

# FY 2024 CITY OF SAN DIEGO BUDGET AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

On behalf of a cohort of organizations and leaders, we welcome you to consider the following City of San Diego considerations for FY 2024. We believe for San Diego to thrive as a city, it needs a continued commitment to make San Diego a place where every child, youth, and family is safe, healthy, and empowered.

We want to begin by acknowledging the important work being done by you, your staff, and your colleagues on the City Council. As Mayor, you have helped San Diego navigate extremely difficult times, and pushed to make San Diego the best place to grow up and raise a family. We implore you to accept this letter as a celebration of what has been accomplished and the opportunity to build upon those wins.

## Office of Child and Youth Success

Establishing San Diego's first local infrastructure dedicated to children, youth, and their families has given the City a catalytic opportunity to combine its resources and leverage inter-governmental and community partnerships to efficiently, effectively, and equitably support San Diego community members.

We support the **budget request made by the Executive Director of the Office of Child and Youth Success**. Based on similar departments in municipalities across the country, we are hopeful this budget request helps **fully staff the Office with a team that represents experience** in the child care mixed-delivery system, and in systems impacting young people and families. The '24 funding should also **provide support to implement the strategic plan for the Office**.

## Access to Affordable, Quality Child Care

Despite research showing time and time again that child care is essential to the healthy development of our children and for the employment of their parents, child care continues to be scarce and expensive in San Diego County. What's more, 10% of our region's licensed child care centers and 5% of our child care homes have permanently closed due to the pandemic. While Members of the Children First Collective are seeing progress made as elected officials and public servants continue to prioritize child care, more must be done to close the ever-expanding care gap.

### **Child Care Facilities**

Adequate and appropriate child care facilities are a critical part of the equation for creating more child care supply locally. Additionally, facility expansion is expressly local, which necessitates this component of child care to be a priority of the City of San Diego.

- With the passing of Measure H, more City-owned property will be available to offer licensed child care. Undoubtedly, renovations will be necessary to get these properties ready to meet Community Care Licensing and other standards. In continuing to engage the community with the Department of Real Estate and Airport Management (DREAM) team, and utilizing child care availability data, we recommend that the City identify an initial cohort of sites. A goal can be to

prepare at least three to five sites as “shovel ready” to apply for State funding should more become available. Meanwhile, a budget should be allocated for facility improvements for the initial cohort of facilities, based on updated prevailing wages and materials costs. Community Development Block Grant funding may also be considered. In alignment with the [San Diego Child Care and Development Planning Council](#) Child Care Plan, it is also crucial that the City offer **free or reduced rents** to child care providers operating on City-owned property. Both state subsidized and private pay child care programs do not receive sufficient funding to cover the [true cost](#) of high-quality care and education. Reducing the rent for these essential programs is necessary to ensure program stability and quality.

- The City should also partner with school districts and San Diego Community College District to convert unused classrooms or buildings into licensed childcare or license-exempt after-school program space with very low facilities fees for providers.
- All future Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for affordable housing coming from the City of San Diego Economic Development Department must prioritize child care alongside other ‘common good’ services.

### ***Job-Related Benefits and Policies for Working Parents***

As the City works to become a more family-friendly employer, we advise the Council support Councilmember Campillo’s [‘Parental Benefits Package,’](#) which includes:

- 480 hours of paid leave, prorated based on the Employee’s current employment status, for an Employee Parent to take time off due to an Eligible Event;
- Extend ‘Eligible Event’ to be within a twelve-month period of birth or placement of a child, to allow for a second birth or placement of child within a one-year period;
- Create a new type of disability called pregnancy disability, specifically for those who are pregnant, and extend benefits to an eight-week period;
- Remove the elimination period for pregnant employees and employees who have given birth. Unless required by a doctor for medical reasons, employees can file for and begin pregnancy disability within the two weeks prior to their expected due date;
- Pregnancy disability should match Parental Leave, which only requires City employees to be employed by the City for 1.5 months prior to being eligible.

We also encourage additional consideration of the following family-friendly policies:

- That the City work to provide stable schedules with minimal variation from week to week, and that any variations be scheduled with two weeks’ notice to the employee;
- Child care grants for employees that takes into account child(ren)’s age, household size, and household income, in order to best capture families in most need and those who fall within the [‘child care chasm,’](#) making too much to receive state subsidies but not enough to cover the cost of care;
- Allow all employees to use a flexible spending account to pay some of their dependent care expenses using pre-tax dollars;
- That the City consider leveraging [existing infrastructure](#) to connect employees with quality child care options and for administering funds.

Ideally, not only will these practices be in place, but the City should implement a communications plan so that every employee is well aware of them and has a clear pathway to access them. To every extent possible, we recommend that the City also require that its contractors offer the same level of family-friendly benefits.

### ***Child Care Workforce Crisis***

The child care sector continues to struggle with **recruiting and retaining workforce** throughout San Diego County and many child care businesses have either closed or are on the verge of closing. The City's Development Services has an opportunity to utilize resources and expertise to **expressly reach out to and support the City's child care non-profits and small businesses**.

- To address the workforce crisis, the City of San Diego should work with San Diego County, the State of California, and federal leaders to adopt the recommendation of the [Rate and Quality Workgroup Report](#), as well as the accompanying modeling of an alternative methodology rate structure, [Understanding the True Cost of Child Care in California: Building A Cost Model to Inform Policy Change](#).
- Consider structured child care provider support and education programs to create resource tools and educate subsidized and private sector childcare business owners in efficient and effective business practices, such as using local data to manage rates, business planning, expense management, strategies for growth, marketing, and using tax incentives. San Diego offers significant support to small businesses, however, owners of family child care—who are predominantly women of color—are often unaware or unable to access these services. Consider dedicated staff to help child care providers identify the business supports relevant to them, as well as navigate permitting and construction processes with the City. These roles could be held by both the Economic Development and Planning Departments.

### ***Mental and Behavioral Health Support Specific to 0–5-Year Olds, Their Parents, Caregivers, and Child Care Providers***

Work with the community to understand the growing need for mental and behavioral health support. Work jointly with the County of San Diego's Behavioral Health Services to support expanded services in prevention and early intervention specific to the 0-5 population and those who care for them, including parents, caregivers, and child care providers.

### ***Pathways for Young People to Succeed, as Defined by Youth, for Youth***

It's essential that our youth are provided with meaningful opportunities and pathways to success. The creation of this office is a promising first step. As we move forward, we must continue to heed the voices of young people by allowing them to lead this work and ensuring that they're well equipped to engage with the City. This is an investment with a long-term gain; by providing meaningful experiences to engage with the City, our youth are getting the skills needed to pursue other careers or a pathway within San Diego. The following recommendations will ensure that our City is providing equitable access to civic engagement for youth:

### ***Wraparound services for young people involved in Employ and Empower***

An approach to wraparound service is strengths-based, needs-driven and includes service strategies specific to a young person. Funding from the Employ & Empower program or leveraged grant opportunities should be sought to support teens and transition-age youth in programs who indicate the need for support. Additionally, prepare

City leaders who are coaching youth interns to host a nurturing experience by offering training in trauma-responsive care.

### **Success for the Youth Commission**

To help the Youth Commission reach a new level of success to integrate youth voice into city decisions, greater support is needed. Recognize the need to support the Youth Commission in meeting quorum. Implement a compensated civics education and engagement program for Youth Commissioners with a starting allocation of \$100,000.

### **Support for Youth who are Unsheltered**

Support for youth who are unsheltered is a direct prevention to chronic adult homelessness. Considering [evidence of San Diego's increasing number of unsheltered youth](#), and the [published goal of having youth homelessness be rare, brief, and nonrecurring](#), more must be done. Utilize the Homeless Housing, Assistance Program (HHAP)—youth set aside funding—to support the Housing Our Youth recommended services for \$3,747,600 annually. Additionally, consider a youth-specific project or a youth component if additional Project Homekey applications are submitted to the state.

### **Mental and Behavioral Health Support Specific to Teens and Transition Age Youth**

Work with the community to understand the growing need for mental and behavioral health support. Work jointly with the County of San Diego's Behavioral Health Services to support expanded services in the continuum of care for 12-25 year-olds, including a consideration of meeting youth where they are, and expanding opportunities for community-based organizations to offer therapeutic services.

**Thank you very much for your consideration!**

**For further information or inquiries, please contact the following individuals:**

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### **Co-Signers**

*American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3*

*A Reason To Survive (ARTS)*

*CastroMaria Family Daycare*

*Chicano Federation*

*Child Development Associates*

*Children First Collective San Diego*

*Clare Rose Foundation*

*The Clare Rose Foundation Center for Creative Youth Development*

*Educational Enrichment Systems, Inc.*

*Jewish Family Service of San Diego*

*Junior Achievement of San Diego County*

*Mission Driven Finance*

*Neighborhood House Association*

*Outdoor Outreach*

*Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)*

*Parent Voices*

*RISE Research & Evaluation*

*SAY San Diego*

*San Diego Community College District*

*San Diego Creative Youth Development Network*

*San Diego for Every Child*

*San Diego Reggio Roundtable*

*San Diego Workforce Partnership*

*San Diego Youth Services*

*TOOTRiS Child Care On-Demand*

*UCUC Preschool*

*UCSD Youth Advisory Council*

*University of California San Diego Center for Community Health*

*YMCA of San Diego County*

*Youth Will*





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Neighborhood House Association  
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**SAY** San Diego  
Social Advocates for Youth



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College of Continuing Education

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