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CONTROLLER

July 31, 2019

Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor
Honorable Michael Feuer, City Attorney
Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council

Re: Room to Grow: A Framework for Youth Development in Los Angeles

Young people age 24 and under make up nearly one-third of the City's population. They are our future teachers, engineers, medical workers, public servants and entrepreneurs, but the road to success can be fraught with challenges and even peril. Too many Los Angeles youth live in poverty; thousands are homeless; some have been impacted by violence; and others are new to the country. Whatever difficulties they encounter in their formative years, scholarship on the topic shows that assisting youth in making purposeful connections with the community around them enriches their lives and influences their future.

The City needs to do more to help our youth mature into the leaders of tomorrow. While the City once had a youth strategy manager and a commission to coordinate youth initiatives, both were eliminated during the Great Recession, resulting in a highly decentralized approach. Although recent actions by the City Council have sought to rectify this, at present, there is no single department or commission dedicated to managing youth programs, nor is there a comprehensive plan to improve targeted services. This report discusses the hundreds of existing City-funded youth programs and proposes concrete steps the City can take to enhance their impact on the development of young Angelenos.

Twenty-six City departments reported having more than 160 youth-centered programs last year, spending $178 million. There are additional youth-centered expenditures not

necessarily reported as such — and the City's proprietary departments also have their own youth programming. However, each department operates independently, meaning there is not a single entity focused solely on youth development goals, overseeing spending on youth programs, or working to improve service equity and inclusion of at-risk and other populations. In addition, it is presently far too challenging for L.A. residents who seek youth programming information to find it. Program details are scattered on myriad department websites, limiting the impact of youth services and unnecessarily keeping residents in the dark about opportunities that may benefit them.

Framework for Success

The accompanying report outlines specific steps the City should take to ensure that its youth services meet the needs of young people and their families in every community:

- Designate a department or other official body to be responsible for overseeing youth programs and initiatives.
- Use data to identify where City youth programming is falling short.
- Develop a master plan that establishes citywide goals and guides decision-making.
- Partner with outside stakeholders to maximize the number of Angelenos benefiting from youth services.
- Create a reporting platform to allow policymakers and the public to monitor the well-being of L.A.'s youth.

Franklin Roosevelt conveyed great wisdom on the primacy of investing in youth development when he said nearly 80 years ago, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." By adopting the framework laid out in this report, the City can reshape the way it serves young residents and better prepare them for the rest of their lives. Doing so will not only improve the next generation, but also strengthen Los Angeles. I urge City leaders to adopt these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

RON GALPERIN
L.A. Controller

Room to Grow:

A Framework for Youth Development in Los Angeles

RON GALPERIN
LA CONTROLLER

Room to Grow

A Framework for Youth Development in Los Angeles

Credit: Department of Recreation and Parks

Executive Summary

Approximately 1.3 million Angelenos – or nearly one-third of the City's population – are children, teens, and young adults who are 24 years old or younger. Our young people deserve access to resources that prepare them to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, and Los Angeles is home to world-class institutions offering many learning and development opportunities. Actively participating in safe and enriching programs can help improve self-confidence, increase academic achievement, and promote feelings of safety and belonging.

However, many young Angelenos face difficult circumstances that can make it challenging to take advantage of available learning and development opportunities. This report identifies and examines strategies which will help the City better invest in its youth.

Subject matter experts have identified several youth subpopulations – many of which overlap – that are most at risk of feeling isolated and falling behind:

- youth experiencing homelessness;
- members of low-income families;
- youth involved with child welfare or justice systems;
- youth exposed to violence;
- LGBTQ youth;
- immigrants; and

- English language learners.

Many of the City's youth fall into these categories. For example, 29.5% of young people age 17 and under in Los Angeles live below the federal poverty threshold. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority estimates that 5,670 children and young adults are experiencing homelessness in the City, and more than 120,000 Los Angeles Unified School District students are English language learners.

Data also shows how challenges that some young people face can be interrelated. For example, 62% of homeless youth and young adults in Los Angeles County report previous involvement in the justice system, while 31% report previous involvement in the child welfare system. **These statistics highlight how important it is for the City to provide all young people – regardless of their background and socioeconomic status – with targeted resources that can be used to improve youth outcomes.**

Youth programs and services offered by the City generally focus on providing avenues beyond the classroom for young people to continue to learn, explore, be physically active, and develop life and career skills. The types of services offered range from arts and culture programming at the Department of Cultural Affairs, to early literacy programs at the Los Angeles Public Library, to cadet programs at the Los Angeles Police Department. **The common thread is that the City's youth programs are typically administered by individual departments.**

Exploring science at one of the library's STEM events
Credit: Los Angeles Public Library

The City recently published the results of a survey that was initiated to take stock of its existing youth programs. **In all, 26 City departments reported that they offered 162 youth-related programs to Angelenos. Those departments reported that spending on City-administered and City-sponsored youth programs was an estimated $178 million in FY2018, including City funds and funding leveraged through grants and partnerships.**

The City's three proprietary departments (the Department of Water and Power, Port of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles World Airports) also offer youth services which provide access to learning opportunities in engineering, and the maritime and aviation industries. While this report does not focus on the youth activities administered by proprietary departments, their programs are an important component of the City's youth services portfolio. The proprietary departments reported that they offered a total of 36 youth programs in FY2018.

It should be noted that these figures represent estimates for youth-specific programs across the City, as self-reported by departments. However, City spending on youth programs is likely higher because departments did not necessarily report administration costs such as staffing, costs associated with the construction and maintenance of facilities that support youth activities, or certain materials costs like children's books at the library.

Regardless, the survey provides a snapshot of the City's current portfolio of youth programs and can be broken down into the following categories, each with its own mission and role.

Youth Programs Offered by the City

Programs promoting good health and physical activity	*Sports and aquatics programs* *Recreation activities* *Health education, outreach, and testing* *Summer lunch programs*
Programs promoting safety and stable youth environments	*Gang and violence intervention services* *Victim assistance programs* *School safety programs* *Supportive housing*
Programs promoting social well-being and community involvement	*Leadership and self-esteem development* *Youth councils* *Volunteering programs* *Community events and celebrations*
Programs supporting academic achievement and college readiness	*Early literacy programs* *Homework tutoring* *Arts education* *College application and testing preparation*
Programs supporting workforce readiness	*Professional skills training* *Career coaching and placement assistance* *Science, tech, engineering, and math activities* *Internship programs*

Although the City offers these programs, the lack of a citywide, youth-specific organizational framework creates several challenges that need to be resolved in order to ensure that high-quality services are available to all young Angelenos.

- **The City does not have a department or commission to serve as a strategy manager for youth programs**. There is no single entity tasked with carrying out critical initiatives

such as establishing citywide youth development goals, monitoring the City's youth programming outcomes, evaluating programming to the ensure efficient service delivery, and improving service equity and inclusion. In the past, citywide coordination and advocacy was the responsibility of the Commission for Children, Youth, and Their Families. However, this commission was eliminated in 2010.

- **The City does not have a comprehensive strategic or master plan to guide short- and long-term decisions about youth services planning, program development, and funding**. Strategic plans can provide a comprehensive vision, outline needs and available resources, and create a structured plan for implementing successful youth programming.

- **There is currently no single point of entry or information source for residents seeking youth programming information; residents must navigate multiple department websites or phone numbers.** The overall effectiveness of any program is limited if potential participants are unaware of available opportunities. For example, Los Angeles Public Library staff said that many students and parents do not know that they can use their library card to access online tutoring services for homework and SAT/ACT preparation.

In March 2019, the City Council instructed the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst to report on options for developing an Executive Task Force on Youth Development, and is exploring funding options for establishing an office that would be responsible for implementing a citywide youth strategy.

Policymakers need to determine how the City's youth framework should be structured. Although New York and San Francisco are different than Los Angeles because they are each a consolidated city-county, they provide important lessons. These jurisdictions each have an agency dedicated to youth services program management and rely on several initiatives such as comprehensive needs assessments, strategic investment plans, and annual reports to help make informed programming and funding decisions.

Regardless of how the City chooses to structure future youth initiatives, it will be vital that the youth strategy is data-driven, focused on achieving successful outcomes, and include a framework that enables continuous analysis and improvement. This report identifies steps the City should take as it evaluates the implementation its youth programs, and lays the foundation for a long term strategy for youth investment decisions. Those steps are listed below.

Step 1 – *Establish or designate a lead office or department to be responsible for youth initiatives,* including citywide youth development strategy, program coordination, and advocacy.

Step 2 – *Analyze demographic, wellness, and achievement data* to examine the specific needs of young Angelenos, and identify areas where programming is falling short of community needs and expectations.

Step 3 – *Develop a formal master plan* which establishes goals for the City, establishes an implementation plan to achieve those goals, and guides departments as they make investment and operational decisions.

Step 4 – *Establish outcome-based performance indicators* which measure the City's progress towards achieving goals, and emphasize both program utilization and program impact.

Step 5 – *Explore partnership opportunities and collaborate with key stakeholders* to improve programs and maximize the number of young Angelenos benefiting from youth services and opportunities.

Step 6 – *Develop a formal, consistent reporting platform* in the form of progress reports or report cards, to allow policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to monitor the well-being of young Angelenos over time. These reports will allow the City to assess the impact of investments, and should be used to make necessary updates to youth master plans.

Creating art at the Barnsdall Art Center
Credit: Department of Cultural Affairs

Conclusion

The City has an opportunity to transform how it provides services to its youth population. For nearly a decade, individual departments have provided programs without a comprehensive framework to establish goals, develop strategic plans, and measure performance. Prioritizing improvement in these areas would enable the City to:

- better understand emerging community needs and develop high-impact programs, especially for at-risk youth;
- determine whether existing programs are achieving intended outcomes; and
- ensure the City maximizes the value of funding dedicated to youth services.

The City should collaborate with partner agencies, community groups, and families to provide young people with the skills they need for success. With the right tools, all young Angelenos can accomplish great things.

Background

Approximately 1.3 million Angelenos – nearly one-third of the City's population – are 24 years old or younger.[1] Young people are essential members of our communities, and will play an integral role in ensuring Los Angeles remains a vibrant cultural and economic center.

The development of a young person, from childhood through young adulthood, is an ongoing process, and a variety of institutions play a role in ensuring residents obtain the life skills and competencies necessary to lead full, enriching lives. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the lead agency responsible for educating young people, and serves 600,000 students at more than 1,000 schools. The County of Los Angeles (LA County), through agencies such as the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Public Social Services, is the lead health and human services provider for young people within LA County. It provides support to eligible young people and families through the administration of nutrition, healthcare, and childcare assistance programs. LA County administers the foster care system, and seeks to protect children who are the victims of abuse and neglect.

Creating stop motion animation at the library
Credit: Los Angeles Public Library

The City's youth development role differs from LAUSD and LA County, and focuses on providing avenues beyond the classroom and child welfare system for young people to continue to learn, explore, be physically active, and develop life and career skills. The services offered by the City include youth sports and arts programs, public safety programs, summer lunch programs, and career preparation programs, among many others. As a public institution, the City can leverage its network of resources and staff to offer unique and engaging programs.

Given our shared future and the impact that young people will have on Los Angeles, it is critical that the City connect young Angelenos to enriching growth opportunities, which will in turn help them grow up to lead healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives as adults.

The Foundations for Youth Success

When a young person is engaged with their school, sports team, civic organization, or workplace, it can lead to improved self-confidence, improve their chances of academic success, protect against aggressive behavior, and promote feelings of safety and belonging.[2] Young people who are actively engaged are also more likely to become healthy, productive adults, while those who feel disconnected from their communities can face development struggles and are more susceptible to negative influences like gangs.

A teen summit at a local recreation center
Credit: Recreation and Parks Department

A study published in 2018 by the Social Science Research Council analyzed groups of young people over the course of 15 years and found that a young person who remains connected and engaged is more likely to experience professional, financial, and personal success when compared to their disconnected peers.

The adults considered to be connected as young people were 42% more likely to be employed, and earned about $31,000 more annually. They were also 45% more likely to own the home in which they lived, and 52% more likely to report being in good health.[3] This research demonstrates the importance of providing young people with access to programs that can have long-term, positive impacts.

While the youth development goals of cities vary based on the unique needs of the community, subject matter experts responsible for developing and managing youth programs have identified foundational youth program elements which, if achieved, will help young people get the most out of education and enrichment opportunities. A description of those foundational elements are described in the chart below.

Foundations for Youth Success[4]

Good Health	*Young people lead active lives and grow up healthy*
Safe and Secure Environment	*Young people are safe and secure in their homes and communities*
Social Well Being and Civic Engagement	*Young people are valued and nurtured by their families and communities, and have the opportunity to contribute to their communities in positive ways*
School Success	*Young people have access to enriching learning environments and are prepared to succeed in school*
Workforce Readiness	*Young people have access to training and work experience opportunities and are prepared to enter the workforce*

In addition to these foundational development areas, the needs of young people change as they grow older. For example, examining the needs of high school students preparing to enter the workforce or college is very different from exploring needs and interests of elementary school aged children learning basic life skills. As children and young adults develop, it is important they have the tools and skills that will allow them to first thrive in school, and later successfully transition to adulthood.

A Challenging Landscape for Some Young Angelenos

Los Angeles is home to world-class museums, universities, and leading research institutions in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. It is a global hub for the arts and media industries, and hosts some of the world's most innovative companies. However, not every young person can easily connect with this diverse landscape of opportunities.

Even though the City's economy has experienced healthy growth since the Great Recession, young people in low-income families often face difficult circumstances. For example, a teenager in a low-income household that is caring for family members, or earning income for their family, may be missing out on playing in a sports league, or unable to take advantage of college preparation and job training opportunities. These barriers can make achieving personal goals difficult, and increase the likelihood that a young person has difficulty connecting with school, work, or their community.

Young people who feel disconnected from their communities are of particular concern. Disconnected youth, sometimes referred to as "opportunity youth," are generally defined as teens and young adults up to the age of 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor employed. According to research by the USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation **there are approximately 73,000 disconnected young people aged 16-24 in the City of Los Angeles.**[5]

Several negative, long-term outcomes are associated with growing up disconnected, including extended periods of unemployment, falling into poverty, engaging in criminal behavior, substance abuse, and incarceration.[6] Given that disconnected youth are more likely to have difficulty supporting themselves, they can place financial strain on public institutions, when considering factors such as lost earnings, welfare costs, and medical costs.[7]

According to subject matter experts who have studied youth development and disconnected youth populations in Los Angeles, children and young adults falling into the following groups are most at risk of becoming disconnected, and face hardships that their peers may not.

Groups Most At Risk of Becoming Disconnected

Youth members of low-income families	*Young people living in low-income households can face barriers accessing extracurricular opportunities and resources because they often take on additional responsibilities such as childcare.*
Youth in the child welfare system	*Young people that are part of the child welfare system, which includes those in foster care, often experience multiple housing and education disruptions, and can lose important relationships with friends and family members.*
Youth experiencing homelessness	*Young people experiencing homelessness, whether alone or with their family, face serious life challenges. Many are focused on day-to-day safety and survival, which makes focusing on school or other activities exceedingly difficult.*
Youth exposed to violence	*Violence, whether it be fights, bullying, or gang-related, can traumatize children and young adults. Traumatic events can take a toll on physical and mental well-being.*
Justice-involved youth	*Many of the young people that come into contact with the juvenile or adult justice systems struggle academically, suffer from truancy issues, and struggle with emotional or behavioral problems.*
LGBTQ youth	*Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people can experience a host of negative experiences which can contribute to anxiety and depression. They can be stigmatized, face discrimination, be rejected by family and peers, and face violence.*
Youth who are immigrants or English learners	*Young people in immigrant families and those learning English as a second language, including young refugees, can experience significant stress and feelings of isolation. Academic achievement gaps also exist between English learners and their peers.*

Connecting Los Angeles' 1.3 million young people to learning opportunities, and keeping them engaged in school and extracurricular activities, improves their chances of successfully transitioning into the adult stages of life. This is especially true of the young people falling into one of these high-risk categories, or those facing other hardships.

Data from a variety of public agencies and research institutions, including the California Department of Education and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, show not only how many young people fall into some of these high-risk categories, but how the challenges they face can be interrelated.

The numbers behind some of Los Angeles' high-risk populations[8]

29.5%
Children (17 or younger) in Los Angeles **living below the federal poverty threshold**, compared to 20.8% statewide

76.7%
LAUSD's **high school graduation rate** in 2017, compared to 87.3% statewide

6.2%
LAUSD 9th graders **consider themselves gang members**

34,177
Young people **in LA County's child welfare system**, 21,046 of which were in out-of-home placement

5,670
The estimated number of **children and young adults experiencing homelessness in the City** on any given night

31%
Homeless youth and young adults in LA County **reporting previous involvement in the child welfare system**

62%
Homeless youth and young adults in LA County **reporting previous involvement in the justice system**

50.4%
LAUSD **5th graders with an unhealthy body composition, which can increase health risks**

123,579
LAUSD students **considered to be English learners**

These statistics highlight the need for the City to make smart investments in young people, especially those facing difficult circumstances. Developing programs is a critical first step; effectively connecting young Angelenos to those resources is just as important.

The City's Investments in Youth Programs

City departments offer a variety of programs and services to young people of all ages. In March 2019, the City Administrative Officer and Chief Legislative Analyst, at the direction of the City Council, completed and published the results of a comprehensive survey of City departments which collected information about the youth programs they offer, program costs, and sources of funding for those programs.
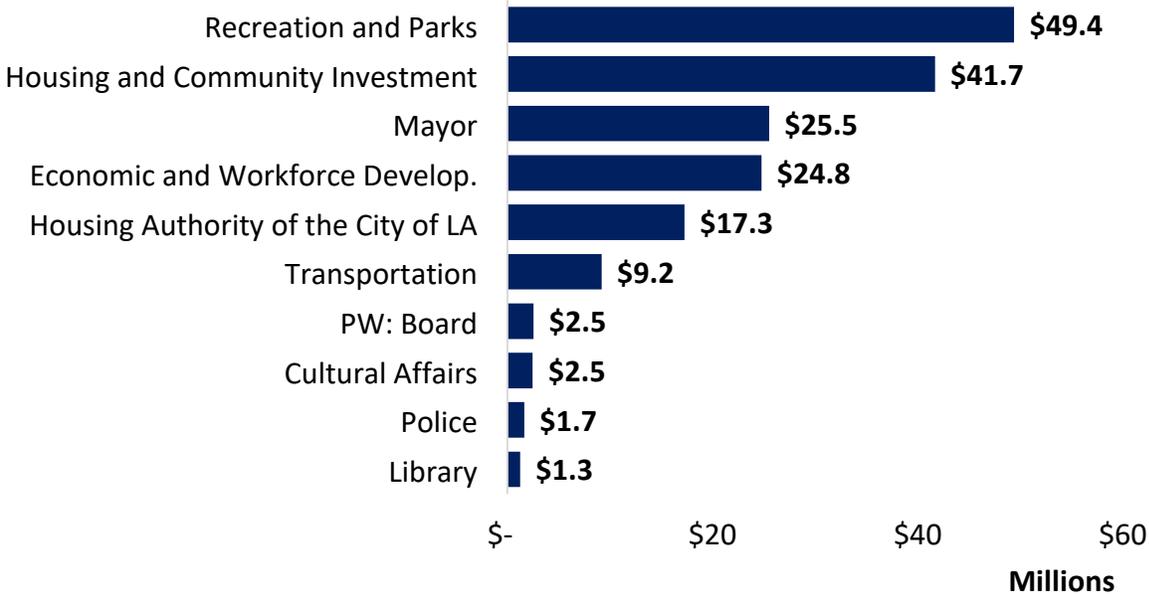
In all, 26 City departments reported that they offered 162 youth-related programs to Angelenos.[9] **Spending on these City-administered and City-sponsored youth programs totaled an estimated $178 million in FY2018, including City funds and funding leveraged through grants and partnerships.** Below are some examples of the types of opportunities available to young people.

Barnsdall Junior Arts Center

Offers arts instruction and facilities for youth aged 3-17 in fields such as drawing, painting, theatre, printmaking, and sculpture.

(Dept. of Cultural Affairs)

Intensive Transitions

Supports youth offenders through individual counseling, tutoring, anger management training, and connects them to employment opportunities.

(Economic and Workforce Development Dept.)

Data Science Federation

Local college students receive training and mentorship while harnessing data and technology to solve real world problems facing the City.

(Information Technology Agency)

Zoo Pals

Covers admission and transportation costs to help eligible Title I schools (schools with high levels of student poverty) bring students to the Los Angeles Zoo.

(Los Angeles Zoo)

Junior Golf

Youth golfers receive discounts ranging from $2-$11 for rounds of golf at the City's municipal courses.

(Dept. of Recreation and Parks)

Free Online Tutoring

Free online tutoring for help with homework, skills building, and test preparation is available to students in grades K-12.

(Los Angeles Public Library)

The types of programs offered, and the levels of funding dedicated to child and youth-related services, varied greatly by department. For example, Economic and Workforce Development spent nearly $25 million dollars on 16 youth programs, focusing primarily on preparing young people for the workforce, and connecting them to career opportunities. The Bureau of Street Services spent $15,000 dollars on one internship program, which provided students with technical and administrative work experience.

The Department of Recreation and Parks spent the most on youth programs in FY2018, with nearly $50 million going towards youth-related services. The top six departments in youth program spending accounted for 94% of the total reported spending. The figure below shows the ten City departments that spent the most on youth programs in FY2018.

Departments Spending the Most on Youth Programs

Department	Amount ($ Millions)
Recreation and Parks	$49.4
Housing and Community Investment	$41.7
Mayor	$25.5
Economic and Workforce Develop.	$24.8
Housing Authority of the City of LA	$17.3
Transportation	$9.2
PW: Board	$2.5
Cultural Affairs	$2.5
Police	$1.7
Library	$1.3

Source: Based on analysis of the CAO/CLA Youth Program Survey, March 2019

The City funds its youth programs through a variety of sources. While a large portion of the City's programming is funded through City sources, including the General Fund and special funds, youth programs can also be funded through grants from federal, state, and county agencies. The City also partners with nonprofit organizations that either help the City to administer or fund certain programs, and many of the City's programs are funded through a mix of City, grant, or nonprofit sources. The table below breaks down the sources of funding for the City's youth programs.

Funding Pool	*Number of Programs*	*Amount Funded*
City Funds *City General Fund or other special funds*	**63**	**$61.2M**
Grant Funds *Grants from federal, state, and other public sources*	**37**	**$37.7M**
No Cost to the City *Require no City resources, other than staff time*	**31**	**$-**
Mixed Funding *Funded through a mix of City, grant, or private sources*	**16**	**$77.9M**
Private Organization *Private parties like the Library Foundation of Los Angeles and the Citi Foundation*	**15**	**$1.4M**

Source: Based on analysis of the CAO/CLA Youth Program Survey, March 2019

A Closer Look at Where the City Focuses Its Youth Spending

When considering the City's spending in relation to the foundational elements for successful youth development, the City dedicated the most resources ($72 million) to programs that work toward ensuring young people grow up in a safe and secure environment. These types of programs include gang reduction programs, school safety programs, and programs that help young people secure stable housing.

The City dedicated the least resources, about $6.7 million, to programs dedicated to social well-being and civic engagement, such as civics classes, leadership programs, and community volunteering programs. The chart below shows how much the City dedicated to the foundational youth elements identified in this report.

Spending by Youth Program Type
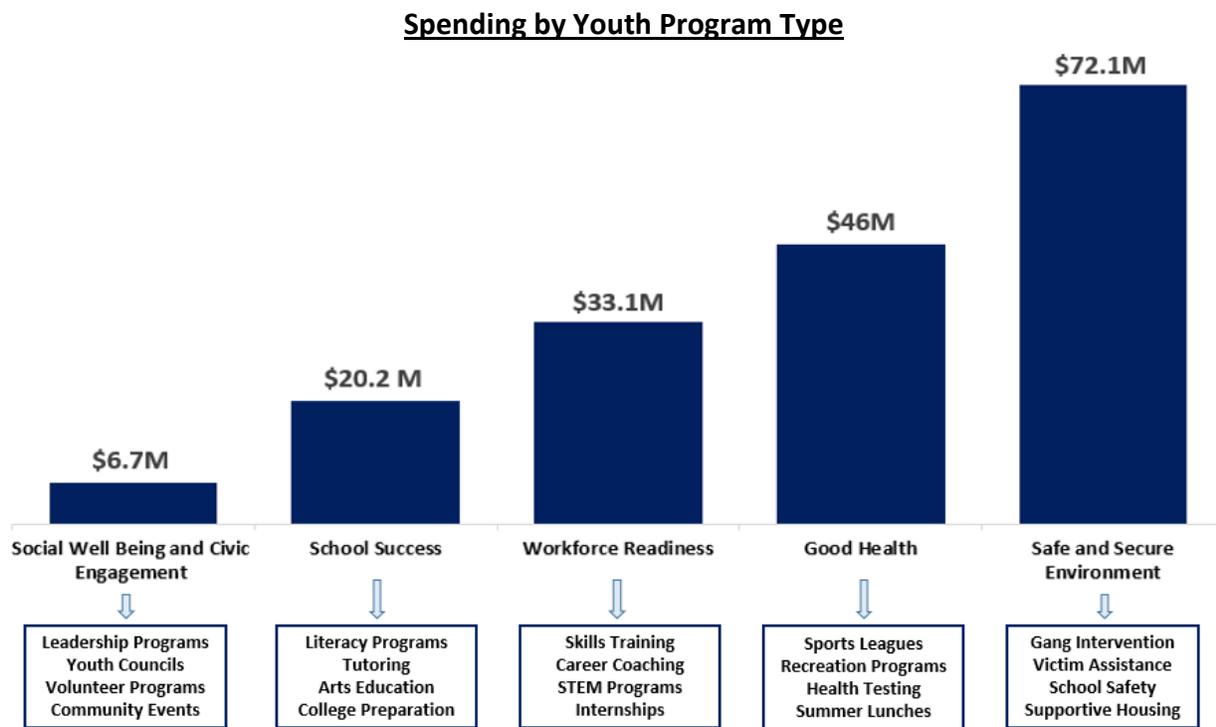
Source: Based on analysis of the CAO/CLA Youth Program Survey, March 2019

The City's spending also varied based on youth age range. The City dedicated the most resources, almost $84 million, to programs dedicated to young people aged 14-24, a critical phase when gaining life skills and professional skills in preparation for adulthood are most important.

The City spent the least, about $11 million, on children in early development stages between birth and age five, when ensuring a child is prepared to enter and get the most out of school is most important. It is important to note that many youth programs are not designed for a single age category, but instead provide services to multiple or all age groups. The chart below shows the amount that the City spent on youth services, based on the programs' target age range.

Spending by Youth Age Range
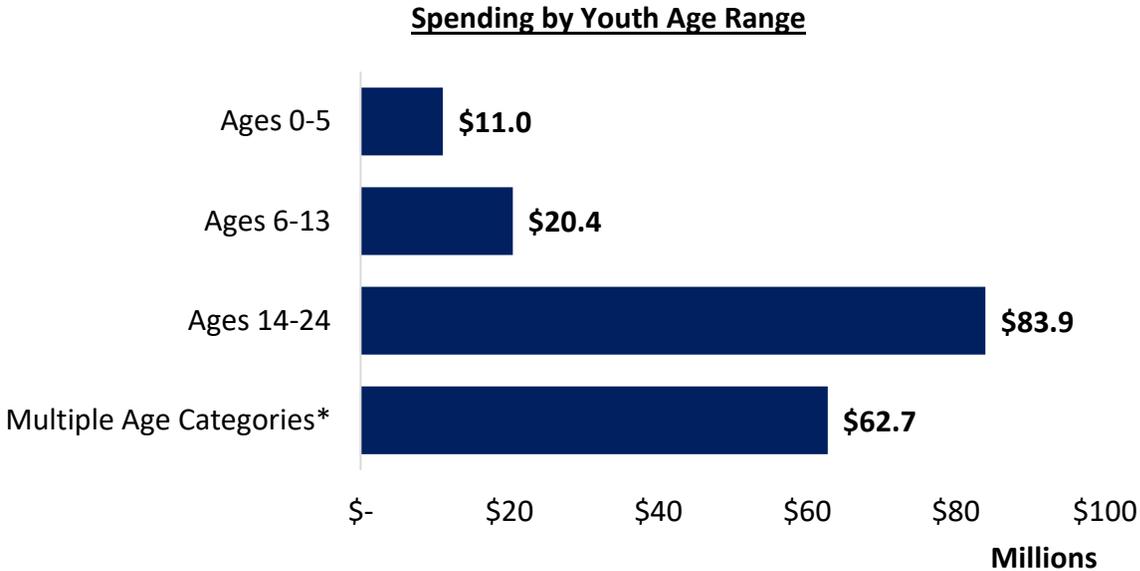
*Programs which serve two or all three of the defined age groups were categorized under Multiple Age Categories.
Source: Based on analysis of the CAO/CLA Youth Program Survey, March 2019

However, given that there are more than 73,000 disconnected young people within the City, it is important that the City examine not only the resources it dedicates to youth programs, but whether it has a strategy to ensure its spending and its programs reach the youth populations that are most at risk.

The City Lacks a Comprehensive Strategy to Guide Its Youth Spending

The City does not currently have a department or commission to serve as a citywide strategy manager for youth programs. The lack of a centralized framework means that **there is no single office tasked with carrying out important initiatives such as establishing citywide youth development goals, monitoring the City's youth programming outcomes, evaluating programming to ensure the efficient service delivery, and improving service equity and inclusion across the City**. In addition, the lack of centralized framework makes it difficult to quickly identify and resolve service gaps or redundancies.

The City previously had a framework that included a youth strategy manager. The Los Angeles Commission on Children, Youth, and Their Families (CCYF) served as the lead office responsible for evaluating and coordinating the City's youth initiatives. It also analyzed citywide trends against long term outcome goals in order to guide policy decisions and resource allocations across all departments. In 2010, the Mayor and City Council, citing budget concerns resulting

from the economic recession, reorganized the City's youth program management functions, which led to the elimination of CCYF.

Students learn from a building inspector
Credit: Economic and Workforce Development Department

In addition to not having an office responsible for citywide strategy management, **the City does not have a comprehensive strategic or master plan to guide short- and long-term decisions about youth services planning, program development, and funding.** Several organizations, including the National League of Cities and the Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, emphasize the need for governments to develop strategic plans. **Strategic plans add value by providing a comprehensive youth programming vision, assessing resources and needs, and creating a structured plan for implementing a successful youth services framework.**

Program Development and Coordination is the Responsibility of Individual Departments

Generally, **each department is responsible for developing youth program goals and strategies**. The departments themselves are often best suited to design services which leverage their own unique tools, subject matter expertise, and industry knowledge. For example, the Information Technology Agency's (ITA) three youth programs offer project based learning opportunities where students work with ITA staff to receive technical training, mentorship, and exposure to real world information technology issues.

However, with individual departments responsible for developing their own youth plans and objectives, the City lacks a formal, cohesive strategy to ensure the City's programs both complement one another, and address specific community needs. The development of youth programming in department silos also increases the likelihood of service duplication and other inefficiencies.

Similar to strategic planning, each City department is generally responsible for coordinating its youth activities with other City entities, as well as with partner agencies like LAUSD and LA County. This decentralized coordination framework makes it more difficult for the City to leverage partnerships with other public agencies and non-profits in order to tackle some of the major youth challenges facing Angelenos.

<u>Navigating Available Youth Programming Opportunities Can Be Difficult</u>

Given the need to keep young people engaged, providing easily accessible information is critically important. **There is currently no single point of entry or information source for residents seeking youth programming information, and instead residents must navigate multiple department websites or phone numbers. This makes it difficult for Angelenos to learn about the youth services offered by City departments, and determine where across the City youth service providers and activities are available.**

<u>Departments Collect and Maintain Youth Program Data</u>

Based on information reported by departments for FY2018, there were approximately 2.3 million participants in City youth programs. However, this is not a valuable citywide metric for gaining insights on what the City is accomplishing for its youth. Not only are there only 1.3 million young people aged 24 and under living in the City of Los Angeles, but department data is not a unique count of individuals served, and many departments estimated program participation in lieu of providing actuals. **Most importantly, participation figures do not always provide details on what the City is accomplishing, and whether programs are improving the lives of children, teens, and young adults.**

Simply counting participants is not sufficient if the City wants to take a comprehensive, youth system-wide look at whether the City is meeting the needs of young people. However, without a lead office evaluating citywide youth data and trends, it is the responsibility of each department to track program participation, performance, and outcomes.

The types of data tracked by the departments, and the methods for collecting relevant data, varies by department, program type, and program size. There are many programs within the City that already collect valuable information about their youth services.

For example, the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), which develops and administers programs designed to reduce gang violence through intervention and prevention services, has partnered with California State University, Los Angeles, to evaluate data and outcomes. GRYD's programs are relatively large, with its three programs spending about $26 million in FY2018. The office tracks a comprehensive set of data points such as gang crime trends, the number of hours spent on proactive outreach and peacekeeping, and program enrollment trends.

Below are other examples of how departments track the performance of their programs.

Performance Metrics of Select Large, Medium, and Small Programs

Program	Mission	Key Metrics
YouthSource Centers Cost: $11,229,000 *(Economic and Workforce Development Dept.)*	Prepare young people for the workforce with services including work skills training, job search and placement assistance, tutoring, college preparation, and mentorship.	✓ Total enrollment ✓ Credential attainment (within 1 year of program exit) ✓ Employment rate (at 2nd and 4th quarters after program exit) ✓ Customer satisfaction
FamilySource Centers Cost: $4,480,000 *(Housing and Community Investment Dept.)*	Support high need families with one stop community centers with services including art and music events, tutoring, SAT and ACT preparation, and college application assistance.	✓ School attendance ✓ English and math grades ✓ Student re-entry into school system ✓ High school graduation rates ✓ Enrollment in post-secondary education or technical career training
Youth Community Arts Centers Cost: $467,000 *(Dept. of Cultural Affairs)*	Bring innovative, high quality arts programming to local communities with activities such as drawing, theatre, graphic design, photography, and video production.	✓ # of programs offered on site ✓ # of classes held ✓ # of participants ✓ # of school visits ✓ # of volunteer hours
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Program Cost: $110,000 *(Dept. of Transportation)*	Provide bike and pedestrian safety classes and bike skills training to LAUSD students. Other activities include teacher training and community events.	✓ # of training classes delivered ✓ # of community events held ✓ # of class and event participants ✓ Safety quiz results
Library Summer Lunch Cost: $8,000 *(Los Angeles Public Library)*	Deliver nutritious lunches to children and teens in 16 locations across the City. Sites provide a safe space for young people and provide access to the library's learning resources.	✓ Surveys measuring wellness indicators like self esteem ✓ # of lunches served ✓ # of participants ✓ # of teen volunteer hours
Civic Youth Leadership Academy Cost: $6,500 *(Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment)*	Educate, engage, and empower young people by preparing them to serve on Neighborhood Councils (NC), and become a voice for their communities.	✓ # of NCs offering youth seats ✓ # of youth candidates during NC election cycles ✓ # of NC seats held by youth representatives

Given how performance indicators tracked by departments vary based on the type of service being offered, and the amount of data that is available, **a significant challenge for the City is determining how to use departments' youth program data in a meaningful way so that policymakers, youth program managers, and other stakeholders can make informed decisions on how to best serve youth Angelenos at a citywide level, neighborhood level, and for the diverse youth populations within the community**.

Lessons from Other Jurisdictions

The administration of youth programs and services by other large jurisdictions offer lessons on alternate program management and evaluation approaches that could serve as a model for the City of Los Angeles. New York, San Francisco, and Seattle have all been identified by youth subject matter experts as having well-developed youth program systems in cities which, like Los Angeles, serve communities which are both diverse and complex.[10] **All three cities have an organization dedicated to youth program and strategy management. They also provide insights as to how other cities analyze community needs in order to make investment decisions**.

It is important to note that a key difference between Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco is that New York and San Francisco are city county consolidations, meaning the city and county are one unified government body. In comparison, the City of Los Angeles is one of 88 incorporated cities within LA County. However, in both San Francisco and New York, health and human services for youth, such as child protection and health care services, are generally managed by agencies that are separate from those that manage youth development programs, making them suitable cities for comparison.

New York City

The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is responsible for investing in a network of community-based organizations that seek to provide opportunities for children, youth, and their families, and promote general community development programs intended to alleviate the effects of poverty on all residents. DYCD had a budget of $813 million in 2018, and supports New York families through after school, family support, literacy, youth development, youth workforce development, and community development programs. Given the size and scope of the department's youth services and community development operations, the department has dedicated program management for each of its program areas.

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development Organizational Structure

The department has implemented several initiatives to ensure it makes needs-based decisions, and continuously assesses capacity and services.

Community Needs Assessments – The department conducts assessments which focus on the education, employment, out-of-school time, family support, and special population needs of New York City communities. The assessments, which are broken down across 42 Neighborhood Development Areas, explore demographic data, studies of the causes and conditions of poverty, and surveys of residents seeking to identify service needs and gaps.

Coordination Councils – DYCD relies on the Interagency Coordinating Council on Youth, and Neighborhood Advisory Boards, to connect departments to the communities they serve. The Interagency Coordinating Council on Youth is a charter mandated body comprised of 20 youth-serving agencies that meet quarterly to promote collaborative strategic planning and information sharing. Neighborhood Advisory Boards are seven to twelve member groups that represent the city's Neighborhood Development Areas, and are responsible for advising DYCD of community priorities, and recommending specific programs.

Annual Reports – DYCD publishes reports which provide information on the department's accomplishments, program highlights, and new initiatives. The report also details the department's various funding streams.

City and County of San Francisco

In San Francisco, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) is responsible for administering youth services by evaluating city services for youth, strategically investing in youth programs, and developing partnerships with community-based organizations. DCYF, which plays a major grant-making role in the city by managing grants for over 400 programs, had a budget of $214 million in 2018. The department places a large emphasis on data collection and analysis in order to inform their grant-making cycle, and contracts with external organizations to conduct program evaluations.

San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families Organizational Structure
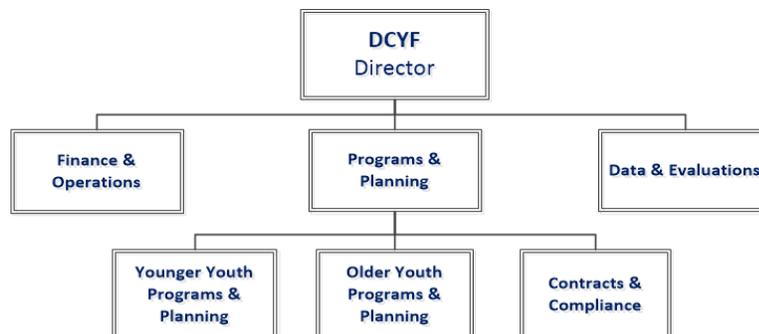
Similar to New York City, San Francisco's DCYF has implemented several initiatives which help the city to make targeted youth investments, and monitor the impact of those investments.

Community Needs Assessments – DCYF conducts assessments to provide the city and its leadership with a comprehensive evaluation of residents' youth services needs and interests. In addition to soliciting feedback from members of the community, this needs assessment analyzes population level demographic, economic, health, and education data. It also includes an equity analysis component, as required by local law. Importantly, the needs assessment is structured around strategic areas that are established jointly by the city, and San Francisco Unified School District, which helps both organizations work together to achieve desired outcomes.

Service Allocation Plans – The results of San Francisco's needs assessment informs DCYF's Service Allocation Plan. The Service Allocation Plan details the department's funding priorities by identifying strategies and programs that can best address residents' needs, and best address disparities among San Francisco families.

Annual Reports – DCYF publishes reports detailing citywide and district level investment results. The reported data includes the amount of funding for each strategic priority area, and number of young people served by DCYF supported programs by age, gender, and ethnicity, and whether those results met annual projections. The reports also detail program performance data for strategic priority areas against established goals, and the results youth surveys designed to measure the impact youth services.

City of Seattle

The City of Seattle offers an example of a city which has a dedicated youth services program manager, but not a dedicated youth services department. Seattle's Human Services Department promotes the development of healthy communities and families in a variety of program areas, including aging and disability services, public health services, transitional living and housing support services, and youth and family services. The department's 2018 budget for youth services was $31 million.

The Human Services Department's Youth and Family Empowerment Division (YFE) is responsible for managing Seattle's youth services. YFE supports youth and families by investing safety, youth employment, education, health, and affordable living programs. YFE's placement within the Human Services Department allows it to make strategic investments which fit into the department's greater community and family development plans.

A Roadmap for Maximizing Investments in Young Angelenos

After nearly a decade without a citywide youth development strategy or a dedicated office or commission to guide the management of youth programming, **it is critically important that the City refocus its efforts to ensure all children and young adults have equal access to enriching**

youth development programs. A comprehensive, data-informed strategy is necessary to ensure the existence of a youth program ecosystem covering all young people, in every corner of Los Angeles.

In March 2019, the City Council instructed the CAO and CLA to report on options for developing an Executive Task Force on Youth Development. It also instructed those offices to explore funding options for establishing an office or commission that would be responsible for implementing a citywide youth strategy.

Sanitation interns learn engineering and science skills
Credit: Economic and Workforce Development Department

The City Council's evaluation of the feasibility of establishing a new entity within the City to lead citywide youth strategy coordination presents an important opportunity for the City and its young people. **As City leaders move forward with efforts to reform management of youth programs, it is important to ensure the City's future youth strategy is focused on achieving successful outcomes and contains a framework that enables continuous analysis and improvement.**

This section identifies the steps the City should take as it evaluates the implementation of its youth programs, and lays the foundation for a long-term strategy for youth investment decisions. This framework will further allow the City to identify, on a continuous basis, areas where the City should increase support for those young people most at risk of living isolated or disconnected lives.

Step ONE: The City should establish or designate a lead office or department to be responsible for youth initiatives, including citywide youth development strategy, program coordination, and advocacy.

The development of a successful and sustainable citywide youth strategy will require a coordinated effort across all departments, and ongoing analysis of youth trends and programs. However, the current gap in leadership when it comes to citywide youth programming and strategy would make the execution of any initiative intended to revitalize the City's youth program system difficult.

In order to effectively create learning and development pathways – and connect young people to those pathways – the City must work with a broad network of subject matter experts, government agencies, businesses, and community partners, to develop a system which better

serves young Angelenos. **An office or department dedicated to supporting young people and their families will ensure that the City has both consistent leadership on youth issues, and a consistent voice to represent the interests of young Angelenos**.

Step TWO: The City should analyze demographic, wellness, and achievement data to examine the specific needs of young Angelenos, and identify areas where programming is falling short of community needs and expectations.

An evaluation of youth population data is necessary to obtain a full picture of the opportunities and challenges facing the City when it comes to delivering high quality youth services, and better understand where the City should provide additional support, or scale back resources. This analysis should incorporate not only citywide data, but also information and trends which speak to youth achievement and wellness at the neighborhood level.

The outcomes of this type of demographic analysis should be compared against the City's existing programming. **This will allow the City's decision makers and youth program managers to identify specific service gaps, and potential service inequities both geographically and among youth subpopulations**.

Fortunately, there is a wealth of data that the City can leverage as it examines the state of Los Angeles' youth populations. Many federal, state, and local agencies, such as the U.S. Census, the California Department of Education, LA County, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and LAUSD, collect and analyze valuable information which can be used to inform City research.

Step THREE: The City should develop a formal master plan which establishes goals for the City, establishes an implementation plan to achieve those goals, and guides departments as they make investment and operational decisions.

It is important that every youth program fit into a wider framework which ensures the City is developing a strong network of services that supports children and young adults throughout their development. Furthermore, it is important that departments are contributing to the City's overall vision and service delivery strategy.

The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families emphasizes the value of youth master plans, as they facilitate the development of a sustained and coordinated strategy focused on improving outcomes for children, teens, and young adults. The master plan should set both citywide goals, and department specific targets. For each broad goal, the master plan should also establish specific strategies delineating roles and responsibilities, and necessary steps for implementation.

<u>Step FOUR</u>: The City should establish outcome-based performance indicators which measure the City's progress towards achieving goals, and emphasize both program utilization and program impact.

A cornerstone of the City's revamped youth strategy must be the establishment of qualitative and quantitative performance indicators that reflect the health, success, and connectedness of young Angelenos. Given that department programs have their own unique goals and expectations, **a performance monitoring framework should incorporate both program specific metrics, and citywide metrics,** allowing decision makers and program managers to have a full understanding of the state of youth-related initiatives.

When monitoring the effectiveness of youth programs, the City should monitor short-, medium-, and long- term trends against baseline data, which will provide insights as to whether the City is actually achieving its targets. The performance monitoring framework should also specify which entities are responsible for collecting data, and emphasize the need for safeguards that ensure the collection of reliable data.

A library read along with an LAPD officer
Credit: Los Angeles Public Library

Perhaps the most significant benefit of a formal performance monitoring system is that it allows the City and its department to continuously monitor outcomes and make evidence-based decisions. The Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs has emphasized the need for organizations to evaluate evidence which identifies the strategies, resources, staff knowledge, and operational structures best suited to address particular youth needs.

The development of an improved performance management framework is an opportunity for the City to prioritize evidence-based programming and link funding decisions to programmatic impact. That is, the City should invest in programs with a proven track record of yielding positive results. Given the amount of spending dedicated to youth programs, the City needs to make smart decisions about which programs are truly adding value. **Successful programs and strategies need to be identified, replicated, and expanded. Unsuccessful programs need to be refined, scaled-back, or eliminated completely**.

Step FIVE: Explore partnership opportunities and collaborate with key stakeholders to improve programs and maximize the number of young Angelenos benefiting from youth services and opportunities.

The City and LAUSD partner to teach traffic safety
Credit: LA Department of Transportation

It is important to recognize that the City is not alone in its efforts to educate and develop children, teens, and young adults in Los Angeles. School districts, other government agencies, nonprofits, and businesses all have a vested interest in seeing young Angelenos attain life and career skills that will enable them to make positive contributions in their workplaces and neighborhoods. Youth subject matter experts stress that **while analyzing data and best practices is one piece of developing a youth strategy, it is extremely important to integrate young people, residents, and community partners into the youth program development and administration process**.

To that end, **the City must tap into community based networks that can pinpoint needs and service gaps within individual neighborhoods and youth populations**. In the past, collaboration among City stakeholders was facilitated by CCYF's Neighborhood Networks4Kids, which served as a mechanism for organizing young people, City Council offices, residents, schools, businesses, and other agencies. This type of community-based network can help not just the City, but all members in coordinating resources, and expanding youth infrastructure.

The City should also continue to expand youth services by partnering with local organizations to deliver services. This can maximize the capacity of both the City and its partners, and expand service providers' geographic coverage across the City. Some departments are already demonstrating the value of the joint partnerships model.

For example, the Economic and Workforce Development Department is part of a regional initiative known as the Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot Initiative (P3). The P3 initiative, which is a partnership between the City, LA County, LAUSD, the Los Angeles Community College District, local Cal State Universities, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and over 50 philanthropic and community organizations, is designed to improve the service delivery system for disconnected young adults. This regional initiative promotes an integrated, wrap around service model which supports youth in multiple service categories, including educational, workforce, and housing opportunities. The Economic and Workforce Development

Department reports that the pilot initiative has connected more than 8,000 young people to necessary career and education support services.

Step SIX: The City should develop a formal, consistent reporting platform in the form of progress reports or report cards, to allow policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to monitor the well-being of young Angelenos over time. These reports will allow the City to assess the impact of investments, and should be used to make necessary updates to youth master plans.

Reports on youth program outcomes are useful tools for measuring on a consistent and long-term basis whether youth strategy and investment decisions are achieving their intended results. As a result, **the reports not only promote transparency, but hold the City and its partners accountable for implementing strategic plans and achieving agreed upon goals and targets**.

Youth subject matter experts noted that the City's reporting should reflect both program level data collected by departments, and bigger picture citywide wellness indicators. For example certain indicators measuring whether young people are connected to their schools and communities could include child literacy rates, youth incarceration rates, high school graduation rates, or youth voter registration rates. In addition to citywide indicators, the report would also provide information reflecting whether, on an operational level, department programs are addressing the specific service needs and gaps identified in the strategic plan.

Furthermore, a youth master plan should evolve along with the changing needs of the City's youth populations. **Formal progress reports, supplemented by other performance data maintained by youth program managers, should be used to revise the youth master plan as necessary.** Progress reports are an invaluable part of this process, and would allow the City, its partners, and stakeholders to ensure youth master plans remain forward-looking documents which serve the community for the long term.

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UCLA Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families
The UCLA Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families is an initiative focused on the needs of children and youth who are disconnected from traditional pathways to success, in particular foster youth.

USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation
The USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation develops ideas and illuminates strategies to improve the quality of life for people in low-income, urban communities.

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work promotes social justice and well-being at every social level through advanced education, community engagement, interdisciplinary scientific activity, advocacy, and professional leadership.

First 5 Los Angeles
First 5 Los Angeles is an independent public agency with a goal to support the safe and healthy development of young children so that by 2028, all children in LA County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

LA County Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services
The mission of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services is improve the lives of all generations in LA County by connecting individuals to careers, connecting employers to a skilled workforce, and ensuring the well-being of older and dependent adults.

LAUSD Beyond the Bell
The mission of the Beyond the Bell is to ensure that all children and youth in LAUSD have access to high quality, safe, and supervised academic, enrichment, and recreation programs that inspire learning and achievement beyond the regular school day.

LAUSD Student Health and Human Services Division
The mission of the Student Health and Human Services Division is to address barriers that prevent students from learning and to optimize their health and wellness in order to facilitate academic achievement.

Covenant House California
Covenant House California is a non-profit youth homeless shelter that provides sanctuary and support for homeless and trafficked youth, ages 18-24.

Los Angeles LGBT Center
The Los Angeles LGBT Center supports LGBT young people and allies experiencing homelessness and other hardships through transitional housing, education, employment, and health services.

Endnotes

[1] In this report, the term youth refers generally to children, teens, and young adults aged 0-24. This definition is consistent with parameters established by entities such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and City and County of San Francisco. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2018); San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, *Final Services Allocation Plan* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, 2017). For an estimate of Los Angeles' population age 24 and younger, see: U.S. Census Bureau, "Los Angeles City, California," *2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.*

[2] Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, *Pathways for Youth: Strategic Plan for Federal Collaboration* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

[3] Kristen Lewis and Rebecca Gluskin, *Two Futures: The Economic Case for Keeping Youth on Track* (New York: Measure of America, Social Science Research Council, 2018).

[4] The foundations of youth success were identified through reviews of reports issued by Los Angeles' defunct youth commission and other California cities (San Francisco and Oakland) with centralized youth frameworks. Los Angeles Commission for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Action Plan for the City's Children, Youth and Their Families, 2000-2006 (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles); San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families, *A Snapshot of San Francisco's Children and Families* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, 2016); Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, *Strategic Investment Plan* (Oakland: City of Oakland, 2018).

[5] Gary Painter, et al., *Opportunity Youth in the City of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 2017).

[6] Martha Ross and Nicole Prchal Swajlenka, *Employment and Disconnection Among Teens and Young Adults: The Role of Place, Race, and Education.* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2016).

[7] Lewis and Gluskin.

[8] Multiple sources were used to compile the data in the table and are listed here, left-to-right. Kidsdata.org, *Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Data 2013-2017* (Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 2018); DataQuest, *2017-18 Four Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Report for LAUSD* (California Department of Education, 2018); Kidsdata.org, *Analysis of the California Healthy Kids Survey* (California Department of Education, 2017); LA County Department of Children and Family Services, *Fact Sheet* (Los Angeles, 2018); Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, *Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary* (Los Angeles, 2019); Lehman William, *Youth Homelessness in Los Angeles County: Innovation with Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice and Coordinated Entry Systems* (Washington, D.C.: United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2018); Ibid.; DataQuest, *Statewide Assessment Division 2017-2018 California Physical Fitness Report for LAUSD* (California Department of Education, 2018); DataQuest, *2018-2019 English Learner Students by Language and Grade Report for LAUSD* (California Department of Education, 2019)

[9] The CAO/CLA Youth Program Survey (March 2019) consolidated certain youth programs for reporting purposes, and reported a total of 133 programs.

[10] Advancement Project California, *Blueprint for Youth Development Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Advancement Project, 2017).