District 6 Summary of Key Themes
TENDERLOIN, CIVIC CENTER, CATHEDRAL HILL, SOUTH OF MARKET, SOUTH BEACH, MISSION BAY, TREASURE ISLAND, YERBA BUENA ISLAND
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D6 (TENDERLOIN, CIVIC CENTER, CATHEDRAL HILL, SOUTH OF MARKET, SOUTH BEACH, MISSION BAY, TREASURE ISLAND, & YERBA BUENA ISLAND)

On November 23, 2019, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) convened a family summit to hear about the needs of children, youth, and families. The goal of the summit was to hear feedback from the community in District 6 and to learn about the lived experience of families in the district, including the greatest pain points in their daily lives, what is working, what could work better, and how the city should improve their quality of life. The summit began with opening remarks from Supervisor Matt Haney and DCYF staff. Participants listened to a presentation about DCYF and the Community Needs Assessment process, then engaged in breakout-table discussions, facilitated by Bright Research Group, for approximately 50 minutes.

Participation in the Family Summit

A total of 35 family members and 20 providers participated in the breakout table discussions. Of the family members, 11 were youth, 21 were caregivers, and 3 were senior citizens/grandparents. A total of seven breakouts took place—one family group, one youth group, and two provider groups were facilitated in English, one family group was bilingual and facilitated in Spanish and English, one family group was facilitated in Chinese, and one family group was facilitated in Tagalog.

![Figure 1: Ethnicity of D6 Attendees (n=64)*](image)

![Figure 2: D6 Attendees by Home Zip Code (n=64)*](image)

*Data in figures includes all community members who registered at the summit. Some participants did not register. Some attendees did not participate in the breakout discussions. Registrants were asked to select all applicable race/ethnicity categories.

Bright Research Group analyzed data by key theme. DCYF made the decision to redact the names of community-based organizations named by family members and youth as sources of support, out of concern that organizations have different levels of capacity when it comes to organizing their participants to attend community events.
Family members were asked about the easy and difficult parts of a typical day in the life of their families. Parents and youth felt that mornings and evenings were the most stressful parts of their days and listed pedestrian safety and transportation as the major pain points in their daily lives. However, both parents and youth also felt that the stress they felt in the evening was mitigated by being able to spend time with their family and relax.

Parents and young people identified unreliable public transit as a major pain point. Youth are penalized by their teachers when they are tardy due to Muni delays in the morning, and in the afternoons bus delays impact their ability to get home before it’s dark outside. In addition, pedestrian safety, especially during commuting hours, was frequently mentioned as a source of stress and anxiety among caregivers and youth who witness and experience harassment from homeless people with untreated mental health conditions and/or individuals struggling with addiction(s) and experiencing “meth psychosis.” High school students from the youth breakout table said that a safe passage program, in which an escort will walk with them to their destination, supports them in allowing them to feel safer when walking home in the evenings.

After-school programs were cited as sources of support in the evenings by families as well. Filipino and Latin@ families said that they rely on community-based organizations to help them navigate the school system, provide extracurricular support for their children, organize a parent network, and provide family literacy workshops. Additional supports were identified by family members included parent advocacy groups, ESL classes provided by City College, programs offering mentorship relationships for young people, and community-based recreation centers in SOMA.

Needs of Families
Major concerns for District 6 families are public safety, in terms of crime and pedestrian safety; housing and transportation, including accessibility and affordability; and childcare, youth and family services as well as healthy food, including accessibility, affordability, and cultural relevancy.

District 6 families do not feel safe in their neighborhoods. Families discussed high rates of property theft, being assaulted in the street, and a lack of police presence and response to reported criminal activity. Caregivers
expressed frustration at broken streetlights and unlit areas that encourage drug use and crime. Each family breakout also mentioned the high rate of homeless people with mental health and substance-abuse issues concentrated in SOMA and Tenderloin and the lack of services for this population. Parents are worried about the trauma their children experience from exposure to inappropriate and illicit behaviors that they see in their neighborhood. At the youth breakout table, young people said that the city has turned its back on the homeless. They also spoke of becoming desensitized to homelessness and found that “stepping over homeless people on the sidewalk” on a regular basis has become normalized. Family members are also concerned about safety at bus stops because drug dealers often congregate near them, especially in Western SOMA and between 8th and 9th Streets. Families want better-lit streets in their neighborhoods; greater police presence and community policing in their district; and guidance on how to talk to their children about homelessness.

Affordable housing feels unattainable to families in San Francisco. It is common for multiple families to share one-bedroom apartments. Parents are concerned that these living conditions are creating instability in their children’s lives, which, in turn, impacts their ability to excel in school. Parents and youth are frustrated with gentrification and its displacement of working-class families.

A single mother currently experiencing homelessness shared her story of how easy it is to lose housing in San Francisco; homeless-shelter politics; and the difficulty she has experienced in securing permanent housing for herself and her child, including the following incidents: the city towing her car from short-term parking while she was meeting with a case worker, and then having to file an appeal with three different city agencies, with the result that she is still without her vehicle; lack of coordinated care and communication while navigating different systems with separate case managers; and the lack of a central location in which she can receive help for different services in one place.

Reliance on public transit has also negatively impacted families who rely on BART and Muni to commute between service providers located throughout the city. Expensive tickets, high towing fees, and the reliance on one DMV to service all San Francisco residents also causes hardships for families trying to get their license reinstated or registration renewed. In addition, families and youth criticized the lack of support in navigating the process of enrolling for a free or reduced public-transit pass for senior citizens and students. Families are told that they can enroll their kids for free transit passes but have not been given instructions on how to do so. Also, high-schoolers complained of their passes being revoked when they turned 18, even though they are still in school. Although there is a way to file an exemption, they aren’t notified until after the fact and have to pay to get to school and after-school programs while waiting for their waiver to be processed. Families would like for the city of San Francisco to increase the number of affordable-housing units, improve access to reliable school transit, and improve the user experience of navigating through SF city agencies.

Families are concerned that there are not enough childcare services in San Francisco, especially in their district. Infant and toddler programs are the most expensive and have the least amount of open spots. One mother said that she has contacted 12 different places, and none of them had openings for early childcare. Furthermore, parents stated a need for childcare hours beyond the typical 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. workday for those who work
nontraditional hours, hold multiple jobs, or commute outside of San Francisco for work. Families would like to see more Head Start programs and additional hours of childcare services in their neighborhoods.

Many parents and youth know that there are a lot of after-school programs in the city but feel they are not equal in quality and lack cultural relevancy. For example, parents feel that mentors are important, especially for teenagers and/or children who have experienced trauma; however, there are not enough programs that have a mentorship component. In addition, bilingual and culturally relevant services are in high demand, and there are not enough trained providers to fill the need. Parents noted that the preteen and teen years are crucial and that the current after-school programs for this age range need the most improvement. Nine of the 11 youth participants said the city is not youth friendly and does not provide enough quality after-school programs, professional-development services, or paid internships for adolescents and young adults.

Additionally, families need support to better navigate the resources available to them. Parents are told to sign up for services such as healthcare but given no guidance on how to do so or how to utilize them once they are enrolled. Other needs mentioned by families include respite care for parents of developmentally disabled children, increased education on the mayor’s rent to own program, access to fresh produce in their neighborhoods, and healthier school lunches for students.

KEY THEMES FROM PROVIDER BREAK-OUTS

Providers’ understanding of family needs and concerns with neighborhoods in District 6 reflected themes from the family breakout discussions (i.e., affordable housing, public transit, public safety, family services, quality of childcare and after-school programs, and healthy food access). Housing and culturally responsive programming were the most talked-about needs at both provider breakouts.

Housing instability was identified as a root cause of trauma that intersects with every aspect of a child’s life. Without security in housing, children have a hard time focusing in school and are more likely to act out behaviorally. Providers emphasized that newcomers, foster care youth, and young people who are involved in the juvenile justice system have the highest need for resources that provide them with stable housing, linguistically appropriate navigation services, and priority enrollment in schools that can meet their needs. For example, immigrant families are not always connected to the schools and programs that are known for their
ability to better support newcomers; foster youth are often moved between districts and sent to multiple schools within a short time frame, reducing their ability to stay on track in school and participate regularly in extracurricular activities; and youth being released from juvenile hall are often told that they cannot go back home, leaving them alienated from their families and the only sense of community they have.

Providers felt that there is a need for trauma-informed, culturally informed, and responsive programming for youth and their families. Providers stated that the first step in filling this need is trauma training for all service providers and a commitment to hiring staff of color who are from the community. Increased funding is needed to provide said training as well as to provide staff with competitive wages so that they can afford to live in the city that they are trying to serve.

Overall, access to services is inequitable. Providers feel that resources are not distributed equitably nor responsibly in San Francisco, especially in regard to housing, mental health supports, academic support, family support services, neighborhood safety, homelessness outreach, and access to healthy foods. Providers feel that DCYF should use their “seat at the table” to advocate in spaces that they do not fund (e.g., affordable housing and public transit).

**PARTICIPANT QUOTES**

> “Homelessness has an impact on trying to raise children here. There are constantly people shamelessly doing things in public. You can’t open your window because it’s so stinky [due to feces], and it affects the air quality.”
> —Parent, D6

> “They hire white teachers who are not aware of the culture. They need a lot of cultural humility...some of these teachers have whitesavior syndrome and a patronizing attitude toward saving Black, Brown, and Yellow kids. You need to hire from the community.”
> —Provider, D6

> “City staff will sign you up for healthcare but do not share how to use it.”
> —Parent, D6

> “It’s all about who you know. The resources are being given to SF natives and friends of friends. It’s being kept in a circle.”
> —Provider, D6