Community Needs Assessment

SEAL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

SF DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN YOUTH
& THEIR FAMILIES

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) acknowledges that it carries out its work on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone, the original inhabitants and stewards of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the government agency that stewards of the Children & Youth Fund, we accept the responsibility that comes with resources derived from property taxes upon unceded and colonized land. We recognize the history and legacy of the Ramaytush Ohlone as integral to how we strive to make San Francisco a great place for life to thrive and children to grow up.

Letter from the Director

On the behalf of the Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF) I am pleased to present our 2022 Community Needs Assessment (CNA). As the first phase of our planning cycle the CNA is the foundation of our efforts to ensure that high need children, youth, disconnected transitional age youth (TAY), and their families can benefit from services and programming supported by DCYF. It is the way that we hear directly from our communities to understand their needs and to shed light on the disparities that affect their lives.

Normally DCYF would complete the CNA during the third year of our funding cycle but as we know the last two years have been anything but normal. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread and long lasting impacts on the lives of children, youth, TAY, and their families in San Francisco. While our data collection efforts began before the pandemic, gathering perspectives and experiences about its impacts became a crucial part of our methodology as the Shelter in Place order was enacted and our process paused. We are extremely grateful for the assistance we received from our grantees and other service providers throughout the process in connecting us with children, youth, TAY, and their families from across the City using the methods and venues available to us.

Our data collection efforts have clearly shown that the impacts of the pandemic have not been experienced equally. If anything, the pandemic has made existing inequities worse especially for low-income households with children, a group that includes a disproportionately large number of people of color. Whether it's ongoing challenges to economic security, growing need for mental health supports, the continued effects of distance learning, threats to physical safety caused by anti Asian and anti-Black violence or the many other ways that the pandemic has impacted our communities, it's clear that DCYF and our City partners have a lot of work to do.

DCYF is ready to do the work to address the needs and disparities affecting our City's children, youth, TAY and their families, including those exacerbated by the pandemic. The second phase of our planning cycle is the Services Allocation Plan (SAP) where we will allocate the Children & Youth Fund to address the needs and disparities highlighted by the CNA. Our 2023 SAP will be developed in collaboration with our City and SFUSD partners so that we can align and coordinate our efforts. We will follow the SAP with our Request for Proposals, the last phase of our planning cycle. This competitive funding process is the way that DCYF selects nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs) with the experience, expertise and cultural competency to provide services that address the needs and disparities highlighted in the CNA.

The 2022 Community Needs Assessment is not just a part of our planning cycle it's also a call to action for DCYF to focus on what is truly needed for children, youth, TAY and their families to lead lives full of opportunity and happiness. I hope you find the 2022 CNA to be informative and useful and I look forward to using it as the foundation of our efforts to make San Francisco a great place to grow up.

Sincerely,

Maria Su, Psy.D.
Executive Director

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Key Terms
& Concepts

Throughout this report, key terms and concepts relevant to youth development, social services, and characteristics of San Francisco residents will be used. This section attempts to clarify definitions and applications of key terms as understood and utilized by DCYF planning purposes.

LIST OF TERMINOLOGY

Accessibility

The "ability to access" the functionality and benefit of a system or product (e.g., service, environment).[1]

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

Childhood experiences such as physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence, which can result in short and long-term toxic stress.

Area Median Income (AMI)

The median family income of a region based upon household size. Calculated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and updated every year based on American Community Survey estimates. Also refers to income limits that determine eligibility for housing assistance programs. These limits are percentages of the estimated median family income with some adjustments for families of different sizes and areas with high housing costs relative to income.

Caring Adult

The ability to which youth experience caring adult relationships. This indicator is utilized by the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) to measure youth development and personal resilience or the ability to avoid negative health behaviors.

Child Maltreatment

A serious harm (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect) caused to children by parents or caregivers.

Child with a disability

A child under 18 that has been evaluated as having a disability defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, and/or traumatic brain injury.[2]

Cisgender

A person who identifies with the gender assigned to them at birth.

Disconnected Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY)

Youth and young adults aged 18 through 24 years old who are experiencing homelessness or in danger of homelessness; have dropped out of high school; have a disability or other special needs, including substance abuse; are low-income parents; are undocumented; are new immigrants and/or English Language Learners; are LGBTQ+, and/or are transitioning from the foster care, juvenile justice, criminal justice, or special education system.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Dollar thresholds that vary by family size and composition used to identify individuals and families in poverty and assess eligibility for public benefit programs, such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

Gender non-conforming

A person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations of gender.

Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

HUD defines homelessness as (1) individuals and families living in temporary shelter or (2) individuals and families who reside in a public or private place not designed for ordinary use as a sleeping accommodation. San Francisco's definition of homelessness includes individuals and families who are "doubled-up" in the homes of family or friends, staying in jails, hospitals, or rehabilitation facilities, and living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units.[3]

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A plan developed to ensure that a child with a disability attending elementary or secondary education receives specialized services.[4]

Justice System Involved

Individuals who are involved with or impacted by the justice system.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

A bi-annual local count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January required for localities receiving federal funding from HUD. San Francisco's PIT Count includes a supplemental count of unaccompanied children and youth under the age of 25.

Recidivism

Reentry intro criminal justice system: Measured by rate at which an individual re-offends.

Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS)

Income levels required for working families to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level, considering family composition, ages of children, and geographic costs of living.[5]

Special Education (SPED)

Instruction or education that is required to meet the needs of children with special needs and that cannot be addressed through modification of regular education program.[6]

Substantiated Maltreatment

An allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment that meets the state legal definition of child abuse or neglect and is believed to have occurred.

Unaccompanied Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Children under the age of 18 and young adults aged 18-24 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not a parent presenting with or sleeping in the same place as their child(ren).

Unsheltered Homelessness

Individuals whose primary residence or sleeping arrangements are in a private or public space that is not ordinarily for use as a sleeping accommodation, including individuals sleeping in a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

LIST OF COMMON ACRONYMS

ACEs   Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACS   American Community Survey

AMI   Area Median Income

APD   Adult Probation Department

BIPOC   Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

CA DOF   California Department of Finance

CBO   Community-based Organizations

CDC   Center for Disease Control and Prevention

CDE   California Department of Education

CHI   Community Hubs Initiative

CNA   Community Needs Assessment

CSEC   Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

DCYF   Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families

DPH   Department of Public Health

ELL   English Language Learner

FPL   Federal Poverty Level

HSA   Human Services Agency

HSH   Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

HUD   U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

IEP   Individualized Education Program

JPD   Juvenile Probation Department

LEP   Limited English Proficiency

LGBTQQ   Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning

MOHCD   Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

OAC   Children, Youth, and Their Families Oversight and Advisory Committee

OECE   Office of Early Care and Education

OEWD   Office of Economic Workforce and Development

ORE   Office of Racial Equity

OST   Out of School Time

PIT   Point-in-Time count

RPD   Recreation and Park Department

RFP   Request for Proposals

SAP   Services Allocation Plan

SEL   Social and Emotional Learning

SES	Socioeconomic Status
SFPD	San Francisco Police Department
SF RISE	Students and Families Recovery with Inclusive and Successful Enrichment
SFUSD	San Francisco Unified School District
SIP	Shelter-in-Place
SPED	Special Education
SPWG	Service Providers Working Group
SSS	Self-Sufficiency Standard
SRO	Single Room Occupancy Unit
TAY	Transitional Age Youth
YRBS	Youth Risk Behavior Survey
YWD	Youth Workforce Development

Introduction

OVERVIEW OF DCYF'S PLANNING CYCLE

This Community Needs Assessment (CNA) report completes the first phase of a multiyear planning process that underpins DCYF's five-year funding cycle. The CNA examines disparities in community experiences, educational attainment, lifelong career outcomes, and resource access, shedding light on high need groups who can most benefit from services and programming. Our Services Allocation Plan (SAP) represents the second phase of our planning cycle. Through the SAP, DCYF allocates resources for services in alignment and in response to CNA findings. DCYF acknowledges that San Francisco communities and City partners maintain numerous assets to promote the well-being of children, youth, and families. As a result, DCYF collaborates with City partners to explore existing assets and identify allocation approaches that both strengthen existing services and support new programs. The third and final phase culminates with DCYF's Request for Proposals (RFP) and subsequent awards of five-year direct service grants. Through our RFP, DCYF seeks applications from community-based organizations (CBOs) to address the disparities in experiences and outcomes that our CNA highlights. DCYF requires the programs and agencies we select for funding to implement services described in our SAP and fulfill additional requirements outlined in our RFP.

DCYF CENTERS EQUITY IN OUR PLANNING

DCYF commits to embedding principles and reflections of equity throughout our external and internal work. As a government agency that distributes public resources, we recognize our role in dismantling systems of oppression that impact the communities we serve. Holding this role, DCYF weaves equity as both a method and goal throughout our planning process to prioritize services for communities that present high service needs due to lived experiences at the confluence of multiple systems of oppression. DCYF prioritizes community engagement so that the voices of the City's diverse communities guide our plans for allocating City resources. We disaggregate data whenever possible to identify layered disparities to target with our funding. When vetting proposed services, DCYF funds community connected providers that demonstrate cultural and linguistic competence to increase the likelihood of services achieving the impacts we seek for communities we prioritize.

Internally, DCYF ensures that our staff constantly explore the complex and ever-changing needs and experiences of the children, youth, disconnected transitional aged youth (TAY), and their families in San Francisco. DCYF engages in the San Francisco Office of Racial Equity's (ORE) Racial Equity Action Planning process, which prompts us to critically examine our internal operations and ensure that our systems and practices align with our values. DCYF requires ongoing training for staff to learn about equity concepts and grow our understanding of how the groups we seek to serve experience conditions of inequity. These practices help DCYF focus our efforts on effective services and supports that bridge gaps in opportunity for children, youth, disconnected TAY, and families across San Francisco's marginalized communities.

DEFINING & OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY & INTERSECTIONALITY

DCYF defines equity as just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. DCYF defines racial equity as a set of practices, rooted in an understanding of historical and present-day oppression, that aims towards a goal of fairness for all racial groups. We believe racial equity will be achieved when race can no longer predict outcomes or the distribution of opportunity. DCYF puts equity and racial equity into practice through processes that help us determine the ethnic and high needs groups most impacted by poverty and through approaches that help us target services to meet the needs of these groups. Our approach also prioritizes partnership with other City agencies to ensure coordination.

DCYF defines Intersectionality as the process whereby interconnected social categories such as race, class, and gender create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for an individual or group. DCYF puts intersectionality into practice by acknowledging that lived experiences with overlapping systems of oppression condition the life course outcomes and service needs of the City's children, youth, disconnected TAY, and families. This lens prompts DCYF to engage with a range of groups to gather data and perspectives that help us understand experiences at the intersections of systems of oppression.

"DCYF defines equity as just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential."

GUIDING QUESTIONS OF THE CNA

Through our CNA, DCYF works toward the goal of understanding the gaps and needs that San Francisco's population of children, youth, disconnected TAY, and families face in existing services and programs. This report also aims to identify and highlight programs, services, and community assets that promote resiliency. The following key questions guide the data collection and analyses in this report:

- How are children, youth, TAY, and families faring in San Francisco?

- What groups of children, youth, TAY, and families face significant disparities in opportunities or outcomes?

- What are the service needs of children, youth, TAY, and families in San Francisco?

- What are the services and resources that are available in low-income and disadvantaged communities compared to the services and resources that are available citywide?

- What are existing programs, services, and community assets that enable children, youth, TAY, and families to thrive in the face of everyday adversities?

- How have the well-being and service needs of children, youth, TAY, and families changed because of COVID-19?

- What programs, services, and community assets might enable children, youth, TAY, and families to recover from the impacts of COVID-19?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES OF THE CNA

The CNA presents a summary of circumstances and related needs that DCYF observes in the lived experiences of San Francisco's children, youth, disconnected TAY, and their families. DCYF held the following principles and corresponding practices as centering guides during our process.

- **Equity**
  - Identify populations facing concentrated need for priority outreach and engagement.
  - Disaggregate data by social and economic characteristics wherever possible.
  - Analyze current investments with an equity lens.
  - Document the strengths and needs of local communities to inform the equitable allocation of DCYF funds.
  - Provide a range of inclusive and accessible opportunities for community members to provide input on the strengths and needs of local communities and priority populations.
  - Acknowledge the impact of overlapping systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism) on opportunities and outcomes.
  - Minimize burden imposed on high need communities by leveraging existing data and community engagement efforts with partners where possible.
- **Research**
  - Incorporate research and findings from other City departments and local organizations.
  - Use high-quality data sources and conduct tailored analysis.
  - Engage experts to conduct qualitative data collection.
- **Community Voice**
  - Conduct targeted outreach and engagement throughout the City to gather input from community stakeholders with attention to parent and youth voice.
  - Use creative outreach and participatory methods to allow for authentic and empowered community participation.

EQUITY

RESEARCH

COMMUNITY VOICE

COVID-19'S IMPACT ON DCYF'S PLANNING TIMELINE

Data collection for the CNA began with the Family Summits we conducted in each supervisorial district in 2019; however, the onset of COVID-19 caused major disruptions to our process. With much of the City shut down from the March 2020 Shelter-in-Place (SIP) Order, DCYF was forced to pause the CNA and extend our five-year funding cycle for an additional year. Our planning work resumed in summer 2021 with a clear focus on additional data collection related to the pandemic's impacts on the City's children, youth, disconnected TAY, and their families. DCYF undertook additional efforts to explore emerging themes of isolation and trauma stemming from conditions of illness, loneliness, and economic hardship related to or exacerbated by the pandemic. In short, this report reflects needs that both preceded and were accelerated by COVID-19.

2018

Summer 2018 — **Start of 2018-2023 Funding Cycle**

2019

Fall 2019 — **We Are The City Family Summits**
Data collection events in all 11 Supervisor Districts

Spring 2020 — **Shelter-in-Place (SIP)**
CNA activities temporarily suspended due to COVID-19
Funding cycle extended to 2024

2020

Spring 2021 — **CNA Plan Re-Issue**

Summer 2021 - Winter 2022 — **Data Collection**

2021

Spring 2022 — **Report Writing**

Summer 2022 — **Report Review & Approval**

2022

TBD — **Next Steps: Services Allocation Plan (SAP) & Request for Proposals (RFQ)**

Summer 2023 — **Original 2018-2023 Funding Cycle End Date**

2023

Summer 2024 — **2018-2024 Funding Cycle Ends**
2024-2029 Funding Cycle begins July 2024

2024

Simultaneous with the relaunch of the CNA, DCYF also led the Mayor's Children and Family Recovery Plan, and the Students and Families Recovery with Inclusive and Successful Enrichment (SF RISE) Initiative.* These efforts explore in greater depth the unique experiences and impacts of the pandemic on San Francisco communities and SFUSD students. Since many of the community engagement efforts for the CNA were shared with the Children and Family Recovery Plan and SF RISE, the findings of these reports echo one another and will jointly inform our SAP and RFP.

DCYF'S CITYWIDE RESULT AREAS & REPORT STRUCTURE

This report builds upon frameworks and structures adopted during our previous planning cycle. In 2016, DCYF launched a Results-Based Accountability planning process to inform the development of our 2017 SAP. This process culminated in the identification of four Citywide result areas that encapsulate aspirations shared by children, youth, disconnected TAY, and their families. These result areas reflect fundamental conditions that all children, youth, disconnected TAY, and their families deserve. We believe we have an active role in cultivating and shaping these conditions. This report is structured around the result areas because we remain committed to advancing positive changes toward these results in the daily experiences and life outcomes of San Francisco's marginalized communities.

DCYF'S RESULT AREAS

CHILDREN & YOUTH ARE SUPPORTED BY NURTURING FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

CHILDREN & YOUTH ARE PHYSICALLY & EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY

CHILDREN & YOUTH ARE READY TO LEARN & SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

YOUTH ARE READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK & PRODUCTIVE ADULTHOOD

*For more information on these efforts and the final reports, refer to their respective sections on the DCYF website: dcyf.org/recovery and dcyf.org/sfrise.

Before presenting findings related to our result areas, this report opens with key population statistics (Overview of San Francisco's Children, Youth, and Families) and a review of broad economic conditions experienced across the City's diverse communities (Opportunity in San Francisco). These sections provide context to the findings presented in subsequent chapters and reflect the economic stresses voiced in many of our community engagement sessions. While these stresses—the need for affordable housing and a living wage, for example—go beyond the scope of any one single City department to address alone, these same topics influence experiences of disparities and conditions of need related to our result areas. Given this relationship, DCYF presents the Opportunity in San Francisco section as a foundation to the subsequent chapters.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods for this report were guided by requirements laid out by the San Francisco City Charter. City Charter requires that "outreach for the CNA shall create opportunities for parents, youth, nonprofit agencies, and other members of the public, to provide input."* Additionally, the CNA must include "qualitative and quantitative data sets collected through interviews, focus groups, surveys, or other outreach mechanisms to determine service gaps in programming for children, youth, and families." DCYF leverages our partnerships with City agencies and CBOs to expand our ability to connect with a diverse range of communities. This enables our CNA and following planning products (SAP and RFP) to reflect community voice and input.

The priority populations that DCYF targeted for outreach originate in our 2016 CNA, which identified groups with concentrated need. These populations, presented in Figure 1, were referenced throughout the 2017 SAP and the 2018-23 RFP. DCYF gathered input from youth and families at the confluence of known histories of marginalization, including those from priority populations with limited recent data. Leading with the understanding that racial and ethnic identities frame experiences of marginalization, DCYF planned engagements with African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African, Pacific Islander, Multiracial, and low-Income Asian families. Additionally, we planned engagement sessions with specific populations, acknowledging that overlapping layers of individual and community identity subject young people and families to intersecting systems of oppression. These include girls and young women, youth and TAY who identify as LGBTQ+, youth with special needs and their families, families experiencing homelessness, immigrant parents, undocumented youth, and youth and TAY with justice system involvement, among others.

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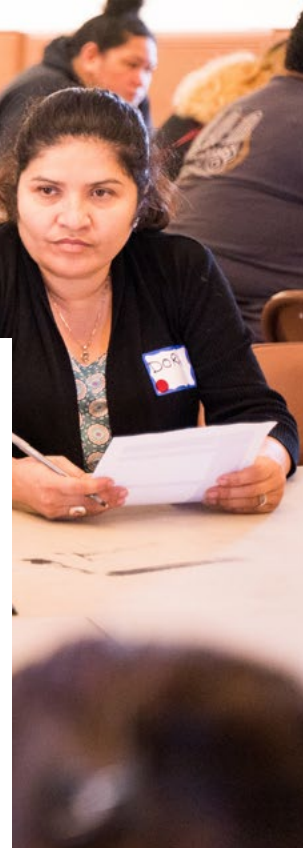
*For more information on the City Charter legislation guiding DCYF's grantmaking process and planning cycle, please visit: dcyf.org/legislation.

Figure 1. DCYF Priority Populations

CITYWIDE/UNIVERSAL NEED

CONCENTRATED NEED

CHARACTERISTICS OF INCREASED NEED

All SF children, youth & their families

- African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx & Pacific Islander children, youth & families
- Low-income Asian children, youth & families
- Disconnected transitional age youth (TAY)
- Families economically impacted by COVID-19
- Individuals with disabilities & their families

- English Learner
- Foster Youth
- LGBTQQ
- Teen parent
- Under-housed
- Undocumented
- Children of incarcerated parents
- Justice system involvement
- Exposure to violence, abuse or trauma
- Academic underperformance or disconnect from school

City Charter also requires the CNA to include "a set of equity metrics to be used to establish a baseline of existing services and resources in low-income neighborhood and disadvantaged communities, compared to services and resources available in the city as a whole." We recognize that poverty correlates strongly with increased need across all our result areas. Additionally, as socioeconomic status and economic inequality across the country continue to structure along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, and other social characteristics with histories of marginalization, we reference disparities and needs according to these characteristics throughout the report. These indicators and metrics will deeply inform our SAP and RFP. Information in the CNA may also prove valuable for broader Citywide planning, and we strive to present high-quality research that can inform funding priorities for children, youth, disconnected TAY, and their families across City agencies.

DATA SOURCES

This report integrates information from a wide array of sources to answer the guiding questions described above. We reviewed literature from the field, gathered population-level data, analyzed local survey data, and conducted community input sessions and targeted outreach to priority populations. When possible, we leveraged existing work by partner agencies to minimize oversaturating high need communities with redundant data collection efforts. The specific data sources referenced by this report include:

- **Literature Review:** DCYF conducted an extensive review of academic research and literature from the field to understand conditions and experiences facing San Francisco children, youth, TAY, and their families and to inform new data collection activities.

- **Public and Administrative Data Sources and Reports:** DCYF analyzed recent data and reports from local, regional, state, and national sources to describe

population demographics and track indicators related to our result areas. Data sources range from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) to summary reports made available by City departments.

- **Community Input Activities:** DCYF launched community input activities in fall 2019. Efforts paused for much of the pandemic, resumed in summer 2021, and concluded in January 2022. Over this period DCYF partnered with numerous City staff, CBOs, and community leaders to gather input and feedback from children, youth, TAY, and families throughout the City. Appendix A provides a summary of community engagement activities along with survey instruments, focus group questions, and interview protocols. Activities include

  - **Family Summits:** DCYF partnered with Bright Research Group and the Board of Supervisors to hold community meetings in each of the City's 11 supervisorial districts in 2019 to share information about our planning process and gather input directly from community members.* Interpretation services were provided for sessions as needed.

  - **Surveys:** DCYF designed and administered multiple surveys in 2021 to understand the experiences of, and supports needed by, children, youth, TAY, and their families. DCYF partnered with City agencies, CBO partners, and San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to distribute and collect surveys at public housing sites, events and fairs targeted to priority populations, and direct to SFUSD students.

  - **Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR):** DCYF partnered with the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), and the San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI), to implement youth-led research activities in the summer and fall of 2021. Participating students planned research activities, collected surveys, and conducted interviews with peers and school staff.

  - **Focus Groups:** In partnership and coordination with Clarity Social Research, CBOs, and City agencies, DCYF facilitated focus groups with youth and parents/caregivers to gather insights into the lived experiences of San Francisco communities. From July 2021 to January 2022, approximately 450 participants engaged in 40 focus groups. Clarity staff led facilitation through virtual platforms or in-person, with DCYF staff present for support and observations. Language interpretation support was provided as needed and all focus group participants received monetary incentives.

  - **Interviews:** DCYF collected insights from CBO leaders, SFUSD staff, and City colleagues via individual or group interviews to leverage their expertise and experience providing services for the City's vulnerable populations. DCYF and Clarity staff also conducted brief intercept interviews with community members at events where our staff were collecting surveys.

Summaries of each Family Summit and a Citywide review appear on the DCYF website for public review: dcyf.org/family-summit-district-summaries

Overview of San Francisco's Children, Youth & Families

This section offers an overview of key demographics related to children, youth, and families in San Francisco to provide context for the topical discussions and community experiences presented in this report. Many of the data points presented in this section reflect estimates generated from U.S. Census Bureau products such as the ACS and the 2020 Decennial Census.*

POPULATION TRENDS IN SAN FRANCISCO & THE BAY AREA

San Francisco is a highly dense, urban city-county contained within roughly 47 square miles. It is situated within the greater nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, an ethnically diverse and populous region of Northern California comprised of nearly 8 million people. The region ranks as one of the wealthiest in the country, with a gross domestic product of $1.10 trillion in 2019.[7] Despite the profound economic impacts of COVID-19, a report from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) projects the Bay Area's population to rise to over 10 million residents by 2050 and the number of jobs to increase from 4 million to more than 5 million over the same timeframe.[8]

Figure 2. SF Select Demographics, 2000-2021

	2000	2010	2014	2019	2021
Total San Francisco Residents	776,733	805,235	852,469	874,961	815,201
Families with children under 18	63,021	62,936	62,494	60,780	--
% with Bachelor's degree or higher (Age 25 years & over)	--	51.2%	54.2%	58.1%	--
Single-parent households	--	14,820	12,735	10,766	--

Source: US Census Bureau. Data sourced from 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, and 2010, 2014, and 2019 American Community Survey (1-year and 5-year estimates) Tables S1501 and DP02, 2021 Population Estimates

The population of San Francisco boomed in the years preceding the pandemic, then declined after COVID-19's onset. U.S. Census Bureau estimates show approximately 875,000 San Francisco residents in 2019, which represents an increase of nearly 100,000 people from 2000. COVID-19 spurred the first population decrease in San Francisco in years, with the City's population declining to 815,000 residents in 2021 (Figure 2). Recent media headlines refer to the "CalExodus" caused by the pandemic

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While these products represent some of the most comprehensive data sources available, there are key limitations to note. At the writing of this report, the U.S. Census Bureau had released limited data from the 2020 Decennial Census. The most recent data referenced in this section do not fully describe the pandemic's impact on the population, though initial 2021 estimates show a steep population decline. Additionally, COVID-19 disrupted the U.S. Census Bureau's data collection activities. Recent reports suggest the 2020 Census may undercount young children under age 5 and populations that identify as African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latinx and overcount people who identify as Asian and White.

and remote work, where droves of residents are leaving major cities like San Francisco and out of California altogether. Research by the California Policy Lab attributes San Francisco's net population decline to both a drastic decrease in out-of-state entrances since the pandemic's start as well as an exodus of households leaving the City.[10] San Francisco's 6.3% decrease in its population from 2020 to 2021 was second only to New York County among U.S. counties with over 100,000 residents.[11] According to a May 2021 poll conducted by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, 44% of voters say they are likely to move out of the City in the next few years, primarily due to cost of living and a decreased quality of life.[12] Additional discussion of economic topics and their influence on communities' quality of life is presented in the Opportunity in San Francisco section of this report.

Forecasts from the California Department of Finance (CA DOF) have not fully adjusted for San Francisco's population decrease, but the most recent projections shown in Figure 3 suggest that the City's population growth will rebound and continue its upward, albeit slower, trajectory, surpassing 930,000 individuals in 2030. An analysis completed by the San Francisco Planning Department explains that the City's overall population growth in recent decades has been due to a rise in married and unmarried couples, who increased in number by 28,500 or over 50% since 1990, far more than total household growth of 18%.[13] On the other hand, the number of families with children under 18 has been slowly declining in the past two decades.

Figure 3. SF Population Estimates and Projections, 2010-2030
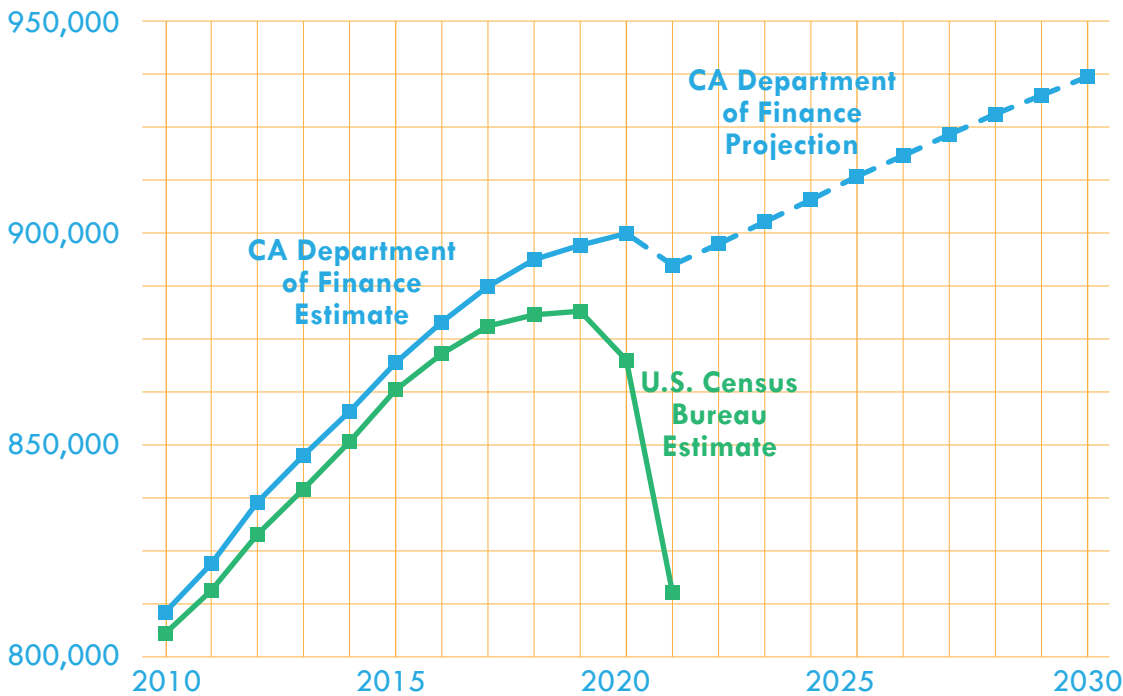
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program. California DOF, Population Projections.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & TAY IN SAN FRANCISCO

The 2019 ACS estimates 118,000 children and youth under 18 in San Francisco.[9] Based on 2019 counts, San Francisco ranks as one of the nation's major cities in terms of the lowest percentage of residents younger than 18; children and youth comprise only 13.4% of the City's population. In comparison, those under 18 make up 20.8% of New York City residents, 20.7% of Los Angeles residents, and 25.1% of Houston residents.

Children & youth comprise only

13.4%

of the City's population

This is not a new population trend; our 2016 CNA also cited San Francisco's relatively small percentage of residents who are children and youth. However, in the years preceding the pandemic, the number of children and youth had been steadily increasing alongside the overall growth in the City's population. With the drastic decline of the City's population following the onset of the pandemic, the number of children and youth also decreased, with almost 4,000 fewer residents under 18 in 2020 compared to 2019.

The population of 0 to 4 year-olds in San Francisco steadily increased from 2000 to 2014, with little population change between 2014 and 2019. Figure 4 illustrates the addition of nearly 8,000 0 to 4 year-olds since the year 2000, which parallels an influx of couples of child-rearing age in the past two decades who gave birth in the City. Data on 5 to 17 year-olds presents a different story. In the first decade of the 2000s, the number of school-aged children declined by nearly 9,000, which suggests that families with young children moved out of the City when their children reached school age. This trend appears to have reversed in the past decade. Since 2010, there has been an addition of 6,000 5 to 17 year-olds. This pattern may indicate that while families face challenges to living in the City, efforts to meet community needs may effectively support families' abilities to maintain San Francisco as home.

The number of 18 to 24 year-olds has followed a different trajectory. The population increased by 7,000 between 2000 and 2010, before sharply declining by 15,000 between 2010 and 2019. Challenges arise when attempting to discern demographic trends for disconnected TAY, as defined by the City Charter, from the entirety of San Francisco's population ages 18 to 24. According to the Charter, "Disconnected Transitional-Aged Youth are those who: are homeless or in danger of homelessness; have dropped out of high school; have a disability or other special needs, including substance abuse; are low-income parents; are undocumented; are new immigrants and/or English Language Learners ('ELL'); are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning ('LGBTQQ'); and/or are transitioning from the foster care, juvenile justice, criminal justice or special education system." Given the decline in overall number of 18 to 24 year-olds, it is reasonable to expect that the number of disconnected TAY has also dropped in the past decade.

Figure 4. Population by Age Group, 2000-2020

Age	2000	2010	2014	2019	2021
Under 18 years of age	112,802	107,524	114,445	117,546	113,227
Under 5 years of age	31,633	35,203	39,307	39,536	--
5 to 17 years of age	81,169	72,321	75,138	78,010	--
18 to 24 years of age	70,596	77,664	66,128	62,085	--

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates and 2020 Decennial Census.

Figure 5 displays the projected numbers of children, youth, and 18-to-24 year-olds over the next decade based on forecasts from CA DOF. The number of 5 to 17 year-olds is expected to continue its rise, a reflection of the increase of children born in the last ten years. Meanwhile, the projections show that the number of children in the 0 to 4 age group are expected to decline back to 2010 levels. The reasons for this decline may vary, but it is likely that the drastic spikes in the cost of living strongly factor into decisions not to raise children in San Francisco. In particular, the costs of childcare and housing have risen dramatically. This will be further discussed in the Opportunity in San Francisco section of this report.

Figure 5. Population Estimates and Projections by Age Group, 2010-2030

78,068
72,213
94,013
67,298
100,369
77,144
41,788
35,163
35,720

Ages 5-17
Ages 18-24
Ages 0-4
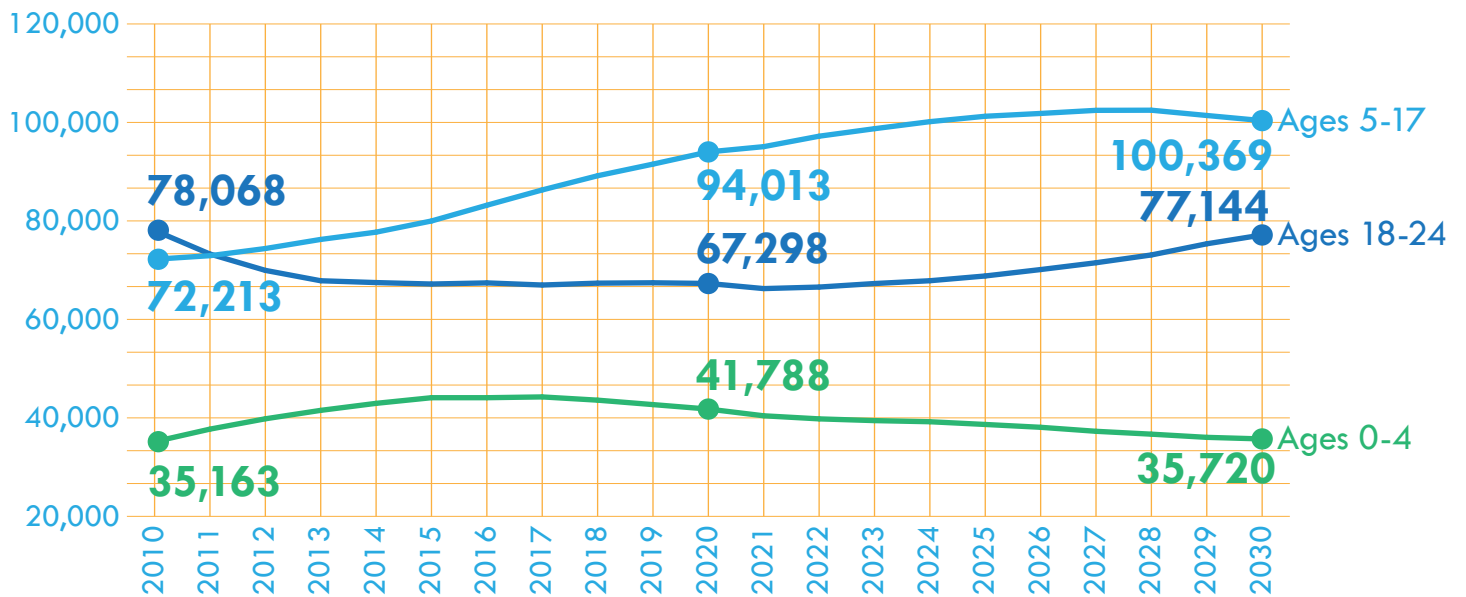
Source: California Department of Finance, "Population Projections."

Geographically, children and youth are not distributed evenly across San Francisco. The map below shows the distribution of children under 18 in San Francisco by neighborhood. Most of the City's children live in the Southeast region including **Bayview-Hunters Point, Bernal Heights, Excelsior, Oceanview/Merced/Ingleside, and Visitation Valley**, as well as in Western neighborhoods such as **Sunset/Parkside and Outer Richmond**.

Figure 6. SF Population Under 18 By Neighborhood, 2019

Population Under 18

☐ 0–1,103
☐ 1,104–2,127
☐ 2,128–3,563
☐ 3,564–12,665
☐ Insufficient Data
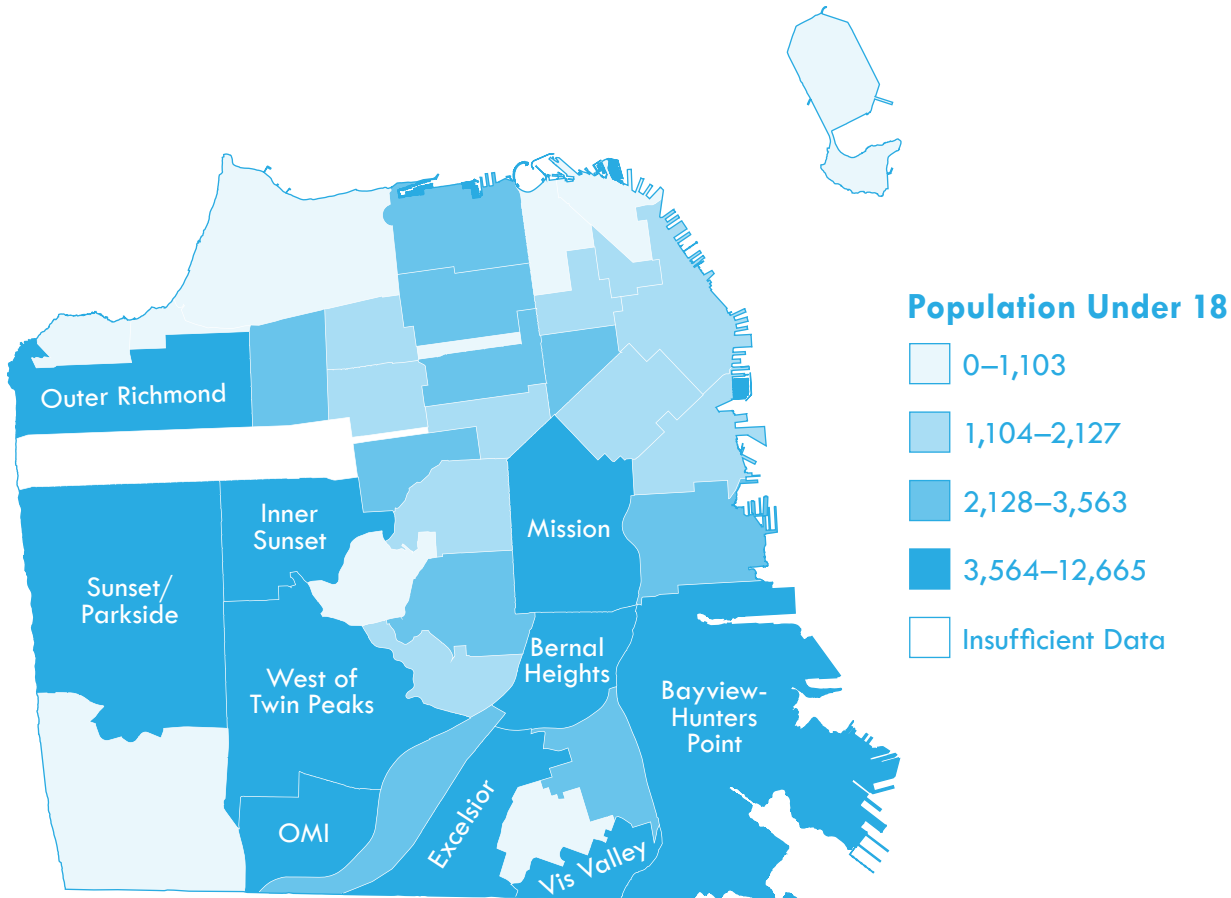
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates.

THE CITY IS A DIVERSE BUT CHANGING PLACE

San Francisco's racial and cultural diversity have been named by children, youth, TAY, and families as one of its strongest assets. However, over the past several decades, major demographic shifts have included changes to the racial/ethnic makeup. As Figure 7 shows, the African American/Black population declined by nearly 14,000 in the past two decades. While American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander populations in the City are much smaller, they have also experienced proportionately significant declines in recent decades. During the same period, Asian residents increased by 56,000, Hispanic/Latinx residents increased by 27,000, and those reporting two or more races nearly doubled. The population of Whites has remained relatively stable.

"I love living here in SF, you can go to school, and you can work too. It's very pretty. We come from different countries. We have the opportunity to meet more people from different countries and that's great."

—*Young person, focus group with TAY providing household economic support*

Figure 7. SF Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-2020

Race/Ethnicity	2000	2010	2014	2019	2020	2020 (under 18)
African American/Black	58,791	46,781	44,419	43,782	45,071	5,946
American Indian/Alaska Native	2,020	1,828	1,440	1,634	1,570	169
Asian	238,173	265,700	287,291	298,108	294,220	33,216
Pacific Islander	3,602	3,128	3,474	2,934	3,244	571
Multiracial	23,154	26,079	31,827	37,140	42,194	12,801
Other	2,580	2,494	5,612	3,626	6,347	1,153
White	338,909	337,451	348,131	354,423	341,306	32,683
Hispanic/Latinx	109,504	121,774	130,275	133,314	136,761	25,710

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates and 2020 Decennial Census

Figure 8. Race/Ethnicity Population Change Over Time, 2005-2019

43.8% ... **39.8%** White
33.5% ... **34.3%** Asian
13.6% ... **15.3%** Hispanic/Latino
6.2% ... **5.4%** African American/Black
2.0% ... Multiracial
... **3.9%** Pacific Islander
Other
American Indian/Alaska Native
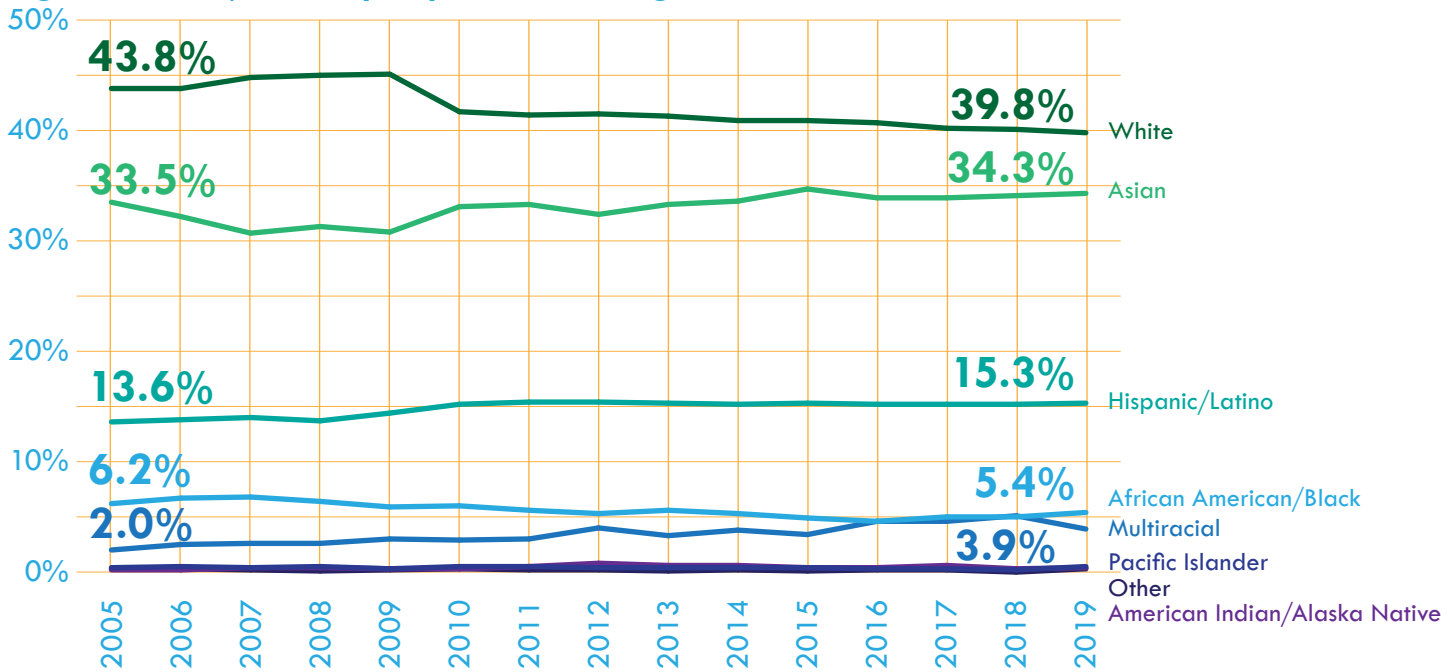
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2019 PUMS 1-Year.

The racial and ethnic makeup of children and youth under 18 can be seen in Figure 9. There are some notable differences between the race/ethnicity distribution of the total population compared to those under 18. For example, the percentage of children and youth that are Hispanic/Latinx is 23%, while Hispanic/Latinx individuals only make up 15% of the total population. In contrast, Asian and White people represent a greater percentage of the total population (34% and 38%, respectively), but Asian and White children and youth represent a smaller share of the under 18 population (27% and 27%, respectively). There is also a significantly higher proportion of Multiracial children and youth (14%) than Multiracial individuals overall (5%). Among TAY, there are larger proportions of African American/Black, Asian and Hispanic/Latinx than there are of those racial/ethnic groups among the total population.

Figure 9. SF Total Population of Children/Youth Under 18 by Race/Ethnicity, 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Decennial Census.

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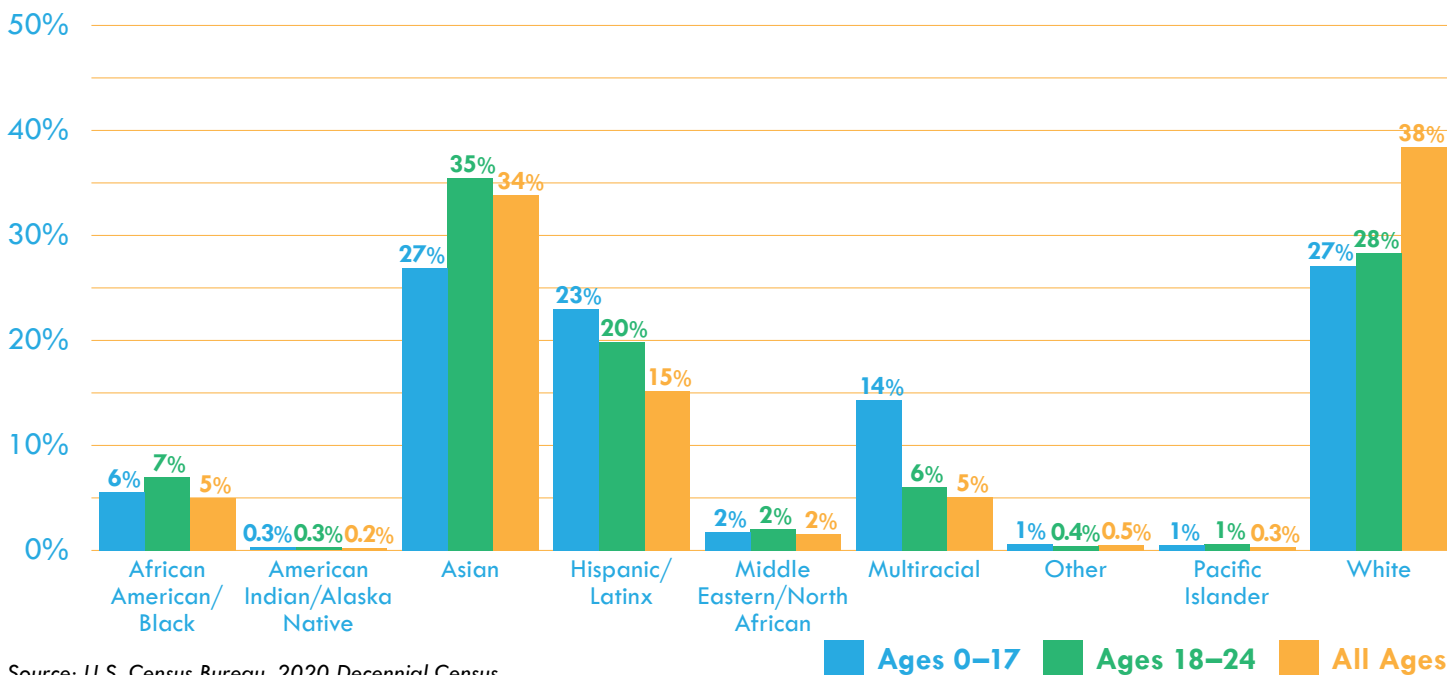
While the race/ethnicity categories presented are routinely used by government data sources, summary data based on these broad categories may mask unique experiences and potential disparities within racial groups. For example, when analyzing data on "Asians," the ways in which needs, access to resources, and life outcomes vary among Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Cambodian, and more distinct ethnic groups become difficult to discern. Pacific Islander subgroups, Hispanic/Latinx subgroups, and Multiracial groups may benefit from similar disaggregation. Furthermore, while we aim to present a detailed picture of experiences and outcomes by race/ethnicity, small population sizes may limit our ability to accurately report on a given subgroup. In particular, American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander groups are critically underserved in San Francisco, but their comparatively small presence in the City presents challenges in data collection. Appendix B describes the racial and ethnic categories discussed in this report and a closer look at population counts disaggregated into these subgroups.

Despite our diversity, geographic analyses show that racial segregation exists in San Francisco. Different racial/ethnic groups are highly concentrated in certain areas, and few census tracts alone reflect the proportions of races/ethnicities of the whole city.[14] African Americans are largely clustered in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood and parts of downtown. Extremely high housing costs and residues of historical practices of racial segregation and redlining continue to limit Black residents from settling elsewhere in the City. Asian Americans are concentrated in the City's Chinatown neighborhood,

33

similarly restricted from settling elsewhere due to policies and practices of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Latinx community has long been associated with the Mission, though gentrifying forces in recent years have changed the face of the neighborhood. White households are heavily concentrated in the northern and central parts of the City.

These generalizations are helpful in understanding where certain racial groups tend to live, but significant pockets of racial diversity in other areas of the City are growing. City planners note that some of San Francisco's historically racially homogenous neighborhoods are fragmenting into increasingly diverse micro-neighborhoods. For example, Figure 10 presents a series of maps prepared by the San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) that display the location of Bayview-Hunters Point residents by race/ethnicity in relation to four public housing developments.[15] There is a significant Asian/Pacific Islander presence along the western edge of the neighborhood boundary. African American/Black individuals and families are more concentrated near Hunters View and Hunters Point, while the Latinx community lives near the Alice Griffith development. The series of maps in Figure 11, prepared for this report, show the concentration of racial/ethnic groups across different census tracts in 2020.

Figure 10. Geographic Distribution of Bayview-Hunters Point Residents by Race/Ethnicity
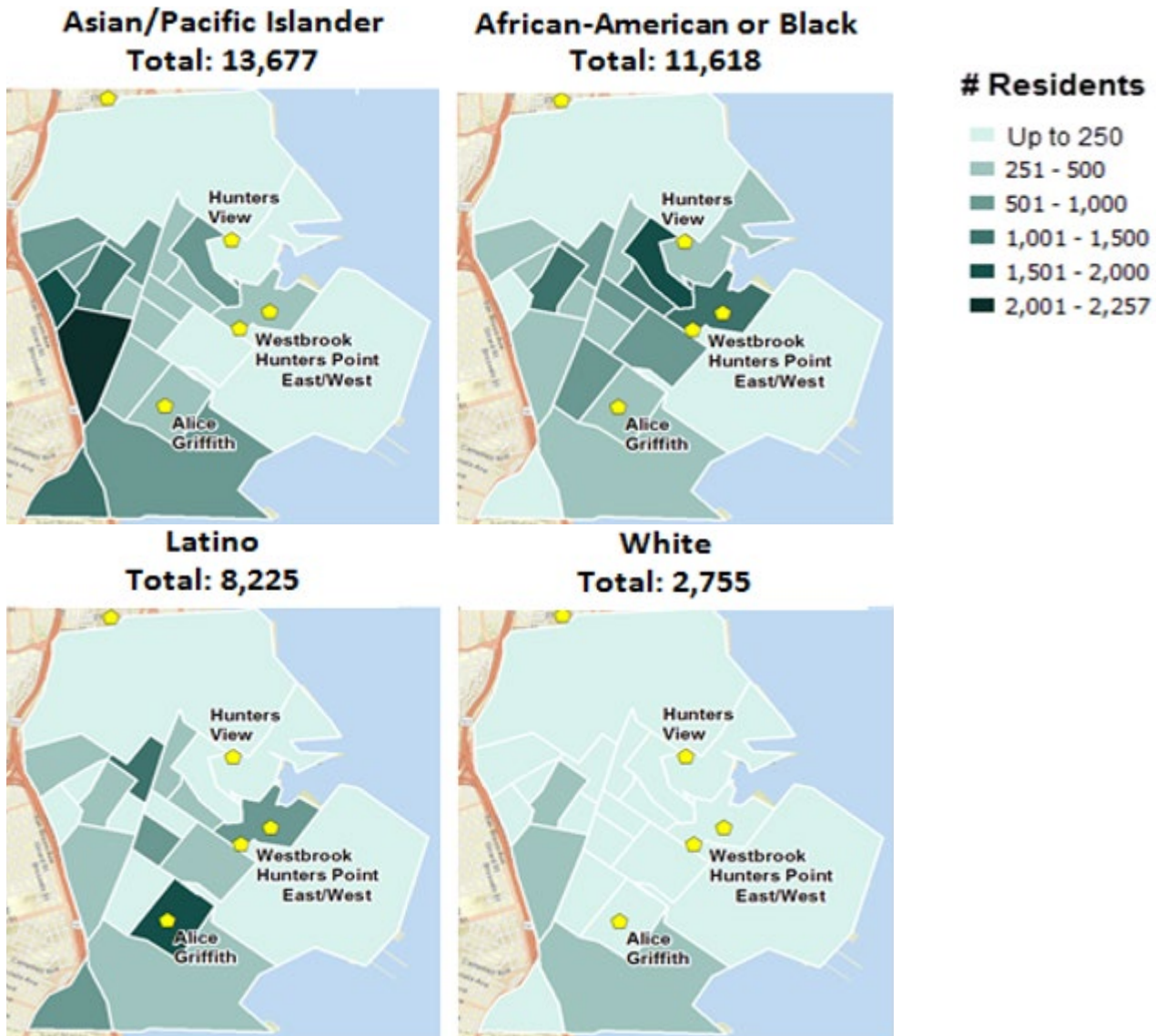
Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency utilizing 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census and 2014 5-Year ACS; Neighborhood identified based on census tract using SF Department of Planning 2015 guidelines

Figure 11. Concentration of Racial/Ethnic Groups Across Census Tracts, 2020

African American/
Black Population,
2020

American Indian/
Alaska Native
Population, 2020

Asian Population,
2020

Hispanic/Latino
Population, 2020

Multiracial
Population, 2020

Pacific Islander
Population, 2020

White
Population, 2020
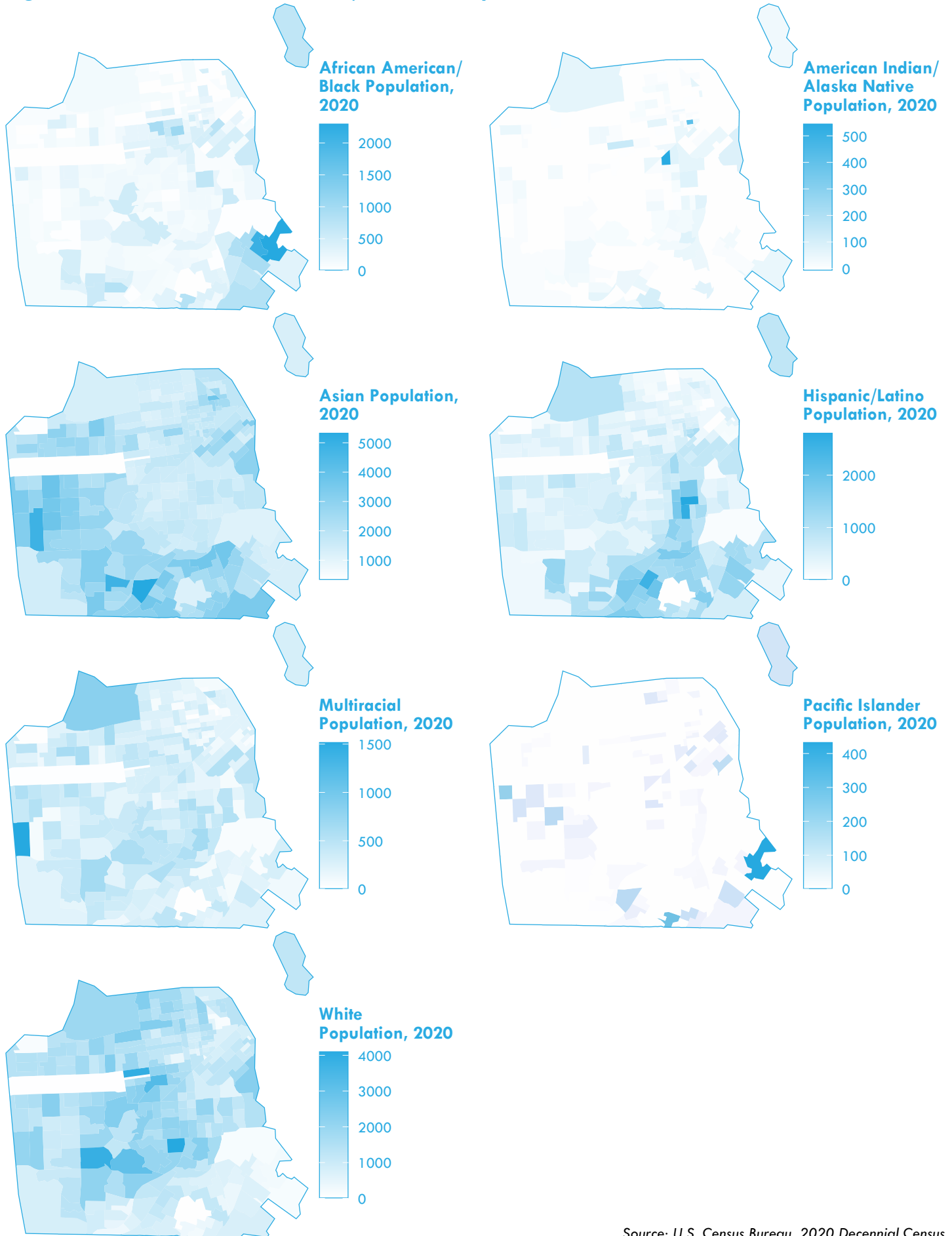
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

San Francisco's racial/ethnic diversity is also characterized by a significant immigrant population which contributes to its linguistic and cultural richness. In 2020, 299,510 residents were foreign-born, comprising a little over a third of the total population (Figure 12). Of the population ages 5 and over in San Francisco, 43% speak a language other than English at home, with Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, Russian, and Vietnamese among some of the most common languages spoken by Limited English Proficiency (LEP) households.[16]

Figure 12. Foreign-Born Population and Those Speaking Languages Other than English at Home, 2000-2020

	2000	2010	2015	2020
Foreign-Born	285,541	286,085	295,417	299,510
Speak Language other than English at home (ages 5 and over)	341,079	346,613	355,121	355,944
Chinese	133,869	144,627	149,123	150,440
Spanish	89,759	88,517	89,130	88,425
Filipino (Tagalog)	29,197	24,532	23,147	22,334

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, American Community Survey, 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 13 shows that among SFUSD students in 2020-21, there were 13,682 ELLs that speak a language other than English at home. This represents a significant decline from the nearly 17,000 ELLs speaking a foreign language in the preceding three years,[17] potentially reflecting the impacts of COVID-19 on migration patterns into San Francisco and declining enrollment at SFUSD. Regardless, these numbers provide a glimpse into the diversity of the City's public-school students.

Figure 13. SFUSD ELLs Speaking a Language Other than English at Home, 2017-2021

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
SFUSD ELLs Speaking a Language other than English at Home	16,869	16,960	16,920	13,682
Arabic	--	380	403	376
Cantonese	3,859	3,604	4,049	3,204
Filipino (Tagalog)	384	--	--	345
Mandarin	677	631	638	535
Spanish	8,015	8,202	9,329	7,587
Vietnamese	430	391	411	--
All Other	3,504	3,752	2,090	1,635

Source: San Francisco Unified School District.

GROWING INCOME INEQUALITY IN SAN FRANCISCO

In the past decade, income inequality in the Bay Area has sharply increased, resulting in a shrinking middle class and the displacement of low-income communities. Analysis conducted by the Brookings Institute in 2016 identified San Francisco as having the sixth highest inequality among major cities in the U.S., with those in the 95th percentile for household income earning $507,824 a year versus those in the 20th percentile earning just $31,840 per year.[18] Over the last decade, income grew much more significantly for the top decile than it did for the bottom decile in the Bay Area. Median household income increased by nearly $250,000 (or 87%) among house-

holds in the top decile but only grew 36% among households in the bottom decile between 2010 and 2019.[19] In San Francisco, 48% of households with children are above-moderate income or upper income, 36% are low or very-low income, and 16% of households with children are in the moderate-income category (See Figure 14).

Figure 14. Income Distribution of Households with Children, 2014-2018
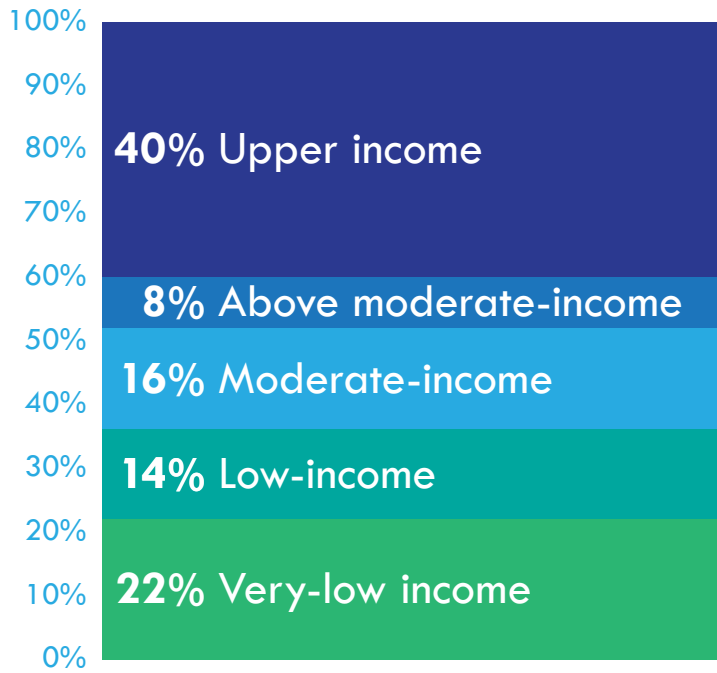
Source: San Francisco Planning Department, Analysis of 2014-2018 IPUMS.

A leading cause of the disparity in household income can be identified in the uneven growth in wages. In 2019, the average wage increased to $129,888, yet 60% of workers living in San Francisco continued to earn less than $100,000.[20] While the highest earners are seeing pay increases, the wages of the lowest earners are remaining stagnant, perpetuating the income disparity. These high wage jobs are industries and sectors that are often less occupied by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), women, LGBTQQ, undocumented, and systems-impacted individuals, making it very difficult for these communities to break the cycle of poverty. As a result, many low-income households in San Francisco are disproportionately represented by marginalized populations.

Economic turmoil brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has further widened this inequality, disproportionately affecting low-income households with children. While the City's population is projected to rebound and grow despite the temporary reversal caused by the pandemic, this growth needs to be inclusive of low-income and working-class families with children. If economic stressors, income inequality, and cost of living challenges continue to persist, families with children will not find it favorable or even possible to live in San Francisco. The next section provides further exploration into this topic.

Opportunity in San Francisco

This section explores Citywide data trends in poverty, unemployment, and homelessness to assess the well-being of children, youth, TAY, and families. Economic stresses widely permeated discussions of children, youth, and family needs during DCYF community engagements. In tandem with community voice, academic research correlates poverty with increased need across all topics relevant to DCYF's Citywide result areas. While these economic stresses—the need for affordable housing and a living wage, for example—go beyond the scope of any one single City department to address alone, these same topics influence experiences of disparities and conditions of need related to our result areas. Given this relationship, DCYF presents the Opportunity in San Francisco as a foundation to our subsequent chapters.

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN SAN FRANCISCO

At its simplest definition, poverty reflects a lack of resources to meet one's basic needs. Income alone provides an incomplete picture of poverty. In San Francisco, an individual earning $100,000 a year may afford the costs of their own material needs. However, a family of four living on the same income may face financial strain paying for basic expenses, such as childcare, food, housing, and transportation. Thus, measures of poverty generally consider household size and composition in addition to income. The U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates of the population in poverty by establishing poverty thresholds, commonly referred to as the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). There is not a single threshold; the amount varies by family size and number of children. Families with incomes below the FPL for their size and composition are considered in poverty. FPL is also used by government agencies to assess eligibility for public benefit programs, such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

In 2021, the FPL for a family of four with two children is approximately $27,500. For a high cost of living area such as San Francisco, a multiple of the FPL, such as 300% of the FPL (three times the FPL) is typically used to understand the extent of poverty across the population. Appendix C provides technical details on various measures of poverty and shows that families earning up to 500% of the FPL may still be considered low-income in San Francisco. For a family of four, 300% of the FPL is approximately $82,500, and 500% of the FPL is $137,000. ACS 5-year estimates from 2016-2020 suggest 30% of youth ages 0 to 17—nearly 34,000 youth—were living in families earning below 300% of the FPL and an additional 17% or 19,000 youth were in families earning below 500% of the FPL.

Poverty does not uniformly distribute across all characteristics of the population. Rather, poverty highly correlates with overlapping characteristics that include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, home language, ability statuses, household size, and educational attainment.[21] In San Francisco and the broader Bay Area, people of color constitute a disproportionately large number of low-income households.[22] Figure 15 indicates that children of families living below 300% FPL in San Francisco are more likely to be African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian American/Pacific Islander, as well as American Indian.[23]

Families earning up to

500%

of the FPL may be considered low-income in San Francisco

Figure 15. Percentage of Youth Ages 0-17 in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-2020
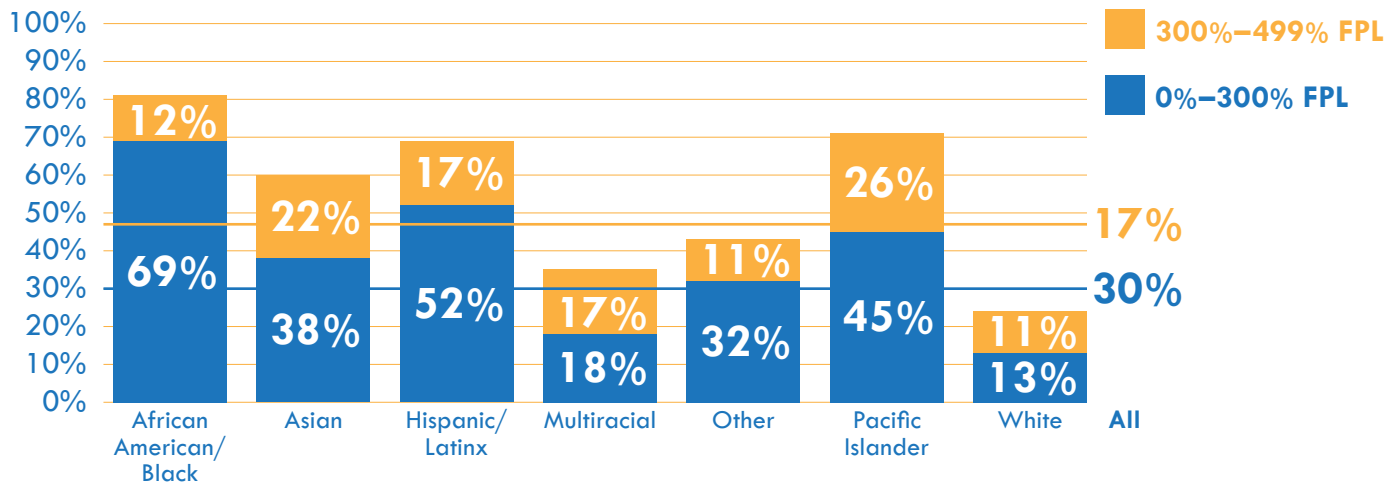
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, Analysis of 2016-2020 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample.

The geography of poverty in San Francisco parallels patterns of racial segregation introduced in the previous chapter. The City's southern and eastern perimeters house higher concentrations of families with children living below 300% FPL. Over half of children residing in **Treasure Island, Chinatown, Tenderloin, South of Market, Mission, Bayview-Hunters-Point, and the Visitacion Valley**, are living in poverty (See Figure 16).[24] Large numbers of youth under 18, especially youth of color, reside in the Mission, Ingleside, and Bayview neighborhoods, which also display high rates of youth in poverty. In addition, a significant share of children living in neighborhoods in **North Beach, Lakeshore, Western Addition, Portola, Excelsior, and Ingleside** are living below 300% of the FPL.

Figure 16. Percentage of Youth Ages 0-17 Below 300% FPL by Neighborhood, 2015-2019
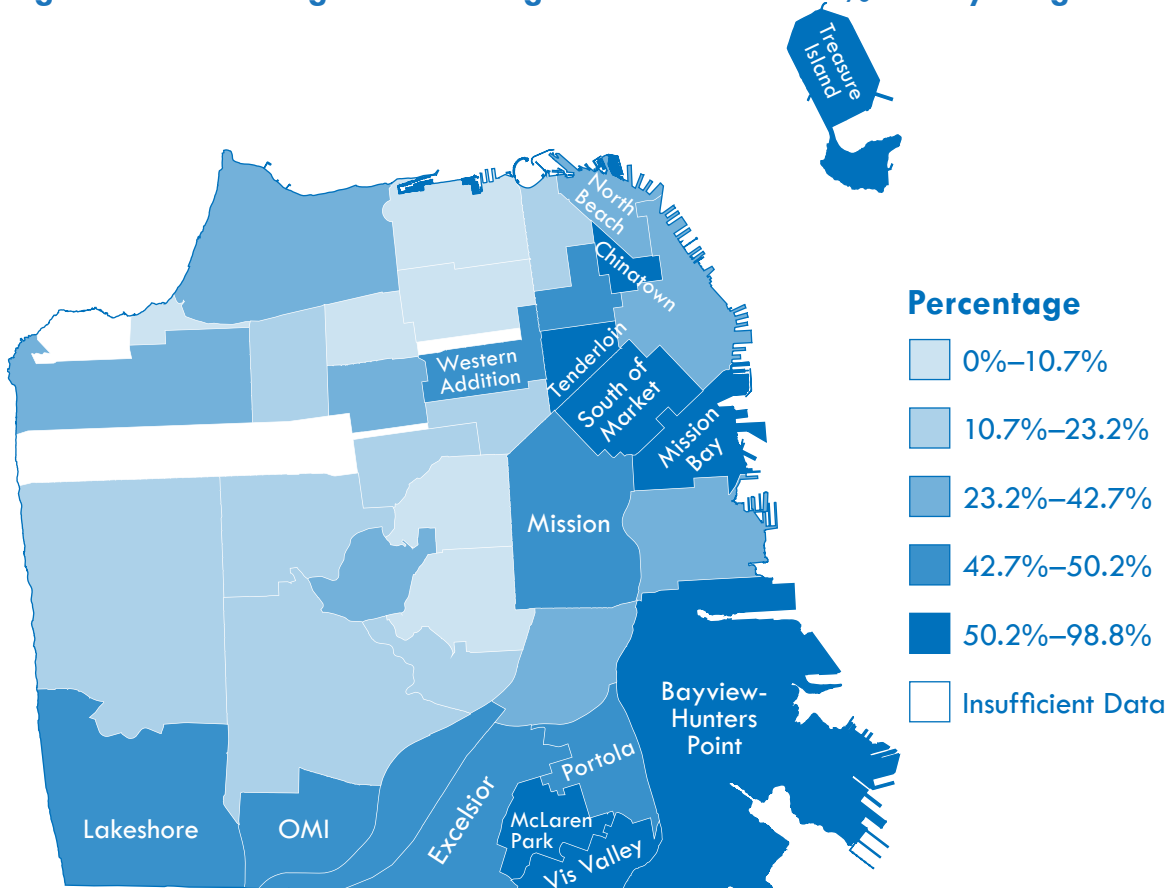
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates.

Neighborhoods with high rates of poverty are also home to many of the City's public housing sites. Administrative data from the San Francisco Housing Authority show approximately 9,500 public housing residents ages 18 and up in 2019.[25] Recent data on the number of children and youth in public housing are not readily available, but a set of reports from 2012 found more than 3,000 children and youth living in public housing at the time, including 1,200 youth in the City's HOPE SF public housing developments.[26] Relative to their share of the City's overall population, African American/Black and Pacific Islander individuals comprise a disproportionately large percentage of public housing residents at 33% and 4% respectively.

HIGH LIVING COSTS & WAGE DISPARITIES CONDITION HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

San Francisco's extreme and increasingly high costs of living and raising children heavily influence the City's poverty trends. According to the Insight Center's Family Needs Calculator, a family of four (two adults, one preschooler, and one school-aged child) must obtain an annual household income of at least $153,227 to pay for basic expenses. Figure 17 below displays the monthly costs for a family of four.[27] With the cost of basic expenses rising by 19% between 2018 and 2021 and housing and childcare costs comprising over half of a family's monthly budget, many families are struggling to afford basic needs, let alone remain in the city.[28] Only 49% of respondents to a DCYF survey of parents and caregivers agreed that they managed to pay rent, utility, and other bills.[29] In every focus group that DCYF facilitated, families identified high costs of living and raising children as an ongoing challenge in their experiences of City life.

The cost of basic expenses rose by

19%

between 2018 & 2021
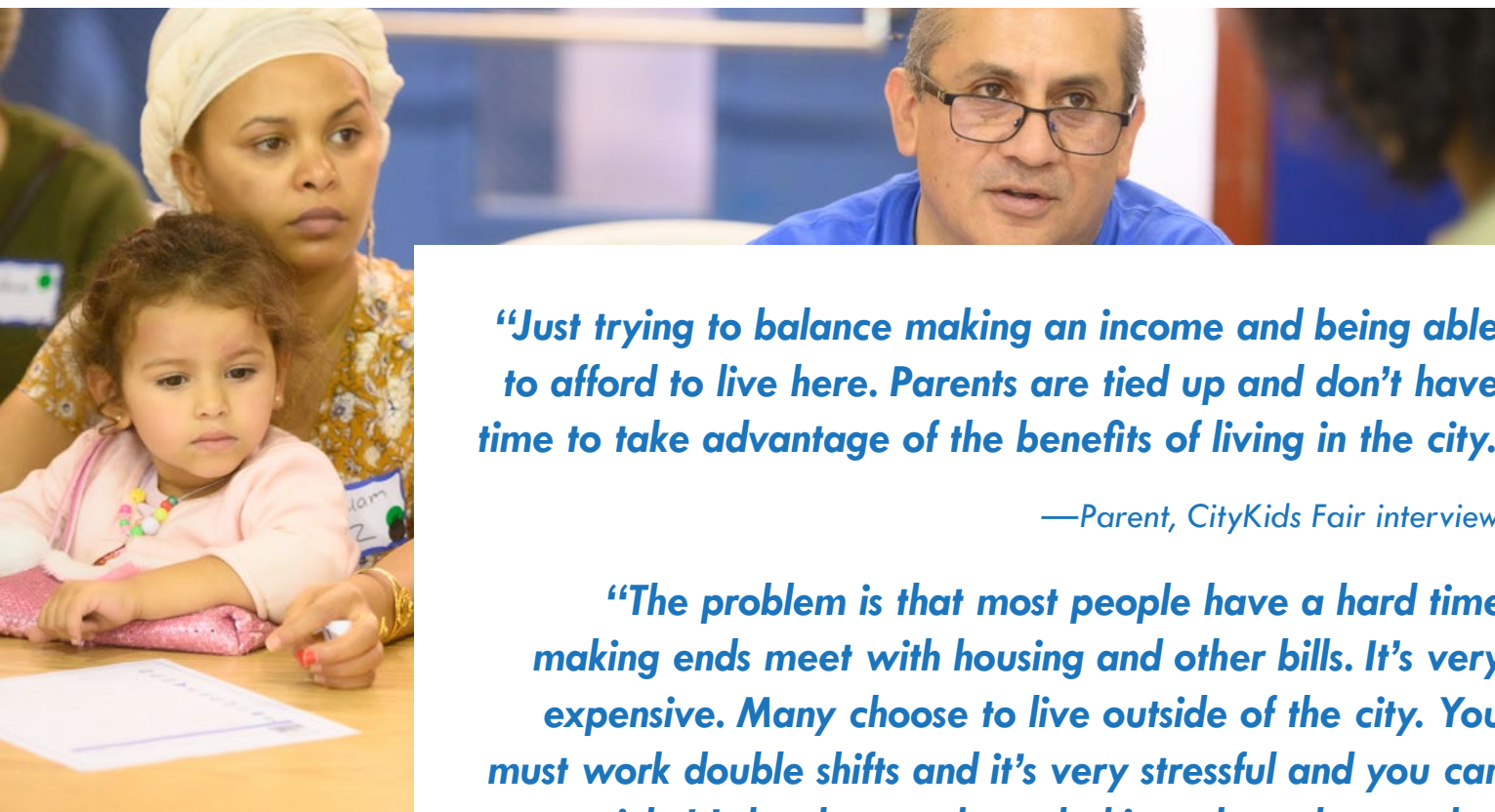
"Just trying to balance making an income and being able to afford to live here. Parents are tied up and don't have time to take advantage of the benefits of living in the city."

—*Parent, CityKids Fair interview*

"The problem is that most people have a hard time making ends meet with housing and other bills. It's very expensive. Many choose to live outside of the city. You must work double shifts and it's very stressful and you can get sick. It's hard to go through this and you learn a lot."

—*Young person, focus group with TAY experiencing homelessness*

Figure 17. Average Monthly Expenses for a Family of Four in SF, 2021

$19,983 per month

- Childcare, $3,293 (25%)
- Food, $1,260 (10%)
- Misc., $905 (7%)
- Healthcare, $855 (6%)
- Transportation, $196 (1%)
- Utilities, $88 (1%)
- Taxes, $3,252 (24%)
- Housing, $3,441 (26%)
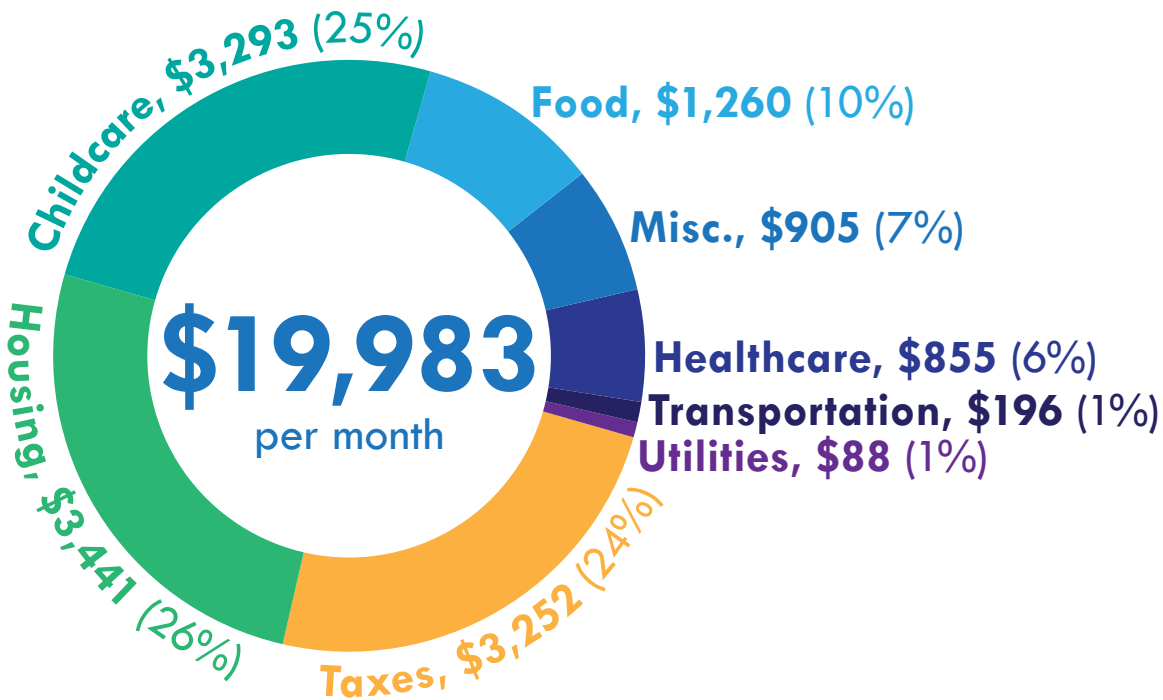
Source: Insight Center, 2021.

While many parents and heads of low-income households with children work, their wages fall short of amounts needed to fully support family needs. DCYF's community engagements surface that even among households with multiple parents and caregivers working full-time, minimum wage simply does not adequately support a family. Among parents and caregivers surveyed by DCYF, only 42% said they had a job that paid enough for their family's expenses.[30]

"It's hard to move away from minimum wage."

—TAY, focus group with justice-involved youth and TAY

Given the City's high costs of living, heads of households with children and the City's TAY need well-paying jobs. While San Francisco's minimum wage ($16.32/hour) sits higher than other metropolitan areas, a single adult with a preschooler working minimum wage would have to work 144 hours in a week to meet their basic needs.[31] Although San Francisco houses many well-paying jobs, these opportunities largely require advanced degrees, specialized skills, or certifications, and hold little flexibility with scheduling. These conditions make it difficult for working parents and disconnected TAY to secure employment income that adequately covers the City's living costs. Considered alongside histories of racial injustice in public education and gender-based discrimination in hiring practices, hurdles to high-paying employment also undermine the ability of many people of color and women to reach and maintain family economic stability. In San Francisco, compared to people of color, White residents are more likely to have a higher wage job and to work in employment industries that allow flexibility and accommodation in work schedules.[32] In contrast, the City's Department of Human Resources found that Black employees have lower-paying jobs, are less likely to be promoted, and are disciplined and fired more frequently.[33] During COVID-19, these disparities in employment left already vulnerable families more likely to be unemployed or face a loss of income.

A single adult needs to work

144

hours a week at minimum wage to support a preschooler

COVID-19 TRANSFORMED WORK, LEARNING & FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS

COVID-19 erased years of economic and employment growth in San Francisco.[34] In February 2020, one month prior to the pandemic's onset, San Francisco's unemployment rate was at an all-time low of 2.2%.[35] During the first calendar year of the pandemic, from December 2019 to December 2020, San Francisco experienced a 14% decline in employment, which ranks as the deepest decrease among California counties.[36] In the span of half a year, between January and July of 2020, the unemployment rate in San Francisco increased from 2% to over 12% (See Figure 18). In April 2020, immediately following SIP orders, the City's unemployment rate peaked at 12.7%.[37] Between March 2020 and April 2021, over 300,000 San Franciscans filed for unemployment, with the **Ingleside/Excelsior, Visitacion Valley, and Bayview-Hunters Point** neighborhoods reporting the largest number of claims.
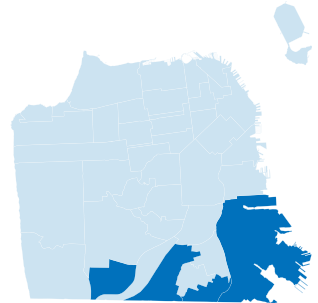
Figure 18. SF Unemployment Rate During COVID-19, 2020-22
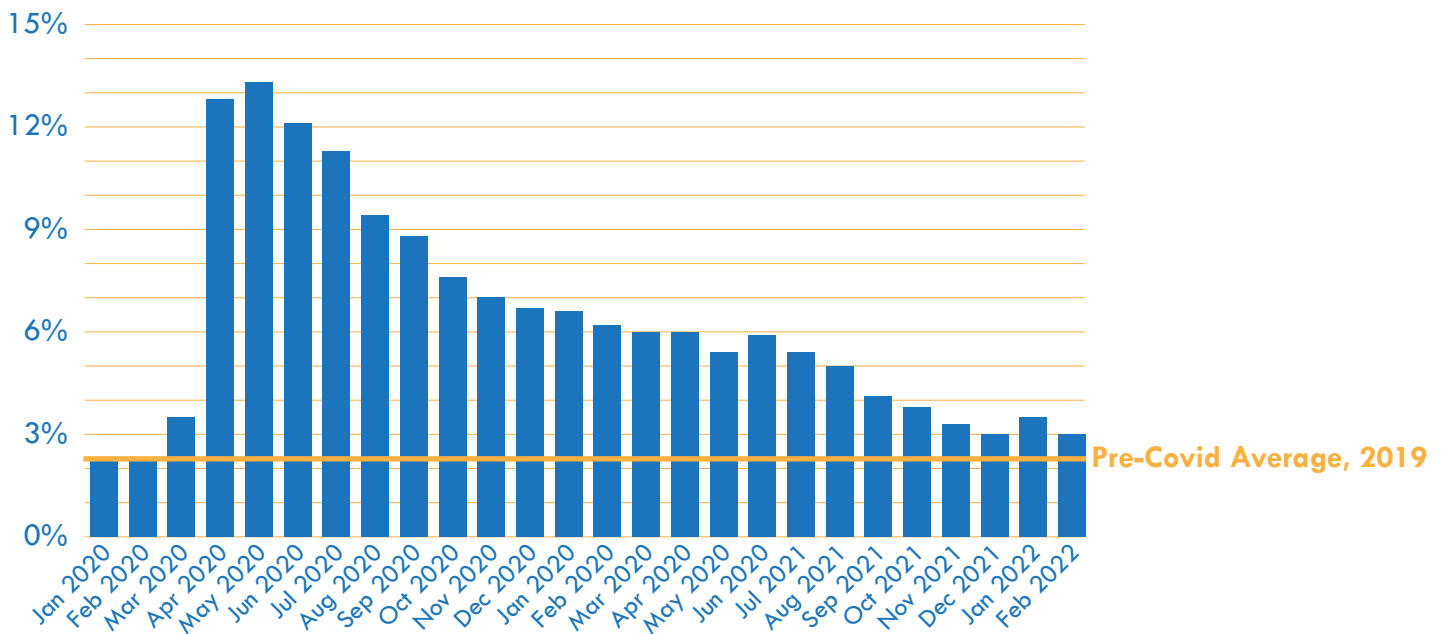
Source: California Employment Development Department.

COVID-19's economic impacts spread unevenly across the City's employment sectors. While industries such as technology and professional and business services were less impacted, workers in lower-paying sectors such as leisure and hospitality experienced extreme job loss. San Francisco's tourism and commercial businesses, including hotels, restaurants, bars, and arts and entertainment lost 56.6% of jobs between February and September 2020.[38] As patterns of occupational segregation continue to group workers of color, especially women, into low-paying roles, COVID-19's economic damages weigh heavier on families of color and low-income households that already faced significant economic challenges.[39] Community engagement data surfaces similar patterns of low-income households and women carrying excess economic burden due to the pandemic.

"My mom lost her job, so we seriously lost a lot of money and she's been trying to look for a job"

—*SFUSD student, Fall YPAR Survey*

Families with children experienced greater rates of unemployment and loss of income during the pandemic. An early-pandemic survey from HSA reports that, among 4,043 responding households with children, employment and income rank as the most immediate needs (35%), followed by food (31%).[40] Households that expressed these needs primarily reside in the City's southeast, including low-income neighborhoods such as **Bayview-Hunters Point, Excelsior, and Outer Mission**. As described in the Overview to San Francisco Children, Youth, and Families chapter, these neighborhoods also house higher concentrations of families of color. Additionally, the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank polled over 7,000 of their clients in spring 2021 and found that 79% of single parent households with children and 75% of households with children lost their job or earned less money due to COVID-19, as compared to 49% of those in households without children (See Figure 19).[41]
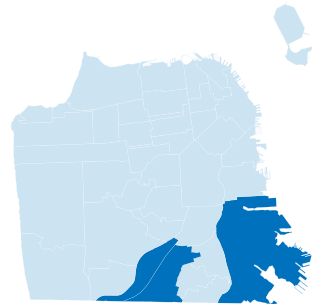
Figure 19. Percent of Households Reporting Losing Job or Earning Less Money Due to COVID-19, 2021
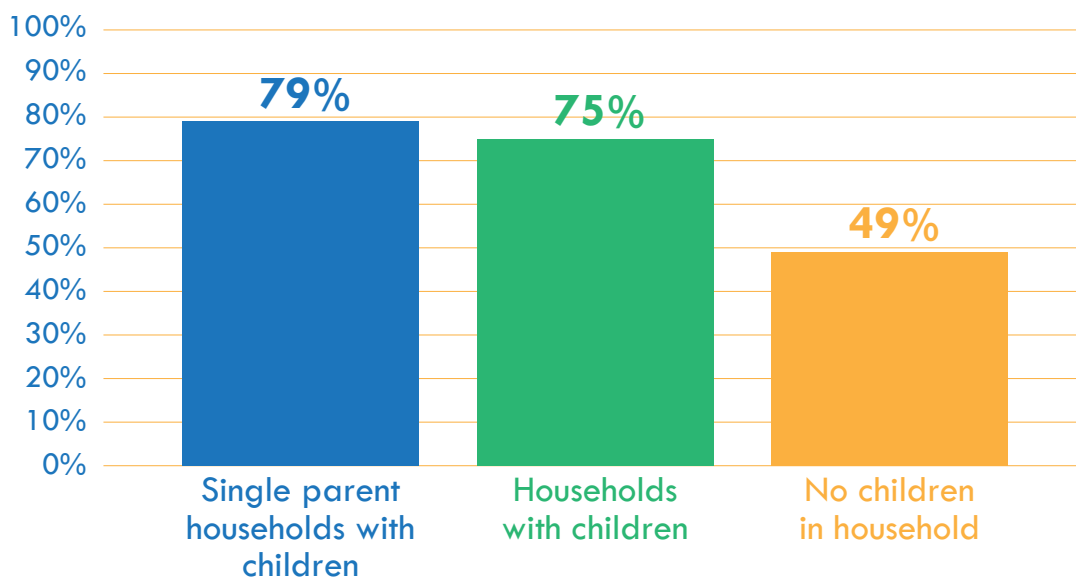
Source: San Francisco-Marin Food Bank

The closure of schools and childcare centers added layers of employment challenges to working parents and caregivers. As adult supervision in the form of classroom teachers and childcare center staff disappeared from children's lives, working parents met home childcare needs by cutting work hours, or simply exiting the labor force. For parents with remote working options, the time required to support their children from home generated work routine conflicts. For parents who experienced unemployment, taking care of their children at home limited their capacity to find new work.

"Before the pandemic, I had a job. Because my daughter had to do virtual learning, and I had to care for her, I quit my job."

—Parent, focus group with families living in SROs

"Making sure my children have childcare while I can work. Not being able to work put a big financial hold on the family."

—Parent, Summer Together Evaluation Survey

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & COST BURDEN

Community discussions of the City's living costs, wage disparities, and pandemic impacts often routed back to discussions of excessive housing cost burden. For context, home values in San Francisco remained stable or rose during the pandemic, with 2020 median home values exceeding $1.4 million. A household would require approximately $290,000 in annual income to afford the purchase of a home at the City's median price. Most low-income households rent their homes, and face similarly high housing costs. In January 2022, the mean rent of all homes in the San Francisco metropolitan region was $3,069 per month compared to the national average of $1,856 per month.[42] A household would require $140,000 in annual income to afford a median priced two-bedroom apartment in the City.[43] Because children require extra space and amenities, housing costs increase for families with children, especially when seeking close proximity to parks or schools.

HUD designates households spending 30% of their income or more on housing as cost burdened and additionally considers households that spend over 50% of income on housing as severely burdened. Higher housing cost burdens restrict funds needed to cover other essential expenses such as healthcare, food, childcare, and transportation. In addition to low-income households tending to face housing cost burdens, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian/Alaska Native households, especially if female-headed, carry higher odds of facing financial strain due to rent burden.[44] According to the SF Housing Element 2022, over half (53%) of African American/Black households and 48% of Hispanic/Latinx households are rent burdened in San Francisco.[45]

53%
of African American/Black households &

48%
of Hispanic/Latinx households are rent-burdened

Low-income households struggled to pay rent and housing costs during the pandemic. In October 2021, the Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office estimated that between 13,750 and 33,200 low-income households were one to six months behind on rent payments.[46] Despite the City' eviction moratorium and emergency tenant protections, many families adapted by moving to more affordable housing or "doubling-up" with extended family or friends. When youth were asked if their housing stability changed during the pandemic, 30% of high school YPAR respondents agreed. Respondents shared that housing situations changed due to reductions in their family income and general challenges with making ends meet. In focus groups, parents, caregivers, and youth described experiences of living in overcrowded spaces and displacement or relocation to temporary shelters as a response to not being able to afford rent. Families and youth who doubled-up with others experienced inadequate space for remote work and distance learning.

"I've never had and don't have now a space at home to be able to have peace and quiet. My uncle and cousin are using up all the space, causing noise. I need quiet, but it's hard to stay focused without the right environment."

—TAY, focus group with TAY providing household economic support

HUD defines overcrowded living arrangements as having more than one person per habitable room. Among San Francisco's overcrowded households in 2019, 60% were low-income and 48% were families with children.[47] Households that live in Single Room

Occupancy Units (SROs) are particularly affected by overcrowding. Approximately 19,000 people live in the City's SROs.[48] Recent data estimates over 699 families living in SROs and notes the likelihood of an undercount due to data collection challenges.[49] SROs are older basic housing units consisting of one room, with limited or shared kitchens and bathrooms. These units have become an alternative for housing for low-income families, especially immigrant families. SROs are concentrated in a few City neighborhoods, particularly the **Tenderloin, Chinatown, North Beach, Nob Hill, South of Market, and Mission**. Living in SROs can affect health, education, and work outcomes. The absence of space and privacy eases the spread of illness, disrupts sleep schedules, and leaves children with little room to study or play. During DCYF focus groups, families living in SROs described low quality living conditions and heightened fears for safety and health during COVID-19.
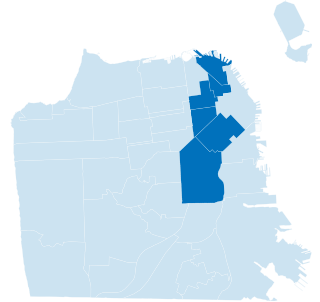
"COVID prevention measures and plans within our single room buildings are loose. Because many of our residents are elderly or children under 12, they are all vulnerable and high risk. Living in single rooms, we face a lot of challenges when we try to avoid contacting COVID."

—*Parent, focus group with families living in SROs*

Despite noting challenging living conditions, families committed to remaining in the City may continue to resort to doubling-up or seeking SROs as their only affordable option.

Many low-income families and youth who have called San Francisco home for generations continue to experience displacement due to the City's high housing costs. From our 2019 Family Summits to our 2021 community engagements, youth and families expressed needs, challenges, and negative impacts on lived experiences that take root in gentrification, the rising cost of living, and the City's ongoing housing crisis.

"Cost of living is really high in SF. Housing—every year where I live in lower Haight, they raise rent every single year. So many families been running in my area, left, moved across the Bay. The way we do it, is we're budgeting, we're recycling, we're sharing each other's ideas of what we can do, and how it would be better to get through with the cost of living."

—*Parent, focus group with American Indian/Native American families*

Eviction frequently forces displacement onto families. Families in low-income neighborhoods, particularly Latinx households, encounter threats of eviction more often. Between January 2016 and July 2019, the highest counts of no-fault eviction notices were received in low-income neighborhoods in the **Ingleside, Richmond, Outer Mission, Visitacion Valley, and Mission Districts**.[50] Despite the temporary moratorium on evictions during the pandemic, families described a need for more tenant protections and rental assistance. Community members who identified gentrification as an issue pointed out a loss of culture and sense of community in their neighborhoods.
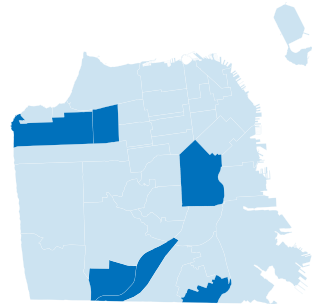
"We've allowed tech companies to come in, drive up the rent, drive homelessness, and force families out of the city. We've allowed tech companies to drain SF of its culture, its history, and it is swept under the rug."

—Young person, focus group with youth and TAY from Tenderloin community

The displacement of families and youth leads to a separation from services and resources and imposes a loss of stability and identity. For example, when interviewing service providers who work with young people in foster systems , discussions highlighted that San Francisco's housing crisis further complicates needs to address for young people in, or transitioning from, foster care. In short, unaffordable housing and living costs increasingly drive foster family placements outside of the City and the broader Bay Area, which widens the gap between a young person in foster care and the stable services and relationships they need. HSA reported in 2020 that only 34% of foster home placement locations remained within San Francisco.

EXPERIENCES & CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG FAMILIES & TAY

Homelessness in the Bay Area is a critical concern in our communities. Prior to COVID-19, San Francisco experienced a drastic increase in populations experiencing homelessness. Between 2011 and 2019, the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness increased from 5,669 to 8,035 (See Figure 20).[51]* Although experts have predicted a rise in homelessness during the pandemic, preliminary data released from San Francisco's delayed 2022 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count reveal a slight decline of individuals

*Data refers to HUD's Federal standard definition of homelessness which excludes individuals "doubled-up" in the homes of family or friends, individuals staying in jails, hospitals, or residential facilities, and families living in SROs.

experiencing homelessness.* The most recent data indicates that total homelessness in San Francisco, including sheltered and unsheltered individuals, decreased by 3.5% from 8,035 people in 2019 to 7,754 in 2022. This decline from preliminary data is considered a product of the City's increase in housing and shelter services. Homelessness remains a city-wide issue, yet rates of homelessness differ by neighborhoods with the most individuals experiencing homelessness residing in the **Tenderloin, South of Market, Civic Center, Market, Mission Bay, and Bayview**.[52] Families with children, unaccompanied children, and TAY represent nearly a quarter of the population experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. The 2022 PIT Count reported 1,073 unaccompanied children and TAY experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, with the vast majority between the ages of 18 and 24.[53] Preliminary data from the same year reported 205 families experiencing homelessness. Among students, SFUSD recently identified approximately 2,000 students in families experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.[54] While most families experiencing homelessness secure sheltered living arrangements, TAY experiencing homelessness remain disproportionately unsheltered (See Figure 21).
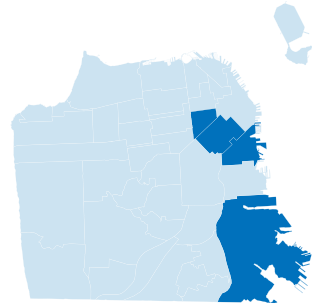
Figure 20. San Francisco Point-in-Time Counts, 2005-19
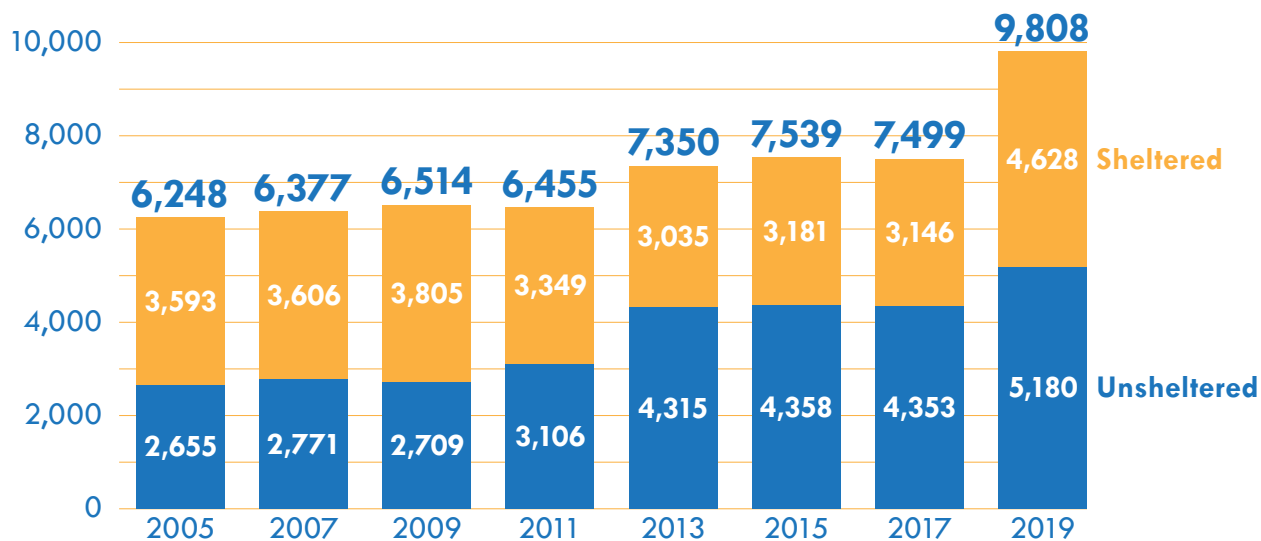
Figure 21. San Francisco Point-in-Time Count by Shelter Status, 2019
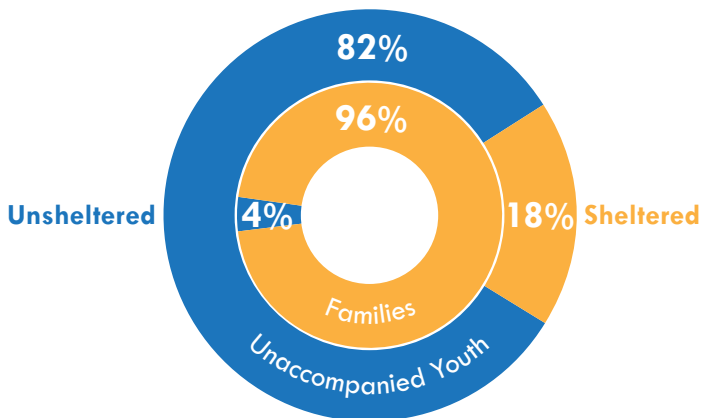
Source: Applied Survey Research. San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, 2019.

*The 2020 PIT count was partially conducted to count individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness. This report cites the 2019 PIT Count and preliminary data from the 2022 PIT Count because it is the most recent available count to reflect rates of both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.

Homelessness disproportionately affects people of color. Multiracial, African American/Black, Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander people are over-represented among San Francisco's homeless population and especially so among un-accompanied children and TAY experiencing homelessness. Individuals who identify as African American/Black comprise 37% of individuals experiencing homelessness but make up approximately 5% of the City's population.[55] Nationally, families with children experiencing homelessness are more likely to be households headed by single women. During San Francisco's 2019 PIT Count, 72% of survey respondents in families with children were female despite an overwhelming majority of the total population experiencing homelessness identifying as male. Among unaccompanied youth and TAY experiencing homelessness, people who identify as LGBTQQ are overrepresented. Justice system involvement and a history of foster care were also reported by youth experiencing homelessness. Among surveyed respondents, 29% of youth under the age of 25 reported a history of foster care and 24% of youth reported involvement with the justice system before turning 18.

Experiences of homelessness in San Francisco result from numerous compounding factors that include the constant shortage of affordable housing, income disparities, and systemic discrimination. Many surveyed individuals among families and TAY experiencing homelessness named unemployment and housing unaffordability as their primary cause of homelessness. Contrary to common public perceptions that attribute experiences of homelessness to poor mental health and substance abuse, only 8% of unhoused individuals reported mental illness as the cause of their homelessness. Only 18% attributed their homelessness at the time to addiction.[56] Community members shared similar insights and understandings of the complexity of homelessness in San Francisco during interviews and focus groups.

"The biggest challenge is finding housing and job resources. It is not what you have, but who you know that gets you access to resources. I am currently transitioning to a new job, and I live at a SIP campsite which is safe."

—*Parent, Pop-Up Village interview*

"Generational homelessness and the direct correlation between gentrification, homelessness, and drug use. Drug use is a symptom of people being failed, not having housing, or enough food, it covers a lot of pain and suffering that people have been going through."

—*Young person, focus group with Tenderloin youth*

For families with children, financial insecurity in the form of unemployment and debt were leading causes of housing insecurity. Families with children experiencing homelessness cited job loss (21%) as a primary cause of homelessness followed by eviction (17%), unaffordable rent (14%), an argument with a friend or family member (14%), and domestic violence (12%). Meanwhile, unaccompanied children and TAY experiencing homelessness, cited an argument with a friend or family member (20%), a lost job (15%), alcohol or drug use (13%), mental health issues (9%), and family/domestic

violence (9%).[57] Youth called out experiences with emotional abuse, financial issues, physical abuse, mental health issues, and sexual abuse as contributing causes of their homelessness.

CITY RESPONSES TO ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Economic insecurity has pushed families with children and youth into fragile housing circumstances. State and national research indicates that the economic impact of COVID-19 left people at an increased risk of homelessness and housing insecurity. In response to the pandemic, City departments and nonprofit partners implemented innovative solutions, including moving over 500 vulnerable people experiencing homelessness into SIP hotel rooms through Project Roomkey and launching a Safe Sleep program. Long-term solutions to resolve homelessness are the focus of continued efforts, such as the Mayor's Homelessness Recovery Plan and Children and Family Recovery Plan.

To mitigate economic burdens and learning losses that pandemic closures imposed on families, DCYF and City partners launched efforts to meet childcare needs for essential workers and working parents. DCYF collaborated with the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD), Office of Early Care and Education (OECE), SFUSD, and numerous CBOs to launch Emergency Child and Youth Care (ECYC) and the Community Hubs Initiative (CHI). ECYC and CHI staff led activities to support continued learning for children and youth throughout the pandemic. These sites served low-income children and families with the most need across the City—including 60% of children and youth living in HOPE SF public housing sites—by providing supplies necessary for remote learning in a safe, academic space.[58] The absence of in-person schooling, youth programs, and services constrained the economic mobility and capacity of families and demonstrated the importance of these support systems in a thriving economy.

More broadly, public assistance was critical to mitigating the economic impacts of COVID-19. For households that lost jobs, federal stimulus payments and expanded unemployment benefits cushioned the loss of income. Low-income children and families were dependent on public benefits for health, food, in-home support, and cash assistance to support their basic needs. HSA observed an increase in demand for the California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal. In the Spring of 2021, HSA reported a 25% increase in CalFresh and a 10% increase in Medi-Cal reliance from its clients compared to the previous year.[59]

"Healthcare, we don't have insurance. We're not taking care of health because it's expensive. We got kicked off Medi-Cal because our household income was above by $2,500."

—Parent, CityKids Fair interview

"In the context of COVID-19, I saw how immigrants and undocumented workers were swept aside. Many lost their jobs and there were few resources for us during the pandemic. We were left on our own. There should be more safety net resources in the cases of emergencies for undocumented workers. For example, my dad was let go of two of his jobs."

—TAY, focus group with immigrants and undocumented community

Safety net programs are an important resource for addressing family poverty. In high-cost regions such as San Francisco, however, many low-income, working families may not meet eligibility criteria for public benefit programs. As discussed earlier in this chapter, families with incomes between 300% and 500% of the FPL—thresholds much higher than those for safety net programs—may face challenges making ends meet in the City. Citizenship status also can be a limiting factor. Families that are undocumented are ineligible for several state and federal programs, including CalFresh and the federal stimulus aid provided during the pandemic. For these reasons, local aid from City departments and CBOs is especially important for populations at the margins. Early in the pandemic, HSA provided over 5,000 locally funded cash payments for undocumented, low-income families who did not receive federal stimulus funds, among other emergency actions.[60]

Innovative solutions to address poverty and basic needs are in development. In the spring of 2021, the City created a Guaranteed Income Advisory Group to develop recommendations for a guaranteed income pilot program. Programs that provide guaranteed income are one way to support financial security for children, youth, and families, particularly for vulnerable populations. The Mayor's Children and Family Recovery Plan recommended implementing a guaranteed income program with a focus on low-income populations at critical life transitions, in addition to tax credits and workforce investments for children, youth, and families. Working towards the economic security of children, youth, families, and TAY is a fundamental need to confront barriers limiting families from accessing resources and actualizing opportunity.

Nurturing Families & Communities

DCYF aims to promote accessible spaces and resources for children, youth, TAY, and families to feel safe, stable, and nurtured in their community, especially when accessing City resources to promote well-being. In its framework on essentials for a healthy childhood, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines safety, stability, and nurturing as follows.[61]

- Safety: The extent to which a child is free from fear and secure from physical or psychological harm within their social and physical environment.
- Stability: The degree of predictability and consistency in a child's social, emotional, and physical environment.
- Nurturing: The extent to which children's physical, emotional, and developmental needs are sensitively and consistently met.

This chapter introduces the protective influence that the presence of caring adults holds over experiences of safety, stability, and nurturing. We then explore how conditions of safety, stability, and nurturing are significantly undermined by experiences of child abuse/neglect and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which persist in many San Francisco communities. Specific contexts that undermine experiences of safety, stability, and nurturing are discussed in addition to disparities in the experiences and impacts of ACEs along lines of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, and ability statuses.[62] This chapter concludes with a discussion of community safety perceptions and community strengths and assets that contribute to a nurturing community.

CARING ADULTS FORM THE FOUNDATION OF NURTURING FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Features of a caring adult relationship hold numerous layers, but tend to include expressions of care, support toward goal fulfillment, challenges toward growth, shared power, and exposure to new ideas.[63] The presence of a caring adult is a known protective factor in reducing risks of ACEs as well as problematic life outcomes to which ACEs contribute (e.g., diminished physical and emotional health, heightened risk of decreased educational attainment and career earnings).[64]

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted youth-adult relationships and reduced opportunities for the presence of caring adults in youth's lives. Prior to the pandemic, 61% of youth respondents from a 2018-19 SFUSD survey reported they had a teacher or other adult at school who really cared about them, and 79% said this was true outside of home and school. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students reported slightly lower levels of caring adult presence, with 60% of respondents expressing they had a teacher or other adult at school who really cared about them, and 76% holding this was true outside of home and school.[65] Figure 22 shows that in school year 2019-20, only 54% to 60% of respondents indicated they had a caring adult relationship.[66] Additionally, only 48% of Native American 9th graders reported having a caring adult relationship, compared to 54% of all 9th graders. Significant disruption in youth-adult relationships can have profound impacts. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) identifies disruptions in caregiving or attachment losses as the most prevalent traumatic experience among children and youth clients, especially those who identify as African American/Black, receiving specialty behavioral health care.[67]

Figure 22. Percent of SFUSD Students Who Report a Caring Adult in Their Life, by Grade and Race/Ethnicity, 2019-2020
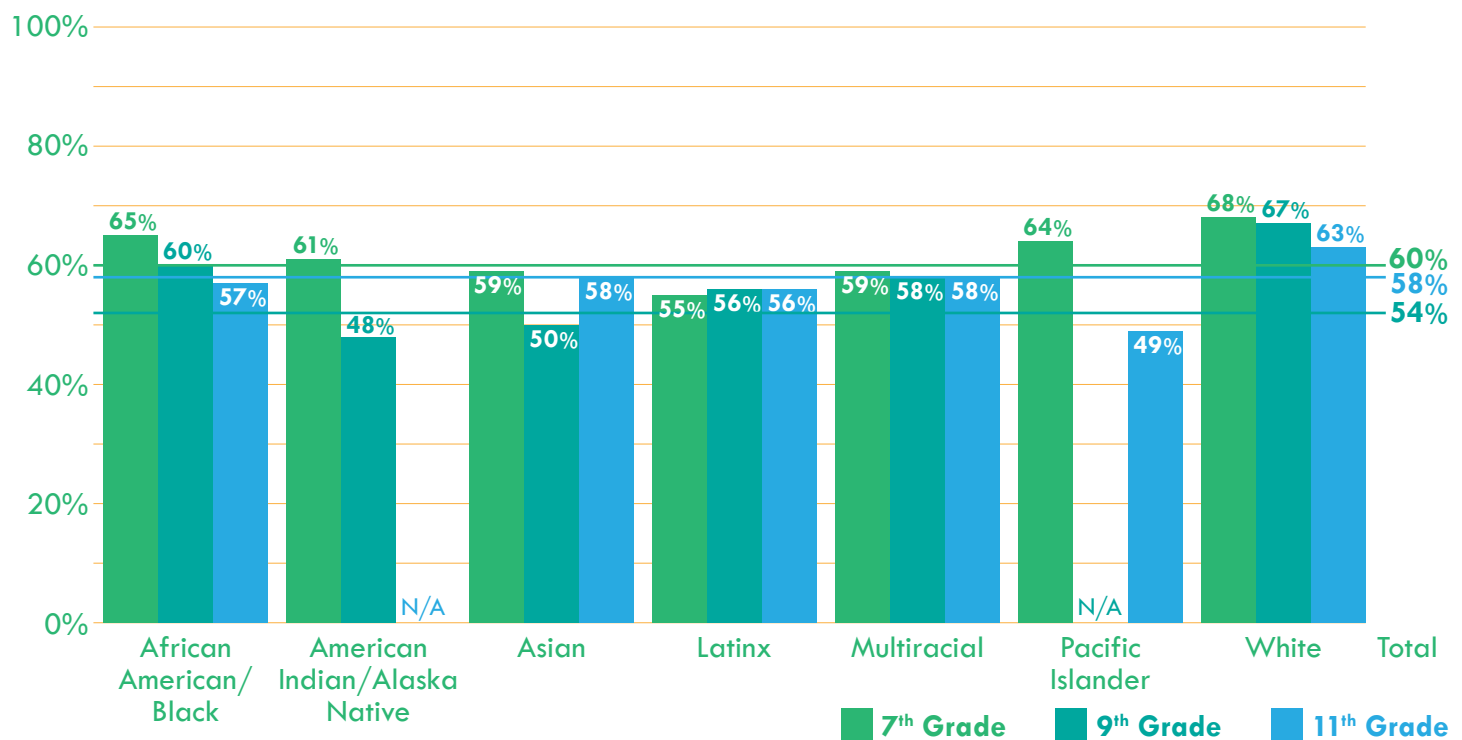
Source: San Francisco Unified School District. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2019-2020: Main Report.

In school and broader community settings, families frequently expressed the need for caring adult relationships for young people of all ages and backgrounds. Voices from community members highlighted the particular importance of caring adults for youth in historically marginalized communities and young people experiencing varied layers of system involvement.

"Hire individuals in these afterschool programs that knows and cares for our kids. Talks to them—they can teach them life skills."

—*Parent, focus group with American Indian/Native American families*

"Advocates. We need advocates. When you have someone in your corner, especially when your mental health needs are used against you, you need advocates to help you with your situations and with your mental health struggles."

—Parent, focus group with justice involved young women

First 5, DCYF, and HSA jointly support the Family Resource Center (FRC) Initiative, which provides families with a welcoming place to learn about child development, build parenting skills and obtain peer support. Through 26 FRCs located throughout every neighborhood in the City, resources, referrals and comprehensive case management are made available to nurture families with supportive services and strengthen wellbeing for the full family.

CHALLENGES TO CHILD SAFETY & FAMILY STABILITY

ACEs describe a broad range of incidents and conditions, including, but not limited to, abuse, neglect, violence, witnessing violence in the home or community, or having a family member attempt or die by suicide. Also included are environmental conditions, such as instability related to parental separation or household members with substance use problems, mental health problems, or experiences with incarceration. ACEs increase the risk that an individual will face negative health, education, and career outcomes, as discussed in other chapters of this report.[68]

Child maltreatment rates, an indicator of ACEs, have declined over the past twenty years in San Francisco. In 2020, the substantiated rate—the rate of reported maltreatment found to be true following investigation—reached a low of 3.5 per 1,000 children.[69] However, the recent decline may be related to the closure of schools and other child-serving programs in the early months of the pandemic. During this time, many children and youth were not in regular contact with teachers, doctors, and other mandated reporters. There were 28% fewer calls to California child abuse hotlines between April and August of 2020 versus the same period in 2019.[70] National data also displays that many states reported lower rates of children receiving welfare investigations in 2020.[71]

Families continue to face unprecedented COVID-19 related stressors (e.g., health concerns, economic stress, and pandemic learning loss) that heighten the risk of children encountering ACEs, such as domestic violence. The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women's Family Violence Council identified an uptick in domestic violence in 2020 compared to 2019.[72] Among survivors and children, domestic violence yields immediate physical harms, lasting mental health issues, and increased likelihood of engagement in risky behaviors such as smoking and binge drinking.[73] DCYF focus group participants described increased encounters with domestic violence as well as substance abuse related to the pandemic.

Child maltreatment rates have reached a low of

3.5

per 1,000 children

"Need services for mental health, therapy options and support groups for grief and loss. It takes 4 to 6 months to access a therapist. Domestic violence went up and substance abuse skyrocketed. We need a hub of case managers who speak multiple languages and can refer people to resources that SF offers."

—Parent, Dancing Feathers Powwow interview

Poverty is a significant risk factor for child abuse/neglect and other ACEs. According to the CDC, rates of child abuse/neglect are five times higher for children in families with low socioeconomic status compared to children in families with higher socioeconomic status.[74] A 2019 self-assessment completed by HSA's Child and Family Services team attributes demographic shifts, the city's high cost of living and pervasive asset poverty among ethnic minorities as reasons behind "more severe and geographically concentrated poverty, increased stress for many families, and higher-needs cases entering San Francisco's child welfare system."[75] Additionally, of children whose births were covered by public insurance—a proxy for poverty status—8% were substantiated as victims of maltreatment before age 5, compared to less than 1% among children with non-public insurance. Before adjusting for other factors, public insurance was associated with a nine times greater risk of substantiation. These trends suggest ACEs reflect broader social inequalities and demonstrate the importance of caring adult support for the City's most vulnerable young people.

YOUTH IN OR TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER CARE

Fulfilling DCYF's charge to support the City's most vulnerable youth and families in experiencing safety, stability, and nurturing requires that youth in or transitioning out of foster care systems access quality services led by caring adults. Supportive family, school staff, and a caring community enable many young people to successfully transition into adulthood. However, for many of the 638 children up to 21 years old in foster care reported by HSA in December 2021, foster system involvement typically limits access to trusted family and destabilizes connections to supportive members of their home and school community.[76]

San Francisco's foster youth population declined by

360

since 2015

Figure 23. SF Children in Foster Care, 2015-2021
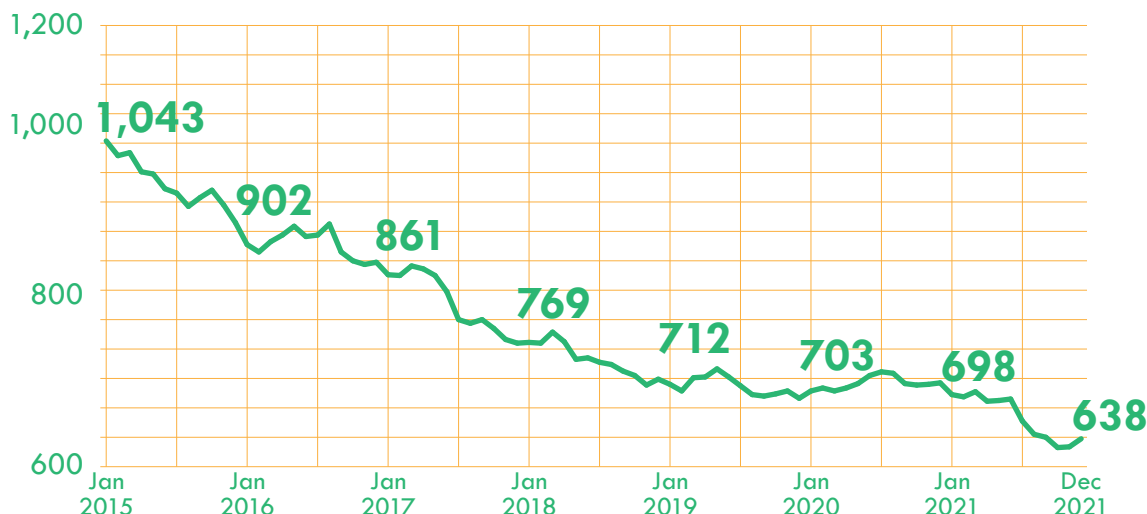
Source: San Francisco City and County Performance Scorecards

56

Figure 24. SF Children in Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity, August 2020

Latinx 31%
Male 48%
283 foster youth ages 16-21
White **13%**
Asian/Pacific Islander **6%**
African American/Black 50%
Female 52%
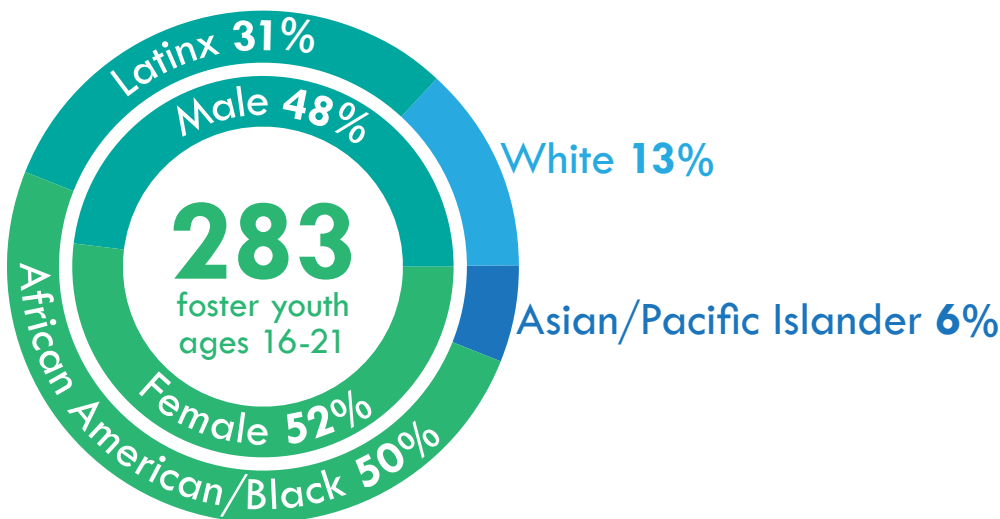
Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency

Figure 23 displays a decrease in the number of young people involved in the San Francisco foster system over the past decade. Yet persistent disparities in experiences with foster systems remain. Service providers that work with these youth described disproportionately high counts of youth of color in foster care during community input sessions. HSA's 2020 demographic summary of caseloads supports these claims. Despite constituting 5% of San Francisco's population, African American/Black youth make up 50% of foster cases. Additionally, Hispanic/Latinx youth make up 31% of cases while comprising 15% of the City's population. Data compiled by the state reports a similar pattern of disproportionately high rates of foster system involvement among American Indian/Alaska Native youth in California, additionally showing that roughly 50% had experienced a child maltreatment investigation by age 18.[77] In addition to disproportionate impacts along racial/ethnic lines, the child welfare system is three times more likely to remove LGBTQQ young people from their homes than their straight and gender-conforming peers.[78] Rather than pathologize or blame family practices in impacted communities when discussing factors that drive young people into foster system involvement, participants in DCYF focus groups illuminated and attributed root causes to processes at the intersection of intergenerational histories of poverty and racism.

P1: "…I would say it's system-wide, the majority of kids are removed from families of origin due to reasons of neglect, not abuse, and neglect is so often correlated with poverty, right?"

P2: "To [P1's] point, 60% or more of foster cases are neglect cases. That's not commission of an act, it's omission of resources. It's not commission of abuse, it's failure to provide something. The injustices we see in the City here are around housing, nutritional scarcity…and more likely if you're poor, you're more likely to be a person of color."

—CBO staff, focus group with service providers who support foster youth

Foster system involvement introduces risks of additional traumatic experiences and adverse outcomes for a young person. Studies on youth experiences in congregate care settings describe inadequate access to food and clothing, experiences of physical and sexual abuse, and inappropriate withholding of stipends intended for young people as the direct recipient.[79] In response to conditions of ongoing neglect and abuse within foster systems, many youth run away in search of healthier circumstances, which often results in the issuance of a warrant for arrest. Law enforcement are also introduced when foster system staff seek them out in response to behavioral incidents and conflicts between peers in congregate care settings. When calling police as responders to situations rooted in challenging behavior not involving weapons or physical violence, foster care systems add a damaging layer of law enforcement interaction onto already challenging experiences of foster system involvement.[80] Foster system and justice system overlaps remain visible in the City. While less than 1% of the City's youth are in foster systems, in 2021, roughly 30% of youth with active juvenile probation cases were engaged in expanded foster care services for youth ages 18 to 21, commonly referred to as "AB12" youth following passage of state legislation that enabled youth to remain in foster care until age 21.[81]

During focus groups and interviews, City and CBO staff who plan and provide services for youth in or transitioning from foster care described needs for broader support options with the aims of mitigating risks for young people and disrupting cycles of multiple system involvement. Supportive services identified by CBO staff and City partners parallel community protective factors that research suggests may contribute to prevention of child maltreatment incidences, such as concrete support in times of need, parental resilience, and social connection.[82]

JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Interactions with law enforcement and ongoing involvement in justice systems introduces numerous adverse experiences and risks into a young person's life. Multiple studies observe a close relationship between justice system involvement and increased risks of experiencing homelessness, reinvolvement with the justice system, decreased educational attainment, lower wages, and diminished quality of general health.[83] Given the myriad risks and hazards introduced by exposure and continued interaction with law enforcement and courts, nurturing youth and TAY who experience justice system involvement depend on effective coordination across communities, supportive City service systems, and the adults who lead them.

Children of incarcerated parents face significant challenges in trying to navigate the complexities of the criminal justice system and manage the emotional and social repercussions of family incarceration. A 2016 study of incarcerated adults in the San Francisco County jail system found that 59% were parents to a total of approximately 1,110 children in San Francisco. Of these children, 16% had witnessed their parent's arrest, 27% had to change homes, and 16% had to change schools at least once due to their parent's incarceration. Additionally, 57% of parents reported their family had lost income due to their incarceration. While only one third of parents reported having visits at the jail with at least one of their children, 95% intend to reconnect with at least one child when they are out of jail. Given that 46% of surveyed parents reported that one of their own parents had been incarcerated, having an incarcerated parent establishes a level of instability that perpetuates cycles of system involvement.[84]

Figures 25 and 26 shows that detention rates and probation cases among the City's youth and TAY have continued their steady decline in recent years. While the City's juvenile hall was built to detain roughly 150 young people, Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) monthly reports display that the hall's average daily population (ADP) remained below 20 for all of calendar year 2021.[85] In the same period, probation caseloads fluctuated between 30 and 70 active cases. Low rates of detention and probation cases in recent years mark steep drops in justice-involvement among youth compared to previous decades. In 1995, the City reported roughly 160 juveniles arrested per 10,000 for violent felonies, which is a stark contrast to the fewer than 30 per 10,000 reported in 2021.

Juvenile Hall's average daily population was below

20

for all of 2021

Figure 25. SF JPD Detention and Probation Rates, 2017-2020
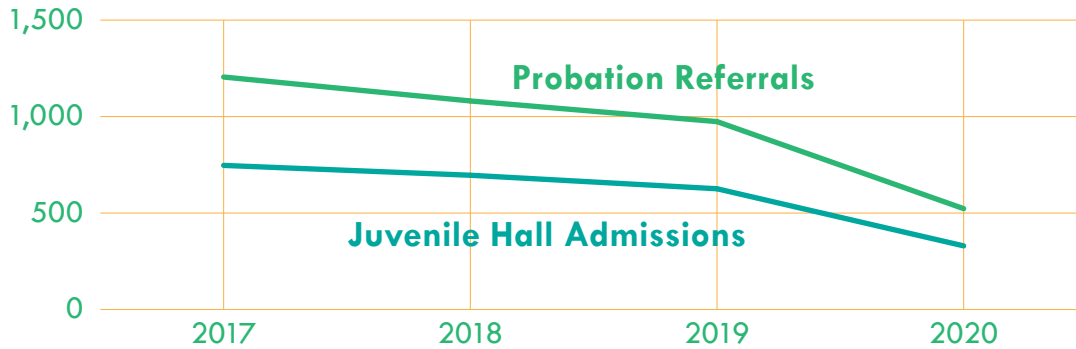
Source: San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department Annual Reports, 2017-2020

Figure 26. Number of Justice-Involved TAY in SF, 2016-2021
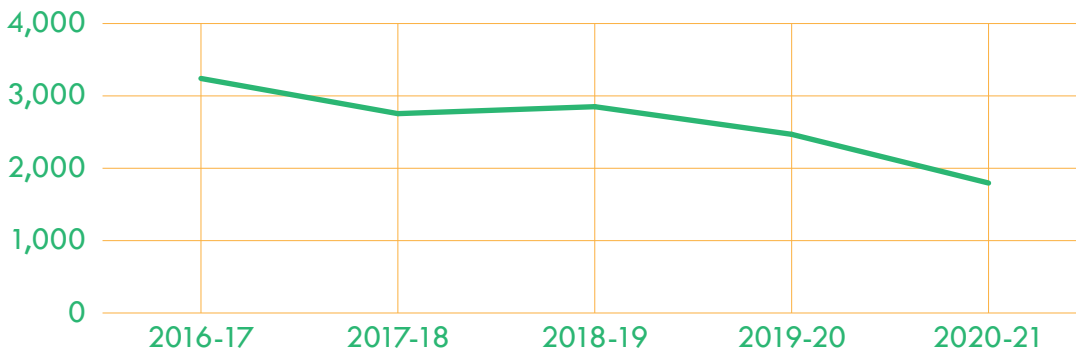
Source: Data Provided by American Institutes for Research

Despite significant declines in overall arrest, detention, and probation cases among the City's youth and TAY, justice involvement continues to disproportionately impact young people of color. Youth and TAY who identify as African American/Black represent over 50% of youth on active probation while constituting only 5% of the City's broader population. Youth and TAY who identify as Hispanic/Latinx currently reflect roughly 30% of youth on active probation and make up 15% of the City population.[86] These disparities continue in adult justice systems, as shown in Figures 27 and 28. Individuals identifying as African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx constitute a disproportionately large number of individuals with active caseloads under the Adult Probation Department (APD). Geographically, JPD monthly reports identify the **Bayview-Hunters Point, Excelsior/OMI, Visitacion Valley/Sunnydale, and Mission/Bernal Heights** neighborhoods as the most frequent home residences of youth and TAY experiencing justice involvement.[87] As noted in the Overview chapter of this report, these neighborhood lines intersect with both higher rates of poverty and denser populations of families of color in San Francisco. The disproportionate rates of justice involvement
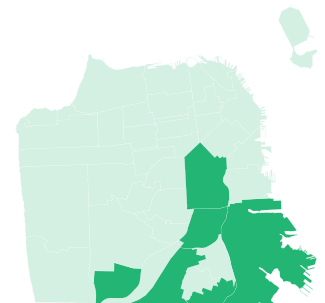
among young people of color in San Francisco mirrors trends observed in national data, which additionally reflects disproportionately high rates of justice involvement among young people who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native.[88]

Figure 27. Unduplicated Count of Juvenile Probation Department Referrals by Race/Ethnicity, 2020

Latinx, **160** (28%)
Asian/Pacific Islander, **41** (7%)
White, **26** (5%)
Other, **20** (4%)
African American/Black, **324** (57%)

572 referrals
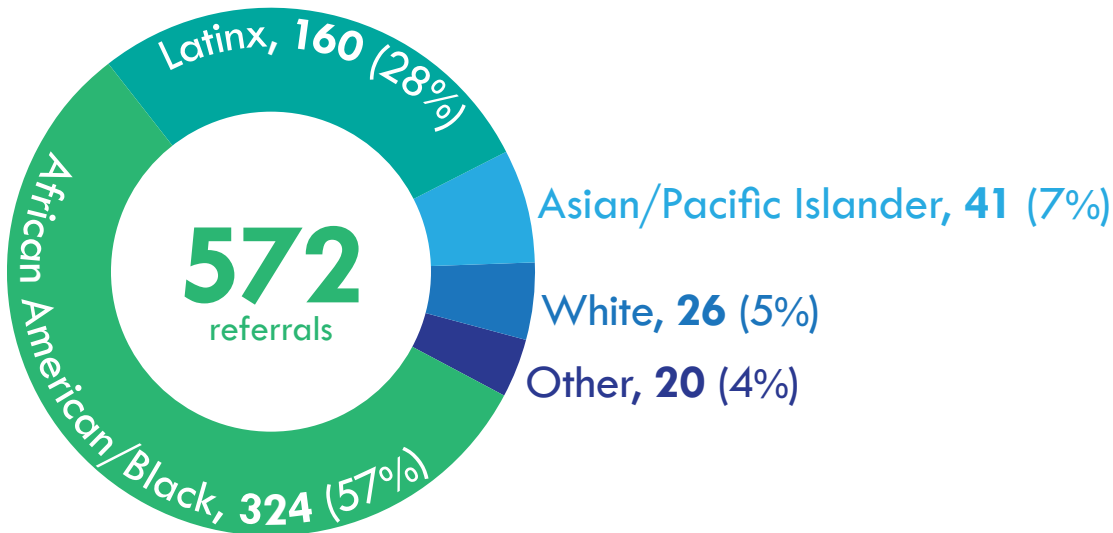
Source: San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department. (2021). JPD Annual Report 2020.

Figure 28. APD Clients Ages 18-25 by Race/Ethnicity, October 2021

White, **59** (19%)
Latinx, **59** (19%)
Other, **34** (11%)
Asian, **9** (3%)
Pacific Islander, **3** (1%)
African American/Black, **146** (47%)

310 clients
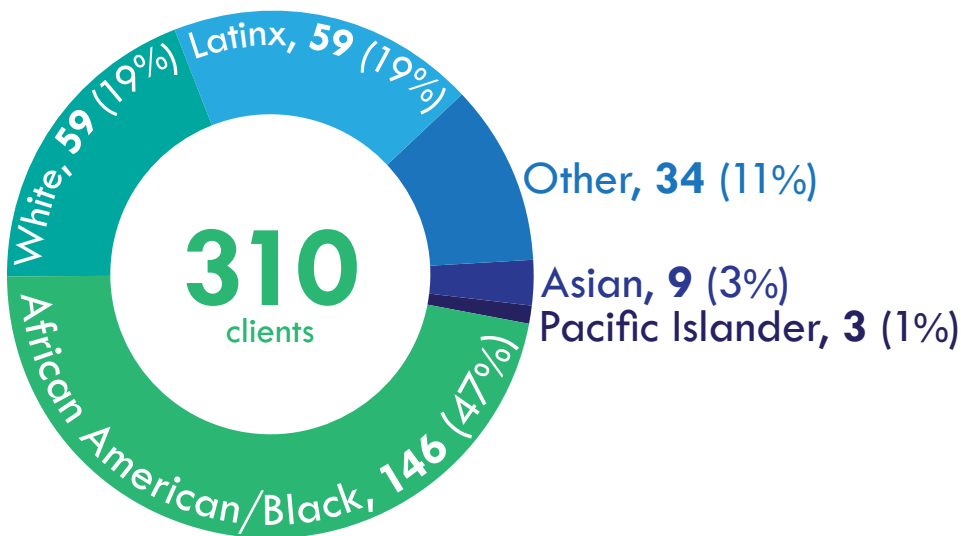
Source: San Francisco APD. (2021). Demographics on 18- to 25-Year-Old Clients.

State and nationwide justice statistics display a rapid increase in girls and young women with justice involvement, which San Francisco also mirrors. Between 1970 and 2014, the national jail population grew fivefold, yet the women's jail population exploded to fourteen times its initial size.[89] As of March 2022, 52 girls and young women remain involved with JPD. Findings from the City's Close Juvenile Hall Working Group highlight that African American/Black girls are 39 times more likely to be detained than other young women.[90] In exploring the experiences of girls and young women involved with justice systems, research notes that, despite lower rates of serious misconduct, sentences and probation conditions for young women appear more intense than those for individuals who identify as male, oftentimes due to use of misaligned risk assessments. In

San Francisco, girls and young women with justice system involvement often experience questionable reasons for incarceration, negligence when in system custody, and unmet needs for support in addressing the long enduring impacts of justice involvement.[91]

In presenting juvenile justice data disaggregated by race and gender, DCYF attributes neither behaviors deemed illegal nor justice system involvement to values or characteristics inherent in a young person's racial or gender identities. We aim instead to highlight disparities in observable data to indicate that law enforcement systems continue to contend with institutional histories and ongoing practices of discriminatory encounters with people of color, women, individuals who identify as LGBTQQ, and individuals in poverty. Justice involvement begins with a law enforcement official's contact with an individual suspected of illegal activity. Quarterly reports from San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) continue to indicate disproportionate targeting, contact, and use of force with the City's African American/Black residents and other communities of color.[92] Data on youth and TAY experiencing justice system involvement continue to mirror trends of disproportionate policing practices targeted toward people of color and historically marginalized communities. Leaders across City agencies focused on criminal justice share this awareness and charge of eliminating racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

> *Criminal Justice Racial Equity Statement: The San Francisco Community Corrections Partnership, Police Commission, Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, Reentry Council, and Sentencing Commission prioritize racial equity so that all people may thrive. San Francisco's criminal justice policy bodies collectively acknowledge that communities of color have borne the burdens of inequitable social, environmental, economic, and criminal justice policies, practices, and investments. The legacy of these government actions has caused deep racial disparities throughout San Francisco's juvenile justice and criminal justice system. We must further recognize that racial equity is realized when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes. We commit to the elimination of racial disparities in the criminal justice system.*[93]

Where COVID-19 exacerbated standing inequalities in the impacts of justice involvement, the San Francisco District Attorney's Office implemented significant practice shifts to reduce the City's jail population, noting that any other route that kept individuals imprisoned through the pandemic equated to a resignation to "reinforce the very racial inequities we just pledged to eradicate."[94] In their departmental Racial Equity Action Plan, the San Francisco APD calls attention to the excessive burden that criminal justice fees and fines impose upon people of color who remain overrepresented in justice systems and notes that through collaboration with the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector, San Francisco became the first city and county in the nation to eliminate all criminal justice administrative fees authorized by local government.[95] Regarding juveniles and TAY specifically, community advocacy for closing juvenile hall and the City's subsequent decision and planning process reflect efforts to promote racial equity in criminal justice systems and respond to declining incidences of youth crime.

Research in criminology regarding youth and TAY specifically has long accepted the notion of a standard "age-crime curve" to describe that engagement in behaviors deemed criminal or delinquent peaks during adolescence and tapers down in young adulthood.[96] Disparities noted above indicate an imbalance wherein young people of color, especially African American/Black youth and TAY, continue to experience harsher terms and responses to a known "age-crime" developmental process that allows

for leniency with non-African American/Black youth. Noting this disparate impact of policing on African American/Black youth and communities of color and a persistent allocation of significant City resources to staff and facilities for a diminished population of justice-involved youth and TAY, grassroots community activists called on City leadership to close juvenile hall. In 2019, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors voted to close the hall and refocus City resources on rehabilitative services for youth and TAY experiencing justice system involvement.

> *Most youth will age out of crime and should be supported in a positive developmental process. This requires creating strong relationships with caring adults, inclusion in pro-social peer groups and activities, and encouragement to develop their own interests and potential. By expanding our investment in services that are community-based, culturally-relevant, trauma-informed, and developmentally-appropriate, the City will enable youth to make a positive transition into adulthood.*[97]

DCYF continues to partner with the City's justice agencies to ensure that local reforms in our justice services landscape translate to Citywide conditions for young people in and at high risk of justice-involvement to access a robust network of community supports. In describing a young person's needs for healthy development as well as the barriers brought on by justice involvement, legislation ordering the closure of juvenile hall echoes DCYF's emphasis on cultivating conditions of safety, stability, and nurturing for the City's children, youth, TAY, and families.

> *Healthy psychological development requires: (1) the presence of a parent or parent-like adult who is involved with and concerned about the young person's development, (2) a peer group that values positive behavior and academic success, and (3) opportunities and activities that foster independent decision-making and critical thinking. These core adolescent development requirements cannot be achieved when young people are detained because those detained are: (1) separated from their support networks, (2) grouped together with other youth who have been charged with offenses, and (3) stripped of their autonomy and self-determination.*[98]

Speaking on their own processes of transitioning into adulthood and pursuit of opportunities for improved quality of life, DCYF focus group participants with direct or family experiences of justice system involvement noted needs for adult mentors and challenges with accessing mental health services. Additionally, they identified academic goals to prepare for careers in community services and echoed a wider sense of urgency for fulfilling basic needs. When discussing experiences in existing services, participants also emphasized genuine empathy, respect, and care as necessary characteristics of adults who provide care for young people while navigating circumstances of compromised safety and stability.

"Growing up in the city as a youth, being Latino, a migrant, and low-income, was very hard. Being on probation was really hard too, especially with parents that only spoke Spanish and couldn't understand everything that was happening in the courts."

—TAY, focus group with justice involved youth and TAY

"There should be more people who've been through what the youth been through—homelessness, through the system. We need more people in higher offices just like us—like in positions to be youth mentors."

—*TAY, focus group with justice involved youth and TAY*

While probation terms may appear less punitive than bouts of incarceration, the active monitoring involved in probation opens opportunities for action that deepen an individual's entanglement in justice systems.[99] Because justice system involvement opens a cycle that easily deepens entanglement for individuals, strategies that aim to minimize impacts of justice involvement on a young person's life can be generalized to two general approaches. Prevention strategies aim to deter initial law enforcement encounters among young people exhibiting high-risk of arrest. Intervention strategies aim for a young person's case and future outcomes to be diverted away from any deeper involvement. Both approaches may entail similar activities that hinge on the contributions of caring adults as mentors, case managers, and advocates, but intervention strategies necessitate additional technical skill and knowledge sharing to support navigation of court processes. Examples of these strategies can be found in CBO services that focus on positive youth development as well as Citywide initiatives such as the Community Assessment and Resource Center (CARC), the San Francisco Young Adult Court, and APD's Community Assessment and Services Center. The San Francisco District Attorney's office also utilizes the Sentence Planning (SP) model of

alternative sentencing for qualifying cases, such as those where the defendant is young and has limited prior offenses, misdemeanor/felony cases, and those where mental health issues are involved.[100] The team of Sentence Planners carefully reviews the details of cases to determine if alternatives to detention can be recommended to the prosecution. These service models represent efforts to prevent justice involvement, divert young people out of justice systems, and connect youth and TAY experiencing justice system involvement with community assets to support transitions out of justice involvement. DCYF remains positioned to support service needs along both lines of prevention and intervention, as we hold supportive partnerships with the City's justice agencies and fund CBOs that serve youth at high-risk of justice involvement.

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN/ DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) refers to "crimes of a sexual nature committed against juvenile victims for financial or other economic reasons." Young people experiencing CSEC tend to be entangled in systems of domestic minor sex trafficking. San Francisco's Department on the Status of Women identified a total of 673 human trafficking cases in 2017, a significant increase from prior years. Overall, 70% of all reported trafficking cases were people of color, with African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx individuals constituting the largest groups of people trafficked. Cisgender women made up 75% of reported trafficking cases, cisgender men an additional 20%, and transgender or gender non-conforming individuals the final 5%.[101] Youth and TAY under age 25 comprised 70% of reported trafficking cases; 23% were minors, and 47% were TAY.[102]

Characteristics that heighten risks of a young person being trafficked include homelessness, compromised immigration status, history of sexual abuse, and involvement with foster or justice systems.[103]For youth who have experienced CSEC, 60% to 90% were involved in the foster system at some point in their lives. Experts who work with these youth suggest that systems often fail to recognize exploitation, and interventions mostly treat the effects or consequences of CSEC rather than the causes.[104]

Lack of consistent data and the hidden nature of trafficking make it difficult to understand its scope and to hold traffickers accountable. Those who are exploited may not realize that they are being exploited and typically do not trust law enforcement and other government agencies due to previous experiences, legal status vulnerabilities, differing cultural attitudes, and manipulation by traffickers. In the United States, traffickers often exploit societal stigma and discrimination against immigrants, people of color, LGBTQQ people, and sex workers to maintain control.[105]

SERVICE ACCESS & NAVIGATION

DCYF, City agencies, and CBOs across the City provide myriad services to nurture our communities and improve life outcomes for the City's most vulnerable populations. The Mayor's Children and Family Recovery Plan identified that many families in the City face challenges in accessing and navigating available services and resources.* Service

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*For additional details on findings, strategies, recommendations aimed at improving service accessibility and navigation, please review the Mayor's Children and Families Recovery Plan at dcyf.org/recovery.

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access and navigation challenges arose with elevated concern particularly in conversations regarding immigrant and undocumented families, individuals with disabilities and their families, and childcare for working parents.

Immigrant Families & Undocumented Individuals

An estimated 35,000 individuals with undocumented immigration status call San Francisco home.[106] With youth under 18 constituting roughly 13% of the City's population, an estimated 4,600 youth with undocumented immigration status reside in San Francisco. Undocumented youth and families face unique and significant barriers to supportive resources. Like many other community members DCYF engaged, undocumented youth focus group participants described urgency and challenge around meeting basic needs. However, these youth called attention to distinct barriers to accessing needed services and supports raised by eligibility requirements contingent on citizenship or immigration status.

City departments plan for services and supports to reach all vulnerable communities, including immigrant families. Policy changes put forth by the previous federal administration and associated anti-immigrant discourse, however, left many of these families uncertain about meeting eligibility criteria for needed subsidies and services. Hostile rhetoric against immigrant communities instilled a still lingering hesitancy to access services for fear of immigration enforcement consequences. In describing their experiences with service barriers raised toward undocumented individuals, youth that DCYF engaged expressed frustration with service limitations.

"Some of us do not have DACA. It is very hard to access resources, especially when your family is undocumented. It is hard to access help when you don't have certain paperwork. There is a tiered level of ability to get resources, even amongst undocumented people."

"There are many restrictions for the support available to undocumented communities. We need to focus on getting rid of these restrictions to support undocumented communities. SF needs to be bolder about doing this, it needs to do it first, so that others can follow. A lot of this is providing the necessary resources for folks to not just survive but thrive."

—Young people, focus group with undocumented and immigrant community

Individuals with Disabilities & their Families

HSA estimates that 94,000 individuals with disabilities call San Francisco home. Considering children and youth comprise approximately 13% of the City's population, 12,000 of these individuals may be children and youth ages 17 and under.[107] These estimates include a range of disabilities: mobility (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), independent living/personal care (difficulty with activities of daily life), cognitive (difficulty concentrating, remembering), and sensory (difficulty hearing and/or seeing). African American/Black individuals in San Francisco make up a disproportionately

SF has an estimated

4,600

youth with undocumented immigration status

SF has an estimated

12,000

youth with disabilities

large percentage of individuals with disabilities, comprising 24% of this population despite constituting only 5% of the City's broader population. Consideration of this disparity and the unique service experiences and challenges that individuals with disabilities and their families encounter are key to ensuring the highest need families in the communities are nurtured.

Caring for a child with disabilities poses multiple challenges. Depending on the type of condition, household finances may stretch thin to provide for necessary staff or supply costs. Research finds that these stressors contribute to parents and caregivers experiencing diminished well-being in both physical and psychological terms.[108] When discussing experiences of City services as well as current needs with DCYF, parents and caregivers of children with disabilities echoed both cost concerns and the household stresses of coordinating necessary supports.

"I don't know why it has to be so hard. We are working off of three different systems. Here we are two educated people. I don't even know where to start. If there was a case manager to help us fill things out it would be a lot easier than me feeling defeated every step of the way."

—*Parent, focus group with families of children with disabilities*

"We need childcare. We're both essential workers. We worked out of the home the entire pandemic. I have two special-needs children and no help. This Camp was the best thing that happened to us because we normally can't afford it."

—*Parent, Summer Together Program Evaluation focus group*

Individuals with disabilities and their families continue to encounter limitations to accessing necessary resources. In conversations with DCYF, parents and caregivers described shortages of staff qualified to meet specific disabilities and conditions as well as experiences of disrespect and inappropriate responses from City staff directed at their youth with a disability.

"Principal sent a message that 'because I'm not trained in this, we don't do this.' [They] tolerate DHH families, but didn't support or include kids and families who were deaf or hard of hearing."

"We had Child Protective Services and SFPD interactions that both felt unsafe and non-understood because of my son's disability. Most systems involved families that I know have a similar experience to the total lack of training and understanding."

—*Parent, focus group with families of children with disabilities*

Institutional leaders charged with supporting children with disabilities and their families described related challenges with staff onboarding and conduct, albeit from a separate angle of service planning and provision and within the context of severe impacts brought on by COVID-19. System coordination and navigation improvements were called out as a priority for strengthening services offered to children with disabilities and their families.

"Have a connective network to engage private and nonprofit, school and City, for youth to get an assessment and right services. These are Title II and III legal obligations."

—*SFUSD Staff, focus group with service providers supporting children with disabilities*

Calling out the need for strengthened networks to navigate families between needs identification and service provision reminds us that the presence of caring adults bolsters experiences of safety, stability, and nurturing not just for young people, but also for other adults and parents seeking support. Research finds that the presence of social supports and close relationships with parents and caregivers of children with disabilities supports positive parenting behavior as well as decreased stress levels.[109] Parents and caregivers echoed this need for support as adults in caring for children with disabilities during focus groups.

"Parents are left out of the equation for mental health. It would be nice to get free counseling services for parents available, even marriage counseling would be beneficial."

—*Parent, focus group with families of children with disabilities*

Accessible Childcare Nurtures Families & Communities

Discourse at a national scale increasingly identifies childcare as a critical form of human infrastructure, as it begins building readiness for kindergarten for our earliest learners and simultaneously supports working parents and caregivers with the time needed to earn wages to provide for household needs. Research has shown that 90% of a child's brain development occurs before kindergarten, and high-quality early care can enhance cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development during those years. Many of the economic and health benefits of quality early care have been shown to persist into adulthood.[110]

Figure 29: Most Common Challenges Related to Childcare Identified by Parents/Caregivers, by Race/Ethnicity, 2018

Stacked bar chart:

Race/Ethnicity	Cost	Available Space	Waitlist
African American/Black	30%	11%	35%
Asian	27%	22%	12%
Latinx	31%	12%	7%
Multiracial/Other	56%	16%	11%
White	53%	26%	15%
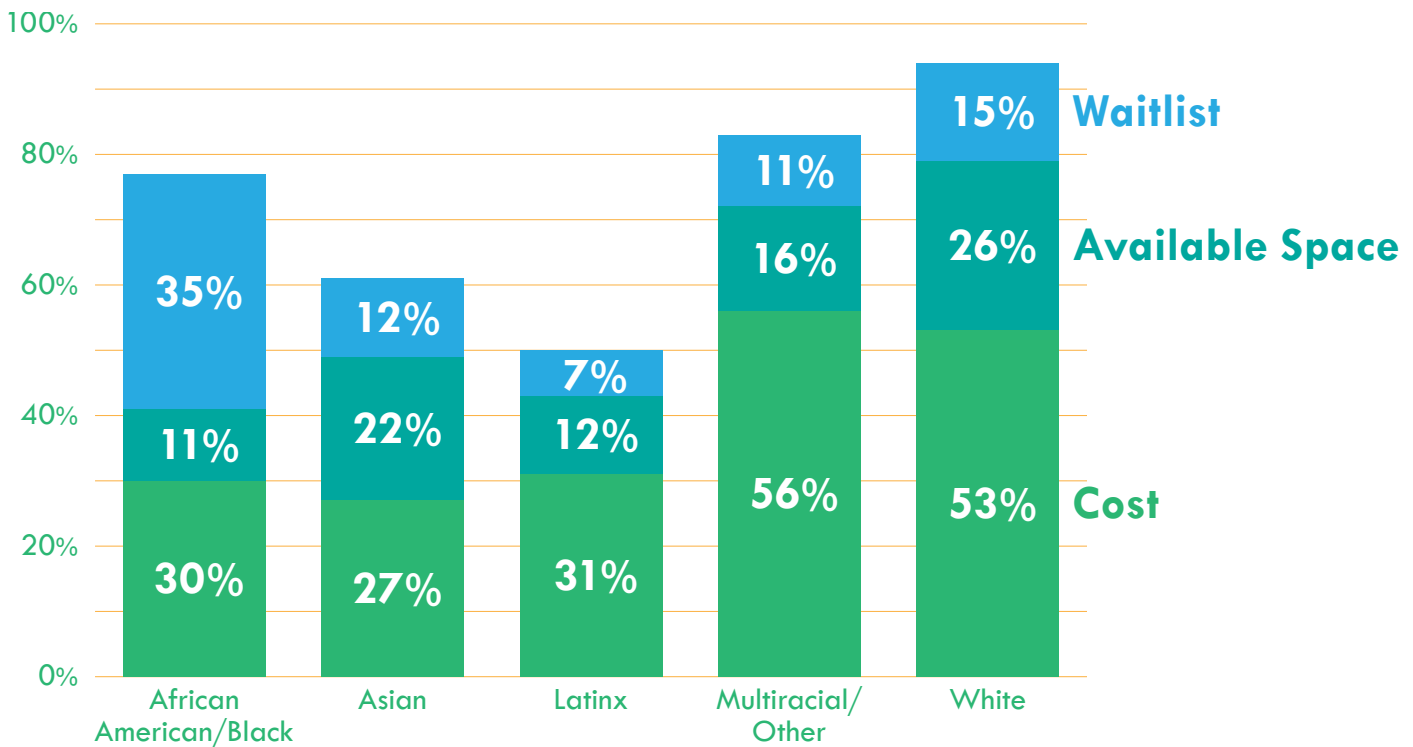
Source: 2018 Citywide Child and Family Survey

Finding affordable, quality childcare in San Francisco is a significant hurdle for many parents and caregivers. Figure 29 above shows the challenges cited by parents and caregivers who responded to the 2018 Child and Family Survey. In San Francisco, annual childcare cost estimates range from $15,000 to $29,000 for infants and $15,000 to $22,000 for preschoolers.[111] For a family with two children, childcare costs can easily account for half of take-home wages. In CNA surveys, 45% of parents and caregivers with children under age 5 felt that their childcare was affordable.[112]

> *"[Childcare is] too expensive. My wife quit her job as a teacher because childcare would have been as expensive as her annual salary. Half of my salary already goes to rent."*
>
> —Parent, Citywide Family Survey

Though subsidized or free programming is available for some families, many parents and caregivers cite long waitlists as a barrier to obtaining childcare. In September 2019, there were 3,000 eligible children on San Francisco's waitlist for childcare subsidies.[113] Other parents and caregivers report that their incomes are too high to qualify for subsidies but that they nonetheless struggled to afford childcare.

> *"Childcare is a big need. We're in the middle ground, don't qualify and still not affordable. We don't have extra family to help, so it's hard."*
>
> —Parent, CityKids Fair Interview

Even for families that can afford the high cost of childcare, some report being on wait-lists for months or years before they can enroll their child. This concern was expressed during community engagement sessions more for preschools than for infant and toddler care, though it was cited as an issue for both program types.

"I've had an easy enough time securing daycare for my children when younger, however preschool admissions are brutal. The waitlists are extensive, and my two sons are/were in daycare much longer than I would like because of this. They are getting/got wonderful care in the licensed daycare we use(d), however are ready for a more educational preschool and are held back by waitlists."

"It was very difficult to find childcare. We made about 30 calls before finding one that had availability. It was totally hit or miss. We are so fortunate that we found one with an opening that has been such a great fit for our family."

—Parents, CityKids Fair Interview

The San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education (OECE) is working to address the challenges cited by parents through initiatives such as the Early Learning Scholarship Program and Preschool for All. These programs seek to make childcare affordable for more San Francisco families, as well as to enhance the quality of childcare programming in the City.[114] The passage of Proposition C in 2018 established a $146 million annual funding stream for San Francisco early childcare, which is slated to be used to clear subsidy waitlists and increase childcare affordability for moderate income families.[115]

While more than 500 childcare centers and 300 family childcare homes currently operate in San Francisco,[116] pandemic-induced school closures and workplace shifts left many parents and caregivers struggling to balance work and childcare. As a result, many parents and caregivers, particularly those in families of color and low-income communities and especially women, left the workforce.[117] When DCYF engaged parents and caregivers to learn about childcare needs, discussions centered around cost and schedule limitations. Among working parents and caregivers in particular, the need to manage the logistics of childcare alongside employment shifts and the general stress of childcare costs add layers of strain to the family dynamic.

"The pandemic was challenging a lot. When it first started, I had trouble with work and had to quit work to take care of my children. All of the childcare services were closed, which impacted the opportunity to find work."

—Parent, focus group with families experiencing homelessness

"We need more aftercare programs, more flexibility in hours with pickup and drop off of children. Childcare for afterschool hours. When my children were younger, I had to leave work to pick up children when there was [an] emergency. Childcare is expensive."

—*Parent, focus group with undocumented and immigrant community*

At the onset of COVID-19, DCYF partnered with City departments and CBOs to launch Emergency Child and Youth Care (ECYC) programs for parents and caregivers working on the frontline pandemic response. Additionally, OECE, First 5 San Francisco, the Children's Council, and City College partnered to strengthen childcare offerings and accessibility for working parents, especially women returning to work and African American/Black families.

CITYWIDE SAFETY CONCERNS

Crime data from SFPD considered alongside public opinion polls point to a dissonance between public perceptions of safety and reported instances of violence. Compared to 2020, 2021 saw a 10.8% increase in reported crimes, with a very small increase in violent crimes at 1%.[118] Geographically, SFPD annual crime data mirrors patterns expressed by residents' feelings of safety across precincts. Incidences of violent crime reported by the Bayview, Central, Mission, Southern and Tenderloin police districts totaled 3,282 in 2021, roughly twice the 1,623 violent crimes reported by SFPD's Ingleside, Northern, Park, Richmond, and Taraval police districts.[119] SFPD data indicates disparate targeting and contacts with individuals of color. This disproportionate contact can contribute to increased reports of crime from precincts that primarily serve neighborhoods with higher densities of residents who identify as BIPOC.

Polling conducted by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce in 2021 suggests that 46% of City voters are concerned about crime and public safety, up from 26% in 2020.[120] Additionally, 81% of those polled felt that crime has gotten worse over the past few years. Community conversations from DCYF's Family Summits in 2019 surface that concerns around neighborhood safety were prevalent even prior to the pandemic. Families reported that many neighborhoods do not feel safe due to drug use, robberies, and car break-ins. Additionally, they expressed difficulty building relationships of trust with police officers who do not speak the language of many families in their neighborhood.[121] During the focus groups we conducted in 2021, community members described an overall sense of discomfort in areas of the City with a concentrated density of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness or reputations for open air drug use.

"I don't want to target neighborhoods specifically as unsafe, but places where people are using substances, have mental health needs, and more support is needed—I don't feel safe walking through there, and people are needing help that we're not able to all provide."

—*Parent, focus group with American Indian/Native American Families*

"When people are just hanging around in the street and I can't walk by them, it makes me feel uncomfortable. [Where] there's a lot of violence and drugs, I usually don't like going there, it makes me feel unsafe and it's very close to where I live. I have to go by it a lot, but I try to go by other streets if I can."

—*Young person, focus group with Arab youth*

Of the youth that DCYF surveyed in 2021, only 47% agreed with the statement "I feel safe in my community."[122] Figure 30 shows that City residents are less likely to feel safe in neighborhoods along the southern and eastern segments of San Francisco, which geographically overlap with City regions that more African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander families call home.

Figure 30. Percent of Parents Who Feel Safe in Their Neighborhood, 2019
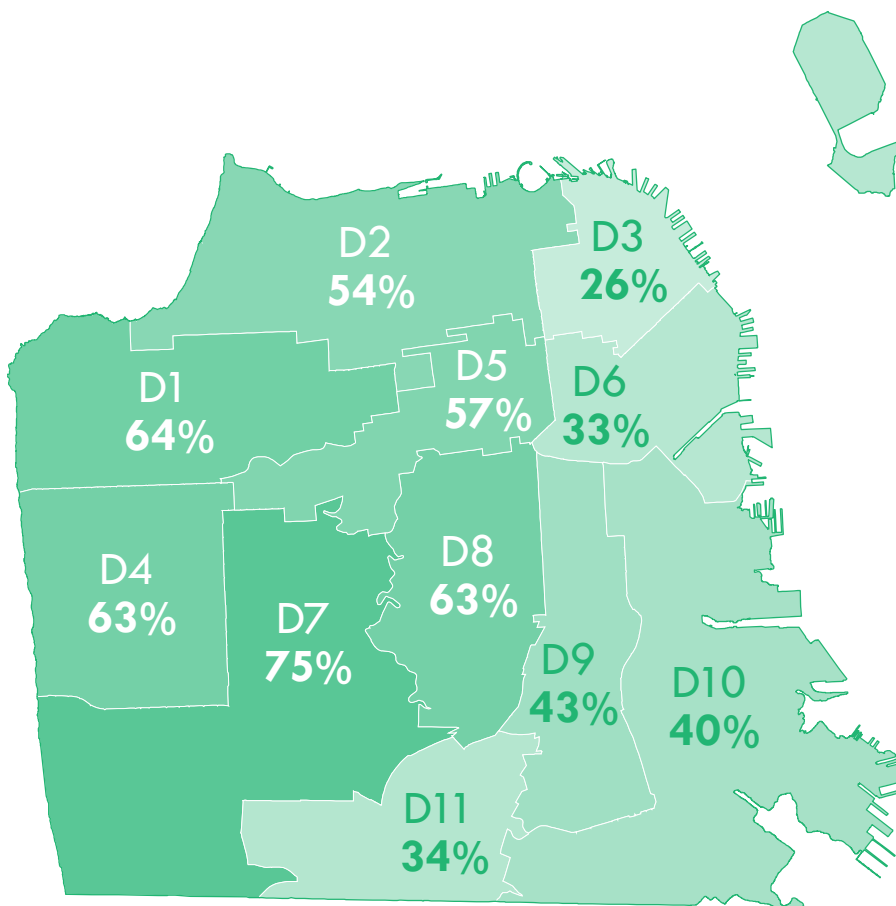
Source: Controller's Office Analysis of the San Francisco City Survey 2002-2019

Community members of diverse backgrounds broadly spoke about school safety, property crime, theft, robbery, gun violence, and substance use when describing their heightened need to feel safe in the City before and after the start of the pandemic. In DCYF focus groups with African American/Black youth and families, participants elevated concerns for youth safety in public, especially around police, given misperceptions of violence or delinquency attributed to African American/Black youth. As previously discussed, disproportionate contact with law enforcement among African American youth persists in San Francisco, which triggers concerns for incidences of police violence directed at African American/Black communities that remain visible nationwide. When

discussing spaces that feel safe, African American/Black families participating in focus groups expressed finding most nurturing and safety in their homes, given broader histories and ongoing experiences of discrimination that permeate across interpersonal relationships and institutional services.

"I felt like the City that raised me and I loved didn't love me back. At every turn, it was clear that I wasn't welcome. It wasn't because of my income. I was unwelcome because of what I looked like, skin color, hair texture...As a Black parent, if I go to [other neighborhoods], 'cause that's where my children go to school, I go to the food pantry. I'm told, 'Why are you over here? You could go over to your neighborhood.' I know how it feels to be mistreated."

—*Parent, focus group with African American/Black families*

In focus groups conducted with Asian youth and families, community members highlighted safety concerns around increased incidences of targeted anti-Asian violence driven by racialized scapegoating and the spread of pandemic misinformation. From the start of the pandemic to April 2021, 3,795 incidents of anti-Asian hate incidents were reported across the country. California accounted for 1,186 of the total reports, and San Francisco comprised roughly 24% of all reported incidents in the state.[123] While reflecting on heightened violence and anti-Asian rhetoric, young people that we talked to aimed to steer away from repeating narratives that deepen community divisions.

"I worry I will get punched by random people. Before this issue, I often took my children out for a walk after dinner. Since we hear lots of incidents on the Anti-Asian violence, we stop going out in the evening."

—*Parent, focus group with families living in SROs*

"...To see my people attacked and targeted in SF...the number of elderly in the SOMA, the Sunset, it's ridiculous. I think it's sad that out of anti-Asian violence, that we get articles talking about violence between Black and Asian communities, which creates more division."

—*Young person, focus group with Arab youth*

Focus groups with LGBTQQ youth and TAY surfaced challenges to long-standing perceptions of the City as a sanctuary for young people who identify as LGBTQQ. Focus group participants described fears of experiencing crimes driven by homophobia and transphobia in public spaces and on transit. These concerns echo research from the SF LGBT Center's Violence Prevention Needs Assessment, which found in 2015 that the City's LGBTQQ population had experienced high rates of violence and that risks worsen for individuals who identify or are perceived as transgender people of color.[124]

> *"Looking visibly LGBT in public…I always keep my phone charged and self-defense items on me. The worst that's happened is people saying homophobic things on the bus, but that's normal."*
>
> —*Young person, focus group with LGBTQQ youth and TAY*

When discussing transit and navigating spaces away from their home communities, focus group participants described stresses and fears for their own safety as well as the well-being of their families. In plans to coordinate, enrich, and retain services to youth and families affected by COVID-19 school closures and distance learning programs, the SF RISE Working Group led by DCYF recommended that City leaders work to improve the public's sense of support and safety in transit.[125] Shelter-in-place orders and service reductions in response to COVID-19 significantly limited and rerouted transit lines that families routinely relied upon for navigating the City. With many daily activities recovering and resuming, transit staffing, scheduling, and routing must respond to increased ridership needs.

> *"It can be stressful, I don't trust my son's safety with public transit going to/from school. There's a lot that takes place with people being territorial about different areas, all types of mischief that happens on public transportation."*
>
> —*Parent, focus group with African American/Black families*

> *"A lot of people feel unsafe inside the buses. A lot of people using drugs or people who are coming down. My wife got beaten inside the bus."*
>
> —*Parent, focus group with Mayan families*

> *"I also worry about my children who take public transit to school by themselves. I often instructed my children to call me once they got on the bus to ensure they rode on the bus safely. Now, I get even more panicked by worrying if they show their phone out on the bus and become a target. I tell them after calling me, should put away their phones immediately."*
>
> —*Parent, focus group with families living in SRO's*

CONDITIONS FOR NURTURING COMMUNITIES

Families of all backgrounds and youth across service settings need to feel safe to engage in relationships and activities that nurture positive development and growth into thriving adulthoods. A review of literature on the topic suggests that key contributors to community safety include well-maintained spaces for public engagements and activities (e.g., parks and community centers) and positive relationships between community members.[126]

With over 200 public parks, San Francisco was acknowledged in 2017 as the first and only U.S. city where all residents could access a park within a half-mile distance.[127] The 2019 City Survey found that frequent park users with children give San Francisco parks a high rating; 81% graded City parks an "A" or "B."[128] RPD facilities, including recreation centers, playgrounds, and public parks, provide key spaces for youth development. The temporary closure of these facilities during the pandemic highlighted their importance to children, youth, and families in the City. These facilities were also vital for hosting pandemic-response activities, such as ECYC sites and CHI programs.

In addition to City departments leaning on the strength of the City's open spaces, City leaders have launched campaigns to facilitate critical discussions and positive connections across communities. In 2018, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) led the Help Against Hate community conversation series. Each conversation on race, hate speech, and discrimination intended to "inspire courageous dialogue towards direct action in an equitable and healing space, and opened an opportunity for participants to express love and provide help against hate."[129] In response to heightened visibility of systemic racism during the pandemic, HRC also launched the Citywide Campaign for Solidarity, which Mayor London Breed promoted as an effort to "build the solidarity, respect, and understanding needed to unite our diverse communities and work towards a more just and equitable future for all."[130] DCYF focus group participants stressed the importance of having culturally and linguistically appropriate programs to ensure that members of diverse communities feel supported and able to thrive.

"A sense of belonging is having a big Chinese community, talking in my own language, and with help from many non-profit organizations. These organizations provide me with important information and give me a sense of belonging to the city."

—Parent, focus group with families living in SROs

"What I think would help the community is—I feel like for us Arabs, especially the young kids—we need a program or a club that we can go to. I know I had that when I came into America. When I came into America, I didn't know English, no friends, so I was scared to go anywhere except that program. I could relate to other kids in the same situation, who spoke the same language, they could show me around the area, the TL, which is not a great place for kids to grow around. Not just for the Arab community, I feel like every race should have their own program so they could help each other out and grow in America."

—Young person, focus group with Arab youth

Though discussions in this chapter spotlight experiences of hardship and challenge, families and community leaders throughout the City continue to identify San Francisco as a great place to grow up. During focus groups conducted in 2021, parents, caregivers, and young people alike acknowledged the diversity of City communities and the breadth of supportive resources offered by the City as their favorite aspects of living in San Francisco. In DCYF's ongoing conversations with CBOs, agency staff champion the fact that San Francisco remains a great place to grow up because City leaders and community members continue to prioritize the interests of our diverse families and communities. As DCYF moves forward in planning services to nurture families and communities, we center the values of unity and collaboration expressed in a recent statement by Mayor Breed, "San Francisco is stronger when we are united and work together. We must continue to come together to denounce all forms of hate, bias, and discrimination."[131]

Physical & Emotional Health

DCYF envisions a San Francisco where all children, youth and families fulfill their basic right to physical and emotional health. Healthy people are more able to take on challenges, support one another, and contribute positively to their communities.[132] Social determinants of health are conditions in environments where people are born, live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health outcomes and risks.[133] These conditions include factors such as safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods; access to education, job opportunities, and income; access to nutritious food and physical activity opportunity; and racism and discrimination. The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Healthy People 2030 (HP2030) highlights the importance of addressing the social determinants of health by including "Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all" as one of its five overarching health goals for the decade. Previous chapters in this report note that access to social and economic opportunities and supports are not equal for all people. These inequities also explain in part why some groups are healthier than others.

While San Francisco is regarded as the healthiest city in America,[134] disparities in health access and outcomes persist. This chapter explores how physical and emotional health conditions and outcomes reflect experiences and characteristics that tend to stratify along lines of race, ethnicity, income, sexual orientation, physical ability, housing, and systems exposure. Data indicates that across multiple measures of health, vulnerable populations experience a lower quality of life and more health complications. Some of these measures include physical health conditions, such as preterm births, prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and asthma, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy at a young age, and other health risks. Vulnerable populations also display higher rates of detrimental emotional health conditions such as depression, toxic stress, and suicide ideation. COVID-19 and its related effects have exacerbated many of these health equity issues. In addition, data shows that African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian/Alaska Native persons in the United States experience higher rates of COVID-19-related hospitalization and death compared with non-Hispanic White populations.[135]

SAFE & RESPECTFUL MATERNAL HEALTHCARE IS NEEDED FOR HEALTHY BIRTHS

Healthcare inaccessibility manifests disproportionately before birth for certain racial and socioeconomic groups. Low-income children and youth face unequal opportunities in accessing quality healthcare, and exposure to stressful conditions, such as housing instability and severe material hardship, have been associated with preterm birth.[136] Babies born before 37 weeks of gestation begin life more precariously than their full-term peers. Preterm birth puts babies at higher risk for health problems, including death, during the first year of life. They are also at greater risk of developing long-term disabilities such as learning delays, respiratory problems, hearing and vision impairment, and autism later in life.[137]

An analysis of San Francisco's live births data shows that African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander women face greater socioeconomic hardships and barriers to care than White women do and that women who do not receive prenatal care have higher rates of preterm births than those that do.[138]

Figure 31. Percent of Preterm Birth Rates, by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-2018
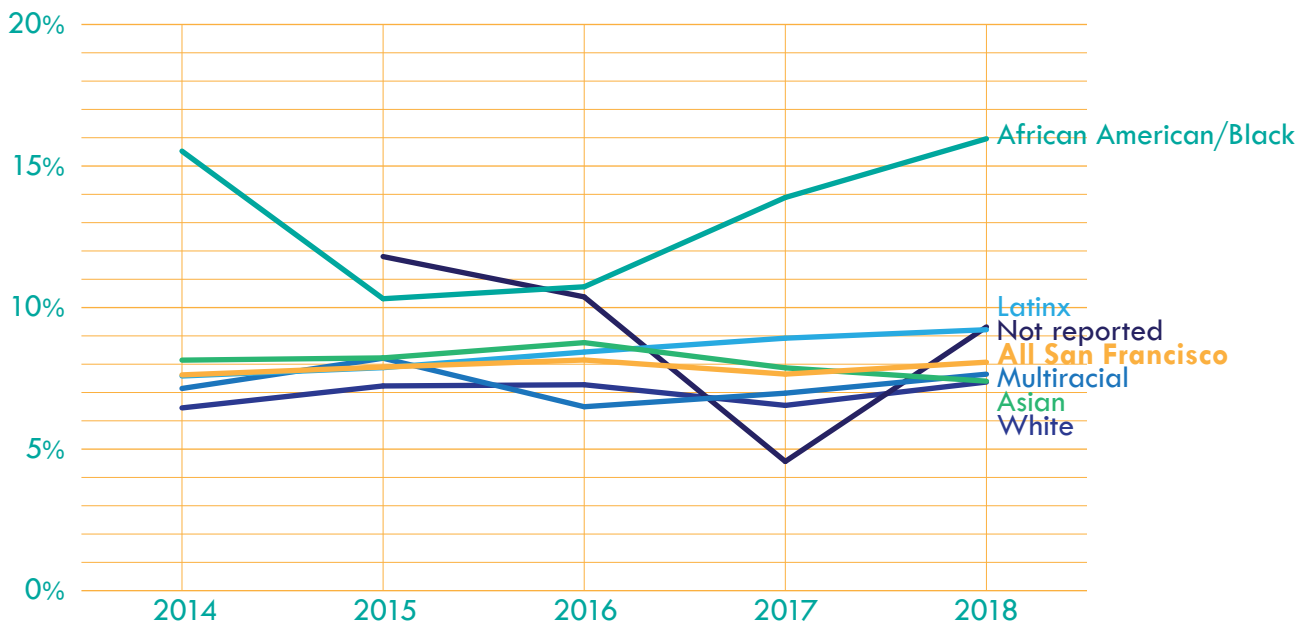
Source: Our Children Our Families, Data from SFDPH MCAH Epidemiology Birth File Analysis, 2019

African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander women also have higher rates of pregnancy complications, and African American/Black mothers have a preterm birth rate of 16% compared to the citywide rate of 8%. Additionally, African American/Black women are eight times more likely to use Medi-Cal for delivery, a proxy for poverty and lack of economic opportunity, and an indicator of not being insured prior to pregnancy.[139] Notably, mothers who experience social stress, like racism and poverty, during pregnancy have two times the risk of having a preterm birth.[140] Regardless of whether an African American/Black mother has public or private insurance, the rate of preterm birth is still disproportionately high and these patients tend to report mistrust, perceived racism, and dissatisfaction with care from their providers.[141]

Several cross-sector groups are working to address preterm births and pregnancy complications. The Abundant Birth Project, supported by DPH and many other city agencies and community groups, was launched in 2021 and will provide unconditional cash supplements to African American/Black and Pacific Islander mothers as a strategy to reduce preterm birth and improve economic outcomes in those communities.[142] In addition, the Pregnancy Pop-Up Village initiative in the Bayview brings an ecosystem of resources for pregnant families to under-resourced communities.[143]

YOUTH NEED MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and youth ages 6 to 17 years participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day of the week.[144] Regular physical activity plays a critical role in helping youth maintain a healthy body composition, control weight, and maintain healthy bones and muscles. Good aerobic capacity can be achieved through regular physical activity and has been shown to reduce the risk of issues like high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and some forms of cancer.[145] Problematically, national data from 2018 suggest that 76% of American children and youth are not getting enough daily physical activity.[146]

Aerobic capacity, calculated by one's ability to run a mile, has increasingly become a standard indicator of body health measurement. SFUSD measures aerobic capacity for students in 5th, 7th, and 9th grades. Across all grades, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Filipino, Hispanic/Latinx, and economically disadvantaged students demonstrated much lower rates of healthy aerobic capacity compared to their Asian and White counterparts.

Figure 32. Percent of SFUSD Students in Grades 5, 7, and 9 with Aerobic Capacity in the "Healthy Fitness Zone," By Race/Ethnicity, 2018-19

*Small sample size; interpret with caution
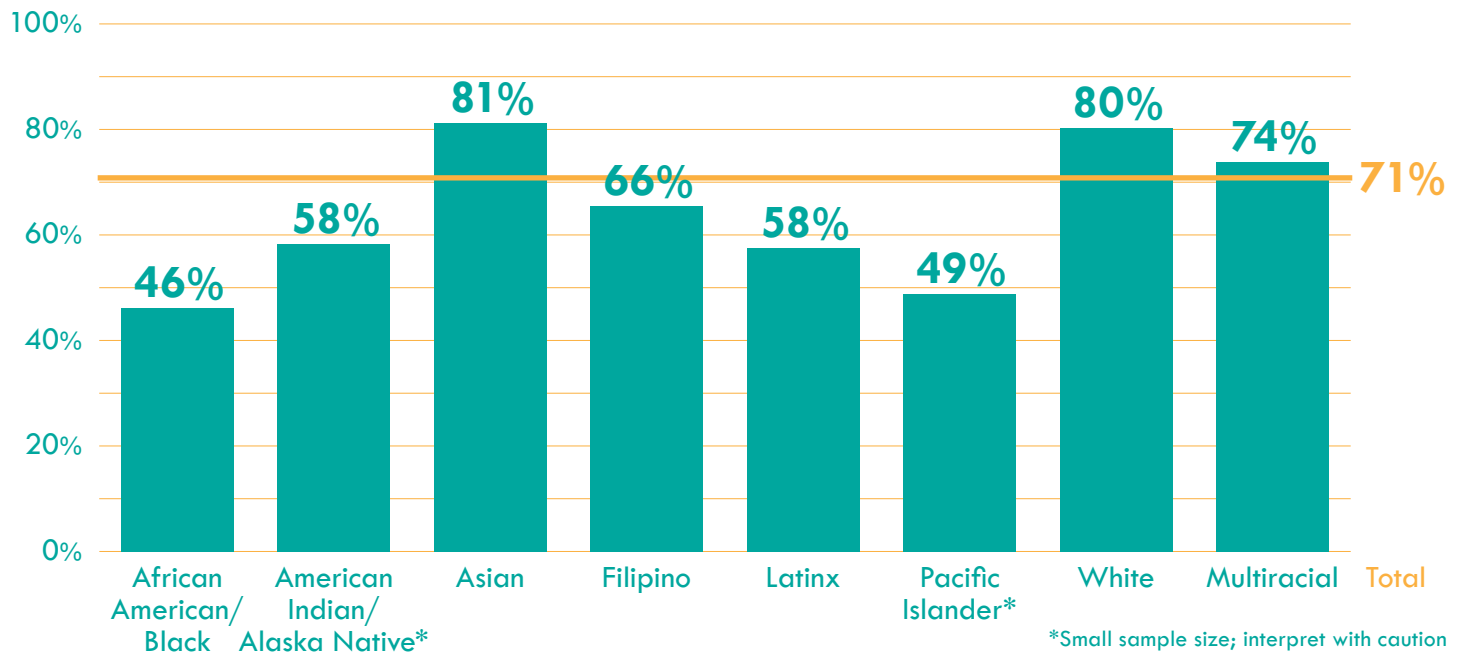
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, 2018-19

Studies show girls, teens, and children with special needs engage in less physical activity than boys, young children, and those without physical limitation, respectively.[147] Residential environments impact physical activity opportunities. Those living in neighborhoods with high crime and limited access to parks are generally less likely to meet physical activity recommendations.[148] The closures of schools, parks, and other recreation facilities due to COVID-19 also led to less physical activity and increased sedentary behaviors, amplifying risks of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes among young people.

"They're sedentary right now and eating a lot. It was important for me for them to move with physical activity. They only wanted to be on screens and eating. Even if we as parents wanted to push, they needed structure and program."

—Parent, Summer Together Program Evaluation focus group

Sports and other youth development programs with physical activity components not only provide youth with opportunities for exercise and recreation, but also help them develop key skills such as teamwork and collaboration. Additionally, these programs help participants positively connect with their peers and develop increased social awareness, self-esteem, and other social-emotional skills.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN FACE FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity contributes to poor health and health disparities through multiple pathways: stress, trauma, poor diet quality, and malnutrition. It also increases the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, impairs child development, and limits academic achievement.[149] Several barriers to food security exist for San Francisco residents; economic trauma, the racial wealth gap, and high cost of living, community influences such as inadequate information about resources and fear or distrust of government, and the inaccessibility of services due to confusing eligibility guidelines, arduous application processes, to name a few.[150]

The San Francisco Food Security Task Force reports that COVID-19 dramatically changed the landscape of food insecurity in the City.[151] Prior to the pandemic, one in four San Franciscans experienced food insecurity. During the pandemic, food needs hit crisis levels; the number of San Francisco residents on CalFresh increased by 40%, and the number of participants in the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) increased by 21%. A 2021 survey conducted by the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank with over 7,000 respondents showed that households with children, especially single-parent households, had the highest rates of food insecurity among their clients (87%). African American/Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx households in San Francisco continue to demonstrate high rates of food insecurity, as well as individuals experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants, and families living in SROs.

> The number of San Franciscans on CalFresh increased by
>
> # 40%
>
> during the pandemic

"Immigrants do not qualify for welfare, EBT, food or rent assistance. This has been a challenge during COVID. I think that the City should help immigrant communities more in this way."

—Young person, focus group with undocumented and immigrant community

Figure 33. Experiences of Food Insecurity by Household, 2021

I worried whether food would run out
- Single parent households with children: 87%
- Households with children: 83%
- No children in household: 76%

The food that we had just didn't last and we couldn't get more
- Single parent households with children: 75%
- Households with children: 71%
- No children in household: 62%

Legend:
- ■ Single parent households with children
- ■ Households with children
- ■ No children in household

Source: SF Marin Food Bank

These communities continue to grapple with reduced income, soaring food prices, and other structural challenges with accessing sufficient food. CBOs throughout the City responded to this need during the pandemic by staffing food distribution sites and providing their communities with access to healthy food. DCYF also continues to administer Nutrition Programs that provide free meals to children and youth during the school year and summer to ensure that young people's basic nutrition needs are met.

MISSED WELL-CHILD APPOINTMENTS & DELAYED CARE

Due to the pandemic, many children accessed less preventative care and parents and caregivers delayed well-child visits and developmental screenings. During focus groups, families described increased health concerns for children with special health needs who were unable to get health check-ups due to fear of contracting COVID-19. Children with seizure disorder and highly restricted medicines were unable to get medication delivered to their homes during the pandemic. In addition, providers, educators, parents, and caregivers are seeing an increase in speech and developmental delays among younger children.[152]

"Her daughter was hospitalized twice during COVID, but she mostly didn't want to bring her child in for visits to avoid being in the hospital. Her child's medical care has been impacted and delayed, making the child's condition more life threatening"

—Parent, interview with parents of children with a disability

The CDC identifies cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) as one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood in the United States and has found that dental health for children with special health needs has worsened because of the pandemic, particularly for TAY. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Children with poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who do not. [153]

Youth who rely on speech and occupational therapy have been unable to receive adequate services during the pandemic while teens have had reduced access to health services due to the closure of schools. These issues as well as other pressures on healthcare systems have widened racial disparities and lowered access to specialized services for children and youth with developmental disparities.[154]

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ARE WIDESPREAD FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES

Social determinants of health heavily influence mental health, which in turn drives a spectrum of life experiences and outcomes ranging from general well-being to suicide and death.[155] Vulnerable populations discussed throughout this report who face systemic challenges such as racism and poverty also experience a disproportionate risk for negative mental health outcomes. For example, children and youth with ACEs are at elevated risk for chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use.[*] A recent DPH brief found that "housing insecurity causes toxic stress, which derails normal child growth and development and predisposes children to poor health outcomes in adulthood."[156]

Adolescence is a key developmental stage for mental health. Screening data collected by the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) suggests that mental health services are needed for approximately one-third of adolescents in San Francisco.[157] For more than 20 years, nearly one in four SFUSD students reported experiencing symptoms of

Approximately

33%
of adolescents in SF need mental health services

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*See the Nurturing Families and Communities chapter for more information about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

depression. The Mayor's Children and Family Recovery Plan stated that pre-COVID, self-reported rates of depression and suicidality among youth were already increasing. SFUSD high school students who responded that they "felt sad or hopeless" increased from 25% to 31% between 2015 and 2019 and students who reported they "seriously considered attempting suicide" increased from 13% to 17% during the same period. SFUSD high school students that were surveyed in 2021 expressed strong interest in health and supportive services, with the top two areas being Stress management (64% interested or very interested) and Depression & Anxiety (58% interested or very interested).

Figure 34. Percent of SFUSD Students with Interest in Health and Supportive Services by School Level, 2021
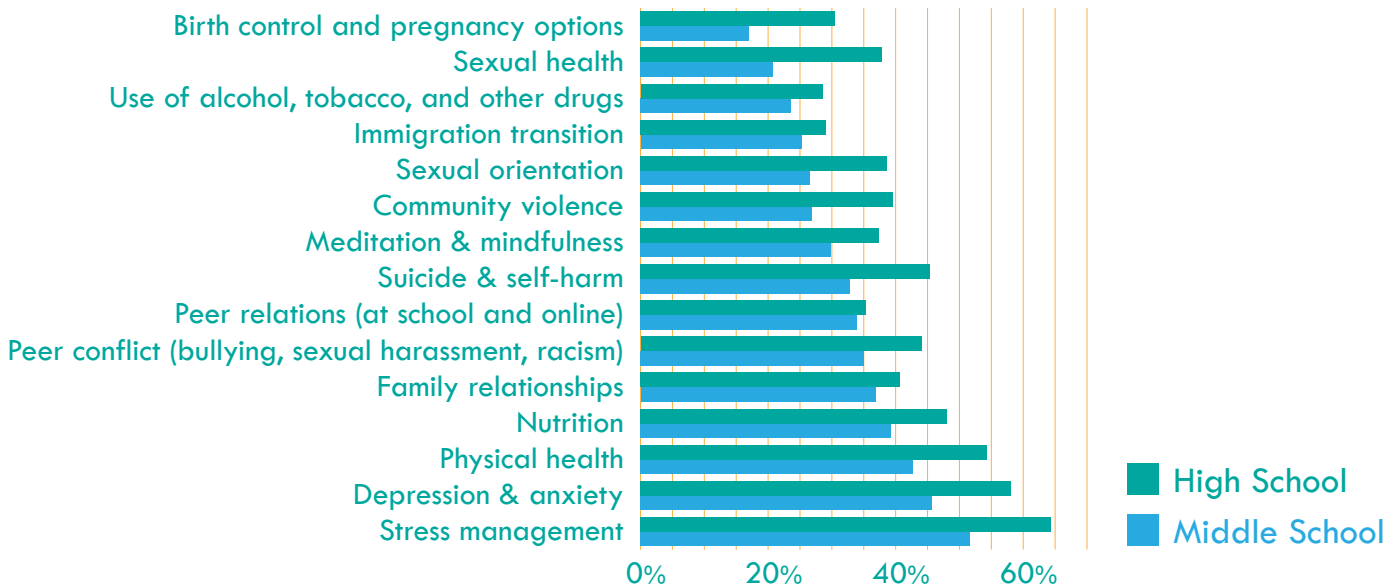
Source: DCYF SFUSD Middle School and High School Surveys, 2021

"What I think is important for the city to understand is that mental health is extremely important during these times because school is very different; work environments are very different, and I feel like having mental health support in the schools and workplaces will be extremely important in order for, not just my family, but for many families to be successful during these times."

—*Parent, Pop-Up Village interview*

"I need people to talk to like a therapist. I get stressed from school and I feel overwhelmed really easily. Someone that will give me really good advice."

—*Young person, focus group with children of incarcerated parents*

The pandemic stoked anxiety and fear and produced layers of increased grief and trauma in San Francisco communities. In surveys and focus groups that DCYF administered in 2021, youth reported worsening mental health during the pandemic. For example, 63% of high school youth participating in the Summer Together YPAR survey

reported that the pandemic had a negative effect on their mental health. Among SFUSD students surveyed during the 2021-22 school year, mental health concerns that students most frequently identified revolved around anxiety, depression, decreased motivation, and feeling isolated as effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.[158] Available data displays an increase in use of crisis services, hospitalizations, and referrals to higher level care, trends that mirror community members' repeated expression of wide-spread needs for mental health supports.[159]

> *"My most common emotions went from content and uninterested to lonely and depressed. Mostly from the huge amounts of time with my family in a small space, and hardly any contact with anybody outside of a couple of good friends."*
>
> *—Youth, Fall YPAR Survey*

Parents, caregivers, and service providers also noted the mental health toll of increased social isolation on children and youth. For example, foster youth faced nuanced challenges as detailed by one service provider. Girls were particularly affected by social isolation during the pandemic. They reported experiencing profound isolation and disconnection, increased stress and anxiety, and taking on unequal caregiving responsibilities.[160]

> *"Increased social isolation. I think that's certainly been amplified by the pandemic… Not being connected to important people in their lives, again amplified by pandemic. Increased mental health challenges. Our volunteers are certainly navigating even more mental health, with young people they're supporting as well as their caregivers."*
>
> *—CBO staff, focus group with service providers supporting youth in foster care system*

> *"I see the mental toll on my children. My daughter is 10, misses her friends. Interaction with kids is lacking, there's social isolation."*
>
> *—Parent, Dancing Feathers Powwow interview*

Parents and caregivers themselves have also faced increasing amounts of toxic stress and mental health challenges related to social determinants of health and seeing their children struggle during the pandemic. According to a national survey of households with children ages 0 to 5, 20% of lower-income caregivers reported feeling stress brought on by the pandemic, compared to 11% of middle- and high-income households.[161] Among participants in DCYF focus groups in 2021, one in four respondents to the post-focus group survey indicated interest in information about or support with managing behavioral health challenges. Parents and caregivers also indicated their own needs regarding mental health services. In particular, parents and caregivers of children with disabilities reported being under enormous stress and identified a need for a network of supports to properly care for their children, which was severely

20%
of lower-income caregivers felt stress brought on by the pandemic

disrupted during the pandemic. Research also indicates that caring for the mental health and broader service needs of parents and caregivers serves as a protective factor against child maltreatment risks.

"We had a structure before of taking them to school, go to work, had our own day. COVID stressed us due to financials, our own mental health, and their mental health. They were getting worried about us. We wanted to guide them but were stressed, wanted good behavior, they spend time differently now. We were stressing each other out."

—*Parent, Summer Together Program Evaluation Survey*

High Need Persists Among Youth from Vulnerable Populations

Anti-LGBTQQ stigma, harassment, and discrimination contribute to negative mental health outcomes among LGBTQQ youth. Mental health issues that result from discrimination are often exacerbated by racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, isolation, and a lack of family support, which create additional stress on an individual's mental health. The importance of being able to access quality mental health treatment for LGBTQQ youth cannot be overstated. Data from the 2017-2019 YRBS show 43% of SFUSD students who identified as bisexual considered suicide and 18% attempted suicide, significantly more than heterosexual-identifying students (11% and 6% respectively).[162] Among students who identify as transgender, 50% reported considering suicide between 2015-2019. Reducing suicidal thoughts among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescents is a HP2030 objective.[163]

50% of trans students considered suicide between 2015-19

In 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Natives nationwide between the ages of 10 and 34.[164] These relatively small communities are also at much higher risk than the national average for other health issues as well. American Indian/Alaska Native people are more likely to die of alcohol-related causes and demonstrate a higher than average incidence of diabetes and tuberculosis. As a group, they also show the highest rate of intimate partner violence in the U.S., and American Indian/Alaska Native children are at double the risk for abuse and neglect.[165] Interview respondents at the Dancing Feathers Powwow described intergenerational supports when asked about community needs:

> *"Consideration for different needs and more awareness. I have mental health needs, my son has mental health disabilities, and another child has Autism. Awareness for my community/Native community. It is hard to raise awareness. For the Native American community, we have generational trauma that gets closed on. My mom is a recovering addict."*
>
> —*Parent, Dancing Feathers Powwow interview*

Xenophobic immigration practices have negatively impacted immigrant children, youth, and families.[166] Immigrant parents expressed stress about deportation. Professionals working with immigrant families (e.g., early childhood education providers and teachers, pediatricians, home visitors, and others) reported a noticeable drop in participation in essential programs and services, including preschool and childcare, nutrition assistance (like CalFresh), preventive health care (like immunizations), and parenting education groups and visits.[167] Many providers describe frequent absences after real or rumored raids in the community or major policy changes. Providers report that when immigrant families do participate, their young children express an increase in separation anxiety during drop-offs, aggressive behavior, and withdrawn interactions during the day.[168]

Childcare providers are in the unique position to influence, educate, and connect with parents and caregivers about existing resources and strategies they can adapt to buffer toxic stress and support the development of their young children. Early Head Start, home-visiting, and childcare programs can initiate formal partnerships with health and mental health services, legal services, and other entities to ensure immigrant parents have the continuum of supports necessary to meet the holistic needs of themselves and their children.[169]

Systems-involved children and youth also demonstrate high need for health services of differing intensities. For example, childhood abuse has been associated with numerous psychiatric and medical diagnoses such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and chronic pain.[170] In addition, victims of maltreatment are more likely to engage in high-risk health behaviors including smoking, alcohol and drug use, and unsafe sex during adulthood. Children and young people involved in commercial sexual exploitation also have layered health needs that result from the trauma of their experiences. These individuals can be diagnosed with a range of psychological conditions ranging from PTSD to substance abuse to self-injury.

Advocates who work with foster youth note the need for greater access for youth aging out of foster care. Their access to mental health and other supportive services

ends once they are no longer in the system, even when that support is still needed. While young people are in the foster care system, those with mild to moderate anxiety and depression do not have access to support because resources are geared towards treating those with severe mental health needs. CBO staff described that among youth, pandemic experiences amplified already existing mental health challenges and needs among young people in/transitioning out of foster care.

"What's really lacking is...access to support for mild to moderate depression, anxiety, which most foster youth have because they don't meet the service qualification for that level of care."

—CBO Staff, focus group with service providers supporting youth in foster care system

Data shows that mental health needs are also prominent among youth experiencing homelessness. Figure 35 below shows that in 2019, 48% of surveyed TAY experiencing homelessness in San Francisco suffered from a psychiatric or emotional condition, and 43% suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. Research also shows that generally, 20% of those incarcerated meet the threshold for serious psychological disorder.[171] It is important to note that those with mental health issues are not more likely to become violent than those without mental health issues. People incarcerated for a violent crime (17%) were just as likely as those incarcerated for a property crime (16%) to have met the threshold for serious psychological disorder in the past 30 days.[172]

Figure 35. Health Conditions Among Unaccompanied Children and TAY Experiencing Homelessness, 2019
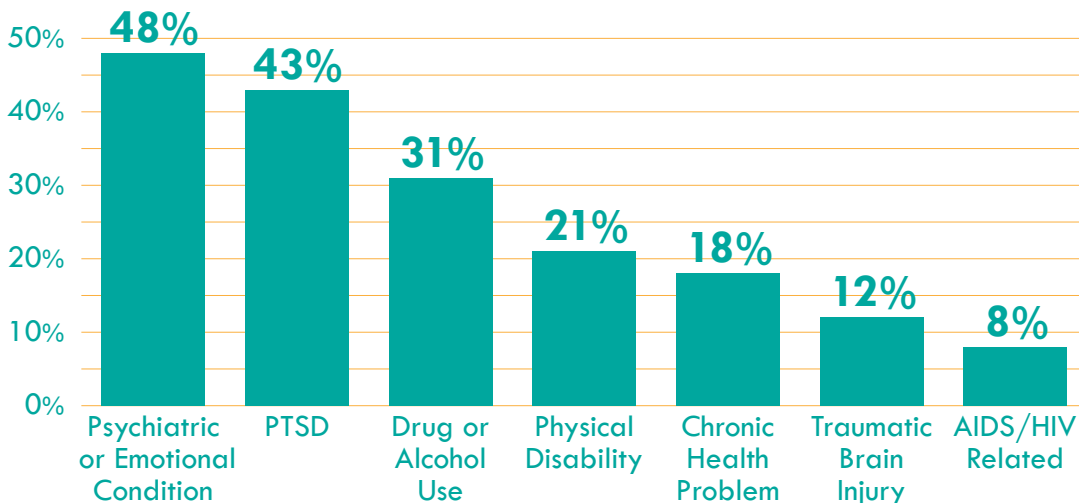
Source: City and County of San Francisco, Local Homeless Coordinating Board and Applied Survey Research. (2019). San Francisco Youth Homeless Count & Survey Report.

Service providers also observe that mental health concerns for children and teenagers with special needs have been on the rise.

"We need more collaboration in the city. Mental health problems can be a barrier for learning. It is hard to provide help outside of the academic environment. We are seeing an uptick in behavior regulation for students that really need routine and predictability. Children's behavior is not lined up with their grade level because of COVID. We need a place to connect folks who do and don't have disabilities. We had an ASL hub for learning disabilities during the pandemic. We had staff try to focus on emotional regulation, just to process what was going on. This was a struggle because we had to contact individual teachers and therapists to help these students. There's a lack of consistency in scheduling with teachers/therapists for students with individual learning needs."

—Young person, focus group with undocumented and immigrant community

Suicide Increased Among African American, Asian, & Latinx Youth

Nearly everyone has experienced a degree of anxiety or depression due to the pandemic. But for African American/Black youth and young adults, who are also confronting persistent racism and ever-widening inequities, the current moment has led to a new crisis in mental health.[173] The suicide rate among African American/Black youth in California, which for years trailed that of Asian and White students, has doubled since 2014 and is now twice the statewide average, far exceeding all other groups, according to the California Department of Public Health.[174] Twelve of every 100,000 African American/Black 10 to 24 year-olds died by suicide in 2020. Black young people are also more at risk of depression, anxiety, and stress due to the pandemic, and the recent spotlight on police violence against Black people, according to a December 2021 advisory from the U.S. Surgeon General.[175] Gun violence, climate change and economic uncertainty also play a role.

As shown in the figure below, Asian and Pacific Islander youth suicide rates in California have also increased since 2011. Nationally, Asian youth have comparable, and in some studies, higher rates of depression and suicide than youth of other races, and are dramatically under receiving mental health services.[176] Research shows that Asian adolescents generally have higher rates of unmet mental health needs and are at greater risk for depression, anxiety, self-injury, and suicide than African American/Black or White youth, even after controlling for variables such as income, sex, age, and caregiver characteristics.[177] A recent report prepared by youth leaders in San Francisco found that Asian students at SFUSD were less likely than their White peers to have seen a therapist at school.

Hispanic/Latinx youth have historically been least likely to die by suicide compared to other race and ethnic groups, however, statewide, suicide rates among Hispanic/Latinx youth increased in 2020 as well.

Demand for Accessible & Culturally Affirming Support

San Francisco youth, parents, and caregivers have long called for better access to mental health supports. Poor responses to mental health crises have been seen in schools (security guard response) and in community (police/law enforcement response), disproportionately impacting Black and Brown persons. Individuals suffering from mental illness or crises are more likely to withdraw from community support and face unique difficulties engaging in school and/or maintaining employment. This may result in downstream consequences such as detainment, loss of income, eviction and/or homelessness, where individuals are further detached and isolated from physical and mental health resources and services.

Students who have had access to mental health services expressed appreciation. However, students and families assert that access to more culturally affirming and mental health services outside of school would also be of great benefit, particularly in a context with others with similar experiences that might feel more welcoming. During DCYF's recent community engagement efforts, nearly every focus group conducted indicated a need for improved access to free or reduced rate mental health services for children and families and support navigating systems to access those services. Parents and caregivers expressed the need for support groups for themselves and discussed difficulty accessing services to address their mental health needs.

"The system is reactive: services kick in and you can access them only after some 'incident' occurs, but it is so hard to initiate services earlier."

—Parent, focus group with parents of children with disabilities

"We need more resources geared towards mental health. Being more culturally sensitive with how they offer or present all services. Parents are stressed, kids are also experiencing stress and anxiety."

—Parent, CityKids Fair interview

"I don't feel safe going to my school's counseling. Sometimes they kind of help but they don't help. Project Avary allows me to be myself. Sometimes in other programs I don't want to speak about things. Like my incarceration situation with my dad. It gives me someone to talk to about mental health or financial problems."

—Youth, focus group with children of incarcerated parents

"A method to reach troubled youth. I feel that a lot of resources are available through school. Many of the youth I consider troubled are not around schools, and they are the ones that can't access resources. Conduct more outreach for these kids but in alternative ways besides through school and more in the communities we know these troubled youth are at."

—Young person, focus group with undocumented youth and TAY

Importantly, youth and service providers also identified the need for mental health support that is culturally affirming and relevant and staffed by providers who reflect their experiences. One study showed that individuals who visit an LGBTQQ-focused practice, or a practice with a specific LGBTQQ program, are more likely to receive care that is sensitive to their gender identity and sexual orientation. Specifically, 94% of respondents surveyed as part of the study who visited an LGBTQQ-focused practice said that their provider was sensitive to their LGBQ-identity, compared with 84% at a general, non-LGBTQQ focused practice.

"Seeing more Black leader figures that look like us and more programs that include mental health and Black specific experiences. Important to have people that look like us in this field of work for the guys."

—Youth, focus group with African American/Black students

"When I was younger and coming out, having a lesbian therapist was crucial. I can't emphasize this enough. I have gone into therapy several times in my adult life and would only consider counseling with a lesbian therapist."

—– Young person, focus group with TAY experiencing homelessness

MORE HEALTH & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES ARE NEEDED TO NAVIGATE A NEW, UNPRECEDENTED WORLD

Children, youth, and families today are navigating life in a new, unprecedented world. COVID-19 upended life for students, families, and schools across the country, but its impacts have been felt unevenly. Loss, trauma, and isolation have disproportionately fallen on historically marginalized students, families, and communities. In addition, converging societal events and changing economic conditions during this same period have added challenges to emotional wellness and social cohesion: the ongoing struggle for racial justice and subsequent backlashes, political upheaval of a contentious presidency and presidential election, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, unemployment, the "great resignation", rising inflation, and climate change. Young people today are growing up at a very tumultuous time, and this has had and will continue to have a profound impact on the social and emotional development of this entire cohort of children and youth.[178] For youth struggling with mental health challenges, it can be difficult to stay engaged academically. In conversations with DCYF, youth, families, and service providers made clear that mental health supports enable success in education and in turn, the transition to productive adulthood.

"I was super depressed in high school and there wasn't really any support for academic stuff when I was falling behind."

—Young person, focus group with youth providing household economic support

"Mental health for academic success, mental health for academic outcomes... There's that piece where maybe we can't control our environment, but [youth may be] able to recognize some of the triggers that bring adverse effects."

—SFUSD staff, focus group with school social worker staff

First 5, DCYF, and HSA jointly support the Family Resource Center (FRC) Initiative, which provides families with a welcoming place to learn about child development, build parenting skills and obtain peer support. Through 26 FRCs located throughout every neighborhood in the City, resources, referrals and comprehensive case management are made available to nurture families with supportive services and strengthen wellbeing for the full family.

The San Francisco Wellness Initiative was established through a partnership between DCYF, DPH, and SFUSD to respond to adolescent mental health needs. Through the program, Wellness Centers at 19 campuses seek to improve the health, well-being, and academic success of the city's 16,000 public high school students. In safe, confidential settings, experts in adolescent health at onsite Wellness Centers help teens gain the skills they need to cope with complex issues such as stress, trauma, suicide, bullying, depression, self-esteem, drug and alcohol use, sexual health, and relationships.[179] While this program provides critical supports to high school teens at SFUSD, needs persist at the pediatric level, among middle schoolers, disconnected TAY, and parents and caregivers themselves. Furthermore, research conducted by young people at SFUSD have found barriers to accessing services at the Wellness Centers exist. Lack of awareness, outreach, low rates of referral to services, and cultural barriers served as obstacles for students, especially Asian students and students whose primary language is not English.[180] When asked if they would see a counselor or therapist if they needed it, only 46% of SFUSD students responding to a YPAR survey in 2021 stated they would visit a counselor or therapist for support, while 38% selected "maybe", and 16% indicated they would not visit a counselor or therapist.[181] This indicates that there is room to improve access to support full and inclusive access to mental health support.

Readiness to Learn & Succeed in School

Academic achievement and social-emotional growth in school set the course for successes and challenges that youth experience into adulthood. For children and youth in kindergarten through 12th grade, DCYF strives to ensure that:

- San Francisco families have access to high quality childcare and early education programs that prepare children to enter kindergarten on equal footing.
- School communities present students with a sense of safety and belonging.
- Diverse academic and social-emotional supports address student needs and support ongoing success in school.

This chapter presents data on experiences and challenges that the City's children and youth face in K-12 school settings and out of school time (OST) programs. We begin by presenting a summary of student enrollment and demographic trends among K-12 students. This chapter then proceeds to explore data and observable disparities in school experiences and academic achievement. We close with a review of learning loss associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and a discussion of efforts that City leaders initiated in response.

SAN FRANCISCO'S K-12 STUDENT POPULATION

SFUSD Enrollment Declines

SFUSD reported a total enrollment of 49,204 students during the 2021-22 school year, which reflects a 7% decline from 2019-20. Pacific Islander and White students displayed particularly pronounced enrollment declines—14% between the 2019-20 and 2021-22 school years. Enrollment rates among American Indian/Alaska Native students dropped 21% over the same period.*

SFUSD enrollment declined

7%

from 2019-20 to 2021-22

Figure 36. SFUSD Enrollment, 2015-2022
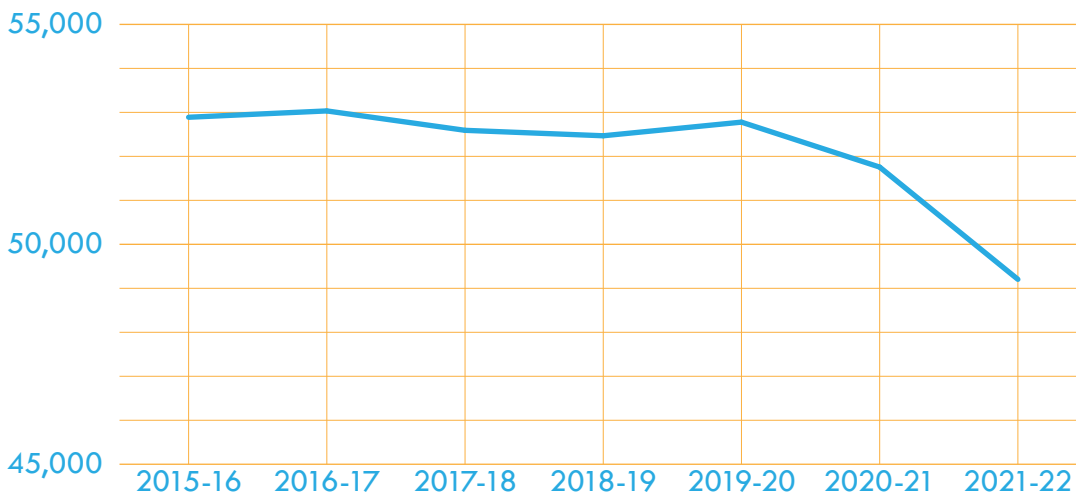
Source: DataQuest, California Department of Education

SFUSD's enrollment declines mirror a statewide trend, and may partially result from a shift in the City's overall population as well as parent dissatisfaction.[182] In the years preceding the pandemic, SFUSD enrollment remained relatively stable.[183] The 2018 San Francisco Child and Family Survey found that 86% of parents and caregivers with a child enrolled in SFUSD were satisfied with the overall quality of schools their children attended.[184] By summer 2020, a survey administered by SFUSD revealed that just 56% of families were satisfied with distance learning, which continued through spring

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The number of enrolled American Indian/Alaska Native students declined from 135 to 106.

2021.[185] Over the course of the 2020-21 school year, SFUSD reported that 700 students unenrolled, in addition to over 1,000 students who unenrolled prior to the same school year.[186]

Enrollment declines contribute to decreased state funding to SFUSD and exacerbate existing financial issues; SFUSD currently faces a $125 million budget shortfall. Families and community stakeholders have shared concerns about budget deficit impacts on students, particularly in the form of possible staff shortages. SFUSD's initial budget plan for 2022-23 includes $50 million in cuts to schools and $40 million in cuts to support services, operations, and administration.

"The life of being a public school parent or educator is that we are always trying to make the best of underfunded schools but I feel like we can go too far to the point where it's gaslighting to try and paint things that are cuts as opportunities. I would like us to be very frank for the benefit of our city about what the costs of these cuts are. We are a city with 75 billionaires—the most dense in the world. I'm really concerned when we talk about shifting staff...because every time that happens school sites that don't have large PTAs end up experiencing cuts in real time."

—SFUSD Parent, November 2 School Board Meeting

For many students, the proposed cuts may result in reduced access to support services, such as counseling and literacy support. In past periods of budget reduction, SFUSD schools that served a higher proportion of wealthy families offset cuts with increased funding from Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), which enabled them to retain and even increase support staff and other services.[187] This pattern in backup fund development exacerbates the already deep impacts of economic inequalities between students, which COVID-19 also intensified.

Enrollment Outside of SFUSD

U.S. Census Bureau estimates from 2016-2020 suggest that 29% of K-12 students in San Francisco—nearly 22,500 students—attend private schools. This represents the largest percentage of any county in California and nearly triple the state average of 9%.* Demographic data on private school students is not available, but the 2018 San Francisco Child and Family survey reported that among parents and caregivers with school-aged children, White respondents were most likely to have a child enrolled in a private school (36%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander (17%) and Hispanic/Latinx (15%) respondents.[188]

In the 2021-22 school year, 4,457 San Francisco youth were enrolled in charter schools.† Students in charter schools were more likely to be African American/Black or Hispanic/Latinx, compared to SFUSD students. White charter school students made up a similar proportion of the student body as their public-school counterparts, while Asian students made up just 6% of charter enrollees compared to 38% of SFUSD students.[189]

29%
of SF's K-12 students attend private schools

The next highest is San Mateo county, with an estimated 19% of K-12 youth enrolled in private schools.
†Excluding Five Keys.

SFUSD Student Demographics

SFUSD student demographics reflect the diversity of San Francisco's general population. In the 2021-22 school year, Asian and Hispanic/Latinx students represented the largest racial groups among SFUSD students (38% and 30%). Students classified as ELLs constituted 27% of SFUSD students, and 52% of all students qualified for free or reduced-price meals.[190]

Figure 37. SFUSD K-12 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2021-22
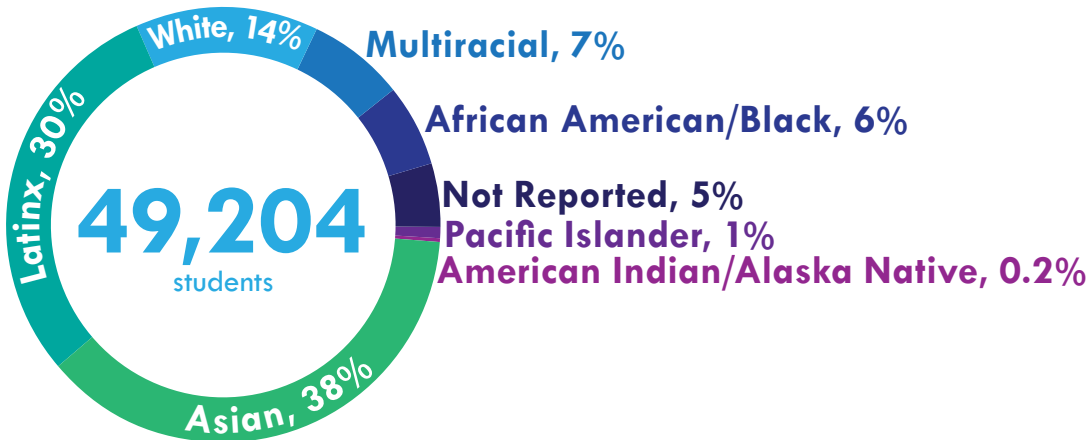
Source: DataQuest, California Department of Education

Despite the diversity in SFUSD's overall population, 28% of District schools were classified as racially isolated—meaning 60% of the school's students are of a single race or ethnicity—in 2020-21.[191] Extensive research details the negative impacts of school segregation on students, and SFUSD is currently redesigning its elementary school assignment system to counter patterns of racial segregation in schools.[192] SFUSD's new school assignment system will begin implementation with the kindergarten class of 2024-25.[193]

In the 2021-22 school year, students with disabilities constituted 12.5% of the SFUSD student population. Nationally, students from families with low socioeconomic status (SES) are overrepresented in special education, as are African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students.[194] SFUSD demographics echo this pattern.

28%
of SFUSD schools are racially isolated

Figure 38. SFUSD Students and Students with Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status, 2020-21

■ **All Students**
■ **Students with disabilities**

Source: DataQuest, California Department of Education

95
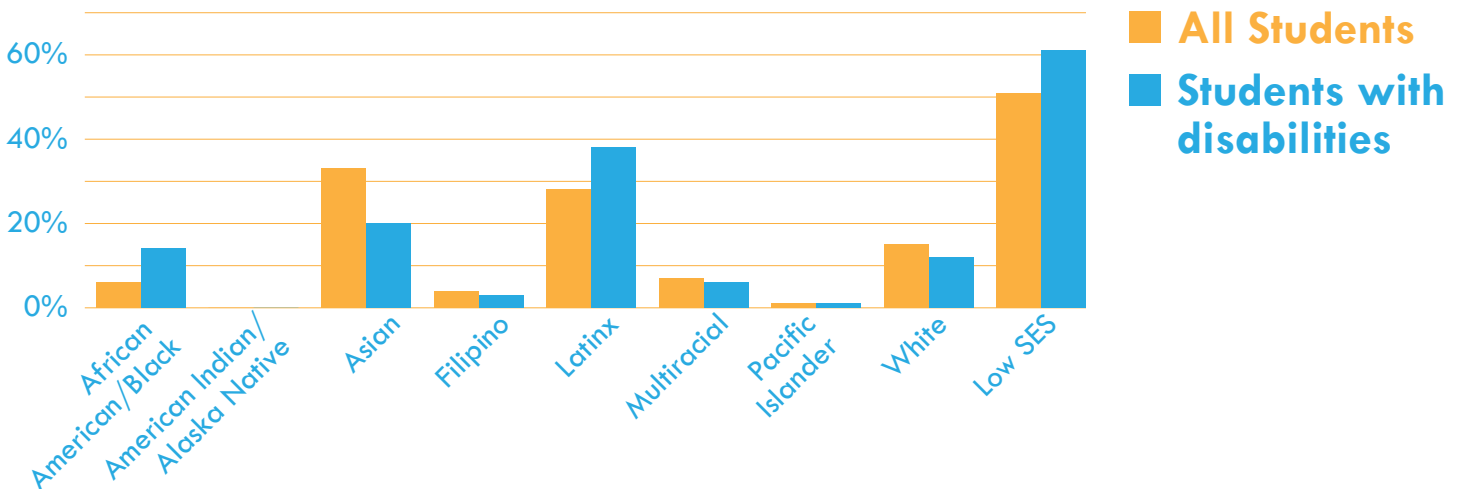
Research finds that schools tend to both over-diagnose and under-identify students of color as needing special education services.[195] Similar research finds that schools problematically misdiagnose students of color and assign diagnoses that staff find less "desirable," such as Emotional Disturbance, to African American/Black students, which contributes to challenging experiences of discipline and campus culture and climate.

K-12 SCHOOL EXPERIENCES IN SAN FRANCISCO

School Climate

Parents, caregivers, and students raised concerns about school safety during engagements with DCYF. Many concerns related to COVID-19 and health risks posed by in-person schooling. Non-pandemic concerns that students expressed referenced experiences of racism and sexual harassment on school campuses. African American/Black students in particular reported feeling isolated at schools and unsafe due to racism and patterns of segregations previously mentioned in this chapter and the earlier Overview of San Francisco Children, Youth, and Families chapter.

> *"There is not one Black teacher at [my son's] middle school and [he] feels isolated at times."*
>
> —*Parent, Summer Together Parent/ Caregiver Survey*
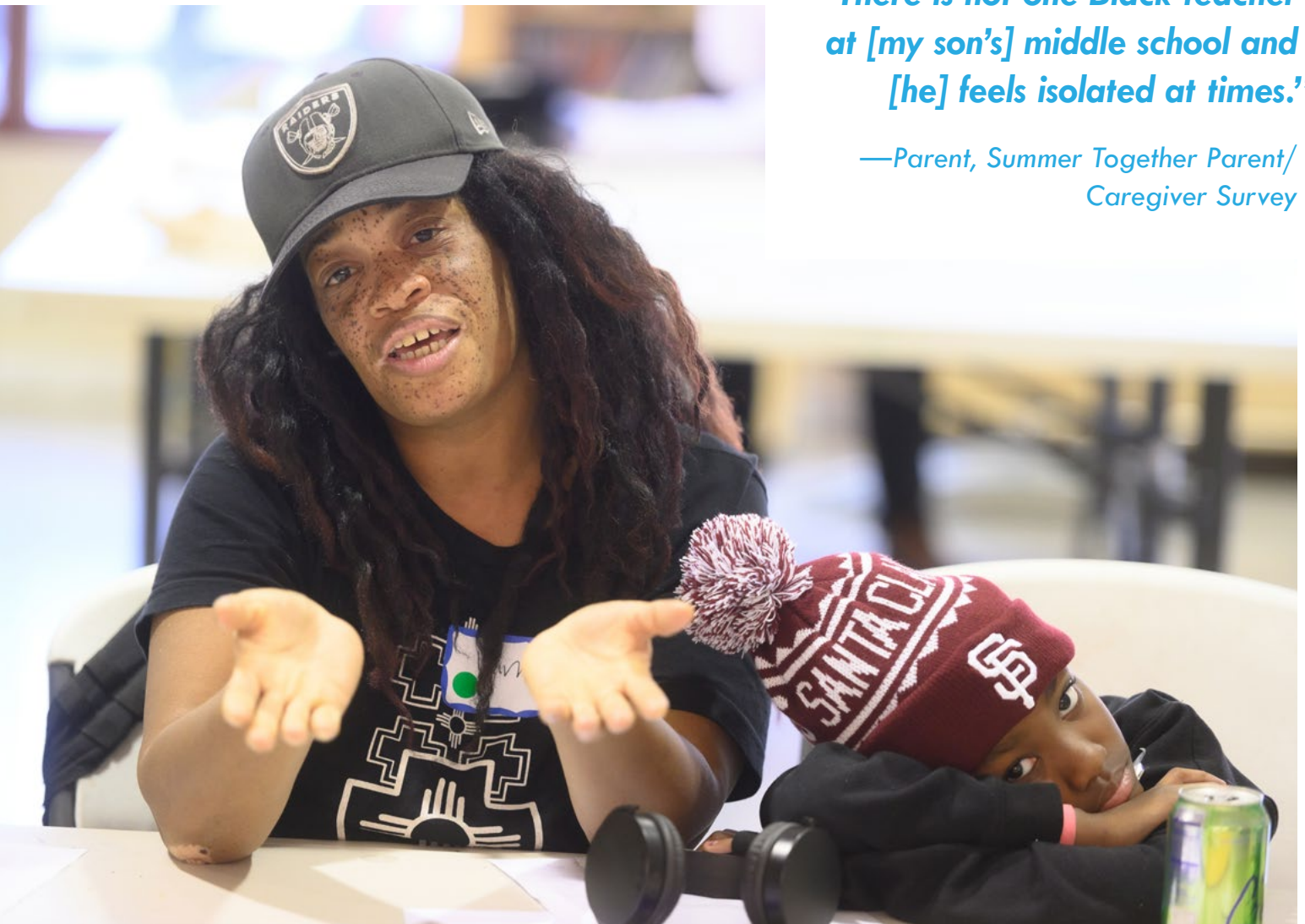
Between 2017 and 2019, just 30% of African American/Black SFUSD students expressed feeling a high level of school connectedness. African American/Black students also report higher rates of being bullied or harassed for having a disability.[196]

Figure 39. Level of School Connectedness by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2019
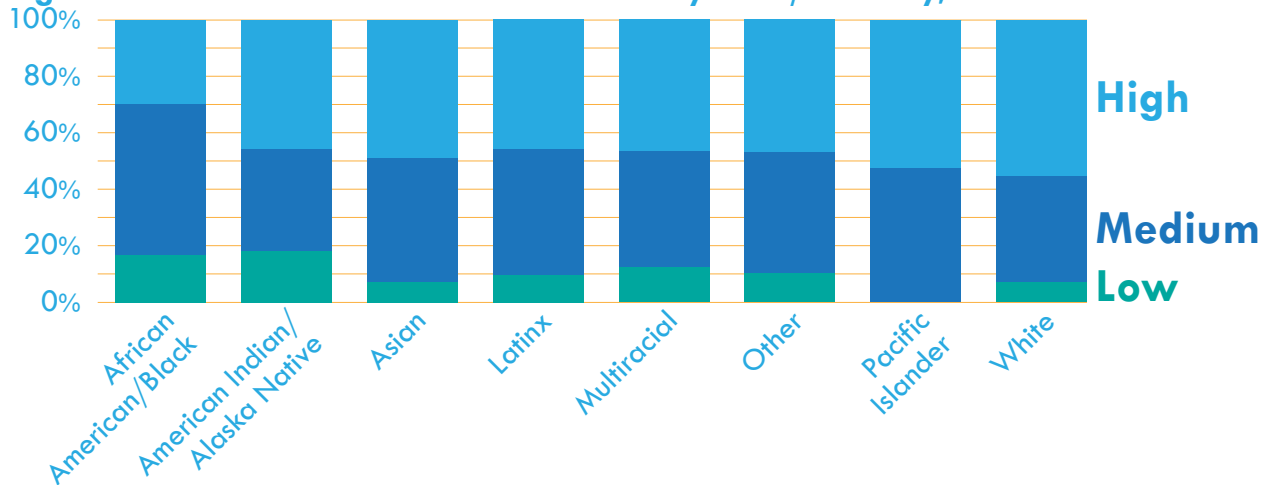
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey

In a 2018 survey of SFUSD high school students, Middle Eastern/North African, LGBTQQ youth, and students with GPAs lower than 2.0 reported feeling the least safe on school campuses. Among SFUSD high school students, Middle Eastern/North African students reported the highest rates of bullying compared to all other racial/ethnic groups.[197]

LGBTQQ youth especially expressed concerns for safety on campuses. In a 2017 survey of LGBTQQ youth, 28% of respondents said they were threatened with physical violence at least once because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.[198] Between 2017 and 2019, 42% of surveyed LGBTQQ students in SFUSD reported being bullied at least once in the previous year, compared to 27% of their straight peers.[199] Additionally, 6.1% of respondents identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual said they felt "Very Unsafe" at school, compared with 2.3% of straight respondents.[200] Overall, 16% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual respondents reported having a low level of school connectedness, double that of straight respondents (8%).[201] Recent YRBS data show that high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are more likely to have experienced violence, as seen in Figure 40.[202]

Figure 40. Percent of Students who Experience Physical Dating Violence by Sexual Orientation, 2018-2019
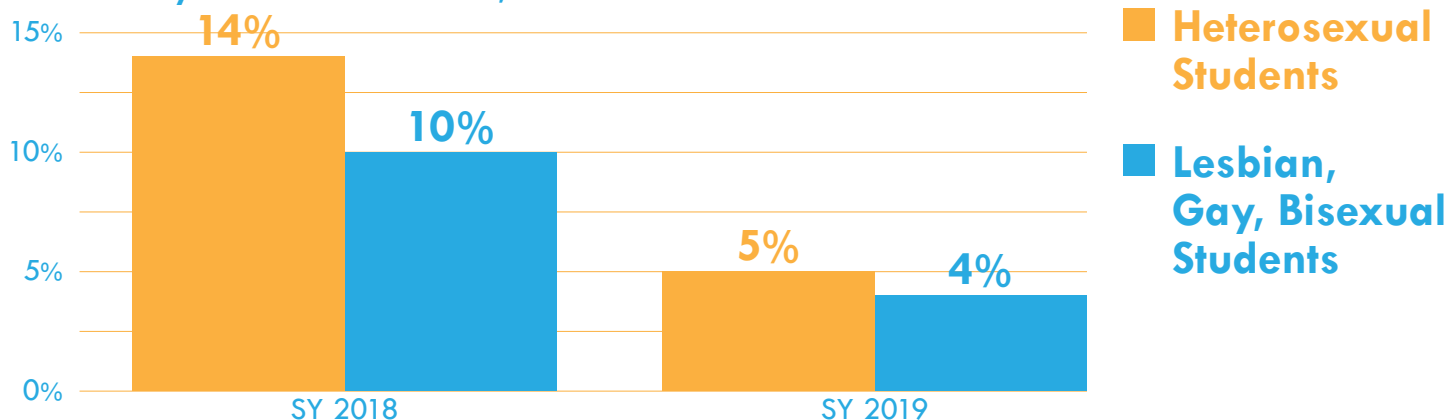
Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey

High school respondents of SFUSD's annual Culture/Climate Survey were more likely to perceive schools as safe in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.* Middle school students consistently answered less favorably when asked about school safety.† In 2017-

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The Culture/Climate Survey is not administered to youth in grades K-3.

†SFUSD defines favorability scores as the number of desirable or "hoped for" responses divided by the number of all responses.

2019, 38% of SFUSD female 7th graders reported being bullied or harassed during the previous year. Data displays lower rates of bullying and harassment among their high school counterparts—26% for girls in 9th grade and 21% for girls in 11th grade. Reports of bullying also appear higher for 7th grade males (32%) than their 9th (27%) and 11th grade (22%) counterparts. One third of 7th grade females and one quarter of 7th grade males reported being cyberbullied at least once during the previous year.[203] Reports of bullying and physical violence at one SFUSD middle school generated publicity in 2020, highlighting the lack of resources and support faced by teachers and school staff to meaningfully address student conflict.[204] In a survey of SFUSD middle schoolers in 2021, 31% of students cited bullying, fights, or general safety issues when asked about the issues that worried them the most in their school community.

Figure 41. Percent of SFUSD Students who Responded Favorably to School Safety-Related Items on SFUSD Culture/Climate Survey, 2017-2020
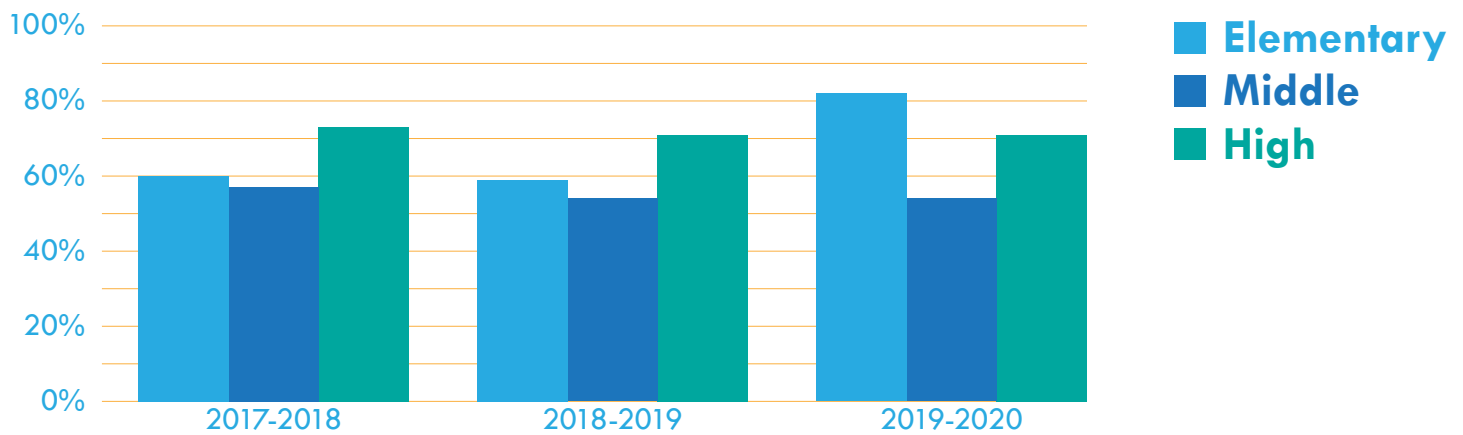
Source: SFUSD Culture/Climate Survey

"I don't feel safe at school. My teachers don't care about our safety. School isn't a safe space. I feel unsafe especially with the school shootings happening recently. I don't feel that the school cares about us or what we think. I don't feel that they would protect us."

—Youth, focus group with children of incarcerated parents

"They need more staff at school for children's safety. A lot of behavioral issues at school and teachers don't say anything."

—Parent, focus group with Mayan families

School Discipline

Student disciplinary actions leave lasting negative effects that inequitably fall on BIPOC students. Education research shows that African American/Black students are more likely to face disciplinary actions for subjective infractions and receive harsher punishments than their peers who enact similar offenses.[205] The impacts of school discipline, particularly suspensions, translate to a loss of critical instructional time. The fact that students who most need extra academic support tend to be suspended at higher rates compounds the damages of lost instructional time. In the 2018-19 school year, SFUSD's suspension rate for students with disabilities was more than triple the rate of

students without a disability. Additionally, SFUSD students who were socioeconomically disadvantaged constituted 75% of suspensions.

Suspensions and additional disciplinary actions negatively impact students' grades and on-time graduation rates. The severity of the impact increases with the severity and frequency of discipline.[206] Recent research notes that simply attending a school with higher suspension rates correlates with a higher risk of adult justice system involvement and a lower likelihood of attending a four-year college, regardless of individual student encounters with disciplinary actions.[207] SFUSD data shows disproportionately higher issuance of suspensions to African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander students, relative to their peers in other racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 42. SFUSD Suspension Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-2019
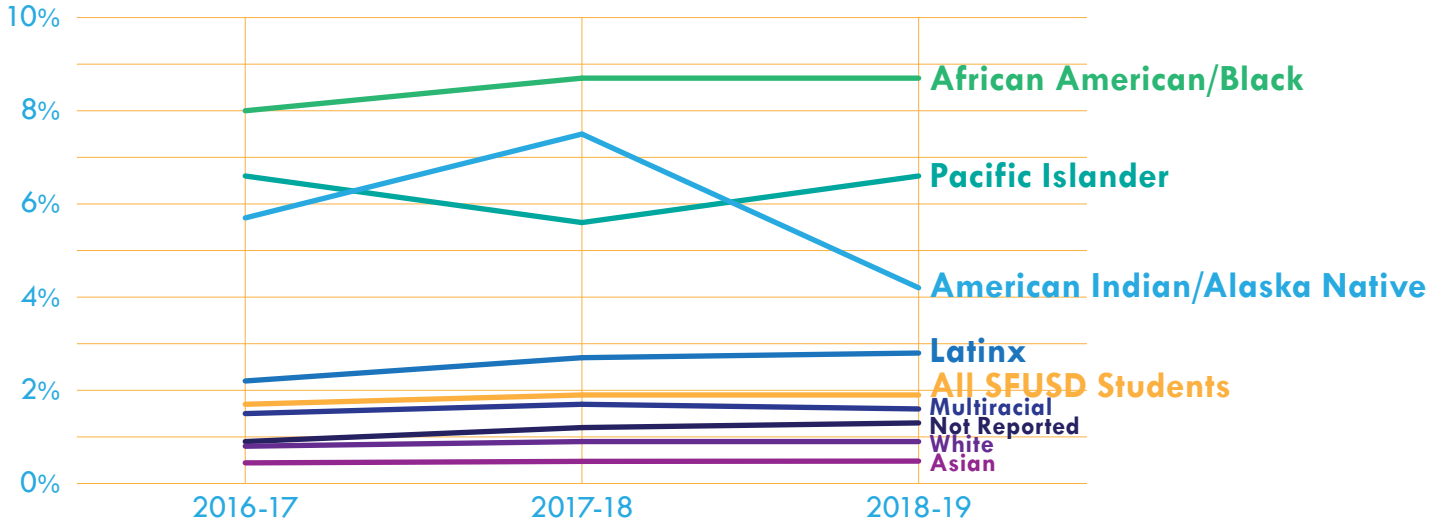
Source: DataQuest, California Department of Education

More than 95% of SFUSD suspensions between 2011 and 2019 were out of school. Suspension rates for middle schoolers are particularly troubling. In 2018-19, the suspension rate for 7th and 8th grade SFUSD students was 4.3%.* African American/Black SFUSD middle schoolers were suspended at five times the rate of their peers; 20% of African American/Black SFUSD 7th and 8th graders were suspended at least once.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF K-12 STUDENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Attendance

Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the school year—regardless of absences being excused or unexcused—leaves detrimental effects on a student's academic achievement and social-emotional outcomes.[208] Chronic absence equates to missed instruction time and correlates with a greater risk of dropping out of school.

Prior to the pandemic in 2018-19, SFUSD reported an average of 14% of students as chronically absent each year. The average number of days absent among SFUSD students was 10.9, and chronically absent students missed an average of 36.8 days. The percentages of chronically absent students and average number of absences become more pronounced in high school. Vulnerable populations of students are two to three times more likely to experience chronic absence starting at an earlier age and are also more likely to experience multiple years of chronic absence.[209]

The suspension rate across all students was 1.9% in 2018-19. For high school students it was 2.7%.

Figure 43 below displays that the number of days missed increased dramatically for both K-8 and high school students in 2020-21, when COVID-19 forced schools into remote learning formats for the school year. Early data from the 2021-22 school year indicates that chronic absenteeism rates remain elevated, even after the return to in-person learning. Fall 2021 attendance data shows a 70% increase in chronic absenteeism, relative to fall 2019.* Elevated rates of chronic absenteeism among K-8 youth primarily drive the broader increase. Chronic absentee rates doubled among students in grades 6-8 and grew by 129% for students in grades K-5.[210] COVID-19 heavily drove this trend, directly via confirmed cases and indirectly, as suspected exposures and systems prompted parents and caregivers to keep students at home.

Figure 43. Average Number of Days Missed by Chronically Absent SFUSD Students, 2017-2021
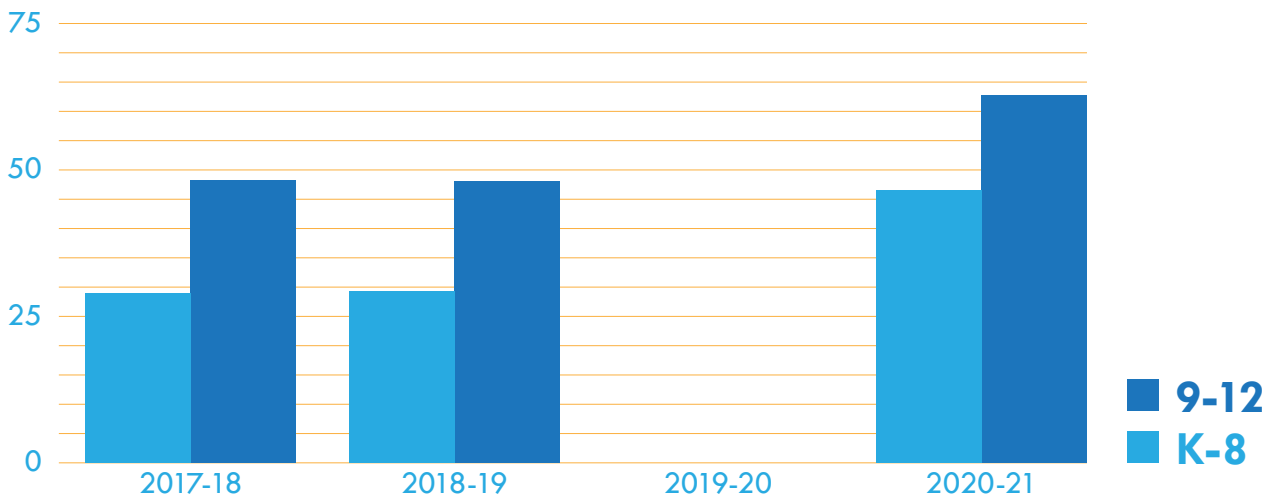
Source: California Department of Education

In SFUSD, rates of chronic absence among students from vulnerable populations sit higher than the average for all students. In Fall 2021, SFUSD reported having 279 foster youth enrolled. Because 68% of foster youth are placed outside of San Francisco, many youth can no longer attend school in the City.[211] In 2021, over half of San Francisco foster youth placed out of county were placed 100 miles or more away. Many foster youth change schools as placement shifts necessitate, which adds instability to educational trajectories and increases the odds of students falling behind. One third of foster youth in California change schools each year.[212] On average, students lose six months of learning each time that they change schools.[213] Lost learning time persists among students in foster care who remain in SFUSD. Figure 43 shows that 51% of foster youth were chronically absent in school year 2018-19, which reflects the highest rate among all SFUSD student segments. Though the percentage of SFUSD foster youth who were chronically absent decreased to 48% in 2020-21, the average number of days missed by those youth increased to 61.

Figure 44 displays an elevated rate of chronic absenteeism among students experiencing homelessness—32% in school year 2018-19. COVID-19 and the shift to remote learning, which requires stable shelter, home supplies and internet connection, brought extreme academic challenges to students experiencing homelessness. In school year 2020-21 chronically absent students experiencing homelessness missed an average 62 days of attendance, a significant increase from 42 days reported in school year 2018-19.

*12.3% of SFUSD students were chronically absent in fall 2019. 20.9% were chronically absent in fall 2021.

100

As demonstrated in Figure 44, significant disparities in rates of chronic absenteeism surface across racial/ethnic groups. Rates of chronic absenteeism appear significantly higher for African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander students in SFUSD.

Figure 44. SFUSD Chronic Absenteeism by Race/Ethnicity and Vulnerable Population, 2018-2019
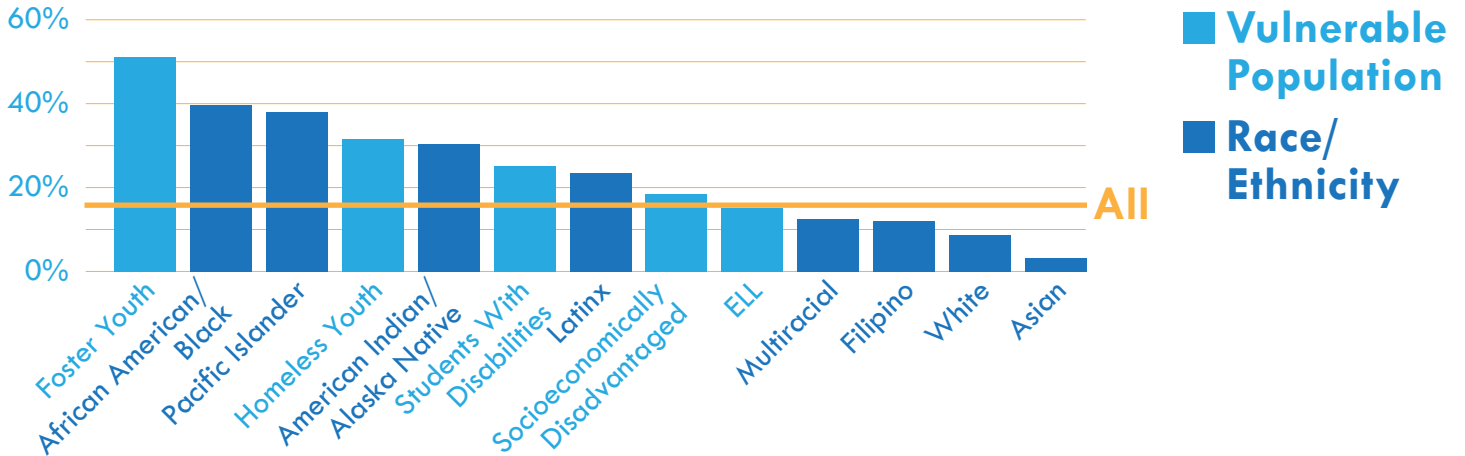
Source: California Department of Education

Social & Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in California focuses on four domains of skills and competencies that contribute to success in school and later life: growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness. Research has shown development of positive skills and mindsets in these domains to correlate with positive academic, health, and social outcomes along a young person's development from childhood to adulthood.[214]

Between 2018 and 2020, respondents to SFUSD's Culture/Climate survey across grades 4-12* rated themselves highest on growth mindset and self-management constructs. Students rated themselves lowest on items related to self-efficacy. White students self-rated their SEL capabilities more favorably than other racial/ethnic groups.† Students from low-SES backgrounds self-rated their SEL skills less favorably than the general population, as did students with special needs, ELLs, and youth experiencing homelessness. Gaps between these student segments and the general population were widest for self-efficacy, and thinnest for social awareness.

Figure 45. SFUSD Student SEL Favorability Ratings by Domain and School Level, 2020-21

Source: SFUSD SEL Survey

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*The SFUSD Culture/Climate survey is administered annually beginning in 4th grade.

†In 2020-2021, White high school students had the lowest growth mindset favorability rating.

Academics

From kindergarten through high school, disparities in academic achievement surface across racial/ethnic lines and between vulnerable and non-vulnerable populations at SFUSD. SFUSD's Kindergarten Readiness Inventory (KRI) measures fine motor skills, SEL skills, numeracy, and early literacy. Figure 46 highlights stark inequalities in students' academic trajectories that appear before children enter kindergarten.

Figure 46. Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standard on Kindergarten Readiness Inventory, 2018-2022
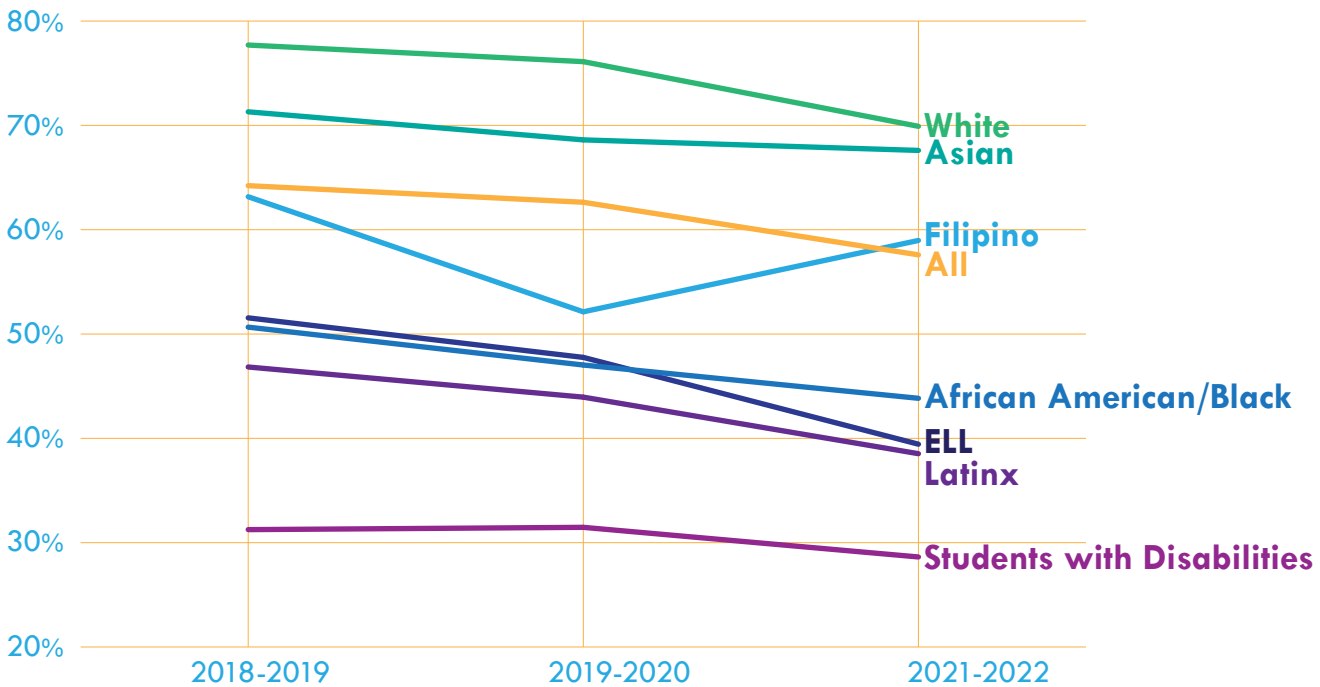
Source: SFUSD, Kindergarten Readiness Inventory Survey

Previous analysis of SFUSD KRI data indicates that child well-being is strongly correlated with kindergarten readiness. KRI administration requires teachers to assess how frequently students present as hungry, tired, sick, absent, or tardy during the first month of school. KRI data from 2015 shows that more frequent signs of student hunger, illness, or tiredness at school link to lower overall readiness scores. Well-being factors correlate with socioeconomic status, which also influence readiness scores, along with preschool attendance.[215]

By the time that SFUSD students reach 3rd grade, disparities in academic achievement across racial/ethnic groups persist and continue through high school. Education research consistently finds 3rd grade test scores nearly as effective as 8th grade scores in predicting high school academic outcomes (e.g., test scores, advanced placement course completion, graduation).[216] During engagements with DCYF, students described concerns for their own academic achievement and expressed a need to receive wider academic supports.

"At my school we don't have a lot of people to help us with homework or tutoring. I see a lot of people falling behind in classes and it's easy to fall behind. It's hard to catch up."

—*Youth, focus group with children of incarcerated parents*

Disparities in academic outcomes across race/ethnicity appear in education data beyond SFUSD. Gaps in achievement stem from a wide variety of factors, such as inequitable school funding models, unequal access to extracurricular enrichment opportunities, disparate exposures to trauma, racial biases that undergird staff interactions with students, lack of culturally responsive curriculum and assessments, and understaffing of counseling and support roles. The degree to which many of these factors appear in a students' school experiences systematically intertwines with socioeconomic status, as Figure 47 displays.*

Figure 47. Percent of SFUSD Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards by Socioeconomic Status, 2019
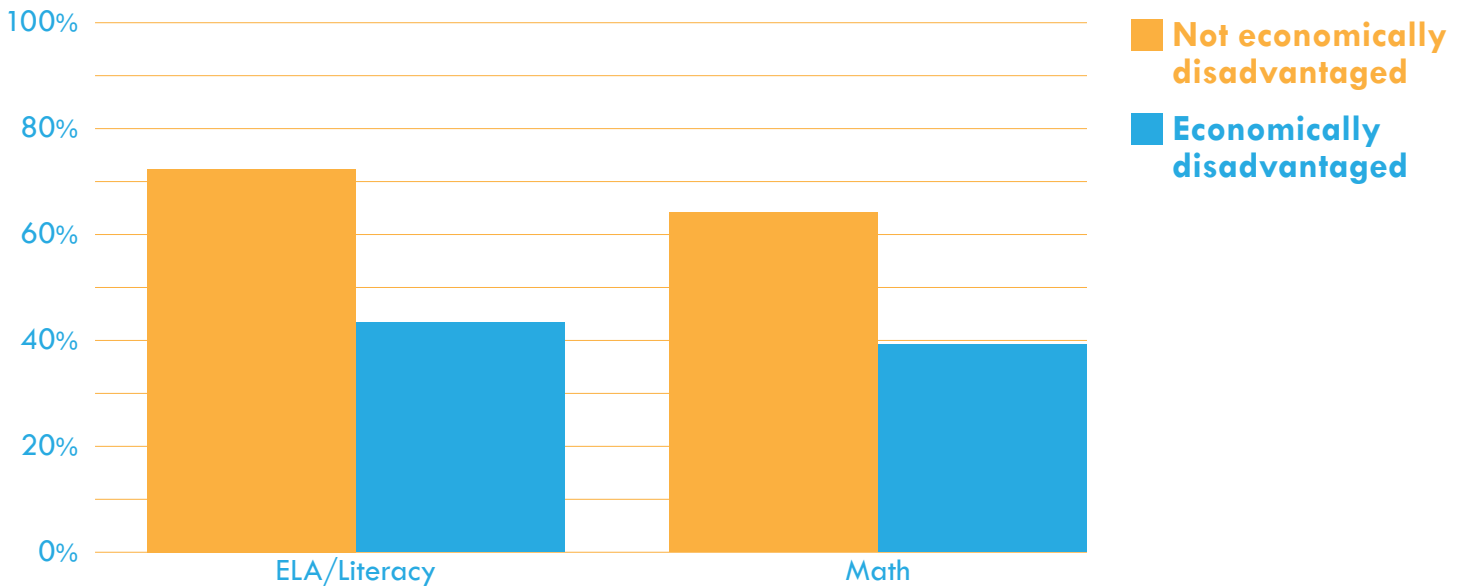
Source: San Francisco Unified School District, CAASPP

Deeply entrenched systems of oppression continue to drive disparities in academic outcomes for African American/Black students in the City and broader education systems. Historical and ongoing systems of oppression limit opportunities and inflict traumas on African American/Black students that result in significant economic, health, and educational disparities.[217] Despite California's overall wealth, per-pupil spending and state efforts to address racial/ethnic disparities in academic proficiency have not effectively bridged gaps that separate African American/Black and White students. Similarly, San Francisco's overall wealth has not translated to effective resources to support academic growth and achievement among African American/Black students. In the 2016-17 school year, achievement among African American/Black students in San Francisco ranked as the lowest of any California county.[218] In the same year, only 19% of African American/Black students in SFUSD met or exceeded state standards in Reading/English Language Arts, significantly lower than the 31% of African American/Black students assessed statewide.

Economic disparities contribute to opportunity and achievement gaps between African American/Black students and their peers. Low SES disproportionately includes Black families, and the low-SES designation correlates with lower levels of reading and math proficiency, as well as higher risk of failing a class.[219] Experiences of poverty include the prevalence of chronic stress in parents and children that negatively affect academic achievement.[220]

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*The California Department of Education defines socioeconomically students as those who were migrant, foster, homeless, or eligible for free or reduced-priced meals any time during the academic year or whose parents did not complete high school

Figure 48. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged SFUSD Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards by Race/Ethnicity, 2019
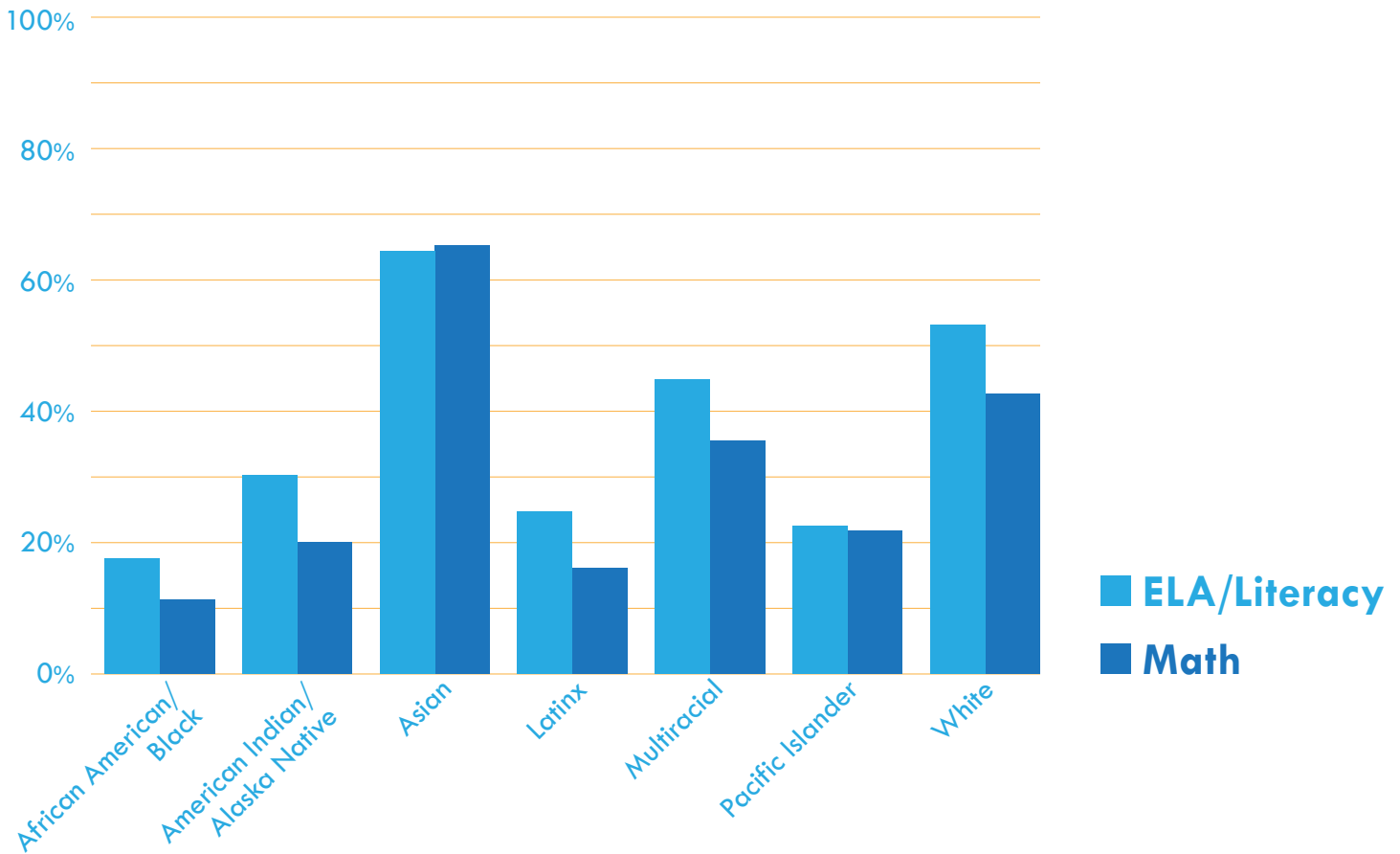
Source: San Francisco Unified School District, CAASP

In engagements with DCYF and in public statements, African American/Black parents report that their children do not receive necessary supports and describe a sense of disregard for concerns within SFUSD.[221]

SFUSD established the African American Achievement and Leadership Initiative (AAALI) in 2013 to provide recommendations to eliminate outcomes disparities between African American/Black SFUSD students and their peers. The 2020 AAALI Theory of Action Scorecard demonstrates gains in some areas, such as increased rates of African American/Black youth with favorable growth mindsets and improved graduation rates. In other areas, such as chronic absenteeism, kindergarten readiness, and high school readiness, changes appear negative or insignificant.[222] SFUSD designated 20 schools as PITCH schools in 2018, denoting that gaps in achievement between African American/Black students and their peers were widest. These schools are expected to create plans using proven strategies to support African American/Black students, and to track and respond to student data on a more frequent basis.[223]

In school year 2020-21, SFUSD reported that 2,090 students were experiencing homelessness (4% of the student body), which reflects a gradual increase from 2.8% in 2014-15.[224] Children and youth who experience homelessness face higher risks of developmental problems, educational delays, behavioral issues, and learning disabilities. Residential overcrowding, relocation, and poor quality of housing correlate with negative academic outcomes among children, especially for very young children who spend more time at home. Average math and reading scores sit lower for children experiencing housing insecurity, and the likelihood of repeating a grade is 2.5 times higher compared to students with stable housing.[225]

Foster youth in SFUSD are more likely to struggle academically. Among SFUSD high school students in foster care, 46% received a D or F in English Language Arts, and 44% received a D or F in math in fall 2019.*[226] Though average standardized test scores for SFUSD foster youth increased between 2017 and 2019, the percentage of students who met or exceeded academic standards remains far below the percentage of the general SFUSD student population.

Figure 49. Percent of SFUSD Foster Youth Meeting or Exceeding Standards, 2017-2019
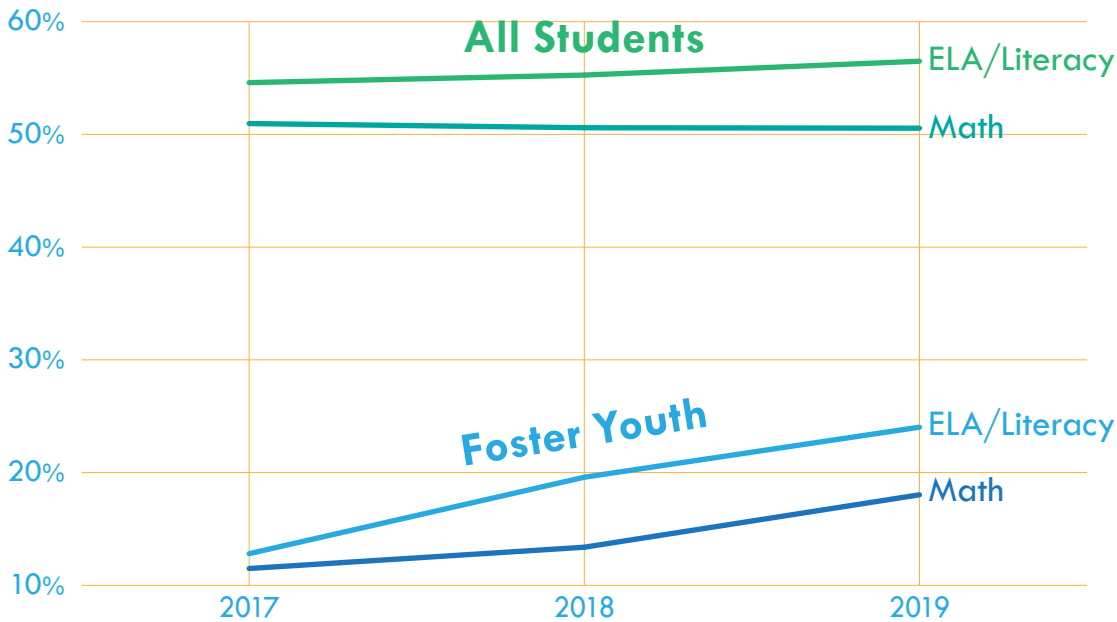
Source: San Francisco Unified School District, CAASPP

Pandemic Learning Loss

SFUSD students transitioned to remote schooling in March 2020 in response to COVID-19. SFUSD schools remained closed longer than many other large districts across the country. Elementary schools resumed in-person learning in April 2021, and many middle and high school students did not resume in-person school until August 2021. Students continue to display acute impacts from the stress of living through a pandemic and the disarray of 13 to 15 months of remote schooling. In DCYF focus groups, parents, caregivers, and teachers reported delays and regression in the development of social emotional and academic skillsets, particularly among younger students.

> *"Our first graders are in the worst shape social-emotionally, academically, because they had online kindergarten...And most didn't even log in for that. So you just see it. They don't know their letters and sounds, they don't know how to make friendships, they're fighting, punching, and I worry that the damage from not having kindergarten will carry them to fifth grade...What can we do to catch them up?"*
>
> —SFUSD staff

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*Compared to 16% and 18%, respectively, across all SFUSD high school students.

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"They need interpersonal and social emotional guidance on how to deal with kids again and navigating friendly play and disagreements. They need extra reading and writing support because that was ineffective online. They need reading comprehension and writing planning and editing skills."

—*Parent, Summer Together Survey*

44% of respondents to DCYF's 2021 survey of parents and caregivers of summer camp participants cited academic support as one of their child's greatest needs as they return to school. The majority of parents and caregivers DCYF engaged expressed concern about children falling behind in academics while attending school from home. Whereas school days generally spanned eight hours pre-pandemic, approximately half of respondents on a SFUSD survey in summer 2020 reported that their child spent two or fewer hours on schoolwork daily (17% reported less than an hour). 44% of respondents stated that their child learned much less than they would in a regular in-person school day.[227] These descriptions align with national research that suggests students across the country made little to no academic progress during after school shutdowns in spring 2020.[228] Throughout school year 2020-21 many students continued to struggle and displayed little to no growth. Early research finds that students returning to school in person present with delayed abilities in both reading and math, and that gaps between vulnerable students and their peers have widened.[229]

The long-term effects of pandemic-related learning loss for students remain to be seen, as COVID-19 waves continue to disrupt administrative plans and coordination for returns to in-person schooling.[230] [231] SFUSD assessment data from the 2020-21 school year did not show significant learning loss, but assessment participation rates varied widely across racial/ethnic groups.[232] Early data from the 21-2022 school year highlights drops in K-3 reading scores compared to 2019-20.

"I need emotional support because in person learning is time pressured and I need someone to talk to about my most recent anxieties."

—*SFUSD student, YPAR*

In 2021, the Board of Supervisors enacted an ordinance establishing the SF RISE Working Group. The primary goal of the Working Group was to better understand the needs of students and families brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify recommendations for SFUSD and City agencies to best meet the needs. Aligning with the state's recent $3 billion investment in community schools, a key theme of the Working Group's recommendations is to strengthen partnerships between schools and CBOs to provide comprehensive, personalized supports for students.

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME SUPPORTS

Programming for K-8 students before and after school provides students with safe supervision and a wide range of academic and enrichment opportunities. Participation in high-quality Out of School Time (OST) programs correlates with positive academic,

social-emotional, and health outcomes for youth.[233] During engagements with DCYF, families with school-age children described challenges with accessing OST opportunities. Similar to families seeking early care, parents and caregivers cited cost as a hurdle in securing before/after school care.

"[Our family's greatest need is] subsidized after care: The program at our school is $550 per month and I have 2 kids in school, so that is $1100 per month for after care."

—Parent, Summer Together Parent/Caregiver Survey

Many families described the importance of OST opportunities related changes in the SFUSD bell schedule. Elementary schools may start as late at 9:30am and may end as early as 2:05pm, which poses challenges to shifts among working parents. Parents and caregivers also mentioned weekly early dismissals as an added scheduling factor to navigate. In a 2021 survey of parents of summer camp participants, 33% cited before/after care as one of their family's greatest needs.

"[Our family's greatest need is] financial assistance for potential After School programs. Worried can't afford this fall and not sure what to do with my 6th grader considering school starts so late (930) and gets out before I may be able to pick him up."

"School end at 2:05. We need child care until 5pm."

—Parents, Summer Together Parent/Caregiver Survey

Parents and caregivers report finding available slots in OST programs as an added challenge. Many parents and caregivers emphasized that they could not transport children to another location, so having affordable programs at their child's school site was a priority.

"After school programs at public schools often fill up quickly...Also some schools offer very little coverage in the afternoons...With so many working parents it would be great if schools could offer more capacity for after school programs."

—Parent, Citywide Child & Family Survey

"Our [elementary school] aftercare program is severely limited due to lack of staffing. This is our no. 1 need for the school year."

—Parent, Summer Together Program Evaluation Survey

For summer programming, the biggest challenges reported by parents and caregivers were cost and availability. For many, these issues are further compounded by the fact that many camps do not have, or offer limited, before/after care. For the camps that do offer, there is a significant added cost on top of the base enrollment fee. More so than before/after school programming, though, quality was also mentioned as a barrier for parents. When sharing experiences registering for summer programs, parents were much likely to cite availability of high-quality programs as an issue, an addition to concerns around transport and location.

"[The biggest challenge San Francisco families face in securing summer programs for their children is that you] have to apply super early to get spaces, especially the affordable ones—and sometimes even then you don't get in. Like with Parks and Rec, I was literally sitting at my computer the hour they opened registration, and I still didn't get into a few of the sessions we were trying for! Most of the other summer camps are really expensive or not that great."

—Parent, Citywide Child & Family Survey

Parents and caregivers also shared how much advanced knowledge and planning is required to secure programming for the full summer, especially for families that have multiple children. Families expressed particular frustration about the lack of programming options in August.

"The time and energy it takes to pick weekly summer programs for the kids is overwhelming....since most programs are weekly you have to patch together a string of different programs, whose hours by the way, are not necessarily conducive to working families."

"These programs fill up very quickly. People with computer access who are in the know have a significant advantage over those who need the programs most."

—Parents, Citywide Child & Family Survey

Accommodating Youth with Disabilities

In surveys and focus groups, parents and caregivers of youth with disabilities expressed the additional challenge of trying to find programs that can accommodate their children, especially summer programs. Though summer camps specifically for youth with disabilities exist, many parents and caregivers, especially those whose children are higher functioning, expressed that they would prefer to send their child to a non-specialized camp. Often this preference also stems from a desire to send children to camp with siblings or peers. However, families shared camps often stated that they could not serve youth with special needs unless the child had an aide (or not at all). Though paraprofessionals are provided free of cost to families in school settings, most private

summer camps require families to secure and finance an aide themselves. For children with more severe disabilities, some resources exist to assist with this process and offset costs, but youth with mild to moderate disabilities often aren't eligible. Paying for an aide on top of the cost of camp is not within the means of all families, and even for families that can afford the extra cost, it can be difficult to find one.

> *"My daughter has autism and she has challenging behaviors associated with her condition. I can never seem to find anywhere for her to belong."*
>
> —*Parent, Citywide Child & Family Survey*

RPD provides specialized therapeutic and adaptive recreation programs for youth with disabilities, in addition to providing inclusion services for youth attending non-specialized RPD camps. However, for families that are unable to pre-register in time (usually in early March) to access early enrollment, or for whom RPD's offerings don't meet their needs, they have very few options.

> *"We want kids with disability to be able to go to any camp they want to. The city needs to provide the staffing and hiring and training so this is possible."*
>
> —*Parent, CityKids Fair interview*

Readiness for College, Work & Productive Adulthood

DCYF envisions a San Francisco where all youth are ready for college, work, and a productive adulthood. Youth who complete postsecondary education are more likely to gain access to high-wage jobs and extend the benefits of those jobs to their families and communities. Higher levels of schooling associate with lower risk of unemployment, decreased dependency on government assistance, and lower incarceration rates.[234] Conversely, when youth do not complete high school and are unable to obtain work, the risk of negative long-term consequences increases.

This chapter presents data on high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment trends among San Francisco's youth and TAY as context for understanding career opportunities and limitations that face the City's youth and TAY. We then explore disparities in educational achievement rates that present how access to higher education and employment is not universal. Youth of color experience systemic barriers that limit access to many resources and opportunities, including postsecondary education and employment. Youth and TAY from vulnerable populations, such as those with involvement in the justice or foster care systems, those with special education needs, and those experiencing homelessness also face barriers to attaining and completing school and work opportunities, which in turn create challenges for a successful transition to adulthood. This chapter concludes with references to resources and models the City provides for youth and TAY to access higher education and employment.

POSTSECONDARY READINESS

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 58.8% of San Francisco residents who are 25 or older have a bachelor's degree, compared to 34.7% in California and 32.9% nationally.[235] For young people looking to gain a foothold in San Francisco's recovering economy, it will be increasingly difficult to be a competitive candidate for employment without a bachelor's degree. Beyond San Francisco, recent reports indicate that approximately 40% of jobs in California will require a bachelor's degree in less than ten years. This indicates that it is more critical than ever for youth to have access to higher education and the support they need to complete it.[236] The rising cost of living in San Francisco makes it increasingly difficult for residents to survive on minimum wage. Completion of postsecondary education is linked to significant increase in earnings potential and decrease in rates of unemployment (See Figure 50).[237]

58.8%
of San Franciscans ages 25+ have a bachelor's degree

Figure 50. U.S. Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment, 2021

Educational Attainment	Median usual weekly earnings	Unemployment Rate
Less Than a High School Diploma	$626	8.3%
High School Diploma	$809	6.2%
Some College, No Degree	$899	5.5%
Associate's Degree	$963	4.6%
Bachelor's Degree	$1,334	3.5%
Master's Degree	$1,574	2.6%
Professional Degree	$1,924	1.8%
Doctoral Degree	$1,909	1.5%

All workers, $1,507 — All workers, 4.7%
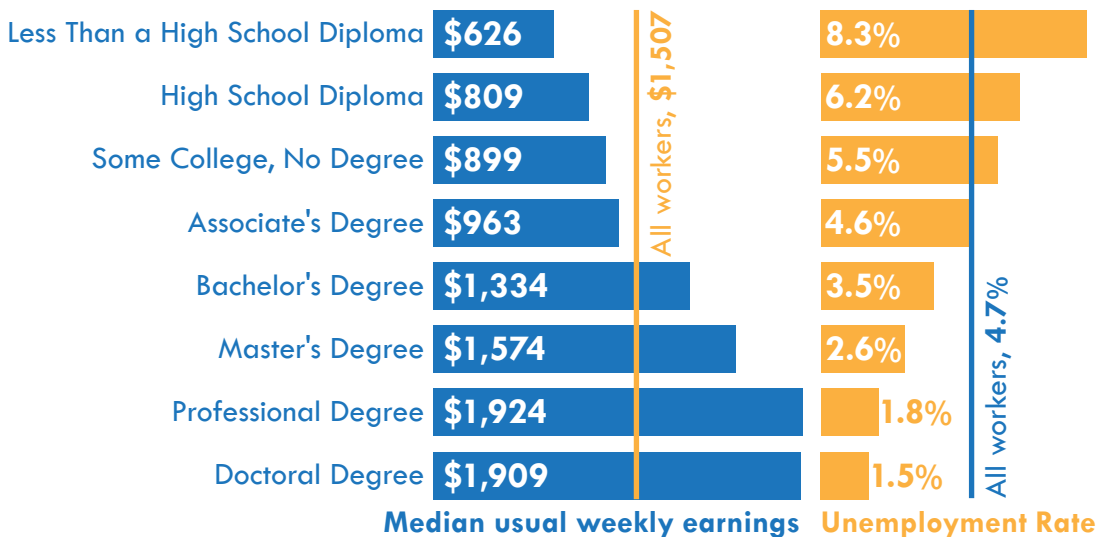
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

A 2021 survey of SFUSD high school students indicated that the vast majority intend to engage in some type of postsecondary education, with most planning to go to a college or university (see Figure 51). While youth indicate widespread interest in higher education, data on key indicators of postsecondary readiness—school attendance and graduation rates—surface disparities between students that parallel trends in chronic absenteeism and academic achievement examined in the previous chapter, Readiness to Learn and Success in School.

Figure 51. SFUSD High School Student Post-Graduation Plans, 2021
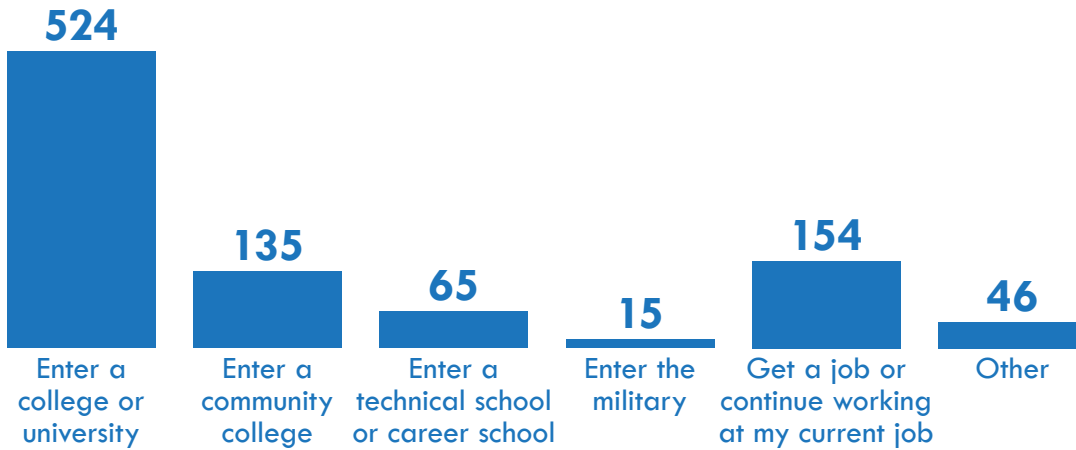
Source: DCYF SFUSD High School Surveys

Figure 52. 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) for SFUSD and CA, by Race/Ethnicity, 2020-21
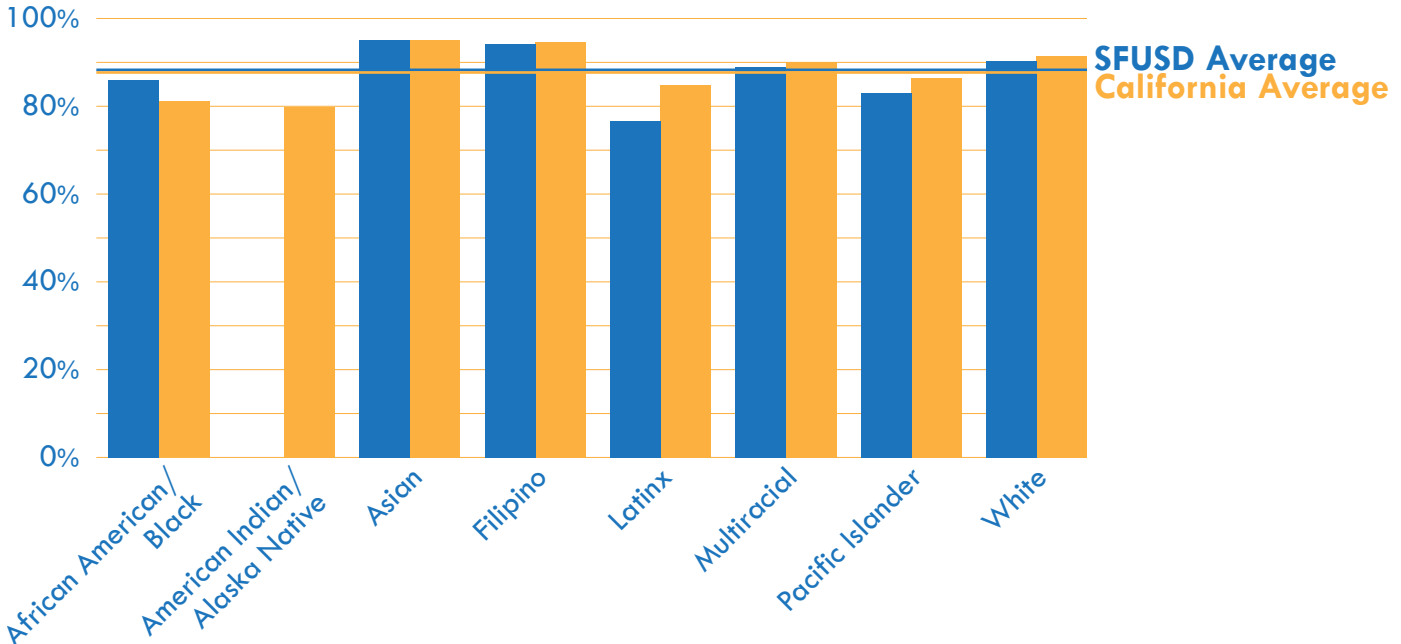
Source: DataQuest, California Department of Education

Data displays notable disparities along racial/ethnic lines in graduation rates (see Figure 52). The overall SFUSD graduation rate has increased from just under 85% for the 2017-18 school year to 88.3% for 2020-21. However, graduation rates among African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander students remain lower than the aggregate rate. Graduation rates among SFUSD's African American/Black students (86%) has increased in recent years and is ahead of the statewide rate (81.1%) for the same population.[238] The SFUSD graduation rate for Hispanic/Latinx seniors

(76.7%) has slowly increased in recent years but remains behind the statewide rate for the same population (84.9%).Graduation rates were not calculated for American Indian/ Alaskan Native students in 2020-21, but in 2019-20, the graduation rate was alarmingly low—63.6%.* Experts from the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center note that these students are often left out of educational research because of their small population size, and that omission in turn perpetuates lack of understanding of their needs.[239]

As discussed in previous chapters, to be successful in school, students need to feel safe and supported. For students experiencing discrimination, the perception of school staff's willingness to address issues and make meaningful change can impact academic engagement. In discussing the lack of services designed for and offered to Middle Eastern/North African students, one focus group participant explained how graduating on time is impacted by not having access to culturally relevant support and programming:

> *"When we discuss things like racism, Islamophobia, like everyone says they want to sweep it under the rug with an email blast. Advisors in our high school, even in college, they have a lot of misinformation, don't necessarily guide us. It is so hard to navigate high school, college, and it ends up taking five or six years."*
>
> —*Young person, focus group with Arab youth*

Graduation is also challenging for youth in the foster care system, whose academic records are frequently lost as changes to foster care placements in many cases result in changing schools and even school districts repeatedly. At the state level, the CDE reports that the five-year cohort graduation rate for foster youth was 64.5% in 2020-21.[240] Service providers that work with foster care youth noted that when youth are supported by a court-appointed educational rights holder, graduation rates are significantly higher, between 80% and 90%.

> *"There's significantly less education disruption when you have an educational rights holder for youth who move among districts, because you're coordinating transportation, you're coordinating mental health support...things like advocates [saying] 'Hey, I collected these five different transcripts over the course of the two years from these three different schools, and I see that we haven't been credited this credit.' That's the difference between a young person graduating in a semester or not graduating in a semester."*
>
> —*CBO staff, focus group with service providers supporting youth with foster care system*

At the time of this report, the demand for educational rights holders greatly surpasses their availability. Leveraging the success of this model to support graduation rates for all San Francisco youth in foster care requires significant investment in recruitment and

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CDE estimates that less than 1% of students in California identify as American Indian/Alaska Native.

training. Service providers suggest that training could be provided to foster parents and family members providing out-of-home placements to help strengthen their ability to advocate for the educational needs of the youth in their care.

Housing security and stability is essential for youth to successfully complete their education and transition to adulthood. Youth experiencing homelessness face significant challenges in completing high school. In the 2020-21 school year, 73.3% of SFUSD seniors experiencing homelessness were able to graduate, significantly lower than the SFUSD average of 88.3%. In 2019, San Francisco's PIT Count found that 53% of youth respondents reported completing high school or receiving their GED, 2% attained an associate degree, and only 1% completed college. In addition, 52% of youth reported being currently enrolled in some form of education or vocation program. Among youth respondents who were enrolled in school, over half (55%) were unsheltered.[241]

73.3%
of homeless SFUSD seniors graduated in the 2020-21 school year

Figure 53. Educational Attainment of Unaccompanied Children and TAY Experiencing Homelessness, 2019
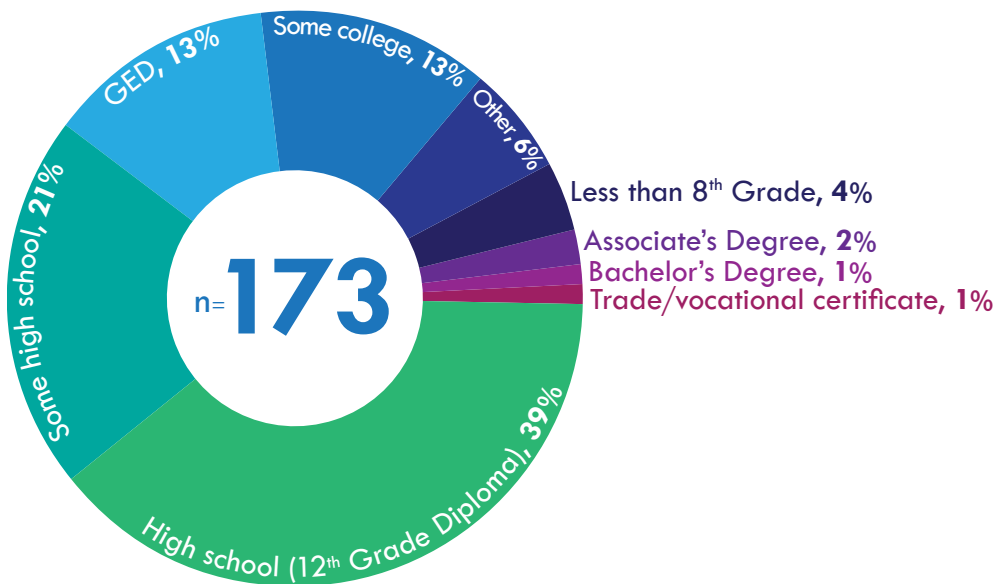
Source: Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, 2019 SF PIT Count Youth Survey

During DCYF's community engagements, youth and TAY experiencing housing instability described the challenge of having to choose between school enrollment and securing employment income. Many felt unable to focus on education because of financial constraints and physical and mental health issues. TAY "aging out" of support systems and experiencing pressures to operate as fully independent adults described heightened pressure from such transitions.

While SFUSD graduation data disaggregated by gender identity or sexual orientation are not available, it is worth noting that LGBTQQ youth are overrepresented among homeless youth, who again, face significant challenges in regular attendance and graduation. A 2020 survey by the Coalition on Homelessness found that 45% of transgender respondents experiencing homelessness had been homeless at or prior to turning 18.[242] Furthermore, despite SFUSD's concerted efforts to make schools safer for LGBTQQ youth, many still indicate feeling unsafe. According to the 2017 SFUSD YRBS, verbal slurs against LGBTQQ youth had decreased from being reported by 40.1% of LGBTQQ youth down to 19.7%. However, LGBTQQ youth and transgender youth in particular reported significantly higher rates of cyberbullying than their cisgender peers.[243] As of 2019, research estimates that only 32% of LGBTQQ students across California reported feeling safe in the classroom.[244]

Postsecondary Access & Enrollment

High school graduation alone does not guarantee access to higher education. An August 2021 report from the California Budget and Policy Center found that in many school districts throughout California, graduation requirements did not match the A-G requirements for acceptance into the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) systems.[245] Although graduation from SFUSD requires A-G course completion, students can graduate with a grade of 'D,' which falls short of the 'C' grade necessary for UC/CSU acceptance. As more high school students have met the A-G requirements, the UC and CSU systems have tightened restrictions, and proposals for more restrictive acceptance criteria are under discussion at the time of this report. Statewide, these policies hold the greatest negative impact for students with disabilities, students in foster care, ELLs, students experiencing homelessness, and migrant students. When disaggregated by race/ethnicity, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx, and Pacific Islander students face the deepest negative impacts.[246] Figure 54 compares the number of SFUSD seniors who graduated in 2020-21 with the number who met the UC/CSU requirements. The percentages for African American/Black youth, Hispanic/Latinx youth and Pacific Islander youth were lower than their Asian and White peers.

Figure 54. San Francisco HS Graduates and Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements by Race/Ethnicity, 2020-21
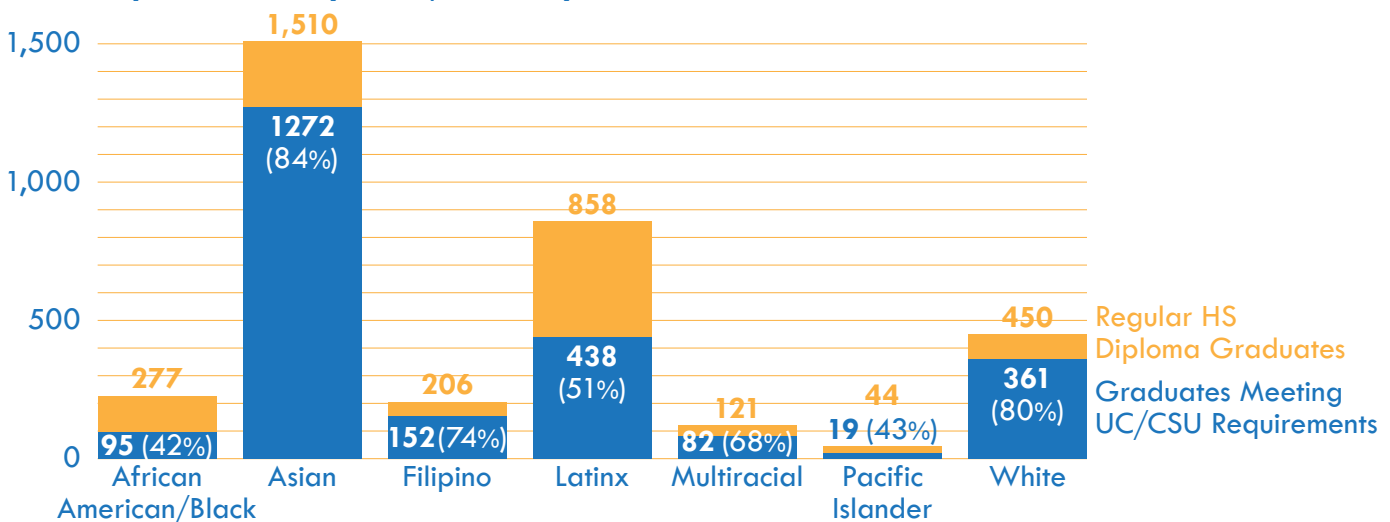
Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest

SFUSD collects data on the percentage of graduates who go on to attend college within 12 months of graduation. Data on college-going rates (CGR) from the 2017-18 school year, displayed in Figure 55, show notable racial disparities. San Francisco's CGR average (68.2%) is higher than the statewide rate (64.4%).[247] However, White students fare better than average (70.4%) in San Francisco and throughout California, as do Asian students (84.4%) and Filipino students (72.5%). In contrast, only 51.3% of African American/Black students graduating from SFUSD went on to college, compared to 59.7% statewide. Hispanic/Latinx SFUSD graduates only had a 50.6% CGR compared with 57.6% statewide, and Pacific Islander students fared the worst, with only 41.5% going on to college, compared to 58.7% statewide. These numbers can be complicated to interpret; certainly not all youth intend to enroll in postsecondary education. However, considering the economic impact of a degree discussed previously, the racial and ethnic disparities seen here can serve to perpetuate existing economic disparities between groups.

Figure 55. College-Going Rate of San Francisco High School Students* by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18

SF Average

CA Average

*All schools, within 12 months of graduation
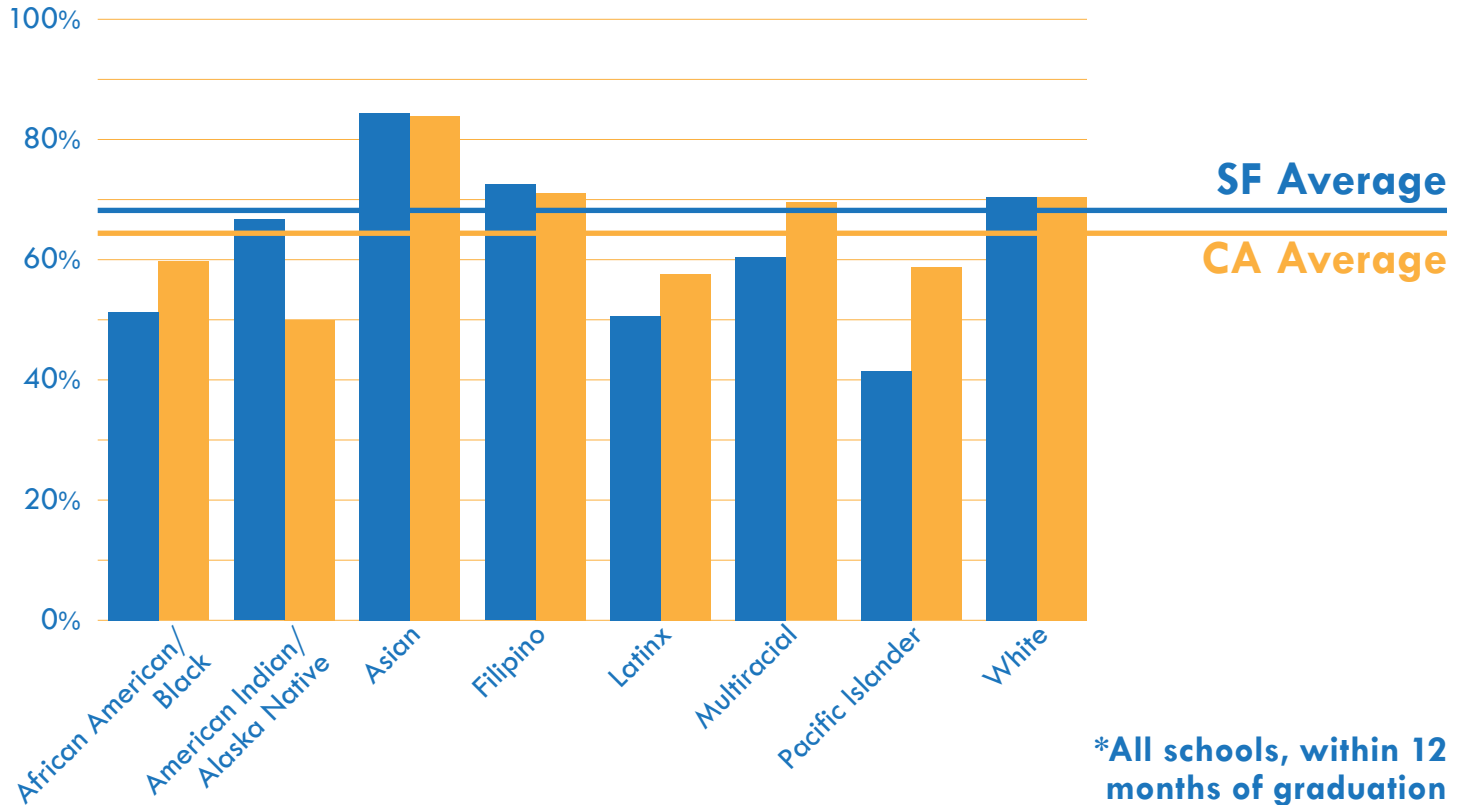
Source: San Francisco Unified School District

For students who satisfy academic requirements for college acceptance, preparing for college and navigating the application enrollment process presents challenges. In CNA focus groups and surveys conducted in 2021, parents, caregivers, and youth expressed a need for more postsecondary education and career support. Less than half (49%) of respondents to a survey of parents and caregivers agreed that their high school student had access to college preparation support.[248] Cost presents students and families with an additional major hurdle to postsecondary enrollment. Tuition costs have been steadily rising, putting many students and families in significant debt, and placing college entirely out of reach for others. Parents, caregivers, and students alike emphasized the need for support around accessing financial aid to make college accessible.

"Programs that are for high schoolers, facilitate the transition from leaving high school (college prep or job prep) so that they don't turn to drugs. This could be made easier by having access to more financial aid and scholarship opportunities."

—*Parent, focus group with Latinx families*

While some youth expressed appreciation for the support and mentorship they received to prepare them for college, others found that more support was needed. One focus group participant explained that resources were not consistent across school sites, and that some schools were able to provide more opportunities than others.

"The school system is an issue. From when I attended Balboa, there wasn't a lot of motivation or support for kids to go to college at the end. When I went to Downtown, there were opportunities for internships, got me connected with [AGENCY] even, given insight on resumes, what to do, a glimpse on where to go—information. And that's a really big help."

—Young person, focus group with youth providing household economic support

Focus group participants referenced challenges for students who are the first in their families to apply for college, or "first-generation" students. Youth whose parents, caregivers, and/or older siblings have gone through college can often rely on this experience to help navigate the process of enrollment and even help them see postsecondary education as a realistic next step after high school. For youth who do not have that support, having access to college guidance in school or community-based programs is even more essential.

"My goals are to graduate high school and college with a good GPA...I don't have an older sibling, so I don't have someone to talk to about college, but if there are resources I can go to and learn about colleges, the nitty gritty details, that would help."

—Young person, focus group with Arab youth

Programs that currently address the needs of first-generation college students include several key components: an emphasis on building relationships and community with youth and their families; college tours that help students explore different options, build a sense of connection and familiarity with college campuses, and meet students with similar experiences; and a multi-year approach that starts in high school and extends into college years. This ensures that students have a consistent source of support and guidance while applying to school and navigating the challenges they may encounter once enrolled. The Center for First-Generation for Student Success also notes that there is a gap of over $60,000 between the median family incomes of first-generation college students and continuing-generation students.[249] Considering the correlation between postsecondary education and earning potential discussed earlier, programs that support first-generation students may be a critical component of closing that gap.

Postsecondary Completion

According to National Student Clearinghouse data, the percentage of SFUSD students who complete postsecondary education within six years of high school graduation increased gradually from class of 2007 to 2014 with a slight drop in 2015. Among the graduating class of 2007, only 47% had completed a degree or certificate by 2013. By 2018, that number had increased to 55% of the graduating class of 2012. However, as that number still hovers just over half of students, clearly many need support, not only to enroll in college, but to succeed once they are there.

Figure 56. Percent of SFUSD High School Graduates Who Enroll in a Postsecondary Institution and Complete within Six Years by Graduating Class
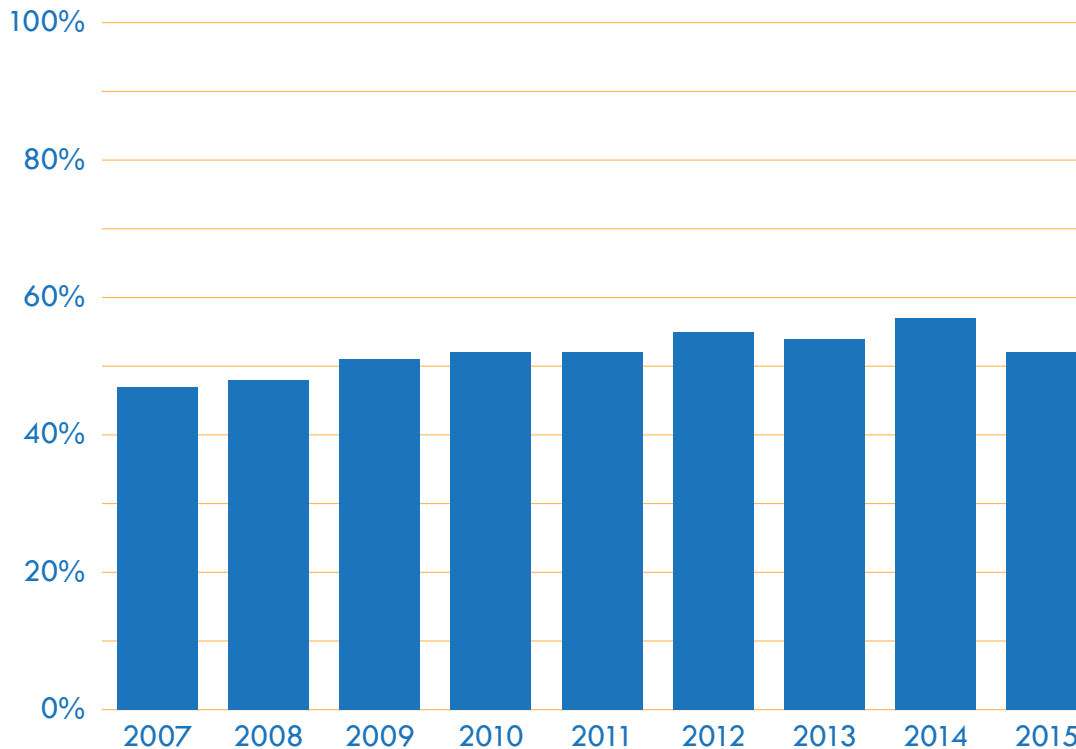
Source: National Student Clearinghouse and San Francisco Unified School District

As previously discussed, models that provide students with continued support from dedicated adult staff during high school and through college can be particularly impactful, especially for first-generation college students and others who face barriers to college completion. One such program in San Francisco has proven highly effective with 91% of participants graduating within five years. The SF RISE Working Group also recognized the need to support youth accessing postsecondary education. Their complete list of initial recommendations included "Create funding opportunities for Transition Coaches, Peer to Peer Support Mentors, and Mental Health/Behavioral Health Supports for first- and second-year college students." The need for Transition Education Specialists was echoed by a justice system stakeholder, who noted that despite the prevalence of case managers, youth have limited access to anyone with deep knowledge of higher education systems who can support them in staying enrolled in school to completion.

A June 2019 report based on focus groups with City College San Francisco students highlighted challenges experienced by several different student populations. African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx students discussed the lack of faculty, staff, and administrators of similar backgrounds and lived experiences. Students with disabilities noted that staff had limited understanding of and sensitivity to a range of physical and learning abilities, policies that inhibit access to accommodations, and faculty and staff without awareness of or compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.[250]

Youth, parents, and caregivers in focus groups we conducted echoed the need for more financial assistance and noted that a basic income model would be a valuable approach to making things like postsecondary education accessible to low-income youth and families. One student-led program at CCSF partnered with DCYF and another CBO early in the pandemic to provide direct payments to students in need. Student feedback indicated that these one-time payments were immensely helpful in allowing them to meet basic needs.

"As a student, what we need most is financial aid for education. Books are super expensive. Transportation cost is expensive...Anything that contributes to education, I'd like more awareness of supports for education."

—CCSF Student

Numerous studies indicate that participation in education programs can significantly reduce recidivism rates among individuals with justice system involvement.[251] Detention-based programs have served as a critical way to bring education to incarcerated TAY and support them in continuing their education and/or finding employment upon their release and re-entry to the community. The Credible Messenger Mentorship model can support educational success for justice involved youth and others who may not have seen themselves as college students by shifting belief structures and providing critical relational support. Credible Messengers have shared lived experiences with the youth they support and go through significant training in the transformational coaching approach they use. A recent evaluation of this model found that participants' chances of being convicted of a felony in the year following the program dropped by two thirds, with the most impactful effects for the youngest participants.[252] In helping justice-involved TAY complete postsecondary education and avoid further justice system-involvement, they also in turn reduce barriers justice-involved TAY face to future employment.

Disparities in economic and K-12 education experiences discussed in other chapters of this report influence rates of postsecondary educational achievement and the benefits that higher education enables. Given disparities that limit postsecondary educational opportunities, all youth and TAY deserve access to pathways for stable employment and adequate wages for thriving life in the City. During 2021 focus groups, parents expressed interest in expanded life skills services for youth who do not want to go to college.

"My kid, he said in HS, they grind them to be continuing education to college, and how difficult it is, and instructors are always on your case... not everybody is fit to continue to go to college. So maybe, some sort of curriculum with life skills, how to get a job, how to do an interview [in junior year of H.S.]. In high school, you could get a workers permit if you have a good grade. They can test the water, maybe for sophomore, or work for a while, then finish HS. I think it's some sort of life skill to help them get to that point, how to interview, how to dress, how to talk to your boss."

—Parent, focus group with American Indian/Native American families

CAREER PLANNING & PROFESSIONAL SKILL BUILDING

Another critical component of the transition to adulthood is employment. Whether or not they plan to engage in postsecondary education, youth need support in planning a pathway to the future employment they want and building the skills to make them successful in the fields they choose. Programs that offer paid internships and/or on-the-job training are highly sought after and valued. Pre-employment training and placement into paid internships help students become better prepared for the workforce.

Additionally, frequent exposure at an early age to elements of the workforce supports students in their future employment goals and helps them become self-sufficient citizens. And for many teens, employment begins prior to the end of high school, as a necessary means to support themselves and their families.

A Youth Budget Needs report compiled for District 5 by the San Francisco Youth Commission found that youth desired more employment opportunities, calling on the City to continue investing in programs such as Opportunities for All and in City-led job fairs for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and TAY.[253] Additionally, more than 80% of SFUSD high school students surveyed in 2021 reported interest in jobs and internships and 65% expressed wanting support in career preparation skills, such as resume writing and interviewing.

Parents, caregivers, and youth elaborated on the types of programming needed in focus groups. Common themes among participants included the need for support around creating resumes, broader life skills, and financial literacy. Parents and caregivers want their children to have support not just in getting a job, but in setting goals that will shape a more long-term career path. Similarly, youth want opportunities that will allow them to develop a more well-rounded set of workplace skills that support a healthy relationship to work, not just the needs of the employer.

"Life skills, if you have life skills down, managing finances, balancing budget, prepping long term and forecasting so you know what you need to survive on your own. Maybe then you know this job isn't going to help me meet my goals, or I need to adjust expectations, or living arrangements. We just assume they'll get it, or family will teach them, but that isn't the case for everyone."

—*Parent, focus group with American Indian/Native American families*

"Interpersonal skills, there's not a lot who focus on this. People focus on can you do the job, technical, but no company culture, timeliness, conflict resolution. A lot of trainings focus so solely on the job, not the person, which ties into mental health, work life balance."

—*Young person, focus group with Arab youth*

"Have programs to help kids go through adulthood, especially if they don't have family members to help them with that. Have classes to learn how to be financially independent, manage their money, make money, do taxes, cook for themselves."

—*Youth, focus group with African American/Black students*

Programming focused on financial literacy was another need expressed by parents and youth alike.

"Workshops for resume writing, interviews, where do we find job opportunities for [youth] under 16? Financial literacy, also. He does not have a sense of the worth of money. That would be very helpful."

—*Parent, focus group with undocumented and immigrant families*

"Business trainings and understand how to use money. Money is the only subject that is not taught. You have to find information through YouTube. What to do with money when you have money."

—*Young person, focus group with youth who provide household economic support*

Parents and caregivers also expressed a need for more job training and employment at both ends of the age spectrum. In the Parent/Caregiver Survey, only 43% of parents and caregivers agreed that there was sufficient job training support for TAY. And in focus groups, many requested opportunities for youth under 16. Some youth participants indicated that job readiness programs and employment opportunities need to be available even before high school, to help protect younger youth from being drawn into potentially harmful ways of earning income.

"More opportunities for the young—for the future—people 13, 14, 12 years old—to get job opportunities. Because that's where people start doing things to try to get money."

—*Young person, focus group with youth providing household economic support*

VULNERABLE YOUTH & FAMILIES FACE UNIQUE EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

The need for paid work opportunities and mentorship is common to all San Francisco families, and DCYF focus group participants named San Francisco's job opportunities as one of the City's strongest assets. However, many youth and families face challenges in obtaining stable employment. Systemic barriers to employment can lead youth to doubt their abilities or fit for a desired career path. Furthermore, the need for unpaid training or years of experience disproportionate to a young person's age can exclude youth who need to support themselves and/or their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted employment rates, particularly among households with children, and including households with TAY parents. Parents and caregivers in focus groups spoke of the difficulty of relying on government assistance programs to make ends meet. These challenges compound for TAY parents, who are more likely to have low-wage jobs, as they are earlier in their career trajectories.

"Invest in young people and their communities, hire them for City jobs that offer a living wage. $16 an hour is not a living wage in SF. Ensure young people have a basic income so they can go to school/finish school while taking care of their families and children."

—Young person, focus group with justice involved youth

During DCYF's 2021 focus groups, ELLs indicated that language barriers at work sites created a challenge for employment. Participants expressed a need for work-based learning opportunities and paths to employment in non-English languages to support access to supportive employment and income options.

"Improve language assistance for employers and employees. Not every organization have bilingual staff or if they do, this staff might not have all the information. If they don't have bilingual staff they have to figure out a way to find an interpreter which increases the wait time. Clients feel discouraged with the long wait time to seek support."

—Young person, focus group with undocumented and immigrant community

In 2018, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) reported that 5,000 undocumented 14 to 24 year-olds in San Francisco had "little to no legal options for employment." [254] Indeed, undocumented youth face a multitude of additional challenges entering the workforce. Without "right to work documents," which verify employment authorization (including photo identification, proof of residency and Social Security Number), wage options for undocumented youth and TAY often limit payments to lower amount stipends or incentives, rather than reported wages.

Justice system involvement poses challenges to youth employment, particularly in the forms of employee stigma and added schedule obligations. Despite California's Fair Chance Act (also known as "Ban the Box") legislation disallowing potential employers from inquiring about criminal histories, youth with history of justice involvement described ongoing experiences of their history of justice involvement undermining their individual goal fulfillment.

In 2018,

5,000

undocumented 14 to 24 year-olds in SF had little to no legal options for employment

"[It is] difficult to break stigma in the community, especially after probation. Probation has changed a lot."

—Young people, focus group with justice involved youth

"It is hard to target our community with these resources when we are living in the shadows. When we are in High School, no one teaches you how to file taxes. If in High School people told me about the options for what jobs I could get with a certain degree...If we can provide more job education support and resources for undocumented youth in high school (e.g. how to pursue internships, how to start your own business), before they make up their mind to not get a higher education because they don't see any professional career opportunities. Some youth go to trade schools because they thought it was easier to get into even though they might have wanted to pursue higher education degrees... Teach them about the various pathways for career opportunity."

—Young person, focus group with justice involved youth

While many assume that San Francisco is a haven for the LGBTQQ community, a 2016 LGBTQQ Violence Prevention Needs Assessment indicated that experiences of discrimination and violence against the LGBTQQ community are still prevalent in the City. Workplaces are one of many settings where individuals identifying as LGBTQQ experience discrimination; a 2020 study by the Trevor Project found that 35% of LGBTQQ youth experience discrimination at work, with significantly higher rates reported by transgender and nonbinary youth.[255]

Nationwide, students with disabilities face many challenges in finding meaningful employment in their early, formative years, and struggle with the transition to successful competitive employment.[256] Despite hard work to overcome challenges and misconceptions, youth with disabilities still have low confidence levels about their future workforce potential, and there is a continuing gap in employment outcomes, particularly for disabled youth of color.[257] Thus, it is critical for youth with disabilities to have frequent exposure at an early age to various career paths and aspects of job readiness, as well as an awareness of the accommodations they are entitled to under the ADA. The SF RISE report indicated that San Francisco parents of youth with special needs are frustrated by the limited opportunities available to their children, particularly during key transition periods, including the transition beyond high school to adulthood. The Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA) requires transition planning as a component of all Individual Education Plans (IEPs), including measurable postsecondary goals and services to address those goals.[258]

CITYWIDE SUPPORTS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

In discussing postsecondary interests and employment experiences, parents and youth expressed a need for programming that in some cases already exists in San Francisco, which indicates a need for wider information sharing and outreach on the part of the City. While DCYF, OEWD, SFUSD and additional City partners have a long history of funding youth workforce development programs, many parents and caregivers report unfamiliarity or challenges accessing these programs. Acknowledging the City provides

myriad services to strengthen employment access, we highlight a small selection of service models below that seek to address disparities and trends discussed above.

The Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP) in partnership with multiple CBOs promotes direct deposit to create sound financial practices with participating youth. Leveraging the impactful moment of earning a paycheck into a sound banking practice helps young people find the road towards good financial habits. Through analysis they homed in on various "touch points" in a young person's involvement with an employment opportunity that can be leveraged to embed good financial practices into youth programming. Such examples are at time of application, when collecting right-to-work documentation, at orientation, and during any ongoing training that programs have with youth. They then created a comprehensive approach that includes training agency staff, implementing supported saving workshops, helping youth create a saving goal, opening youth their own accounts, and paying youth through direct deposit.

The High School Partnerships Initiative exemplifies collaboration between SFUSD and prospective employers that supports postsecondary and career planning for youth and TAY. High School Partnerships is an embedded model with a vocational focus. It is designed to build work-based learning and career exposure experiences directly into the school day and intentionally connect to what youth are learning academically. CBO partners work closely with school site staff to ensure the work-based learning opportunities align to students' school-day curricula and support the development of college and career readiness skills, including resume writing, job search, and interview preparation.

Free City College—a partnership between City College and the City & County of San Francisco to waive tuition costs for San Francisco residents— has helped make community college accessible for many San Francisco youth since launching in 2017. Statewide, the California College Promise Grant has helped waive enrollment at California community colleges for eligible students.[259] While opportunities like these are extremely helpful in mitigating tuition, there are often additional costs that students incur when attending college. The Free City College initiative recognizes this and provides additional monetary support to low-income students. The Free City program accounted for 17,879 students enrolled in Fall 2017 and 17,316 students in Spring 2018. Approximately 74% of enrolled students received a tuition fee waiver and the remainder received a stipend.[260] In a 2019 focus group, City College students expressed gratitude for this program and noted that there are still financial hardships associated with school, including the high cost of living in San Francisco, and particularly the cost of housing.

Free City accounted for

17,879

City College students enrolled in Fall 2017

"I appreciate that CCSF is free now. CCSF cost was a big barrier. I wish there was more housing, but I do see that companies respect a CCSF certification."

—Young person, focus group with Arab youth

The Trans Employment Program (TEP) was launched in 2007, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the City of San Francisco and multiple CBO partners. It was the first City-funded program in the country to provide a broad range of employment services to transgender and gender-non-conforming community members, connecting thousands to Bay Area jobs and working directly with hundreds of employers to create

workplaces that are safer and more inclusive for transgender employees and job applicants.

One model currently addressing career readiness for youth with disabilities provides comprehensive vocational programming consisting of career exploration, job-readiness assessment, skill development, and year-round job placement and retention services at multiple SFUSD high schools. Students receive a curriculum of integrated work-readiness skills, job-search skills, and career/vocational assessment in a regular classroom setting. Frontline staff deliver the curriculum, connect students with paid internships, and provide follow-up support to ensure their ultimate success. However, to ensure sustainable employment for youth with special needs, it is critical that programs also provide pathways to ongoing employment in workplaces that are familiar with and compliant to ADA requirements.

Next Steps

This report explored the needs and lived experiences of San Francisco's children, youth, TAY, and their families. We highlighted programs, policies, and other community assets that promote resiliency and help communities thrive. The pandemic induced two years of collective trauma on society. Its uneven impact across San Francisco deepened service needs that preceded COVID-19. Yet the pandemic has also facilitated new partnerships and strengthened existing collaborations across the City in support of San Francisco's most vulnerable populations.

The CNA is the first step in DCYF's planning cycle. With this report, we reaffirm existing commitments to priority populations we aim to serve. The data highlighted here will guide the second phase of our cycle, the development of the Services Allocation Plan. The SAP will describe how Children and Youth Fund dollars will be allocated for the 2024-29 funding cycle. During the SAP development process, DCYF will examine how well priority populations are being reached and service needs are being met through existing investments and partnerships. Our process will center the data and findings from the CNA to ensure that our allocations address the needs and disparities highlighted in this report.

To develop the SAP, DCYF will actively engage with City and SFUSD partners to align and coordinate the service systems we collectively support. This coordination is a crucial element of our efforts to achieve our four results and address the needs of our priority populations. By bringing together the partners that have a role in providing services to children, youth, TAY, and their families and by grounding our process in the voices and experiences of the City's diverse communities, we aim to ensure that our systems provide aligned and coordinated services that are accessible to those that need them.

Our planning cycle will culminate with a large procurement process in which we develop our 2024-29 Request for Proposals and award five-year grants to community-based organizations. The RFP is the vehicle to provide funding for services that seek to address the needs and disparities identified in the CNA. This competitive process will be designed to prioritize the nonprofit CBOs with the cultural competency and community connections needed to provide the services detailed in the SAP.

Beyond its role in our own planning work, our hope is for this report to serve as a valuable resource for our City and CBO partners that serve children, youth, TAY, and their families across the City. Ensuring that San Francisco remains a great place to grow up, particularly for the City's most vulnerable populations, is a collective effort involving sustained commitment to equity and a shared focus on continually improving the accessibility and quality of programming and services.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This appendix provides a brief overview of the community engagement activities conducted between fall 2019 and spring 2022. Separate report on the findings and key insights from 2019 Family Summits and 2021 focus groups and surveys produced by Clarity Social Research is available on DCYF's website.*

We Are the City Family Summits

Between October and December of 2019, DCYF held family summits in each of the 11 supervisorial districts in San Francisco. The goal of the family summits was to gather feedback from the community in each district and learn about the lived experiences of families, including the greatest pain points in their daily lives, what is working, what could work better, and what the City and County of San Francisco could do to help improve their quality of life.

The tables below depict the demographic characteristics of the participants at the DCYF family summits. A total of 526 people participated in the eleven family-summits including 123 adolescents and young adults (i.e., 14–24 years old), 162 parents and caregivers, and 241 providers. Around two-thirds of family members, parents, and caregivers (excluding providers) reported having children under 11 years old. A majority of the registrants were Asian and indicated that English was their preferred language; however, participants who speak Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, Russian, and Arabic also participated in family breakout groups facilitated in their preferred language. Thematic summaries of DCYF's 2019 Family Summits can be viewed online at dcyf.org/family-summit-district-summaries.

Race/Ethnicity of Family Members, Adolescents and Young Adults
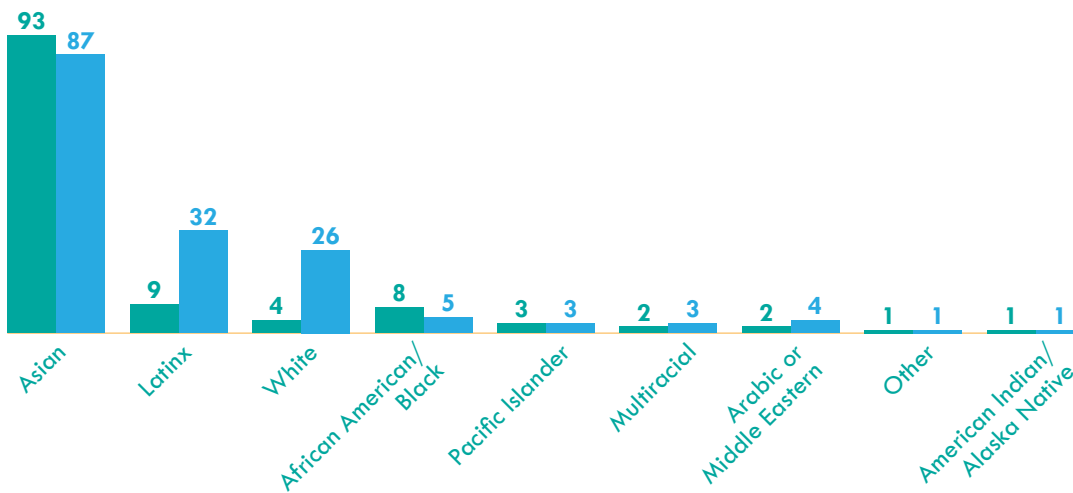
District	Participants
1	62
2	23
3	102
4	21
5	35
6	64
7	48
8	29
9	35
10	67
11	40
Total	**526**

CNA Focus Groups

A series of 32 interviews and focus groups were conducted virtually and in person with approximately 230 parents, youth, and service providers. Participants were recruited and gathered with the support and partnership of community-based organizations across San Francisco to gauge community strengths and needs between August 2021 and January 2022. Each focus group was facilitated by two CNA staff: a seasoned qualitative researcher who led groups through the protocols, who was supported by a trained notetaker.

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*For more details, see:

In addition, a series of 16 focus groups (10 with youth; 6 with parents) were conducted in July-August 2021 in tandem with the CNA, as part of the Summer Together program evaluation.

Audience	Community	Community Partner
Parents/Caregivers	Families living in SROs	Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC)
Parents/Caregivers	Families experiencing homelessness	Compass (English and Spanish)
Parents/Caregivers	Families experiencing homelessness	Hamilton Families
Youth	Latinx TAY	Legal Services for Children (Spanish)
Youth	TAY experiencing homelessness, providing household economic support	Horizons
Youth	TAY experiencing homelessness, providing household economic support, foster youth	Larkin
Youth	TAY with justice system involvement	Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC)
Youth	Children with parents currently or previously incarcerated	Project Avary
Youth Parents/Caregivers	Young women-identifying TAY experiencing homelessness, foster youth, justice-system involvement	Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC)
Youth	LGBTQQ youth and TAY	LGBT Center
Youth	LGBTQQ TAY	LYRIC
Youth	Low-income Asian American, ELL	Community Youth Center (CYC)
Youth	Tenderloin District, Middle Eastern and/or Arabic TAY	Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) / Tenderloin Community Benefit District (TLCBD)
Youth	Black/African American High School youth	San Francisco Achievers
Youth Parents/Caregivers	Black/African American TAY and parents	Black to the Future
Parents/Caregiver	Filipino families	SFILEN: Filipino Community Center (Tagalog)
Parents/Caregivers	Latinx families	Buena Vista Children's Center (BVCC) (Spanish)
Parents/Caregivers	Mayan Families	Asociacion Mayab's (Spanish/Mayan)
Youth Parents/Caregivers	Latinx undocumented and immigrant families	SFILEN: Cause Justa:Just Cause, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, PODER (Spanish)
Youth Parents/Caregivers	Undocumented and immigrant TAY	DreamSF (Spanish)
Youth Parents/Caregivers	American Indian/Native American families	American Indian Cultural District (AICD)
Parents/Caregivers	Parents of children with disabilities	Pomeroy
Parents/Caregivers	Parents of children with disabilities	Northern California Hearing and Speech Center

Focus Group Demographics

At the close of each focus group session, participants were asked to complete an optional survey to gather demographic information as well as participants' interest in information or support. Results are reported in the table below.

What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	6%
Arab or Middle Eastern	5	5%
Asian or Asian American	34	33%
Black or African American	21	20%
Hispanic/Latino	34	33%
Multiracial	5	5%
Pacific Islander	3	3%
White	10	10%
Decline to State	1	1%
Total	**104**	**100%**

What language do you speak the most at home?		
English	43	43%
Spanish	24	24%
Chinese	15	15%
Cantonese	9	9%
English + other (Punjabi, Arabic, Spanish, and Turkish)	5	5%
Arabic	3	3%
ASL	1	1%
Tagalog	1	1%
Total	**101**	**100%**

What is your gender?		
Female	60	58%
Male	36	35%
Gender non-binary	6	6%
Genderqueer	1	1%
Bigender	1	1%
Total	**104**	**100%**

What is your age?		
Under 18	20	19%
18-24	40	38%
25 or older	45	43%
Total	**105**	**100%**

CNA Parent/Caregiver Focus Group Protocol

Background

This protocol will be used to facilitate 60-minute group conversations with parents and caregivers identified as belonging to priority populations that DCYF wants to hear from. The list at the end of this protocol identifies some common needs that may come up in discussions that we would like to hear from the community about. Feel free to use these as probes for any of the questions.

Introduction (10 Minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. My name is {YOUR NAME}, and I'm going to lead our conversation today. I am passionate about working with families and advancing social change because {brief comment about your personal commitment to advancing social change with and for families}. We are working with the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families, or DCYF for short, to conduct community conversations across the city to learn more about the strengths, challenges, and needs of families, children, and youth. DCYF funds programs across the city that support after school programs, youth workforce development, educational supports, justice services, family empowerment, and social emotional support services and they want to learn about what you are experiencing as you raise a family in San Francisco, because they want to be certain that their funding decisions reflect your everyday experience.

We are recording today's meeting and taking notes on this group's collective ideas and needs for DCYF to consider while planning their investments, and we will summarize what we learn in a report for DCYF. Your names will never be mentioned in our notes or in the report—we are only collecting information you share about your experiences in San Francisco. My colleague, {NOTE TAKER's NAME} will be taking notes of our conversation today {Colleague has an opportunity to briefly introduce themselves}.

To make sure we can have a productive, collaborative conversation and that everyone feels comfortable speaking, please know that your participation is completely voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable during the conversation, you can leave at any point. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer, you do not have to answer.

Everything that is said today stays in this room. This conversation is confidential. Let's have a safe space where we can all feel free to share openly. The only exception to our confidentiality is if there is a safety concern about potential harm to you or to others. If we hear about abuse happening, or that someone is planning to hurt someone else, especially if it involves someone under 18, those are safety issues that we are mandated to report if we hear about it. So please let's just keep this in mind as we share.

- Please, let's have one person talking at a time. Try not to cut each other off. We will do our best to get to everyone.

- Please be respectful of each other's opinions even if you don't agree with them. Everyone's experiences are valid and important.

- Take space, make space. In other words, if you notice that everyone else is talking and you haven't said anything yet, challenge yourself to speak up—we want to hear you. If you notice that you are the one who keeps responding to the questions, take a moment to make space for others to share their perspective. We want to hear everyone.

- Sometimes, I may need to interrupt the conversation and direct the group to a new

topic. We have a lot of important topics to cover today, so I will only do this to get through all of these topics and to make sure that everyone in this group has a chance to be heard.

- Are there any other community agreements we should add?

Before we begin, I want to make sure I have a way to get your $50 grocery gift card to you. Please note that you will need to print the emailed gift card to use it at the grocery store. [Please read out email addresses (without the @xxx.xxx part - just the first bit) to confirm and match attendees to email addresses].

I have just one last note before we begin. We know that affordable housing is a big concern across the city for many families and we are also concerned about this. However, DCYF's funding is focused on providing high-quality programs for children, youth, and families and unfortunately, they do not have much power to affect affordable housing concerns. I tell you this so that we can focus our conversation today on things that DCYF can respond to and we want to hear from you so that funding decisions can be made that reflect your experiences.

Group Introductions (10 Minutes)

To start, let's spend a few moments getting to know one another. Let's go around the Zoom and share:

- Your first name
- How many kids you are raising in San Francisco and the kids' ages
- The one thing you love most about living in San Francisco. What keeps you living in San Francisco?

Daily Experiences and Common Needs (30 Minutes)

Now, we are going to talk a bit more about your experiences living in San Francisco. Think about a typical day in your life right now. A lot goes on in a day for each of us. You may be juggling work, parenting, family responsibilities, and other things...

1. It has been an intense couple of years navigating the Covid pandemic, Black Lives Matter, Anti-Asian violence, and everything else. What are the biggest challenges facing your family and families like yours living in San Francisco today?

2. *Housing, food, health care, other basic needs:* How is your family managing to meet your day-to-day needs, such as housing, having enough food to eat, getting health care, and meeting other basic needs? What are the challenges your household deals with in these areas? What do you need for your family to feel more stable in these areas?

3. *Safety and Belonging:* Where are the places in San Francisco that feel safe for you and your family, and what makes them feel safe? Are there places that feel unsafe? What makes them feel unsafe? Where do you feel a sense of belonging? Where do you feel out of place? [Probes: Anti-Asian violence? Immigration concerns? Covid?]

4. *School Supports/Climate:* Tell me about your children's experience with school. Are you satisfied with their educational experiences? What feels challenging? What do you and your children need in order for your children to feel supported and successful in school? [Probes: new bell schedule? Before or after school care needs?]

5. [if participants have children in high school] *Job Preparation for Young People:* What do you think young people need to prepare them for work? What types of

job opportunities and/or job preparation programs do you think young people need?

6. ***Support to Manage Mental Health Issues:*** In such a challenging year with Covid and everything, what do you think families need to help with to support their mental health and wellbeing? {e.g., anxiety, depression, isolation}? What kind of support would be helpful?

7. ***Parenting Supports:*** What is most stressful about being a parent? What kinds of supports or programs or services do you need to feel more supported as a parent?

8. Looking ahead to the next 3-5 years, what is the most important/urgent thing the City should do to help children, youth, and families live healthy, successful lives?

9. [if there is time] Civic Engagement: Do you feel your needs are heard, valued, and represented in the City? What can be done to improve your sense of being heard, valued, represented?

Conclusion

Thank you for being here today. We truly appreciate and deeply respect your time, perspectives, and ideas.

CNA Youth Focus Group Protocol

Background

This protocol will be used to facilitate 60-minute group conversations with parents and caregivers identified as belonging to priority populations that DCYF wants to hear from. The list at the end of this protocol identifies some common needs that may come up in discussions that we would like to hear from the community about. Feel free to use these as probes for any of the questions.

Introduction (10 Minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. My name is {YOUR NAME}, and I'm going to lead our conversation today. I am passionate about working with families and advancing social change because {brief comment about your personal commitment to advancing social change with and for families}. I am working with the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, or DCYF for short, to conduct community conversations with young people like you about your experiences living in San Francisco, to help inform how they will make decisions about the kinds of programs and services for children and young people they will provide funding for in the future. DCYF funds programs across the city that support after school programs, youth workforce development, educational supports, justice services, family empowerment, and social emotional support services and they want to learn about what you are experiencing as a young person in San Francisco, because they want to be certain that their funding decisions reflect your everyday experience. My colleague, {NOTE TAKER's NAME} will be taking notes of our conversation today {Colleague can introduce themselves}.

We are recording this session to help us take notes, but the recording won't be shared outside of this research team. Your names will never be mentioned in our notes or in any reports that we will create for DCYF.

To make sure we can have a productive, collaborative conversation and that everyone feels comfortable speaking, please know that your participation is completely voluntary. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer, you do not have to

answer. If you feel uncomfortable during the conversation, you can leave at any point. Everything that is said today stays in this room. This conversation is confidential. Let's have a safe space where we can all feel free to share openly. The only exception to our confidentiality is if there is a safety concern about potential harm to you or to others. If we hear about abuse happening, or that someone is planning to hurt someone else, especially if it involves someone under 18, those are safety issues that we are mandated to report if we hear about it. So please let's just keep this in mind as we share.

- Please, let's have one person talking at a time. Try not to cut each other off. We will do our best to give everyone a chance to speak.

- Please be respectful of each other's opinions even if you don't agree with them. Everyone's experiences are valid and important.

- Step up and step back. In other words, if you notice that everyone else is talking and you haven't said anything, challenge yourself to step up and speak up—we want to hear you. If you notice that you are talking a lot, take a moment to step back and make space for others to share their perspective. We want to hear everyone.

- Sometimes, I may need to interrupt the conversation to give someone a chance to speak or to move us to the next question. We have a lot of important topics to cover, so I may have to do this to move us along and to make sure that everyone in this group has a chance to be heard.

Before we begin, I want to make sure I have a way to get your $50 grocery gift card to you. Please note that you will need to print the emailed gift card to use it at the grocery store. [Please read out email addresses (without the @xxx.xxx part - just the first bit) to confirm and match attendees to email addresses].

I have just one last note before we begin. We know that affordable housing is a big concern across the city for many families and we are also concerned about this. However, DCYF's funding is focused on providing high-quality programs for children, youth, and families and unfortunately, they do not have much power to affect affordable housing concerns. I tell you this so that we can focus our conversation today on things that DCYF can respond to and we want to hear from you so that funding decisions can be made that reflect your experiences.

Group Introductions: (10 Minutes)

To start, let's spend a few moments getting to know one another. Let's go around and share:

- Your first name and pronouns

- What is the best thing about living in San Francisco?

Daily Experiences and Common Needs (30 Minutes)

Now, we are going to talk about your experiences living in San Francisco. Take a few minutes to think about a typical day in your life right now. A lot goes on in a day for each of us. You may be juggling school, work, friends, family responsibilities, and other things. Acknowledging that our identities and experiences are many and layered, what is it like for young people living in San Francisco?

1. What is it like to be a young person living in San Francisco? Think about a typical day in your life. What adjectives or descriptive words would you use to describe living in San Francisco?

2. You all shared something you loved about living in the city. What would you say

are your specific neighborhood or community's greatest strengths?

It has been an intense couple of years navigating the Covid pandemic, Black Lives Matter, Anti-Asian violence, and everything else. What do you think are the greatest challenges that you and your community face in San Francisco today? (refer to the "Common Needs" list at the end if the group gets stuck)

3. When it comes to getting help or support, who can you count on to get the support you need? Are there particular programs, community-based organizations, or service providers that you know you can rely on for help?

4. What types of supports do you need that you aren't currently getting? Is there some kind of support you feel you need *more* of? [e.g., mental health, transportation, dental care, other health care, tutoring, social outlets, etc.]
   How do you find out about what supports are available?

5. *Safety and Belonging:* Where are the places, spaces, or situations in San Francisco that feel safe for you and what makes them feel safe?
   Are there places or situations that feel unsafe? What makes them feel unsafe?
   Where do you feel a sense of belonging? Where do you feel out of place?

6. *School Supports/Climate:* Tell me about your experience with school. [for homeless/TAY: Are you connected to school right now? If no: What do you need to get reconnected to school? If yes, proceed:] What is school like for you? What feels challenging? What do you need to feel engaged, supported and successful in school? Do you feel your needs are being heard and addressed at school?

7. *Job Preparation for Young People:* **How** do you or other young people you know gain work experience? What types of job opportunities or what kinds of job preparation programs do you think would be a good fit for you? What kinds of job skills do you feel you need to succeed?

8. *Support to Manage Mental Health Issues:* It has been such a challenging year. What kinds of services would be helpful in supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing?

9. We're getting close to the end – just a couple more questions…
   When you think about your future, what kind of goals do you have for yourself? What would you like to achieve in the next 3-4 years? What kind of support services would help you achieve those goals?

10. *Barriers:* What would you say are the biggest barriers or roadblocks to you achieving your goals?

11. Looking ahead to the next 3-5 years, what's the most important/urgent thing the City should do to help children, youth, and families live healthy and successful lives?

12. [only if time permits] Civic Engagement: Do you feel your needs are heard, valued, and represented in the City? What can be done to improve your sense of being heard, valued, represented?

Conclusion

Thank you for being here today. We truly appreciate and deeply respect your time, perspectives, and ideas.

CNA Surveys and Intercept Interviews

Surveys were conducted city-wide from August 2021–December 2021 and offered in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Tagalog. Intercept interviews with parents and youth were deployed at three community events in the Mission District and the Bayview neighborhood. Key findings summarized in this briefing include data collected from the following survey and tabling efforts:

August 2021	Summer Together program evaluation	1,402 parent respondents
August 2021	Backpack Giveaways	135 parent respondents 95 youth respondents
September 2021	MOHCD & HOPE SF door-to-door surveying	373 parent respondents 140 youth respondents
October 2021	Children's Council CityKids Fair	81 parent respondents 20 intercept interviews
October 2021	Friendship House Dancing Feathers Powwow	49 parent respondents 22 youth respondents 36 intercept interviews
November 2021	Pop-Up Village	20 intercept interviews
November 2021	California Academy of Sciences	54 parent respondents

CNA Parent Surveys Demographics
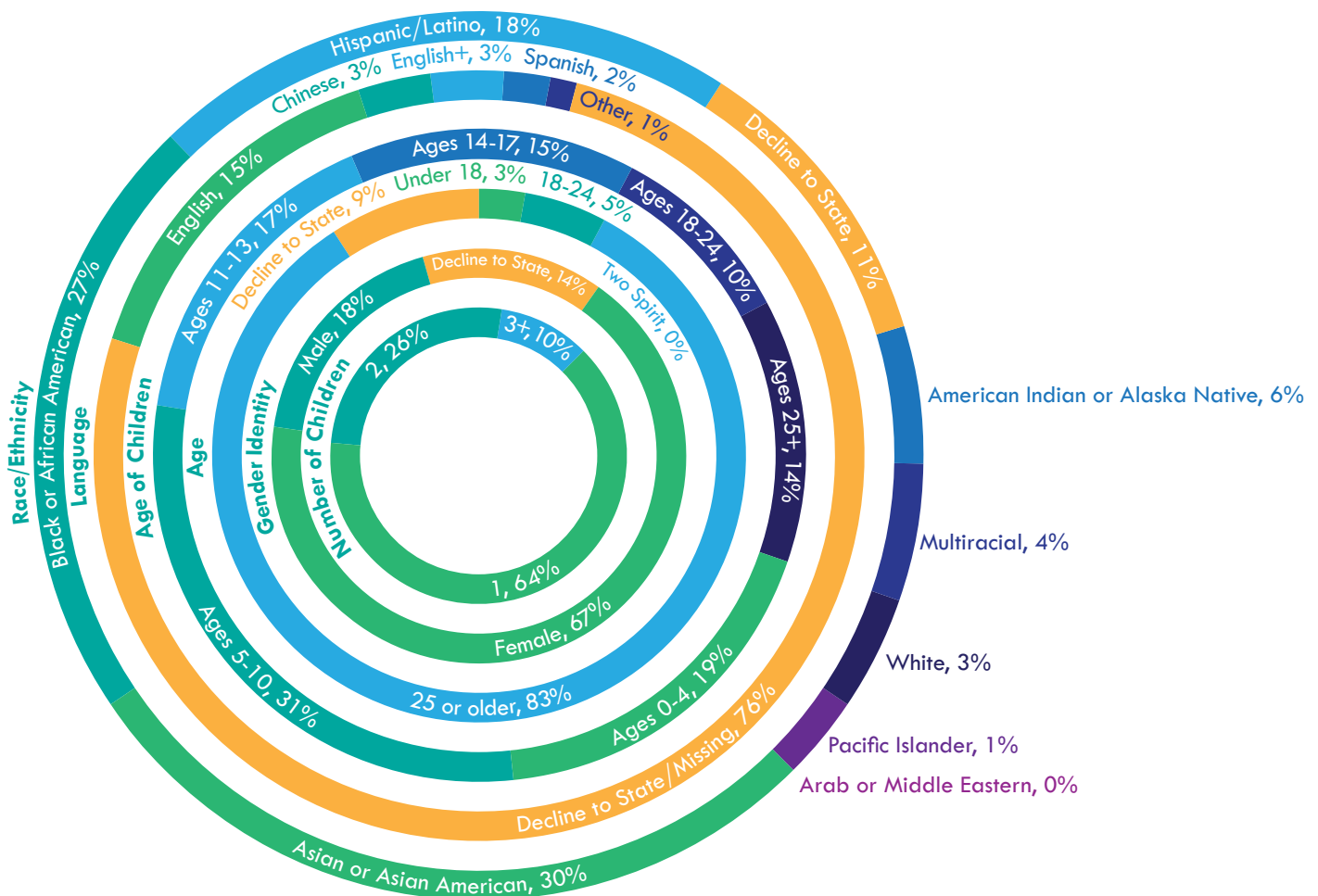
CNA Youth Surveys Demographics

Race/Ethnicity
- Black or African American, 27%
- Asian or Asian American, 30%
- American Indian or Alaska Native, 6%
- Multiracial, 4%
- White, 3%
- Pacific Islander, 1%
- Arab or Middle Eastern, 0%
- Hispanic/Latino, 18%
- Decline to State, 11%

Language
- Spanish, 8%
- Chinese, 17%
- English+, 8%
- Tigrinya, 0%
- Decline to State, 9%
- English, 39%

Age
- 25+, 8%
- 18-24, 14%
- 10 or younger, 11%
- 11-13, 25%
- 14-17, 33%

Gender Identity
- Male, 43%
- Decline to State, 10%
- Trans Male, 1%
- Genderqueer/Gender Non-binary, 0%
- Female, 46%
- Decline to State, 27%

CNA Parent/Caregiver Survey

Thank you for sharing your experiences and expertise as a San Francisco community member to help DCYF and other City departments make funding and programming decisions that will reflect your needs and interests better.

1. Do you have children in any of these age groups? (Please select all age groups that you have children in)

[ ] Ages 0-4 [ ] Ages 5-10 [ ] Ages 11-13 [ ] Ages 14-17 [ ] Ages 18-25 [ ] Ages 25+

2. Please tell us about the **basic needs** you have for your family right now:
   (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	N/A (I do not go to work)
I have stable, affordable housing				
I have a job that pays enough for my family's expenses				
I have access to healthy food				
I have access to health care				
I am managing paying rent/ utility/other bills just fine				
I have reliable transportation to get my child(ren) to/from school/ child care				
I have reliable transportation to get to/from work				

3. Please tell us more about your family's **basic needs** right now:

4. What **caregiving needs** do you have for your family members right now?
   (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	N/A (I don't have a child this age)
I am happy with the child care I have for my child aged 0-5				
My child care is affordable				
I have support for parenting stress or learning parenting skills				
I have academic support for my K-12 student				
I have the right school supplies for my K-12 child (including technology)				
My K-12 child has after-school enrichment opportunities				
My K-12 child has enrichment opportunities before the school day starts				
My high school student has access to college planning				
My child 18 years or older has access to the job training they need				
I have the care I need for aging dependent adults				

5. Please tell us more about your **caregiving needs** for your family members.

6. Tell us about your day-to-day experiences with **safety and wellness**: (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I have safe spaces in my neighborhood, such as a park to enjoy			
I feel safe from Covid in my community			
I feel safe from violence at home			
I feel safe from violence at my workplace			
I feel safe from violence in my neighborhood			
My child is mentally and emotionally healthy and strong (e.g., I have no concerns for my child's mental and emotional wellbeing)			
I have no concerns for my own wellbeing			

7. Please tell us more about the **safety and wellness** concerns you have for yourself or for your family.

8. What effect did **Covid-19** pandemic and year of **distance learning** have on your child? (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Large Negative Effect	Negative Effect	No Effect	Positive Effect	Large Positive Effect
Academic knowledge and skills					
Liking school					
Social relationships					
Emotional wellbeing					
Happiness					
Physical health					
Behavior at home					

9. What are you most **looking forward** to as your child(ren) returns to school?

10. Please indicate if you have any interest in information or support with any of the following. (Please select all that apply)

[ ] How to support a child with special needs

[ ] Family life with justice-involved family members

[ ] Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) kids/youth

[ ] Dual-language learning resources

[ ] Immigration issues

[ ] Healing from violence or other trauma

[ ] Navigating child protective services

[ ] Fostering children or youth

[ ] Managing behavioral health challenges

[ ] Employment and training programs

[ ] None of the above

11. What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)

( ) American Indian or Alaska Native   ( ) Pacific Islander

( ) Arab or Middle Eastern   ( ) White

( ) Asian or Asian American   ( ) Decline to State

( ) Black or African American   ( ) Not listed - Please write in:

( ) Hispanic/Latino   _____

( ) Multiracial

12. What language do you speak the most at home? _____

13. What is your gender?

( ) Female   ( ) Trans Male

( ) Gender non-binary   ( ) Decline to state

( ) Male   ( ) Not listed - Please write in:

( ) Trans Female   _____

14. What is your age? ( ) Under 18 ( ) 18-24 ( ) 25 or older

15. Do you currently work for a City-funded organization? ( ) Yes ( ) No

16. If yes, what programs/services does your organization provide?

17. What is your zip code?

18. If you would like to receive updates or alerts on future DCYF events and opportunities, please enter your email here:

CNA Youth Survey Instrument

Thank you for sharing your experiences and expertise as a San Francisco community member to help DCYF and other City departments make funding and programming decisions that will reflect your needs and interests better.

1. How do you feel about **returning to school** this year?

   (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I feel academically prepared to return to school			
I feel I will need extra one-on-one support from teachers			
I have the right school supplies (including technology)			
I will feel comfortable interacting with other kids at school			
I have something to do or someplace to go after school			
I need to be able to be at school before the school day starts			
My school will have after school programs I can participate in			
My school will have programs before the school day starts that I can participate in			

2. Please tell us more about returning to school this year.

3. Please tell us about **getting to school** this year.

   (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	N/A (I don't use this form of transport)
I have reliable transportation to get to school				
I feel safe on my walk to school				
I feel safe taking public transportation				
I feel safe from Covid while on public transportation				

4. Please tell us more about **getting to school** this year.

5. Do you worry about any of the following **Covid** issues when you return to school in **person**? (Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I am confident that my school will follow safety protocols such as masking and distancing			
I will have enough safety equipment for myself such as masks and hand sanitizer			
My school site will have enough safety equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer			

6. Please tell us more about the **Covid issues** when you return to school in person.

7. Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following **day-to-day experiences.** (Please indicate your response with "X")

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
I have enough food to eat everyday			
I feel mentally and emotionally healthy (e.g., I don't have any anxiety, loneliness, depression)			
My housing situation is stable and secure			
I have all my before-school needs taken care of			
I have all my after-school needs taken care of			
I feel confident that I can keep safe from Covid			
I feel safe from violence in my home			
I feel safe from violence at my school			
I feel safe from violence in my neighborhood			
My school will have programs before the school day starts that I can participate in			

8. Please tell us more about any other general concerns you might have right now.

9. When you think about returning to school in person, what are you **most looking forward to**?

10. How would you describe yourself? (Please select all that apply)

( ) American Indian or Alaska Native   ( ) Pacific Islander
( ) Arab or Middle Eastern   ( ) White
( ) Asian or Asian American   ( ) Decline to State
( ) Black or African American   ( ) Not listed - Please write in:
( ) Hispanic/Latino
( ) Multiracial

_____

11. What language do you speak the most at home? _____

12. What is your gender?

( ) Female   ( ) Trans Male
( ) Gender non-binary   ( ) Decline to state
( ) Male   ( ) Not listed - Please write in:
( ) Trans Female   _____

13. What is your age? ( ) 10 or younger ( ) 11-13 ( ) 14-17 ( ) 18-24 ( ) 25 or older

14. If you would like to receive updates or alerts on future DCYF events and opportunities, please enter your email here:

SFUSD MS/HS Activities Survey

Activities & Programs

Fill in squares in each column based on the instructions below. You may fill in more than one square in each row.

	Outside of class, I currently participate in: (Select all that apply)	During the school year and outside of class, I would like to participate in: (Pick up to four)	During the summer and outside of class, I would like to participate in: (Pick up to four)
Academic support (tutoring, homework help)			
Art, music, theater, or dance			
Career prep (interview skills, resume writing)			
College prep			
Community service & volunteering			
Multicultural appreciation			
Religious and/or spiritual activities			
Jobs & internships			
Leadership			
Mentorship			
Outdoor recreation			
Sports & athletics			
Science & tech (coding, robotics)			

For the programs and activities listed above... (Select one)
❑ I already know how to access ALL of them
❑ I already know how to access MOST of them
❑ I already know how to access SOME of them
❑ I do not know how to access any of them

How do you learn about activities and programs? (Select all that apply.)
- ❑ Friends
- ❑ School staff
- ❑ Parents/guardians
- ❑ Online
- ❑ School poster or flier
- ❑ I don't know

How do you learn about activities and programs? (Select all that apply.)
- ❑ Friends
- ❑ School staff
- ❑ Parents/guardians
- ❑ Online
- ❑ School poster or flier
- ❑ I don't know

Health and Supportive Services

How interested are you in health education/supportive services in the following areas? (All services would be confidential and take place outside of class.) Fill in one square for each row.

	Not at all interested	A little interested	Interested	Very Interested
Peer conflict (bullying, sexual harassment, racism)				
Physical health				
Immigration transition				
Depression & anxiety				
Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs				
Family relationships				
Meditation & mindfulness				
Nutrition				
Peer relations (at school and online)				
Birth control and pregnancy options				
Sexual health				
Sexual orientation				
Stress management				
Suicide & self-harm				
Community violence				

For services that might help with the issues listed above... (Select one)
- ❑ I already know how to access services for ALL of the issues
- ❑ I already know how to access services for MOST of the issues
- ❑ I already know how to access services for SOME of the issues
- ❑ I do not know how to access services for any of the issues

How do you learn about health and supportive services? (Select all that apply.)
- ❑ Friends
- ❑ School staff
- ❑ Parents/guardians

❑ Online
❑ School poster or flier
❑ I don't know

Accessing Activities & Services

Thinking about the activities, programs and services listed on this survey...

	…if you have participated in any, where and when did you participate? (select all that apply)	…if you would like to participate in any, where and when would you prefer? (select all that apply)
AT SCHOOL, BEFORE		
DURING		
AFTER		
NOT AT SCHOOL, BEFORE		
DURING		
AFTER		

What grade are you in?
❑ 6
❑ 7
❑ 8

What is your sex?
❑ Female
❑ Male
❑ Non-binary

Are you Hispanic/Latino?
❑ Yes
❑ No

The above part of the question is about ethnicity, not race. No matter what you selected above, please continue to answer the following by selecting one or more of the options below to indicate what you consider your race(s) to be.

❑ American Indian or Alaska Native
❑ Asian Indian
❑ Black or African American
❑ Cambodian
❑ Chinese
❑ Filipino
❑ Guamanian
❑ Hawaiian
❑ Hmong
❑ Japanese
❑ Korean
❑ Laotian
❑ Middle Eastern/Arabic
❑ Other Asian
❑ Other Pacific Islander
❑ Samoan
❑ Tahitian
❑ Vietnamese
❑ White
❑ Not Specified

What is the zip code of your home address? _____

What school do you currently attend? _____

YPAR Surveys

Youth Participatory Action Research or YPAR, is an "an innovative approach to positive youth and community development based in social justice principles in which young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them." In the summer and fall of 2021, DCYF partnered with leaders from YPAR organizations, the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), and the San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI). From June to July 2021, PEP and YLI implemented a YPAR project with 58 youth participating in the Summer Together program. From September to December 2021, SFBI, YLI, and PEP conducted interviews with teachers and students, and collected 1,193 surveys from middle and high school aged youth focused on student experiences in their school and community. Key findings from YPAR conducted in the fall and summer are included throughout this report. YPAR is a year-long project that will culminate into a youth-driven action plan.

Data Collected:

Summer	YLI / PEP	58 H.S. (9th-12th grade) survey respondents + small group discussions
Fall/Winter	SFBI	875 M.S. (6th-9th grade) survey respondents
	YLI	260 H.S. (9th-12th grade) survey respondents
	PEP	Qualitative data on teacher perspectives collected through discussions linked here.

Participating School Sites:

PEP	SFBI	YLI
• Balboa High School	• Bessie Carmichael	• Mission High School
• Burton High School	• Buena Vista/Horace Mann	• George Washington High School
	• Paul Revere	• Lincoln High School
	• AP Giannini	• John O'Connell High School
	• Aptos	• Lowell High School
	• Everett	
	• Francisco	
	• Herbert Hoover	
	• James Denman	
	• James Lick	
	• Marina	
	• Martin Luther King	
	• Presidio	
	• Roosevelt	
	• Visitacion Valley	
	• Willie Brown	

YPAR Survey Demographics

Grade of YLI and SFBI Survey Respondents

Grade	Count
12th	62
11th	78
10th	62
9th	58
8th	188
7th	269
6th	383
Teacher	23
Other/N/A	11
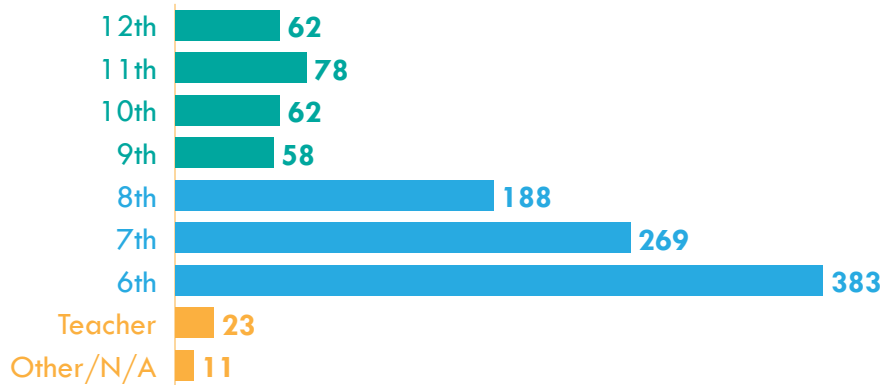
Race/Ethnicity of YLI Survey Respondents (Grades 9th-12th)

Race/Ethnicity	Count
Asian	116
White	45
Hispanic/Latinx	29
N/A	27
Multiracial	27
African American/Black	6
Filipina/o	5
Indian	3
European	1
Russian	1
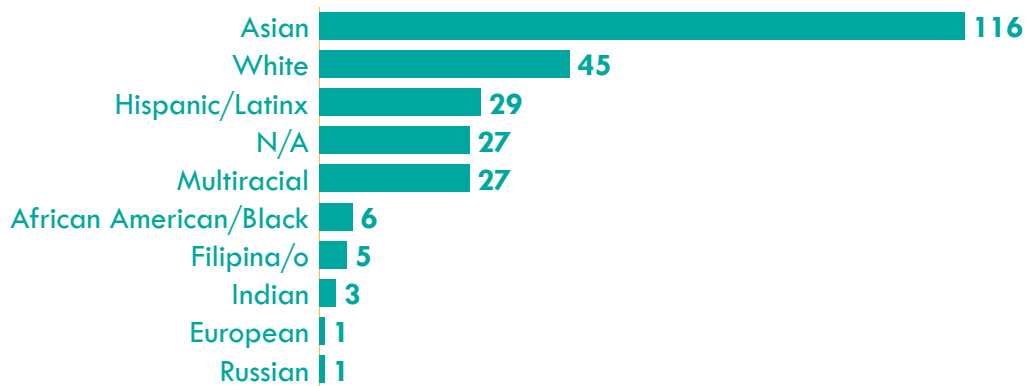
Race/Ethnicity of SFBI Survey Respondents (Grades 6th-9th)

Race/Ethnicity	Count
Asian	310
Hispanic/Latinx	207
Multiracial	88
Filipino/a	56
White	40
African American/Black	38
Middle Eastern/Arab	9
Pacific Islander	3
African	3
American Indian/Native American	2
N/A	118
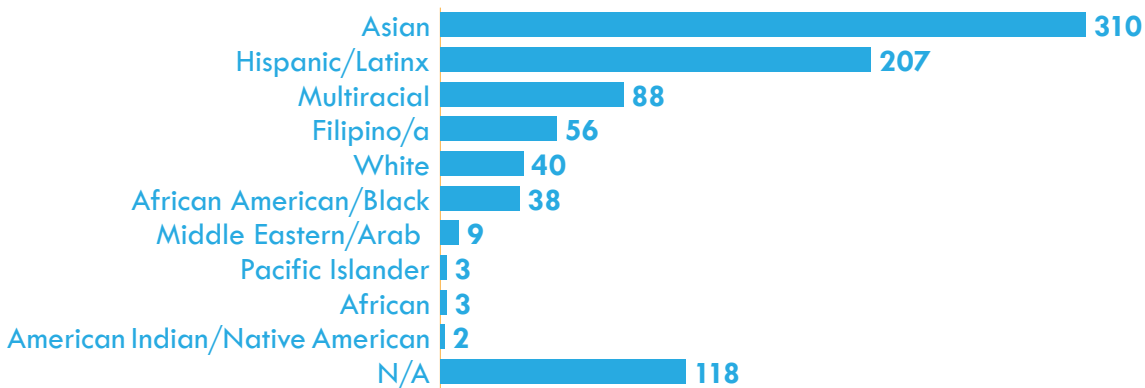
YPAR Survey Respondents Identifying as LGBTQQA+

	YLI	SFBI
Yes	83	67
Questioning	19	42
No	147	225
N/A	11	10
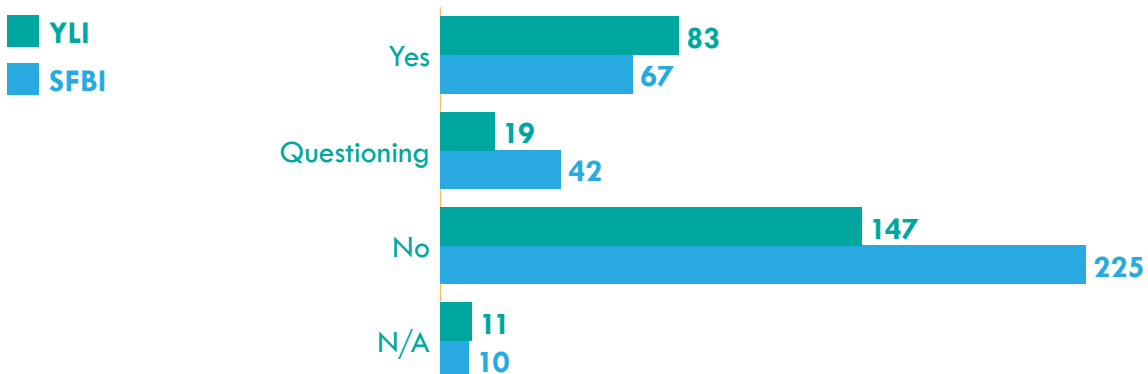
Neighborhoods of YLI and SFBI Survey Respondents

Neighborhood	Count
N/A and Not Sure	308
Sunset	113
Mission	86
Bayview/Hunter's Point	67
Outer Mission/Excelsior	66
Outside of San Francisco	52
Ingleside/Monterrey/Ocenview	51
Richmond	49
North Beach/Chinatown/Russian Hill/ Nob Hill	40
SOMA	37
Tenderloin	36
Portola	29
Visitacion Valley/Crocker Amazon	29
Glen Park/Twin Peaks	17
Outer Sunset	17
Bernal Heights	16
Hayes Valley/Alamo Square/Haight	16
Mission Bay	14
Fillmore/Western Addition	12
Civic Center/Downtown	11
Noe Valley/Castro/Diamond Heights	9
Park Merced/Lake Merced	9
Inner Sunset	9
Marina	6
Potrero	6
Inner Richmond	4
Outer Richmond	4
Presidio	4
West Portal	4
Treasure Island	4
Pacific Heights	3
Financial District	2
Cole Valley	1
Unhoused	1
Lakeshore	1
Laurel Heights	1
Parkside	1
Seacliff	1

Fall YLI Survey Template:

1. Looking at this Emotion Wheel, what are three feelings that came up for you the most during distance learning? Why?

   _____

2. I felt confident about the transition from distance learnng to in-person learning.
   ❑ Agree
   ❑ Neutral
   ❑ Disagree

3. My teachers showed empathy towards me during distance learning.
   ❑ Agree
   ❑ Neutral
   ❑ Disagree

4. How was your emotional stability during distance learning?
   (On a scale of 1-5, 1 being stable and 5 unstable)

5. I received good communication from my school during distance learning.
   ❑ Agree
   ❑ Neutral
   ❑ Disagree

6. I had at least one person to talk to when I needed support during distance learning.
❑ Agree
❑ Neutral
❑ Disagree

7. What effects has the pandemic had on your mental health? _____

8. Has your housing stability changed during the pandemic? (Yes/No)

9. If so, please explain, if you are comfortable enough: _____

10. What are potential resources you or your family need? (Check all that apply)
❑ Access to food
❑ Access to transportation
❑ Childcare
❑ Counselors
❑ Housing Support
❑ None

11. How do you feel the return to in-person learning has gone? _____

12. I have someone I can talk to about my needs now.
❑ Agree
❑ Neutral
❑ Disagree

13. I feel comfortable with the new bell schedule.
❑ Agree
❑ Neutral
❑ Disagree
❑ I don't know the new bell schedule

14. What support do you need now that you've returned to in-person learning?
_____

15. What advice do you have for teachers about in-person learning?
_____

16. What advice do you have for counselors about in-person learning?
_____

17. What advice do you have for school administrators about in-person learning?
_____

18. Any questions or comments? Is there anything we missed? _____

Fall SFBI Survey:

1. Rate your level of safety in the following spaces: [School Community]
❑ Safe in all spaces
❑ Safe in most spaces
❑ Safe only in specific places
❑ Not safe anywhere

2. Rate your level of safety in the following spaces: [Home Community]
❑ Safe in all spaces
❑ Safe in most spaces
❑ Safe only in specific places
❑ Not safe anywhere

3. What issues worry you the most in your school community? _____

4. What issues worry you the most in your home community? _____

5. Do you feel supported by the adults at school?
    (On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not supported and 5 very supported)

6. Do you feel supported by your classmates at school?
    (On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not supported and 5 very supported)

7. What do you think are the biggest problems affecting your school community?

    _____

8. What do you think are the biggest problems affecting your home community?

    _____

9. If you or someone you know has been bullied, do you know an adult you can report it to?
    ❑ Yes
    ❑ Maybe
    ❑ No

10. Do you have access to a counselor or a therapist at your school?
    ❑ Yes
    ❑ Maybe
    ❑ No
    ❑ I don't know

11. Would you visit a counselor or therapist if you needed their support?
    ❑ Yes
    ❑ Maybe
    ❑ No

12. What are some positive things that you see going on in your school or home community? _____

13. If you could change one thing at your school, what would it be? _____

14. Are there opportunities in your school community to make positive change?
    (Check all that apply)
    ❑ Yes, clubs
    ❑ Yes, student leadership roles
    ❑ Yes, student government
    ❑ Yes, other opportunities
    ❑ No
    ❑ I'm not sure

15. Do you have space and time to take care of yourself?
    (On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not at all and 5 being absolutely)

16. Is school a good learning environment?
    ❑ Strongly Agree
    ❑ Agree
    ❑ Neutral
    ❑ Disagree
    ❑ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B: RACE & ETHNICITY DATA

DCYF is deeply committed to equity. We recognize that we have a role in dismantling the systems of oppression that impact the communities we serve. Understanding and highlighting the experiences of different racial and ethnic groups in the City are key to this role. Race and ethnicity are social categories that identify groups that share common characteristics, such as culture, ancestry, and history. While race and ethnicity are widely referenced in society, definitions and use of these terms vary. When an individual is asked to provide information about their race or ethnicity, their response may differ depending on the time, context, and types of responses permitted. We felt it was important to acknowledge and explain our choice of categories for race and ethnicity in this report. We recognize that by identifying and naming groups, we may in certain instances be masking or excluding the experiences of groups subsumed within broader categories or not represented in our narrative. This appendix describes the categories used in this report and provides brief estimates of the sizes of more detailed racial and ethnic groups.

The City's Office of Racial Equity, a division of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, is currently leading conversations about guidance and standards for City departments to collect and report information on race and ethnicity. DCYF is an active participant in these discussions. However, given that conversations are ongoing at this time, DCYF moved forward to identify the categories to reference in this report. We welcome feedback on our approach to inform how we and other City departments may improve our collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data.

Categories & Terminology

Race and ethnicity are social constructs that are informed by contemporary society and history. The ways in which individuals identify themselves vary based on their experiences, and their personal identities may not align with the labels ascribed to them by society. Additionally, categories and terminology shift over time. The U.S. Census Bureau, the federal agency responsible for collecting quality data about the nation's people and economy, has gathered data on race and ethnicity for decades, and its approach has evolved over time. The current approach follows guidelines adopted in 1997 by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, which state:

> The revised standards will have five minimum categories for data on race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. There will be two categories for data on ethnicity: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."[261]

The U.S. Census Bureau's approach informs how many public agencies and private organizations collect and report data on race and ethnicity and has significant implications on how populations are counted and understood. For example, following this approach, individuals who identify Hispanic or Latino as their ethnicity are often counted as Hispanic or Latino regardless of how they identify their race. This may lead to undercounts of individuals who would otherwise identify as Multiracial.* There are active public debates to improve the collection of race and ethnicity data. For example, since the 1980s, advocates have raised concerns about existing federal guidance that categorizes people in the U.S. with origins from Middle Eastern and North African countries as White.[262]

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*The 2020 Decennial Census included new write-in options and additional response coding, which help to address this issue. For more information, see: nytimes.com/2021/08/13/us/census-multiracial-identity.html

The terms used to represent racial and ethnic categories have also evolved over time alongside changes in society. In recent years, the term "Latinx" has gained increasing usage as individuals seek to promote gender-inclusive identities. However, scholarly articles suggest adoption of the Latinx label varies greatly by political ideology, immigrant status, and birth cohort.[263] Additionally, concerns have been raised about the term being a form of "linguistic imperialism" that imposes "U.S. ideals upon a language in a way that does not grammatically or orally correspond with it."[264] We acknowledge that by selecting terms to represent racial and ethnic groups in this report we engage in these active conversations.

Our choices reflect a balance among our desire and intention to be comprehensive and inclusive, the data available to us for reporting, our analysis of the experiences of different populations in the City, and the terms we see used in practice by San Francisco youth. Figure 57 displays the categories referenced in this report where data is available.

Figure 57. Race/Ethnicity Categories

- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Multiracial
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

We acknowledge that our categories are broad and that grouping diverse communities together may in some cases mask their different experiences. When disaggregated data is available and our analysis has identified the importance of highlighting this information, we describe the experiences of more detailed racial and ethnic subgroups. For example, we recognize that our "Asian" category includes an array of communities with different cultures and histories. We strive to provide more disaggregated information where data is available to describe the varying experiences of subgroups included in the Asian category, such as Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese children, youth, TAY, and families in the City.

Our choices also reflect a compromise between how the data was collected and our intention to be inclusive and to represent the communities of San Francisco. We understand the importance of providing visibility to communities and giving voice to their stories and experiences. Approaches to capture data do not always include information for all racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, information on small populations may not be available or reliable. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey is based on an annual sample of roughly one in 40 households. Estimates related to small populations are generally not reliable due to large sampling error. We see this with estimates related to American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander communities in San Francisco, which often have large margins of error as these populations comprise than one percent of the population.

Population Estimates

In this section we provide detailed population estimates based on analysis of 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files. In addition to asking questions about race and ethnicity, the ACS asks a separate question about "ancestry or ethnic origin." We examined this data to generate estimates of the sizes of detailed racial and ethnic groups in San Francisco. Caution should be exercised in referencing and interpreting the data in the following tables. Some estimates presented may be unreliable due to large margins of error. However, our aim in providing this information is to provide visibility to different populations in San Francisco and a starting point for understanding communities that may be small but face significant needs.

Table 58 below provides a crosstabulation of the City's population by race/ethnicity and age group.*

Figure 58. San Francisco Population by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25+	Total
African American/Black	1,943	4,581	4,247	32,682	43,453
American Indian/Alaska Native	138#	183#	170#	1,219#	1,710
Asian	8,581	23,023	21,617	242,847	296,068
Hispanic/Latinx	8,619	18,398	12,066	93,730	132,813
Middle Eastern/North African	913#	1,141#	1,250#	10,496	13,800
Multiracial	6,646	10,134	3,678	23,642	44,100
Other	166#	510#	252#	3,293#	4,221#
Pacific Islander	55#	534#	367#	1,906	2,862
White	12,293	19,543	17,258	286,430	335,524
Total	**39,354**	**78,047**	**60,905**	**696,245**	**874,551**

#*Caution, estimate may be unreliable due to large margin of error.*

Table 59 below presents detailed estimates of racial and ethnic subgroups nested within the above categories. Not all subgroups are represented, as subgroup estimates with large margins of error are omitted.† Additionally, the subgroup estimates shown are those associated with records indicating a single subgroup rather than multiple subgroups. For example, individuals that identified as Japanese alone are counted as "Japanese," and individuals that identified as both Japanese and Filipino are not counted in the "Japanese" nor the "Filipino" subgroup below.

PUMS records were coded to form mutually exclusive categories. Records with ethnicity identified as Hispanic or Latino are reported as "Hispanic/Latinx", regardless of race and ancestry responses. Records with two or more race options selected are reported as "Multiracial". Except for records already coded as Hispanic/Latinx or Multiracial, records with ancestry and ethnic origin responses indicating Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as Algeria, Egypt, Iran, and Lebanon, are reported as "Middle Eastern/North African," regardless of race responses. All other records are reported according to race responses.

†*Subgroups with population estimates with coefficients of variation larger than 50 are omitted. In these cases, the margin of error is close to the size of the estimate. Absence of a subgroup from the list does not necessarily mean the population is small. Alternative estimation approaches based on additional ACS data beyond race, ethnicity, and ancestry (e.g., place of birth, language spoken at home) may yield larger estimates.*

Figure 59. San Francisco Population Subgroups by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25+	Total
African American/Black	**1,943**	**4,581**	**4,247**	**32,682**	**43,453**
Eritrean					597*
Ethiopian					866*
Jamaican					612*
Nigerian					598*
American Indian/Alaska Native	**138***	**183***	**170***	**1,219***	**1,710**
Cherokee					145*
Asian	**8,581**	**23,023**	**21,617**	**242,847**	**296,068**
Asian Indian	790*	1,413*	2,149*	17,645	21,997
Bangladeshi					108*
Burmese					542*
Cambodian					1,036*
Chinese, except Taiwanese	4,864	14,527	12,655	148,993	181,039
Filipino	470*	2,459	2,309	29,413	34,651
Indonesian					669*
Japanese	134*	427*	344*	8,604	9,509
Korean	461*	578*	977*	10,423	12,439
Laotian					500*
Malaysian					309*
Mongolian					540*
Nepali					541*
Pakistani					1,061*
Sri Lankan					269*
Taiwanese	51*	138*	273*	2,678	3,140
Thai					1,748*
Vietnamese	280*	1,139*	1,310*	12,901	15,630
Hispanic/Latinx	**8,619**	**18,398**	**12,066**	**93,730**	**132,813**
Argentinean					1,234*
Bolivian					373*
Chilean					789*
Colombian					2,150*
Costa Rican					460*
Cuban		250*	142*	1,877	2,269
Dominican					413*
Ecuadorian					868*
Guatemalan	587*	881*	513*	3,820	5,801
Honduran					2,754*
Mexican	4,277	9,808	7,385	44,843	66,313
Nicaraguan	534*	1,066*	555*	6,349	8,504
Panamanian					601*
Peruvian	402*	304*	214*	3,476	4,396

Caution, estimate may be unreliable due to large margin of error.

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25+	Total
Puerto Rican	281*	473*	317*	4,163	5,234
Salvadoran	1,320*	2,485	1,120	12,427	17,352
Spaniard	74*	274*	501*	2,608	3,457
Venezuelan					1,044*
Middle Eastern/North African	**913***	**1,141***	**1,250***	**10,496**	**13,800**
Arab					144*
Armenian					1,515*
Egyptian					358*
Iranian					1,731*
Israeli					228*
Lebanese					553*
Palestinian					477*
Syrian					131*
Turkish					1,103*
Multiracial	**6,646**	**10,134**	**3,678**	**23,642**	**44,100**
African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native					300*
African American/Black, Asian					1,945*
African American/Black, Pacific Islander					239*
African American/Black, White	810*	1,303*	661*	2,590	5,364
American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian					154*
American Indian/Alaska Native, White	65*	147*	317*	1,867	2,396
Asian, Other					907*
Asian, Pacific Islander					1,373*
Asian, White	5,208	5,957	1,929*	11,761	24,855
Other, White					1,924*
Pacific Islander, White					1,135*
Three or More Races					3,049*
Other	**166***	**510***	**252***	**3,293***	**4,221***
Brazilian					406*
Pacific Islander	**55***	**534***	**367***	**1,906**	**2,862**
Chamorro					398*
Native Hawaiian					342*
Samoan					1,091*
White	**12,293**	**19,543**	**17,258**	**286,430**	**335,524**
Arabic					590*
Australian					500*
Austrian					462*
Basque					183*

Caution, estimate may be unreliable due to large margin of error.

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25+	Total
Belgian					762*
Belorussian					304*
Brazilian					458*
British	157*	40*	93*	2,862	3,152
Bulgarian					239*
Canadian					939*
Croatian					671*
Czech					509*
Czechoslovakian					145*
Danish					499*
Dutch					1,752*
English	42*	202*	480*	7,886	8,610
Finnish					290*
French	159*	308*	105*	3,576	4,148
French Canadian					1,144*
German	132*	121*	599*	10,414	11,266
Greek					1,945*
Hungarian					1,105*
Irish	527*	560*	570*	16,038	17,695
Irish Scotch					930*
Italian	60*	163*	387*	11,039	11,649
Latvian					146*
Lithuanian					327*
Mexican					185*
Norwegian		38*	228*	1,405	1,671
Polish		133*	104*	2,662	2,899
Portuguese					1,067*
Romanian					284*
Russian	62*	194*	338*	5,652	6,246
Scandinavian					944*
Scotch Irish			14*	1,101	1,115
Scottish	26*	32*	52*	2,201	2,311
Serbian					231*
Sicilian					256*
Slovak					151*
South African					104*
Spanish					238*
Swedish					1,409*
Swiss					528*
Ukrainian					3,324*
Welsh					260*

Caution, estimate may be unreliable due to large margin of error.

The previous tables presented mutually exclusive groups and subgroups. These tables may understate the size of certain populations, as some individuals counted under the "Multiracial" category may not identify as such. Table 60 below provides an alternative view by removing the "Multiracial" category and presenting non-mutually exclusive categories where individuals are counted in multiple cells. Put another way, summing the Total column will not yield an estimate of the City's overall population because individuals are double counted. We present this view to establish an upper bound estimate for the population that may identify with each race/ethnicity group.

Figure 60. San Francisco Population by Race/Ethnicity and Age, Duplicated Count

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-17	Ages 18-24	Ages 25+	Total
African American/Black	3,873	8,144	5,559	39,763	57,339
American Indian/Alaska Native	451*	1,297	1,097	7,357	10,202
Asian	15,050	32,426	24,705	262,689	334,870
Hispanic/Latinx	8,619	18,398	12,066	93,730	132,813
Middle Eastern/North African	1,108*	1,452*	1,467*	12,224	16,251
Other	5,169	12,761	8,126	61,738	87,794
Pacific Islander	243*	1,471	710*	4,832	7,256
White	23,682	36,544	26,655	358,303	445,184
Total	**39,354**	**78,047**	**60,905**	**696,245**	**874,551**

Caution, estimate may be unreliable due to large margin of error.

The size of all racial/ethnic groups, except for Hispanic/Latinx, increases using this approach.† Notably, the estimate for the American Indian/Alaska Native population increases by nearly a factor of six, from 1,710 to 10,202. This suggests that there are several thousand individuals in the City who have American Indian/Alaska Native ancestry and identify with a racial group other than American Indian/Alaska Native. Additionally, the size of the "Other" population increases from 4,221 to 87,794 using this alternative approach. This increase is associated with many Hispanic/Latinx respondents to the ACS identifying Hispanic or Latino as their ethnicity and "Other" as their race.

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†*The Hispanic/Latinx estimate did not increase because responses indicating Hispanic or Latino as an ethnicity were initially reported as Hispanic/Latinx regardless of race and ancestry responses.*

APPENDIX C: POVERTY INDICATORS

Poverty at its most simple definition is understood as a lack of resources to meet one's basic needs. Income alone provides an incomplete picture of poverty. In San Francisco, an individual earning $100,000 a year may be able to meet their material needs. But a family of four living on the same income may have trouble paying for basic expenses, such as childcare, food, housing, and transportation. For this reason, measures of poverty generally consider household size and composition in addition to income.

Alternative measures exist to assess the extent of poverty in a population and determine eligibility for government assistance programs. We reviewed three commonly referenced indicators: (1) the Federal Poverty Level, (2) the Area Median Income, and (3) the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Data associated with each of these indicators is discussed at various points in this report. In this section, we provide technical information on each measure.

Federal Poverty Level

The U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates of the population in poverty by establishing poverty thresholds, commonly referred to as the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). These thresholds are dollar amounts that vary by family size and number of children. Families with incomes below the FPL for their size and composition are considered to be in poverty.

Figure 61. Federal Poverty Level Thresholds

	1 adult, 1 child	2 adults, 2 children
100% FPL	$18,677	$27,479
200% FPL	$37,354	$54,958
300% FPL	$56,031	$82,437
400% FPL	$74,708	$109,916
500% FPL	$93,385	$137,395

Figure 61 shows the FPL for two types of families. In 2021, the FPL for a family of four with two children is approximately $27,500.* For a high cost of living area such as San Francisco, a multiple of the FPL, such as 300% of the FPL (three times the FPL), is typically used to understand the extent of poverty across the population. FPL is also used by government agencies to assess eligibility for public benefit programs, such as Medi-Cal (income below 138% of the FPL) and CalFresh (income below 200% of the FPL).†

Area Median Income

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets income limits that determine eligibility for federally funded housing assistance programs. These income limits are generally referred to as the Area Median Income (AMI), as HUD calculates the limits based on estimates of the median family income for each metropolitan area and non-metropolitan county. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) describes 0-15% of AMI as "Acutely Low Income," 15-30% of AMI

For other family types, see: census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html

†*Note that in assessing eligibility for public benefit programs, poverty "guidelines" rather than "thresholds" are used. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issues federal poverty guidelines each year. The guidelines are a simplification of the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty thresholds, which are used primarily for statistical purposes. For more information, see aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines.*

as "Extremely Low Income," 30-50% of AMI as "Very Low Income", 50-80% of AMI as "Lower Income", and 80-120% of AMI as "Moderate Income."

Figure 62. Area Median Income Thresholds

	1 adult, 1 child	2 adults, 2 children
Acutely Low Income	$17,950	$22,450
Extremely Low Income	$43,850	$54,800
Very Low Income	$73,100	$91,350
Lower Income	$117,100	$146,350
Median Income	$119,700	$149,600
Moderate Income	$143,600	$179,500

HUD estimates the median family income for San Francisco to be $149,600 in 2021. Figure 62 above provides the income limits for San Francisco using HCD's descriptive categories for two types of families.* In San Francisco, the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) uses AMI to determine eligibility for housing assistance services, such as its Below Market Rate Ownership programs.

Self-Sufficiency Standard

The Center for Women's Welfare at the University of Washington describes the Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS) as "a budget-based, living wage measure that defines the real cost of living for working families at a minimally adequate level."[265] The SSS was launched in 1996 by the Insight Center and takes into account family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs of basic goods and services, such as childcare, healthcare, housing, food, utilities, and transportation. The tool used to look-up the SSS is also referred to as the Family Needs Calculator.

Figure 63. Self-Sufficiency Standard Thresholds

Monthly Costs	1 adult, 1 child (preschool)	2 adults, 2 children (preschool and school age)
Rent	$3,353	$3,353
Utilities	$88	$88
Childcare	$1,945	$3,293
Healthcare	$776	$855
Food	$620	$1,260
Transportation	$98	$196
Miscellaneous	$688	$905
Taxes	$2,692	$3252
Child Care Tax Credit	-$50	-$100
Child Tax Credit	-$167	-$333
Earned Income Tax Credit	$0	$0
Self-Sufficiency Standard		
Monthly Wage	$10,043	$12,769
Annual Wage	$120,519	$153,227

HUD adjusts its income limit calculations for families of different sizes and areas with high housing costs. For example, although "Very Low Income" is described as 30-50% of AMI, the established income limit differs from the arithmetic calculation of 50% times $149,600 due to HUD's adjustments. For more information, see huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html.

Figure 63 above provides an accounting of the SSS for two types of families.[266] The figure shows that the SSS considers taxes and tax credits in addition to the costs of basic goods and services.

Discussion

The three different measures of poverty—FPL, AMI, and SSS—result in slightly different estimates of the population in poverty in San Francisco. This is not surprising as the three measures consider different factors. Figure 64 shows how the thresholds for identifying families in poverty vary across the three indicators.

Figure 64. FPL, AMI, and SSS Poverty Thresholds by Family Type
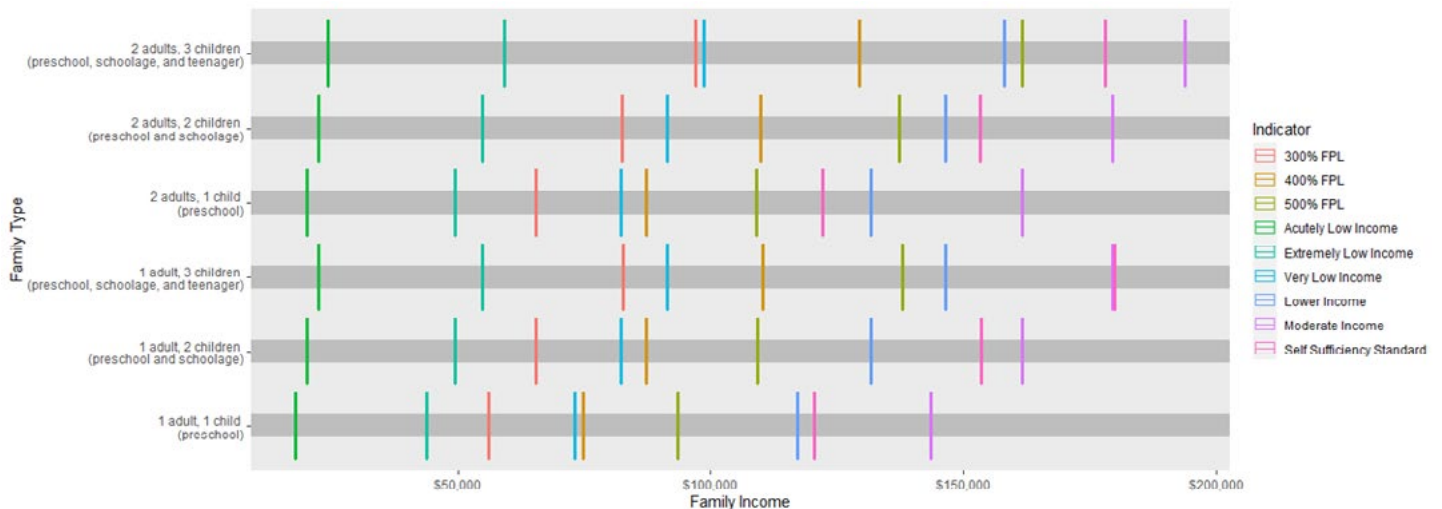
In our 2016 CNA, we identified 300% of the FPL as a measure of poverty. Figure 65 demonstrates that 300% of the FPL often falls between HCD's thresholds for Extremely Low Income and Very Low Income, which suggests that this indicator may understate the extent of poverty in San Francisco. Notably, with one exception in the figure above, 400% and even 500% of the FPL also fall within HCD's Lower Income range.

The shortcomings of FPL as an indicator of poverty are well-known.* The varying costs of basic goods and services across the country do not factor into the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty thresholds. As the AMI and SSS are grounded in local data, these measures may provide better indicators of poverty. However, they rely on the availability of detailed information related to family income and composition to generate estimates. Crosstabulations of this information for small geographic regions, such as census tracts, neighborhoods, or zip codes, are not readily available from the U.S. Census Bureau.† Given that we aim to understand and describe low-income neighborhoods within San Francisco, as an alternative, we reference the U.S. Census Bureau's estimates of the ratio of family income to the FPL in this report. These estimates are readily available for regions as small as census block groups.

Administrative data managed by the San Francisco Human Services Agency, which administers CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and other public benefit programs, provide another source of valuable information on low-income individuals and families in San Francisco.

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*For example, see: latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-09-24/federal-poverty-level-us-families.

†The U.S. Census Bureau makes available Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files for researchers to generate estimates for counties, states, and other large geographic regions. Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) are the most detailed geographic areas for which estimates can be generated; however, these do not correspond to neighborhoods, zip codes, or local boundaries. See: census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html.

The department's Vulnerable Populations Data Book showed roughly 166,000 public benefit recipients in September 2020, representing approximately 22% of the population ages 18 and over in the City.‡ The Data Book provides detailed demographic information on the population most in need in the City and under 200% of the FPL. However, the discussion above demonstrates there may be individuals and families in need but ineligible for assistance. In this report, we aim to provide greater visibility to this population by presenting additional estimates of individuals and families below 400% and 500% of the FPL.

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‡*The income eligibility threshold for CalFresh is 200% FPL. For more information, see:*
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AUTHORS

- Aumijo Gomes, Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives
- Jasmin Serim, Senior Program Specialist
- Jill Berkin, Senior Research, Evaluation, and Data Analyst
- Joanna Rosales, Senior Program Specialist
- Maya Lawton,* Research Assistant
- Ryan Sapinoso,* Senior Research, Evaluation, and Data Analyst
- Simone Combs, City and Community Partnerships, Principal Analyst
- Veronica Chew,* Senior Analyst
- Walter Abrazaldo,* Manager of Data and Analytics

ADVISORS, CONTRIBUTORS & DESIGNERS

- Celeste Middleton,* Senior Data Analyst
- Colin Kimzey, Community Engagement and Communications Specialist
- Devin Corrigan, SFUSD Supervisor of Analytics/ City Liaison
- Dori Caminong, Community Engagement and Communications Lead
- Emily Davis, Senior Community Engagement and Communications Specialist
- Eva Love, San Francisco Fellow
- Michelle Gallarza, San Francisco Fellow
- Mitzi Chavez, Research, Evaluation, and Data Analyst
- Monica Flores, Senior Program Specialist
- Rebecca Corteza, Executive Assistant
- Sarah Duffy,* Manager of Data and Evaluation
- Xavier Morales, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager
- DCYF Program Specialists

CITY/COUNTY/SCHOOL PARTNERS

- California Academy of Sciences
- City College of San Francisco (CCSF)
- Department of Public Health (DPH)
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- Human Rights Commission (HRC)
- Human Services Agency (HSA)

*CNA Project Leads

- Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)
- Office of Civic Engagement and Immigration Affairs (OCEIA)
- Office of Early Care and Education (OECE) + First 5
- Office of the District Attorney
- Recreation and Park Department
- San Francisco Adult Probation Department (APD)
- San Francisco District Attorney
- San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (JPD)
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- San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)—Research, Planning, and Assessment Department
- Service Providers Working Group (SPWG)
- University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

- American Institutes for Research
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COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- American Indian Cultural District (AICD)
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- Black to the Future
- Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco (BGCSF)
- Buena Vista Child Care (BVCC)
- Causa Justa::Just Cause
- Children's Council
- Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC)
- City Impact
- Community Youth Center (CYC)
- Compass Family Services
- Family Connections Center
- Filipino Community Center
- Friendship House
- GLIDE
- Huckleberry Youth Programs
- Ingleside Community Center
- Jamestown Community Center

- Japanese Community Youth Council
- Larkin Street Youth Services
- Latino Task Force
- Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center
- Legal Services for Children
- Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- New Door Ventures
- Pin@y Educational Partnerships
- PODER
- Pomeroy
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- Safe and Sound
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- Young Community Developers (YCD)
- Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC)
- Youth Leadership Institute (YLI)
- Youth Speaks

Endnotes

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