



Making San Francisco a great place to grow up



[2016 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT]

A Snapshot of San Francisco's Children and Families

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CREATING A CITY WHERE CHILDREN THRIVE

San Francisco's prosperity depends on our ability to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunity to thrive. When children grow up healthy, obtain a quality education, and live in safe, supportive homes and communities, they have a solid foundation for a productive future.



WHEN CHILDREN THRIVE, CITIES BENEFIT

In 1991, voters passed the Children’s Amendment to the City Charter, making San Francisco the first city in the country to guarantee a dedicated funding stream to children each year. This landmark legislation set aside a portion of annual property taxes for the Children’s Fund to be used exclusively for services that benefit children from birth to age 17. In 2000, residents overwhelmingly voted to renew the Children’s Fund, and then again in 2014 with an extended 25-year tenure.

Renamed the Children and Families First Initiative, the property tax earmark will increase to four cents for each \$100 of assessed property value by fiscal year 2018-2019. Additionally, the initiative expanded the use of the Children’s Fund to provide services to disconnected transitional age youth (TAY) aged 18 to 24 years, and renamed the fund the Children and Youth Fund to reflect this expanded service population.

The Children and Families First Initiative also created the Our Children, Our Families (OCOF) Council, a coordinating body co-chaired by the mayor and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) superintendent to align City, School District, and community efforts to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The Children and Families First Initiative established a five-year planning cycle for spending from the Children and Youth Fund. To fulfill the planning requirements of the Children and Youth Fund, the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) engages young people, parents, and service providers across the city in a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every five years. The Children and Families First Initiative stipulates that the CNA shall 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” and requires that DCYF conduct an equity analysis as part of the process to identify community needs.

The results of the CNA inform the development of the Services Allocation Plan, which will inform strategic funding priorities. This CNA is structured around five areas of service needs in San Francisco and highlights the disparities between populations across the city along these five interconnected areas of the OCOF Outcomes Framework:

1. **Economic Security & Housing Stability:** This describes how San Francisco fares on measures of poverty and self-sufficiency and examines the extent to which city residents are stably housed.
2. **Safe & Nurturing Environments:** This examines perceptions of neighborhood safety, crime, and violence among city residents.
3. **Physical, Emotional, & Mental Health:** This describes disparities across the city on dimensions of health that also intersect with other challenges raised across other sections of the CNA.
4. **21st Century Learning Environment:** This describes early care and education (ECE) settings and examines disparities around school readiness and K-12 school outcomes.
5. **Post-Secondary Education & Career Paths:** Successful transition into adulthood is the ultimate targeted outcome of all these efforts, and this section examines challenges associated with this transition.



ECONOMIC SECURITY & HOUSING STABILITY

San Francisco is a vibrant city with a booming economy and strong prospects for continued long-term economic prosperity. However, this success has come at a price, as the cost of living increasingly squeezes out working families, and San Francisco's once diverse population is becoming split in two by a widening income gap between the city's highest and lowest earners.

FAMILIES STRUGGLE TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT

We make just enough money to support our family, but too much to get any help, so we struggle every day, month-to-month. – Chinese immigrant mother

The cost of living in the city has been steadily rising over the years, making it increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet. Approximately 38% of households with children in San Francisco are living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS), a benchmark that measures the minimal level of income needed to support very basic household needs without public or private assistance. In 2014, the SSS for a two-parent household with two small children in San Francisco was \$92,914.¹

Moreover, 27% of San Francisco households fall below the SSS, but above the federal poverty level of \$23,850 for a family of four, thereby limiting their ability to qualify for some critical support services and aid. While there are some programs such as Medi-Cal and Free Muni for Youth available for individuals and families that fall into this gap, eligibility criteria vary and many needs remain unmet.

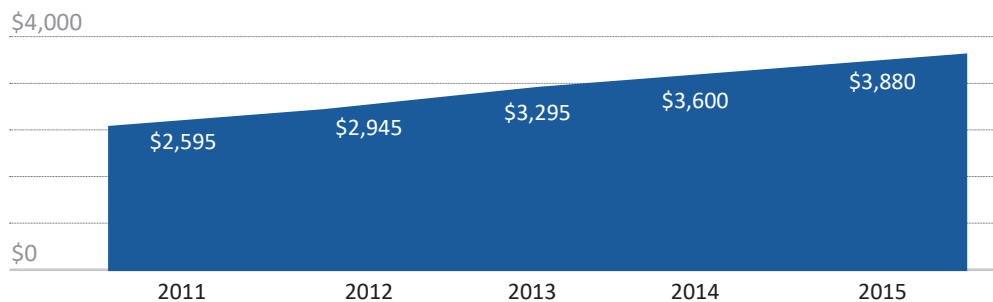
HOUSING IN THE CITY IS INCREASINGLY UNAFFORDABLE

Public housing units are falling apart, [are] moldy, and housing managers don't always pay attention to requests to fix things. There aren't enough low-income housing spots for people who need them. – Samoan youth

Housing in the city is increasingly unaffordable, particularly for families. The rapidly rising cost of housing in San Francisco has caused families to leave the city in increasing numbers year after year.² Several programs and initiatives, such as those supported through the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, HOPE SF, and the Human Services Agency provide critical services and resources to ameliorate the city's housing crisis. Yet, the cost of housing in San Francisco continues to rise.

The median cost of rent in August of 2015 was \$3,880 per month (\$2,722 for a studio, \$3,452 for a one- bedroom, \$4,400 for a two-bedroom apartment),³ which is prohibitive for low- and moderate-wage workers (those earning less than \$18/hour) who comprise 36% of the labor market.

Figure 1. Median monthly rent by year in San Francisco, 2011-2015



Source: Priceonomics. (2015). *The San Francisco Rent Explosion Part III*. Retrieved from <https://priceonomics.com/the-san-francisco-rent-explosion-part-iii/>

Moreover, communities of color have higher housing burdens, as they are more likely to spend 30% or more of their household income on housing, and this is particularly true for renters.⁴ Due to high housing costs, many San Franciscans have no choice but to live in overcrowded (defined as more than one person living in each habitable room in a unit) conditions. The 2012 Census reported that 20,520 of all San Francisco households were overcrowded.⁵ While this represents just 6% of the city’s population, the incidence of residents doubling up is likely severely underreported, given the difficulty of collecting reliable data. In 2014, 699 families with minor children were counted as living in single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels across the city in the SRO census, which represents a 55% increase since 2001.⁶

HOMELESSNESS PERSISTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

There are so many homeless. I have to walk by homeless people every day on my way to school.
 – Arab youth

In 2015, there were nearly 2,100 homeless or marginally housed children in SFUSD, which represents a staggering 110% increase since 2007.⁷ Across the city, a total of 7,539 individuals were counted on the streets and in shelters in the 2015 point-in-time count in San Francisco; 6,686 were adults, and 853 were unaccompanied children and TAY (aged 18-24), representing a 7% increase in the homeless population since 2005.⁸

SAFE & NUTURING ENVIRONMENTS

Crime and low levels of perceived safety challenge social cohesion and pave the way for more crime. Neighborhoods with the highest concentration of low-income households often experience the highest rates of crime and residents in these neighborhoods feel their safety most compromised.

SAFETY IS A BIG CONCERN FOR SOME RESIDENTS

My neighborhood is not safe. There is “No more Chinese” written on the wall in my neighborhood. My keys got stolen from me on the bus. It’s not safe. – Chinese immigrant parent

In the 2012-2014 period, South of Market, the Tenderloin, McLaren Park, the Financial District, the Mission, and Bayview-Hunters Point experienced the highest rates of crime in the city.⁹ In 2015, 17% of all Juvenile Probation Department referrals and 15% of all Juvenile Hall bookings were in Bayview (the next-highest bookings were in Visitacion Valley and the Inner Mission, which each had 8%).¹⁰ In addition, 17% of all adult probationers lived in Bayview.¹¹

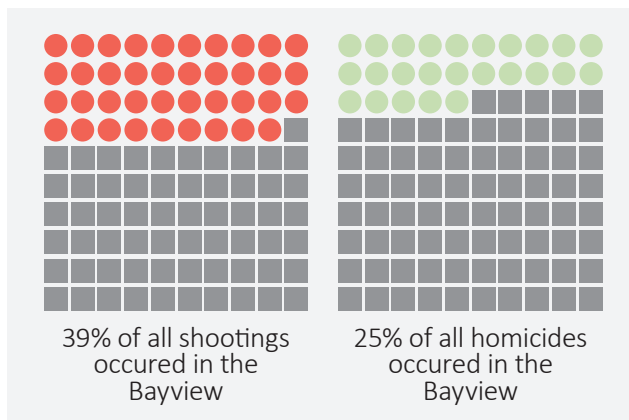
Residents of the Bayview and South of Market neighborhoods report feeling less safe than residents in other parts of the city. Low-income residents, transgender residents, and residents of color feel less safe than other residents in San Francisco.¹² Moreover, trust in law enforcement and government to address safety concerns is low, particularly where the need for such services is greatest; some residents in the Bayview neighborhood fear that the community will ultimately become gentrified and residents will be displaced.¹³

VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE IN SAN FRANCISCO

Because there is so much violence, many are afraid to come out and get help with housing, education, employment, and everything else. Dealing with immediate issues of neighborhood violence keeps them from being able to get additional help. There needs to be more trust. – Deputy Probation Officer, San Francisco Adult Probation Department

Violent crime has increased in San Francisco over the past five years, including a 14% increase in robberies, a 13% increase in aggravated assault, and a 4% increase in homicides.¹⁴ In 2012, 39% of all shootings and 25% of homicides occurred in the Bayview, and in 2014 the child maltreatment rate in Bayview was close to three times the city average.¹⁵

Figure 2. Violence in the Bayview neighborhood as compared to San Francisco as a whole, 2012



Source: City and County of San Francisco District Attorney's Office and Vera Institute of Justice. (2015). Bayview Safer Together Implementation Plan.

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Physical, emotional, and mental health provide the basic foundation for an individual and community to thrive. Discrimination, poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma, and involvement in the criminal justice and/or foster care system are major barriers to a fundamental state of health and well-being, and are issues that San Francisco's most disenfranchised residents grapple with daily. The stress and trauma experienced by many of the city's families and youth are often unaddressed and take a toll on physical, emotional, and mental health.

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR HAVE GREATER PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

I want to go on bike rides and walks in my neighborhood, but it's not safe. I want to learn yoga and Zumba and have physical activities, but I don't know where to go and cannot afford to pay for them.
– Mexican immigrant parent

Communities of color face significant health challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area, with over 68% of the region's African Americans and Latinos identified as obese or overweight.¹⁶ This preventable health risk is exacerbated by poor access to healthy foods. Food deserts, defined as low-income census tracts where a substantial number or share of residents have little to no access to a supermarket or large grocery store, is a condition predominantly experienced by people of color. In San Francisco, the Tenderloin, Bayview, and Treasure Island neighborhoods are considered "food deserts".¹⁷

Residents of SROs, most of whom are people of color and immigrants, experience significant health disparities. Of SRO residents, 84% are at high nutritional risk,¹⁸ and children in SROs are at increased risk for nutritional deficiencies due to the lack of kitchen facilities.¹⁹ Moreover, 48% of families living in SROs report their health being negatively impacted by living in an SRO. Of those, 63% complained of respiratory problems, 27% of insufficient light, 15% of infections due to unsanitary conditions, and 13% of sleep deprivation due to noise.²⁰

STRESS AND TRAUMA AMONG THE CITY'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE OFTEN UNADDRESSED

A lot of people come to San Francisco, but the city doesn't have enough services to support everyone. There are not enough therapeutic services... The waiting list for therapy is 5-6 months...
– Transgender TAY

San Francisco is home to a substantial lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) population, thousands of homeless residents, tens of thousands living in poverty, and to immigrants from all over the world. With such diversity represented among its residents, the vulnerabilities, traumas, and mental health needs in San Francisco are also diverse.

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH



An estimated one in 10 children and youth under age 18 in the city has had three or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs, including conflict in the family, violence, abuse, discrimination, and extreme poverty, have been found to negatively impact healthy development and lifelong well-being.²¹

Some children and youth are at particular risk for poor outcomes, including children of incarcerated parents, youth in foster care, children that are homeless or under-housed, undocumented youth, and LGBTQ youth. In the state of California, students in foster care are five times more likely to be classified with an emotional disturbance than other students.²² Among SFUSD high school students surveyed

in the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), females were more likely than males to have considered suicide, and LGBTQ students were more likely to have considered it, as compared to heterosexual students.²³ Middle school students are at even greater risk.²⁴

A 2015 survey of incarcerated adults in the San Francisco County jail system found that 59% are parents to a total of approximately 1,110 children in San Francisco. A parent's incarceration increases a child's risk of living in poverty and/or instability that could lead to perpetuating cycles of system involvement.²⁵

Among the sizable homeless population in the city, mental health needs are particularly acute. The most frequently reported health condition among homeless survey respondents was drug or alcohol abuse (37%), followed by psychiatric or emotional conditions (35%). These issues also pose significant barriers to homeless individuals' ability to obtain and maintain employment.²⁶



21ST CENTURY LEARNING & EDUCATION

Quality early care and education imparts benefits to the children who receive it by preparing them for kindergarten entry, and setting them up for academic success and social-emotional growth. Many children and youth must make great strides to catch up to their peers, and this gap often begins before children even enter kindergarten.

ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IS LIMITED

I want to work. I need to work. But I cannot find affordable childcare. Waiting lists [for subsidized childcare] are two years long! – Chinese immigrant parent

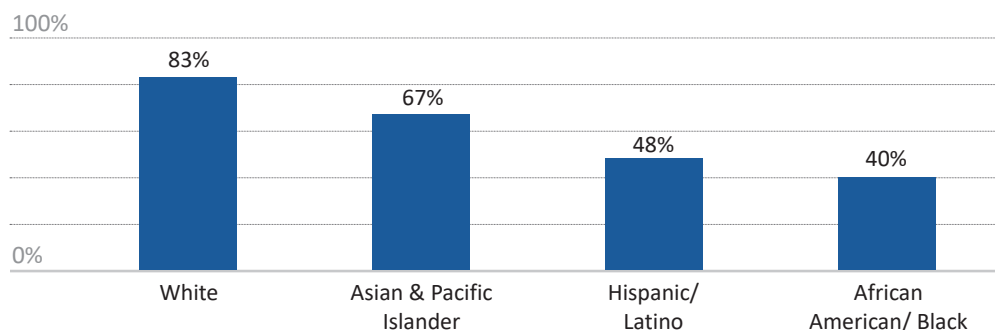
Preschool enrollment in the city is on the rise. In 2013, 71% of three- to five-year-olds in San Francisco attended preschool, compared to only 48% in California overall.²⁷ Despite the fact that licensed childcare center capacity grew by 1,147 slots between 2006 and 2012, as of May 2015, 3,370 eligible children aged 0-5 remain on a waiting list for subsidized early care and education.²⁸

MANY CHILDREN AND YOUTH MUST MAKE GREAT STRIDES TO CATCH UP TO THEIR PEERS

Children need to see themselves reflected in their school curriculum favorably and authentically. – Parent Advisory Council member comment

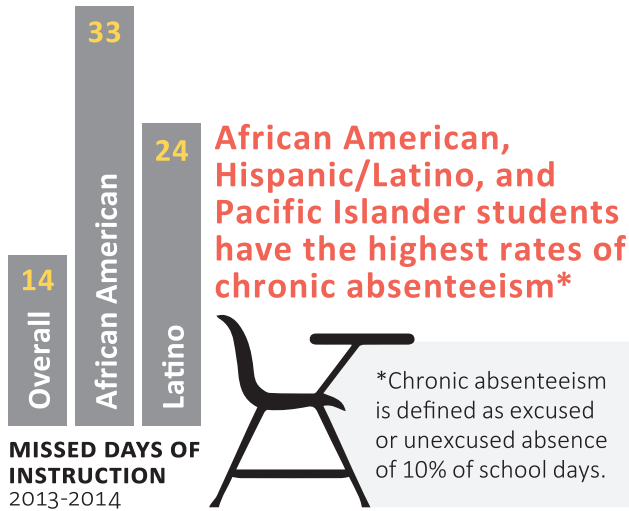
Sixty-two percent of the entering SFUSD kindergarten class in 2015 demonstrated the readiness skills in motor development, self-regulation, social-emotional development, and kindergarten academics needed to be academically successful by the third grade.²⁹ However, readiness levels varied substantially by race/ethnicity.

Figure 3. Proportion of SFUSD students ready for kindergarten by race, 2015



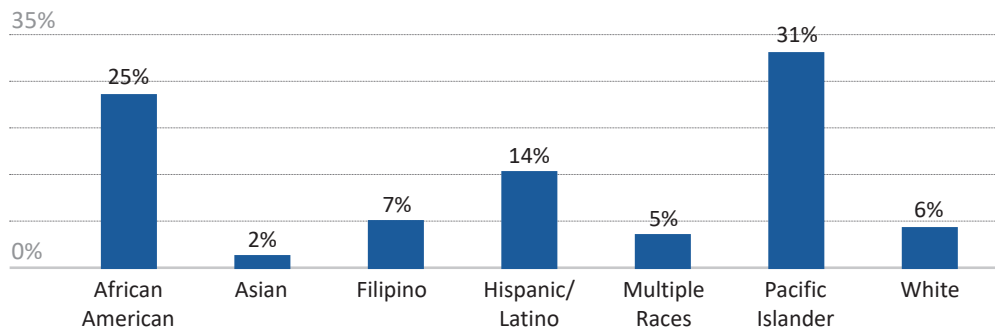
Source: Applied Survey Research. (2016). *School Readiness in SFUSD, 2015-16*.

Time spent in school, or *instructional time*, is critical to learning and a big contributor to academic success. In San Francisco, instructional time varies considerably by race/ethnicity. In 2013-2014, African American high school students missed an average of 33 days of instruction, while Latino students missed almost 24 days, compared to the overall average of 14 missed days.³⁰ African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander students have the highest rates of chronic absenteeism and also achieve much lower proficiency rates on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress than other students.³¹



There are persistent disparities by racial/ethnic groups along a range of academic outcomes. African American and Latino students are less likely to be on track for graduation than White students, and only 26% of English Language Learners (ELs) in SFUSD were on track to graduate by spring of their junior year in 2013, compared with 68% of non-EL students.³²

Figure 4. Percentage of SFUSD students chronically absent 2014-2015, by race/ethnicity



Source: CORE Districts. (2015). Research File, 2014-15. Retrieved from <http://coredistricts.org/core-index/download-index-file/> Note: No data available for American Indian/Alaska Native.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & CAREER PATHS

While there are multiple pathways to successful transition into adulthood, the consequences of not completing necessary education or not landing gainful employment can be detrimental and long-term. Particularly vulnerable are young adults in the juvenile justice, foster care, and/or special education systems, as they tend to drop out of school and out of work, leaving them ineligible for services that facilitate the transition to adulthood.³³ Youth who are neither enrolled in school nor working thus find themselves veering off the path to self-sufficiency and are at risk for multiple poor outcomes going into adulthood.

DISADVANTAGED YOUTH CONTINUE TO LAG BEHIND THEIR PEERS IN EDUCATION

Immigrant youth in a community input session highlighted the need for programming that supports their entire family in understanding pathways to higher education.

Individuals who complete a college degree tend to earn a higher income, enjoy greater economic stability and upward mobility, and are able to more fully participate in their communities. However, less than half (47%) of SFUSD graduates from the class of 2008 earned a college degree within six years; 23% of African Americans, 27% of Latino, and 31% of ELs completed a bachelor's degree in six years.³⁴



SOME YOUTH FACE MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS INTO ADULTHOOD

I'd like to hear and learn from someone from our community who "made it." I want to know how one of us actually did it and made a pathway out to be successful. – Samoan youth

It is estimated that roughly 10% of 16- to 24-year-olds in San Francisco are at elevated risk of not transitioning successfully into adulthood.³⁵ The city's most vulnerable and marginalized youth are at greatest risk of finding themselves "disconnected": out of school and unemployed with few skills. For instance, an estimated 5,000 undocumented 14- to 24-year-olds have little to no legal avenues for employment.³⁶ For transitional age males, being neither enrolled in school nor working increases their risk of delinquent behavior and/or illegal activities. Females in this group are at increased risk of becoming dependent on welfare.³⁷

In January 2015, 1,441 youth aged 18-24 were counted in shelters and living on the streets, and the city's homeless youth are much less prepared for successful transition into adulthood than their counterparts who are not homeless. Forty percent of homeless TAY surveyed had not completed high school or obtained a General Education Development (GED) certificate, compared to 8% of the general 18- to 24-year-old population in San Francisco.³⁸

Given that the majority (75%) of 18- to 24-year-olds on Adult Probation were unemployed at the time of their arrest,³⁹ it becomes clear that career paths for TAY can be a critical antidote to system involvement. Indeed, young adults in the juvenile justice, foster care, and special education systems are particularly vulnerable, since they tend to drop out of school and the workforce at an early age.⁴⁰



NEXT STEPS

San Francisco made a unique commitment to our children, youth and families by dedicating funding to vital services through the Children & Youth Fund. DCYF is dedicated to drawing upon the input from the community collected for the CNA as we develop a strategic allocation of the Fund through our Services Allocation Plan (SAP). The SAP will seek to create an equitable distribution of funds to address the needs identified through the CNA to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families experiencing the greatest disparities. The SAP will establish strategies to achieve clear and measurable results for the Fund. Upon completion of the SAP, a master Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued. Grants awarded from this process will start in Fiscal Year 2018-2019.



ENDNOTES

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THE TIGER SEED
RUTH KRAUSS
DICK KING-SMITH
ILLUSTRATED BY DICK KING-SMITH

When a tiger baby grows to a certain size, his parents try to find him a good home. But the tiger baby always finds a way to stay with his parents.

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