



# Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Strategic Investment Plan

2022-2025

Prepared by:  
Hatchuel  
Tabernik &  
Associates



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary 2022-2025 OFCY Plan- Identifying Opportunities for Strategic Investment in Children &amp; Youth .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan Goals and Strategies.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Shared City-wide Goals for Children, Youth, and their Families.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<b>II. The 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan: Identifying Opportunities .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Community Engagement.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Key Themes and Guidance from Community Engagement. ....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Community Needs Assessment, Racial Equity Analysis and Evaluation Findings.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Key Findings from OFCY Evaluation Learning.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>OFCY Equity Framework for Strategic Investments.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>The Opportunity.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<b>III. 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Strategies for Investment: 2022-2025.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Healthy Development of Young Children .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Children’s Success in School.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Youth Development and Violence Prevention .....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Transitions to Adulthood.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Planning &amp; Oversight Committee Members.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (Staff of the Human Services Department).....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Bright Research Group.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<b>List of Acronyms.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Citation Endnotes.....</b>	<b>39</b>

# Executive Summary 2022-2025 OFCY Plan- Identifying Opportunities for Strategic Investment in Children & Youth

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) plays a critical role in creating opportunities for Oakland’s children and youth to thrive. OFCY partnerships and investments have strengthened the ecosystem of organizations that collectively work to meet the needs of Oakland children, youth and families. This plan identifies goals and strategies that will guide OFCY’s investments in the Oakland community over the next three years (2022- 2025). They are founded on OFCY’s vision, mission and guiding principles.

**Vision Statement**  
*All children and youth in Oakland will be supported by community to thrive – leading safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.*

**Mission Statement**  
*OFCY provides community-driven funding to heal trauma, advance equity, and elevate opportunity for Oakland’s children and youth from birth to age 21.*

**Guiding Principles**

- ◆ Child and Youth Development
- ◆ Racial, Social, and Economic Equity
- ◆ Collaboration
- ◆ Community

## Shared City-wide Goals for Children, Youth, and their Families

OFCY funding is intentionally leveraged with other public and philanthropic efforts to address the holistic needs of children and youth and to contribute toward shared city-wide goals for children, youth, and families. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Oakland community was challenged by profound health, economic, educational, and societal impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic with direct effect on the well-being of children and youth. Oakland’s City leadership also launched the Reimagining *Public Safety Task Force* to respond to the need for social justice and safety amid rising violence and calls for reinvestment in communities. These challenges are ongoing and inform the investments called for under this Strategic Investment Plan.

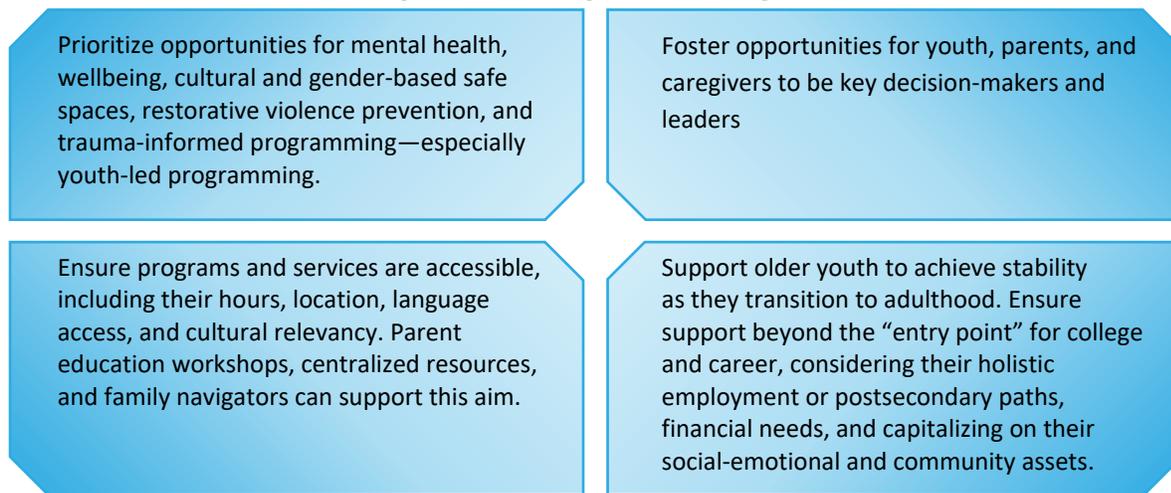
The OFCY Plan is aligned with an emerging collective focus on 1) literacy, strong readers by third grade; 2) youth mental health and well-being; 3) reducing the violence that threatens youth and adults; and 4) advancing community economic empowerment. This Plan supports direct funding to community organizations and alignment with other public systems, City departments, and community initiatives to accomplish citywide goals including readiness for kindergarten, high school graduation, access to postsecondary education/training, opportunities for and pathways to youth development and leadership.

**The OFCY Equity Framework:** Based on extensive community input, OFCY’s investments must be rooted in racial equity and designed to address racial and socioeconomic disparities in order to support the vision “*that all Oakland children and youth will be supported by community to thrive*”. OFCY’s 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan centers the needs of **Black/African American and Latinx youth and families**. OFCY’s investments will also support other youth of color and their families, including Asian Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and **children and youth in low-income families**. OFCY will focus on services for **East, Central, and West Oakland**. Given the dramatic disparities between different neighborhoods, investments should be directed to the neighborhoods and schools where youth live and attend. OFCY will prioritize funding for children, youth and families facing specific challenges and/or discrimination due to disconnection from school and work, engagement in foster care, homelessness, sexual exploitation or violence, LGBTQ youth, disabilities, and immigration. Black/African American children, youth, and families are disproportionately affected by almost all of these challenges.

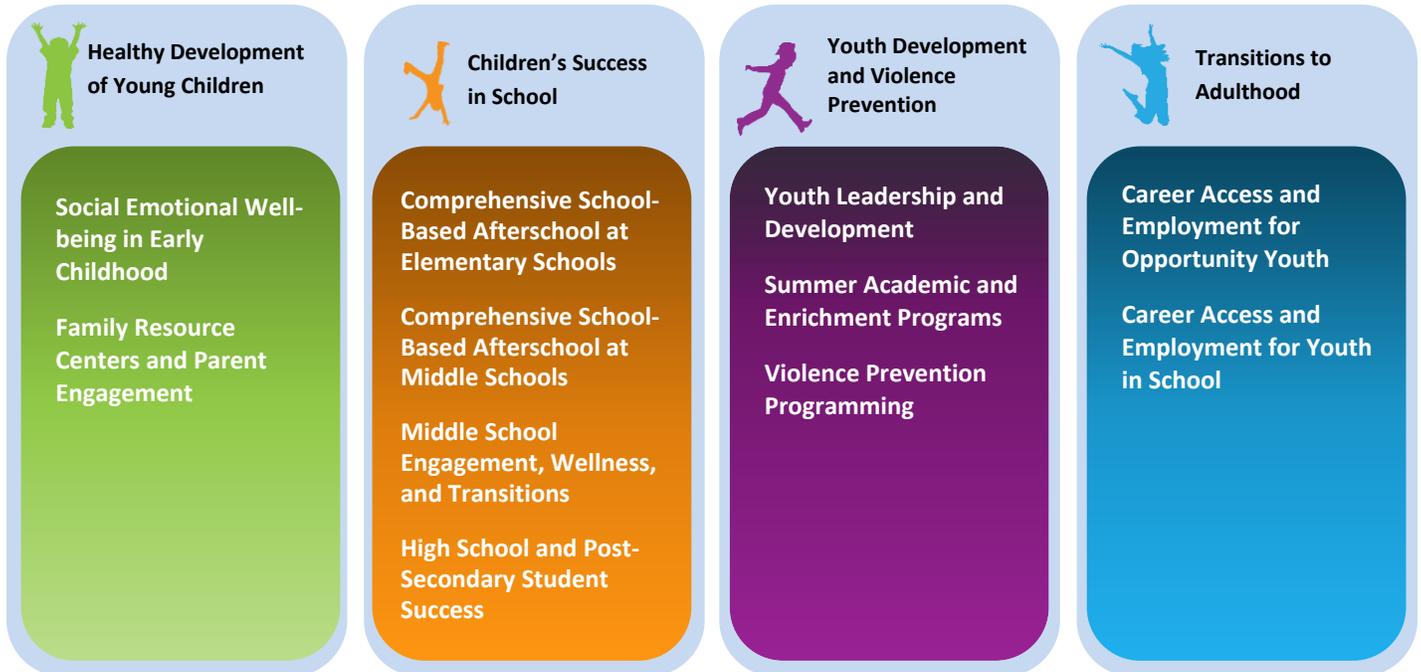
OFCY’s **Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis (CNA-REA)** assembled data from numerous sources into one document to present information on community indicators, disparities, and needs through a racial equity lens. OFCY’s independent evaluations provided additional insights based on the results of previous investments. The salient findings from the CNA-REA, past OFCY evaluations, and community voice call for stronger and more focused strategic investments.

The 2022-2025 OFCY priorities and strategies were informed and inspired by numerous community voices. OFCY engaged the community to gather input on needs and desires for programs and services, available resources, gaps, community strengths, and emerging opportunities. Youth, family members, and CBO partner staff shared their experiences, insights, and priorities for programming and services in Oakland. Key system leaders helped identify emerging opportunities for alignment and coordination.

### **Key Community Guidance for OFCY**



## 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan Goals and Strategies



- Social Emotional Well-being in Early Childhood:** to provide support for parents and caregivers to promote the healthy emotional and social development of young children. Activities may include wellness and mental health services, play and learn groups, parenting workshops, classroom supports, and mental health programming for young children and their parents/caregivers, as well as referrals to support services.
- Family Resource Centers and Parent Engagement:** to reach families across Oakland and increase their connection to support services. Services are designed to meet the unique needs and build upon the assets of the communities they serve. Activities may include in-home support; parenting workshops; resource navigation and referrals; economic supports; and other linguistically and culturally relevant family supports.
- Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Elementary Schools:** to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities after school at Oakland elementary school sites for students in grades K-5, through partnerships between OFCY, OUSD, and community-based organizations
- Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Middle Schools:** to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities after school at Oakland middle school sites for BIPOC students, through partnerships between OFCY, OUSD, and community-based organizations.
- Middle School Engagement, Wellness, and Transitions:** to enhance OFCY's investment in place-based middle school engagement by encouraging the field to develop culturally-competent programming that meets the unique needs of middle school students, particularly Black/African American students.
- High School and Post-Secondary Student Success:** to support student well-being and enhance access to supports for student transitions to college or postsecondary opportunities. This may include support for new Wellness Center initiatives at schools and culturally-specific programs to address equity for BIPOC students.
- Youth Leadership and Development:** to promote positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities to recognize, utilize, and enhance youths' strengths, fostering positive relationships including connections to caring adults, and offering enriching activities and safe spaces in community settings.
- Summer Academic and Enrichment Programs:** to provide diverse opportunities for enrichment, confidence-building, and new experiences over the summer months, through summer school and community-based programs.
- Violence Prevention Programming:** to have an equity-focused impact on preventing violence through restorative justice and targeted prevention programming.
- Career Access and Employment for Opportunity Youth:** to support holistic and sustainable opportunities for employment and successful transitions to adulthood for older youth ages 16-21 who are disengaged from school and work.
- Career Access and Employment for Youth in School:** to ensure equitable opportunity for high school students through career pathways programs that build pre-employment skills, experience, and knowledge connected to identified industry sectors, as well as through Summer Youth Employment programs to provide youth with subsidized employment to build job experience and skills.

# I. Introduction

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) plays a critical role in creating opportunities for Oakland’s children and youth to thrive. At the heart of OFCY’s work are the organizations serving Oakland’s children, youth and families. These OFCY funded organizations have, over the years, formed an ecosystem of support at the forefront of collective efforts to meet the needs of children, youth and families. Through partnerships with these organizations, OFCY has distributed over \$250 million in targeted funding over the past 24 years, reaching more than 20,000 youth ages 0-21 each year – about one in five children and youth in Oakland.<sup>1</sup> The goals and strategies identified in this plan will guide the next three years (2022- 2025) of OFCY investments in the organizations serving our Oakland community. The goals and strategies are founded on the following statement of OFCY’s vision, mission and guiding principles.

## Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

### Vision Statement

*All children and youth in Oakland will be supported by community to thrive - leading safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives*

### Mission Statement

*OFCY provides community-driven funding to heal trauma, advance equity, and elevate opportunity for Oakland's children and youth from birth to age 21.*

### Guiding Principles

#### Racial, Social, and Economic Equity

*OFCY promotes equity, justice, and accountability with concerted application of our resources towards youth of color and those with the greatest need.*

#### Collaboration

*OFCY works with community and system stakeholders to identify shared goals and objectives, and encourages organizations to work together collaboratively to strengthen results and support each other.*

#### Child and Youth Development

*OFCY supports efforts to promote the social and emotional, physical, cognitive, and positive youth development of children, and to instill individual and community pride and leadership.*

#### Community

*OFCY engages children, youth, and families within our communities to make our children and our city strong.*

## Shared City-wide Goals for Children, Youth, and their Families

OFCY funding is intentionally leveraged with other public efforts at the city, county, state, and national levels to address the holistic needs of children and youth. The resources provided by philanthropic and system partners contribute toward shared city-wide goals for youth.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Oakland community was challenged with the profound health, economic, educational and societal impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, with direct effect on the well-being of children and youth. Public systems (City, County, School District) responded with the help of federal and state emergency resources and philanthropy. Grassroots and community organizations also pivoted and were on the frontline in advocating for and meeting the basic needs of families, from the distribution of food to direct support for children, teachers, and families navigating the distance learning environment. Oakland's City leadership also launched the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force to respond to the Black Lives Matter and social justice movements, the need for safety amid rising violence, and calls for reinvestment in under resourced communities.

The challenges and assets of Oakland communities inform the future investments called for under OFCY's 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan. There is an emerging collective focus on 1) literacy by third grade; 2) youth mental health and well-being; 3) reducing the violence that threatens youth and adults; and 4) advancing community economic empowerment. OFCY's Plan supports direct funding to community organizations and alignment with other systems and initiatives to work toward the shared citywide goals shown below for children and youth.

- Children are ready for kindergarten.
- Children are attending school.
- Children are reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Youth have abundant opportunities for youth development, learning, and enrichment.
- Youth graduate from high school.
- Youth have access to employment.
- Older Youth are connected to school, employment and /or training opportunities
- Youth are not involved in the justice system

**Table 1: OFCY’s strategies align with citywide goals for children, youth, and their families:**

City-wide Goals		OFCY 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Area			
		Healthy Development of Young Children	Children’s Success in School	Youth Development & Violence Prevention	Transitions to Adulthood
↑	Children Ready for Kindergarten				
↑	School Attendance				
↑	Children Reading at or Above Grade Reading Level (3 <sup>rd</sup> grade reading)				
↑	Opportunities for Youth Development, Learning, and Enrichment				
↑	Youth Graduating High School				
↑	Youth Employment				
↓	Fewer Opportunity Youth (not in school or working)				
↓	Fewer Juvenile Arrests				

OFCY strategies are designed to work toward these goals with other system and community partners through universal application of principles of racial, social and economic equity. The 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan is thus informed by other developing initiatives and institutions working in partnership with community organizations. These institutions include but are not limited to:

- Oakland Unified School District
- Youth Ventures Joint Powers Authority / Oakland Thrives
- City of Oakland Office Parks Recreation and Youth Development
- Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Initiative
- First Five Alameda County
- Oakland Literacy Coalition
- City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention
- City of Oakland Human Services Department – ReCAST Project
- Oakland Workforce Development Board

## II. The 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan: Identifying Opportunities

### Community Engagement

The priorities outlined in the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) were informed and inspired by numerous community voices. OFCY was intentional in creating spaces so that the Black/African American, Latinx and Asian-Pacific Island communities could participate, and their perspectives would be heard. Community engagement included youth, parents, CBO partners, and providers in order to learn about their experiences, insights, and priorities for programming and services in Oakland.

The community engagement occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic via virtual town hall meetings, community forums, system conversations, youth and family focus groups and key informant interviews. More than 312 individuals were directly engaged in these virtual events, and the information and ideas they shared have informed the overall development of the Strategic Investment Plan. Families of young children/youth, youth (ages 14-21), service providers (from nonprofit organizations, schools, and the community), and community stakeholders directly participated in the community engagement events. Two youth focused forums and additional listening sessions engaged Black/African American, Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and transitional age youth (TAY). OFCY partnered with trusted community members to reach out to residents of East, Central, and West Oakland for the Town Hall. This effort reached out to Black/African American families, and immigrant communities in East Oakland through focus groups. Many more individuals were engaged through OFCY's website, list-serve, and participation in formal meetings of the Planning & Oversight Committee.

## Type of Community Engagement Events



### Key Themes and Guidance from Community Engagement.

A number of consistent themes and related concrete guidance emerged from community voices to inform priorities, approaches, and investment strategies contained in this plan: The themes include the following:

- ***Many Oakland Children and Youth Experience Frequent Stress and Trauma.*** Youth cited experiences with and trauma from violence, racism and discrimination, neighborhood conditions that are unhealthy and unsafe, high levels of poverty, and major stressors on youth mental health such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Young women of color in particular said they do not feel safe because of experiences with catcalling and other gender-based violence, citing fears of harassment, assault, or sexual exploitation. Youth also reported that COVID-19 exacerbated these traumatic situations.
- ***Immigrant children and youth play a disproportionate role in service navigation especially in monolingual non-English speaking households.*** Immigrating children, as well as U.S.-born children of immigrants, often bear a significant share of the burden of navigating their new environment. Monolingual families have less access to information and resources that could support them in meeting their needs and advocating effectively

for their children and families. Further, programs could be more accessible for many working families if, for example, they were offered outside of daytime working hours.

- **Transition-aged youth must balance competing priorities as they strive to take care of themselves and their families, while getting on a path to self-sufficiency.** Many youth struggle to transition into college, job training, and full-time employment as they age out of the school system and other services. They are also facing a competitive job market, high barriers to entry for career pathways, high housing prices, and an immediate drop in wraparound support availability.
- **Families, youth, and communities have solutions to the challenges children, youth, and families are facing.** Parents and youth are the foremost experts on their assets, needs, and lived experience, and are the best source of solutions and impetus for mobilization. Youth have provided powerful insights into what would make them safer, such as more comprehensive restorative justice efforts and community-based supports. Youth identified safe spaces that promote belonging (including cultural and gender-based affinity spaces) and mental health systems of support as particularly critical.

### Key Community Guidance for OFCY

Prioritize opportunities for mental health, wellbeing, cultural and gender-based safe spaces, restorative violence prevention, and trauma-informed programming—especially youth-led programming.

Foster opportunities for youth and parents to be key decision-makers and leaders

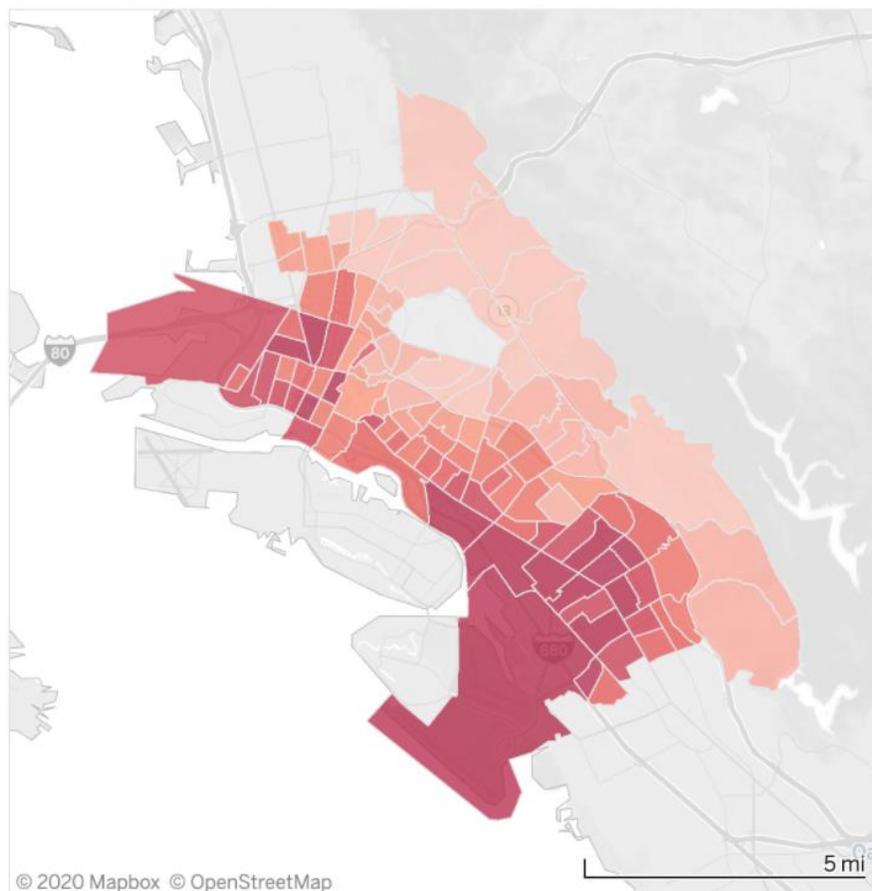
Ensure programs and services are accessible, including their hours, location, language access, and cultural relevancy. Parent education workshops, centralized resources, and family navigators can support this aim.

Support older youth in achieving stability as they transition to adulthood. Ensure support beyond the “entry point” for college and career, considering their holistic employment or postsecondary paths, financial needs, and capitalizing on their social-emotional and community assets.

## Community Needs Assessment, Racial Equity Analysis and Evaluation Findings

OFCY's **Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis (CNA-REA)** assembled data and community input into one document to examine key indicators and needs through a racial equity lens and better assess outcomes that call for deeper public investment. The systemic gaps that were consistently found in this examination included the dramatic disparities that exist by race and by place in Oakland. This is visualized clearly in the Oakland Stressors Index which provides a map of multiple risk factors related to community stress. The index captures **21 stressor indicators** across a range of domains, including **1) Health and Environment, 2) Housing, 3) Education, 4) Poverty, 5) and Criminal Justice System Involvement**. The Stressor Index supports data-rich decision making and strategic planning for place-based interventions and resource allocation<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 1: Oakland Community Stressors Index**



Color Legend: Rankings (1=Most Stressed)

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



The CNA-REA layers and integrates a variety of data sources such as other planning efforts occurring across the City of Oakland, community perspectives, the lived experience of many key informants, and OFCY evaluation findings. These data informed the development of the SIP and OFCY strategies. The following findings emerged to further inform the priorities, approaches, and investment strategies contained in this plan.

### Key Findings from the CNA-REA

- ***There are Dramatic Racial and Geographic Disparities in Access to Resources and Outcomes.*** Youth growing up in neighborhoods in East, Central, and West Oakland face the highest levels of poverty, environmental stressors, arrests, and the poorest outcomes for early development, health, school success, and transitions to adulthood. In particular, Black/African American youth bear the highest burdens from poverty, environmental degradation, and interactions with punitive systems (i.e., suspensions, arrests, and detention).
- ***Disparities Persist in Children and Youth’s Readiness for Engagement and Success in School.*** The majority of Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) students are not considered ready for kindergarten, high school, or college and career. Kindergarteners in concentrated areas of East Oakland are only half as likely as their peers in the Oakland hills to be “on track” in their academic and social development. Rates of chronic absenteeism and suspensions are extremely disproportionate by race, gender, socioeconomic status, school, and special needs status. Black/African American and Pacific Islander students, experience compounded impact from multiple stressors which negatively impact their success in school and transitions to adulthood.
- ***Schools located in neighborhoods with high levels of environmental stressors are more likely to serve students and families experiencing those same stressors, often with insufficient resources available to do so.*** Schools are important anchor institutions, particularly in neighborhoods experiencing high levels of stress. They frequently play a role well outside of the scope of academics, for example, 1) providing a setting for families to meet, form community, and share resources; 2) offering wraparound services such as health care, navigation for families, food pantries, and 3) extended learning.
- ***The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities in income, housing status, access to resources, and outcomes for Oakland children, youth, and families.*** Black/African American, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are two to three times more likely to experience poverty in Oakland than white people. The pandemic exacerbated these conditions and has widened educational gaps for students who were already facing disparate access to education.

## Key Findings from OFCY Evaluation Learning

- OFCY programs and strategies were successful in reaching priority populations where they live with greatest reach in West Oakland, Central Oakland/Fruitvale, and East Oakland.**<sup>3</sup> These populations include Black/African American, Latinx, Native American and Asian Pacific Islander children and youth; immigrants and refugees. Strategies that were designed to reach particular populations were successful in reaching participation levels for those populations. During the 2019-2020 program year, OFCY served 21,237 children and youth (approximately 20% of the overall Oakland population 0-19).
- OFCY investments addressed disparities between neighborhoods by investing in place.** Approximately 70% of participating youth live in flatland neighborhoods of Districts 5, 6 & 7 that are defined as high stress due to the burden of housing cost, high unemployment, and low income.
- Youth are better off through these investments, with older youth participating in youth development and workforce strategies reporting so at high rates and reach for Black/African American youth.** This strategy is reaching the population that was intended. The 2018-2019 evaluation report shows that 77% of participants identified as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx. Youth surveys indicate that an average of 87% of youth served felt that the programs successfully supported youth.

**Table 2: OFCY Population served compared to 2019 American Community Survey 5-year population estimates for youth ages 0-19 in Oakland**

Year	African American	Latinx	Asian/Pacific Islander	White
FY 2019-20 Population Served	32%	44%	11%	4%
FY 2018-19 Population Served	33%	41%	12%	4%
2019 Population Youth Ages 0-19	23%	42%	9%	27%

## OFCY Equity Framework for Strategic Investments

Specific communities in Oakland continue to face disproportionate and compounding burdens. As discussed throughout the CNA-REA, Black/African American and Latinx youth are the most likely to live in poverty and reside in low-income neighborhoods, which in turn have less access to early childhood development opportunities, greater environmental stressors (such as increased pollution and unsafe street crossings), fewer parks and safe places to play, fewer affordable grocery stores with healthy food, limited resources available to local schools, more exposure to violence and interaction with police, and fewer living-wage job opportunities.

Insufficient income has a negative impact on the social determinants of health, academic achievement, personal development, and well-being of children and youth in Oakland, disproportionately affecting youth of color in the flats of East, Central, and West Oakland. These communities have the highest poverty rates overall and as a proportion of African American (23.8%), Native American (21.8%), and Latinx (20.6%) children and youth.<sup>4</sup>

Black/African American youth in particular are facing challenges on all sides, and are disproportionately represented among foster children, children with disabilities, children and youth who are sexually exploited, who are housing insecure, chronically absent from school, facing suspension from school, and likely to be disconnected from both school and work as they transition to adulthood.

There are additional communities that also face ongoing challenges that require targeted approaches. Available disaggregated data and community engagement findings reveal important nuances in the needs of different communities. For example, while students identifying as Asian have the lowest rates of chronic absenteeism as a whole, Pacific Islander students – whose data are often folded into the larger category of Asian – have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism in OUSD. At the same time, the population of Native American children and youth is relatively small and cannot be reported to preserve student confidentiality.

OFCY's investments are designed to address the racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic disparities in Oakland. While the overall, desired vision is that all children and youth will thrive, as a public investment, OFCY prioritizes services and programs for those with the most need and least access. OFCY works toward an equitable city by funding strategies designed to support more equitable outcomes.

## Equity Guidance

**Across all strategy areas, equity is the foundation that guides funding decisions:**

1. OFCY's strategy areas should focus funding to address the needs of Black and Latinx youth and families who bear the most disproportionate burdens and face the most compounding stressors, as detailed in nearly all subsections of the CNA-REA. OFCY's approaches should specifically prioritize funding for proposals that center the needs of Black/African American youth and families who face the greatest disparities, are declining in the city's population, and are hardest to reach. OFCY should, therefore, encourage culturally affirmative services.
2. Funding should serve low-income children and youth, ensuring that investments reach specific communities of color, including Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. Again, OFCY should target resources to culturally-responsive approaches to services.
3. OFCY should also target funding by place. Given the dramatic disparities that exist between different neighborhoods, a place-based approach is crucial to ensure that resources are reaching the target populations (Black/African American and Latinx youth and low-income youth). Investments should be directed into the neighborhoods and schools where these youth live and attend. The Human Services Department (HSD) stressor map is used to identify gaps and needs in a graphic manner which helps communities prioritize funding for direct services to communities in East, Central, and West Oakland.

OFCY recognizes the need to channel funds to youth facing multiple barriers that often intersect and heighten risk and drive inequitable outcomes. Funding approaches should support the specific needs and experiences of youth – especially those facing the most egregious challenges. These include:

- Opportunity Youth are transition age youth (TAY) who are disconnected from both school and work. In 2019, In Oakland there were an estimated 20,695 youth ages 16-19 not in school or working. Of these youth, Black/African American TAY were represented at more than double the city average. When opportunity youth struggle to make ends meet and experience housing and financial instability (paired with the stress of that instability), they are also at heightened risk of contact with the criminal justice system.
- Alameda County Foster Youth are predominantly Black/African American and Latinx. One in three OUSD foster youth are enrolled in special education.
- Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness are four times more likely to be Black/African American and Indigenous residents compared to their representation in the overall city population. TAY as a whole are highly at risk of housing insecurity as they age out of available supports.

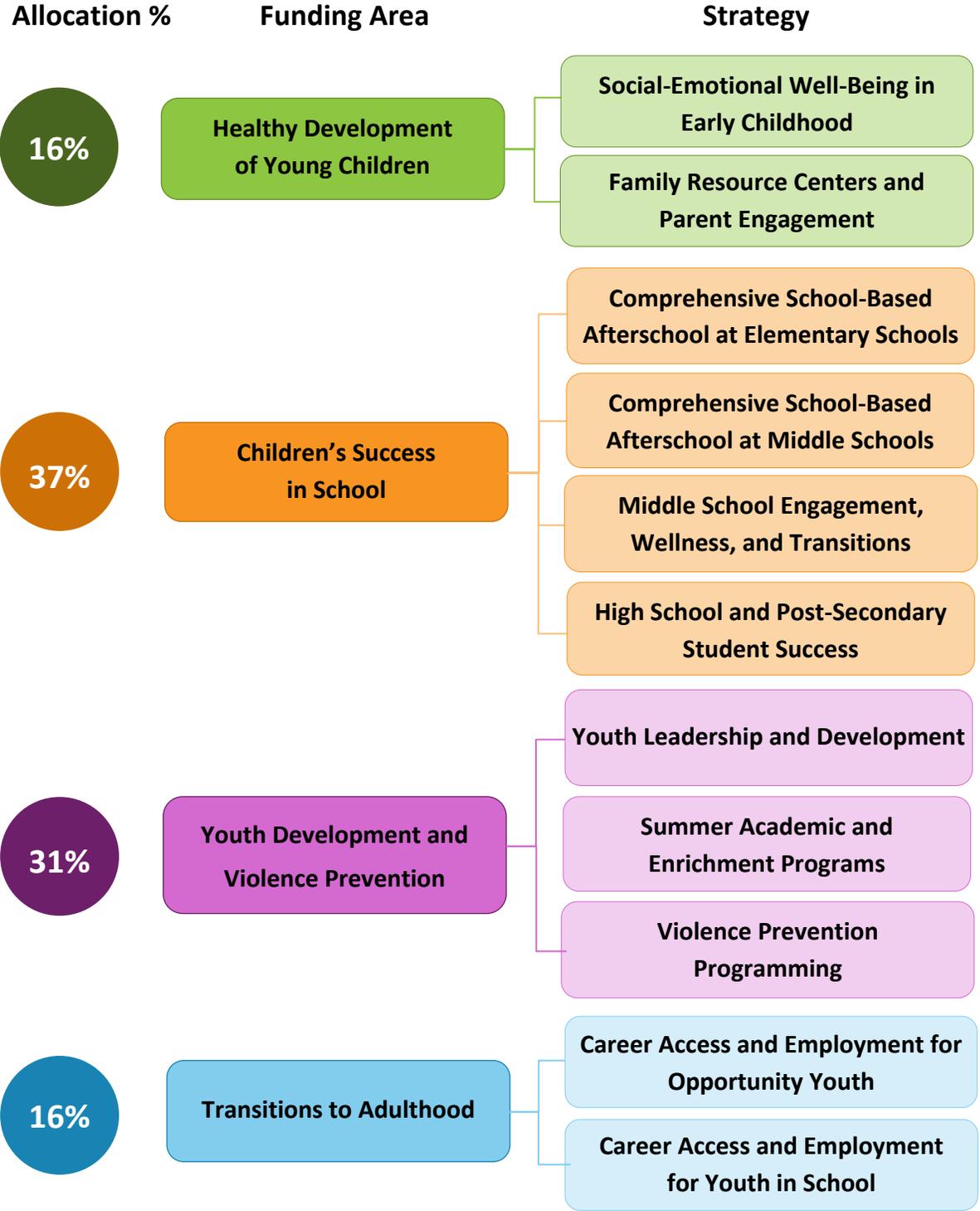
- **Newcomer and Immigrant Children, Youth, and Their Families.** In 2020-21, there were 2,909 newcomer youth enrolled in OUSD. Young people who have arrived in the U.S. in the past three years face unique challenges. Furthermore, monolingual families whose primary language is not English need culturally and linguistically sensitive support to navigate resources.
- **LGBTQ+ Children and Youth.** LGBTQ+ and gender non-binary youth are at a higher risk of bullying and harassment, depression, and suicidal ideation than their peers. LGBTQ+ students are particularly susceptible to depression, with reported rates of chronic depression at more than twice the rate of their straight peers.
- **Children and Youth with Disabilities.:** In 2020-21, OUSD served 5,369 students who were identified with disabilities. Youth with disabilities and their families experience unique struggles in academics, health, systems navigation, and transitions to adulthood.
- **Commercially-Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (CSEC).** Black/ African American, Asian-American, Native American, and unaccompanied immigrant children, primarily Cisgender girls, are at the highest risk of being trafficked and exploited.

## The Opportunity

OFCY is in a position to support the resilience and success of Oakland's most marginalized youth and families. Strategies are designed based on the equity framework and to strategically target and leverage funds to reach priority populations for better outcomes for children and youth.

# III. 2022-2025 Strategic Investment Plan

The allocation to each funding area is estimated based on past funding levels and factors such as the demand for services. Funding level is determined through the proposal and award process by factors such as outreach to priority populations and neighborhoods and the strength of proposals.



## Strategies for Investment: 2022-2025

### Healthy Development of Young Children

#### Social Emotional Well-being in Early Childhood

to provide support for parents and caregivers to promote the healthy emotional and social development of young children. Activities may include wellness and mental health services, play and learn groups, parenting workshops, classroom supports, and mental health programming for young children and their parents/caregivers, as well as referrals to support services.

#### Family Resource Centers and Parent Engagement

to reach families across Oakland and increase their connection to support services. Services are designed to meet the unique needs and build upon the assets of the communities they serve. Activities may include in-home support; parenting workshops; resource navigation and referrals; economic supports; and other linguistically and culturally relevant family supports.



#### Healthy Development of Young Children (0-8)

OFCY strategies support greater engagement with families to support the healthy social and emotional development and learning of young children. Strategies fill a gap in service to young (0-8) children and their families who are underserved by current resources. Funding strategies support collaboration among community based organizations and collective efforts tied to kindergarten readiness and literacy.

OFCY will continue to support the healthy development of young children by investing in family centered strategies to expand safe, stable nurturing relationships and environments. Family engagement and social and emotional learning programs offer opportunities for increased support for families of high need in East and West Oakland. The opportunity reaches directly to parents and caregivers and expands access to the network of services and opportunities for children and families with very young children and/or children – especially those who are not enrolled in formal early childhood or preschool programs. This strategy clearly acknowledges that parents themselves are the key decision-makers and their children’s “First Teachers.” Culturally specific programming removes language barriers and celebrates diverse cultures represented by families across Oakland, providing access to new immigrant and non-English speaking populations and support for low-income and Black/African American and Latinx families of communities of East, Central, and West Oakland. Funded programs leverage other system investments and reach neighborhoods to support readiness for kindergarten.

These investment strategies support the wellness and developmental needs of Oakland’s young children. They provide for increased support directly to parents, as well as to early childhood educators and family resource centers – helping parents to build their knowledge and skills about early childhood development, increase their involvement as first teachers and improve their access to a variety of resources in their community and close to home.

These strategies engage Oakland’s families so that they are better able to thrive. They will support safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, early protective factors that are essential for all children to reach their full potential.<sup>5</sup> This approach responds to risk factors in specific neighborhoods (place), socioeconomic status, the social determinants of health, exposure to adverse childhood experiences, and structural racism which can result in learning, health, and mental health disparities.<sup>6</sup> Supporting the healthy development of young children builds a foundation for their success in school and beyond.<sup>7</sup>

### **Social Emotional Well-being in Early Childhood**

OFCY supports programs focused on the social emotional well-being in early childhood by investing in a range of program models that strengthen the capacity of parents and caregivers to support the healthy development of young children. Programs provide more direct supports for children and families who are stressed by traumatic events and who are in need of mental health services and referrals. Support for family well-being initiatives, wellness and early childhood mental health consultation can support parents and caregivers in childcare and early learning settings with greater reach to families in need. Programs support social and emotional wellness and skill building among parents and teachers to support the social emotional and mental health of infants, toddlers and young children. This approach responds to risk factors in specific neighborhoods (place), socioeconomic status, social determinants of health, exposure to adverse childhood experiences, and structural racism which can result in learning, health, and mental health disparities.<sup>8</sup> Supporting the healthy development of young children builds a foundation for their success in school and beyond.<sup>9</sup>

### **Family Resource Centers and Parent Engagement**

Parent engagement is a longstanding strategy to support programs that build knowledge and skills about early childhood development, increase parent involvement as first teachers, and support early learning such as playgroups and workshops engaging parents. Programming takes place in community settings, such as recreation centers and hubs for early childhood services.

Parent/Family engagement programs involve opportunities for parents to connect with other families for social networking, learning, service, civic engagement and leadership. They are often innovative, targeting specific populations including fathers, teen parents, refugee and immigrant populations to meet their unique needs. They are uniquely suited to support the citywide vision for quality literacy to ensure strong readers by third grade and align with family driven and family centered approaches, including the hiring of parent liaisons and diverse multi-lingual family literacy tutors.

Comprehensive Family Resource Centers (FRCs) operate as hubs for services for high need families of young children in priority neighborhoods by providing safe spaces through trusted community-based organizations and culturally and linguistically relevant services and approaches to address the unique needs of the families they serve. FRCs are collaborative by design as hubs for a constellation of family support services, family navigation, promoting partnerships, mutual aid, and distributions to support the basic needs of low-income families. FRCs provide key connections for neighborhood families to participate in early childhood programming, support groups and to access educational resources such as ESL classes. FRCs also offer opportunities for parents as decision-makers, parent leadership and civic engagement, peer-based services, assistance and networking, income and community empowerment. Opportunities for gathering and social connection are important, particularly for parents and caregivers of children with special needs, hard-to-reach young parents, newcomers/immigrant families and others who may be isolated from resources.

### **Community Voice**

Community members and stakeholders encouraged OFCY to fund a whole-child, whole-family, community-driven approach to support the social emotional well-being of young children.<sup>10</sup> The community encouraged a more family-centered and strength-based approach that is culturally- and linguistically-aligned with the communities being served. Parents as first caregivers and teachers need to be given access to the resources that they need. One parent shared, *“If OFCY wants to support children and youth, they need to support the entire family and engage parents and family members as partners in creating an Oakland where children, youth, and families thrive.”* Child development research also highlights the importance of early childhood programming and the inclusion of parents and caregivers.<sup>11</sup>

Oakland parents, caregivers, educators, community members, and service providers emphasized how the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered the true extent of disparities between families in highly stressed, low-income neighborhoods and higher income communities. Areas of East, Central, and West Oakland were identified as neighborhoods that have the highest proportion of children with adverse experiences and children who are not ready for kindergarten.

## Supported Programming

### Social-Emotional Wellbeing

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

### Parent Engagement and Family Resource Centers

- Peer Support and Social Connection
- Infant/Toddler Play and Learn Groups
- Parent Leadership/Civic Engagement
- Family Navigation/Referrals to Support
- Computer Access
- Educational Resources/Workshops
- Basic Needs Distribution
- Economic Supports/Legal Rights
- Parent and Family Activities
- Linguistically and Culturally Relevant Family Support

## Intended Outcomes and Impact

- Improved access to culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed mental health services for children, parents/caregivers, and families
- Improved grounding of literacy in early childhood
- Increased kindergarten readiness
- Teachers at Head Start and State Preschool programs more confident in helping children and families who are experiencing stress
- More families are connected to resources (e.g., basic needs and mental health services)
- More children are ready for kindergarten
- Increased parent confidence, leadership, and self-advocacy
- More children and parents/caregivers participate in developmentally supportive activities

## Alignment

OFCY is intentionally aligned with the kindergarten readiness efforts of First 5 Alameda County modeled under the Neighborhoods Ready for School Initiative. OFCY funding expands services to additional high need communities and, through support for community programs, advances the collaboration through the Oakland Family Resource Center Network (OFRCN).

Additional investments in early childhood systems are anticipated through new funding streams in the coming years (Measure A, Measure C, America Cares Rescue Act). As new and increased public funding streams are realized, OFCY will work with partners in early childhood to leverage and align resource allocation in an equitable way. These include many community partners such as, the City of Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start, First 5 Alameda County, OUSD's Early Childhood Education Department, and citywide literacy initiative through the Oakland Unified School District, Oakland Literacy Coalition and Oakland Reach collaboration.

## Children's Success in School

### Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Elementary Schools

to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities after school at Oakland elementary school sites for students in grades K-5, through partnerships between OFCY, OUSD, and community-based organizations

### Comprehensive School-Based Afterschool at Middle Schools

to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities after school at Oakland middle school sites for BIPOC students, through partnerships between OFCY, OUSD, and community-based organizations.

### Middle School Engagement, Wellness, and Transitions

to enhance OFCY's investment in place-based middle school engagement by encouraging the field to develop culturally-competent programming that meets the unique needs of middle school students, particularly Black/African American students.

### High School and Post-Secondary Student Success

to support student well-being and enhance access to supports for student transitions to college or postsecondary opportunities. This may include support for new wellness center initiatives at schools and culturally-specific programs to address equity for BIPOC students.

## Children's Success in School

This funding area provides a continuum of supports for school-aged youth from elementary through high school and brings together school communities and community-based organizations to support learning and the whole-child success among students. Funding for comprehensive afterschool in both elementary schools and middle schools, and the extended funding to support student wellness at priority middle school and high school locations advances citywide goals for literacy, high school graduation and access to post-secondary education and employment.

School based programs effectively reach Black/African American and Latinx children, children from low-income families living in neighborhoods with high levels of environmental stress, or attending schools with fewer resources and other indicators of stress such as high chronic absenteeism or suspensions rates, specifically in East, Central, and West Oakland.

In 2019-20, 80% of OFCY's elementary and middle school afterschool participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American. OFCY Evaluation found that in 2019 and 2020, elementary and middle school afterschool programs reached 45% of African American students at the host schools, the highest rate among racial and ethnic groups.

In line with the goals of full service community school districts, community based organizations lead and serve as effective hubs to advance school community priorities and thereby make significant contributions to the overall school community. OFCY is focusing additional resources toward middle schoolers by funding culturally competent and focused programming, efforts to address trauma, stress, and mental health crises among students, through youth led opportunities to support student well-being and to meet the unique needs of specific populations.

### **Comprehensive Afterschool in Elementary School**

The afterschool program partnerships are designed to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities at Oakland school sites for low-income students in elementary (grades K-5). This strategy supports low-income families by providing safe, high quality, effective afterschool opportunities at low-cost or no-cost to families. This strategy will continue to support afterschool programs at schools where the majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch and live in neighborhoods where students are likely to be exposed to stressors. This strategy emphasizes partnerships between lead community-based organizations, funded under this strategy, the OUSD Expanded Learning Office, school site leadership, and OFCY in order to support student wellness and success.

Students participating in afterschool programs have opportunities to receive extra academic support and interact with caring adults and peers in a stimulating environment after the school day has finished. These programs can also increase students' sense of agency, belonging, and wellness. Due to their flexibility and willingness to bring in other providers to deliver a wide array of programming, afterschool programs are also effective in supporting students who are struggling with social emotional challenges, academic issues, and difficult peer relationships. Afterschool staff are often able to reach out to teachers and counselors to discuss strategies for individual students, allowing for coordinated efforts and mentoring relationships with broader and more diverse staff. These programs also provide a critical resource for working families to ensure their children are in a safe, supervised space during working hours – specifically addressing the needs of low-income families who are able to access enrichment at no cost to them.

During FY 2019-20, 8,839 Oakland students participated in comprehensive elementary and middle school afterschool programs. The OFCY 2019-20 Evaluation Report shows that afterschool programs continue to be in high demand, exceeding program enrollment goals and achieving 90% of average daily attendance goals. The Report also found that afterschool participants were less likely to be chronically absent than other students.

### **Comprehensive Afterschool in Middle School**

The middle school programs funded under OFCY's School- Based Afterschool Strategy are also partnerships designed to coordinate comprehensive academic and enrichment activities at Oakland school sites for middle school students (grades 6,7-8). This strategy also supports low-income families by providing safe, high quality, effective afterschool opportunities at low-cost or no-cost to families. The strategy will continue to support afterschool programs at schools where the majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. This strategy focuses on the key middle school years and provides support for student wellness and success.

OFCY is interested in partnerships and thoughtful design of programs to meet the unique needs and experiences of middle school students. These students are more independent than elementary school students. Recruitment and retention of middle schoolers may depend on the strength, innovation and creativity offered in specific programs, as well as enhanced connection to caring adults to support the need for trauma informed approaches to learning and social and emotional health, and the opportunities to support engagement, youth development and leadership potential of the age group.

### **Middle School Engagement, Wellness, And Transitions**

Enhanced investment in middle school engagement, through partnership with the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) and OUSD, will provide low-income students of color that live in high stress neighborhoods and/or attend high stress schools with additional opportunities for peer leadership, mentoring, community building, community service, and holistic wellness supports. Programs funded under this strategy can support middle school students to learn healthy problem-solving strategies and social-emotional assets that can be sustained and used throughout their lives. Targeted programs during or after school can provide opportunities for counseling, mentoring, wraparound services, and other approaches to promote youths' agency, self-esteem, and growth mindset. OFCY also expects to support partnerships with Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development directly and with nonprofit partnerships to broaden opportunities for middle school youth to participate in outdoor recreation, sports, and nature exploration.

Children and youth in grades 6-8 are in early adolescence and are experiencing many changes in their growth and development. The transition from elementary school into middle school is a challenging time where children and youth feel less connected to their school and peers than they do in elementary and high school. During this time, middle school students may be struggling with trauma and mental health challenges and may develop numerous challenging behaviors including substance use and absenteeism that can impact their success in school and life. Middle school students in OUSD are more likely to be suspended from school than students in elementary or high school.<sup>12</sup> The most recent California Healthy Kids Survey data show that more than a third (36%) of 8th grade students experienced chronic sadness or hopelessness in the past year, rising steadily from 6th to 8th grade.<sup>13</sup> Rates of reported alcohol and drug use more than double from 6th to 8th grade.<sup>14</sup>

### **High School and Post-Secondary Student Success**

The high school strategy will continue to support programs that work with Oakland youth ages 14 to 21 – enhancing their abilities to successfully transition to post-secondary educational opportunities or college. This strategy includes culturally specific equity-focused programs for Oakland’s BIPOC high school students. In addition, this funding may support Wellness Centers that create supportive spaces where students address trauma and violence, while supporting healing.

Challenges facing high school and college-age students in Oakland, especially BIPOC students, are numerous as demonstrated throughout OFCY’s community engagement and CNA-REA processes. In 2021 the OUSD Board of Education adopted a resolution to prioritize “Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic”<sup>15</sup>. The resolution highlights that, even prior to the pandemic, a mental health crisis existed among Oakland’s children and youth. From the advent of the pandemic, in April, 2020, to October of 2020, mental health related visits for adolescents aged 12-17 increased by 31%.

### **Community Voice**

Young people attending community workshops expressed the need for access to emotional and social support from adults and peers, along with community-based supports that help them navigate intergenerational differences with their parents and cope with their stress and anxieties. They shared their appreciation for affinity spaces that promote a sense of belonging, spaces that welcome and respect cultural diversity and traditions, and gender-specific spaces. They emphasized how important it is for youth to have places outside their homes where they can connect with friends and trusted adults.

In community forums, older youth were candid about their needs for support for the transition from high school to college. They also displayed their resiliency and desire for success whether that be in college or other career paths. Some young women said that they would like to see more wellness programs and counselors co-located on their school campuses.<sup>16</sup> Parents who participated were hoping for and expecting support as they navigated the college application process with their children. They also wanted help developing strategies to pay for college. Providers noted a need for college readiness programs to prepare students for the academic, social, and cultural experiences of a college or university setting. Parents, students and providers concurred that only supporting students up to the “entry point” of employment or higher education is not enough to help them succeed. Students need wraparound support with a focus on technology, financial education, career preparation, and life skills.<sup>17</sup> Programs using these approaches can improve the mental health, social and emotional resilience, academic success for high school and post-secondary students.

## Supported Programming

### Afterschool Programs – Elementary School

- Safe, school-based afterschool programs that support academic and enrichment program, integrated with the school day in coordination with school leadership and the District.
- Activities that build foundational social emotional skills.

### Afterschool Programs – Middle School

- Programming for the unique needs of middle school students, including the transition to high school (under middle school sub-strategy).
- Programming focusing on youth development and joyful enrichment, such as visual and performing arts, hands-on science, recreation, and culturally affirming activities.
- Mentoring opportunities.

### Middle School Engagement

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

### High School Success

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

## Intended Outcomes and Impact

- Improved school attendance
- Improved academic achievement
- Increased connection to and engagement with school, and improved school climate
- Improved connections to peers and caring adults
- Increased opportunities for enrichment including arts, STEM, sports, recreation, cultural events, participating in creative pursuits, and others.
- Youth and families report improved relationships
- Improved readiness for high school transition (middle school focused programs)
- Improved high school graduation rates (high school focused programs)
- Increased access to programming that supports college readiness and postsecondary school planning (high school focused programs)
- Improved postsecondary matriculation and persistence (high school focused programs)

## Alignment

The Oakland After School Partnership is one of the City's strongest and most long-standing partnerships to leverage resources for Oakland students. OFCY's support for comprehensive afterschool programming for elementary and middle school students was developed in partnership with OUSD to provide thousands of students from low-income families with free, high-quality afterschool programming. OFCY funds are used as matching funds to leverage millions of dollars in federal and state funding managed by OUSD for Oakland's afterschool programs each year. OUSD and OFCY then co-fund community-based organizations to serve as lead agencies at school sites and provide direct services. OFCY partners with OUSD's Extended Learning Office which provides training, professional development and technical support to nonprofits to develop the afterschool provider workforce. Nonprofit agencies are able to offer youth development expertise and a variety of enrichment, academic, and recreational program offerings for diverse programming to students. By co-funding lead agencies with OUSD, the City of Oakland is able to support a high-quality afterschool workforce that supports thousands of low-income students free of charge every day of the school year. However, the most recent evaluations find that afterschool programs were the most likely to report challenges recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff. Recent increases in state funding available in Oakland for afterschool programming fall short of the level needed to support and retain quality front-line afterschool staff. OFCY funds for afterschool will support staff that struggles with ever rising cost of living in Oakland. OUSD's most recent Strategic Plan notes that community partners are critical in the OUSD plan to "Redesign schools to be places of joy, inclusion, and beauty". Afterschool programs have played a key role in furthering the integration of social-emotional learning across the OUSD, and contribute directly to positive school culture.

Oakland has undertaken a renewed focus on literacy as a collective impact focus, adolescent mental health, and meaningful economic opportunities for youth. OFCY's foundational partnership with the OUSD through investments in community-based partnerships can advance literacy efforts, provide support for OUSD's Pathways programs, and potentially partner with the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (ACHCSA), the DVP and others to develop a more integrated approach to adolescent behavioral health, and to promote a culture of health, well-being, and connection to school and peers.

OFCY funding for high school and postsecondary success further builds on strong partnerships with OUSD's efforts to "develop essential skills to secure postsecondary success", the Peralta Community College District's Career Technical Education initiative, the Oakland Workforce Development Board's (OWDB) youth workforce programming, and Alameda County Office of Education's (ACOE) work with youth in detention and those in a variety of alternative high school programs.

## Youth Development and Violence Prevention

### Youth Leadership and Development

to promote positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities to recognize, utilize, and enhance youths' strengths, fostering positive relationships including connections to caring adults, and offering enriching activities and safe spaces in community settings.



### Summer Academic and Enrichment Programs

to provide diverse opportunities for enrichment, confidence-building, and new experiences over the summer months, through summer school and community-based programs.

### Violence Prevention Programming

to have an equity-focused impact on preventing violence through restorative justice and targeted prevention programming.

## Youth Development & Violence Prevention

Youth development continues as one of OFCY's most innovative and powerful investment areas. Funding prioritizes reach toward low-income BIPOC youth of color and provides support for specific populations of youth who face adverse circumstances, including but not limited to CSEC, LGBTQ youth, youth with learning disabilities and youth facing housing insecurity. Funding promotes a strengths-based foundation and ecosystem for youth development and engagement and opportunities for youth leadership and decision-making, and responds to the community voices stating the need for safe, nurturing, inspiring, and empowering programming for children and youth.

The City's *Reimagining Public Safety Task Force* called for expanding safe spaces for youth, the expansion of violence prevention and reduction strategies and the promotion of a culture of restorative justice. OFCY can fill gaps in our City's support infrastructure by supporting community driven, creative and culturally rich programs, and ensuring room for small, nimble, culturally effective entities, innovative programs and youth-led approaches.

The Youth Development and Summer Strategies are long-standing and effective strategies supporting Oakland's children and youth with opportunities to increase physical activity, foster

joy and creativity, explore their interests and enhance a sense of belonging and individual agency. OFCY's most recent comprehensive evaluation showed that the vast majority (82%) of youth participating in OFCY's 2019-2020<sup>18</sup> youth development programs reported that they have gained communication skills, a sense of belonging, positive connections with adults, and leadership skills.<sup>19</sup> The Youth Development strategy has been historically highly effective in supporting youth through both creative and culturally specific programming for Black/African American, and Indigenous youth.

Additional focus on violence prevention can offer more targeted resources toward trauma informed and healing centered programming for youth who are exposed to trauma and/or live in neighborhoods with high levels of violence, and youth who are at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system, and can support youth's well-being and their social emotional and mental health.

### **Youth Leadership and Development**

The strategies in this area will continue to support creative, innovative, and culturally specific programming for youth in Oakland. These strategies include vibrant cultural arts, recreation, and enrichment programming; supports safe community spaces as centers for gathering, learning, and empowerment; and programming that enhances youth agency and voice by fostering leadership, organizing, advocacy, and civic engagement. This strategy can support programs that reach specific groups of youth with tailored, culturally relevant, and engaging activities that empower youth so that they can thrive.

Youth development strategies build equity by focusing on youth who have had adverse experiences and have fewer opportunities to participate in supportive activities. These programs and activities provide critical foundations that support goals for healthy development and violence prevention. Programs under this funding area use a positive youth development framework that promotes learning, leadership, and peer-to-peer social connections – helping youth stay academically engaged while having fun, developing new academic and employment skills, and building social connections.

### **Summer Academic and Enrichment Programs**

OFCY will continue to fund a Summer programming strategy through community based programs at community locations and its partnership with the OUSD Extended Learning Office for summer school, which allows children to participate in high-quality, enriching summer activities that may otherwise not be financially accessible to Oakland families. This strategy has been shown to support learning for students in low- and middle-income families by preventing the "summer slump", whereby youth who are *inactive* during the summer fall behind their peers when they return to school. Summer programming can promote social-emotional asset building, cultural and community connections, health and wellness, and cognitive development.

### **Violence Prevention Programming**

The crucial goal of preventing violence and gang involvement among youth is not fully addressed by any one system. Violence prevention strategy aims to advance opportunities for

systemic coordination, and to expand restorative justice and or other promising programs specific to youth ages 11-21. The strategy will support violence prevention education, peer leadership, restorative justice, and healing practices that help youth build mastery of anti-violence competencies. Through the collaboration with the Human Services Department on the Oakland ReCAST Project funded by a grant from the SAMSA, OFCY can expand support to youth-serving providers to center trauma informed practices and support the goals of mental health and well-being in collaboration with the DVP.

### **Community Voice**

In the March 2021 community workshop series, youth participants expressed a need for easier access to community-based supports that help them navigate inter-generational differences with their parents, anxiety, and stress. Some youth shared feelings of alienation from their parents, particularly with respect to their mental health and emotional challenges. Youth said they need access to positive adult and peer relationships, and social and emotional support, whether in person or online. Youth in community engagement forums voiced concerns about their own safety, about the safety of their families, and about the stress of community violence. Young women specifically talked about the threat or prevalence of gender-based violence.

Community stakeholders emphasized that the past year of pandemic-related restrictions further exacerbated the already existing trauma and has had a marked impact on domestic and gender violence and violent street crime. Stakeholders also recommended wraparound models and a holistic approach to working with high-need and opportunity youth and their families. There is strong community support for services and safe community spaces for vulnerable populations of youth, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ youth, youth experiencing homelessness, and immigrant and newcomer youth. Youth and parents expressed the need for more quality programming free of charge so Oakland children and youth can participate in arts, recreation, sports, music, nature and activities that promote positive youth development year-round and in summer months.

### **Supported Programming**

#### **Youth Leadership & Development**

- Arts, creative, and cultural enrichment
- Sports and physical recreation
- Youth leadership, organizing, advocacy, and civic engagement
- Safe spaces for priority populations
- Peer mentoring
- Positive connection with caring adults
- Youth voice and agency in program decision making

#### **Summer Academic & Enrichment**

- Social-emotional skills development
- Cultural and community connections
- Health and wellness
- Field trips and nature exploration

#### **Violence Prevention**

- Restorative justice programming
- Targeted youth violence prevention programming
- Peer and adult mentoring programs
- Peer-led training addressing community and gender-based violence

## Intended Outcomes and Impact

- Increased caring relationships with peers and adults
- Increased opportunities for leadership
- Increased connection to community
- Increased access for children and youth to challenging and engaging activities and learning experiences
- Expanded access to literacy, arts, technology, and other enrichment
- Improved youth physical activity levels, fitness, and overall physical wellness
- More available safe, supported spaces for high priority youth populations
- Increased youth agency and self-efficacy
- Retaining academic skills and knowledge over summer months
- Fewer youth involved in the juvenile justice system
- Reduction in youth-involved violence
- Fewer expulsions, suspensions, and other disciplinary actions

## Alignment

The OFCY Youth Development and Violence Prevention strategy aligns closely with the work of the City's Department of Violence Prevention, the Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development (OPRYD), and the Human Services Department ReCAST Project. OPRYD is also a lead youth development City partner through its range of sports, recreation, performing arts, and other age-appropriate initiatives and provision of safe spaces that support programming and collaboration with other agencies.

OFCY can collaborate with the Department of Violence Prevention's through developing opportunities to align with the calls for expanded youth and adult life coaching to provide more relationship-based case engagement, middle school focused program for youth at risk of exposure to the juvenile justice system, and coordination with OPRYD on positive evening and weekend activities for Oakland youth exposed to and at high risk of engaging in violence.<sup>20</sup>

OFCY partners with the OUSD's Extended Learning office to fund community-based organizations that can provide summer enrichment programming to augment traditional summer academic support. This funding area aligns with OUSD's Strategic Initiative to "develop essential skills to secure postsecondary success", and with OPRYD's efforts to provide programmed spaces for students throughout the year and summer.

## Transitions to Adulthood

### Career Access and Employment for Opportunity Youth

to support holistic and sustainable opportunities for employment and successful transitions to adulthood for older youth ages 16-21 who are disengaged from school and work.

### Career Access and Employment for Youth in School

to ensure equitable opportunity for high school students through career pathways programs that build pre-employment skills, experience, and knowledge connected to identified industry sectors, as well as through Summer Youth Employment programs to provide youth with subsidized employment to build job experience and skills.



## Transitions to Adulthood

This goal area supports programming that provides opportunities for youth to gain valuable skills and experience that contribute to their success and assist in transitions to employment and success in life. These strategies fill an important gap providing education, access to training, employment experience and can reduce youth involvement in the juvenile system. The most recent California Healthy Kids Survey of students attending OUSD high schools report that nearly a third of students felt school did not give them the skills and knowledge needed to get a job after high school, get job training, and/or go to college.<sup>21</sup> Recognizing the lasting importance of the successful transition to adulthood, OFCY is the largest City investor in youth workforce funding.

This strategy is reaching the population that was intended: the 2018-2019 evaluation shows that 77% of participants identified as African American/Black or Hispanic/Latinx. The effectiveness of the strategies in this goal area are also underscored by 2019 survey data where an average of 87% of youth agreed with statements related to youth development outcomes, indicating that Career Awareness and Academic Support programs successfully supported youth.

### Career Access and Employment for Opportunity Youth

This strategy supports programming that provides holistic support and sustainable opportunities for employment and transitions to adulthood for older youth ages 16-21. Programming focuses on connecting opportunity youth to supported training and employment and re-engagement to education at the stage most appropriate and suited for the youth. The strategy supports programs for opportunity youth that have foundational workforce skill

building elements, and including innovative programming and new opportunities such as apprenticeships. Successful to the work is the ability to provide appropriate and needed wraparound support services to reconnect youth by addressing a variety of other barriers including housing instability, immediate financial needs, family, system involvement, and mental health and substance dependency. Meeting the needs of opportunity youth is a strong equity strategy as Black/African American youth in Oakland are disconnected at twice the city-wide rate.<sup>22</sup>

### **Career Access and Employment for Youth in School**

This strategy strives to ensure equitable opportunity for high school students by providing subsidized employment opportunities year-round. Programming is aligned to OUSD's Career Academies and work over the years to build out strong industry-aligned high-school workforce programming, and supports the goal of providing in-school youth with opportunities to learn about industries and employment and what is required to gain these jobs. Programs provide job shadowing, work experience, industry-aligned training, and other youth workforce engagement activities to build skills, knowledge and abilities of Oakland youth. Through the programs, youth will learn the educational pathways required to obtain living-wage jobs and the career pathways available in Oakland's priority industry sectors. Additionally, OFCY partners with the Oakland Workforce Development Board to directly support Oakland Summer Youth Employment, providing high school youth with first time job experience during the summer months to gain experience and earn a wage between the school years. The partnership with OWDB was developed in 2019 and co-funds nonprofit service providers through a joint request for proposal partnership to deliver summer programming. The programs include job readiness training, 100 hours of paid (minimum wage) work experience, and financial literacy support. Over the years it has supported hundreds of youth gaining first-time job experience and providing hundreds of thousands of dollars directly to youth through earnings.

### **Community Voice**

Broad input from multiple stakeholders emphasized paid youth jobs and employment as a solution that addresses both equity and violence in Oakland. Multiple stakeholders point to increased city support for youth employment as a direct violence prevention strategy. Parents of high school youth emphasized the importance of access to training programs that prepare students for living wage jobs, not just entry level jobs. Youth stakeholders expressed the desire to have training and leadership opportunities to build their resumes and emphasized experiential leadership and career exploration opportunities. Mentors and paid internships were also mentioned as playing an important role in youths' ability to learn about work opportunities and job exploration. Providers underscored the role that many students play in contributing financially to their families' basic needs, and the direct value of the stipends and wages earned by youth participating in these programs.<sup>23</sup> Stakeholders suggested this strategy should provide opportunities such as apprenticeships as alternatives to college.

## Supported Programming

### Opportunity Youth

- Programming for opportunity youth ages 16-21 who are not in school or employed
- Comprehensive, supported work experiences (apprenticeships, subsidized employment, internships, and direct job placement) for youth who face high barriers to self-sufficiency.
- Pre-employment and life skills training
- Support for academic achievement, alternative educational pathways, and holistic supportive services.
- Programs that incorporate financial literacy and financial access into their program design.

### High School Youth

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

## Intended Outcomes and Impact

- Youth increase experience with and awareness of job and career options
- Increased participation of opportunity youth in workforce programs
- Improved access and connection to internships and other work-experiences that offer tangible work-skills and job readiness for high school youth
- Increased numbers of youth who participate in summer jobs and gain first time job experience
- Re-engagement with educational systems for currently disengaged youth
- Improved rates of high school graduation
- Reduced community violence
- Improved postsecondary participation and persistence
- Improved financial stability for youth through earned stipends and wages

## Alignment

This strategy closely aligns with the Oakland Workforce Development Board (OWDB)'s current Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan, and the City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention's focus on re-engaging disconnected youth into supportive programs. The high school youth sub-strategy aligns closely with the goals of the OUSD career academies as well as the OWDB's support for key Oakland industry sectors. In the last round of OFCY and OWDB funding, these two organizations issued a joint RFP for funding for one cohesive program model for youth to participate in the Oakland summer jobs program, expanding programming offerings and participation. This approach helped to reduce the administrative burden, strengthen collaboration system-wide and provided increased opportunities for youth to participate in subsidized summer jobs programs.

OFCY and OUSD have access to a multitude of employment partnerships with local businesses and community-based organizations, which are further supported by this strategy. Career and Technical Education programs offered through OUSD and community colleges provide students with opportunities to explore various careers through courses, internships, and on-the-job apprenticeships. This alignment prioritizes coordination among resources and investments for youth workforce development programs that prepare high school students and transitional aged youth to prepare for careers and post-secondary education.

# Acknowledgements

The following acknowledges the core team who undertook key roles in creating this plan. This is in addition to the many community participants who were engaged via community events, public meetings, and through OFCY communications.

## Planning & Oversight Committee Members

William “Bill” Riley, EdD  
Kimberly Aceves  
Tasion Kwamilele  
Peter Lê  
Pecolia Manigo  
Anakarita Allen  
Langston Buddenhagen  
Sofia Guerrero  
Dwayne Davis  
Jorge Velasco  
Anthony Bibiano

## Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (Staff of the Human Services Department)

Sandra Taylor, OFCY Director & Children & Youth Services Division Manager  
Mike Wetzal, OFCY Program Planner  
Scott Kim, OFCY Program Analyst  
Kaitlin Forgash, OFCY Administrative Assistant

## Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates

Tim Tabernik  
Lori Allio, PhD  
Arlando Smith, EdD  
Aurelio Rivera  
Kweli Kitwana  
Adar Schneider, MSc.

## Bright Research Group

Brightstar Ohlson, MS  
Vanetta Thomas, MPH

# List of Acronyms

<b>BIPOC</b>	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>CNA-REA</b>	Community Needs Assessment – Racial Equity Analysis
<b>DVP</b>	City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>FRPM</b>	Free and Reduced Priced Meals
<b>HSD</b>	City of Oakland Human Services Department
<b>OFCY</b>	Oakland Fund for Children & Youth
<b>OPRYD</b>	Oakland Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development Department
<b>OUSD</b>	Oakland Unified School District
<b>POC</b>	Planning and Oversight Committee for OFCY
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>SIP</b>	Strategic Investment Plan
<b>TAY</b>	Transitional-Aged Youth

# Citation Endnotes

---

- 1 OFCY Program evaluations for 2019-2020
- 2 The Oakland Community Stressor Index was updated by the City of Oakland, Human Services Department in 2019
- 3 OFCY Final Evaluation Report, 2019-2020, pg., 11
- 4 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis Report. 2021.p 75.
- 5 Essentials for Childhood, Creating Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for All Children. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. March 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/essentials/index.html>
- 6 Gee, Gilbert C., and Chandra L. Ford. "Structural racism and health inequities: Old issues, New Directions1." Du Bois review: social science research on race 8.1
- 7 Bath E, Njoroge WFM. Coloring Outside the Lines: Making Black and Brown Lives Matter in the Prevention of Youth Suicide. Journal of the American Academy Child Adolescent Psychiatry. January 2021.
- 8 Gee, Gilbert C., and Chandra L. Ford. "Structural racism and health inequities: Old issues, New Directions1." Du Bois review: social science research on race 8.1
- 9 Bath E, Njoroge WFM. Coloring Outside the Lines: Making Black and Brown Lives Matter in the Prevention of Youth Suicide. Journal of the American Academy Child Adolescent Psychiatry. January 2021.
- 10 OFCY Stakeholder Interviews Spring 2021
- 11 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis Report, 2021, p 16
- 12 Oakland Unified School District Data Dashboard 2019
- 13 CDE and WestEd. California Healthy Kids Survey. Oakland Unified Elementary and Secondary. 2019-2020 Main Reports. (pre-COVID)
- 14 Ibid
- 15 Board of Education Resolution No. 2021-0046, Aimee Eng and Jessica Ramos, April 14, 2021
- 16 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis Report, 2021, p. 27
- 17 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis Report, 2021, p. 69.
- 18 OFCY 2019-20 Evaluation was the most recent comprehensive evaluation because COVID compromised the gathering of survey, focus group, and other in-person data collection methods during the 2020-21fiscal year.
- 19 FY18-19 Final Report-Youth Development Strategy, summary. PDF pp.6-9
- 20 DVP Strategic Spending Plan FY 22-24, p. 14
- 21 OFCY Community Needs Assessment and Racial Equity Analysis Report, 2021, p. 47
- 22 S0902 Oakland City and CA 5 Year Estimates, 2019
- 23 Bright Research Group, Community Workshops Summary of Findings Report, April 2021