

Richmond Kids First: Richmond Fund for Children and Youth

Talking points for signature gatherers & sponsors



General Principles when responding to questions or criticism:

- Remain respectful and calm.
- Give what information you can and that the person is willing to hear.
- If the discussion is not useful or getting heated, find a good way to end it and move on (for the most part we do not want to spend more than 5-6 minutes going back and forth with someone who we are trying to collect a signature from, in other situations it might make sense to talk for longer.
- Do not make up things if you do not know the answer or have a response – invite them to get in touch with the campaign at the following email: info@richmondkidsfirst.org.

What is the ballot measure about?

- We are asking voters to support a measure to establish a dedicated fund for children, youth and young adults in Richmond.
- The measure will not increase taxes but instead will set aside a very small portion of the City's current budget for children, youth and young adults. Currently there are no dedicated funds set aside for young people in Richmond.
- The measure will fund services for children ages 0-12, youth ages 13-18 and young adults ages 19-24. It will prioritize those youth who are most impacted by harm and are most at risk for poor health, mental health and educational outcomes, unemployment and incarceration.
- The measure will increase funding for existing non-profits and city programs and launch new programs to provide the following services: well-being and mental health, violence prevention and response, homelessness prevention, reducing involvement in the criminal legal system, education and job training, after school programs, sports and recreation, urban gardening and agriculture, support for parents and guardians, environmental justice, and media, arts and culture.
- The measure includes oversight by an independent committee of citizens and annual evaluation and audits. It also includes strategic planning every three years to reset priorities based on the changing needs of young people in Richmond.
- The measure seeks to amend the City Charter to require Richmond to gradually increase funding over four years to spend 3% of its annual general-purpose revenues.
- After 10-years, the Fund will be assessed and the voters can decide if it should continue as is or be changed to better meet the needs of young people in Richmond.
- If the measure passes the first round of funding for services will be released in June 2018. No more than 10% of the money set aside can be used for administration.

Proof: The Success of Similar Fund in SF & Oakland

- In San Francisco and Oakland, a fund of dedicated money for children and youth has been established to fill in the gap in services and resources available: San Francisco's since 1992, and Oakland's since 1996. Both Funds have demonstrated improvements in the well-being of young people and their families. Both Funds have resulted in improved coordination of the city's services, better planning, and the leveraging of significant additional resources.
- Over close to 20 years of operations, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth has produced the following significant positive outcomes for youth: a) 84% showed increased college readiness; b) 92% showed increased knowledge of career paths; c) 85% showed an increased sense of empowerment &

agency; d) 86% showed improved decision-making and goal setting; e) 85% showed a greater sense of confidence and self-esteem; and f) 81% expressed having a greater connections to caring adults (OFCY 2014-2015 Evaluation).

The Need for the Fund

- Despite effective and committed community-based and city programs for children and youth, young people in Richmond experience high rates of harm, including violence; poverty; unintended pregnancy; harmful substance use; contact with child welfare, law enforcement and the criminal legal system; suspension, expulsion and dropout from school.
- A recent *Out-of-School Time Programs* study conducted in West Contra Costa in 2012 identified that out of the estimated 14,832 out-of-school opportunities needed for low-income West County youth, only 1,286 summer program spaces were available, nearly 87% of all low-income young people need services that are not available.
- 6.7 million young Americans lack the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to succeed in school or in jobs, particularly youth of color and low-income youth.
- The high school dropout rate for African American and Latino youth was double and triple the rate of white youth and the unemployment rate for African American young adults is double that of all teens.
- According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, prevention and early intervention programs for youth are consistently found to have the greatest long-term economic impact through increased earnings and decreased involvement in the criminal-legal system.
- This includes significant reductions in self-harm and suicide (32% after 12 months of services) and one study showed 11% fewer mental health disorders and higher overall educational and economic attainment in young adults in a fifteen-year follow-up.
- According to a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration* (2011), beyond its failure to reduce future offending and protect public safety, juvenile incarceration also damages young people's future success. Young people are much less likely to succeed in school or work and face both learning disabilities and mental health issues. Not surprisingly, many or most come from high-poverty neighborhoods.
- According to the same report, as an alternative, holistic supports for juveniles and their families cost one-tenth of the cost and have MUCH higher success rates. Costs average \$6,000 to \$9,500 per youth for such programs, whereas a typical stay in a juvenile corrections facility costs \$66,000 to \$88,000 (9 to 12 months at \$241 per day).
- These types of alternatives to incarceration result in 25 to 70 percent lower re-arrests than youth who are incarcerated. In another study, participants in such programs proved nearly six times more likely to avoid re-arrest (40 percent vs. 7 percent) than youth in juvenile hall.
- The California Endowment's 10-year initiative, *Building Healthy Communities*, took nearly two years of planning, 17,000 residents and 150 CBO representatives to build a logic model and approach to working across silos in Richmond, followed by five years of nearly a million dollars per a year of investment in programs, information, dialogue and policy analysis in order to bend the curve on health, safety and school readiness for thousands of children and youth in Richmond. This work will sunset in another four years, leaving an incredible gap in the city for youth - unless we take advantage of the momentum for change and improvements by investing in the hard won learning's we as a community have achieved. The ballot initiative is timed to pick up as TCE's Initiative rolls out- sustaining generational change.
- Eight to ten years ago, a similar situation was taking place in regards to violence in Richmond. Many were working on the issue, but there was no citywide, overarching group charged with connecting dots, providing resources and working on larger solutions to systemic problems. Many leaders in Richmond recognized the role that city government and its resources could play to change the tide. The original research for the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) was also accomplished with funds from The California Endowment and a new division custom made for our community gave us ONS. Many would

argue this was a key element in reducing the city's tragic murder rate and strengthening police effectiveness.

- Right now there is no office or agency that coordinates funding, activities and resources *across city, county, school district and CBO systems*. There's a need for an agency to drive incentive cooperation, hold knowledge, leverage outside resources and reward excellent work from the community. The change that can happen will be a combination of structure and resources.

How the Fund will address the need and support a better future for Richmond

- The fund will increase funds for children and youth services by approximately \$40 million over the next ten years. The young people of today are the future of Richmond. Our investment in their health and potential is an investment in our future.
- The measure can support increase coordination of services for children and youth, identify and aim to fill gaps in services, and build a shared vision for addressing the needs of young people in Richmond.
- It has already created a strong coalition that is working together on the measure and in the process identifying needs and ways to work more closely together. Those partnering on this measure include: Sponsored by: RYSE Center, East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, Youth Enrichment Strategies (YES), The Ed Fund, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Pogo Park, Healthy Richmond, Education Matters, Building Block for Kids, Community Health for Asian Americans, Urban Tilth and Funding the Next Generation.
- As it has in San Francisco and Oakland, it will be useful in leveraging additional funds for children, youth and young adults in Richmond; it will increase public/private partnership; and it will support existing non-profit and City programs, and increase their effectiveness by increasing funding, providing evaluation with specific recommendations and improving coordination among and between both.
- Richmond has plans that will bring new residents to the city with hopes of increasing revenue. We want to be part of ensuring that as Richmond's future revenue increases, those who already live here, were born here and whose families have been here are able to be part of that up-turn and are not pushed out of Richmond. In the long-term, an investment in our young people, will contribute toward the overall economic health of Richmond, in addition to the overall health of the community.