

Our Children, Our Families Council
Summary of City-wide TAY Advisory Board

April 21, 2015

Goals of the Effort

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) San Francisco created the City-wide TAY Advisory Board (CTAB) to serve as a space for gathering information, providing trainings and resources, and creating policy and budgetary recommendations for the disconnected, transitional age youth population in San Francisco. They provide insight into the work of the Human Service Agency, the Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments, the Department of Public Health, and other city departments.

The board is broken down into working groups that identify issues affecting transitional-age youth. Currently they are working on the rights of undocumented youth. The board is also focusing on affordable and permanent transitional housing. They are also focused on trauma informed services and policing. In education, the board has identified a large need for reengagement efforts.

Focal Population of the Effort

CTAB's work focuses on San Francisco's population of disconnected young adults age 18-24.

Impact

The Department of Public Health (DPH) partnered with CTAB around their trauma-informed services initiative. When it was being birthed and shaped, CTAB helped form the DPH's strategy. They participated in the training and gave feedback on what they thought it did well and what it lacked. Members of CTAB are being trained on how to train providers to deal with people that have experienced trauma.

When the Children's Fund was up for reauthorization, some stakeholders were against some of the recommendations of young people, like increasing the children's fund and including TAY in the fund. CTAB partnered with another coalition to engage parents and families to find out what they wanted from the fund. They engaged other young people to use their personal stories to advocate. After two weeks of lobbying, the Board of Supervisors changed their minds and included TAY in the fund.

CTAB's greatest strength is that it is guided by the needs of young people and tries to keep them at the head of decision-making and priority setting. They work collaboratively with service providers, departments and young people.

Challenges

The greatest challenge for CTAB is that it does not have the resources or authority to make departments do what they are mandated to do for transitional-age youth.

Origins of the Effort

In 2006, in response to urgent calls by youth advocates, former mayor Gavin Newsom named a 36-member task force comprised of the City's advocates, providers, young people and funders. The task force was charged with identifying policy and practice reforms that would help San Francisco's most vulnerable young people successfully transition into adulthood and achieve self-sufficiency. In 2008, TAYSF, the Transitional Age Youth Initiative, was created to sustain these high-priority recommendations beyond the life of the task force and to implement and enhance them. TAYSF functioned in the nexus of city government, service provision, research, advocacy and policymaking working closely with city departments, service providers and young people to improve the transition of young people into adulthood.

CTAB was created in response to one of the recommendations—to keep young people in a decision-making role. So, CTAB was created. Originally, the board was called the young adult advisory board and was created around 2008. It is not mandated by any ordinance.

Leading the Effort

Jose-Luis Mejia leads the CTAB and is the board's only full-time staff. Jose served on the advisory board and then became a TAYSF fellow. After that, he became youth and young adult engagement coordinator for TAYSF.

DCYF provides in-kind support of office space. Funding comes from private organizations. The Zellerbach Family Fund funds the advisory council, as well as two fellows that work for TAYSF for a year. Fellows are like the staff for the board—they convene it, facilitate the meetings and create the agendas. The Human Services Agency and Department of Public Health provide some funding, as well.

Members of the Effort

TAYSF's CTAB is comprised of a dedicated group of 10-15 youth workers who are all between the ages of 18-25 and are interested in advocating on behalf of the transitional age youth population in San Francisco. TAYSF recruits members who have experience with the barriers transitional-age youth face, and who each work as a service provider or at an organization that provides services. Members commit to being on for a year and depending on their engagement can request to be on for another year for up to three years. People initially apply or get nominated to join.

TAYSF also has a steering committee that is reflective of the mayor's original taskforce: city departments, providers and young people.

Structure of the Effort

CTAB meets monthly and usually has about 75% of its membership in attendance. Advisory board members receive 50 dollars for every meeting they attend.

The Role of Data

Departments track data and TAYSF produces an annual report. A larger picture of the TAY population across the city could be used to hold departments accountable.

Related Documents

More information about TAYSF and CTAB can be found at www.taysf.org