiative in 1996. It required the City of Oakland to allocate 2.5 percent of the city’s annual unrestricted General-Purpose Fund revenue to provide services and programming to support children and youth from birth to 21 years of age. The City of Oakland Charter specifies that this funding should be used exclusively to support the healthy development of young children; help children and youth succeed in school and graduate high school; prevent and reduce violence, crime, and gang involvement among children and youth; and help youth transition to productive adulthood. In 2009, Oakland voters reauthorized the Oakland Children’s Fund (known as the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, or OFCY) for the next 12 years (2009–2021) through Measure D, which required the City of Oakland to designate 3 percent of its unrestricted general fund to continue these efforts.

OFCY makes grant awards to community-based organizations (CBOs) and public agencies to deliver programming and services for children, youth, and families. Over the last two decades, OFCY has distributed over \$200 million in funding and has become a key institution in the provision of high-quality, free or low-cost services for children and youth in Oakland. Continued funding has fostered a growing community of nonprofit providers that in turn have brought additional philanthropic and public dollars into the city to bolster the quality and reach of supportive services for children, youth, and their families. OFCY also works in collaboration with city departments and other public agencies, leveraging complementary efforts to address the needs of children and youth.

### The Planning and Oversight Committee

OFCY is led by the Planning and Oversight Committee (POC), a public body that is comprised of youth and adult residents of Oakland who have been



#### 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 21 years of age to become healthy, happy, educated, engaged, powerful, and loved community members.

appointed by their city councilmembers. The POC is responsible for developing and submitting a strategic investment plan to City Council every three years; soliciting funding applications and awarding grants to non-profit and public agencies to provide services; and reviewing the annual independent, third-party evaluation of OFCY programming and submitting the evaluation to City Council for adoption. As part of the 2019-2022 Strategic Investment Plan development, POC members supported and participated in community engagement events, reviewed information from stakeholder interviews, evaluation findings, and best practices research, and ultimately approved and submitted the Strategic Investment Plan to City Council.

## Guiding Values-based Investing

The strategic investment plan, developed by the POC every three years, defines key investment strategies and serves as the basis for the solicitation of proposals that will ultimately result in the grant awards totaling between \$17-18 million each year of the 2019-2022 cycle.<sup>1</sup> Annual investments reflect the investment plan's specific strategies as well as OFCY's guiding values, which are social and economic equity, child and youth development, and community and collaboration. Funding is directed to those communities that are most in need and most impacted by inequity; to providers and programming that operate from an asset-based youth development framework; and to partners that build on the resources in the greater Oakland community to serve and strengthen families.

### VALUE

### 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 towards youth with the greatest need.*

Creating equitable outcomes for individuals starts with addressing inequity at the earliest stages of life, with continued support as children develop into adults. OFCY overwhelmingly directs program funds for enrichment and support to schools, communities, and families most impacted by inequity. In the 2016–2017 program year, OFCY served over 32,000 youth at over 400 program sites.<sup>2</sup> Funding reached primarily children and youth of color living in Oakland's least-resourced neighborhoods.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2020, OFCY's charter will be up for reauthorization, which may introduce changes to allocations mid-funding cycle.

<sup>2</sup> **Note:** This reflects the total number of children and youth served, based on enrollment reports from each program. Children and youth may participate in more than one program and thus may be counted more than once.

In addition to prioritizing programming and services in high-stress neighborhoods and schools, OFCY places an additional focus on populations within those communities who are most vulnerable, including youth experiencing homelessness, children and youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth (including unaccompanied minors), LGBTQ youth, commercially sexually exploited minors, children with disabilities, foster youth, and opportunity youth (youth ages 16-21 not enrolled in school or employed).

## VALUE

### CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

*We support efforts to promote the social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual development of children and to instill individual and community pride and leadership.*

Over the last two decades, OFCY has invested in and supported the adoption of asset-based, positive youth development (PYD) as a paradigm for engaging Oakland's youth. The concept of positive youth development was developed as a prevention strategy for averting negative experiences such as youth violence, crime, and gang involvement, and has since been adopted by communities all over the country as means of not just reducing negative outcomes but actively investing in positive ones. This commitment communicates a core OFCY value that youth are an asset to their community and that it is critical to invest in them, give them the skills they need to thrive, and that this, in turn, will pay dividends in the greater Oakland community.

In addition to emphasizing a positive youth development approach to supporting children and youth, OFCY is deeply invested in supporting the youngest Oaklanders (and their families) from birth through five years old. The earliest years of childhood, from prenatal to three years old, are the most critical for brain development. Adverse early childhood experiences have a direct effect on outcomes for children. By supporting efforts to foster safe, nurturing, and enriching early childhood experiences and improving outcomes for parents, caregivers, and families within communities, Oakland can achieve better outcomes for young children.

## VALUE

### 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. 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.*

OFCY recognizes that for programming to be effective it must work in the context of the community and the whole family. OFCY supports programming for parents and caregivers as key participants in promoting the healthy development of children, and recognizes that their involvement in programs for children and youth are key to their success. Programs engage not just children and youth, but also provide support systems and opportunities for parents and caregivers. It is through strong families that strong communities can thrive, providing a positive and supportive environment for children to grow up in Oakland.

As a key City of Oakland funding investment supporting children, youth, and families, OFCY is active in working within a network of partner institutions and initiatives across the city and county to advance shared outcomes including kindergarten readiness, improved literacy and numeracy, increased graduation rates, postsecondary articulation, and youth employment, and to reduce incidents of violence and recidivism.

**To provide this safe, enriching, and empowering programming for children, youth and their families, OFCY works in partnership with a host of institutions, including:**

- Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)
- Oakland Head Start
- Oakland Unite/City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention
- Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Initiative (OSSSI)
- First Five of Alameda County
- Oakland Summer Learning Network
- Oakland Literacy Coalition
- Oakland Promise
- Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority
- Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund
- City of Oakland Human Services Division / Oakland ReCAST
- Oakland Workforce Development Board

## NEEDS STATEMENT

When communities are disproportionately affected by racism and urban poverty, the resultant stress is linked to disparate health, educational, and social-economic outcomes for children and adults. OFCY's mission to strategically fund services and programming for children and youth is intentionally directed towards communities and families most in need. As part of the strategic planning process, OFCY reviews a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data to help determine funding priorities.



<sup>3</sup> OFCY's three Oakland Demographic Profiles can be found at: [www.ofcy.org/about-us/strategic-plan/](http://www.ofcy.org/about-us/strategic-plan/)

<sup>4</sup> For this strategic plan, OFCY reviewed data provided by the Oakland Unified School District, the Oakland Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority, and the City of Oakland Department of Race and Equity. OUSD's Public Dashboards can be found at: <http://www.ousddata.org/public-dashboards.html> and The Oakland Office of Race and Equity's Oakland Equity Indicators Report can be found at: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/documents/2018-oakland-equity-indicators-report>.

An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data confirmed disparities in outcomes across neighborhoods and racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups. For instance, black families are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to face unemployment, violence, and poverty.<sup>1</sup> The recent *Equity Indicators Report* from the City of Oakland's Department of Race and Equity cited that over a quarter of all African Americans and over one in five Latinos in Oakland are living at or below the poverty line. African American students and Latino students are also much more likely to be chronically absent from school—an important indicator of future persistence in education—and less likely to graduate from high school in four years than their white and Asian counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

Neighborhoods and schools in East and West Oakland consistently experience higher levels of environmental stress. Communities facing the cumulative effects of poverty and high levels of environmental stress continue to be the priority population for OFCY programming. More specifically, stakeholders confirmed the continued vulnerability and priority of many of OFCY's priority populations such as children and youth of color, LGBTQ youth, foster youth, and youth with disabilities. In the 2019-2022 planning process, stakeholders particularly emphasized:

- **Immigrant youth, refugees, and unaccompanied minors** face a number of challenges in joining and thriving in the Oakland community. Beyond the standard challenges of newcomers such as language acquisition and adjusting to a new community, stakeholders conveyed a growing sense of fear and distrust in newcomer communities. Immigrants and refugees feel targeted by hate speech, toxic national politics, and expressed concern over incidents of violence, intimidation, and discrimination both locally and nationally.
- **Youth and families experiencing homelessness:** Homelessness is difficult to measure accurately, but providers and partners all confirm the data from the 2017 Alameda County point-in-time count showing a 26% increase in homelessness in Oakland compared to 2015 and described an increasingly unstable and uncertain housing market for Oakland's lower income families. OUSD reported over 800 homeless youth in the 2017-2018 school year, half of which were unaccompanied youth and newcomers.<sup>3</sup> Youth experiencing homelessness are at a far greater risk for negative health, safety, and educational outcomes. In addition to homelessness, providers and partners described a general housing instability for families; between 2011 and 2017 average rents doubled and many families have been forced to move.

- **Commercially-Sexually Exploited Youth:** From 2011-2016 the Oakland Police Department rescued 273 children involved in human trafficking. Alameda County is considered a hotspot for human trafficking cases with 46% of all prosecuted human trafficking cases in California since 2011 originating in the Alameda District Attorney's office.<sup>4</sup> Stakeholders working with children and youth raised particular concern about this very vulnerable population.
- **Disconnected/opportunity youth:** Disconnected/opportunity youth are youth between the ages of 16 and 21 that are out of work and out of school. These youth often face difficulty in successfully connecting to work, postsecondary training, and ultimately self-sufficiency. In Oakland, one in ten youth are neither working or in school (10.3%). African American youth are the most likely to be disconnected (14.8%), followed closely by Latino youth (13.2%).

In the 2019-2022 funding cycle, OFCY will prioritize funding for programming that serves these key populations.

## SHARED GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As a unique City of Oakland investment, OFCY's funding has impact through the direct services provided by nonprofit providers and through strategic alignment with other system and funding initiatives working toward community-wide goals for the well-being of Oakland's children. These goals include that families are supported in their children's health and development; children are able to attend quality preschool and are ready for kindergarten; school-aged children have safe places to go after school and in the summer for expanded learning and enrichment; youth experience positive outcomes and benefit from positive youth development programming and reduced risk of exposure to violence; and that older youth are supported in their goals for learning, including high school graduation and progress toward postsecondary education, and have opportunities for career exposure and employment in the transition to adulthood.

In 2016, the Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority (JPA) presented an analysis of the collaborative landscape in Oakland which identified 31 collaborations supporting improved outcomes for Oakland's children, youth, and families in the areas of health, wealth, education, safety, and housing.<sup>5</sup> OFCY's strategic initiatives frequently intersect these collaborative efforts by focusing resources on the social and emotional well-being of children and youth; creating safe spaces for children, youth and families; funding more programming to support youth's healing, learning, enrichment, leadership development and employment opportunities; and by strengthening communities through building provider capacity to deliver services that affirm the cultures, worth and dignity of all children, youth, and families in Oakland.

OFCY funding addresses these goals from within an equity framework aligned with system partners and key stakeholders through a process of community engagement that supports the overall vision that all children and youth will thrive.

- ↑ kindergarten readiness
- ↑ school attendance
- ↑ 3rd grade literacy
- ↑ opportunities for youth development, learning, and enrichment
- ↑ high school graduation
- ↓ juvenile arrest rate
- ↑ youth summer employment
- ↑ youth employment particularly for opportunity youth

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<sup>5</sup> Selected shared indicators from Youth Ventures, Joint Powers Authority *Update on the Oakland Citywide Dashboard, August 8, 2018* are highlighted in the green box.

# DEVELOPING THE 2019-2022 STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN

Strategic planning began in fall 2017 and continued through spring 2018, and included outreach to community stakeholders, examination of citywide data on demographics, consideration of school quality and outcomes for children and youth, and a review of the results and findings from the OFCY evaluation. Information gathered through the process was then used to develop strategies.

## Community Engagement Process

OFCY engaged youth, parents, community members, partners, and service providers to learn about the needs and priorities of Oakland's children, youth, and families. Partners provided key insights into how OFCY funding supports and aligns with other city and county initiatives. Providers, parents, and youth shared information about priority services, concerns, and their vision for Oakland.

Stakeholders were engaged through:

- **Five community meetings held across the city.** OFCY hosted community events in partnership with the Oakland Youth Advisory Council at the United Roots – Youth Impact Hub, the Tassafaronga Recreational Center, the Cesar E. Chavez Branch Library, the West Oakland Branch Library, and Oakland City Hall. Community engagement events took on a range of topics from services for early childhood, to youth empowerment and leadership priorities, to economic equity. In total, 142 community members attended community engagement events to provide input on the 2019-2022 Strategic Investment Plan.
- **Interviews with key partners in the public and nonprofit sectors.** OFCY consultants, Social Policy Research Associates, and Communities in Collaboration interviewed over 25 partners and civic leaders to learn about their priorities and how OFCY investments could continue to align with, complement, and leverage other activities and initiatives in Oakland. Representatives from Oakland City Council also participated in interviews.
- **Three focus groups with service providers.** Providers from the early childhood, afterschool, and youth workforce community provided feedback on OFCY programming strategies and on the challenges encountered by providers as they seek to offer high quality, free or low-cost services to Oakland's children, youth, and families.
- **The OFCY Community Input Survey.** OFCY hosted an online community engagement survey (in English and Spanish) on its website for 5 weeks in April and May of 2018. This survey was designed to solicit community input on OFCY's strategies for serving children, youth, and families and to learn what the community perceived as the most pressing issues and effective solutions. In total, 31 individuals – youth, parents, and providers – completed the survey.

Across the engagement process, key themes emerged that informed the 2019–2022 investment strategies.

### Themes from the Community Engagement Process

**What OFCY does is important!** There is broad and deep support for OFCY's current strategies from the community and key stakeholders. There is consensus around the need for continued investment in parent support programs, after school programs, youth development and arts programs, and programming to help youth gain employment experience.

**Oakland residents care.** Residents love Oakland and want to be involved in the decision-making process and advocacy for children, youth, and families. Providing space and opportunities for youth and parents to play a strong role in the design and delivery of services and programming is important, and it is also a key aspect of the positive youth development framework.

**There is no shortage of need.** There is still a strong need for programming for children, youth, and families across Oakland. Social and economic inequities continue to highlight this need across many demographic groups.

**The rising cost of living is a challenge for families and providers.** Rising costs for housing, transportation, and services puts stress on children, youth, and their families. Service providers are also affected by the rising cost of living in Oakland. CBOs need more resources to maintain operations in the city and to retain quality staff through competitive salaries.

**Changing demographics impact neighborhood-based services.** There is a declining African American population in Oakland and an increase in Latino, immigrant, refugee, and White residents. Changing populations require the public and nonprofit sector to adapt and provide culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate services to new populations while maintaining services for long-term residents who are experiencing inequities, disparities, and displacement.

**Partnership and alignment are key.** It is important for partners to move towards greater collective impact around shared population-level outcomes. OFCY aligns its work with other key public agencies such as the Office of Violence Prevention, City of Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development, the Oakland Workforce Development Board, First 5 Alameda County, and OUSD.

**Safe and supportive environments must be provided.** Stakeholders appreciate that OFCY funds programs that allow working parents to feel confident that their children are engaged in learning and enriching activities, and that they have opportunities to experience new things in safe and supportive environments.

## Lessons from OFCY's Evaluations

Some key findings from the evaluations of programs in the 2016-2019 funding cycle<sup>6</sup> affirm themes that emerged from the community engagement process and helped to inform the development of the goals and strategies of the strategic plan. These findings include:

- **Programming is reaching priority populations.** Participants were primarily children, youth, and families of color living in OFCY's priority zip codes – with the majority coming from East Oakland. 75% of children and youth served were Latino or African American. OFCY also supports a variety of population-specific programs that successfully engage harder-to-reach populations, such as LGBTQ youth, immigrant and refugee populations, homeless youth, and boys and young men of color.
- **Programming is high quality.** Overall, survey results from participants and staff were very positive, particularly for programs that served smaller numbers of youth.
- **Parents, caregivers, and youth are better off.** Parents and caregivers reported gains in knowledge of child development after participating in programming aimed at parent and caregiver support. Youth across all ages that participated in programs reported high levels of skills mastery, confidence, and connections to peers and adults. School-based afterschool participants had better attendance than their non-participant peers.

These key findings resonate with themes surfaced through the community engagement process, reinforcing OFCY's role in providing vital services to Oakland's youth. Community engagement and evaluation interviews with program directors also underscored one of OFCY's most important functions: providing enriching experiences to participants who might not otherwise have access. OFCY supports the creation of safe, supportive environments where youth can break out of their comfort zone and try something new.

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<sup>6</sup> OFCY contracts with third-party evaluators to conduct an annual evaluation of its programs. In 2016-2017, Social Policy Research Associates conducted the evaluation of all OFCY funding strategies and supported programs with the exception of the school-based after school strategy and programs, which was conducted by Public Profit. The evaluations produce comprehensive annual reports, which are approved by the POC in the fall and subsequently adopted by the Oakland City Council.

# 2019-2022 STRATEGIES

The 2019-2022 funding strategies are built on OFCY’s long history of supporting key services in the community and also reflect current concerns and realities for Oakland’s children and youth. Themes from the stakeholder engagement effort underscore the importance of creating and maintaining safe spaces for children and youth to learn, play, explore, and grow, alongside a pressing need to support families, youth, and providers as the cost of living exceeds the capacity of many of Oakland’s residents, exacerbating inequities experienced by its diverse communities. The following strategies were developed based on input gathered during the community engagement process, research that supports these strategies as important interventions, and OFCY’s own evaluation of its programming and providers. During the 2019-2022 funding cycle, OFCY will continue to work with its partners and the provider community to offer high quality, low- or no-cost programming and services to the people of Oakland. OFCY anticipates an increase in grant funding annually to \$17 - \$18 million for 2019-2020. Estimated funding is approximate for the strategy areas.

## The 2019-2022 OFCY Funding Strategies and Approximate Allocations

STRATEGY	APPROX. ALLOCATION
1. Parent Engagement and Support	18-20%
2. Family Resource Centers	
3. Socioemotional Well-Being in Preschool and Early Childhood Education Settings	
4. Comprehensive Afterschool Programs	34-36%
5. Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students	
6. Summer Programming	25-27%
7. Youth Development and Leadership	
8. High School and Postsecondary Student Success	20-22%
9. Career Awareness and Employment Support	
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED GRANT FUNDING (FY2019-2020)</b>	<b>\$17M-\$18M</b>

## Parent Engagement and Support

1.

This strategy creates and expands programs to strengthen the capacity of parents and caregivers to support the healthy development of their children through services offered in community-based settings and is aligned with the family engagement initiatives of Head Start, First 5 of Alameda County, OUSD, Alameda County and community organizations across Oakland.

### Supported programming

Family engagement activities that promote attachment and positive parent-child interactions, and family supports that are linguistically and culturally competent. Activities will include:

- Playgroups, parent-child activities, and early literacy efforts
- Workshops and parent engagement services, parent leadership and community engagement opportunities
- Home visits, peer connection, and family supportive services such as navigation of community resources

### Intended impact

Supported programming will help parents and caregivers through:

- Increasing knowledge of child development
- Improving skills to support academic and socioemotional development
- Increasing family involvement
- Increasing confidence in managing children's behavior
- Increasing access to resources and support

### Priority populations

Parents and caregivers with young children, birth to age 8. Prioritization for low-income families, parents of color, immigrants, and refugees, and for services in neighborhoods with higher percentages of children and families—especially families with children living in poverty.

### Rationale

Extensive research underscores the importance of quality early childhood programming and the inclusion of parents and caregivers. Increasing access to programs that strengthen parents' and caregivers' social support and promote opportunities for positive parent-child interactions can have a significant positive impact on children's developmental and health outcomes.<sup>5,6</sup> Quality child-focused programming provides young children opportunities to develop socioemotional and cognitive skills and prepares them for school readiness and later success in life.<sup>7,8</sup>

Community members emphasized the need for safe spaces and quality family support services, especially in high-need neighborhoods and communities. In partnership with First 5 Alameda County, Head Start and Early Head Start, OUSD Early Learning, and philanthropic organizations, OFCY is working to build a strong network across Oakland that provides family support services in high-need neighborhoods.

2.

## Family Resource Centers (FRCs)

This strategy invests in creating and expanding access to Family Resource Centers (FRCs). FRCs are welcoming centers in the community that offer comprehensive services and a range of activities and opportunities to meet the needs of families where they live to support the healthy development and learning of young children. This strategy builds on the existing parent and family engagement programming by funding general operating support for FRCs. It is aligned with the increased investment in neighborhood-based programming and philanthropic support to coordinate and strengthen the network of FRCs in Oakland.

### Supported programming

Neighborhood-based FRC funding will support operating expenses and comprehensive programming in support of children and families. Services offered at FRCs can range and may include: early childhood playgroups; food and clothing assistance; healthcare benefits assistance; health and wellness workshops; developmental screenings for children; parent and caregiver workshops; parent leadership and engagement opportunities; computer access; literacy workshops; legal rights assistance services and classes; navigation of community services for families, case management and linkages to resources; and culturally and linguistically responsive services in the neighborhood and larger community.

### Intended impact

Programming will help parents and caregivers through:

- Increasing access to resources and support
- Increasing knowledge of child development
- Improving skills to support academic and socioemotional development
- Increasing family involvement
- Increasing parent leadership
- Increasing access to mental health and trauma-informed care support services
- Increasing confidence in managing children's behavior
- Increasing the percentage of young children who are ready for kindergarten success

### Priority populations

Parents and caregivers with young children, birth to age 8. Prioritization of low-income families, parents of color, immigrants, and refugees, as well as services in neighborhoods with higher percentages of children and families—especially families with children living in poverty—but which lack early childhood and family services and supports, particularly in East Oakland.

## Rationale

FRC expansion is rooted in *The Center for the Study for Social Policy's Protective Factors Framework*: parental resilience, social connection, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children. OFCY's experience in supporting school- and community-based FRC programming as well as past investments in organizations that build supports for families demonstrates the importance of fostering social connections between families and the community and helping families navigate systems of care. Community input has underscored the importance of family supportive services to bolster the healthy development of children and to sustain these crucial programs. OFCY is supporting FRC expansion to grow the network of centers that provide these critical services and to meet the diverse needs of families in Oakland, particularly in high-need neighborhoods and communities.

Stakeholders increasingly link children's developmental outcomes and school readiness with a place-based approach to building family and community resilience and resources. OUSD has incorporated the EDI (Early Development Instrument) assessment of child development outcomes and kindergarten readiness and map the findings by census tract to identify early learning opportunities and neighborhood conditions. This strategy aligns strongly with several partner initiatives, including the Oakland FRC Initiative's Conceptual Framework developed by the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Initiative, new funding for neighborhood-based programming for early childhood hubs supported by First 5 of Alameda County through the Neighborhood Ready for School Initiative, as well as school-based FRC programming supported by OUSD, OFCY and Alameda County.

3.

## Social and Emotional Well-Being in Preschool and Early Childhood Education Settings

This strategy connects consultants who are early childhood mental health professionals with early childhood education settings to build the capacity of teachers and families to promote the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children. Early childhood education consultants support preschool teachers on how to work with children who have high needs, respond appropriately to behavioral issues, and prevent, identify, and reduce the impact of trauma affecting mental health and developmental challenges among young children. Consultants are trained in trauma-informed and culturally competent approaches to partner with family members and caregivers. They work with families to develop family-centered strategies to support the socio-emotional development of children. Partnering with OUSD Early Childhood Education and Oakland Head Start Child Development Centers, this strategy promotes quality preschool and early learning and supports children's readiness for kindergarten.

### Supported programming

- Consultations between early childhood educators and mental health professionals that address attitudes, beliefs, practices, and conditions and promote the effective integration of trauma-informed practices within early childhood settings.
- Development of individualized plans for children with early childhood educators and parents or caregivers. Planning will include how to support the child in group settings and will aim to strengthen the capacity of parents and early childhood educators to support children's socioemotional development.
- Linkages to community resources for special needs, mental health services, and individual therapy or treatment for young children.
- Workshops, social groups, and linkages to educational resources for parents to help them understand developmental milestones and child behavior.

### Intended Impact

Programming will help parents, caregivers and early childhood educators through:

- Increasing access to resources and support
- Increasing knowledge of child development
- Improving skills to support academic and socioemotional development
- Increasing access to mental health and trauma-informed care support services
- Increasing confidence in managing children's behavior

## Priority populations

Young children (ages 3-5), their families and caregivers, and early childhood educators at OUSD Child Development Centers and Head Start sites.

## Rationale

Consultants are in a unique position to support the important relationships between parents/caregivers, educators, and young children by working with caregivers to understand child development, promote practices that strengthen families, and link families to the best resources for children. The most recent evaluation of OFCY highlighted that most educators found that the consultations with professionals gave them a better understanding of children's behavior at different ages and stages and helped them better interact with parents and caregivers. Providers have noted that preschool teachers need and appreciate professional development to enhance and reinforce their skills.

This strategy aligns with early childhood education programs in Oakland, primarily Oakland Head Start and OUSD, and also with the Oakland ReCAST program<sup>7</sup> supporting trauma-informed practices in programs and settings serving children.

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<sup>7</sup> In 2016 the City of Oakland Human Services Department was awarded a \$5 million grant by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) grant seeks to promote resiliency and equity for Oakland's high-risk youth, families, and adults most affected by trauma, violence, and civil unrest.

4.

## Comprehensive Afterschool Programs

This strategy funds a lead agency to coordinate comprehensive afterschool academic and enrichment activities at Oakland public school sites, which will serve as a single-point-of-access to programming for students in grades K-8. Investments complement state After School Education & Safety Program (ASES) and federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding for school-based afterschool programming and provide local funding to support high-quality and enriching programming at no or low cost. Afterschool funding will specifically support low income families by providing safe and beneficial, low- or no-cost opportunities for their children. The strategy will support programming at schools where a majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch rates. OFCY also aims to provide funding support to address program capacity at sites with high need and demand for afterschool services.

The lead agency will coordinate the afterschool programming at each school site, including working with subcontractors to provide additional enrichment, academic, or supportive programming to students at the school. The lead agency will work in partnership with the school site leadership, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) After School Programs Office, and OFCY to best support students. This strategy emphasizes the strong partnership between OUSD's Community Schools and Student Services Department and OFCY around providing comprehensive academic and enrichment opportunities to youth in Oakland's public elementary and middle schools that serve a majority of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch to increase positive youth development and educational outcomes. Afterschool programming at Oakland public charter school sites that receive ASES funding is also supported through this strategy.

### Supported programming

Programming should address the specific needs of children and youth at their age and stage, including providing increased leadership opportunities and diverse programming for students in later grades to develop their strengths and interests. Supported programming includes:

- Enrichment programming, such as music and arts, health and wellness, science and technology, and sports and recreation
- Academic and literacy support
- Youth development and leadership opportunities for positive youth engagement

### Intended Impact

Programming will support children and youth by:

- Improving school-day attendance
- Reducing rates of chronic absenteeism
- Improving sense of school connectedness
- Increasing caring relationships with peers and adults
- Providing expanded access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment

## Priority populations

Students in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, attending Oakland public elementary and middle schools where more than half of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

## Rationale

Participation in afterschool programs is linked to better academic outcomes and school persistence, as it gives students an opportunity to receive extra academic support and interact with caring adults in a stimulating environment after the school day has finished. A large body of evidence shows that afterschool programs can help children and youth develop an attachment to school, strengthen academic achievement, improve attendance, and prevent juvenile crime.<sup>9,10</sup> Community and stakeholder input also emphasized the importance of opportunities for enrichment and learning afterschool, and also cited safety as a key reason they appreciate afterschool programs, particularly in communities where students may experience more trauma and high stress.

5.

## Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students

This strategy supports the academic achievement of elementary and middle school students through literacy and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programming. Programming will specifically address student attachment to school, school-day attendance, and improved literacy and numeracy outcomes. While the strategy addresses disparities in academic outcomes, programming will be delivered through an asset-based, positive youth development approach that provides students with interesting and enriching activities in a safe and supportive environment. Programming that is delivered at school sites during afterschool hours will be coordinated with the lead agency providing comprehensive afterschool programming at the site.

### Supported programming

Programs designed to improve attendance, school connectedness, and academic performance (literacy and numeracy). Programs can be delivered at community-based locations or school sites and should engage elementary and middle school students, along with their parents or caregivers as appropriate, in any or all of the following:

- Addressing attendance-related issues, such as chronic absences and/or suspensions.
- Offering programming to enhance and boost literacy or numeracy.
- Offering STEM programming intended to inspire creativity, problem solving, experimentation and interest in STEM fields.

### Intended Impact

Programming will support children and youth by:

- Improving school-day attendance
- Reducing rates of chronic absenteeism
- Improving sense of school connectedness
- Improving grade-level literacy rates
- Improving grade-level numeracy rates

### Priority populations

Programs working with K-8 students who attend schools that are in East Oakland, Fruitvale, and West Oakland and that have high demonstrated need and high levels of school environmental stress, as well as programs that address improvement in attendance outcomes.

## Rationale

This strategy aims to help elementary and middle school students engage and thrive in school. To benefit from school-day and school-site programming, students first need to attend school regularly, and by addressing chronic absenteeism, programming can help improve reading, math, and graduation outcomes.<sup>11</sup> Both attendance and reading at grade level at the end of third grade are strong predictors of school success, persistence, and graduation, and hands-on STEM programming has been shown to help students build problem-solving skills and confidence and increase their likelihood to pursue STEM coursework later on in school.<sup>12,13,14</sup> The strategy directly supports key priorities of OUSD, the Oakland Reads 2020 Campaign and the Oakland Literacy Coalition, and the Oakland Joint Powers Authority (JPA).

## 6.

## Summer Programming

This strategy supports high quality summer programming and directs funding to school- and community-based programs with an asset-based youth development approach to promoting learning and peer and social connection. During summer months, programming will provide opportunities for enrichment, exploration, and new experiences that build confidence, self-esteem, and other important life skills in a safe and supportive environment.

### Supported programming

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

### Intended Impact

Supports children and youth in the summer months with the intention of:

- Retaining academic skills and knowledge
- Increasing caring relationships with peers and adults
- Increasing access for low-income children and youth to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
- Expanding access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment
- Improving youth activity levels, fitness, and overall physical wellness

### Priority populations

Children and youth (ages 5–14) in Oakland. Prioritization for children and youth of color as well as low-income youth, and for programming in East Oakland, Fruitvale, and West Oakland.

### Rationale

By supporting summer programming, OFCY provides youth enrichment opportunities to promote year-round learning through activities and new experiences for children and youth. The strategy builds on the large body of research showing the beneficial effects of summer programming on children and youth. Quality opportunities for expanded learning can offset summer learning loss, leading to improved behavior, attendance, and academic performance.<sup>15</sup> In addition, research shows that summer programs can help youth build resilience and positive social skills.<sup>16</sup> Enrichment

activities offer opportunities for children and youth to form positive relationships with caring adults, promote positive social interaction, and build conflict resolution skills to prevent engagement in violence.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the years, OFCY has consistently supported quality enrichment programming for Oakland's children and youth during summer months and is one of the primary funders of such programs in Oakland. Community input has underscored the importance of supporting high-quality, free or low-cost summer programming opportunities for youth in Oakland, especially in neighborhoods that have gaps in services and particularly for opportunity youth. This strategy also supports families by offering parents a safe and enriching option for their children during the summer.

7.

## Youth Development and Leadership

This strategy supports youth development and leadership programming that takes place year-round, during the school year, and in summer. Funding will support activities that encourage youth to develop leadership skills, engage in their communities, participate in arts programming to support personal and cultural identity and growth, and participate in enrichment activities including sports, technology, nature exploration, and other activities that build on youth's strengths to build positive peer and adult relationships and develop problem-solving skills. This strategy supports programming that is based in the community at neighborhood sites and provides a safe and supportive environment for children and youth after school and during summer months.

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

- Arts, music, and recreation enrichment programs that provide youth with opportunities to explore personal and cultural identity through arts, literature, or other forms of expression, sports, gender-specific or cultural programming, and to build their socioemotional, cultural, physical, and cognitive skills.
- Population-specific programming that is culturally relevant, asset-based, trauma-informed, and provides social, emotional, and physical support for vulnerable populations such as LGBTQ youth, children and youth of color, immigrants and refugee youth, and youth experiencing homelessness or other populations facing disparate health, academic, and social outcomes. Through the delivery of comprehensive services and supports to young people, programming will provide positive youth development, empowerment opportunities, and family support.
- Youth and peer leadership programming that provides youth with leadership skills and experiences such as peer mentoring, community advocacy, or other opportunities to practice leadership and hold roles of responsibility. Investments will focus on programming that includes youth in program design and delivery, empowering them to experience leadership that can boost their self-efficacy, educational achievements, and sense of community.

### Intended Impact

Programming supports children and youth by:

- Increasing caring relationships with peers and adults
- Increasing opportunities for leadership and connection to community
- Increasing access for low-income children and youth to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
- Expanding access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment

- Improving youth activity levels, fitness, and overall physical wellness
- Increasing the number of safe, supported spaces for vulnerable, high priority youth populations

### Priority populations

Children and youth (ages 5–20) in Oakland. Prioritization for children and youth of color and low-income youth, and for programming in East Oakland, Fruitvale, and West Oakland, as well as for priority populations including youth experiencing homelessness, foster youth, commercially sexually exploited minors, LGBTQ and immigrant youth and other vulnerable groups.

### Rationale

The strategy is responsive to community feedback that giving youth access to new opportunities to grow, connect, explore, and build their skills and dreams is fundamental to helping youth prepare for their futures. In their feedback, parents emphasized the importance of programming that provides opportunities for children to develop leadership skills and make meaningful contributions to the community. By providing low- or no-cost access to arts, leadership, and other enriching programming for children and youth, this strategy creates access for those who might not otherwise be able to participate. Programming also provides safe spaces for children and youth when they are not in school and helps them forge connections with caring adults who are not family members. By providing safe spaces for out-of-school time enrichment activities, this strategy will support not just children or youth but also their families. Moreover, these programs support positive asset building and resiliency, which have been shown to reduce engagement in risky behaviors and strengthen protective factors in youth.<sup>18</sup> Participation in out-of-school enrichment activities can increase motivation and have positive impacts on school performance.<sup>19,20</sup>

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

8.

## High School and Postsecondary Student Success

This strategy supports high school and postsecondary student success and persistence by funding school and community-based programming designed to support achievements in learning, increase youth attachment to school, and facilitate older youth transitions into high school and postsecondary education. It directs funding to culturally responsive strategies that address the needs of older youth by helping to strengthen their skills to support their academic success and well-being.

### Supported programming

- High school success programming that provides peer leadership, mentoring, community building, and other academic and social supports to engage youth in school.
- Transition programming that focuses on students moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9, with the goal of improving incoming high school students' connections to their new school through early and targeted interventions, case management, and engagement in social, enrichment, and academic programming.
- Postsecondary access and success programming that provides college and postsecondary preparation, such as college application support, course enrollment and advising, and financial planning assistance; as well as persistence support such as college remediation courses, academic planning, mentoring, and other supportive services.
- Conflict resolution and restorative justice programming that works to address and reduce student conflict, provide life coaching and case management, connect youth with service learning opportunities, offer healing circles and healing centered approaches to conflict, build community organizing skills of youth, and advance positive school culture and community. Note: Conflict resolution and restorative justice programming is not restricted to high school environments and may be offered in middle schools as well.

### Intended Impact

Supports older youth transition to adulthood by:

- Increasing supports for youth in high school and in transition to high school
- Increasing access to programming that supports college readiness and post-high school planning
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Improving postsecondary matriculation and persistence

## Priority populations

Oakland youth, ages 14–21. Prioritization for youth of color and for programming in East Oakland, Fruitvale, West Oakland, and at school sites with high levels of environmental stress.

## Rationale

Oakland's high school graduation rate has steadily improved over the past 10 years but remains approximately 20% lower than county and state rates, with persistent disparities by race and ethnicity.<sup>21</sup> Community feedback has highlighted the effectiveness of and need for programming that supports youth to be engaged in high school, be connected to their school, and receive support and assistance to not only graduate high school but also attend, persist, and succeed in college and/or other postsecondary training. This is critical in ensuring the future success of Oakland's youth; high school graduates earn more than high school dropouts, have better health outcomes, including a longer life expectancy, and are less likely to engage in criminal behavior.<sup>22,23,24,25</sup> Youth who engage in high school persistence and college readiness programming attend school more frequently, have higher grade-point averages, enroll in and attend four-year colleges at higher rates, and have fewer disciplinary issues than peers who do not participate.<sup>26,27,28</sup> This strategy aligns and supports the goals of OUSD, Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority, and the efforts of Oakland Promise.

9.

## Career Awareness and Employment Support

This strategy supports career awareness and employment support for older youth. Through career exploration, work readiness training, and employment opportunities, programming will provide youth with on-the-job experience, skill-building supports, and exposure to career options and pathways. This strategy will support both year-round and summer programs for students in school and for opportunity youth not connected to school or employment.

### Supported programming

- Programs for youth enrolled in high school that provide youth with career exposure, internship opportunities, and/or work experience during the school year and in summer months. Programming that focuses on helping youth learn about various occupations and industry sectors as well as acquire real, on-the-job experience as a means of encouraging and motivating students to complete high school and pursue postsecondary training.
- Programming for opportunity youth ages 16-21 who are not in school and not employed that offers comprehensive, supported work experiences for youth who face high barriers to self-sufficiency. Programming that includes employment experience along with support for academic achievement and wraparound supportive services.
- Summer work experiences that provide short-term, paid summer employment opportunities for youth in coordination with Earn & Learn, the Oakland Workforce Development Board's Mayor's Summer Jobs Program. Earn & Learn placements will provide youth with a supported work experience which encompasses on-the-job experience as well as job readiness training, ongoing case management support, and financial literacy training.
- The strategy will support programs that incorporate financial literacy and financial access into their program design.

### Intended Impact

Supports older youth transition to adulthood by:

- Increasing awareness of job and career options
- Improving access and connection to internships and other work-experience opportunities that offer tangible work-skills and job readiness
- Increasing the number of youth who participate in the City's summer youth employment program
- Improving employment outcomes for opportunity youth
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Improving postsecondary matriculation and persistence

## Priority populations

Youth (ages 14–21) enrolled in school as well as opportunity youth, with priority for youth of color residing in East Oakland, Fruitvale, and West Oakland.

## Rationale

Programming that provides youth with career preparation and work experience is strongly supported by youth, parents, and community members. Work experience—both year-round and during the summer—offers youth a positive, productive activity during out-of-school time, builds critical socioemotional and problem-solving skills, and provides important monetary incentives in the form of wages and stipends. Research supports subsidized and supported employment as an effective intervention in improving later life employment and earnings. Linked Learning, also supported by this strategy, is a promising approach for increasing high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence.<sup>29,30</sup> OFCY's investment in youth workforce and career preparation is aligned with work in OUSD Linked Learning Department, the Oakland Workforce Development Board, Oakland Promise, Oakland UNITE, and the Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority.

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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 21 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. [www.ofcy.org](http://www.ofcy.org)

## **ABOUT SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

This plan was written by SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (SPR) is a small, employee-owned research, evaluation, and technical assistance firm, founded in 1991 and based in Oakland, California. SPR works nationally with clients in federal, county, and local government, foundations, non-profits and the private sector. Our team of professionals has in-depth expertise in a wide range of methodologies, intervention strategies, and fields. Visit us at [www.spra.com](http://www.spra.com).

## **ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN COLLABORATION COMUNIDADES EN COLABORACIÓN**

COMMUNITIES IN COLLABORATION (CIC) designed and facilitated the five community meetings that provided input into the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. CIC brings over three decades of collective experience conducting community-based participatory research, capacity building, and evaluation projects, as well as designing and leading stakeholder engagement with broad and diverse communities. CIC|CEC is an Oakland-based, women- and minority-owned firm. [www.communitiesincollaboration.com](http://www.communitiesincollaboration.com)

# APPENDIX

