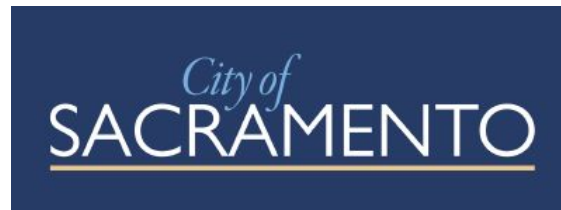


# **Sacramento Children's Fund Strategic Investment Plan**

**July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2029**



**Prepared by Sacramento Children's Fund Planning and Oversight  
Commission, with support from Third Plateau**

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# Welcome

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## Land Acknowledgement

The Sacramento Children’s Fund Planning and Oversight Commission acknowledges that we benefit from living and working on the ancestral and unceded lands of Sacramento’s Indigenous Peoples<sup>[i, ii]</sup>. We recognize and honor the Nisenan people, the Southern Maidu, Valley and Plains Miwok, Patwin Wintun peoples, and the people of the Wilton Rancheria, Sacramento’s only Federally recognized Tribe. This acknowledgement demonstrates an intention to working together to build a more just and inclusive future where we dismantle the systems that enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous voices, contributions, and history, and affirm the many Indigenous Peoples past, present, and future who resist, live, and uphold their sacred relations across these lands.

## City of Sacramento Racial Equity Statement

The City of Sacramento affirms racial equity as a core value in which race does not affect life outcomes. We acknowledge historical racial inequities and are committed to transparent, deliberate, and actionable solutions that will remedy those inequities and serve all our diverse communities.

# Executive Summary:

## Sacramento Children's Fund Strategic Investment Plan

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### The Sacramento Children's Fund (Measure L)

In November 2022, voters in the City of Sacramento resoundingly approved the Sacramento Children and Youth Health and Safety Act. Also known as Measure L, this Act established the Sacramento Children's Fund (SCF or "the Fund") as a dedicated stream of funding for child and youth services.

The SCF is supported by general fund revenue, as determined by the City's existing cannabis business operations tax, which supplies an estimated \$8-10 million annually to fund programs and services for children and youth less than 25 years of age through an open, transparent, and competitive grant process. Five fund goals provide overarching direction for investing available funds. These goals include supporting the mental health and emotional wellness of youth and the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5, as well as preventing and reducing youth homelessness, substance abuse, and violence.

A nine-member Sacramento Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission (SCF Commission) was also created to work in partnership with the Sacramento Youth Commission to develop this five-year Strategic Investment Plan, review annual service performance reports and periodic evaluation reports, and make recommendations to the City Council regarding investments in the programs and services that children and youth need and deserve to fully participate, prosper, and achieve their optimal potential.

### The Strategic Investment Plan

The current five-year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029) Strategic Investment Plan overviews the goals of the SCF and the opportunities and challenges that Sacramento is facing in relation to these goals. Strategies for programming, funding allocations, fund management, and public accountability recommended by the SCF Commission are also discussed. This plan will be presented to the City Council for approval and the fund will be implemented by the City's Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment Department (YPCE). *Key components of the plan are outlined below.*

**Community Input** | This plan was informed by a landscape scan, frameworks for youth development, and community voice, including through a community survey and a series of community listening sessions. During the listening sessions, youth, parents, community and system leaders, and other community careholders shared their experiences, insights, needs, and desires for SCF-funded programming. Between January and August 2024, the SCF Commission, Sacramento Youth Commission, and YPCE staff met regularly to review the community findings and identify recommendations for directing SCF investments.

**Focus on Equity** | With equity at the core of Measure L, this five-year Strategic Investment Plan prioritizes children and youth who are the farthest from services and resources to ensure they receive maximum access to and benefit from SCF-funded programs. The SCF Commission recommends that funding be directed to agencies serving the neighborhoods, schools, and communities where youth experience the greatest impacts of poverty, trauma, and violence.

**Recommended Strategies** | This plan outlines a series of program strategies that were identified based on community input and documented effectiveness (see table below). These strategies align with the mission, vision, and goals of the SCF. Programs and services that use one or more of these strategies may be eligible for SCF grant funding. Additionally, the SCF Commission recommends utilizing part of the Fund's budget to support a Guaranteed Basic Income Program for youth who are transitioning out of foster care.

# Executive Summary: Sacramento Children’s Fund Strategic Investment Plan

## Strategies to Achieve Fund Goals

### 1. Support the mental health and emotional wellness of youth

- Increase mental health literacy
- Develop healthy cultural identities
- Enhance social, emotional, & behavioral learning
- Provide cognitive behavioral interventions
- Reduce access to lethal means

### 2. Prevent and reduce youth homelessness

- Direct, unrestricted cash assistance
- Prioritize family support and reunification
- Expand housing programs
- Improve supportive crisis responses
- Provide street outreach

### 3. Prevent and reduce youth substance abuse

- Substance abuse screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment
- Integrate harm reduction
- Develop positive coping skills
- Build youth power to address socially-based stressors

### 4. Prevent and reduce youth violence

- Community-based violence intervention
- School-based safety programming
- Workforce development and employment
- Youth leadership and empowerment

### 5. Support the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5

- Promote early learning and school readiness
- Support responsive relationships
- Champion positive parenting skills and peer-support
- Provide economic supports to reduce sources of life stress
- Expand child care access

### Guaranteed basic income for foster youth

- Unconditional cash transfers for current or former foster youth ages 18-24
- Optional wrap-around services, such as financial literacy courses and housing or job search assistance
- Public benefits counseling to ensure informed youth participation

**Fund Management |** This plan recommends two multi-year competitive funding cycles to award program grants. Grantees are encouraged to leverage existing community, public, and private resources and initiatives, and funded programs should be aligned with the Citywide Youth Development Plan and Framework for Children and Youth Programs. Other key recommendations made by the SCF Commission include receiving ongoing updates on the SCF granting process, robust community engagement, capacity building among SCF-funded grantees, and a youth-focused external evaluator.

This five-year Strategic Investment Plan draws on community wisdom, puts youth at the center, and stresses accountability to the public for making a sustained, positive impact on the lives of Sacramento’s children and youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence. The recommendations are rooted in a shared commitment to learning, expanding, and innovating on what works for ensuring that all children and youth have equitable access to the power, conditions, opportunities, and experiences that enable them to fully participate, prosper, and achieve their optimal potential.

# Letter from the Chairs

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## Dear Sacramento Community,

As two young adults born and raised in the City of Sacramento, we had the unique experience of helping lead the campaign that established the voter-approved Sacramento Children's Fund in 2022. Now, as chairs of the Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission and the Sacramento Youth Commission respectively, we are actively involved in planning the implementation of the fund.

We want to begin by thanking the youth, adult allies, city staff, and local representatives who supported this initiative through its various iterations. Establishing a Children's Fund in Sacramento took years of dedicated effort, driven by the youth and adult leaders of the Sac Kids First Coalition. Through the years, we held the belief that investing in our most underserved youth, children, and their families is crucial for the City's prosperity and that the fund itself has the potential to positively impact youth, children, and families for generations to come.

In this letter, we offer recommendations to present and future commissioners, city staff, and consultants as we continue to collaborate on the implementation of the Sacramento Children's Fund. To maximize the positive impact of the Children's Fund we believe every part of the process from planning to implementation must include the following components:

### 1) Center youth and community voices

We challenge future commissioners, consultants, and city staff to not just "consult" with the Sacramento Youth Commission (SYC) but to collaborate intentionally with the SYC to ensure the voices of Sacramento youth are honored throughout this process. To achieve this, we encourage both commissions to routinely hold joint meetings and collaborate with the City and community-based organizations to implement targeted approaches to engaging youth, especially those from communities most impacted by poverty, violence, and trauma.

This can be achieved by 1) engaging youth where it is convenient for them, in their schools and communities, and via trusted community-based organizations; 2) offering a variety of methods for youth to engage in the process, virtually or in-person while compensating them for their time and engagement; and 3) doing targeted, intentional outreach to youth and adult allies so that they are aware of the services and opportunities available to them.

### 2) Be transparent and accountable

As a part of the implementation process, it is also important to build trust within the broader community and ensure that the community can see the tangible benefits of the fund. This process involves 1) transparency at the onset of every new fiscal year by publicizing the amount of funding available online and where it can be accessed by the public; 2) collecting comprehensive data from funded projects so that progress can be measured; and 3) engaging with youth and community members at every stage of the process to learn about their experience as funded entities or recipients of services.

## Letter from the Chairs

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The evaluation process should be specific, thorough, and transparent, allowing us to measure impact accurately and make data-driven decisions. If our goal is to create lasting positive change in the lives of Sacramento's children, we need to be transparent about the process we are engaging in to get there.

### 3) Emphasize equity

Both commissions must commit to integrating an equity lens in the strategic investment plan at the onset. To achieve this, we should expect to collaborate with the Sacramento Racial Equity Alliance, the Office of Diversity and Equity, and the Sacramento Racial Equity Committee. The City must also commit to using an equity-centered approach in its RFP and contracting process that aligns with the recommendations in the strategic investment plan (i.e. priority neighborhoods and populations). Most importantly, our efforts must continuously uplift the voices of Sacramento youth who often are left out of the process. Therefore, commissioners and city staff must ensure youth from the most underrepresented and impacted communities are included in the community engagement process.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation to the active members of the Sacramento Youth Commission and the Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Commission who offered their expertise and experience to make this plan happen. Everyone from current and future appointed commissioners, city staff, local representatives, and community-based organizations has a role to play in the success of this fund, and this responsibility must be held with care. Together, we can ensure that the Sacramento Children's Fund remains a powerful force for equity and opportunity, empowering future generations of children, youth, and their families to thrive.

Sincerely,

**Leo Hsu**  
Chair, Sacramento Youth Commission

**Monica Ruelas Mares**  
Chair, Sacramento Children's Fund Planning  
and Oversight Commission

# I. Introduction

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In November 2022, after years of youth-led community organizing and advocacy, voters in the City of Sacramento resoundingly approved the Sacramento Children and Youth Health and Safety Act. Also known as **Measure L**, this Act established the Sacramento Children’s Fund (SCF or “the Fund”) as a dedicated stream of sustained funding to support positive youth development and youth violence prevention programs for Sacramento children and youth less than 25 years of age.

**“In five years, with thriving youths, Sacramento could be a vibrant and dynamic city. We might see more community involvement, innovative ideas, and a strong sense of youth empowerment, more youth-led initiatives, and a positive impact on the city. There would be a good change.”**  
- Youth focus group participant

The money for the SCF comes from local cannabis business operations tax (CBOT) revenue. Specifically, the SCF receives 40% of the annual revenue generated from the CBOT. This amounts to an estimated \$8-10 million annually in resources dedicated toward child and youth services, in addition to the City’s existing budget allocations.

**Measure L identified five fund goals that provide overarching direction for investing available funds in the Sacramento community:**

- Goal 1: Support the mental health and emotional wellness of youth
- Goal 2: Prevent and reduce youth homelessness
- Goal 3: Prevent and reduce youth substance abuse
- Goal 4: Prevent and reduce youth violence
- Goal 5: Support the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5

## Planning and Oversight Commission

Measure L also created a nine-member Sacramento Children’s Fund Planning and Oversight Commission (SCF Commission) consisting of one member appointed by the Mayor and one member appointed by each of the City Council Members representing the eight council districts in the City.

In partnership with the Sacramento Youth Commission, the SCF Commission is tasked with developing and refining a five-year strategic investment plan to guide the distribution of available funds, reviewing funded program performance and evaluation reports, and making recommendations to the City Council regarding investments in child and youth services.

## Strategic Investment Plan

The following five-year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029) Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) is organized around the five fund goals, each with a statement on the envisioned outcome, followed by a brief narrative that underscores the challenges to be addressed and opportunities to be advanced for that goal area. Options for strategies to achieve desired outcomes for each of the fund goals follow, with an emphasis on approaches that support the specific needs and experiences of children and youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence. Recommendations for funding allocations, fund management, and public accountability to evaluate progress toward achieving the fund goals are also



## I. Introduction

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provided. Taken together, the components of this plan provide an articulation of values, intent, and accountability founded on the following statement of mission, vision, and guiding principles.

### Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

#### Mission Statement:

The SCF provides a dedicated stream of sustained funding to support positive youth development and youth violence prevention programs for Sacramento's children and youth from birth to age 24.

#### Vision Statement:

All children and youth in Sacramento, especially those most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, will have equitable access to the power, conditions, opportunities, and experiences that enable them to fully participate, prosper, and achieve their optimal potential.

#### Guiding Principles:

As with all City of Sacramento-supported programs for children and youth, the SCF is committed to adhering to and deliberately taking action that aligns with the values, social justice principles, and research-based supports and opportunities outlined in the [Citywide Youth Development Plan & Framework for Children and Youth Programs](#).

#### Value Statements:

- **Youth Voice:** Honor the youth mantra, "Nothing about us without us."
- **Elimination of Systemic Barriers:** Actively seek ways to break systemic barriers so that youth have access and ability to fully utilize resources and supports.
- **Cultural Humility:** Acknowledge individual and institutional biases, accepting that there are gaps in our knowledge and being open to new ideas.
- **Mutual Respect:** Build relationships through developing a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity.
- **Integrity:** Conduct our work in an honest, moral, ethical, and accountable manner.
- **Innovation:** Recognize that the status quo is unacceptable if it is not improving the lives of Sacramento's children and youth, and thus, we call for thinking outside of the box to better support our youngest residents.
- **Courage:** Have the audacity to take risks, stand up for what is right, and address the most challenging situations is unquestionable.

#### Social Justice Principles:

- Analyze power in social relationships
- Promote systemic social change
- Make identity central
- Encourage collective action
- Embrace youth culture

#### Supports and Opportunities:

- **Safety**
  - Emotional
  - Physical
  - Cultural
- **Relationship-Building**
  - With adults
  - With peers
- **Skill-Building**
  - Challenging
  - Interesting
  - Leading to growth and mastery
- **Youth Participation**
  - Input and decision-making
  - Opportunities for leadership
  - Sense of belonging
- **Community Involvement**
  - Ability to impact community

## I. Introduction

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### Local Data & Community Input Informing the Strategic Investment Plan

This Strategic Investment Plan was informed by a multipronged approach to gathering local data and community input that began in early 2024 with a landscape analysis of child and youth needs and services. A series of community listening sessions and interviews were also conducted to gather feedback from youth, families, and service providers.

A common theme emerged: neighborhoods across Sacramento differ significantly in their access to the social, economic, and environmental resources and conditions that allow children, youth, and their families to thrive. These disparities include varying availability of quality schools and afterschool activities, safe housing, healthy food, parks, clean air, transportation access, and economic opportunities. Such differences in neighborhood opportunity fundamentally shape young people's experiences and outcomes related to the fund goals. Historic and present-day laws, policies, and practices rooted in racial discrimination and economic exclusion have contributed to these inequities, including restrictive zoning, racial covenants, redlining, displacement through urban renewal, and segregated public housing. As a result, not all young people in Sacramento have equal access to the local resources and conditions that enrich their development and maximize their potential. For more detailed information, see the [SCF Research Findings](#) and the [SCF Community Engagement Findings](#).

**“I've had 20 years of being in North Sacramento. There has been a historic disinvestment of infrastructure, facilities, and programming for residents. The economic impact alone for the community is really an underlying factor for all five [fund goal] areas.”**  
- CBO focus group participant

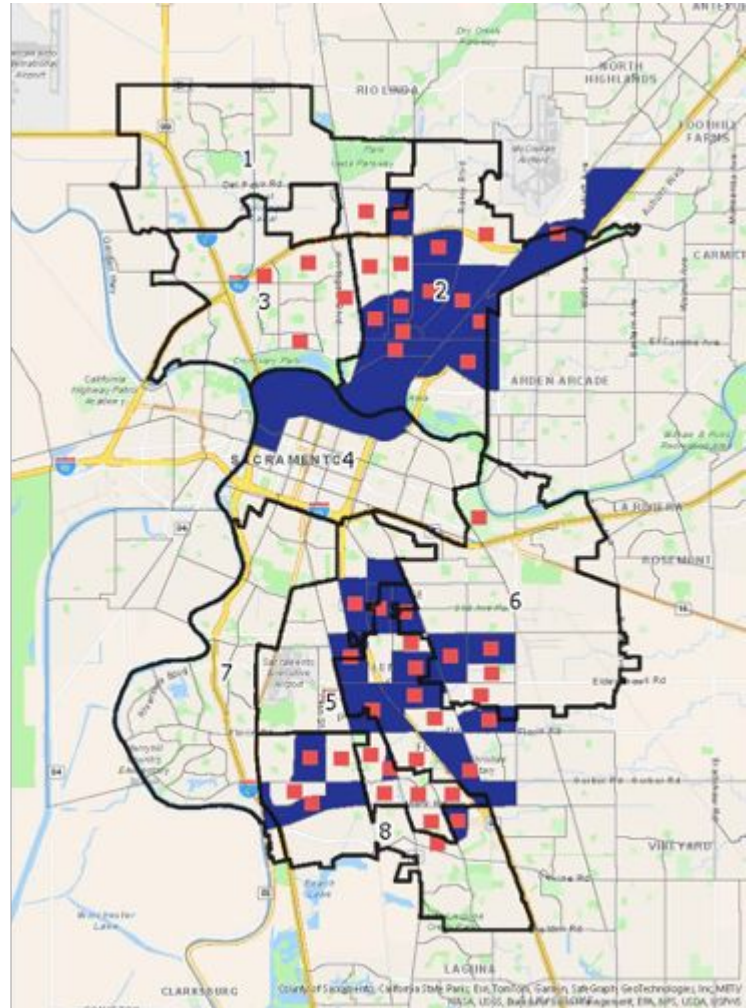
The SCF Commission sought a data-informed way to measure important differences in the landscape of opportunity for children and youth across neighborhoods. Two complementary methods for identifying neighborhood inequity are the [Child Opportunity Index \(COI\)](#)<sup>[iii]</sup> and the [Sacramento Equity Explore Design \(SEED\) tool](#).<sup>[iv]</sup> The COI and the SEED Equity Index tool each aim to identify the quality of resources and conditions that influence the healthy development and life chances of children and youth in the City's 152 census tracts (or neighborhoods, see Appendix Table 1).

These composite indices use more than 40 indicators across multiple domains to provide comparable measures of inequity across neighborhoods. Data encompassed across these indices include: the availability and quality of neighborhood institutions, such as quality schools and nonprofits; peer and adult influences that help shape children's norms and expectations, such as the high school graduation rate and high-skill employment rate for adults; neighborhood social structure and economic resources, such as the poverty rate, broadband access, and mobility-enhancing friendship networks; environmental quality, such as air pollution; and resources for healthy living, such as green space, access to healthy foods, and walkability.

## I. Introduction

**Figure 1** visualizes the distribution of neighborhood opportunity with an overlay of COI scores and SEED tool scores within the City of Sacramento. These scores are used to categorize neighborhoods into levels, ranging from very low- to very high-opportunity (COI) and from the lowest to highest equity quintile (SEED tool), respectively, relative to other neighborhoods in the area.

The SCF recognizes the benefits of channeling funds to support young people and families in meeting their basic needs in neighborhoods with the most limited conditions and fewest resources for positive development and future success. This approach is not about benefiting one group or one neighborhood at the expense of another. Rather, when strategies are tailored to the needs of communities farthest from resources, opportunities improve for all. The SCF Commission recommends prioritizing the unique needs and experiences of children and youth in very low-opportunity neighborhoods (red squares in Figure 1) or neighborhoods within the lowest equity quintile (blue shading in Figure 1). While these areas may receive priority consideration in funding decisions, all entities proposing to serve children and youth, particularly youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, are equally encouraged to apply and contribute to the mission of the SCF.



*Figure 1. Distribution of neighborhood opportunity in the City of Sacramento, by City Council District*

## I. Introduction

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### Children and Youth Most Impacted by Poverty, Trauma, and Violence

The City of Sacramento has a rich history of diverse communities and cultures, as well as vibrant neighborhood histories; however, many of our children and youth continue to struggle with poverty, trauma, and violence. Measure L prioritizes those children and youth with the greatest need for resources and supports. The profile below provides a snapshot of current conditions disproportionately impacting a subset of Sacramento children and youth.

#### Profile of Children and Youth Living in Sacramento:

The City of Sacramento includes almost 165,000 children and youth (ages 0-24 years) residents.

- 1 in 5 children and youth live in a household with income below the poverty line.<sup>[v]</sup>
- There are a total of 1,110 children and youth (0-21 years) in foster care; 242 of these youth were 18-21.<sup>[vi]</sup>

#### Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

- 41% of 11 Grade students report experiencing chronic sadness/hopelessness in the past 12 months.<sup>[vii]</sup>
- 3,034 children and youth were admitted to an Emergency Department for injuries related to self-harm. Seventy children and youth died by suicide (2020-23).<sup>[viii]</sup>

#### Homelessness and Foster Youth

- The 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Homeless Count estimated that 10% of the unhoused in Sacramento were children under 18, and 7% were youth between 18 and 24.<sup>[ix]</sup>
- Those youth in, or transitioning out, of foster care are at a heightened risk for homelessness. One out of every four (25%) of all unhoused individuals surveyed in the 2024 Sacramento PIT shared that they had once been in foster care or lived in a group home before they were an adult.<sup>[x]</sup>

#### Substance Abuse

- Fourteen percent of 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Sacramento self-reported using drugs or alcohol one more days in the past 30 days.<sup>[xi]</sup>
- In Sacramento, fentanyl deaths for youth under 25 nearly tripled from 2019 to 2023 (14 to 38 deaths).<sup>[xii]</sup>

#### Violence

- Between 2020-2022, there were 86 child and youth homicides in the city, including 26 homicides among children ages 0-17, an increase from zero between 2018-2019. Black youth (15-24) are almost nine times more likely to die from homicide than White youth.<sup>[xiii]</sup>
- Only half of Sacramento County students (grade 7-11) feel safe in school. LGBTQ+ students report the lowest percentages of feeling safe in school.<sup>[xiv]</sup>

#### Early Childhood Development

- Less than half of the children (45%) served by First 5 Sacramento were read to at least five days a week.<sup>[xv]</sup>
- Child care spaces are available in Sacramento for only 28% of the children who need them.<sup>[xvi]</sup>

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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This section discusses the status of Sacramento’s children and youth in relation to each of the five fund goals and are accompanied by opportunity statements that envision future outcomes over the next five years. Recommended strategies to achieve each of these visions are discussed below. Strategies were identified through community input and demonstrated effectiveness, as well as alignment with the mission, vision, and goals of the SCF. Additional data can be found in Third Plateau’s [SCF Research Findings Report](#).

### **Goal 1. Support the mental health and emotional wellness of youth**

**Opportunity Statement:** All children and youth in Sacramento have fair and just opportunity to reach their highest level of mental health and emotional well-being.

The mental health and emotional wellness of children and youth is a critical aspect of development and foundational to lifelong health and overall well-being. Positive mental health enables young people to navigate the complexities of day-to-day life, build meaningful relationships, adapt to change, utilize relevant coping mechanisms, have their needs met, and realize their purpose and optimal potential. Yet rates of youth depression and anxiety, as well as youth suicide ideation, attempts, and deaths, even among younger youth, have been on the rise for years and remain unacceptably high.

**“I work in a psychiatric facility and I see so many adolescents that do not have coping skills, healthy habits, access to mental health education and mental health care...Mental health is so important. Mentally unwell adolescents don’t disappear. They become adults that feel helpless, experience homelessness.”**  
- Youth focus group participant

In California, American Indian and Alaska Native youth ages 10-24 experienced the highest suicide death rate from 2018-2022; Black youth experienced the greatest increase in rate; and Latinx youth experienced the largest absolute number of deaths due to suicide.<sup>[xvii]</sup> A statewide survey in 2021 additionally found that 44% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 13-24 had seriously considered suicide and 14% had attempted suicide in the past year.<sup>[xviii]</sup> Sacramento’s youth are disproportionately impacted: from 2018-2022, the suicide death rate among Sacramento area youth was 8% higher than the state overall; and, in a 2022-23 survey, more than 1 in 3 Sacramento City middle and high school students said they had experienced chronic sadness or hopelessness in the past 12 months.<sup>[xix]</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing mental health risk factors, while also increasing exposure to new stressors, especially for children and youth with minoritized and marginalized identities who face unique challenges due to inequities in insurance status, fear and distrust of health care providers, institutional and interpersonal racism, implicit bias, and difficulty accessing culturally relevant providers. Mental health problems and emotional distress can interfere with children’s functioning, learning, and behavior; older youth may use substances or act in ways that elevate their risk for unhealthy outcomes; and research suggests that unmet mental health needs contribute to youth homelessness and increased involvement with the foster care and juvenile justice systems.



## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Options for Strategies to Achieve Goal 1

The SCF supports youth-driven, culturally-affirming, and trauma-responsive strategies that are coordinated, equitable, appropriate, timely, sustainable, and accessible, so that all children and youth have fair and just opportunity to develop and maintain positive mental health, as well as access to affordable and effective early intervention, treatment, and recovery care when, where, and in the ways they need it most. These include<sup>[xx]</sup>:

- **Increasing mental health literacy:** Increase knowledge and understanding of how to develop and maintain positive mental health, especially peer modeling programs, as well as skills that support how to effectively engage in help-seeking while also removing systemic barriers to access.
- **Developing healthy cultural identities:** Focus on promotion of strength-based, culturally grounded protective factors over reduction of risk to help build a sense of belonging while countering stigmatization of impacted populations and communities.
- **Enhancing social, emotional, and behavioral learning:** Promote social skills and emotional development by focusing on self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social and self-awareness while enhancing connectedness to peers, adults, and community.
- **Providing cognitive behavioral interventions:** Teach skills for emotional regulation, anxiety management, and problem solving to address disruptive thoughts and behaviors in ways that are culturally adaptive or tailored to meet the unique needs of young people and families.
- **Reducing access to lethal means:** Promote safety by removing or securing access to dangerous items such as guns, medications, or other household items that could be used to cause harm to oneself or others in a “moment of crisis.”

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### **Goal 2. Prevent and reduce youth homelessness, especially among youth transitioning out of foster care<sup>[xxi]</sup>**

**Opportunity Statement:** All children and youth in Sacramento have a safe and stable place to live and the resources needed to sustainably meet their basic needs.

Housing has a profound impact on the lives of children and youth. Stable housing roots young people in communities, helping to meet basic human needs for safety, support, and belonging and enabling them to access opportunities that are necessary for healthy development and to achieve their optimal potential. Stable housing is linked to increased educational achievement for children and youth; greater family stability; improved job security and access to other family resources, including receipt of public benefits; better health and mental health outcomes throughout life; and stronger communities, as young people can establish durable ties to neighbors and the places they live.<sup>[xxii]</sup>

By contrast, children and youth experiencing inadequate housing, frequent housing transitions, and homelessness, especially youth experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian, are more likely to endure threats to their health, safety, and well-being, including: missing school, resulting in higher rates of problem behavior and dropping out, experiencing poverty, and becoming involved in the juvenile justice system; mental health problems, including suicidal ideation and attempts; substance misuse; violence exposure and injury, including physical and sexual assault and sex and labor trafficking; and unhealthy survival strategies, including stealing, selling drugs, or exchanging sex for basic needs.

**“In my situation, I experienced homelessness because I didn't have the ability to afford an apartment when the pandemic happened. No one checked in on me, and my foster family was collecting AB20 money. I had no job. So, making sure youth have these funds up until they're 21 and have housing stability to reduce youth homelessness [is important].”**

*- Youth focus group participant*

Differing definitions of homelessness and varied research methodologies mean that no single data source provides a complete picture of youth homelessness. In California, depending on the source, annual numbers of children and youth experiencing homelessness can range from 26,000 to 226,000.<sup>[xxiii]</sup> In Sacramento County, an estimated 340 unaccompanied children and youth were found to be homeless and unsheltered during the 2022 point-in-time count, with an additional 213 young people staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens; transition age (TA) youth ages 18-24 accounted for the overwhelming majority (94%) of this population.<sup>[xxiv]</sup> Youth who identify as LGBTQ; pregnant and parenting youth; youth with special needs or disabilities; and minoritized youth, particularly Black and American Indian and Alaska Native youth; as well as youth with a history of involvement with the foster care and juvenile justice systems, particularly TA youth exiting foster care, have elevated risk of experiencing homelessness.<sup>[xxv]</sup>

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Options for Strategies to Achieve Goal 2

The SCF supports additional and coordinated investments in cross-system strategies that focus on root causes, advance equity, and are informed by the strengths and perspectives of youth, so that all young people have a safe and stable place to live, as well as access to the resources needed to exit homelessness and meet their basic needs as they prepare for and enter adulthood. These include <sup>[xxvi]</sup>:

- **Direct, unrestricted cash transfers:** increase access to cash assistance, including one-time payments to help avert a potential crisis, as well as longer-term income payments to make housing and other basic necessities more affordable
- **Prioritizing family support and reunification:** intervene early to avoid a young person separating from their family in the first place, and support youth experiencing homelessness to return home to family when safe and appropriate
- **Expanding housing programs:** when family reunification is not possible, offer coordinated short- and long-term housing options, including both rapid re-housing assistance and permanent supportive housing tailored for youth with a demonstrated need for the most intensive services
- **Improving supportive crisis responses:** increase local crisis housing capacity so that no young person remains unsheltered, including flexible shelter responses, host homes, and other safe, low-barrier crisis housing options
- **Street outreach:** build relationships with youth experiencing homelessness to provide street-based services such as survival aid and resources to move youth into stable housing and prepare them for independence



## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Goal 3. Prevent and reduce youth substance abuse

**Opportunity Statement** <sup>[xxvii, xxviii]</sup>: All children and youth in Sacramento have access to the supports and services they deserve to address unhealthy patterns of substance use.

Addressing early exposure to and frequent use of substances among youth is important for healthy brain development and can prevent both short-term harm and lifelong chronic substance use disorders. Unhealthy patterns of using substances—such as nicotine, alcohol, cannabis, illicit drugs, and prescription drugs—often co-occur with mental health and wellness problems and can lead to negative impacts on educational success, including repeated absences, suspension, and expulsion; physical and mental health dangers, including driving while impaired; stressed or fractured family and peer relationships; and increased involvement with the juvenile justice system; and can also develop into substance use dependence, other chronic diseases, and contribute to social and financial insecurities in adulthood.

The youth substance use landscape has shifted over the years. With few exceptions, use of substances continued an overall downward trend from 2020 to 2021 and largely held steady in 2022 and 2023<sup>[xxix]</sup>; however, substance use, including misuse of prescription opioids, remains a salient public health challenge.<sup>[xxx]</sup> Sacramento, like many regions across the country, continues to confront a concerning epidemic of opioid overdose deaths, including and increasingly among youth. While the opioid overdose death rate in Sacramento County is nearly equivalent to the state rate among older youth ages 20-24, the rate among youth ages 15-19 is nearly 40% higher in Sacramento County than the state overall.<sup>[xxxi]</sup> Deaths involving illicitly manufactured fentanyl, an especially potent synthetic opioid, are particularly concerning given the social media proliferation and marketing to youth of counterfeit pills that may contain fentanyl or other illicit drugs that increase overdose risk. Increases in cannabis potency, alcohol by volume, vapor products that ease access to nicotine and cannabis, and multiple substance use also mean that for youth who use, the risks of harm are higher than ever before.

**“[It’s] unnerving to be walking through the hallway and smelling weed, or in classrooms. [It’s] hard to get into the bathroom because girls are smoking and vaping...It’s socially acceptable to post pics of them vaping - but why is it so accessible? School is not doing anything about it.”**  
- Youth focus group participant

Biological and personality factors interact with multiple sources of life stress to place youth at unequal risk of substance use problems. Exposure to these socially based stressors, such as poverty, hunger and food insecurity, community violence and trauma, family instability, homelessness, and discrimination, is more common among youth with disadvantaged social status and those with minoritized and marginalized identities, who may be more vulnerable to unhealthy coping responses owing to the chronicity of adverse stress exposures and overwhelmed psychosocial coping resources. Individual-level interventions, medical care, and treatment can address consequences of these socially based stressors, while upstream interventions, such as those that seek to improve the conditions in which young people live via changes in policies, housing, neighborhood conditions, and increased socioeconomic status, can reduce exposure to the social drivers of substance use vulnerability.<sup>[xxxii]</sup>

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Options for Strategies to Achieve Goal 3

The SCF supports holistic, equitable, culturally appropriate, and youth-friendly prevention, early intervention, and treatment strategies that empower youth to make their own decisions around substance use and take ownership, so that all children and youth in Sacramento have access to the supports and services they need and deserve to make healthy choices and thrive even in the face of challenges. These include:

- **Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment:** Focus on wellness-based responses, rather than disciplinary ones, that offer screening to assess the severity of use, brief interventions focused on motivational interviews to promote awareness and behavior change, and referral to treatment for unhealthy substance use and specialty care.
- **Integrating harm reduction:** Help youth improve their knowledge and decision-making around substance use to reduce stigmatization of use and minimize negative health, social, and legal harms, including lifesaving practices like carrying naloxone and testing substances before trying them.
- **Developing positive coping skills:** Empower young people with healthy coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, relaxation techniques, exercise, creative expression, and problem-solving skills, leveraging peers themselves as resources and support.
- **Build youth power to address socially based stressors:** Empower young people to mobilize and dismantle oppressive systems in their communities such as poverty, trauma, or lack of access to mental health services that play a role in creating vulnerability to unhealthy substance use.

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Goal 4. Prevent and reduce youth violence

**Opportunity Statement:** All children and youth in Sacramento grow up with safety and without the fear, threat, or reality of community violence harming them or their loved ones.

In too many communities—especially communities of color and low-wealth communities that have long suffered from disinvestment, lack of critical services, high levels of poverty, and racial and economic segregation—gun and community violence tragically and unjustly curtail opportunities for children and youth to participate, prosper, and realize their full potential. Research shows that youth exposure to and engagement in violence can have profound negative impacts on a broad range of physical and mental health outcomes, experiencing additional or other forms of violence, and myriad challenges across the lifespan, including barriers to education, employment, and housing. These consequences contribute to the cyclical nature of violence by increasing risk factors in the environments that surround youth and removing protective factors that could promote safe, healthy, and hopeful relationships, families, and communities.

“One of the issues is that for our young people, there's not a lot of options and opportunities for things to do...especially once they hit the 10-14 age range. You're not just going to go to the park or if you were at the park, it isn't safe in a lot of different places. Even though now they can ride the bus for free, there's not a lot for them to do on a regular basis. Once in a while, there's an event or activity, but... during the school year, there doesn't seem to be a lot of space for that group to just be. Without that, they'll go into spaces where they can't and that'll lead to some issues.”  
- Caregiver focus group participant

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to record increases in gun and community violence in cities across the country.<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> Between 2020-2022, there were 26 homicides among children ages 0-17 within the city limits compared to zero homicides from 2018-2019.<sup>[xxxiv]</sup> The health and safety burden of this violence is grossly uneven, reflecting the concentration of violence in specific neighborhoods and within small networks of young people who are at the center of risk for causing harm. Compared with the state overall, children and youth in Sacramento have a more than three-fold higher rate of homicide. Older youth ages 15-24 account for the largest share of these deaths, with a homicide death rate in 2022 that is nearly double the overall rate among children and youth in the city. Two in three homicides involving Sacramento's children and youth in 2022 were among young people identified as Black or Latinx, with Black youth experiencing a homicide death rate nearly three times higher than the overall rate for children and youth in the city.<sup>[xxxv]</sup>

Despite mounting recognition of violence as a preventable public health problem, the tendency to rely on reactive and punitive responses to youth violence and problem behaviors remains common. In non-violence situations where there is no public safety risk, such as classroom disruption, use of profanity, misbehavior on public transit, fighting or truancy, harsh discipline policies and law enforcement-involvement can be counterproductive. Actions like school suspension or expulsion and ticketing or arrest, often push vulnerable youth away from school and employment, potentially into the juvenile justice system. This effect, particularly impacting youth with minoritized and marginalized identities, foster youth, and those with disabilities, contributes to the identified “school-to-prison pipeline.”

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Options for Strategies to Achieve Goal 4

The SCF supports community-directed strategies that address three key elements of violence prevention and response. First, strategies should target the unhealthy conditions that cause unequal vulnerability to violence. Second, programs should focus on those youth that are at the highest risk of violence. Finally, individual and community healing and transformation in the aftermath of violence should be centered as an important part of prevention. These strategies are intended to ensure all young people can grow up with safety and without the fear, threat, or reality of violence harming them or their loved ones. These include:

- **Community-based violence intervention:** Establish strong relationships and intervene with young people at the center of risk for violence, leveraging people and organizations with influence and credibility to provide:
  - Intensive life coaching and supportive services for active offenders
  - Street outreach to interrupt and mediate imminent violent conflicts
  - Crisis response and direct support for victims of violence
- **School-based safety programming:** Create school environments that are socially predictable, consistent, safe, and positive by supporting children and youth with conflict mediation skills and restorative justice practices rather than punitive measures.
- **Workforce development and employment:** Invest in improving employment outcomes, including civilian job corps, paid internships and summer jobs for youth, soft skills training, and job placement.
- **Youth leadership and empowerment:** Strengthen and expand civic engagement training for youth to activate their lived experiences and hone their leadership and advocacy skills.

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Goal 5. Support the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5

**Opportunity Statement:** | All young children in Sacramento have the care, relationships, and resources needed to thrive and to begin school safe, healthy, and empowered to succeed.

There is a strong body of evidence affirming the importance of early childhood for every person's future development, health, and well-being. Early childhood is marked by rapid brain development, which supports cognitive skills and is linked to physical and emotional development, including heart and lung function, digestion, immune response, and emotion regulation. This is also the time when the brain is most "plastic" or flexible, allowing young children to adapt to a wide range of exposures. The ways in which development proceeds are fundamentally shaped by a child's early environment, interactions, and experiences, especially their relationships with parents and caregivers. Stable and strong early foundations provide opportunities to affect lifelong learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.

““[There] already wasn't enough places for high-quality learning, then pandemic happened and all supports went online. [We] lost childcare centers and places where kids could go and have a half day of a good learning experience. [They are] still getting built back up; some never came back.”  
- *City staff focus group participant*

Research identifies three key factors for building stronger early foundations in children: 1) constant, responsive relationships between children and adults; 2) healthy core skills of executive function and self-regulation; and 3) low stress, especially the absence of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences.<sup>[xxxvi]</sup> Providing resources and supports to families of young children aimed at reducing stress, developing positive parenting skills, and securing basic needs further builds the foundation for healthy development. For example, affordable, quality childcare is a critical component in achieving these goals but is in short supply in Sacramento. The median annual cost of care in Sacramento County ranges from \$10,806 (for a family childcare home) to \$17,073 (for a childcare center), leaving many families with young children to live in a constant, stressful scramble to find quality care and early learning and school readiness opportunities.<sup>[xxxvii]</sup>

A child's readiness to learn and read when they enter kindergarten is critical to lifelong learning, and can be strengthened through parent involvement, exposure to books, and quality preschool. Young children who do not have the opportunity to develop school readiness skills before entering Kindergarten continue to show gaps in learning throughout their education. Disparities that start in early school readiness are reflected in third grade learning; only 16% of Black children and 26% of Latinx children meet or exceeded the standard of English Language Arts, compared to 57% of White children and 51% of Filipino children.<sup>[xxxviii]</sup>

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Options for Strategies to Achieve Goal 5

The SCF supports strategies that promote young children’s healthy development by reinforcing the capabilities and resources of parents and caregivers, so that all children ages 0-5 in Sacramento have the care, relationships, and resources they need to thrive and to begin school safe, healthy, and empowered to succeed. These include:

- **Promoting early learning and school readiness:** Support early childhood literacy and learning to prepare young children for early school success, such as summer school programs for children entering kindergarten and programs that provide books free of charge.
- **Supporting responsive relationships:** Build caregivers’ capabilities and resources to engage in supportive interaction and “sensitive caregiving,” characterized by prompt and adequate response to a child’s signals and needs.
- **Championing positive parenting skills and peer support:** Support caregivers to build positive parenting skills to successfully manage the stressors of parenting young children, including home visitation programs and parent-to-parent programs.
- **Providing economic supports to reduce sources of life stress:** Create the conditions in which families are able and enabled to meet basic needs and build financial assets to withstand unexpected losses or emergencies, such as cash assistance and family support navigators.
- **Expanding childcare access:** Provide resources and opportunities, such as tuition vouchers and navigation and enrollment support, for families to access high-quality childcare for their young children.

## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

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### Cross-Cutting Considerations and Approaches

The SCF recognizes the interconnections among the five goal areas and their relationships to common barriers and enablers to positive child and youth development. Integrated strategies that can address underlying causes and provide foundational supports are therefore strongly recommended.

Regardless of the individual fund goal, successful strategies include coordination and intentional cross-system collaborations in communities and across levels of government. The SCF Commission recommends programming that includes one or more of the following cross-cutting considerations related to service provision, delivery, and access:

**Service Providers** | In considering who provides services, effective strategies typically are led by:

- **Peers, centering youth voice:** Programs engage youth in authentic partnership, centering young people as the experts and leveraging peer-to-peer models where youth can support one another.
- **Caring, trusted adults:** In addition to peer-to-peer approaches, programs staff caring, responsive adults who create safe spaces and are held accountable.
- **People with shared experiences and identities:** Programs engage trusted messengers in mentorship roles who have shared backgrounds and lived experiences as the youth and communities they serve.

**Service Delivery** | In considering how services are delivered, effective strategies typically are:

- **Tailored to youth needs:** Programs center around unique youth needs, especially those identified by youth themselves, and allow youth to find support when, where, and in the way they need it.
- **Strengths-based:** Programs take an assets-driven approach and view the voices and critical insights of youth, especially impacted youth, as a necessary strength.
- **Culturally responsive and linguistically fluent:** Programs are culturally affirmative and linguistically accessible. This includes valuing and recognizing identity while building belonging.
- **Trauma-informed and healing-focused:** Programs center around healing and consider the impacts of trauma and traumatic stress. Offerings are restorative and non-punitive.
- **Holistic with wrap-around supports:** Programs prioritize wrap-around services to help young people in meeting complex needs through comprehensive and coordinated resources and supports.

**Service Accessibility** | In considering how young people and families utilize services, effective strategies typically are:

- **Accessible:** Programs are accessible to all youth, including youth with disabilities.
- **Place-based:** Programs are located or deeply rooted in the communities they serve and mindful of transportation access and barriers.
- **Free, low-cost:** Programs are offered for free or at a low-cost. When possible, programs offer stipends, compensation, or training credits for participation.
- **Located in safe, trusted, neutral spaces:** Programs leverage existing trusted and neutral community spaces.

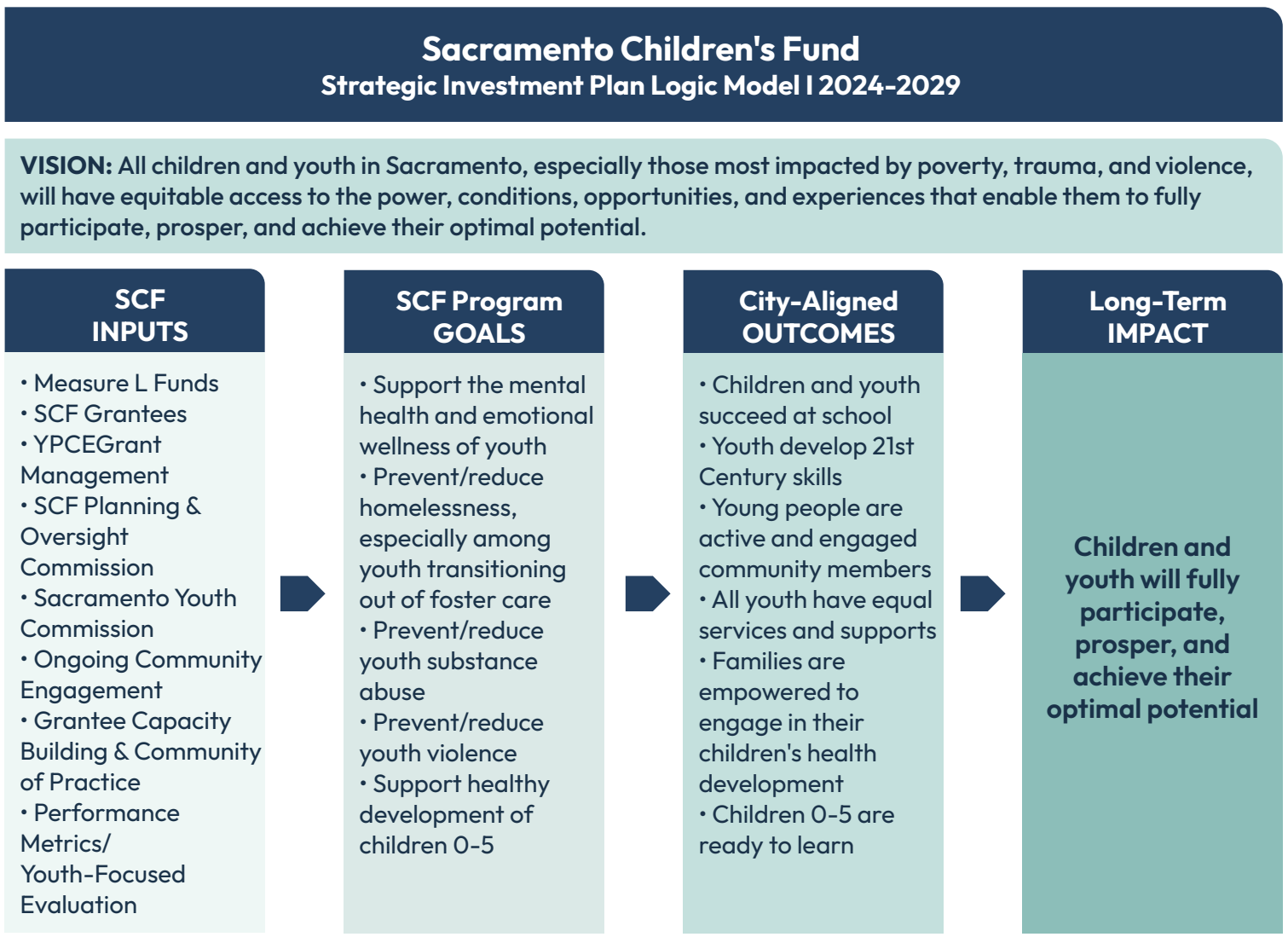


## II. Strategies For Investment By Fund Goal

### 2024-2029 Strategic Investment Plan Logic Model

This Strategic Investment Plan aims to make an impact in Sacramento over the next five years by supporting children and youth to fully participate, prosper, and achieve their optimal potential. The SCF Strategic Investment Plan Logic Model in **Figure 2** provides a high-level illustration of the key components of SCF implementation. It identifies the "inputs" as outlined in Measure L and this plan, as well as the five fund goals under which the SCF will finance program strategies for families, children, and youth. The model shows how these programs are expected to produce positive outcomes aligned with the Citywide Youth Development Plan, and how those outcomes contribute to long-term impacts for Sacramento's children and youth. Throughout the next five years, the implementation and management of the Strategic Investment Plan should adhere to the values, social justice principles, and support and opportunity frameworks identified in the Citywide Youth Development Plan.

*Figure 2. SCF Strategic Investment Plan Logic Model*





### III. Investment Recommendations

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The following recommendations<sup>[1]</sup> were developed by the SCF Commission with input from the Sacramento Youth Commission. These recommendations aim to establish an equitable, sustainable, and transparent process for using the SCF dollars to support the City of Sacramento’s children and youth. This Strategic Investment Plan assumes SCF supported programs and services will build on YPCE’s existing programs and infrastructure and align, leverage, and coordinate with other public and private resources. This plan prioritizes children and youth who are most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, and it will be critical for YPCE and future grantees to coordinate with schools and County systems (e.g., MediCal, Child Protective Services, Probation, Sacramento County Office of Education, and First 5) to ensure SCF investments have maximum impact.

These recommendations follow the values outlined in the [Citywide Youth Development Plan & Framework for Children and Youth Programs](#) and underscore the importance of youth voice and the meaningful engagement of the residents of Sacramento in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the SCF, i.e., “Nothing about us, without us.” Taking the learnings from this first strategic planning process, it is recommended that the City support ongoing community and youth engagement throughout the next five years of the SCF implementation.

#### Grants for Children and Youth Programs

The primary investment strategy is funding programs and direct services for children, youth, and their families that align with at least one of the fund goals. Given the complex needs of children and youth who are experiencing any of the five challenges outlined above, the SCF Commission encourages programs to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and innovative, addressing multiple goals as appropriate. This plan addresses the funding allocations for the next five fiscal years (FY24/25 through FY28/29) and includes the distribution of SCF funds accrued since FY23/24.

#### Grant Funding Structure

The SCF Commission recommends that funding available for grant making during the next five fiscal years should be structured in the following ways.

##### Multi-year grant cycles

The distribution of funds should be structured so that grants will be awarded through two separate competitive funding cycles.

**The first grant cycle** will be for 3 years, whereby grantees will apply to a competitive RFP for up to three years of funding. Funding will be dispersed annually, contingent upon grantee performance and fund availability. Grantees in the first funding cycle will be eligible to reapply for the second round of funding, in an open bid process.

**The second grant cycle** will be for 2 years, whereby grantees will apply to a competitive RFP for up to two years of funding. Funding will be dispersed annually, contingent upon grantee performance and fund availability.

<sup>[1]</sup>YPCE staff will make good faith efforts to implement the recommendations made by the SCF Commission, upon approval by the City Council, recognizing operational constraints and resource needs may necessitate reasonable adaptations and flexibility in implementation.

### III. Investment Recommendations

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#### **Funded Grants**

The primary investment strategy for the SCF is funding programs and direct services for children, youth, and their families that align with **at least one of the SCF goals**. Given the complex needs of the most disadvantaged children and youth, we encourage programs to be comprehensive, evidence-based, and innovative, addressing multiple goals as appropriate.

#### **Guaranteed income grants**

The SCF Commission recommends multi-year grant funds be dedicated to support one or more grantees to provide guaranteed cash transfer programming for current or former foster youth ages 18-24. To optimize beneficial outcomes and improve economic security, funded programs should follow best practice by offering all participants optional wrap-around services, such as financial literacy courses, assistance in housing or job searches, or guidance in accessing other social safety net benefit programs. Given that guaranteed cash transfer payments are meant to supplement, rather than replace, the public benefits that young people may be eligible for or already receiving, public benefits counseling should be provided to all participants, before and during program enrollment, so that young people can make informed decisions regarding their initial and ongoing participation. The SCF Commission recommends that 20% of each grant cycle be dedicated to providing guaranteed cash transfer programming; however, it is understood that multiple factors will impact exact percentage allocations and other grantmaking decisions, including the number and type of grant proposals eligible for funding and annual fluctuations in the CBOT and the City's General Fund.

#### **Open grants**

The SCF Commission recommends the remaining grant cycle funding be awarded to a mix of proposals providing program strategies that address the five fund goal areas. This means that each grant cycle should fund a range of programmatic strategies that complement each other and have the potential to make the greatest impact for children, youth, and their families in Sacramento. The SCF Commission recommends that these individual grants be funded at a minimum of \$25,000 annually and a maximum of \$500,000 annually.

#### **Grant Criteria**

SCF grant proposals should be assessed through the City's competitive RFP and proposal selection process to ensure they are consistent with Section 120 of the Sacramento City Charter and meet the following criteria.

The following criteria are required for any SCF supported programs.

**1) Goal Alignment** | Align with at least one of the five fund goals. Programs that demonstrate capabilities to advance multiple fund goals may be given priority .<sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[2]</sup> Being given "priority" is not a guarantee that an application advancing multiple program goals will be awarded funding, nor does it guarantee that an applicant who receives such priority will receive funding instead of other applicants who only advance one program goal. The advancement of multiple program goals will be included in the grant application scoring matrices, along with other scoring criteria.

### III. Investment Recommendations

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**2) Most Impacted Populations** | Reach children, youth, and families in the City of Sacramento who are most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, such as:

- Children, youth, and families who are low-income
- Children, youth, and families who are Black, Indigenous, Latino/e, Southeast Asian
- Youth or families who are unhoused
- Children and youth who identify as LGBTQ+
- Youth in or transitioning out of foster care
- Youth who are not in school or working
- Children and youth who have been involved in the juvenile or criminal legal systems
- Children and youth who are first generation immigrants or refugees
- Children and youth with disabilities

**3) Underserved Populations** | Demonstrate the ability to reach and serve those children, youth, and families that are not otherwise connected to programs or services.

**4) Organizational Status** | Be a public agency (including the City through its offices and departments) or nonprofit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exemption status.

The following criteria are preferred<sup>[3]</sup> for any SCF supported programs.

**5) Priority Neighborhoods** | Primarily serve youth in neighborhoods with the lowest levels of equity and/or the lowest levels of opportunity for children, as identified using the following tools:

- The Child Opportunity Index (COI) will be used to prioritize programs serving youth in neighborhoods with "very low" child opportunity.<sup>[4]</sup>
- The Sacramento Equity Explore Design (SEED) tool will be used to prioritize programs serving youth in neighborhoods in the lowest quintile on the Sacramento Equity Index, indicating the lowest levels of equity.<sup>[5],[6]</sup>
- Welfare Tax Exemption for Low Income Affordable Housing within the City of Sacramento.\*

**6) Citywide Youth Development Plan & Framework Alignment** | Align with, and are informed by, the Citywide Youth Development Plan & Framework for Children and Youth Programs, including its values, social justice principles, and research-based supports and opportunities.<sup>[7]</sup> Specifically, the grant award criteria should include:

- Promote equity, justice, and accountability with a concerted application of resources toward those youth in greatest need.

<sup>[3]</sup> Meeting the preferred criteria does not guarantee an applicant will be awarded funding, nor does it guarantee that an applicant who satisfies the "preferred criteria" will receive funding instead of applicants who do meet the preferred criteria. The preferred criteria will be included in grant application scoring matrices, along with other scoring criteria.

<sup>[4]</sup> The COI measures and maps the quality of resources and conditions that matter for children's healthy development in the neighborhoods where they live. The COI is a composite index comprised of 44 indicators in three domains (education, health and environment, and social and economic) and 14 subdomains.

<sup>[5]</sup> The Sacramento Equity Explore Design (SEED) Geographic Information System (GIS) Tool applies a Sacramento Equity Index by rank percentile, using the following data: People of Color, linguistic isolation, income, employment, housing cost burden, educational attainment, disability status, policing and incarceration, technology access, health insurance, neighborhood redlining information, and pollution burden.

<sup>[6]</sup> "Sacramento Equity Explore Design," The City of Sacramento, Office of Diversity and Equity and Information Technology-Geographic Information System, May 24 2024, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ed1c486357884c06877c31f1fe4ee5c1>

<sup>[7]</sup> "Youth Development Guide," 2001.

\* The Welfare Tax Exemption for Low Income Affordable Housing was added by the Sacramento City Council.

### III. Investment Recommendations

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- Implement the Youth Development Framework practices in all program design, operations, and evaluation.
- Align, leverage, and/or coordinate with other public and private resources.<sup>[8]</sup>
- Partner with existing programs, especially small, local community-based organizations (including those who are BIPOC-led/serving and/or have an annual budget under \$250,000).

7) **Local** | Be located in Sacramento County, including the City of Sacramento.

**Allocations by Grantee Type** | It is recommended that community-based organizations receive approximately 50% of programmatic grant funding\*. Community-based organizations are well positioned to leverage and complement public programs, while expanding programmatic reach to children and youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, and who have not historically been served by existing programming.

#### **Grant Selection Process**

The selection of SCF grants must be based on an open, transparent, and competitive process and should align with YPCE's current granting process. In addition, the SCF Commission makes the following recommendations to ensure a transparent and fair process, YPCE and the selection committee should:

- **Conduct a robust outreach effort** to inform grassroots organizations within the communities of focus about the RFP processes, especially those organizations that have not been previously funded by the City.
- **Maximize competition** by reducing administrative burden and promoting a diverse group of grant applicants.
- **Provide technical assistance to CBOs** as needed in the application process.
- Include two members from the SCF Commission in the review of applications.
- **Implement transparent processes.** Post the outcomes of the selection process on the Measure L web page within 90 days of the finalization of the RFP process.

#### **Grant Administration with an Equity Lens**

SCF grants will be managed by the City of Sacramento following existing grants management policies. The City should review administrative processes to ensure all organizations that meet the SCF criteria outlined above can successfully apply for and meet the requirements associated with the City's grant administration process, and specifically, that smaller community-based organizations will not be excluded by administrative requirements. In addition, the SCF Commission recommends that the City intentionally implement best practices for managing SCF grants for ensuring equitable and impactful grant-making, including:<sup>[9]</sup>

- Reduce administrative burden of grant management. Reduce administrative burden to minimize the need to use SCF for program services (e.g., streamlining proposal and reporting asks).

<sup>[8]</sup> Scoring criteria will take into account the level of matching funds or in-kind services proposed. All public agencies (other than the City) are already required to provide matching funds, so this preference will not apply to them.

<sup>[9]</sup> Best Practices for grant-making and supporting CBO capacity building with an equity lens include: <https://www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/practices>; [https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/2021-9/CA\\_CBOs\\_Covid\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_20190908\\_0.pdf](https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/2021-9/CA_CBOs_Covid_Report_FINAL_20190908_0.pdf); <https://www.geofunders.org/resources/reimagining-capacity-building-navigating-culture-systems-power-1340>

\*This recommendation was modified by the Sacramento City Council. The original SCF commission recommendation was that CBOs receive approximately 65% of programmatic grant funding.

### III. Investment Recommendations

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- **Provide advanced payment for funding.** Provide a payment of up to 50% annual grant award upon execution of the contract to ensure programs have the resources necessary to plan, staff, and execute program services in a timely manner.
- **Balance trust-based practices with accountability measures,** ensuring the City receives agreed upon output/outcomes data and can monitor and terminate grants, as needed.
- **Be responsive to emerging needs and events.** Keep a pulse on local community needs and revisit investment strategies, as needed, to adapt to the changing environment.
- **Gather and take action on grantee feedback.** Solicit feedback to support continued program improvement, year over year. Share findings with SCF Commissioners to support adjustments and improvements to the Strategic Investment Plan.
- **Encourage, facilitate, and leverage collaboration, as possible.** Support collaborative efforts across organizations and convene partners to creatively address shared challenges.
- Prioritize efforts that demonstrate they are **successfully expanding access** for those youth in greatest need and the hardest-to-reach communities, including those who have not previously been engaged in services.

#### Management of the Sacramento Children's Fund

Sacramento Children's Fund management should follow the intent of Measure L and maximize its collective impact in supporting children and youth in Sacramento. Recommendations for critical aspects of the SCF management are detailed below, including: ongoing community engagement; grantee capacity building; grant and performance measurement; and an external evaluation of the Strategic Investment Plan that centers the voices of the youth and families.

#### Ongoing Engagement & Capacity Building

The SCF Commission recommends robust communication and engagement strategies be integrated into the management of the SCF. This engagement should take place on multiple levels within Sacramento and its communities.

**Community Engagement** | Culturally appropriate and accessible materials should be developed to inform and promote SCF programming within Sacramento's priority neighborhoods and populations. SCF community engagement should build public recognition of the Fund programming, its goals, and accomplishments, and serve to increase access to programming among those children, youth, and families, especially those that may not have been previously connected to City youth services. This ongoing community engagement should facilitate contact points and outlets for which to seamlessly gather input for the next strategic investment planning process. Special attention should be given to conducting communication and engagement through the methods and media that are most effective at reaching youth and their families.

**Social, Educational, and Youth Services Engagement** | The SCF Commission recommends that the SCF staff have ongoing engagement with the social service, educational, and youth-focused organizations and institutions that make up the local infrastructure for serving Sacramento's families, children, and youth. The focus of the SCF is to serve the children and youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence, and it is expected these participants of SCF programming will have complex needs and may require multiple layers of support. YPCE staff should actively engage with relevant entities, agencies,

### III. Investment Recommendations

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and task forces that are working towards supporting children, youth, and their families in Sacramento. This includes school districts, libraries, and County social support agencies in order to leverage the established infrastructures, planning, and coordination of services.

**Grantee Capacity Building** | The SCF Commission recommends that the SCF support ongoing engagement with grantees as valued partners in serving the children, youth, and families of Sacramento. Ongoing grantee engagement should facilitate coordination, alignment, leveraging, and collaboration across SCF-funded programs focused on shared challenges and opportunities through mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone system of support. Grantees should be provided with resources to build and sustain their administrative and programmatic capacity with the intention of maximizing their individual and collective effectiveness in supporting children, youth, and their families in Sacramento. The SCF Commission recommends coordinating an ongoing grantee community of practice to include trainings, strategic organizational support, networking, and sharing of best practice around the fund goal areas, as well as holding a grantee convening at least annually. This ongoing engagement with grantees is critical in identifying ongoing and emergent issues impacting children and youth in Sacramento and increasing the effectiveness of grantees to develop creative and collaborative solutions for addressing them in concert.

#### **SCF Measurement and Evaluation**

Monitoring and measuring the work and impacts of the SCF will be integral to providing data for continuous improvement and grantee learning regarding how to best serve the families, children, and youth of Sacramento. In addition to measuring the work of the individual grantees' programs, it will be important to learn from this inaugural Strategic Investment Plan and the overall impact of the SCF for Sacramento.

#### **Grantee Performance and Outcome Measurement**

The SCF Commission recommends that SCF grantee requirements align with YPCE's grantee performance measurement process and their Citywide Youth Development Plan and Framework to reduce the need for a parallel measurement system and to ensure transparency in achieving citywide outcomes. The YPCE grant team will routinely review key performance indicators such as the selection of CBOs, recruitment and enrollment of intended youth, services provided, progress on program benchmarks, and feedback from participants, CBOs, caretakers and parents, and the community. Performance measurement results should inform any technical assistance required to support the success and sustainability of funded programs. YPCE will work with grantees to identify strategy-specific indicators that contribute to the city-aligned outcomes, ensuring that these indicators are feasible to collect and can measure change over the course of the grant period.

In addition to grant-level outcome measures, initiative-wide indicators should also be measured and reported to track how SCF are advancing the Citywide Youth Development Plan and Framework. When available, these indicators should be disaggregated to highlight the status of those most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence.



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#### **Youth-Focused External Evaluator**

In addition to YPCE’s grantee performance measurement process, the SCF Commission recommends that the City use available administrative resources to hire an external evaluation contractor to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of this five year Strategic Investment Plan as a whole. This approach is crucial for understanding the collective impact of SCF programming and informing the next plan. This contractor should have demonstrated experience conducting evaluations in a manner that is culturally competent, trauma informed, and centers the experience of children, youth, and their families in its assessment of initiatives.

The Sacramento Citywide Youth Plan explicitly centers youth voice and provides opportunities for input, decision-making, and leadership. As a requirement, the evaluator should have experience integrating youth voice into evaluation processes (e.g., using a youth evaluation advisory board, implementing Youth Participatory Evaluation, conducting Photovoice, etc.) and experience working with Sacramento communities. The evaluation design should utilize creative and effective approaches to measure the overall implementation of the SCF Strategic Investment Plan, including alignment to the vision, values and strategies recommended, such as the quality and level of community and youth engagement, and success in reaching and serving those youth that have the greatest needs, reducing disparities in access and outcomes, and applying a racial equity lens to the implementation.

#### **Estimated Funds Available**

The amount of budget available for the SCF is expected to vary annually, with cannabis sales and revenue generated from the City’s resulting Cannabis Business Operation Tax (CBOT). The annual budgets available for this Strategic Investment Plan are estimated below in Table 1. These estimates are based upon the SCF allocation from the 23/24 CBOT revenue and do not account for annual accrued interest or potential roll-over of unspent funds.

**Total Estimated Fund** | This Strategic Investment Plan covers the fiscal years 24/25 to 28/29, with the allocation from fiscal year 23/24 also being available for the SCF. The SCF will have an estimated total budget of approximately \$44 million dollars.

**Administrative Expenses** | Measure L takes into account the expenses needed to administer the SCF, including “strategic planning, grant making, grants management, data collection and evaluation, technical assistance, organizational capacity-building, communications, community engagement, and service performance and impact evaluation.” Measure L limits the amount of funds available to the City to cover these administrative costs associated with managing the SCF. More resources are allocated to administrative costs in the first two years of the SCF in order to establish staffing, administrative processes, and facilitate the strategic investment planning process. The mandated cap on using the SCF for administrative purposes per year includes the following: (2023-24) maximum of 20%; (2024-25) maximum of 15%; and (2025-26 and beyond) maximum of 10%. The SCF will have an estimated total budget of about \$5.7 million dollars to cover administrative expenses over the course of this Strategic Investment Plan.

### III. Investment Recommendations

During this investment period, the SCF will support three full-time staff that will be housed in YPCE and include one Program Specialist and two Administrative Analysts. In order to ensure that this plan is fully implemented—including providing ongoing community engagement, grantee capacity building, and a youth-focused evaluation—administrative expenses should be used to cover the cost of external consultants as needed.

*Table 1 | Recommended SCF Allocation by Expenses and Available Budget*

Fiscal Year	Total Estimated Fund	Administrative Expenses (% of Total)	Multi-Year Grants		
			Total Funding	Guaranteed Income Grants (20%)	Open Grants (80%)
23/24	\$8,786,500	\$1,757,300 (20%)	\$7,029,200	\$1,405,840	\$5,623,360
24/25	\$8,786,500	\$1,317,975 (15%)	\$7,468,525	\$1,493,705	\$5,974,820
25/26	\$8,786,500	\$878,650 (10%)	\$7,907,850	\$1,581,570	\$6,326,280
26/27	\$8,786,500	\$878,650 (10%)	\$7,907,850	\$1,581,570	\$6,326,280
27/28	\$8,786,500	\$878,650 (10%)	\$7,907,850	\$1,581,570	\$6,326,280
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,932,500</b>	<b>\$5,711,225 (13%)</b>	<b>\$38,221,275</b>	<b>\$7,644,255</b>	<b>\$36,903,300</b>

*\*Note: estimated annual totals from General Fund/CBOT are for illustration purposes only.*

**Multi-Year Grants** | The majority of the SCF funding is budgeted to fund competitive grants that provide services to families, children and youth. Over the course of this investment period, it is estimated that \$38 million dollars will go directly to multi-year grants (or 87% of the total fund). The SCF Commission recommends that approximately 20% of these annual grant funds be reserved for funding guaranteed basic income grants for foster youth. It is estimated that the SCF will provide approximately \$7.6 million dollars over the next five years for guaranteed basic income programs. The remaining funds are recommended to go to open grants for programming that address the five SCF fund goals. This will amount to an estimated \$37 million dollars for child and youth programs and services.



## IV. Commission Oversight & Public Accountability

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As an important component of this Strategic Investment Plan implementation, the SCF Commission recommends the City provides timely and ongoing updates to both the SCF Commission and the Sacramento Youth Commission. These updates should include but not be limited to:

- The status of SCF grant management process;
- Changes in the forecasted or actual contributions of the fund resulting from the CBOT;
- Planned and implemented engagement with grantees and community members; and
- Emerging issues impacting the health and wellbeing of children and youth in Sacramento.

Specific data and reporting requirements are outlined below. All updates and reports should be presented in accessible and digestible formats in order to provide maximum transparency to the Commissions, the public, and especially non-technical audiences.

### **Annual Service Performance Reporting**

Measure L stipulates that the City will develop an annual report evaluating all services funded by the Sacramento Children's Fund, assessing those services' performance and progress toward youth outcome metrics established in this Strategic Investment Plan. These annual reports should include the following content.

**Summary of Funding Cycle** | At the conclusion of each funding cycle, YPCE will update the Commission with a summary of funding that includes a list of all organizations/agencies receiving grants, including: a) Name of organization, b) SCF outcomes proposal is intended to address, c) Neighborhood and population of focus of proposal, d) Amount of funding requested, and e) If awarded, amount and period of funding.

**Financial Reporting** | On an annual basis, YPCE staff will provide a financial update to the SCF Planning and Oversight Commission. Updates should include:

- Status of expenditures (i.e., administration, grant spending, allocation of grant spending)
- Status of grantee and contractor contracts/budgets
- Estimated amount of total funding for new fiscal year from CBOT
- Estimated amount of administrative budget
- Estimated amount available for multi-year and guaranteed basic income allocations
- Estimated amount of interest/roll over from previous year balance

**Summary of Grantee Performance Metrics** | YPCE will provide an annual summary of performance metrics from SCF's multi-year grantees. At a minimum, this summary should include: a) total number of youth, children, and families served, c) types of services and programming received, d) how the program participants have been identified as those that are most impacted by poverty, violence, or trauma; and e) resident neighborhoods of those being served.

**Summary of Fund Implementation, Engagement & Evaluation Activities** | YPCE staff, in collaboration with the engagement and evaluation contractors, will provide at a minimum, annual updates that will include: a) summary of SCF engagement and youth-focused evaluation activities, including the number of participants/grantees and communities represented; b) summary of evaluation activity, including profiles of programs, demonstrating the impact that they are having on Sacramento's children and youth.

## IV. Commission Oversight & Public Accountability

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### **Youth Impact Evaluation Reporting**

In addition to annual reports, Measure L mandates that the City produce evaluation reports at the three and five year mark of the investment period. In addition to assessing progress in program performance and youth outcome metrics, the SCF Commission recommends that the City work with an external evaluator to assess the implementation of the SCF Strategic Investment Plan, including how well the City's grant management practices and the community engagement aligns with the objectives of Measure L and the recommendations in this plan.

**3-Year Evaluation Report** | This report will include an evaluation summary of the implementation and outcomes of the 5-year Strategic Investment Plan at Year 3. This report should include an assessment of grantee progress in providing programming and their measured outcomes for the children and youth most impacted by poverty, violence, and trauma. In addition, the evaluation should assess how well the implementation of the SCF is aligned with the recommendations within this Strategic Investment Plan through an equity lens. The purpose of the 3-year report will be to update the Commissions on the status of the SCF, provide actionable feedback to the grantees and City that support improvements to processes and programming, provide recommendations for modifying the SCF funding in the remaining two-years, if needed, and provide data to inform the next cycle of strategic planning for the SCF.

**5-Year Youth Impact Evaluation Report** | This report will document the achievements and impacts across the 5-year Strategic Investment Plan funding period to assess the impact of the SCF for the City and Sacramento, and those children and youth most impacted by poverty, violence, and trauma. This report should include an assessment of the community engagement activities and how well the implementation of the Strategic Investment Plan reflects the objectives of Measure L. The purpose of this report is to inform the public on the progress of the SCF and highlight the impact on the children, youth, and families that benefited from SCF supported programs and services.

### **Commission Review**

The SCF Commission, in consultation with the Sacramento Youth Commission, will provide ongoing oversight to the implementation of the fund. The Commissions should hold at least one joint meeting per year specifically to review and accept the Annual Service Performance Reports as well as the Youth Impact Evaluation Reports. The Commissions will make recommendations to the City Council as a result of its review of reports. It is recommended that the SCF Commission start the process of creating the next Strategic Investment Plan in January 2028, after the review of the Year 3 Evaluation Report findings. For the purposes of planning the next Strategic Investment Plan, the SCF Commission should hold monthly meetings and hold multiple joint meetings with the Youth Commission to ensure they are actively engaged in the planning process.

## APPENDIX, Table 1

Census Tracts, Districts, Zip Codes, and Neighborhoods with Sacramento Equity Index of 0-20 and/or COI “Very Low”						
SEED Rank	SEED Rank Percentile	COI “Very Low”	Census Tract	District	Zip Code	Neighborhood
1	0.66	Yes	Census Tract 37	5	95820	South Oak Park, North City Farms, Central Oak Park
2	1.32	Yes	Census Tract 65.01	2	95838	Del Paso Heights
3	1.97	Yes	Census Tract 69.02	2	95815	Old North Sacramento, Noralto
4	2.63	No	Census Tract 28	5	95817, 95820	Central Oak Park
5	3.29	Yes	Census Tract 44.01	6	95820	Lawrence Park
6	3.95	Yes	Census Tract 68.01	2	95815	Richardson Village, Noralto
7	4.61	Yes	Census Tract 66	2	95815, 95838	Hagginwood, South Hagginwood, Old North Sacramento
8	5.26	Yes	Census Tract 44.02	5	95820	South Oak Park
9	5.92	Yes	Census Tract 47.02	6	95823	N/A
10	6.58	Yes	Census Tract 63	2	95815, 95838	Cannon Industrial Park, Hagginwood, South Hagginwood
11	7.24	Yes	Census Tract 50.02	5	95823, 95828	Parkway
12	7.89	Yes	Census Tract 67.04	2	95838	Robla
13	8.55	Yes	Census Tract 96.40	8a	95823	Valley Hi / North Laguna
14	9.21	Yes	Census Tract 49.07	5	95823	Parkway
15	9.87	Yes	Census Tract 43.02	8, 7	95832	Meadowview
16	10.53	No	Census Tract 69.01	2	95815	Woodlake, Johnson Business Park, American River Parkway, Erikson Industrial Park
17	11.18	No	Census Tract 53.01	4	95811, 95814, 95816	Southern Pacific / Richards, Dos Rios Triangle, East Sacramento
18	11.84	Yes	Census Tract 46.04	6	95824	N/A
19	12.50	Yes	Census Tract 68.02	2	95815	Noralto, Old North Sacramento, South Hagginwood
20	13.16	No	Census Tract 7	4	95814	Downtown, Old Sacramento
21	13.82	Yes	Census Tract 74.13	2	95821, 95660	Del Paso Park
22	14.47	Yes	Census Tract 48.02	6	95828	Glen Elder
23	15.13	Yes	Census Tract 45.02	5	95823	Parkway
24	15.79	Yes	Census Tract 62.02	2	95815, 95821	Ben Ali, Swanston Estates
25	16.45	Yes	Census Tract 32.04	6	95824	Avondale, Fruitridge Manor
26	17.11	Yes	Census Tract 32.02	6	95824	Fruitridge Manor
27	17.76	Yes	Census Tract 42.02	8	95822, 95832	Meadowview
28	18.42	Yes	Census Tract 45.01	5	95824	South City Farms
29	19.08	Yes	Census Tract 68.03	2	95815	Willis Acres, Noralto
30	19.74	Yes	Census Tract 55.02	2	95815, 95825	Swanston Estates, Ben Ali, Arden Fair, Erikson Industrial Park

## APPENDIX, Table 1 cont.

31	20.39	Yes	Census Tract 48.01	6	95828	Southeast Village, Glen Elder
32	21.05	Yes	Census Tract 49.06	5	95823	Parkway
33	21.71	Yes	Census Tract 64	2	95838	East Del Paso Heights, Village Green, Parker Homes, Raley Industrial Park
34	22.37	Yes	Census Tract 47.01	6	95823	N/A
35	23.03	Yes	Census Tract 41	5	95822	Woodbine, Brentwood
36	23.68	Yes	Census Tract 32.03	6	95824	Southeast Village, Glen Elder
37	24.34	Yes	Census Tract 67.05	2	95838	Norwood Tech, Oak Knoll, Johnston Heights, Strawberry Manor
39	25.66	Yes	Census Tract 49.09	5	95823	Parkway
40	26.32	Yes	Census Tract 46.03	6	95824	Fruitridge Manor
42	27.63	Yes	Census Tract 70.01	3, 2, 1	95833, 95384	Gardenland, South Natomas, American River Parkway
43	28.29	Yes	Census Tract 70.22	3	95834	South Natomas
46	30.26	Yes	Census Tract 42.03	8	95822, 95832	Meadowview
47	30.92	Yes	Census Tract 96.34	5	95823	Valley Hi / North Laguna
51	33.55	Yes	Census Tract 49.08	5	95823	Parkway
53	34.87	Yes	Census Tract 52.01	6	95819, 95826	CSUS, College Town
55	36.18	Yes	Census Tract 67.03	1	95838	Glenwood Meadows, Pell/Main Industrial Park
57	37.50	Yes	Census Tract 49.10	5	95823	Parkway
61	40.13	Yes	Census Tract 43.01	8	95832	Meadowview
62	40.79	Yes	Census Tract 70.21	3	95834	South Natomas
67	44.08	Yes	Census Tract 49.04	5	95823	Parkway
68	44.74	Yes	Census Tract 96.33	8	95823	Valley Hi / North Laguna
96	63.16	Yes	Census Tract 70.24	3	95833	South Natomas, River Gardens
77	50.66	Yes	Census Tract 67.06	2	95838	West Del Paso Heights, Norwood I-80

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