

# BACKGROUND

In October 2018, San Francisco Mayor London N. Breed announced the launch of Opportunities for All (OFA), an initiative designed to address economic inequality by ensuring all young people can be a part of San Francisco's thriving economy.

Operated by the City and County of San Francisco, the initiative includes paid internships, mentorships, and pathways to employment for participants ages 13 to 24. OFA focuses on equitable access to these opportunities through connections, support, and resources for both job seekers and employers.



# WHY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL?

Providing opportunities for youth to gain work experience beginning in high school gives youth the skills to succeed in the workforce, improves their probability to attain long-term employment, increase their potential future earnings, and builds a pipeline of competent talent for employers. Although unemployment has decreased both nationally and in San Francisco, unemployment among youth remains high, especially among low and middle-income communities.

In San Francisco, not everyone is benefiting from the City's booming economy; a report from the Brookings Institution found that San Francisco has one of the largest wealth disparities in the nation. Racial disparities have been proven to play a part in this imbalance: across the nation, affluent White teens are four times more likely to be employed than low-income Black youth, and twice as likely compared to Latino teens. Disconnects in educational opportunities also may be contributing to the skills deficit seen in high school students; less than half of youth and employers say recent graduates leave school with the proper skills to succeed in today's workforce despite 72% of teachers thinking their students are prepared.

Persistent racial disparities exist across the certain populations in San Francisco, particularly affecting African American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx youth. Despite our City's best intentions, innovative and renowned programs, and executive leadership consistent with our progressive and compassionate values, these inequities remain. The OFA initiative leverages the private sector, local education system and City government to create equitable opportunities for youth through workforce connection, support, and job resources.

Cities around the globe, but particularly in the United States, have long provided a broad range of workforce development opportunities specifically for young people. Historically, both in San Francisco and across the nation, these opportunities were either:

- **UNPAID** – meaning youth from low- and middle-income families did not have the same economic support to work as youth from higher-income families; and/or
- **LIMITED TO SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES** (e.g. nonprofit, child care, retail, food service, etc.) – meaning youth were not able to access opportunities in other industries that could lead to longer-term or higher-wage employment

These factors, in addition to the previously cited racial, economic, and educational disparities, have created a cycle of limiting low-income youth to low-income opportunities, and high-income youth to high-income opportunities.

The OFA initiative's intention is to break this cycle by:

- Promoting economic sustainability at a young age;
- Connecting young people directly to paid, work-based learning opportunities to remove the economic barrier to success;
- Engaging a wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit businesses and organizations to create a catalog of opportunities spanning a broad range of industries and sectors; and
- Centering the experience on the youth, giving them the autonomy to take responsibility for their success, and providing support when needed to ensure that success.

OFA is based on the idea that by providing paid work experiences for our diverse young people we are connecting them to a more successful future and making our city and communities stronger. The initiative is helping to address the significant gap in professional achievement facing low-income youth and youth of color – a key disparity preventing meaningful equity in San Francisco.

The benefits of equitable youth workforce development programs are connected to other positive outcomes in communities. Participants in work-based learning opportunities improve in areas associated with civic engagement as well as skills development. OFA's intention of not only offering all youth that are willing to work a paid internship, but capturing even the most at risk/vulnerable/overlooked population of youth, benefits society as a whole. Ensuring that youth are engaged in work opportunities during the typically idle times of summer can prevent violent and property crimes from happening. Further, ongoing recruitment helps develop a diverse pool of local talent for coveted internships and future employment.

Through this effort, OFA will change the broader narrative of what it means to pursue a "normal" career – in essence, making it normal for any young person, regardless of their background, to become a doctor, a CEO, an artist, or Mayor of their hometown.

# SUMMER 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

## TOTAL PLACEMENTS

**2,300**

EXISTING  
PLACEMENTS

+

**1,500**

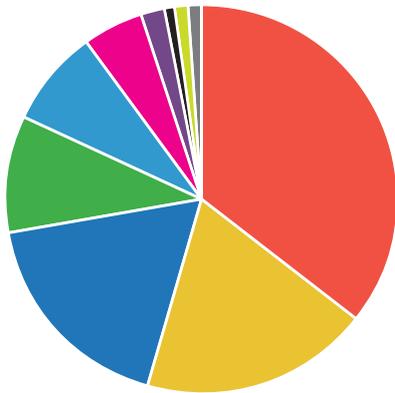
NEW  
PLACEMENTS

=

**3,800**

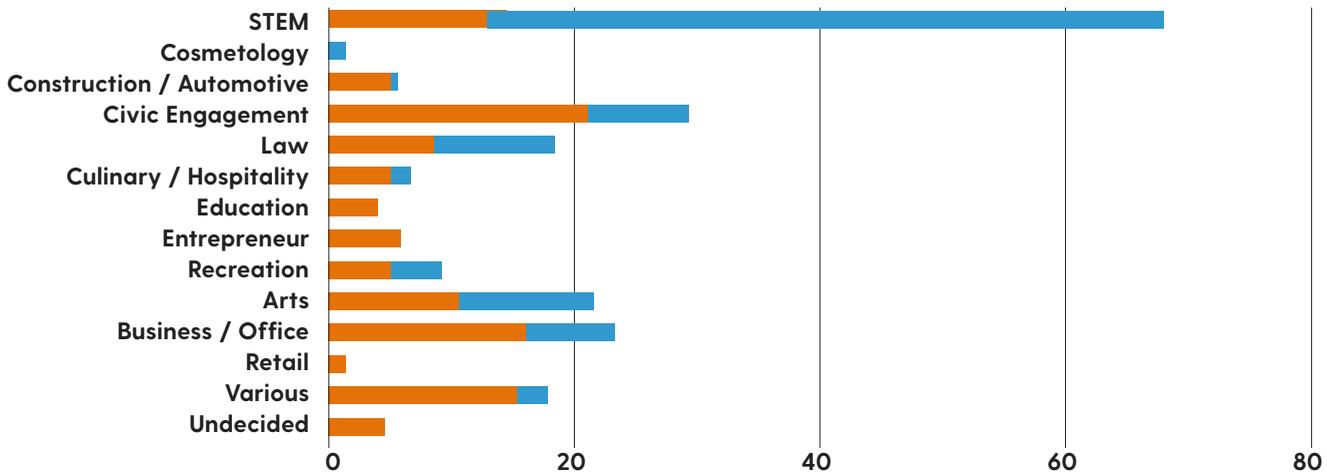
TOTAL YOUTH PLACED  
IN PAID INTERNSHIPS

## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



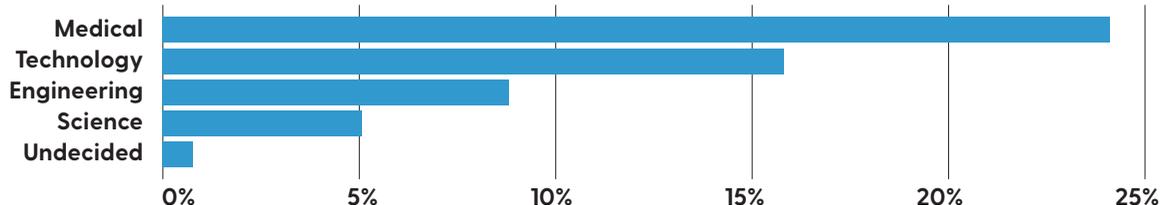
- Asian American (East Asian): 36%
- Black or African American: 19%
- Hispanic or Latinx: 18%
- Asian American (South Asian): 10%
- White: 8%
- Undisclosed: 5%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 2%
- Multi-racial: 1%
- African: 1%
- Native American/American Indian: <1%

## PLACEMENTS BY INDUSTRY VS. YOUTH INTERESTS / DREAM JOBS

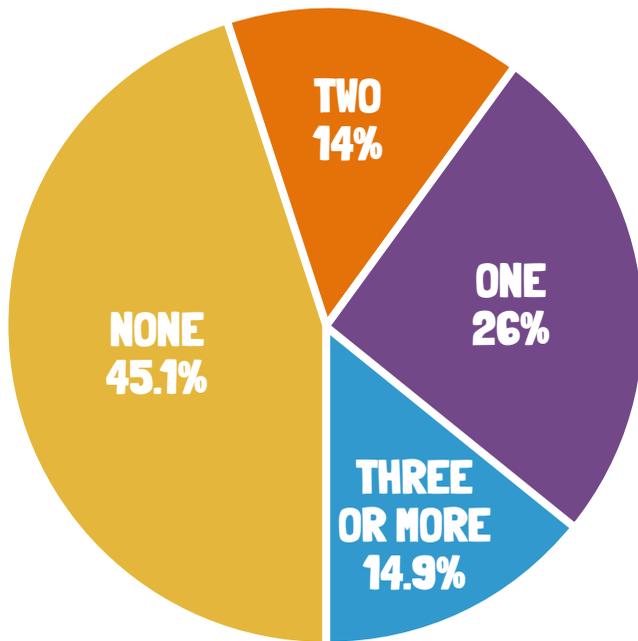


Youth have an opportunity to explore a variety of industries, more than 50% of respondents identified their career jobs are in the STEM fields.

## STEM BREAKOUT

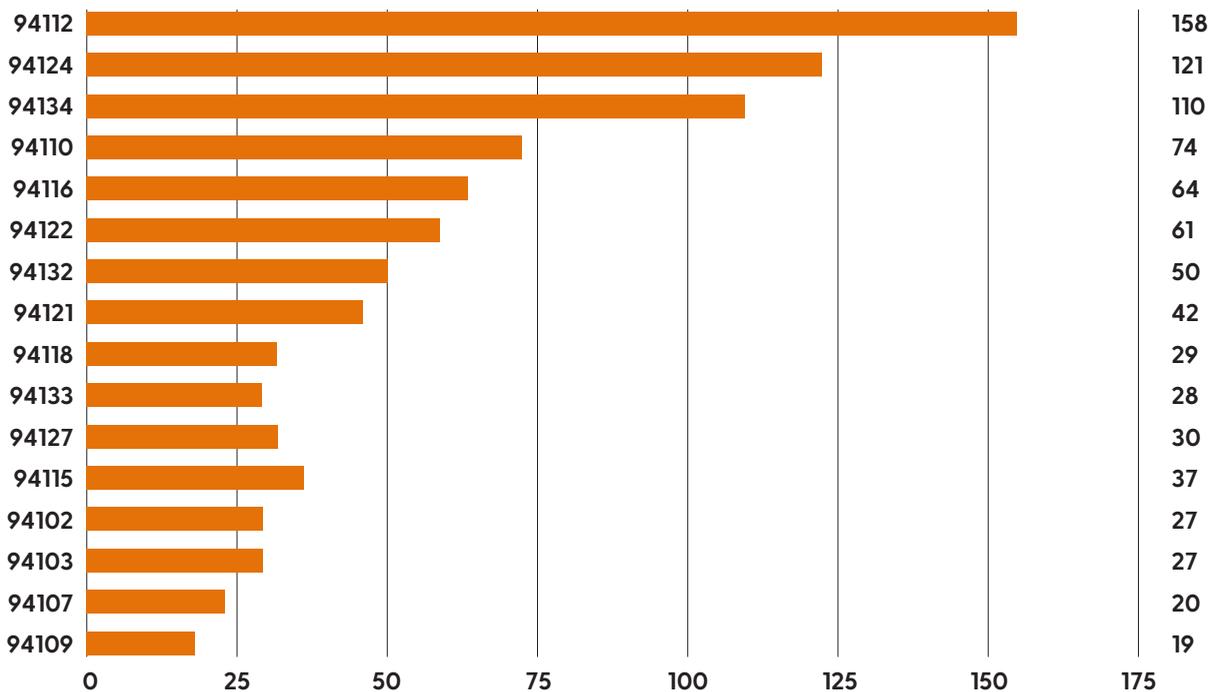


## JOB EXPERIENCE



Number of previous jobs reported by respondents

## YOUTH BY ZIP CODE



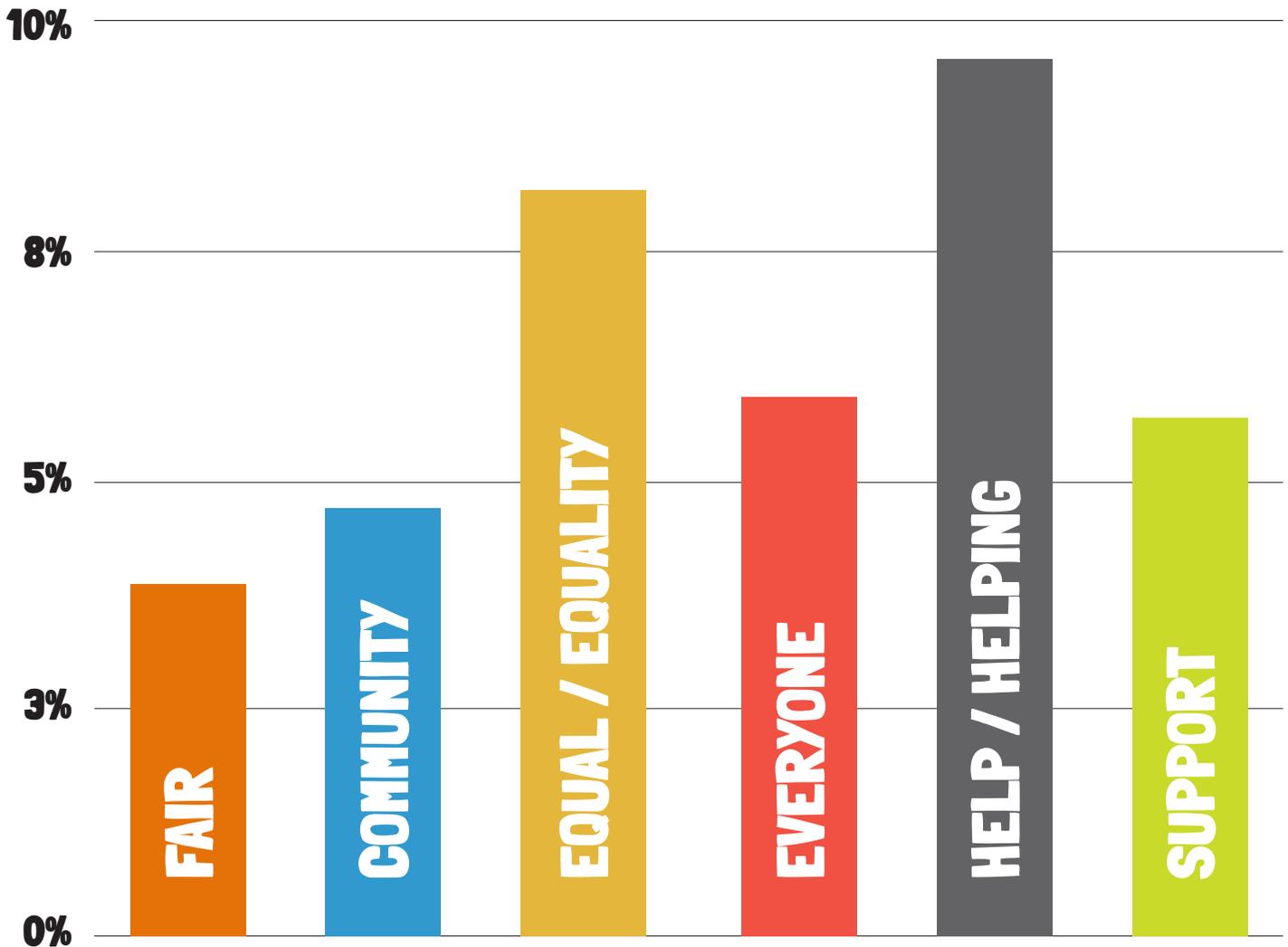
# FRAMEWORK

## EQUITY

OFA utilizes an equity-based framework modeled after the Bronfenbrenner Ecological System, which emphasizes the importance of being cognizant of children’s inherent qualities and how they are influenced by their environments. OFA placed youth experience at the center of the framework, focusing on providing youth with meaningful employment experiences, opportunities to engage with mentors and interact with non-parental adults, and the ability to identify their own career aspirations by giving youth the option to explore jobs across a broad range of industries.

By placing youth experience at the core and working to ensure their success on an individual level, that success will begin to shift the larger narrative of how providing work-based learning opportunities can create equitable communities. This begins starting with the youth’s inner circle of families, peers and schools and eventually expanding to larger communities, government structures, and economic systems.

## EQUITY SKILLS YOUTH PRIORITIZED



A Conference Board survey of more than 400 employers across the United States reported employers found youth lacking in skills necessary for success at work (Casner-Lotto, 2006). In order to better prepare youth to enter the workforce, there is a need to increase the number of programs offering work-based learning opportunities for youth (Symonds et al., 2011).

More needs to be done to better prepare youth for work, improve their skills and provide experience employers are looking for in employees.

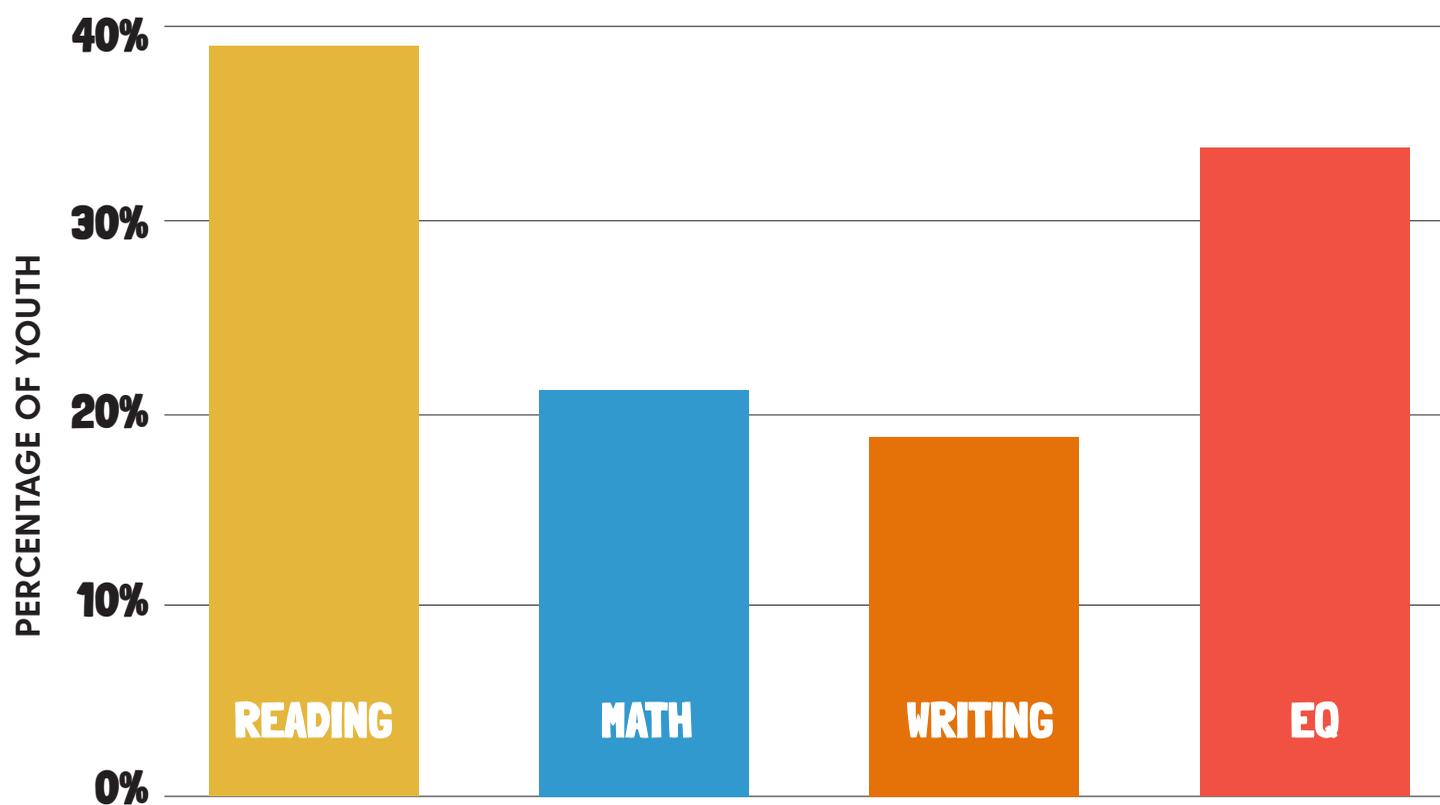
Providing learning in rich environments can be transferred and places greater emphasis on problem solving; providing youth an opportunity to learn in work environments will help them develop skills that will help them succeed in other environments.

Embedded as a core component of the work of Opportunities for All, is a commitment to provide activities that help youth develop skills identified as lacking. As such, we ask all youth and employers to consider how to be intentional around basic and applied skills, as well as what is commonly known as soft skills and referred to here as Emotional Intelligence Quotient.

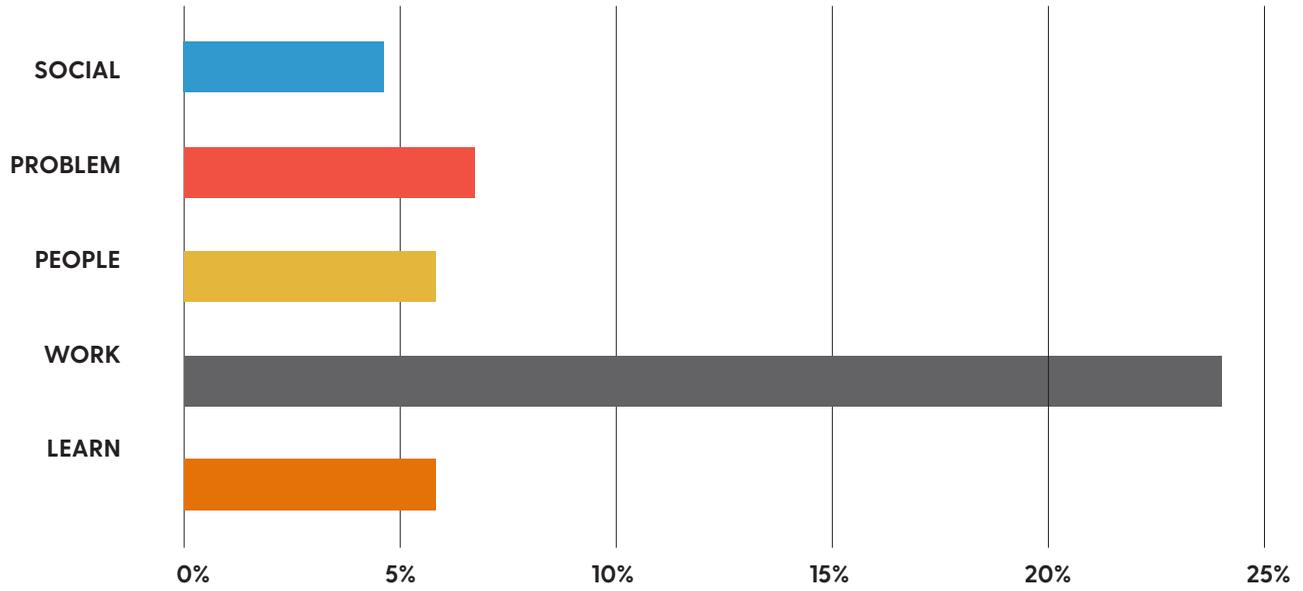
How we frame the idea of these skills is informed by desired skills identified by employers and how beneficial outcomes can be achieved for the youth, their families, the community in addition to employers.

- **BASIC:** reading comprehension, mathematics and basic written communication.
- **APPLIED:** critical thinking, problem solving, professionalism and professional written communication.
- **EQUITY:** practices that shift systems to improve outcomes and increase equity in employment and income.
- **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT (EQ):** recently EQ has been connected to soft skills and typically refers to one's ability to recognize and manage their emotions, improve critical skills and performance.

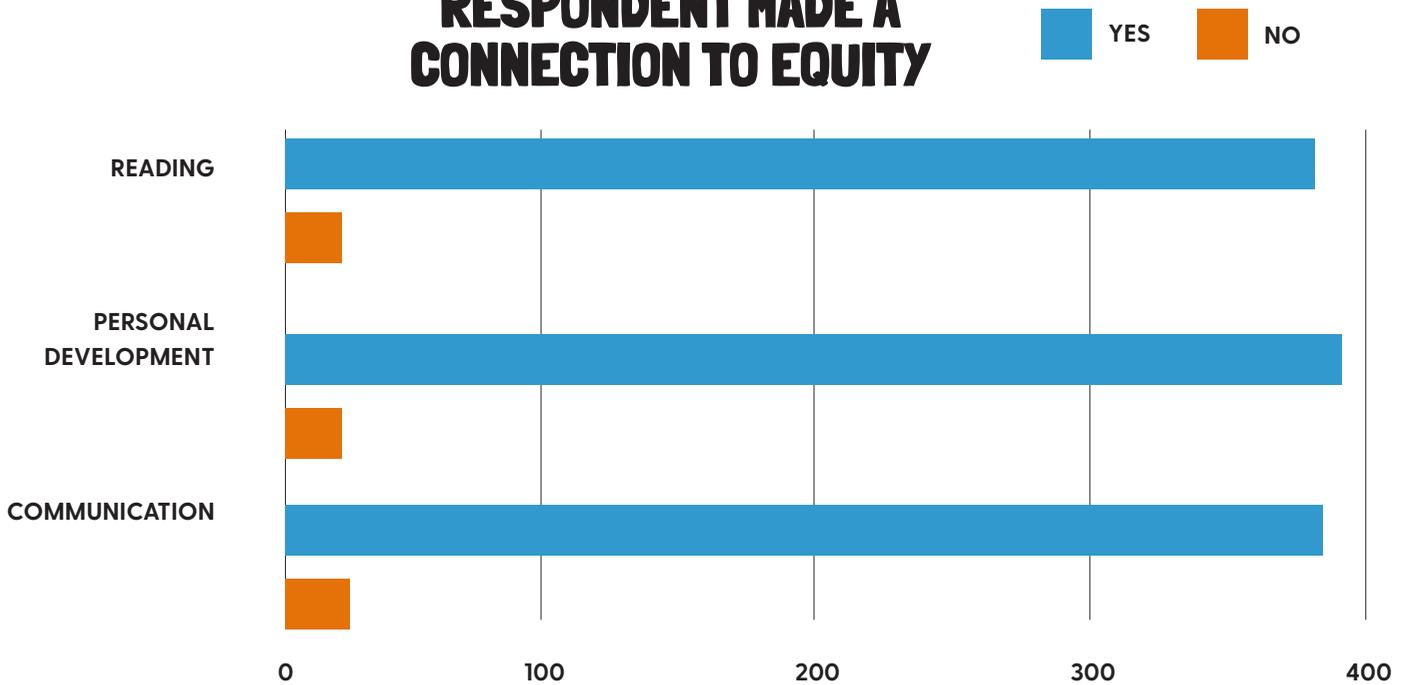
## BASIC SKILLS YOUTH WANTED TO DEVELOP / STRENGTHEN



## RESPONDENT IDENTIFIED APPLIED SKILLS



## RESPONDENT MADE A CONNECTION TO EQUITY



## WORK-BASED LEARNING

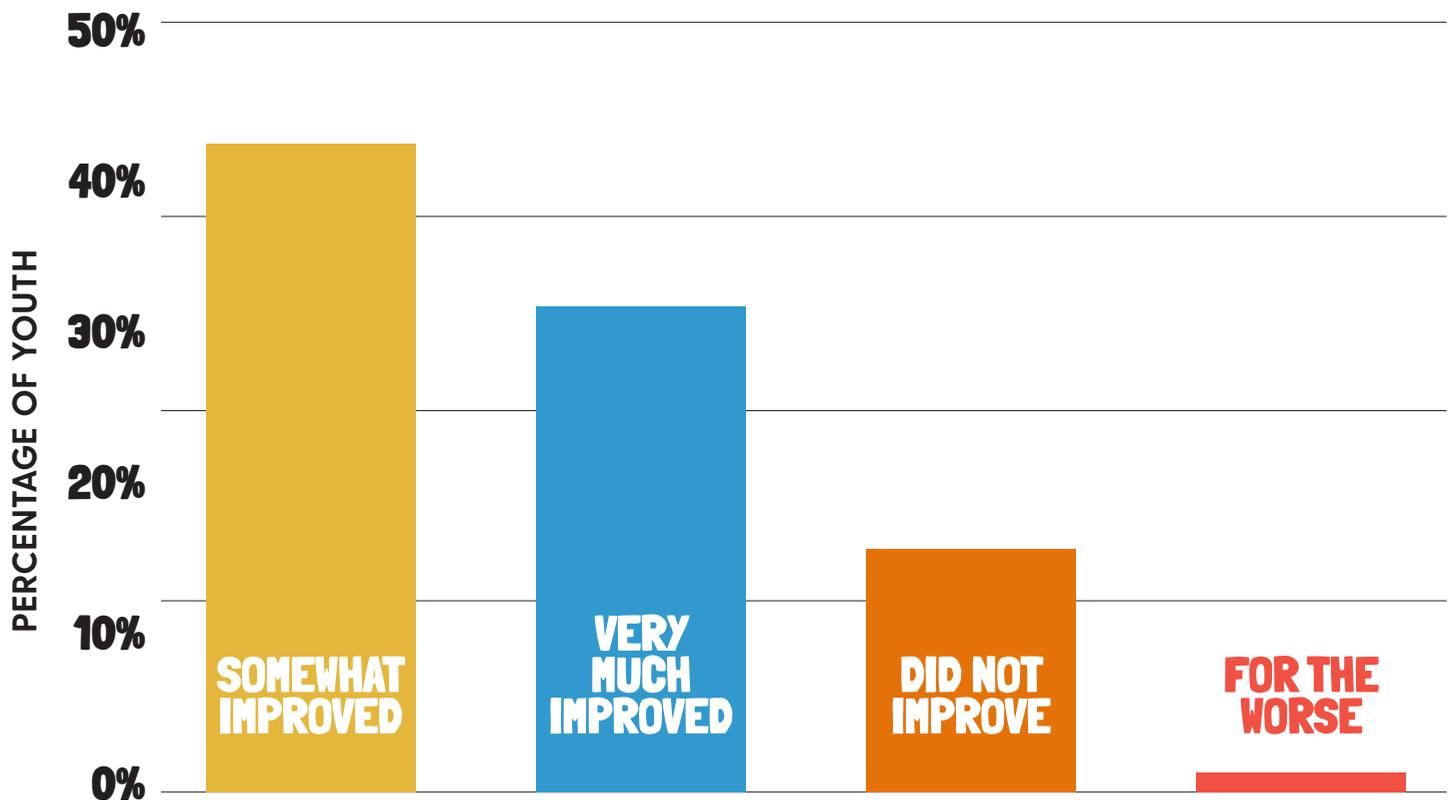
In a survey of high school workforce readiness, a majority of employer respondents reported that recent high school graduates entering the workforce were deficient or below average in a number of basic and applied skills, from reading, writing and math to critical thinking, problem solving and professionalism.

Creating a space for young people to develop these skills, with direct oversight and instruction from supervisors and professionals, will ensure that upon completing their internships any young person can begin an entry-level job with at minimum the basic tools and resources required of them to make the internship successful for both themselves and their employers.

Work-based learning opportunities have been proven as a national best practice to achieve this, which is why we made work-based learning a core part of the OFA framework.

Lastly, as today's workforce shifts more high-wage jobs towards specialized skill sets with steeper learning curves (e.g. tech, healthcare, finance), ensuring that young people are developing those skills as early as possible will give them a better opportunity to compete for and secure high-wage jobs in the future.

## RESPONDENTS THOUGHTS ON GETTING ANOTHER JOB AFTER PARTICIPATION IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



# LESSONS LEARNED / MOVING FORWARD

## RECOGNIZE OUR SUCCESS

Through feedback from participants, OFA was successful largely in part due to three core tenets of the initiative:

### YOUTH LED/DRIVEN:

Youth are the reason why the program exists; they are not an after-thought. Youth lead and sustain the work. Moving forward, we will continue to place youth at the center of OFA, provide them with the appropriate resources and support, and trust that their individual successes will translate into the initiative's long-term success and shift the values and beliefs of the community at large.

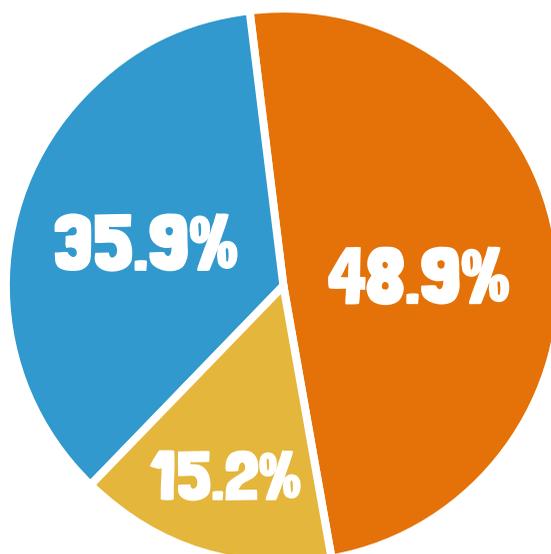
### COMMUNITY:

OFA interns are not just given a job; they are given the opportunity to build skills as community leaders. Creating a community within OFA of interns, mentors, and employers has strengthened the initiative. Investing in our youth now is laying the foundation to build stronger, more equitable communities in the future.

### WORK-BASED LEARNING FRAMEWORK:

Work-based learning is a national best practice and has been proven to prepare youth more effectively for not only entry-level jobs, but also mid- and upper-level jobs. Providing youth with work-based learning opportunities earlier, especially during high school, allows them to gain the confidence to pursue specific career paths in college and beyond. It is critical that, as we expand the program, we continue to focus on ensuring that work-based learning opportunities are available across a vast variety of industries so youth are exposed to and aware of their options.

## APPLIED SKILLS



After this experience, respondents believe their professional manners:

**VERY MUCH IMPROVED - 35.9%**

**SOMEWHAT IMPROVED - 48.9%**

**DID NOT CHANGE - 15.2%**

# LESSONS LEARNED / MOVING FORWARD

Finally, employer networking events and support over the course of the summer will be tremendously expanded. In addition to general support needed from employers, the OFA team will be available to help identify sources of funding for wages and assist in the internship program design development-- which includes creating job descriptions and organizing workshops and field trips.

## **YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND ENGAGEMENT:**

Thanks largely in part to existing relationships within the community, OFA engaged hundreds of youth that have historically been disproportionately impacted by disparities in academic, health, income, and social justice gaps. There are over 54,000 students in San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), with nearly 16,000 in high school, it is estimated that 64% of SFUSD students qualify for free or reduced lunch based on household income levels, and Opportunities for All survey results show that more than 85% of youth respondents are able and willing to work – internships can help develop skills, meet the interest of youth and help support basic needs in low-income households.

OFA's focus on engaging these specific communities led to larger proportions of historically underrepresented populations participating in OFA than the demographic make-up of San Francisco. For example, despite African Americans constituting less than 6% of San Francisco's overall population, nearly 19% of OFA participants identified as African American. Similarly, while 15% of San Francisco's population identifies as LatinX, 22% of OFA participants were LatinX.

Black and LatinX students have consistently been overlooked in most programs, yet they make up the majority of OFA's targeted—at risk youth—those who are living in poverty, are more likely to be incarcerated, and those that come from households with unemployed parents or caregivers with limited or interrupted access to academic institutions. This issue of leaving our Black and Hispanic youth behind is prevalent nationwide. Additionally, when income level is factored into this equation, youth from lower level income households have traditionally been unable or less inclined to seek an internship due to their financial positions—they do not have the financial support to take what has traditionally been an unpaid internship.

Certain neighborhoods have also been unable to benefit from San Francisco's thriving economy, OFA worked to connect with youth living in communities with high levels of unemployment and poverty. Some of the neighborhoods with unemployment rates at 2 – 3 times the citywide level are Bayview Hunter's Point, Outer Mission and Visitation Valley, these also represent where 35% of OFA survey respondents live.

Further, of the nearly 2500 applications OFA received, 7% reported to be a part of an individualized education plan (IEP), meaning they have been identified as having a learning disability and receive specialized instruction or educational accommodations due to it. These numbers are an indication that despite the limited outreach, and false narratives, the youth in our traditionally underrepresented communities are ready and willing to work. It follows that, with sufficient outreach in the coming years, OFA will capture the entire underserved population.

**“ONE THING I DISLIKE WAS THE LACK OF AVAILABLE WORKING HOURS, BUT I UNDERSTAND THE BUDGET CONSIDERATION.”**

**– SURVEY RESPONSE**

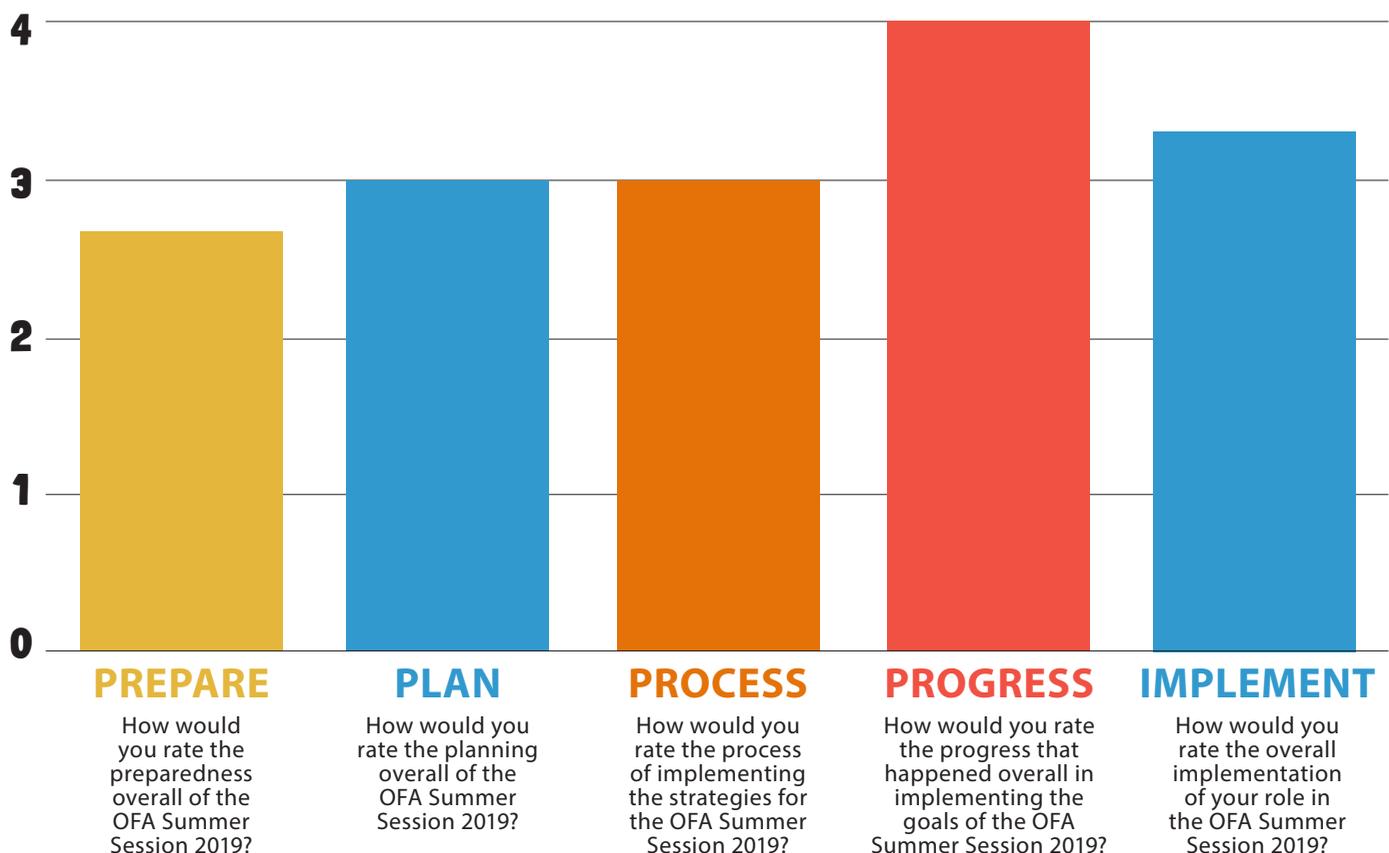
# LESSONS LEARNED / MOVING FORWARD

## PREPARATION TIMELINE

Project and Program leads expressed a need for better preparation for engagement with their cohorts and projects. OFA will address this need by implementing a training process that will begin well before the youth summer internships begin.

Employers expressed a desire for additional time developing their programming to adequately reflect their workplace values and activities. The OFA team has designated a point-person dedicated solely to employer engagement and support.

Finally, OFA needs to allocate additional resources, support and time for community-based organizations, which continue to lead the way in developing strong, supportive pathways for youth.



## ACCOUNTABILITY AND COLLABORATION

OFA's success is owed to the dedication and commitment of its partners to create access and opportunities for all youth. Moving forward, to continue this trend of success, there needs to be increased partnership and collaboration—beyond placement in work-based learning opportunities.

The need to share data, centralize and coordinate services, and work across systems, neighborhoods and politics to advance long-term change in outcomes for these communities that have long suffered from economic, health, academic, and other disparities. Additionally, defining specific roles and responsibilities of partners will increase the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the initiative.

# EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

## **RESEARCH AND DATA**

When creating OFA, we looked at many other summer youth workforce development programs across the nation, and one of the biggest missing factors was data or research on the long-term impacts of these programs. While programs readily cited the number of youth served, only recently have many of the programs begun tracking key demographic or outreach information that could be used to track how paid summer jobs impact a youth's success in postsecondary education and in the workforce. OFA hopes to conduct a longitudinal study on the impact of the work, as well as an assessment of who participated in the program and who had access to which opportunities.

A partnership with the University of San Francisco's McCarthy Center is helping to document and evaluate the first summer of Opportunities for All. A potential partnership with Stanford University's SPARQ lab could help inform strategies to build off of the report, *Mobility from Poverty*.

In addition to outside evaluators, the Office of the Controller, who plays an important citywide role in data collection and reporting, could be supportive in assessing impact and sharing lessons learned through this project. Many of the City departments are tasked with workforce training deliverables and face challenges in collaboration. Using the knowledge gained through participation in this project, San Francisco's workforce system will be well positioned to measure impact and increase gains from collaboration across other programs and training.

## **A REGIONAL APPROACH**

As more and more families encounter economic difficulties due to rising costs of living in San Francisco and the larger Bay Area, a regional approach has been considered.

Numerous youth and their families from surrounding communities, especially those immediately adjacent to San Francisco such as Oakland, Berkeley, and South San Francisco, have asked if, when, and how they could bring OFA to their cities. Similarly, the initiative had to adapt to support youth who either live in San Francisco and attend school elsewhere, or vice versa (live elsewhere but attend school in San Francisco).

It is widely acknowledged that addressing income, health, and wealth disparities throughout the Bay Area will require collaboration between cities across the region; no one city can solve these issues on its own.

**“APPRECIATED: EXPONENTIAL GROWTH  
CHALLENGING: EXPONENTIAL GROWTH”**

**– PROGRAM STAFF**

# EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

## **YEAR-ROUND OPPORTUNITIES**

While the summer months are prioritized for internship and job opportunities as most youth are not attending school full-time, if we are to create truly equitable opportunities for all San Franciscans, we must explore expanding OFA into a program that lasts longer than a few weeks during the summer.

Whether by partnering with local schools to incorporate existing school-year career education programs into OFA, or expanding or creating after-school programs with private sector partners, there are a number of ways to achieve this that will require data sharing, increased staff and resources, and higher accountability standards for partners to ensure students' success in the classroom and the workplace.

## **A HOLISTIC APPROACH**

Supporting young people to succeed is more than just providing a summer job. OFA is working to provide more comprehensive support that addresses the various needs that young people have in San Francisco – and as young people in society in general.

This includes academic support throughout the school year; mental and behavioral health services; facilitating deep connections with mentors; and exploring a multi-generational approach.

To ensure the long-term health, wellness and safety of all communities, including underserved communities of color, City executives across the nation are increasingly seeking capacity-building support to develop cross-departmental infrastructure and best practices. To achieve success, that infrastructure must: explicitly focus on disparities; build a sustainable collaboration related to the area(s) of focus; track progress at the individual and household level; and ultimately deliver results and outcomes in a healing-centered fashion for the populations we serve.

We therefore define success as a shift in policies and processes that prioritize collaboration and create data-driven decision-making teams from diverse backgrounds. This collaboration must include decision-makers from departments connected to education, employment and overall well-being, as well as business and community leaders. If this team can meet and develop policies and strategies that measure impact and share data across systems, it will help inform a shift in other areas.

Additionally, a comprehensive, shared understanding of the interconnected nature of the education system, employer network and City bureaucracy is key to improving Opportunities for All in future iterations. As the partnerships between the private sector, school district and City deepen, each entity will become more familiar with the needs and goals of the others, allowing for a more efficient and effective program.