February 2011

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Building Our Youth for the Future:
Strengthening San Francisco’s Youth Workforce System

A report by the Youth Council of Workforce Investment San Francisco
San Francisco Youth Workforce

It is the vision of the Youth Council that San Francisco will be a city where every young person acquires the skills, knowledge, and abilities to prepare them for success by age 25; and city government, our schools, and community leaders are all working together to make this happen. This report outlines how key leaders and institutions are working together to build a better youth workforce system and further challenges us to deepen and focus this work in order to realize our vision.

Youth Council of the Workforce Investment San Francisco Board

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The Youth Council thanks the Office of Economic and Workforce Development for providing support for the development of this document.
Building Our Youth for the Future: Strengthening San Francisco’s Youth Workforce System

Getting a good job in the 21st century means getting a good education. This is particularly true in San Francisco and the Bay Area, home to one of the most highly educated workforces in the United States. Nearly two-thirds of San Francisco’s new jobs, and virtually all jobs that pay a living wage, will require a post-secondary credential. Thus, it is no longer sufficient to provide young people with work experiences and teach them soft skills. Young people need a strong academic foundation if they are to obtain San Francisco’s high-knowledge, high-skill jobs and contribute to our local economy.

Unfortunately, large numbers of San Francisco youth lack the education and skills necessary to connect successfully with the workforce. Between 20 and 25 percent of young people that enter 9th grade each year do not graduate from high school. Over 18,000 young adults ages 18-24 in San Francisco are not in school and lack a post-secondary degree or credential—about 6,000 of these young adults have less than a high school degree, and another 12,000 have only a high school degree.

It is the goal of San Francisco’s City government and its educational institutions to provide all youth with the opportunities and resources they need to achieve career and economic success. To address this goal, former Mayor Gavin Newsom reestablished the Youth Council of San Francisco’s Workforce Investment Board (WISF) in February 2009. Working with San Francisco’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF), and other City departments, the Youth Council oversees and sets direction for San Francisco’s youth workforce system—the systems serving people ages 14-24.

Former Mayor Newsom laid out three key charges for the Youth Council in 2009:

1. Work with OEWD, DCYF, and other City departments to develop priorities for City resource investment in youth workforce.

2. Develop recommendations for helping youth obtain the requisite education and workforce experiences to succeed in the labor force in conjunction with City departments, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), and City College of San Francisco (CCSF).

3. Identify strategies and mechanisms for improving service delivery to young people, so that all San Francisco youth are well-prepared to pursue the career of their choice.

Over the past 18 months, there has been major progress in meeting these goals. This report identifies the actions and accomplishments thus far and outlines a vision for how San Francisco can continue to build its youth for the future and thus build San Francisco’s economic future.
How San Francisco is Making Progress

Working with the Youth Council, the leadership of several City departments has instituted changes critical to strengthening San Francisco’s youth workforce system and developing our City’s emerging workforce. The most important achievements to date include: (1) a new commitment to using youth workforce opportunities to support educational achievement, (2) a strategic approach to investment of City resources, and (3) development of quality standards to improve service delivery.

1. Workforce in Support of Education

Workforce experiences and training can be a powerful means of supporting young people’s educational achievement. For 14-18 year olds, workforce experiences help students that are having difficulty in school, or who have dropped out of school, reengage in their education. These experiences can further students’ interests and efforts in education by giving them an understanding of the “why” behind learning and showing the relevance and connectedness of academic knowledge. Workforce development programs for 14-18 year olds should support educational skill development and attainment, and provide close connections to schools and workplace mentors that reinforce the importance of educational success. For 18-24 year olds, effective workforce development programs must enhance literacy and math skills, support attainment of a high school degree or GED, and encourage pursuit of post-secondary education, as well as provide employment services that enable young adults to further their education while working.

Recognizing the importance of education, the Youth Council adopted the following policy directive for youth workforce systems at its initial meeting in March 2009:

The intent of San Francisco’s youth workforce system is to help all San Francisco youth complete high school, obtain a post-secondary credential that is useful in the workforce, and to develop the non-academic skills needed for successful long-term connection to the workforce.

In line with this directive, both DCYF and OEWD have made helping youth obtain necessary educational credentials the central focus of their youth workforce spending. In addition, these City departments and Youth Council members have been engaged in another major San Francisco effort to support post-secondary educational attainment, Bridge to Success, formerly known as Communities Learning in Partnership. Supported by a $3 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bridge to Success supports a coordinated effort by SFUSD, CCSF, San Francisco State University, and City departments designed to double the number of low-income youth who obtain a post-secondary education credential. Work experiences are an essential component of this strategy.

2. Investing Together, Investing Smarter

Over the past 18 months, OEWD and DCYF, working with committees of the Youth Council, have taken major steps to develop a coordinated funding
strategy designed to create a full continuum of needed services. OEWD awards approximately $3 million yearly under its “Youth Workforce” category, using federal Workforce Investment Act, Community Development Block Grant, and City General funds. DCYF allocated $7.6 million dollars annually for youth workforce in its 2010-13 spending cycle. These funds are awarded primarily to community-based organizations (CBOs) that compete to implement programs that will achieve City and Department goals.

This past year witnessed both unprecedented inter-departmental coordination in developing a strategic plan and significant shifts in the use of City funding. Most notably, DCYF and OEWD, working with the Transition Age Youth Initiative (TAYSIP), SFUSD, and CCSF, jointly developed their strategies for youth workforce spending and issued a single Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP was informed by the work of the Youth Council’s Education Working Group, which developed a framework for planning effective programs for different segments of the youth and young adult population. Staff from DCYF, OEWD, the Mayor’s Office of Housing, SFUSD, and CCSF worked closely with community experts to identify program approaches that could be included in the RFP. The RFP focuses 2010-13 youth workforce dollars on activities designed to promote educational outcomes, in addition to providing a continuum of work force experience and job training for young people ages 13-24 years based on age and need. Among the key new elements in the RFP are:

- **A new school-based partnership funding stream.** DCYF is funding four nonprofits to work in partnership with six schools serving high-need students. The organizations will develop workforce opportunities that are linked to learning and school attendance, as well as provide case management to meet students’ other needs. This new approach emphasizes workforce in support of education, and incentivizes close collaboration between CBOs and the SFUSD.

- **Dedicated resources for high-risk youth.** DCYF allocated substantial resources for programs that provide educationally-oriented workforce experiences to youth at very high risk of dropping out of school and engaging in violent behaviors. This shift is important given the severity of need experienced by this population.

- **Re-engaging youth to attain a high school diploma or GED.** Acquiring at minimum a GED, or high school equivalency certificate, is essential for young adults that have dropped out of high school, if they are to obtain employment. Through the GED+ Initiative, OEWD has funded three organizations that partner with educational institutions to assist young adults in obtaining their high school diploma or GED. Two additional partnerships are currently under development.

- **Creating pathways into growth sectors.** The Youth Sector Bridge strategy (also supported with Community Development Block Grant funds) helps to prepare young adults for entrance into growing industry sectors (Healthcare, Information Technology, and Construction) through classroom and vocational skill instruction linked to CCSF.

In addition, OEWD continues to provide funding for RAMP, an intensive education and workforce program designed to reach young people who are not positively connected to education or the labor market with intensive job readiness training, wraparound support, classroom instruction, and work experience. With these new additions to a number of existing programs, San Francisco now has a continuum of workforce services that focus on the educational, as well as the job skill, needs of our youth and young adults (see Exhibit 1, next pages).

“Building a workforce system that can provide quality services is a central focus of the City’s workforce strategy.”

Rhonda Simmons
Office of Economic & Workforce Development
### Exhibit 1. DCYF and OEWD Funded Youth Workforce Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative/Funding Strategy Description</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Annual Budget*</th>
<th>Youth Served Annually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Workforce Development for General Population</strong></td>
<td>This funding strategy supports a variety of community-based organizations that offer programming that includes employment readiness, career awareness and exploration, internship or work experience placement, educational support, and transition and post-secondary planning activities.</td>
<td>Youth ages 14 - 17 with a priority of SFUSD students in the Special Education system and youth with traditional barriers to employment including placement in group or foster care, LEP, having disabilities, or being teen parents.</td>
<td><strong>$1,521,000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Youth Works</strong></td>
<td>Youth Works is a citywide year-round program that supports the positive development of 10th and 11th graders in San Francisco by engaging them in meaningful work-based learning opportunities in City government.</td>
<td>SFUSD 10th-12th grade students who are engaged with SFUSD's Career Technical Education Programs.</td>
<td><strong>$1,100,000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MYEEP</strong></td>
<td>MYEEP is a citywide program that supports the positive development of youth who have no previous work experience. It is designed to engage them in up to a one-year experience including work readiness training, educational support, youth leadership development activities, and meaningful work-based learning opportunities in the nonprofit, government, and private sectors.</td>
<td>9th &amp; 10th grade students, predominantly youth who likely face barriers to or have limited access to employment.</td>
<td><strong>$2,200,000</strong></td>
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<td><strong>School Partner Model</strong></td>
<td>This initiative aims to provide high school students in alternative public high schools with work-based learning experiences that have relevance to their school day, promote education completion, and provide opportunities to build 21st Century skills and to prepare for the workforce.</td>
<td>Students who are under-credit and/or at-risk of not graduating on time.</td>
<td><strong>$610,094</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Workforce Development for High-risk Population</strong></td>
<td>This strategy provides funding to a coordinating entity and to 13 direct service providers which offer the following menu of activities to referred youth: employment assessments, planning, and transition services; internship and job placements; individualized employment support; educational support, and; jobs development.</td>
<td>High-need youth ages 14 - 21 years of age who may be disconnected from services—youth who are under-housed or engaged with juvenile justice, and involved with multiple service systems such as child welfare, foster care diagnosed disability, or attending county/community schools.</td>
<td><strong>$1,859,457</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative/Funding Strategy Description</td>
<td>Target Population</td>
<td>Annual Budget*</td>
<td>Youth Served Annually</td>
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<td><strong>Youth Sector Bridge</strong></td>
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<td>These programs prepare youth and young adults with basic education and technical skills that are contextualized around a specific industry sector leading to an articulated path to post-secondary education, further sector training, or industry-recognized certification. Programs are offered in Construction, Health, and IT/Digital Media.</td>
<td>High school youth who are on track to graduate, but do not plan on attending post secondary, and youth who have a high school diploma or GED but who are unemployed or not engaged in formal post-secondary education.</td>
<td>$661,000</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Targeted Youth Services</strong></td>
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<td>This includes education and employment services that provide referrals to academic and employment resources, job search and job readiness skills offered through individualized and group learning, case management, and barrier removal.</td>
<td>Youth between the ages of 17 - 24 who face barriers such as homelessness, current or previous engagement in foster care, teen parenting, involvement in juvenile justice, or risk of not graduating high school or attaining a GED.</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td><strong>GED+</strong></td>
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<td>GED+ provides enriched educational instruction and supports to assist youth in addressing educational and workplace challenges, leading to a high school diploma or GED.</td>
<td>Youth ages 17 1/2 to 21, primarily low-income.</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RAMP</strong></td>
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<td>RAMP-SF is a workforce and educational development program that provides youth with an opportunity to address barriers to employment within the context of a work environment. This program model combines job readiness training, paid work experience, educational services, and intensive support.</td>
<td>Youth ages 18 - 24 who are not positively connected with the workplace or education, particularly those without a high school diploma or GED, who are involved with the justice system, and/or who have significant employment barriers.</td>
<td>$1,400,000</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Budget figures represent the City’s investment, but may not reflect the total cost of the program or funding leveraged from other sources. Costs per client served vary based on the intensity and duration of programming, as well as the range of services provided.*
These programs will reach over 3,500 young people and represent a significant investment made by the City in youth workforce development. However, they still reach only a portion of the total number of youth who are in need of and would benefit from these services.

3. Raising the Bar on Service Quality

San Francisco is without question home to a number of highly effective youth workforce programs. However, too many programs fall short when it comes to delivering services. Youth members that sit on the Youth Council, and members of the Transition Age Youth Young Adult Team who serve as a sounding board for City efforts dedicated to this population, have made clear the importance of raising both the quality and intensity of youth workforce programs in order to effectively assist young people with acquiring the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. The overall results of recent system redesign efforts, and taxpayers’ return on investment, can be far higher if service quality is improved.

To address this issue, a working group of the Youth Council, comprised of members representing nonprofits, the business sector, youth, UCSF, and City departments, developed a set of Minimum Quality Standards for youth workforce programs.1 It recommended that these standards, which are based on the Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) standards developed by the National Youth Employment Coalition, be used citywide in the planning and funding of all youth workforce programs beginning in 2011. The standards, which address program management and design, youth development, and performance measurement, have been approved by the full Council and its parent body, the San Francisco Workforce Investment Board (WISF).

These standards have already been incorporated by DCYF and OEWD in their recent RFP for youth workforce development. These departments are now incorporating the standards into their program monitoring and capacity building work with providers in an effort to improve program operations, move organizations toward use of more effective data and performance systems, and strengthen services through the application of evidenced-based practice. The Minimum Standards for Youth Workforce Programs can be found at: www.oewd.org/Directives.aspx.

What’s Working Now

As a result of the policy changes, system improvements, and new investments, important new work is now in motion:

• The first cohort of School Partnerships are being co-created by high schools and community organizations, and are anticipated to serve 100 students at four schools this year.

• The Mayor’s Youth Employment & Education Program (MYEEP), the city’s largest youth jobs program, has been redesigned to incorporate stronger educational and training components.

• YouthWorks has aligned its programming with SFUSD’s Career Technical Education Programs to increase the number of workplace opportunities that students in Career Academies can experience and to strengthen the relationship between workplace and classroom learning.

• RAMP continues to reach over 200 18-24 year olds who have been disconnected from education and the workforce, providing life-changing experiences leading to a high school diploma and workplace skills training.

1 DCYF had created a set of minimum quality standards as a part of its 2005 effort to develop standards for each of its service areas. This more recent effort built off those and other national work on standards.
• GED+ programs are expanding to reach over 200 young adults, coupling educational preparation with work experience, life skills, and support services.

• Youth Sector Bridge programming has begun in health, construction, and IT/digital media with the goal of serving 200 youth through these pathways.

• Young people have been brought in as active partners in evaluation efforts and the development of policy through a formal partnership with the Youth Council and the Transitional Age Youth initiative.

Of critical importance, most of the key City departments, SFUSD, CCSF, and the Mayor’s Office have been actively involved in making this work happen, and are now investing resources in evaluating the effectiveness of select programs in serving youth. Coordinated action is essential to producing the outcomes desired from our workforce investments.

Looking Forward

San Francisco has begun to put in place some of the key components necessary for helping youth and young adults develop the education and skills they need to connect successfully with the workforce. Local civic leaders should continue to advance the programmatic work currently underway. This includes building nonprofit capacity to meet the Minimum Quality Standards identified by the Youth Council, strengthening accountability by identifying and measuring a clear set of outcomes across City-funded youth workforce programs, and involving the business and labor communities in building additional career pathway or industry pipelines models.

However, in order to spur deeper systems change and achieve the Council’s vision of “every young person acquiring the skills, knowledge, and abilities to prepare them for success by age 25; and city government, our schools, and community leaders working together to make this happen,” more must be done.

The Youth Council and its partners believe that San Francisco is uniquely positioned to make a lasting difference in the economic wellbeing of our youth. Several features of the local landscape offer advantages with respect to catalyzing deep systems changes—we are a combined City and County with a robust set of departments and enterprise agencies with potential to support youth workforce efforts, we are home to nonprofit and philanthropic leaders who share a passion for improving the economic wellbeing of our residents, and we have a set of business and labor leaders at the forefront of driving innovation. Recognizing the opportunities that exist locally, the following steps are recommended to embark on the next phase of this work:

• Use the Youth Council to develop a strategic plan for youth workforce development that articulates a compelling policy agenda and set of systems goals designed to achieve large-scale change, while providing a continuum of services addressing both age and developmental needs. The plan should evaluate existing efforts, articulate strategies for achieving necessary changes, and provide a roadmap for making the vision a reality. Further, it should encompass efforts of all City departments to address the needs of high risk populations, including those involved with the juvenile and adult justice systems, youth on General Assistance, and youth in foster care.

• Expand the involvement of the business and labor communities in identifying needs and informing strategies for supporting the education and workforce development of San Francisco’s youth.
• Expand the membership of the Youth Council to ensure that it has representatives from all constituencies that have an interest in and authority over youth workforce resources.

• Align and integrate the efforts of City departments serving young people (e.g., the Human Services Agency, Juvenile and Adult Probation, and the Health Department) to ensure youth are equipped with services and supports (such as housing and treatment) they need to thrive.

• Build new partnerships designed to leverage the resources and opportunities of enterprise agencies and City departments (e.g., the Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco International Airport, the Port of San Francisco, and the Recreation and Park Department) to support youth workforce development.

• Put in place a stronger data and evaluation infrastructure for youth workforce development services which incorporates outcomes that can support decision-making across departments, including the joint development of assessment and implementation tools and strategies.

Over the next year, the Youth Council will be working with City departments, educational institutions, the business and labor communities, workforce training providers, and youth in a collective effort to ensure that San Francisco’s workforce system fully prepares youth to become our next generation of highly skilled employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders. With the continued leadership and support of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the Boards of SFUSD and CCSF for our ongoing work and these recommendations, together we can build today’s youth for San Francisco’s future.

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i The Youth Council is an arm of the WISE, which serves as the City’s federally-mandated Workforce Investment Board. The minimum duties of the WISE and Youth Council are established by the federal Workforce Investment Act.

ii OEWD also received approximately $2.5 million in additional youth workforce funding through the America’s Recovery and Reinvestment Act which expires on June 30, 2011.

iii The Mayor’s Community-Based Organizations Task Force has also called attention to widespread concerns about the quality and consistency of nonprofit service delivery. The Task Force recommendations emphasize the importance of evaluating nonprofit service delivery based on cost, quality, and effectiveness, and acting accordingly. Mayor’s Transitional Youth Task Force. Disconnected Youth in San Francisco: A Roadmap to Improve the Life Chances of San Francisco’s Most Vulnerable Young Adults, 2007. San Francisco, CA: The Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families.
Youth Council Members
2009 - 2010

Michael Wald  Youth Council Chair

Allison Magee  Juvenile Probation Department
Anthony Jenkins  Transitional Age Youth San Francisco
Brian Cheu  Mayor’s Office of Housing
Carla Javits  REDF Foundation
Cecilia Ramirez-Ruiz  Transitional Age Youth San Francisco
Clara Wade  New Door Ventures/Youth Employment Coalition
Damon Lew  University of California, San Francisco
Hydra Mendoza  Office of the Mayor
Jim Fithian  SFUSD – Court & Community Schools
Katherine Miller  Office of the District Attorney
Kimberly Wicoff  Communities of Opportunity
Lorne Needle  United Way of the Bay Area
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Phyllis McGuire  City College of San Francisco
Sam Rubin  Improving Transitions Outcomes Project
Rachel Antrobus  Transition Age Youth San Francisco
Ruth Barajas  CHALK/Youth Employment Coalition
Sara Razavi  Honoring Emancipated Youth
Steve Arcelona  Human Services Agency
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Wilhelmina Parker  Treasure Island Job Corps
Yvette Robles  Public Defenders Office

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