

Evaluation Report

FY 21-24



Richmond Fund for
Children and Youth

WestEd 



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WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to improve the lives of children and adults at all ages of learning and development. We do this by addressing challenges in education and human development, increasing opportunity, and helping build communities where all can thrive. WestEd staff conduct and apply research, provide technical assistance, and support professional learning. We work with early learning educators, classroom teachers, local and state leaders, and policymakers at all levels of government.



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Executive Summary

From FY 2021 to FY 2024, the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth (RFCY) invested over \$9.1 million in programs supporting Richmond's children, youth, and families.

Administered by the Richmond Department of Children and Youth (RDCY), RFCY funded 56 programs implemented by 46 grantee organizations, spanning services in mental and behavioral health, education and employment, out-of-school time, violence prevention, access to basic needs, and case management. This evaluation—conducted by WestEd—provides a comprehensive assessment of the reach, quality, and outcomes of RFCY-funded programs, as well as recommendations for future improvement.

Key Achievements

- **Widespread Reach:** There were over 58,000 children and youth encounters¹ across 120 sites throughout Richmond, with high representation from areas of greatest need.
- **Equity-Focused Implementation:** Programs reached diverse groups, including Black, Latinx, multilingual, and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth. Many programs embedded trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.
- **Accessible Services:** Many sites were accessible by public transit, walkable for youth, or supported by transportation partnerships. Some grantees launched their own bus routes to eliminate access barriers.
- **Positive Youth Experience:** Youth reported high levels of satisfaction, belonging, and connection with caring adults. Outcomes included positive youth experiences related to leadership, self-confidence, college and career readiness, and mental health support.
- **Support for Organizations:** RFCY funding helped grantees stabilize and expand services, strengthen partnerships, and plan for long-term sustainability. Several small or emerging organizations successfully expanded their reach and capacity.

¹ Each grantee reported the number of youth served at their organization per quarter, described in this report using the term “encounter.” Participants are duplicated in these counts if they participated in more than one funded program or attended their programs for more than a quarter. Given that there are about 46,000 Richmond residents ages 0–24, the data suggest that RFCY program participants attended more than one program and/or a single program for more than one quarter.

Implementation Challenges

- **Barriers to Outreach and Participation:** Some grantees struggled to reach youth most in need, and some struggled with consistent attendance due to the many demands youth face.
- **Administrative and Staffing Burdens:** Organizations struggled with staff turnover, delayed payments, and administrative requirements. Early RDCY staffing limitations also impacted grantee support.
- **Sustainability Concerns:** Despite successes, some grantees expressed uncertainty about long-term funding and scalability without additional support or infrastructure.

Recommendations

- **Prioritize Flexible Funding:** Maintain flexible funding to support responsive, community-informed programs that can pivot to meet emerging needs.
- **Support Capacity Building for Program Quality:** Expand technical assistance to strengthen infrastructure, data use, and program quality.

- **Promote Long-Term Sustainability Planning:** Help grantees build fiscal resilience through strategic planning, revenue diversification, and blending of funding sources.
- **Enhance Communication and Responsiveness:** Improve clarity in communication between the RDCY and RFCY grantees and streamline grantmaking processes.
- **Increase Access Supports and Promote Attendance:** Reduce participation barriers by promoting transportation solutions, expanded hours, and flexible formats tailored to high-need populations.
- **Strengthen School and Community Partnerships:** Help grantees to streamline coordination with schools via aligned calendars, clear points of contact, and processes to reduce disruptions.
- **Deepen Youth and Community Voice:** Expand participatory approaches in evaluation and program planning to ensure programming remains inclusive, relevant, and effective.

Future Impact

The RFCY has become a vital, equity-driven investment in Richmond's children and youth-serving system, enabling organizations to deliver impactful, culturally relevant services. Continued improvements in systems coordination, grantee support, and strategic communication—alongside sustained flexible funding—will be key to maximizing RFCY's long-term impact.

Introduction

On June 5, 2018, Richmond voters approved Measures E and K, known as the Richmond Kids First Initiative.

The Richmond Kids First Initiative approved a City of Richmond charter amendment (Article 15) to create the Richmond Department of Children and Youth (RDCY) and require that a portion of the General Fund be set aside to fund youth programs and services. Starting in fiscal year (FY) 2021–22, RDCY provided grant funding through the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth (RFCY) to various organizations serving Richmond and North Richmond youth under the age of 24. WestEd was contracted by RDCY to evaluate the RFCY from FY 2021 through FY 2028. This report summarizes evaluation findings from FY 2021–24, reflecting the first three grant funding cycles.

The six goals of RFCY are the following:

1 ▼

To ensure that Richmond’s children, youth, and young adults are physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially healthy; educated and successful in school; and live in stable, safe, and supported families and communities.

2 ▼

To increase safety for children, youth, and young adults, their parents/guardians, families, and the communities in which they live by preventing problems and enhancing the strengths of children, youth, young adults, and their families.

3 ▼

To ensure young people are provided with gender responsive, trauma-informed, population-specific, and culturally competent services.

4 ▼

To strengthen collaboration between public agencies and community-based organizations around shared outcomes among all service providers for children, youth, young adults, and their parents/guardians.

5 ▼

To ensure an equitable distribution of resources to all of Richmond’s young people in recognition of the importance of investment in their futures from birth through young adult.

6 ▼

To fill gaps in services and to leverage other resources whenever feasible.

What is evaluation?

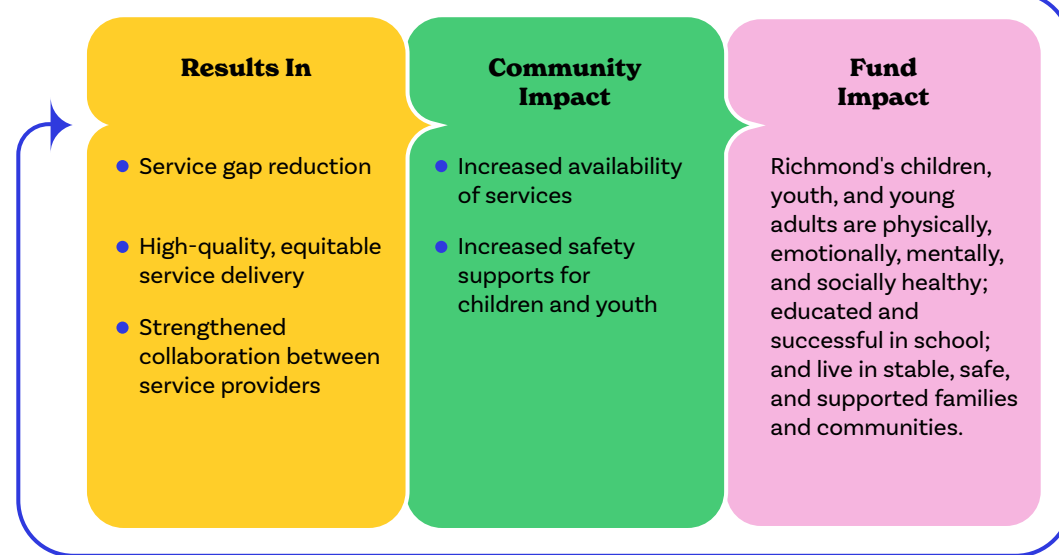
Evaluation provides an opportunity for an organization to share its story about the program; the people served; and the impact of the program on those who are served, their families, and the broader community.



RFCY Theory of Change

Figure 1. RFCY Theory of Change

Richmond Fund for Children and Youth



The RFCY **theory of change** (Figure 1) visualizes how the RFCY is expected to positively impact Richmond residents long term. By funding Richmond-serving organizations, the RFCY will reduce service gaps, deliver more high-quality and equitable services, and promote stronger collaboration between service providers across the city. Over time, these short-term outcomes

will lead to increased availability of services and safety supports for Richmond children and youth. Through these positive short- and intermediate-term outcomes, the RFCY will ensure that Richmond children, youth, and young adults are healthy; educated and successful in school; and live in stable, safe, and supportive communities.

Evaluation Questions

1 ▼

How and to what extent is the Fund successfully building the capacity of grantees?

2 ▼

What are successes and challenges of implementing RFCY-funded activities and services?

3 ▼

How and to what extent are grant funds used to expand program reach and/or coverage?

4 ▼

How and to what extent is the RFCY reducing service gaps in the city of Richmond?

5 ▼

How and to what extent is the RFCY facilitating high-quality programming?

6 ▼

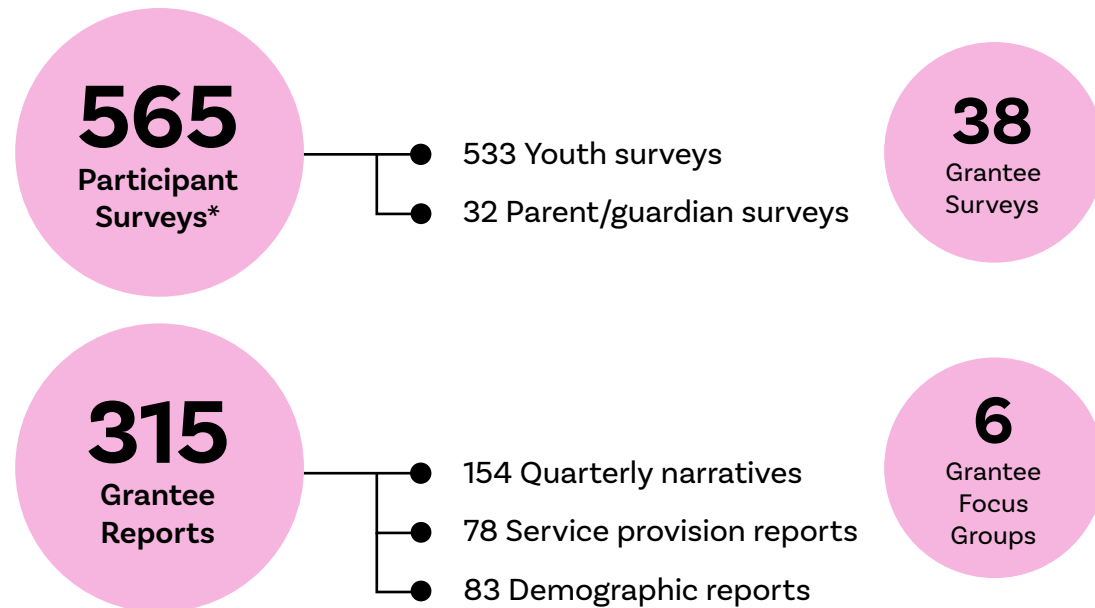
How and to what extent are RFCY-funded programs promoting positive outcomes for program participants?

Evaluation Approach

The RFCY evaluation is designed to measure the extent to which the RFCY is meeting its intended goals. The evaluation plan was developed over 10 months in collaboration with the RDCY, the RFCY Oversight Board, RFCY grantees, and Richmond youth (see Appendix A for a description of evaluation plan development). During the evaluation planning phase, WestEd hosted listening sessions with grantees and co-developed evaluation

instruments with the RFCY Oversight Board and youth co-evaluators. WestEd also partnered with a small group of grantees to pilot the participant survey data collection process. During the data collection and analysis stage, WestEd collaborated with the RDCY, RFCY Oversight Board, and co-evaluators to co-interpret evaluation data (see Appendix B).

Data Sources



Detailed descriptions of data sources are found in Appendix C.

*Youth surveys were administered to youth ages 11 and older, whereas parent surveys were administered only to parents of children ages 10 and younger. When funded, grantees were not explicitly required to participate in evaluation activities, and some programs did not have activities corresponding with data collection windows. Survey findings are not representative of all grantees, as only 40 percent of grantees administered surveys.

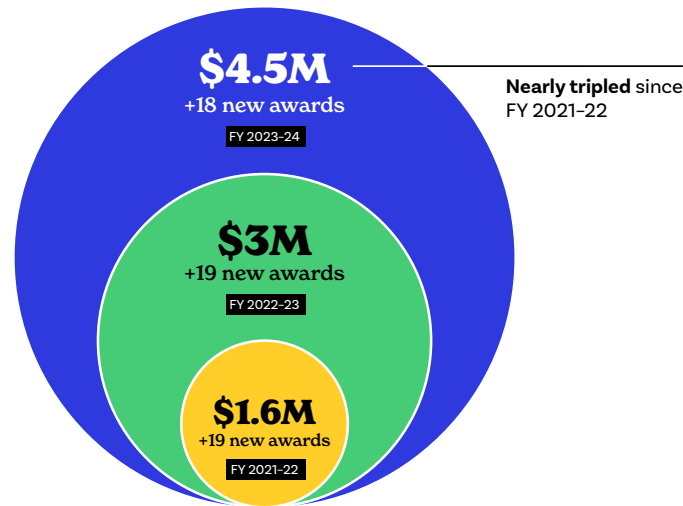
RFCY Implementation Summary

RDCY first awarded grants on July 1, 2021.

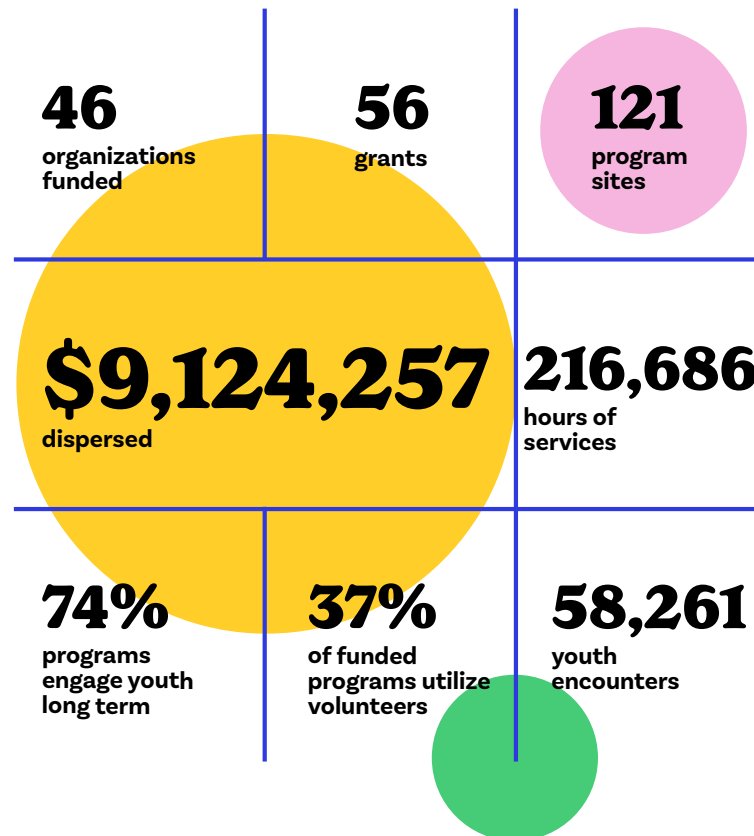
Each subsequent year, RDCY renewed grant agreements with existing grantees and awarded new grants to additional programs. Annual grantee awards ranged from \$15,000 to \$150,000.

In total, over 9.1 million dollars went to organizations serving Richmond children, youth, and families.

Evaluation data show that the RFCY is increasing access to services and supports for Richmond children and youth by expanding the availability and accessibility of services across the city. Funds were used to cover a variety of costs, including staff salaries, direct program costs, infrastructure and administrative costs, and staff training and professional development.



Nearly tripled since FY 2021-22



“The funding helps a lot because as [a] non-profit it’s pretty much impossible to continue to pay for everything yourself, especially as your goals continue to grow and as the amount of people you’re helping continues to grow.”

—Program Staff

Program Reach and Coverage

The RFCY has funded 56 programs that operate across 120 different sites.

Program sites span the city of Richmond (80 sites) and surrounding areas, including San Pablo (10 sites) and El Sobrante (4 sites). Sites in Richmond include 12 publicly owned facilities (libraries, city community centers, recreation complex), 13 outdoor spaces, 32 schools, and 24 community-based sites such as youth centers, social service providers, and offices. Sites outside of Richmond include 5 parks, 8 destinations that were visited as one-time field trips, 3 schools outside of West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), 3 postsecondary schools, and 11 sites that are offices or centers for social services, healthcare, or outreach. Figure 2 shows the location of RFCY-funded program sites across census block groups, which captures the geographic area the census uses to summarize information about the households in that area. As shown by the map (Figure 2), sites are most concentrated in central Richmond, and overall, there are more sites in areas with a higher population of children and youth.

RFCY Participant Demographics

Throughout FY 2021–24, RFCY grantees had over 58,000 encounters with children and youth. Each funded program served between 21 and 2,700 children and youth per quarter. The largest programs were those that served entire schools or grades within schools. Many grantees said that RFCY enabled them to expand their reach by serving more students and expanding programming. The funding from RFCY increases programs' capacities to operate at more locations, for longer durations, and have more spaces in their program.

Grantees served a diverse population of children and youth of various ages, ethnicities, and neighborhoods. Grantees served a large portion

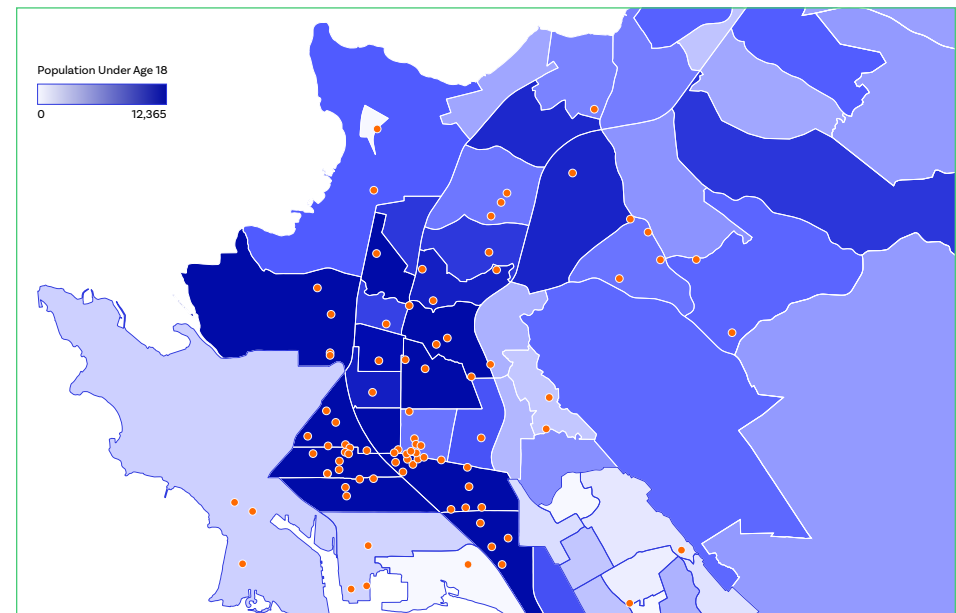
of Richmond's population, given that young people under 24 make up about 30 percent of Richmond's total population.²

The majority of participants resided in the following zip codes: 94801 (34%), 94804 (34%), and 94806 (19%) (Figure 3).

“The funds have really helped open up and expand our program. We can work not just with middle school students but also high school students and year round.”

—Program Manager

Figure 2. Map of RFCY Sites



² American Community Survey 2023 5-Year Estimates. United States Census Bureau.

Figure 3. Home Zip Code of RFCY Participants

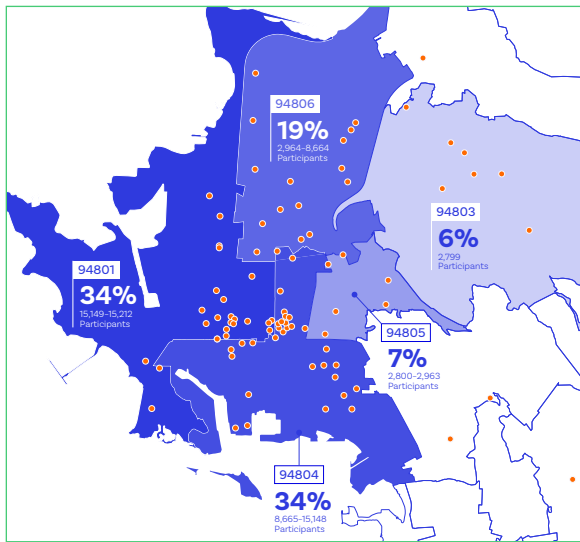


Figure 4. RFCY Participant Gender Identity

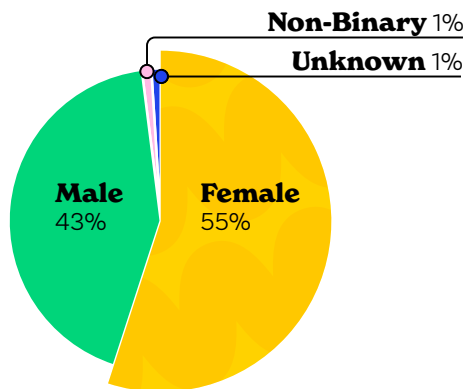
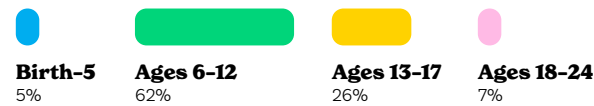


Figure 5. RFCY Participant Ages

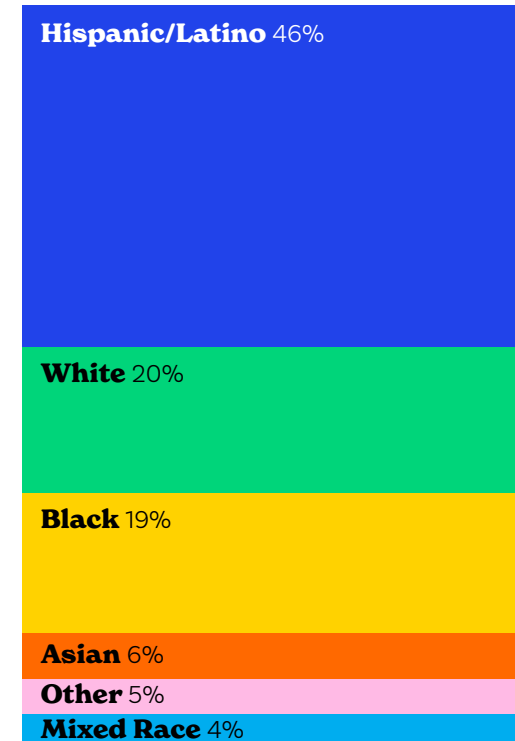


The majority of participants (62%) fell into the 6-12 age range. A small number of programs served children 5 years old and under (Figure 5). Those same programs also served older children and/or the entire family. Programs that served young adults (ages 18-24) included internship and employment programs and whole-family services, such as case management and workshops for parents. These services were offered through private businesses, the Richmond Department of Employment and Training, and other well-funded nonprofit and social service organizations.

“We have bilingual (Spanish-English, some Arabic) Youth Peer Support staff to support in authentic youth engagement and program leadership, especially to help address the language barriers present in the community.”

—Grantee report

Figure 6. RFCY Participant Race/Ethnicity



Note. “Other” includes Native American, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, and Unknown

Grantees served a racially and ethnically diverse population of children and youth. The demographics of participants in RFCY-funded programs mirror that of Richmond’s overall population (Figure 6). Many programs were intentional in providing services for Spanish-speaking children, youth, and families. Several programs offered services in more than two languages.

Program Highlight

The East Bay Center for Performing Arts Young Artist Diploma Program (YADP) was funded in FY 2021–24 to provide cross-cultural performing arts programs. The YDAP provides youth ages 7-12 with wrap-around services to help youth experience art as a therapeutic outlet. For example, the grantee partnered with the Contra Costa Family Justice Center to help young artists understand and address complex issues related to violence in their communities. Through these partnerships, YADP promotes resilience and positive youth development. As one staff member describes, “This important capacity-building work to document our highly effective curriculum will provide program continuity for years to come and ensure that all faculty and staff have the tools and focus they need to ensure that all young people are able to meet their full potential in all aspects of their lives.”

Serving Communities With the Highest Needs

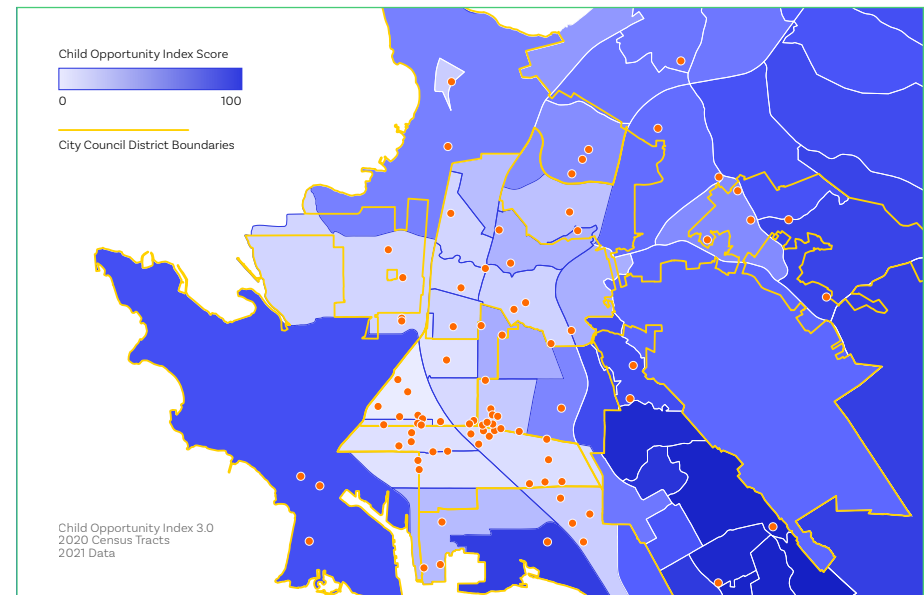
The majority of program sites are in areas with a higher proportion of families whose income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and are rated as areas of lower opportunity on the Child Opportunity Index (COI; see Figure 7) compared to other Richmond city council districts. See the [2024 Richmond Department of Children and Youth Community Needs Assessment Report](#)³ for more information about Richmond’s high-needs areas.

Across Richmond’s six city council districts, district 3 has the most RFCY-funded program sites, followed by district 1. These districts are also those with lowest COI, indicating areas of highest need.

“In West Contra Costa, we’re contracted with WCCUSD, Bay Area Community Resources, and Expanded Learning. We work in schools and with afterschool programs, but we also work at housing sites, clinics, community centers. So we’re really reaching youth in a lot of different settings.”

—Program Director

Figure 7. Child Opportunity Index Across Richmond



³ COI visualized on the map is a calculated measure of neighborhood resources and conditions across domains of education, health, environment, social, and economic resources. For more information about the COI, visit www.diversitydatakids.org.

Serving Children and Youth at Easily Accessible Locations

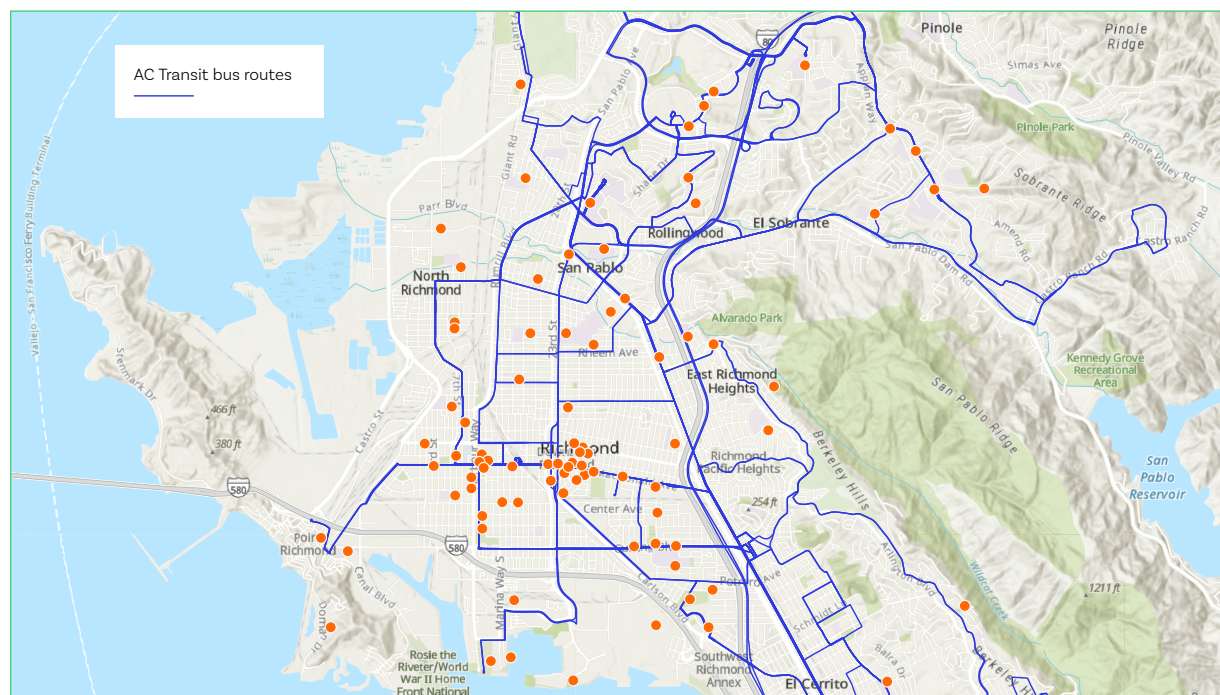
The majority of program sites are easily accessible via Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) buses and Richmond's public shuttle service, Richmond Moves⁴ (Figure 8). Many are located in central Richmond and the Richmond City Center—both of which are also accessible by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). Additionally, several sites are situated in high-density neighborhoods, making them walkable for many local youth.

Grantees are implementing innovative strategies to support youth with limited access to public transportation. One organization partnered with WCCUSD to offer no-cost transportation, enabling students from across Richmond to attend programs at two school sites. Another launched its own bus route, allowing approximately 20 percent of participating families—who otherwise would have been unable to attend—to access services.

School-based programs help remove obstacles that might prevent students from accessing programs off campus. In total, 44 K-12 schools hosted RFCY-funded programming, including 27 elementary, 5 middle, and 5 high schools. The school sites include 29 WCCUSD schools. Colleges and adult schools also partnered with RFCY grantees. The approach of operating at school sites meets children and youth where they are and reduces potential barriers related to transportation.

Throughout FY 2021–24, there were over 43,000 encounters with children and youth at school sites.

Figure 8. AC Transit Routes Across Richmond



⁴ The City of Richmond Office of Transportation Services reported that 15,826 students took rides on Richmond Moves between March 4 and December 31, 2024.

Program Highlight

Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY) has a long history of partnering with schools, the County Office of Education, and community-based organizations. The RFCY has directly supported the expansion of this program to operate in more schools by providing resources for FLY to strengthen partnerships with schools. In the 2022-23 school year, FLY forged a partnership with a new school site, Sylvester Greenwood Academy, which allowed the program to serve 24 new at-risk and justice system-impacted Richmond youth.

“[RFCY is the] kind of funding that ... has been creative in addressing an issue that [is] usually something that is a second thought to all the other services, and it’s specific for youth. It’s been really empowering for our kids to hear that this money is for them and about them.”

—Resource Development Administrator

Schools Who Partner With RFCY-Funded Programs

A Aspire Cal Prep

B Benito Juarez Elementary School
Betty Reid Soskin Middle School

C Caliber Upper School
Ceasar Chavez Elementary School
Coronado Elementary School
Crespi Middle School

D DeAnza High School
DeJean Middle School
Dover Elementary School
Downer Elementary School
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School

E El Cerrito High School

F Ford Elementary School

G Grant Elementary School

H Helms Middle School
Highland Elementary School

J John F. Kennedy High School

L Lake Elementary School
Leadership High School
Lincoln Elementary School

M Michelle Obama Elementary School
Mira Vista Elementary School
Montalvin Manor
Murphy Elementary School

N Nystrom Elementary School

O Olinda Elementary School

P Peres Elementary School
Pinole Middle School

R Richmond Charter Academy
Richmond College Prep
Richmond High School
Richmond Technology Academy
Riverside Elementary School

S Sheldon Elementary School
Stege Elementary School
Sylvester Greenwood Academy

T Tara Hills Elementary School

V Verde Elementary School
Vista Virtual Elementary School
VOICES

W Washington Elementary School

“That’s one of our biggest thing[s]—incorporating the parents and the youth into morphing us into something that they really want to come to and share with their friends and family.”

—Program Founder

“The administration at all of the schools were excited and expressed that they had been waiting for an opportunity like this. They were quick to support our integration into [their] sites and to do their part to support our implementation.”

—Grantee report

Reducing Service Gaps

RFCY supports a diverse array of programs that address critical service gaps in Richmond.

Over the past 3 years, the RFCY has made a meaningful impact by enabling child- and youth-serving organizations to meet their ongoing and evolving needs. While limited resources often constrain organizations to focus on only the most urgent needs, RFCY funding allowed grantees to expand their capacity and meet the interconnected needs of their participants. **Grantees provided over 215,000 hours of programming to Richmond children and youth in FY 2021–24.**

In focus groups, grantees spoke about the impact of RFCY funding:

“It feels a lot better to know we’re embedded in our community, not just in the kids and the staff, but also the funding.”

—Vice President of Programs

Types of Supported Programming

● Providing Individual Support

Example activities: Individual counseling, case management, private lessons, mental health assessments, individual tutoring

● Providing Group Support

Example activities: Tutoring, reading circles, workshops, field trips, college tours, summer camps, after-school clubs

● Managing Internships

Example activities: Recruitment of interns, coordinating with host sites, trainings for interns

● Contracting With Other Youth-Serving Organizations

Example activities: Contracts with partner organizations for counseling services, environmental education, dance classes

Grantees used funds to deliver individual supports, group programming, and internships and to address the basic needs of children and youth. While each grantee organization receives funding for a specific program, the **RFCY’s flexibility allows grantees to spend funds in ways that are responsive to the community’s needs.** For example, one program that offered support to parents in the form of parent workshops learned that

parents were hesitant about a group setting. In response, the program began offering more individualized, one-on-one support. From adapting program models to shifting staff roles and incorporating youth feedback, grantees emphasized the importance of flexibility—especially in the evolving, post-pandemic context.

“Because of this funding, our clinicians can more flexibly address the needs of the student, the school faculty, and promote a more supportive and trauma-informed climate. The flexibility allows us to support youth and their families ‘on the go,’ as the needs arise, as often as needed, and for as brief or as long a term as needed.”

—Grantee Report

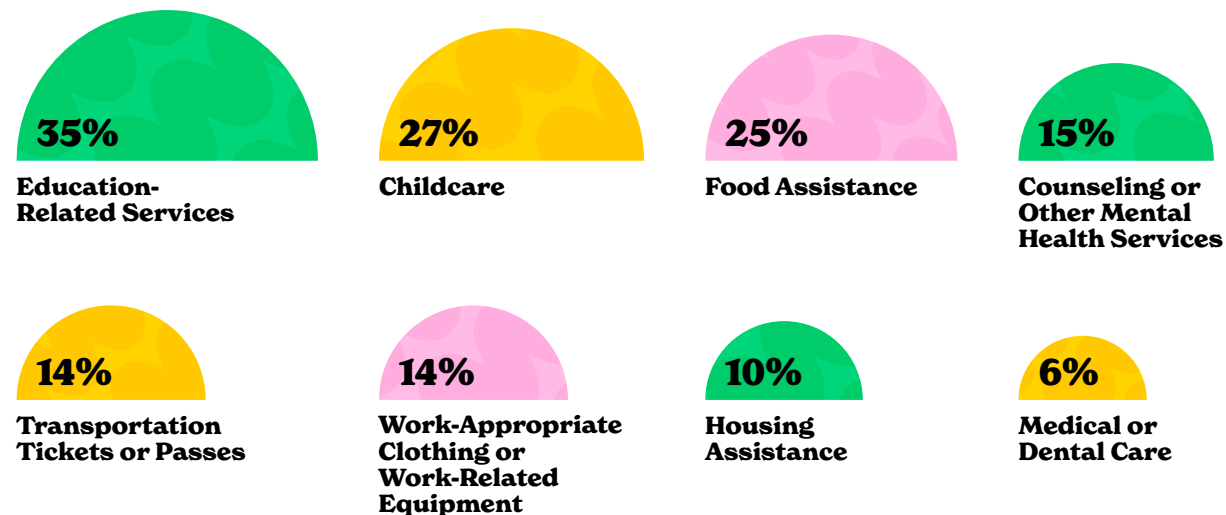
Addressing Basic Needs

RFCY-funded programs connected youth and families to basic needs like transportation, food and shelter, and access to technology (Figure 9). Programs also trained participants in foundational skills such as financial management,

public speaking, and navigation of the legal system. Through these supports, programs facilitated positive short- and long-term outcomes for participants. One funded program, 18 Reasons, shared that “participants are thankful for the food provided through the program as well as the information on how to save money at the grocery store.”

Parents/guardians were interested in programming for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons why parents/guardians enrolled their child in the program was because they wanted their child to participate in learning activities, new experiences, and/or because the program was free (Figure 10).

Figure 9. Types of Resources Received by Youth



Note. Participants could select all that apply, so percentages do not add up to 100 percent. Parent/guardian survey respondents also reported that they were connected with work-appropriate clothing or equipment (28%), childcare (25%), and education-related services (25%), alongside counseling (22%), food assistance (19%), housing assistance (16%), transportation assistance (16%), and medical or dental care (3%).

Figure 10. Reasons Parents Enrolled Their Child in Programming



Note. The chart above reflects 32 parent surveys from six funded programs. Respondents could select all that apply, so percentages may not add up to 100 percent.

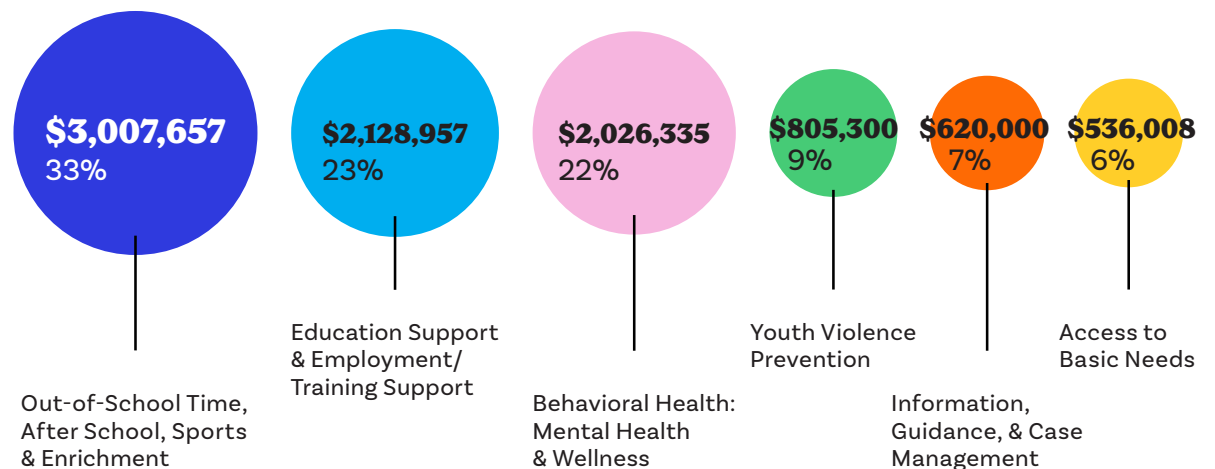


Programs by Priority Area

Programs were funded under one of six priority areas that were identified through the [2020 Community Needs Assessment](#) and [Strategic Investment Plan](#) (see Figure 11): behavioral health: mental health and wellness; education training and employment/training support; out-of-school time, after school, and sports and enrichment;

youth violence prevention; access to basic needs; and information, guidance, and case management.⁵ Although each program was funded under a single priority area, many grantees offered programming that crossed multiple priority areas. See Appendix D for a complete list of funded programs and their funding amount, organized by priority area.

Figure 11. Priority Area of Funded Programs



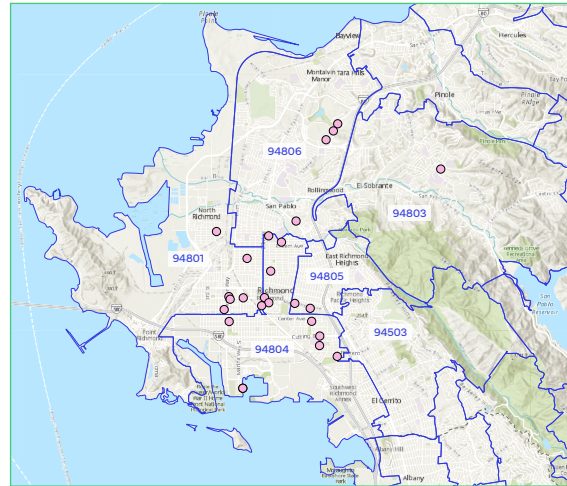
⁵ See Appendix D for full list of programs by priority area. Profiles of each funded program can be found in a supplemental file.



Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Wellness

Funding Amount FY 2021–24: \$2,026,335

Number of Participant Encounters: 19,475



The RFCY funded 10 programs to increase access to mental health services, reduce stigma around mental health support, decrease substance use, and promote greater awareness of available mental health resources at 26 sites. Funded programs under this priority area provided therapeutic interventions, resource connections, mental health education, and advocacy to enhance the behavioral health and well-being of children and youth. Specifically, grantees offered individual and group therapy, family advocacy

and support, school-based mental health services, wellness classes in schools, integrative healing-arts programming, mentorship, wrap-around services, and case management. Funding behavioral health services allows organizations to address a broader set of participant needs that wasn't feasible in the past. For example, the Early Childhood Mental Health Program shared that RFCY funding allows them to provide services for the prenatal population regardless of insurance. The program manager explained, "Because of Medi-Cal, we would have to diagnose infants [to receive reimbursement]. And so, with this funding, we didn't have the pressure of having to prove medical necessity, and we were able to look at it from a relational perspective on how we can provide services to the mothers and infants that we were serving."

Programs funded under this priority area:

- *Early Childhood Mental Health Program: Perinatal Circle of Care*
- *Greater Richmond Interfaith Program: Early Childhood Mental Health Program*
- *Bay Area Community Resources: Mental Health and Wellness Classes at Richmond Schools (2 separate grants)*
- *Mindful Life Project: Mental Health and Wellness Support for Richmond Schools*
- *New Life Movement: Reactions Program*

- *West County Mandarin School PTA: Social and Emotional Learning Enrichment*
- *Richmond Community Foundation: Sister Circle*
- *Seneca Family of Agencies: Unconditional Education School Partnerships*
- *Desarrollo Familiar: Youth Matters Program*

Program Highlight

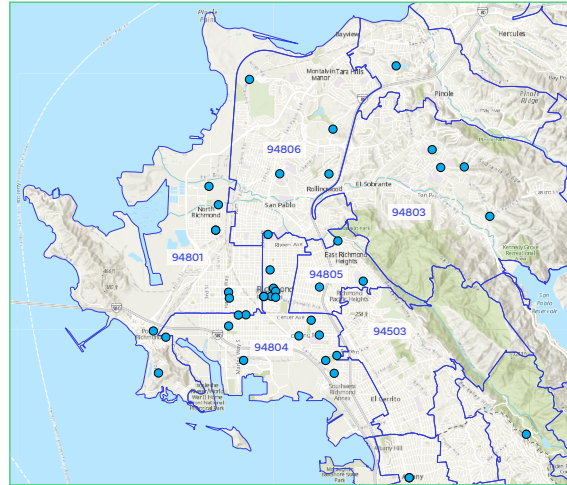
Mindful Life Project (MLP) was funded by RFCY in FY 2022–24. MLP provides mindfulness-based programming for teachers, parents, and elementary and middle school students. MLP led mindfulness sessions for teachers both one-on-one and at staff meetings, and it hosted family mindfulness sessions during weekly school-hosted Family Coffee Hours. In addition, MLP provided age-appropriate mindfulness sessions at partner schools. The TK–2nd grade lessons focused on understanding emotions and how to identify them when they arise. The 3rd–5th grade lessons focused on brain science and how different parts of the brain affect emotional responses. The 6th–8th grade lessons emphasized independent learning.



Education Support and Employment/Training Support

Funding Amount FY 2021-24: \$2,128,957

Numbers of Participant Encounters: 9,456



The RFCY funded 12 programs to provide education support and employment training to promote increased access to early learning, improved reading, higher school attendance rates, higher school graduation rates, improved college entry and persistence, reductions in chronic absenteeism, increased access to career and college resources, and more opportunities and higher earnings for youth and young adults at 49 sites.

Funded programs within this priority area provided a variety of services to improve children and youth's education and employment trajectories. Programs that served younger children and youth provided experiential learning opportunities related to career exploration (e.g., field trips, in-classroom demonstrations, project-based learning) and academic supports to improve literacy and reduce summer learning loss. Programs under this priority area also prepared young adults for post-high school opportunities through college readiness workshops, college tours, paid internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship. When possible, programs also provided additional supports to address barriers that their participants experienced, such as scholarships for college, wraparound services, and parent information workshops.

Programs funded under this priority area:

- *Bridges From School to Work: Job Readiness and Placement Program*
- *City of Richmond Employment and Training Department: Healthcare Pathways Program*
- *City of Richmond Employment and Training Department: Richmond BUILD*
- *College Is Real: Summer Bridge Program and High School Programming*
- *Healthy Contra Costa: Richmond Youth Health Advocacy Pathways*

- *Improve Your Tomorrow: Support program for young men*
- *Richmond Art Center: Supporting People's Outlooks, Talents, and Speech (SPOTS) Mural Program*
- *Richmond Promise: Health Care Career Connections for Richmond Promise Leaders*
- *Richmond Public Library: Drop-in homework help and tutoring services*
- *Things That Creep: Neighborhood Snakes program*
- *Urban Tilth: Urban Agriculture Academy*
- *Watershed Project: Green Collar Corps Youth Employment Program*

Program Highlight

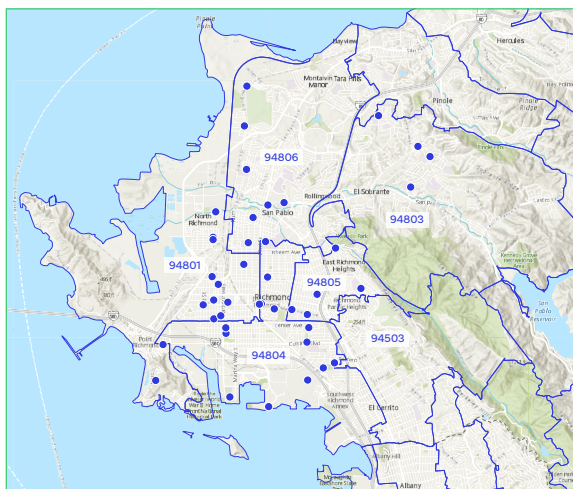
The Watershed Project Green Collar Corps was funded by RFCY in FY 2022–24. This project funded 10 young people to participate in its program, which consisted of three components: team-building field trips, a yearlong career development academy that provides training and project-based work experience, and a community day. This program is a career-building opportunity, particularly for high schoolers who face barriers to maintaining a balanced school, home, and work life.

As the Youth Employment Program Manager explained: “There are plenty of kids who want to do [cool] things, but they can’t. They can’t get to the office. They can’t come after school. Or they have to cook dinner for their younger siblings in the evening. And so, thanks to RFCY, we’re able to fund transportation, we’re able to fund meals, we’re able to fund materials and make it possible.”

Out-of-School Time, After School, Sports and Enrichment

Funding Amount FY 21-24: \$3,007,657

Numbers of Participant Encounters: 19,876



The RFCY funded 20 programs to expand access to out-of-school programs, increase year-round learning opportunities, provide more diverse and culturally relevant offerings, and increase no-cost or subsidized programs at 47 sites.

Funded programs within this priority area provided culturally relevant and diverse free or low-cost programming that supports positive youth development, empowers young people, and provides academic enrichment. About half of programs in this priority area operated during the school year only, providing free after-school clubs, field trips, and extracurricular activities.

Four programs under this priority provided full-day summer learning and enrichment programs that were free to participants. Six programs operated throughout the year, providing consistent opportunities for children and youth. Programs included a variety of activities, including tutoring, physical activities, artistic development, cultural activities, and environmental awareness and stewardship. Under this priority area, RFCY grantees also used funds to build program staff capacity and increase the number of spots available to participants in their programs.

Programs funded under this priority area:

- **ABLE Community Development Foundation:** After-school enrichment club
- **Aim High for High School:** Summer Learning Programs
- **City of Richmond, Community Services:** Camp Achieve
- **City of Richmond, Community Services:** Sports and Leadership Program
- **Community Education Partnerships:** Educational Services
- **DREAM Financial:** Literacy Project
- **East Bay Center for the Performing Arts:** Young Artist Diploma Program
- **Richmond Freedom School:** Summer program

- **Envisioneers Inc:** Curriculum support and after-school enrichment
- **Social Progress:** Academic tutoring
- **Oshiana Unique Thompkins Foundation:** Oshi Entrepreneur Club
- **Pogo Park:** Enrichment Programs at Elm Playlot
- **Practice Space:** Speak Together Be Together
- **Rosie the Riveter Trust:** Community liaison to support educational enrichment programming
- **Rosie the Riveter Trust:** Rosie Service Corps
- **RYSE:** Integrative Arts Programming
- **Scientific Adventures for Girls:** After-school STEM program at WCCUSD Schools
- **Watershed Project:** Educational program support for WCCUSD teachers
- **West County Digs:** School Garden Renewal Program
- **Youth Code Now:** After-school program

Program Highlight

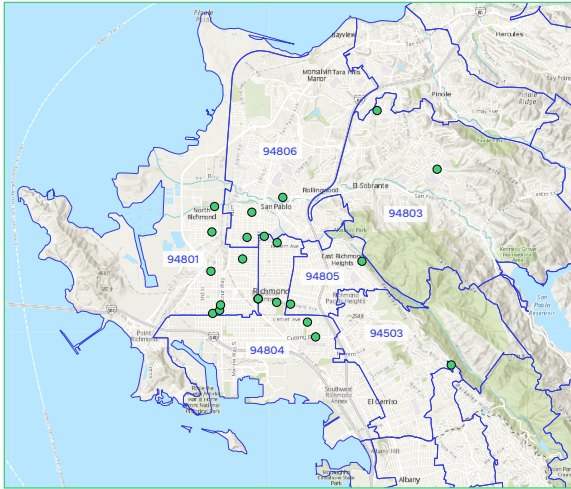
Pogo Park was funded by RFCY in FY 2022–24 to provide enrichment programs at Elm Playlot. During the 2023–24 school year, Pogo Park provided 188 enrichment opportunities to 544 children and youth who came to the park. The program provided diverse activities to meet various interests and needs of the community. For example, Pogo Park offered dance classes and an art station to nurture children’s self-expression and collaboration; a chess club to hone critical thinking, decision-making, and focus; nature exploration to instill curiosity; and a gardening program to teach responsibility.

Collectively, these diverse programs helped Richmond children and youth thrive socially and emotionally. As one staff member explained, “These spaces serve as outlets for creativity, imagination, and self-expression, allowing children to explore their interests and develop their talents. Additionally, they provide opportunities for social interaction, building friendships, and enhancing communication and cooperation skills. *Overall, these spaces empower low-income children to thrive, discover their potential, and lay a foundation for a brighter future.*”

Youth Violence Prevention

Funding Amount FY 2021-24: \$805,300

Numbers of Participant Encounters: 6,150



The RFCY funded five programs to reduce the number of youth who witness violence, become involved in criminal activity, and perpetrate violence and bullying at 31 sites.

Programs within this priority area promoted healthy child development and nonviolent coping through positive adult relationships, peer-to-peer groups, family support, outreach, and after-school activities. Specifically, RFCY grantees supported young people by providing safe spaces, legal education, mentorship, social-emotional learning activities, and wraparound services. The grantees' programming sought to support youth to make positive choices. Several RFCY grantees aimed to interrupt intergenerational cycles

of violence by providing resources to parents and offering individual and group counseling services. As one grantee explained, "Abusive households have profound impacts on [children's and youth's] development. The trauma-informed service providers support our young clients to intervene in the cycle of abuse and trauma they develop."

Programs funded under this priority area:

- *Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County - Speak Up Be Safe and Nurturing Parenting Program*
- *Community Violence Solutions: H.O.P.E. Counseling and Therapy Services*
- *Fresh Lifelines for Youth: Law-Related Education*
- *Project Avary: Leadership Program for Children of Incarcerated Parents*
- *Richmond Police Activities League: Youth Diversion and Development program*

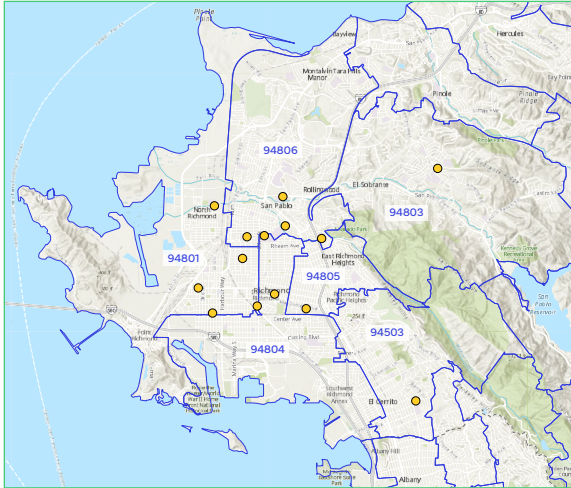
Program Highlight

The Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) of Contra Costa County was funded in FY 2021-24 to implement its Speak Up Be Safe program and Nurturing Parent Program. Speak Up Be Safe is a culturally and linguistically competent curriculum delivered to English- and Spanish-speaking students at Cesar Chavez, Lincoln, and Verde elementary schools. The lessons teach children what is and is not safe and when they should talk to a safe adult. The Nurturing Parent Program is a program for parents at Cesar Chavez Elementary School that teaches them about the protective factors for child development. This multigenerational approach to interrupting violence is meaningful, as CAPC reported, "Parents [shared] how their own parents raised them and the parenting practices that were normalized. ... They acknowledged their parents tried their best, and now parents believe they have the opportunity to do better."

Access to Basic Needs

Funding Amount FY 2021-24: \$536,008

Numbers of Participant Encounters: 2,227



The RFCY funded four programs to address the basic needs of children and youth, such as housing, food security, childcare, transportation, and high-speed internet at 16 sites.

Programs within this priority area provided childcare, meal and nutrition support, financial counseling, rent assistance, trauma-informed mental health support, and resource navigation. Funding in this service area met basic needs by providing nutrition education and groceries, funding a homeless shelter for families, and providing computers to first-year college students. RFCY programs were intentional about delivering culture- and language-specific services to overcome traditional barriers to access in marginalized communities.

Programs funded under this priority area:

- *18 Reasons: Cooking Matters Program*
- *Fresh Approach: Nutrition Education and Resources*
- *Greater Richmond Interfaith Program: Shelter Services*
- *Richmond Promise: Technology Access for First-Generation College Students*

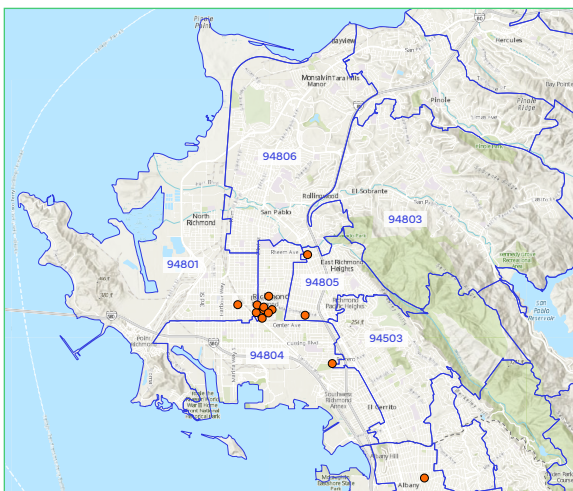
Program Highlight

Fresh Approach's Youth Community Ambassador program was funded during FY 2022-24 to engage youth ages 18-24 in part-time employment, mentorship, and training in the topics of nutrition, food access, and public health. Participants earn nutrition and wellness coach certificates and gain job shadowing experience with reputable partner organizations. With RFCY funds, Fresh Approach reports that they have been empowering youth to be healthy eating and wellness ambassadors to their communities. Moreover, every participant and their household receive \$10/week in VeggieRX vouchers. This resource enables youth and their families to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers' markets.

Information, Guidance, and Case Management

Funding Amount FY 2021–24: \$620,000

Numbers of Participant Encounters: 1,077



The RFCY funded five programs to increase access to information and build capacity for navigation support, case management, and/or wraparound services at 13 sites.

Programs within this priority area provided tangible resources for children, youth, and families. The five funded programs within this service area provided financial wellness and homeownership workshops, referrals, wraparound services, and/or case management to children, youth, and their families.

Programs funded under this priority area:

- *Contra Costa Family Justice Alliance: Family Justice Center*
- *Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau: Wraparound Services*
- *Greater Richmond Interfaith Program: Case Management*
- *Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services: High School to Homeownership (H2H) Program*
- *Youth Finance Institute of America: Personal Finance Workshop Program*

Program Highlight

Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services (RNHS) was funded in FY 2023–24 to partner with Youth Finance Institute of America (YFIA) and create a program to support Black youth’s financial progress toward home ownership. Workshops explored budgeting and credit management to give youth the knowledge needed to make sound financial decisions as they become adults. In their partnership, RNHS and YFIA combined their areas of expertise to host a workshop explaining the connection between two seemingly disparate financial decisions—purchasing one’s first car and future homeownership: “We tied this workshop to one day purchasing a home by showing how buying a car you cannot afford can delay or even prevent homeownership in the future, [and also] how having access to reliable transportation is key to obtaining and retaining employment.” At the end of its funding cycle, RNHS indicated that 100 percent of participants reported improved knowledge on topics related to the homebuying process.



Assessing the Quality of Funded Programs

Programs funded by RFCY are expected to provide high-quality programming, as measured by a series of universal performance measures.

These performance measures capture how well a program is performing relative to a benchmark value that indicates adequate performance. Appendix A includes a table of all performance measures and their associated benchmarks, which were determined in partnership with RDCY and RFCY grantees (see Appendix B for a description of partner engagement processes). Transformational change that promotes program quality requires sustained investment over multiple years. During this initial data collection period, performance measures provided a point-in-time snapshot of program quality, which

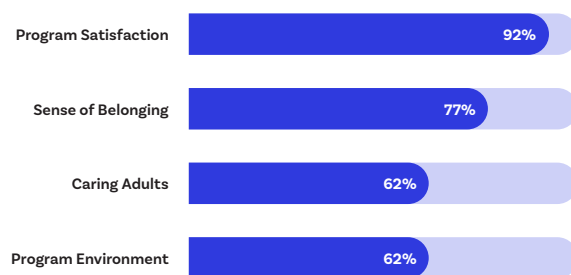
is expected to improve over time with continued funding and targeted support from RDCY.

Grantees generated performance measurement data based on surveys of 533 youth who attended 22 programs. Of the 533 survey respondents, 14 percent indicated that the survey was conducted on their first day in the program—an important consideration, as their limited exposure to the program and staff may have influenced their responses and affected the overall findings.⁶

Grantee-level performance measures are provided to RDCY annually for performance monitoring over the course of the grant period. While the majority of grantees met the key performance measures, some programs fell short (see Figure 12). A disaggregated list of performance by grantee was provided to the RDCY after the data were collected to help identify which grantees need additional support, if funded in the future. The RDCY is developing technical assistance and capacity-building offerings to support grantees who fell below predetermined performance benchmarks.

⁶ Survey respondents who indicated they were attending the program for the first time were primarily from four programs. These programs were all at schools/in partnership with schools, and most of these respondents were middle school aged (90% ages 11-14). Possible explanations include (a) the respondent has attended the program before but hasn't known it by name if the program came in and the student didn't distinguish it separately from regular school activities or (b) the student may have been absent last time the program worked with the school and truly has not interacted with the program before. In both cases, WestEd is collaborating with grantees to improve data collection procedures to ensure collected data is a valid representation of funded programs.

Figure 12. Percentage of RFCY Grantees Who Met Performance Benchmarks, FY 2021–24



Note. The Figure above includes data from 13 grantees who had at least 10 youth survey responses. Only grantees who had at least 10 survey responses are included in benchmark calculations.

Program Highlight

Richmond Freedom Schools leveraged RFCY funding to improve the quality of their services in a variety of ways—from adding more afternoon enrichment opportunities to sending food home on the weekends to paying for field trip transportation. As one staff member summarized the impact of the RFCY on program quality: “The program is already a quality program at its base, but ... this money puts us over the top so we can give our absolute best for the kids.”

RFCY Grantee Performance Measures

- **Program Participation:** Number of participants served as a percentage of the program’s proposed number of participants
- **Service Provision:** Number of hours of programming provided as a percentage of the program’s proposed number of hours of programming
- **Program Satisfaction:** Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, “I would recommend this program to a friend.”
- **Program Environment:** Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, “I feel physically safe when I am at this program.”
- **Caring Adults:** Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, “There is an adult at this program who cares about me.”
- **Sense of Belonging:** Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, “I have a strong sense of belonging to a community at this program.”

As depicted in Figures 13–17, **findings from the youth experience survey were mixed.** Although the majority of participants rated their programs positively across key items in the youth survey, a significant portion selected neutral responses. These neutral ratings suggest that

while participants may not have had negative experiences, they may also not have experienced strong engagement or impact in certain areas of programming. There are many possible reasons for these neutral responses, including the amount of time participants spent in the program or the specific structure and activities offered.

A small but meaningful number of youth participants indicated negative experiences in their programs. While these responses represent a minority, they are important indicators of areas where program improvements may be necessary to ensure all youth feel safe, supported, and engaged. There are many potential reasons behind these negative responses, including mismatches between youth needs and program offerings, inconsistencies in implementation, or interpersonal challenges within program environments.

Both neutral and negative ratings raise important questions about how youth are experiencing programs and what factors influence their experience in the program. WestEd and RDCY will explore these findings further in conversations with community partners and grantees to better understand youth perspectives and identify the underlying causes. These insights will help shape future supports—and, in some cases, required improvements—to ensure quality programming and more consistently positive experiences for all youth.

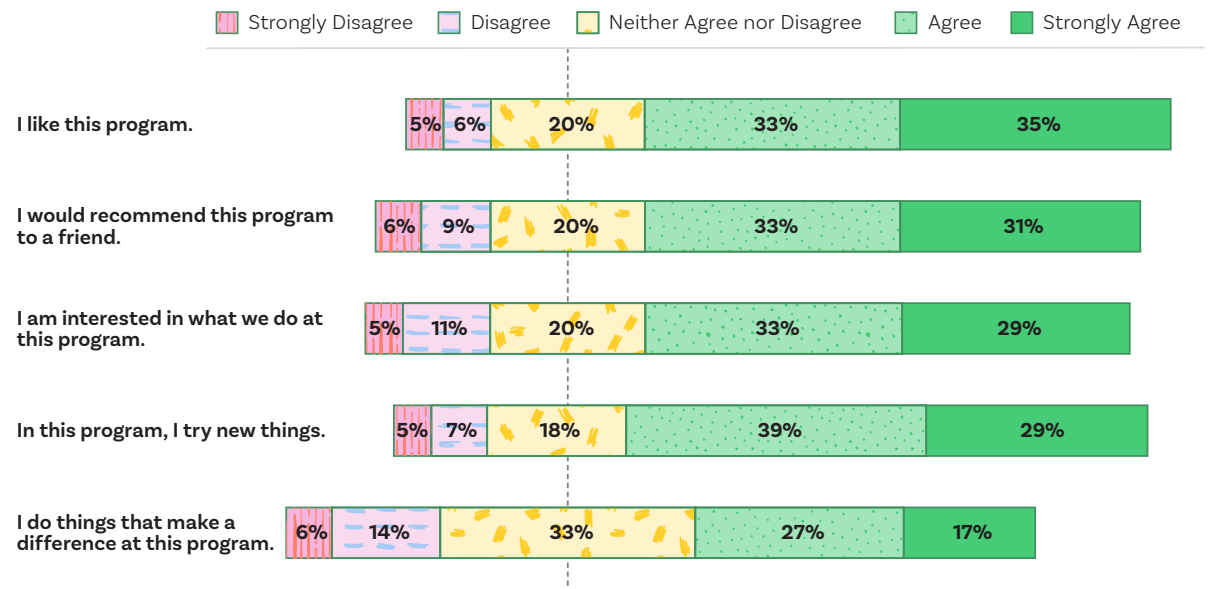
Participant Satisfaction

The majority of participants were satisfied with the programs they attended (Figure 13). Outside of the program satisfaction measures collected as part of the RFCY evaluation, many grantees collected their own program satisfaction data and reported that, overall, their participants enjoyed their programs. Youth participants expressed satisfaction with a range of programmatic aspects, including the loving and respectful community, the supportive structure, and the concrete skills gained. Most commonly, youth participants expressed satisfaction through comments about how “fun” or “safe” or “eye-opening” the program experience was for them. Similarly, the vast majority of parent survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the program, they would recommend the program to another parent, their child was interested in what they do at the program, and they try new things (97%, 94%, 91%, and 94%, respectively). One youth participant from Fresh Lifelines for Youth shared their admiration for their program: “I honestly believe the program organizers did a fantastic job and deserve props for their hard work.”

Program Environment

RFCY funding has enabled most grantees to create program environments that prioritize safety, support, creativity, and a sense of

Figure 13. Participants' Satisfaction With Their Programs



Note. The chart above reflects 533 participant surveys from 22 funded programs. Participants who did not respond to the question or selected “Does Not Apply” were categorized as “N/A.” Fewer than 5 percent of participants fell into the “N/A” category for each item. Totals may not equal 100 percent due to omission of “N/A” responses

belonging (Figure 14). From green spaces to in-school wellness centers, these environments help youth feel secure, cared for, and empowered. The program environments offered opportunities for collaboration, relationship-building, and open communication, while also encouraging youth to express themselves and explore their interests and talents.

Grantees were also committed to building culturally and linguistically responsive spaces that supported emotional and physical well-being.

Some grantees focused on diverse hiring practices to reflect the communities they serve, while others integrated cultural competency into their programming—celebrating traditions such as West African and Mexican music and dance. Several grantees also provided multicultural wraparound services to holistically support youth from diverse backgrounds. A participant from Desarrollo Familiar shared, “In this program I can feel safe that I will not be judged, and I can share my ideas safely.”

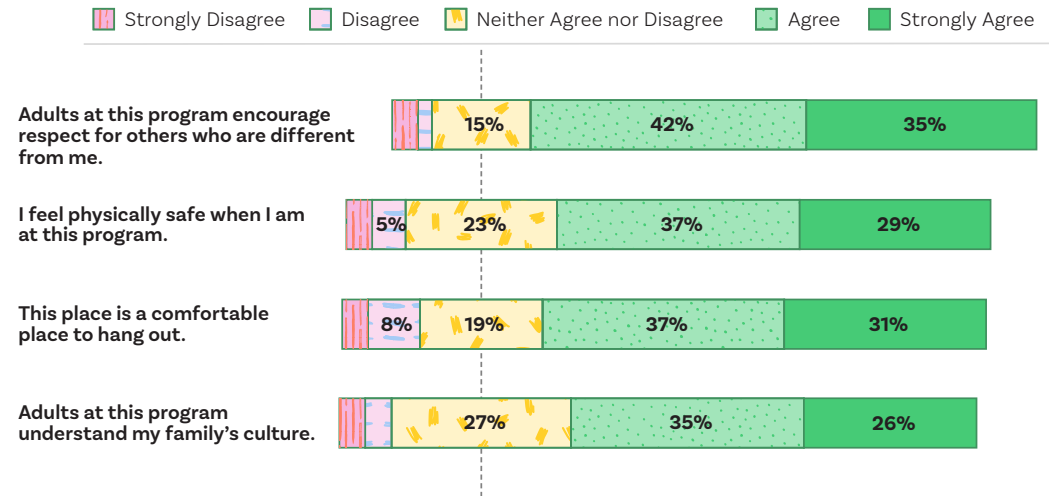
● Caring Adults

Most RFCY grantees fostered strong, supportive networks of adults through programming that centered on youth well-being. Some did this through behavioral health initiatives that build trusting relationships with counselors and mentors, while others offered arts enrichment programs in which youth connect with safe, caring instructors. A participant from the East Bay Center for Performing Arts shared, “The consistent instruction and support from trusted adults is one of the most valuable components of our program. ... I call this place my home away from home.” This sentiment reflects a broader trend, as most youth indicated in surveys that they felt supported by caring adults in their programs (Figure 15).

● Sense of Belonging

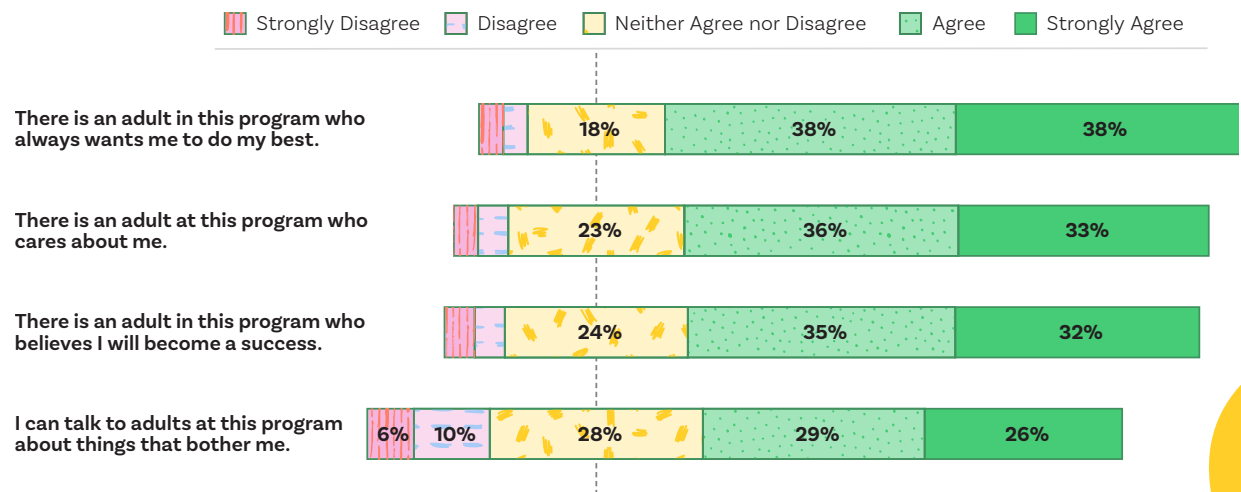
Grantees reported that RFCY-funded programs fostered strong social connections among youth by creating inclusive environments and offering a wide range of opportunities that promote belonging. These included team-building activities, nature discovery walks, inter-age buddy reading, and unstructured play. One program specifically supported youth with incarcerated parents by offering a safe and understanding community of peers and counselors who share similar experiences. And at Community Education

Figure 14. Participants’ Satisfaction With Program Environment



Note. The chart above reflects 533 participant surveys from 22 funded programs. Participants who did not respond to the question or selected “Does Not Apply” were categorized as “N/A.” Bars without data labels had 3 percent or fewer participants.

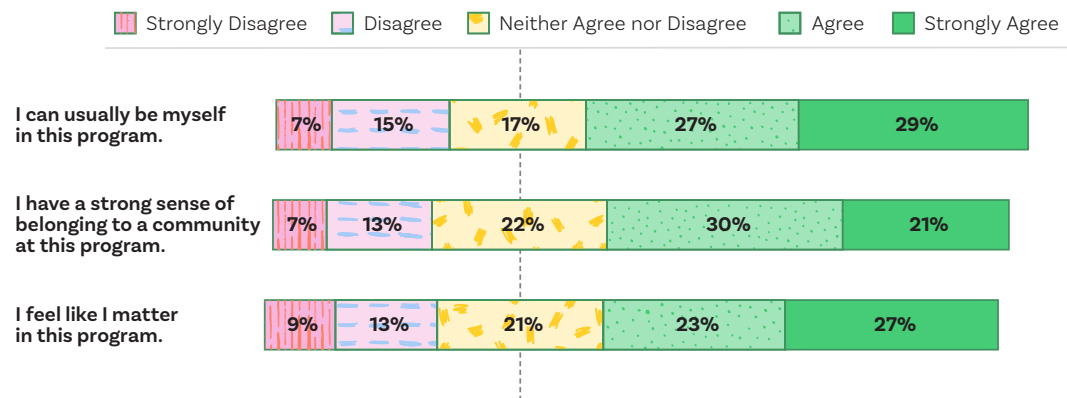
Figure 15. Participants’ Experiences With Adults in Their Programs



Note. The chart above reflects 533 participant surveys from 22 funded programs. Participants who did not respond to the question or selected “Does Not Apply” were categorized as “N/A.” Bars without data labels had 3 percent or fewer participants.



Figure 16. Participants' Sense of Belonging in Their Programs



Note. The chart above reflects 533 participant surveys from 22 funded programs. Participants who did not respond to the question or selected "Does Not Apply" were categorized as "N/A." Totals may not equal 100 percent due to omission of "N/A" responses.

Partnerships, students began referring to each other as "cousins," demonstrating a deep sense of mutual support both within and beyond the program.

A participant from Project Avary captured this feeling of connection, saying, "When a youth steps off the bus for their first time at a camp or retreat, they suddenly know that they are no longer alone and that they now have a community of support and belonging where every youth has this shared experience." Survey results from RFCY participants further reinforced this theme, with youth expressing a strong sense of belonging in their programs (Figure 16).

Additional Participant Experiences

In addition to the four areas of performance described in the previous section, the participant surveys also included a range of other questions about participant experiences, which are shared in this section. Overall, there were 533 youth and 32 parent/guardian survey respondents. However, the number of respondents to each section described here differ due to the survey structure.

Building Connections

- **93%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program helps me learn how to get along with others.”**
- **87%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program helps me make new friends.”**

Leadership and Advocacy

- **94%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“since coming to this program, I better understand solutions to problems in my community.”**
- **90%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“since coming to this program, I am better at saying ‘no’ to things I know are wrong.”**
- **88%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“since coming to this program, I am more aware about what is going on in my community.”**
- **82%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“since coming to this program, I am more of a leader.”**

College Preparation

- **83%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“because of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get into college.”**

“I feel like this program really pushes me and encourages me into doing my best.”

—East Bay Center for the Performing Arts participant, age 16

RFCY program participants formed meaningful connections within supportive, nurturing environments.

Youth had opportunities to explore their identities, strengthen social and emotional skills, and engage in open, trusting dialogue with peers and adults. Through activities that encouraged peer bonding and community responsibility, they developed a deeper sense of belonging and purpose. Project-based learning fostered collaboration, while service-oriented projects taught youth how to contribute to and support their broader communities.

Through RFCY-funded programs, Richmond youth engaged in diverse experiences that nurtured their leadership and advocacy skills.

Several grantees offered community service and civic engagement opportunities, encouraging youth to become stewards of shared environments. Other programs focused on self-discovery and helping youth understand their role within a broader community. Some initiatives provided structured advocacy pathways, training youth

to present to city and county boards. Others hosted showcases to build communication and public-speaking skills. Across these varied experiences, youth gained critical life skills, a deeper sense of agency, and the confidence to lead—emerging as empowered voices in their communities.

RFCY-funded programs equipped Richmond youth with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets needed to pursue and succeed in college.

Some programs emphasized critical thinking by engaging youth in real-world projects, while others provided targeted college preparation support—such as helping students meet eligibility requirements or navigate the admissions process. Several programs awarded scholarships for study in specific fields, such as the arts. Recognizing that college preparation can be stressful, many programs also integrated mental health services, including case management and crisis intervention, to support students more holistically. From financial aid guidance and college campus tours to “high school roadmaps,” RFCY grantees have been using their funding to ensure youth of all ages feel prepared, supported, and empowered to pursue higher education.

Academic Success

- 67% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program makes learning fun.”**
- 65% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“what I learn at this program helps me be more successful in school.”**
- 56% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“because of this program, I am more motivated to learn in school.”**

Life Skills

- 95% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program helps me to think about the future.”**
- 89% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“I have learned new skills that will help me achieve my goals.”**
- 86% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“in this program, I learn how to set goals and meet them.”**

RFCY-funded programs supported Richmond youth in building both academic skills and confidence. Many grantees used project-based learning approaches to engage youth in real-world challenges—such as identifying ways for communities to have access to clean water—that required critical thinking and creative problem-solving. Other initiatives offered comprehensive academic supports not typically available in schools, including personalized tutoring, mentoring, life skills counseling, and college readiness coaching. These individualized services helped students feel more prepared and capable in their academic pursuits. Some youth also developed leadership skills by mentoring younger peers, reinforcing their own learning in the process. Across programs, participants reported greater confidence in their academic abilities, improved reading comprehension, more positive attitudes toward learning, and increased interest in fields such as STEM and the arts.

Youth reported learning the following skills:

- Write a resume (39%)
- Complete an application (34%)
- Make better choices about spending (29%)
- Interview for a job (28%)
- Search for a job (22%)
- Open a bank account (16%)
- Make a budget (15%)
- Fill out official forms (12%)

RFCY grantees offered transformative experiences that helped Richmond children and youth build essential life skills. Through hands-on, project-based learning, youth learned to express themselves and collaborate effectively. Mentorship and mindfulness training fostered core social-emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, communication, leadership, and problem-solving. Workshops equipped youth with practical skills in budgeting, personal finance, organization, goal setting, and navigating the legal system. These trainings and workshops provided structured opportunities to apply these lessons in real life. As a result, participants reported feeling more confident in their ability to make healthy, informed decisions about their futures.

“You can express yourself and you can be yourself.”

—Community Violence Solutions participant, age 16



Career and Trade Job Readiness

- **93%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program helps me to understand how to get the kind of job I want.”**
- **91%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“in this program, I learned about jobs I can have in the future.”**
- **87%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program has helped me learn how to work independently with focus.”**
- **84%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“at this program, I learned what is expected in a work setting.”**
- **67%** reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“in this program, I learned about an industry that I am interested in (e.g., IT, health care, culinary arts).”**

"I liked this experience because it helped me with talking more and being more comfortable."

—Rosie's Service Corps participant, age 13

Overall, 77 percent of career and job readiness respondents reported receiving the following supports:

- A paid job (42%)
- A volunteer opportunity (35%)
- A paid internship (13%)
- An unpaid internship (3%)
- An unpaid job (3%)

RFCY program participants engaged in robust career and trade job readiness activities designed to expand their horizons and prepare them for the future. Through structured workshops and field trips, Richmond youth met professionals in fields such as biology, engineering, and even space exploration—gaining exposure to a wide range of career possibilities. Some programs introduced youth to skilled trades, such as carpentry and welding, while others offered specialized training, such as healthcare occupational skills that counted toward certification. Participants also received individualized support, including resume reviews, regular check-ins, and personalized guidance, to help them navigate career pathways. Programs addressed common barriers to success by offering resources and mentorship to help youth manage stress, peer pressure, and family responsibilities.

"I have fun and learn at the same time."

–Social Progress
participant, age 18



RFCY programs supported the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of Richmond youth.

Some grantees partnered with schools to deliver small-group mindfulness or social-emotional learning lessons to students in close coordination with school staff. Others collaborated with local agencies to provide wraparound services for youth and their families. Programs such as Pogo Park offered opportunities for physical activity, including dance and horse or pony rides, through partnerships with other Richmond-based organizations. Collectively, these programs helped youth build emotional regulation skills, adopt healthy physical habits such as nutritious eating, and develop strategies to cope with trauma and daily stressors, including community violence.

Youth frequently expressed appreciation for these supports, noting the lasting impact on their well-being. As one 8th grader shared, “Mindfulness [is] important to me because it helps me calm down in tough situations and it allows me to manage them better.” Many echoed this sentiment, highlighting the powerful role that RFCY programs play in equipping youth with tools for healing, resilience, and self-care.

“I feel like this program has helped me so much”

—Bridges From School to Work participant, age 16

Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

- 77% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program has taught me to deal with my problems in a positive way (like asking for help).”**
- 74% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program teaches me how to be healthy.”**
- 71% reported it was somewhat, mostly, or completely true that **“this program has helped me cope with stress.”**

Grantee Approaches to Assessing and Improving Program Quality

● Grantees actively measure impact and participant learning

Many grantees administered their own participant surveys to track growth over the course of their programs. For instance, The Watershed Project uses surveys to assess how participants' learning progresses over time. Other grantees are conducting impact evaluations, focusing on strategic planning, and establishing actionable goals to ensure their programs yield measurable outcomes.

● Community engagement is central to grantees' work

One key lesson that grantees identified is that **meaningful community engagement is essential to building high-quality programs**. They found that authentic engagement goes beyond outreach—it involves actively including youth and families in shaping the future of their own communities.

Grantees indicated that **clear, consistent communication is critical to successful program implementation and growth**. Grantees who established open lines of communication with partners and participants reported stronger engagement, smoother delivery, clearly defined roles, effective contingency planning, and greater overall buy-in.

“We are conducting regular program evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of our interventions, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to optimize outcomes. This ongoing process of evaluation and adaptation ensures that the project remains responsive to the evolving needs of the community and maintains its relevance and effectiveness over time.”

—Grantee Report

“When we are working together towards the same goal, we demonstrate how beautiful and heartwarming are the people of our community. Working together allows us to help each other and the children of this community, which are the future of this beautiful community.”

—Grantee Report

RFCY-funded programs are strengthened by the support of formal partners, local businesses, volunteers, and parents throughout the Richmond community. Grantees noted that, over the course of their grant periods, they were encouraged by the strong interest from community members eager to volunteer their time. This mobilization of community support played a key role in program success, helping to sustain long-term impact through deeper engagement with participants, donors, volunteers, and other interest holders. Many grantees also reported expanding their partnerships with community organizations and institutions, a reflection of the growing positive public perception of RFCY-funded initiatives.

“[This is a] very helpful program for someone who starts their first job.”

—Bridges From School to Work participant, age 19

Multiple grantees described that schools were particularly committed to supporting RFCY-funded programs, which helped facilitate smooth program implementation: “The administration at all of the schools were excited and expressed that they had been waiting for an opportunity like this. They were quick to support our integration into [their] sites and to do their part to support our implementation.”

—Grantee Report

“I’ve had a big change in how to handle my emotions and know that they’re in my control.”

—Desarrollo Familiar Participant, age 16

Grantees collect participant and community feedback by the following:

- Conducting surveys and focus groups with students, parents, or teachers (e.g., annual program surveys, post-session surveys for teachers and parents, literacy surveys for youth)
- Engaging and elevating community voice (e.g., Youth Ambassador Programs, Youth Committee, direct observation)
- Participating in ongoing dialogue with partners and collaborators (e.g., conversations with school staff that provide deeper insights into student needs or preferences)

Grantees responded to feedback in a variety of ways:

- Adjusting program design to include different age groups and/or the types of services offered (Aim High, Oshiana Unique Thompkins Foundation; CEP; Bay Area Community Resources; Watershed Project Educational Programs; DREAM)
- Revising and/or developing curriculum to address implementation barriers (18 Reasons, Aim High)
- Engaging district officials for district-level endorsements to support school-level student outreach (Oshiana Unique Thompkins Foundation)

- Expanding volunteer recruitment to fill volunteer vacancies post-COVID (CEP)
- Revising internal evaluation tools to capture reliable and valid participant feedback (Things That Creep)
- Integrating feedback with broader organizational goals and strategic planning (RYSE)

“Community involvement in the decision-making process ensures that the programs ... truly reflect their needs and aspirations. Community voices are essential for creating relevant and impactful programs.”

—Grantee Report



RFCY Grants Support Programs' Organizational Capacity and Sustainability

RFCY plays a vital role in strengthening organizational health and supporting sustainable program models.

While no more than 20 percent of the grant funds may be allocated to indirect costs, grantees are using their indirect allotment to cultivate meaningful partnerships, enhance sustainable program design, build organizational capacity, and engage in frequent community engagement and robust program evaluation. Collaborations with local schools, community-based organizations, and the school district allow grantees to share resources and expertise, expand their reach, and deliver lasting support to youth and families. In addition, grantees are actively diversifying their funding streams to sustain and grow their efforts beyond RFCY funding.

“This funding has given us the opportunity to look forward and plan ahead. ... [The fund is] giving back our voice because we’re not limited on what we can do and it gives us an opportunity to look at new ways to do community outreach, look for other sources of funding. It’s strengthening the partnerships with us and other [community-based organizations].”

—Program Coordinator

Capacity Building for Grantees

When RFCY grantee organizations build their internal capacity, children and youth directly benefit from higher-quality programming. When submitting their RFCY application, grantee annual budgets ranged from \$25,000 to over 151 million dollars, with 42 percent of grantees having annual budgets less than 1 million dollars. The funding amount made up less than 10 percent of the operating budget for most grantees (57%) and added more than 50 percent to the operating budgets for three grantees. Because RFCY funding

accounts for only a small percentage of most grantees' total operating budget, its ability to drive immediate change may be limited. While the funding may not be sufficient to scale programs, invest in infrastructure, and support long-term planning in the first funding year, over time, and combined with other funding sources, RFCY can contribute to each of these organizational goals. Grantees built their capacity by hiring additional staff, increasing salaries, enhancing professional development opportunities, and improving volunteer recruitment efforts. Others were invested in strategic planning and refining internal systems and operational structures to support long-term effectiveness and sustainability.

RFCY catalyzed collaboration in Richmond

The RFCY actively fostered collaboration by funding nine “collaboration” grantees to implement programs that required partnerships between at least two organizations. In addition, many grantees funded as “single agencies” partnered with schools, businesses, and community organizations to deliver high-quality, community-responsive programming. In focus groups, one program leader shared, “RFCY has really brought us all together,” highlighting how the initiative has encouraged community-based organizations to build stronger, more coordinated partnerships across the city.

Partnerships enabled programs to more effectively and sustainably address challenges, such as participant recruitment and program access.

These collaborations also helped grantees overcome barriers, coordinate services, and better meet the diverse needs of Richmond's youth and families. For example, Bay Area Community Resources partnered with the California Department of Education and the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation to deliver specialized trainings for 6th grade students—opportunities that would not have been feasible for the grantee to provide on its own. These trainings focused on reducing social isolation, enhancing peer relationships, and preventing bullying and violence in schools.

Grantees partnered with healthcare professionals, universities, and community-based organizations to strengthen their staff's capacity to meet the needs of youth and families. For example, Rosie's Service Corps, which supports LGBTQ+ youth facing fears around employment discrimination, partnered with the Rainbow Community Center to provide staff with specialized LGBTQ+ training. This collaboration helped ensure that staff were better equipped to offer inclusive, affirming support to the youth they serve.

“While we have a plan in place to facilitate more school and district contracts, [RFCY] grant funding remains essential to helping us reach high-need student populations and increase our capacity to provide the highest-quality programming for Richmond students and take on more schools.”

—Grantee Report

\$1,581,457

administered to 9 collaborative programs

100% of grantees funded in FY 2021 or FY 2022 were re-funded the following fiscal year. Funding for FY 2025-28 shifted to a 3-year grant that does not require grantees to reapply each year.

“Effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders—including school district officials, teachers, parents, and mentors—are vital. ... Addressing communication gaps and fostering strong partnerships facilitates better coordination and support for at-risk youth.”

—Grantee report

Collaboration Program Highlight

D.R.E.A.M. Financial Academy and Just Imagine KidZ Literacy Project co-deliver summer and after-school programs to youth ages 8-17 on a variety of topics, including financial literacy, STEM, and Black history education. Before RFCY, the program creators used their own money to fund their offerings. During the 2022-23 school year, the program served twice as many children and youth than they had originally proposed due to their collaborative funding model. During the 2023-24 school year, D.R.E.A.M. added another collaboration with Junior Achievement of Northern California to incorporate a career exploration component to the program.

RFCY helped emerging programs grow their organizational infrastructures

RFCY intentionally invested in eight small and emerging programs during FY 2021-24. These programs had unique support needs to hire staff, build infrastructure, and secure additional funding. RFCY grantees are required to provide data to RDCY throughout the grant period, which pushed some organizations to grow and improve their internal capacity.

\$559,957

administered to 8 small and emerging programs

“[RDCY] helped us think together about what the program needed from an infrastructure standpoint in order to deliver the services. [RDCY’s requirements allowed us] to co-write very strong grants and we got funding for it. ... And that team that was one and a half people at the beginning, is now a team of five people”

—Program Director

Small and Emerging Program Highlight

Richmond Freedom School was established in 2021 as a 6-week literacy program for TK-6 children in Richmond. It was funded by RFCY as a small and emerging summer program in FY 2022-24. Each program day included integrated reading curriculum, enrichment activities, intergenerational leadership development, two meals and a snack, and field trips on a weekly basis. Since becoming an RFCY grantee, Richmond Freedom School became sustainable by securing over \$100,000 in individual contributions, establishing a partnership with WCCUSD, and recruiting 60 volunteers. The director intends to pursue additional grant opportunities and funds from schools, faith-based organizations, and community partnerships.

Grantees' Fiscal Health and Sustainability

Multiyear RFCY funding supported grantees' planning and growth

The ability to receive RFCY funding over multiple years enables grantees to develop long-term business strategies and allocate resources toward securing additional funding. Many grantees expressed enthusiasm about RFCY's shift to a 3-year grant cycle beginning in FY 2025, noting that this change will support more sustainable investments in program improvement and organizational growth.

Grantees pursued additional funding sources to support sustainability

To secure additional funding, several grantees launched fundraising campaigns, while others received fiscal support through new grant opportunities. Some shared that receiving RFCY funding helped strengthen their credibility, as city funding served as a "stamp of approval" that appealed to other funders. For example, Pogo Park is actively expanding its donor base and increasing earned income as part of its effort to "build a resilient

financial framework that can withstand fluctuations in income streams."

"I don't think there's another partner out there who provides a multi-year level of support the way the Richmond Fund does and to the depths of that support—it's really transformative. And so, while we definitely can find ways to keep the program going, [it is] so much easier with this good partnership and it allows us to plan for the future, knowing that the population of students on site will continue to increase and knowing that we will need to be there to support them."

—Program Director

To support program sustainability, many grantees combined RFCY funding with other sources, including local foundations, school districts, county agencies (such as health and probation departments), and state grant programs. During focus groups, grantees noted that many of these existing funding sources come with restrictions that limit who can be served. By strategically braiding RFCY dollars with other funds, grantees are able to fill service gaps and extend their program reach. For example, some programs receive funding from WCCUSD, which can only be used for students enrolled in the district—excluding Richmond children and youth who attend other schools. RFCY funding helps bridge these gaps, ensuring more equitable access to services across the community. Furthermore, emergent programs were able to leverage this data to secure additional funding.

“When we tell people from different companies, ‘Hey, we’ve got the support of the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth,’ that helps us. That’s a big deal because they’re like, ‘Oh, okay, the city is actually supporting this program.’ So that not just legitimizes it, but it makes them feel stronger about supporting us.”

—Executive Director

“Additional funding sources allow you to serve a greater variety of kids. ... We were able to take in both charter students from the city of Richmond as well as kids that the school district will pay for. And so again, with diversified funding, you find a way to kind of pay for everything in pieces.”

—Executive Director



Implementation Challenges

RFCY Grantees and the Richmond Department for Children and Youth experienced a variety of challenges over the course of their grant period.

COVID-19

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many youth and families faced significant crises. Grantees funded in 2021 encountered major challenges, including school closures and the need to quickly transition to virtual programming. Even after schools reopened, grantees continued to navigate emerging post-pandemic needs—most notably, increased demand for mental health support and disparities in learning loss. In response, many programs integrated trauma-informed practices and mental health referrals into their core services. As one grantee shared, “Youth are dealing with more than we anticipated. ... We added more emotional intelligence sessions and formed small support groups to respond to the level of emotional need.”

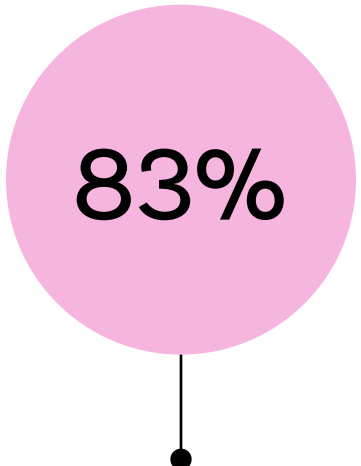
Barriers to Access and Attendance

While many of the RFCY programs are easily accessible by public transportation, some are not. The program lead of one grantee organization pointed out, “Some folks are coming from

South Richmond or North Richmond, and so if they don’t have reliable transportation, if they don’t have cars, it can just be difficult for them to get to our program, to come to our meetings.” Another grantee described the challenges that participants have accessing internships both locally and outside the city due to limited transportation options.

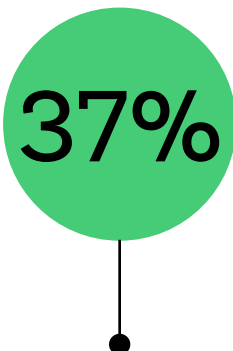
Grantees reported recruitment challenges in reaching the children and youth most in need. In one case, limited communication between staff and families delayed the identification and referral of at-risk youth who would have benefited from New Life Movement’s Reaction Program—a behavioral health initiative designed to address and redirect harmful behaviors. Another grantee aimed to provide youth-specific supports for all children living in its shelter program. However, the transitional nature of families moving in and out of the shelter made consistent engagement difficult.

For some grantees offering multi-week programs, maintaining consistent attendance was a challenge due to family vacations, summer sports, and other scheduling conflicts. One grantee working primarily with families noted the difficulty of engaging parents, explaining that “guardians often have numerous other commitments in addition to picking up their children from school or after-school care.” To address these challenges, many grantees relied on strong partnerships. Collaborating with schools and community organizations helped them identify optimal times and strategies for engaging participants and sharing



83%

83% of grantees served more children and youth than they had originally proposed.



37%

37% of grantees provided more hours of services than they had originally proposed.

information. Partners also played a key role in overcoming participation barriers—offering transportation support or helping with scheduling to increase accessibility.

“At the beginning of the project ... we faced significant challenges with youth recruitment and attendance ... due to staffing constraints and limited partnerships for recruiting young adults for our workshops. ... Our initial struggles highlighted the necessity of building a robust recruitment pipeline and establishing strong community partnerships from the outset.”

—Grantee report

Scheduling and Communication Issues With Partners

Grantees faced a range of challenges when partnering with school sites, particularly around communication and scheduling. Many reported difficulties with timely information sharing and misaligned calendars between their programs

and school partners. For example, one grantee designed a 12-week program model but had to adjust it for a school operating on an 8-week quarter system. As a result, the program lost about half of its participants for that quarter.

Staffing Shortages and Turnover

Some grantees faced staffing transitions or limited staffing capacity, which affected their ability to deliver programming. Throughout the funding period, those experiencing staffing challenges reported actively recruiting new team members. In some cases, staff shortages led to reduced program offerings. This issue also extended to grantees who relied heavily on consistent volunteer support, highlighting the broader impact of staffing gaps on program implementation.

“We were asked to complete a new process with the district, which prevented us from serving students at [our originally proposed school] for most of the academic school year. Despite our immediate efforts to submit the required paperwork, the response was delayed in coming, so we focused our efforts on serving students at [another school]. We took the opportunity to implement curriculum at [the other school] and piloted a semester-long program.”

—Grantee report

“With staff transitions that took place over the course of our grant,] a number of our programs have needed to either be put on hold or be adjusted to account for a decrease in staff.”

—Grantee report

In addition, **staffing changes within schools sometimes delayed program implementation.** In cases of teacher turnover, some grantees had to pause their programs until a new point of contact was identified. Occasionally, the new contact lacked the interest or capacity to support external programming. While grantees had little control over school staffing shortages or transitions, strong communication with school partners helped mitigate disruptions and minimize the impact on program delivery.

“Within these partnerships, it has given us valuable insights to the school system and some of the challenges or barriers they are experiencing, such as inadequate teachers or transition of key staff, which ultimately could have a negative or positive impact on [our] programming.”

—Grantee report

Limited Grantee Organizational Capacity

Grantees reflected that **larger funding amounts would better support the delivery of high-quality, consistent programming.** While many aimed to dedicate more staff time to direct services, they also had to manage essential administrative responsibilities needed to keep their organizations running effectively. Some grantees reported having growing waitlists but lacked the physical space and organizational capacity to fully meet this rising demand.

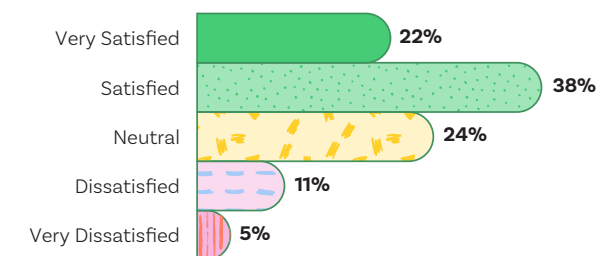
“Our primary challenge remains managing the daily administrative tasks required to run a non-profit, while also finding time or assistance for grant writing to secure more consistent funding.”

—Grantee report

Limited RDCY Organizational Capacity

During the RFCY’s first funding cycle, the RDCY was simultaneously responsible for funding and monitoring grantees while also building a new city department from the ground up. This included hiring and training staff, developing internal systems, managing an external evaluation team, and creating a program model to deliver and oversee the RFCY. **These foundational efforts, which spanned the first several years of grant implementation, placed significant demands on RDCY’s capacity and impacted the level of support that RDCY staff could provide to grantees.** Overall, results from the grantee survey indicate that grantees were generally satisfied with RDCY staff (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Grantee’s Overall Satisfaction With RDCY (N = 37)



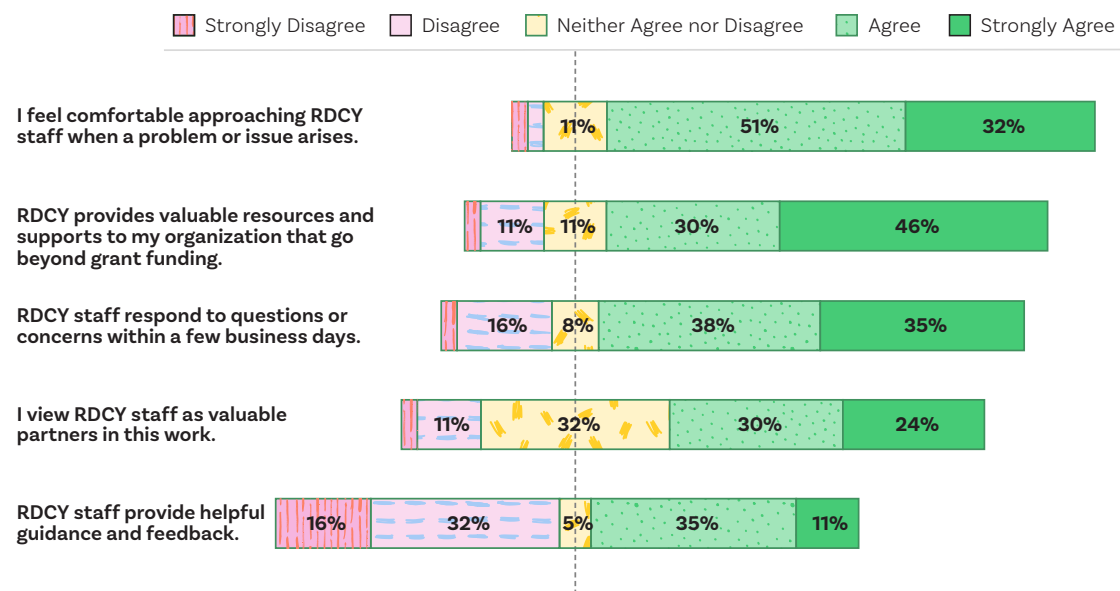
The majority of grantees indicated that RDCY staff were valuable partners in their work (76%), RDCY staff provided helpful guidance and feedback (73%), they felt comfortable approaching RDCY staff when problems arose (84%), and they felt that RDCY provided valuable resources and support that goes beyond grant funding (54%; see Figure 18).

Despite these strengths, grantees also encountered challenges with staff responsiveness and communication. One grantee shared, “It was a challenge to get in touch with staff members who could give us an update on payments.” Delays in processing grant agreements and invoices—largely due to RDCY’s limited capacity—were a common concern. As one grantee explained, “The grant process is very well-organized, but the invoices take far too long to process,” while another noted, “Reimbursements were processed very slowly, sometimes extending for weeks, which affected the program’s flow.”

Grantees also expressed frustration with unclear or inconsistent forms and reporting instructions. One remarked, “The forms and instructions can be unclear, contradictory, or duplicative.” Some found the reporting requirements more intensive than those of other funders. Many of these issues are being addressed in the next cycle of RFCY funding, with the implementation of the Submittable platform for grantees to submit required reporting and invoicing documents using a standardized, online template.

Still, many grantees conveyed optimism, expressing hope that as RDCY continues to build its internal capacity, improvements in systems, communication, and responsiveness will follow.

Figure 18. RFCY Grantee’s Service and Support Satisfaction (N = 37)



Note. Bars without data labels had 3 percent or fewer respondents.



Recommendations to Improve the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth

As RFCY continues to fund programs through FY 2027, WestEd offers a set of recommendations grounded in evaluation findings and youth development best practices.

Implementing these strategies can enhance RFCY's impact on child- and youth-serving organizations and the communities they serve.

Prioritize Flexible Funding

Continue to prioritize the RFCY funding model that allows grantees to respond dynamically to community needs. This adaptability supported program pivots, individualized services, and innovative programming aligned with emerging needs and youth and family feedback.

Support Capacity Building for Program Quality

Increase technical assistance and capacity-building efforts for organizations on program quality. Program quality supports include networking events and training around youth development, collaboration with schools, and data collection and reporting. Performance measures and findings from the youth experience survey can inform what tailored technical assistance supports grantees may benefit from. Small and emerging organizations may need more intensive supports unique to the organizational challenges they face.

Promote Long-Term Sustainability Planning

Encourage and support grantees to engage in long-term strategic planning, diversify revenue streams, and braid RFCY funds with other funding sources. This might include providing technical assistance focused on administrative infrastructure, data reporting, and sustainable funding strategies.

Enhance Communication and Responsiveness

Improve clarity and consistency in communication with grantees, especially regarding invoicing, reporting requirements, and instructions about forms. Build systems to expedite invoicing and payments. Investing in staffing and systems at RDCY will improve support and responsiveness.

Increase Access Supports and Promote Attendance

Address barriers to access and attendance by supporting grantees with funds or partnerships that allow for transportation solutions, expanded hours, or flexible program formats to increase reach to high-need populations.

Strengthen School and Community Partnerships

Identify opportunities to streamline partnerships between grantees and schools, including clear coordination processes, calendar alignment, and designated points of contact to mitigate disruptions due to staff turnover.

Deepen Youth and Community Voice

Continue and deepen participatory evaluation, grant-making, and needs assessment efforts with youth and community members. Their insights led to more relevant, inclusive, and effective programming and should remain central in future evaluation and planning efforts. Grantees found value in community and participant feedback on their programs. Efforts to deepen youth and community voice will support continuous improvement and youth empowerment.

Conclusion

The RFCY has made a significant, measurable impact on Richmond's children, youth, and families in its first three funding cycles.

By investing over \$9.1 million across 56 programs and supporting more than 58,000 encounters with children and youth, RFCY has expanded grantee programs' reach, closed service gaps, strengthened the capacity of local organizations, and facilitated high-quality programming.

The evaluation findings highlight RFCY's **success in promoting equity, supporting the whole child, and empowering grantees to meet evolving community needs.** Programs demonstrated strong performance across key quality indicators and achieved meaningful outcomes in areas such as academic success, mental health, leadership, and life skills. Although challenges persist, the commitment of grantees, community partners, and the RDCY to continuous improvement is evident. **With sustained investment and ongoing collaboration, the RFCY is well positioned to deepen its impact and advance its vision of a thriving, equitable Richmond for all children and youth.**



Appendix A. Evaluation Planning Process

The evaluation plan was developed over 10 months in collaboration with the RDCY, the RFCY Oversight Board, RFCY grantees, and Richmond youth.

Document Review

RDCY provided WestEd with copies of all RFCY grantee contracts, contract amendments, progress reports, and quarterly reports from March 2021 through December 2023. WestEd reviewed these materials to develop a comprehensive understanding of RFCY-funded programs and to compile an inventory of each grantee's internal evaluation design and measures. In addition, WestEd conducted a comparative review of evaluation frameworks used by similar funding initiatives in neighboring cities, including Oakland and San Francisco. This review included youth and staff survey instruments as well as key performance metrics.

Table 1. Core Performance Measures for RFCY Grantees

Topic	Measure	Benchmark
Program participation	Number of participants served as a percentage of the program's projected number of participants	85%
Service provision hours	Number of hours of programming provided as a percentage of the program's projected hours of programming	85%
Program satisfaction	Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, "I would recommend this program to a friend."	> 50%
Program environment	Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, "I feel physically safe when I am at this program."	> 70%
Caring adults	Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, "There is an adult at this program who cares about me."	> 70%
Sense of belonging	Percentage of surveyed youth who agreed or strongly agreed, "I have a strong sense of belonging to a community at this program."	> 50%

Listening Sessions With RFCY Grantees

In October 2023, WestEd facilitated two listening sessions with RFCY grantees representing all six priority areas. The sessions aimed to deepen WestEd’s understanding of the diverse programs funded by RFCY, the populations they serve, how grantees utilize RFCY funds, and how their programs address the needs of children and youth. Insights from these sessions helped refine the primary evaluation questions and informed the overall approach to data collection.

Development of Performance Measures

The RFCY evaluation is designed to measure whether funded programs are offering high-quality programming. To define and measure program quality, WestEd created a community-informed list of universal performance measures. A performance measure is a number or a quantity that shows how well a program is performing relative to a predetermined benchmark value that represents adequate performance. WestEd collaborated with RDCY, the Oversight Board, Richmond youth, and grantees to identify performance measures that are reported on an annual basis. The selected performance measurement use data from grantee-reported service provision data and the youth experience survey (Table 1).

Pilot Evaluation

WestEd conducted a pilot evaluation to test the surveys and survey protocols. Six RFCY-funded programs were selected to participate in the pilot: Sister Circle, Bridges From School to Work, Social Progress, Community Violence Solutions, Contra Costa Family Justice Center, and East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. Pilot grantees were strategically selected to cover different program areas, ensuring that all items from the youth experience survey would be administered. Across six evaluation pilot programs, 40 youth completed the youth experience survey and two parents completed the parent survey. All six programs completed the grantee survey. WestEd presented pilot results to the RDCY and the RFCY Oversight Board and made revisions to the participant surveys and the grantee survey based on feedback received.

Appendix B. RFCY Evaluation Partner Engagement

WestEd employed a participatory evaluation approach that actively engaged those most affected by the RFCY in the design and implementation of the evaluation.⁷

WestEd learned from community partners, including youth and grantees, through holding listening sessions, codesigning evaluation instruments, and collectively interpreting findings.

Regular Meetings With RDCY

WestEd met biweekly with RDCY staff from July 2023 to June 2025. During these biweekly meetings, WestEd collaborated on partner

engagement and evaluation planning and implementation.

RFCY Oversight Board Engagement

WestEd first met with the Oversight Board in November 2023, facilitating an activity to gauge members' interest in deeper collaboration in the evaluation. Since then, WestEd has actively partnered with board members throughout each stage of the evaluation.

In March 2024, WestEd returned to provide updates on evaluation planning and community engagement. During this meeting, board members offered feedback on the RFCY logic model, evaluation questions, and draft items for the Youth Experience Survey. In June 2024, WestEd presented the full evaluation plan and received input on the emerging qualitative data collection approach. Most recently, in April 2025, WestEd shared project updates and preliminary findings and sought recommendations for incorporating spatial analyses into the final report.

Youth Co-Evaluators

The Youth Co-Evaluators are a group of Richmond youth, ages 14–20, who contribute their unique perspectives as participants in school- and community-based programs funded by RFCY. The evaluation plan was initially shaped by a team of five youth data collectors nominated by RFCY-funded grantees. These youth received training in research and evaluation fundamentals and, during the evaluation planning phase, helped pilot the Youth Experience Survey and informed the approach to analyzing grantee reports. They were also trained to assist grantees with administering participant surveys.

During the implementation phase, WestEd recruited additional Youth Co-Evaluators through a similar nomination and application process. These 13 youth were onboarded in February 2025 and contributed to the development of this final report.

⁷ Organizing Engagement. (2023). Participatory Action Research and Evaluation. <https://organizingengagement.org/models/participatory-action-research-and-evaluation/>

Appendix C.

Detailed Description of Data Collection Methods

Participant Surveys

The RFCY participant surveys were designed to assess the extent to which the Fund is fostering high-quality programming. The survey measures a range of program-specific outcomes for children and youth who participate in RFCY-funded programs. There are two versions of the survey, one of which is designed for youth participants over age 10 and the other for parents of participants age 10 and younger. The participant surveys are available online and on paper in both English and Spanish.

The youth surveys include a core module composed of 16 items, supplemental modules, and a set of demographic questions. The core module, as seen in Table 2, measures several topics for all RFCY-funded program participants. Supplemental modules are sets of questions that measure topics aligned with the program type. With this flexible design, youth experience surveys are customized to each program based on program format and goals. For example, programs that support youth to apply for jobs and manage their

finances administer the employment and life skills modules, while programs that offer educational supports administer the academic engagement module. The specific topics measured by the core and supplemental modules were informed by listening sessions with grantees, feedback from RDCY and the RFCY Oversight Board, and review of existing standardized measures of program quality. The parent survey includes items from core modules and those supplemental modules seen in Table 3.

Table 2. Youth Survey Modules

Core Module	Supplemental Modules
• Program satisfaction • Sense of belonging • Program environment • Positive relationships with adults • Cultural competency • Linkage to resources • Demographics	• Program satisfaction • Sense of belonging • Program environment • Positive relationships with adults • Cultural competency • Linkage to resources • Demographics

Table 3. Parent Survey Modules

Core Module	Supplemental Modules
• Program satisfaction and enjoyment • Sense of belonging • Program environment • Positive relationships with adults • Linkage to resources • Motivation for enrollment • Demographics	• Building connections • Academic engagement • Health

All RFCY grantees were invited to administer participant surveys. Survey data were collected in paper and digital formats, in English and Spanish, during programming time. In total, 22 grantees (39%) collected at least one survey response. Of these, only 13 grantees had enough data for performance monitoring and data featured on program profiles (10 responses minimum). A supplemental file lists the programs that administered the youth experience survey during this reporting period and shows which supplemental modules were administered for each program.

Grantee Focus Groups

To understand RFCY implementation, WestEd conducted six 1-hour virtual focus groups with 33 RFCY-funded program managers and executives. The goal of the focus groups was to learn about the extent to which and how the RFCY is successfully building the capacity of grantees and to learn about the successes and challenges of implementing RFCY-funded activities and services. All focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and coded by WestEd analysts. WestEd conducted a thematic analysis of focus group data and summarized these findings in this report.

Quarterly Reports

As part of their grant agreement, each RFCY grantee is required to submit a quarterly progress report and a final report at the end of the funding year. These reports help WestEd understand more about the implementation of RFCY and the characteristics of funded programs. The reports are a key data source for grantees to describe program outcomes and impact, but are subject to reporting bias where grantees might only report positive outcomes. The reports were systematically analyzed and the findings were summarized in the body of this evaluation report. The progress reports and final reports were collected by RDCY.

WestEd conducted a content analysis of grantee reports to address each of the evaluation

questions. Findings from these analyses are summarized throughout this report.

Grantee Survey

WestEd administered a survey to FY 2021–24 grantees to learn more about how RFCY and RDCY has supported their organizational goals and their needs for additional support. The survey was administered to all RFCY grantees in December 2024. There were 37 respondents to the survey, representing 33 organizations across all six priority service areas. Overall, the survey had a 75 percent response rate from grantee organizations funded by RDCY between FY21 and FY24. Most survey respondents were program leads/managers (47%), followed by executive directors (30%) and program staff (9%). Roles of the remaining respondents (14%, categorized as “other”) included development manager, director of advancement, county director, and grant administrators.

Appendix D. Funded Programs Priority Area

Program Name	First year of Funding	Sum of Total Funding Received	Total Number of Youth Encounters
Behavioral Health: Mental Health and Wellness		\$ 2,026,335	
Bay Area Community Resources – Mental Health and Wellness Classes at Kings Schools (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$150,000	173
Bay Area Community Resources – Mental Health and Wellness Classes at DeJean-Coronado (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$300,000	658
Desarrollo Familiar, Inc. – Youth Matters (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$405,000	395
Early Childhood Mental Health Program – Perinatal Circle of Care (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$300,000	210
Greater Richmond Interfaith Program – Early Childhood Mental Health Program (Collaboration)	FY 2023-24	\$85,000	73
Mindful Life Project – Mental Health and Wellness Support for Richmond Schools (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$ 120,000	12,355
New Life Movement – Reactions Program (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$200,000	313
Seneca Family of Agencies – Unconditional Education School Partnerships (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$300,000	4,786
West County Mandarin School PTA – SEL Enrichment (Small and Emerging)	FY 2023-24	\$41,000	463
Richmond Community Foundation – Sister Circle (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$125,335	49
Education Support and Employment/Training Support		\$2,128,957	
Bridges From School to Work – Bridges from School to Work (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$50,000	30
College Is Real – Summer Bridge Program and High School Programming (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$255,000	3,616

Program Name	First year of Funding	Sum of Total Funding Received	Total Number of Youth Encounters
Healthy Contra Costa – Richmond Youth Health Advocacy Pathway (Collaboration)	FY 2023-24	\$96,007	38
Improve Your Tomorrow (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$75,000	94
Richmond Art Center – Supporting Peoples Outlooks, Talents, and Speech (SPOTS) Mural Program (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$80,000	36
Richmond Promise – Health Care Career Connections (Collaboration)	FY 2021-22	\$397,950	165
Richmond Public Library – Literacy Program (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$150,000	2,640
Things That Creep – Neighborhood Snakes (Small and Emerging)	FY 2022-23	\$60,000	1,546
Urban Tilth – Urban Agriculture Academy (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$240,000	1,064
Watershed Project – Green Collar Corps Youth Employment Program (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$200,000	26
City of Richmond Employment and Training Department – YouthWORKS – Healthcare Pathways Program (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$150,000	21
City of Richmond Employment and Training Department – RichmondBUILD (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$375,000	180
Out-of-School Time, After School, Sports and Enrichment		\$ 3,007,657	
ABLE Community Development Foundation – After-school enrichment club (Small and Emerging)	FY 2023-24	\$ 45,707	23
Aim High for High School – Aim High Summer Learning Programs for Richmond Middle School Students (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$300,000	702
City of Richmond, Community Services – Camp Achieve (Collaboration)	FY 2021-22	\$270,000	198
City of Richmond, Community Services – Sports and Leadership Program (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$ 61,500	220
Community Education Partnerships – Educational Services (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$134,700	122

Program Name	First year of Funding	Sum of Total Funding Received	Total Number of Youth Encounters
DREAM – Financial Literacy Project (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$ 80,000	324
East Bay Center for the Performing Arts – Young Artist Diploma Program (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$300,000	990
Easter Hill United Methodist Church – Richmond Freedom School (Small and Emerging)	FY 2023-24	\$39,000	79
Envisioneers Inc. – Academic Curriculum (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$ 80,000	971
Greater Richmond Interfaith Program – Social Progress Inc (Small and Emerging)	FY 2023-24	\$15,000	200
Oshiana Unique Thompkins Foundation – Oshi Entrepreneur Club (Small and Emerging)	FY 2022-23	\$ 60,000	217
Pogo Park – Enrichment Programs at Elm Playlot (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$ 300,000	3,938
Practice Space – Speak Together Be Together (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$ 200,000	832
Rosie the Riveter Trust – Community Liaison (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$ 172,500	1,405
Rosie the Riveter Trust – Rosie Service Corps (Collaboration)	FY 2021-22	\$195,000	1,206
RYSE – Integrative Arts Programming (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$225,000	2,954
Scientific Adventures for Girls – Afterschool STEM Program at WCCUSD Schools (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$130,000	1,908
Watershed Project – Educational Programs (Collaboration)	FY 2022-23	\$ 100,000	1,433
West County Digs – School Garden Renewal Program (Small and Emerging)	FY 2021-22	\$136,500	1,647
Youth Code Now – After School Program (Small and Emerging)	FY 2021-22	\$162,750	507

Program Name	First year of Funding	Sum of Total Funding Received	Total Number of Youth Encounters
Youth Violence Prevention		\$ 805,300	
Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County – Speak Up Be Safe (SUBS) and Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP) (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$105,000	2,027
Community Violence Solutions – H.O.P.E. Services (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$300,000	3,715
Fresh Lifelines for Youth – FLY Law-Related Education (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$130,950	116
Project Avary – Leadership Program for Children of Incarcerated Parents (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$195,300	127
Richmond Police Activities League – Youth Diversion and Development program (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$ 74,050	165
Access to Basic Needs		\$ 536,008	
18 Reasons – Cooking Matters (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$ 75,000	1,373
Fresh Approach – Nutrition Education and Resources (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$136,008	322
Greater Richmond Interfaith Program – Shelter Services (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$100,000	307
Richmond Promise – Technology Access for First-Generation College Students (Collaboration)	FY 2021-22	\$225,000	225
Information, Guidance, and Case Management		\$620,000	
Contra Costa Family Justice Alliance – Family Justice Center (Single Agency)	FY 2021-22	\$330,000	425
Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau – Wraparound Services (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$160,000	70

Program Name	First year of Funding	Sum of Total Funding Received	Total Number of Youth Encounters
Greater Richmond Interfaith Program – Case Management (Single Agency)	FY 2022-23	\$ 40,000	116
Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services – High School to Homeownership (Collaboration)	FY 2023-24	\$60,000	45
Youth Finance Institute of America – Youth Finance Institute of America (Single Agency)	FY 2023-24	\$30,000	842
Grand Total		\$9,124,257	58,682