

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Office of the Mayor

DATE: September 17, 2025

RE: Appointment of Three New Members to the Budget Advisory Commission

The Mayor's Office respectfully requests City Council consideration for the appointment of three new members to fill existing vacancies on the Budget Advisory Commission.

The Budget Advisory Commission continues to play a vital role in providing independent fiscal oversight and analysis of the city's budgetary processes, revenue projections, and expenditure priorities. Filling these vacancies will restore the commission to full capacity and ensure comprehensive review of budget proposals and financial policies that impact our community.

Proposed Actions:

- Appoint three qualified members to fill vacant commission seats
- Fulfill vacancies for At-Large and Financial Chair representative positions
- Ensure comprehensive analysis and review of city budget matters

Next Steps: The Mayor's Office will present the appointment recommendations at the next Council meeting. The proposed members bring valuable expertise that will enhance the commission's advisory capabilities.

Completing these appointments will enable the commission to continue its important work reviewing budget proposals, analyzing revenue and expenditure trends, and providing informed recommendations on fiscal policies that ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and support the city's long-term financial stability.

We greatly appreciate any support you can provide in expediting this process and welcome the Council's prompt consideration of these appointments.

Profile

Ben

First Name

Gould

Last Name

Pronouns

he/him

Email Address

Street Address

City

Suite or Apt

State

Postal Code

What City Council district do you live in?

☒ District 3

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

EcoDataLab

Employer

President

Job Title

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Budget Advisory Commission: Submitted

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us how your qualifications and participation will relate to the requested board and/or commission's mission.

After growing up in Berkeley and spending nearly a decade as a community volunteer and organizer in Berkeley politics, I moved to Oakland about a year ago and am excited to contribute and help my new community. My professional background is as a climate policy analyst and consultant. I have worked as a Legislative Aide for City Councilmembers Lori Droste and Terry Taplin, as a Sustainability Analyst for San Francisco International Airport, and I currently work full-time as President of EcoDataLab, a climate policy consulting firm I co-founded with my advisor from UC Berkeley. Our work specifically looks at the impacts of land use policy on greenhouse gas emissions globally:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/13/climate/climate-footprint-map-neighborhood.html> Prior to moving to Oakland, I spent eight years serving on Berkeley's environmental commission, where I was the first to propose banning natural gas in new buildings, ultimately leading to Berkeley's first-in-the-nation law doing just that. I was also an alternate commissioner for Berkeley's Zoning and Planning commissions, where I was an advocate for maximizing zoned housing capacity at BART; and I help to lead a Berkeley community advocacy group focused on smart land use planning and walking, biking, and transit facilities (Berkeley Neighbors for Housing and Climate Action). I am the lead author and co-manager for Berkeley's Measure FF campaign, a citizen's initiative on the November 2024 ballot to fund street and sidewalk repair, walk/bike safety improvements, and other enhancements. Since 2021, I have served as the transit representative to the Alameda County Transportation Commission's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. I hold a Master of Public Policy degree from UC Berkeley, where I studied Oakland city governance and budget policy under former City Administrator Dan Lindheim, and as well as a MS in Environmental Engineering. My personal interest is at the intersection of climate, land use, and local government. I've applied to serve on the BPAC, Budget Advisory Commission, and Planning Commission because I think any of these commissions would provide an opportunity for me to contribute my background and expertise to advance these interests on behalf of the City of Oakland. As a car-free resident of Downtown Oakland, I have a strong interest in seeing Oakland be a safe, walkable, and bikeable community; I know these need to be advanced through both infrastructure and planning efforts. At the same time, none of these goals - or other improvements and services the City intends to deliver - can be met without effective budgeting, and I know our city is facing unprecedented financial challenges. I believe the work of all three of these commissions is essential to helping Oakland thrive in the coming years, and I would be excited to serve the community on any of these bodies. Thank you, Ben

Please submit your resume or curriculum vitae. You may upload a document. (A Word format is preferred.) Alternatively, you may paste the text of your resume in the field provided below.

[Ben_Gould_Oakland_Resume_2024.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume

Please paste the text of your resume or curriculum vitae below.

CA RELEVANT EXPERIENCE President July 2020 - Present EcoDataLab Oakland, CA • Providing climate action consulting services to nonprofits and municipalities in the US and Canada, specializing in consumption-based emissions. Clients include C40 Cities, New York City, Toronto, Seattle, Austin, Boulder, and others. Featured in The Climate Impact of Your Neighborhood, Mapped (New York Times, Dec 2022). COMMUNITY SERVICE Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Alameda CTC Feb 2022 - Present • Serve as the AC Transit Representative for ACTC BPAC. Provide input on proposed bike/ped projects across the county. Board Member, Berkeley Neighbors for Housing & Climate Action Jan 2019 - Present • Organizing community members to advocate in support of climate-smart transit-oriented development, and alternative transportation. • Lead author of 2024 Measure FF, a parcel tax measure to fund street repair, walk/bike safety improvements, and environmental enhancements. Overseeing campaign activities including volunteer organizing, fundraising, and messaging. Commissioner, Chair (2016, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023) September 2014 - October 2023 City of Berkeley Environment and Climate Commission Berkeley, CA • Prepared recommendations on environmental policies for Berkeley City Council. First to recommend banning natural gas in new construction in 2016, leading to first-in-the-nation law in 2019. Candidate March 2016 - Nov 2018 Ben Gould for Council 2018, Council 2017 Berkeley, CA • Ran competitive campaigns for City Council to represent Downtown Berkeley. Earned support from State Senators Nancy Skinner and Scott Wiener, Mayors Libby Schaaf and John Bauters, Berkeley City Councilmembers, labor unions, political clubs, news organizations, and more. EDUCATION Master of Public Policy (MPP); M.S. in Environmental Engineering December 2017 University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA Bachelor of Science, General Biology June 2013 University of California, San Diego San Diego, CA

Please click the acknowledgement below.

Service on City of Oakland boards, commissions, and committees may require filings of the FPPC's Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700). Upon appointment and determination of filing status, I will comply with all filing obligations.

☒ I Agree *

Ben Gould

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

President July 2020 – Present
EcoDataLab Oakland, CA

- Providing climate action consulting services to nonprofits and municipalities in the US and Canada, specializing in consumption-based emissions. Clients include C40 Cities, New York City, Toronto, Seattle, Austin, Boulder, and others. Featured in *The Climate Impact of Your Neighborhood, Mapped* (New York Times, Dec 2022).

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Alameda CTC Feb 2022 – Present

- Serve as the AC Transit Representative for ACTC BPAC. Provide input on proposed bike/ped projects across the county.

Board Member, Berkeley Neighbors for Housing & Climate Action Jan 2019 – Present

- Organizing community members to advocate in support of climate-smart transit-oriented development, and alternative transportation.
- Lead author of 2024 Measure FF, a parcel tax measure to fund street repair, walk/bike safety improvements, and environmental enhancements. Overseeing campaign activities including volunteer organizing, fundraising, and messaging.

Commissioner, Chair (2016, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023) September 2014 – October 2023
City of Berkeley Environment and Climate Commission Berkeley, CA

- Prepared recommendations on environmental policies for Berkeley City Council. First to recommend banning natural gas in new construction in 2016, leading to first-in-the-nation law in 2019.

Candidate March 2016 – Nov 2018
Ben Gould for Council 2018, Council 2017 Berkeley, CA

- Ran competitive campaigns for City Council to represent Downtown Berkeley. Earned support from State Senators Nancy Skinner and Scott Wiener, Mayors Libby Schaaf and John Bauters, Berkeley City Councilmembers, labor unions, political clubs, news organizations, and more.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Policy (MPP); M.S. in Environmental Engineering December 2017
University of California, Berkeley Berkeley, CA

Bachelor of Science, General Biology June 2013
University of California, San Diego San Diego, CA

Profile

Karen

First Name

Roye

Last Name

Pronouns

Email Address

Street Address

City

Suite or Apt

State

Postal Code

What City Council district do you live in?

None Selected

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

City and County of San
Francisco - Department of
Child Support Services

Employer

Executive Director

Job Title

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Budget Advisory Commission: Submitted

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us how your qualifications and participation will relate to the requested board and/or commission's mission.

I am thrilled to throw my hat in the ring for a seat on the Oakland Budget Advisory Commission (OBAC). With a rich background in government program management, budget development, and community engagement, I believe I bring a unique perspective to the table. A proud Oakland resident for over 30 years, I have called neighborhoods like East Oakland, Allendale, and Crestmont my home. As an Afro-Cuban, openly gay woman, I have made it my life's mission to uplift marginalized communities through my work in public service. Currently serving as the director of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services, I have honed my skills in managing operations, finances, legislation, and community outreach over the past two decades. In addition to my professional commitments, I have also dedicated my time to various volunteer organizations such as the SF NAACP, the Young Women's Freedom Center, and the Boys and Girls Club, to name a few. I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with the OBAC to empower and connect with all members of our community. My passion for advocating for those often overlooked aligns perfectly with the values and mission of the commission. Thank you for considering me for this important role.

Please submit your resume or curriculum vitae. You may upload a document. (A Word format is preferred.) Alternatively, you may paste the text of your resume in the field provided below.

Please paste the text of your resume or curriculum vitae below.

My life mission is... to authentically lead public service delivery successfully align with the needs of people equitably, promoting healing, empowerment, and self-determination. My public service career with the City and County of San Francisco began in 1998 with my position as a Budget Analyst with the Bureau of Finance for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. I managed the operational budget for San Francisco Water Department and Water Supply and Treatment for five years. Prior to my current position, I served as a Budget Analyst for the Mayor's Office of Budget and Legislative Affairs from 1999 through 2002 assisting in the development of the City's 2001-2002 fiscal year budgets under Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. During this period, I assisted the development of the annual budgets for the Board of Supervisors, Aging and Adult Services, Human Services Agency, Department of Public Health, and the Department of Child Support Services. In 2004 then Mayor Gavin Newsom appointed me Director of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services (SF DCSS) and I continue to serve the City and County of San Francisco in this capacity. As director, I have sought to pioneer innovative programs and collaborations that revolutionize service delivery to custodial and non-custodial parents in San Francisco. I developed a variety of service models that support parents in a variety of life situations that includes parental empowerment portfolio of innovative services that includes early intervention strategies, family violence prevention, referrals to employment services, and active collaborations with local partners. My goal has been to create service delivery models that keep pace with the needs of families today so that children can continue to count on their parents for the financial and medical support that they need to be healthy, and successful. Before joining the City and County of San Francisco, I held the position of Assistant Vice President of Manufactures Hanover Trust Company in charge of Book-Entry Trade settlements for government-backed securities. Education: I hold a Bachelor of Science degree from Cal State University Hayward, 1997 and an Executive Masters of Public Administration from Golden Gate University, 2015 and currently under consideration for a doctoral program. Civic Volunteerism: I currently serves as Parliamentarian Board Member for the Friends-Stewards of the African American Museum and Library of Oakland, California. I hold a seat on the San Francisco Reentry Council since 2006, the Family Violence Council since 2007, and the Sentencing Commission since 2012. I serve on: California Board of Behavioral Sciences (2006 through 2008); San Francisco Boys and Girls Club (2017-present); Advisory Board for the San Francisco Unified School District; Beacon Centers; Founding member of the San Francisco "Sister Circle" The San Francisco Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) San Francisco Chapter NAACP Board (2004 through 2008 and 2009 through 2012; Alameda County Board of Supervisors to represent District 4 as a Board Member on the Community Advisory Board for the Alameda Department of Adult and Juvenile Probation.

Please click the acknowledgement below.

Service on City of Oakland boards, commissions, and committees may require filings of the FPCC's Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700). Upon appointment and determination of filing status, I will comply with all filing obligations.

☒ I Agree *



KAREN ROYE

CONTACT



[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

EDUCATION

EMPA / Public Administrator
Golden Gate University
2013 – 2015

BS / Sociology
Cal State University Hayward
2010 – 2013

AA / Finance
Marymount Manhattan College
1982 - 1985

EXPERTISE

Progressive Leadership

Innovative

Courageous

Public/Community Focused

Strategic Decision Making

Seasoned Director

Dedicated to the Mission

Legislation Development

Flexibility/Adaptability

Collaborate with Labor

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I am a skilled leader experienced in overseeing the creation of an effective service delivery system centered around the needs of economically disadvantaged individuals and those involved in the justice system. I focus on promoting positive personal growth through compassionate guidance, parent-led initiatives, justice collaborations, and community partnerships to enhance social and family outcomes. Furthermore, I have a strong background in financial management and optimizing government budgets to make the most of available resources.

WORK EXPERIENCE

DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2004 – Present
City and County of San Francisco Department of Child Support Services

Responsible for the administration of the Title IVD child support program in accordance with federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. Accountable for the interpretation, evaluation and analysis of programmatic trends countywide, statewide, nationally, and advise and make policy recommendations to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. A seasoned executive leader with a proven record of accomplishment in operational management, providing the vision and leadership to the Department's programs, services, and operations.

A proven decision-maker with demonstrated success in strategic planning and organizational leadership developing and maintaining a professional workforce that encourages staff dedication, enthusiasm, and morale.

Successfully created a family-centered service delivery model that supports parental equity, is trauma-informed, and delivers compassionate engagement through parent-led case management. Services include full program access for incarcerated parents throughout the county jail system and early intervention strategies for justice-impacted, family violence prevention, and referrals to employment services.

Demonstrated success in strategic planning and organizational development to achieve agency mission, vision and goals; who led the transformation of the Department's culture, the development of policies, and programmatic improvements based on evidence grounded in research. Work closely with the San Francisco Unified Family Court, Pretrial Services, DA, Sheriff, Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, Public Health, Human Services, and Office of Workforce, the State and local child support agencies in numerous functional program areas.

Leader of program activity workgroups, policy advisory groups, and automation groups as a change agent dedicated to furthering the program's mission by developing and implementing a parental empowerment portfolio of award-winning child support programming exceeding federal and state performance measured goals—strategic plan.

KAREN M. ROYE

CONTACT



SKILLS

Trauma-informed Case Management

Implicit Bias Training

Racial Equity Plan

Collaborator

Problem-solving abilities

Business Development

Controlling Expenses

Managing Databases

Organization Strategies

Active Listener

TECHNICAL

Committed to Human Resource Development

Blue Ribbon Accounting Management

Rated "Low Risk" on Federal and State Audits, consistently 17 years

Contract Management

IT Applications

WORK EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

2001 – 2004

San Francisco Department of Child Support Services

- Coordinated the transition of functions and staff from the SF District Attorney's Family Support Division to an independent County Department
- Directed the development of new labor agreements and agreements with the SF Unified Family Court, SEIU Local 790, MAA, MEA, and Local 21 to transition staff from non-affiliated exempt positions The reader should have a clear understanding of a 'day in the life' of your position at this company

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET ANALYST

1999 – 2001

San Francisco Mayor's Budget Office, WLB, Jr. Administration

- Assisted in developing the City's FY 2000 and FY 2001 budgets under Mayor Willie L. Brown
- Developed the annual budgets for the Board of Supervisors, Aging and Adult Services, Human Services Agency, Department of Public Health, and the Department of Child Support Services
- Responsible for drafting and publishing the Annual Budget Book for Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. Fiscal Year 1999-2000.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR - BUDGET ANALYST

1995 – 1999

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Bureau of Finance

- Managed the development and provide oversight of the operational budget for the San Francisco Water Department and City Distribution of Water for four years at a \$200 million budget.
- Contract Administrator/Auditor for SF PUC, Audit Prime Contractors for MBE/WBE participation
- Successfully applied for and received \$22.5 million in FEMA funding to support sewer line failure Sea Cliff district of SF

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

1988 – 1998

Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company

Before joining the City and County of San Francisco, I was the Assistant Vice President of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company in charge of Book-Entry Trade settlements for government-backed securities (1988-1998).

- Managed team Book Entry settlement of government backed security trades

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request

KAREN M. ROYE

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Year</u>
SPUR Good Government	Good Government Award – The Family Violence Prevention Team’s Safe Communication Strategies	2019
California Child Support Directors Association	Leader in Positive Collaboration Award	2017
Powerful Women International Connections	The Compassionate Leader Award	2017
SPUR Good Government	Good Government Award – New Approach to Collecting Child Support	2015
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Celebration of Black American History	The Alex L. Pitcher Humanitarian Award	2011
Senator Mark Leno, 3rd District	Certificate of Recognition – Community Leader	2011
A Philip Randolph Institute, San Francisco Chapter, Labor Council (AFL-CIO)	Appreciation and Recognition of Support, Commitment, and Distinguished Public Service	2010
National Child Support Enforcement Association, 57th Annual Training Conference & Expo	Child Support Leader: Track Chair Professional Development, Trauma-Informed Case Management	2008
Gavin Newsom, Mayor, San Francisco	Certificate of Honor-Efficient, Effective and Compassionate Leadership	2007
Senate Rules Committee, Don Perata Chairman	Confirmed as a Member of the Board of Behavioral Sciences unanimous vote.	2007
Kamala D. Harris, District Attorney, San Francisco	Award of Appreciation for Outstanding Commitment to “Changing the Odds For Youth” Program	2007
Brothers Against Guns	Community Support Award	2005
Mark Leno, Assemblyman, 13th District	California Assembly Resolution and Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Public Service	2005
A Philip Randolph Institute, San Francisco Chapter, Labor Council (AFL-CIO)	Appreciation and Recognition of Support, Commitment, and Distinguished Service	2003
California Department of Child Support Services	Certificate of Distinguished Program Leadership	2002

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

<u>Role</u>	<u>Board/Council</u>	<u>Term</u>
Councilmember	Our Children Our Families Council, San Francisco	2017-Present
Councilmember	San Francisco Reentry Council	2006-Present
Councilmember	San Francisco Family Violence Council	2007-Present
Board Member	Community Advisory Board Alameda County Department of Adult and Juvenile Probation	2018-Present
Commissioner	Oakland Public Library Commission	2021-Present
Board Member	California Board of Behavioral Sciences	2006-2008
Board Member of Governors	San Francisco Boys and Girls Club	2017-Present
Board Member	Beacon Center – San Francisco Unified School District	2018-Present
Board Member	Young Women’s Freedom Center	2008-2018
Senior Advisor	Young Women’s Freedom Center	2018-Present
Founding Board Member	“Sister’s Circle” supporting previously incarcerated women	2017-Present
Executive Member	San Francisco NAACP	2004-2008, 2009-Present
Board Member and Parliamentarian	Friends-Stewards of the African American Museum and Library of Oakland	2015-2021

KAREN ROYE

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, 2004-PRESENT

I am responsible for the administration of the Title IV-D child support program in accordance with federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. At the time of my appointment there were 250 full time positions budgeted and 27,650 open cases. One of four labor unions represents the staff: SEIU Local 790 now SEIU Local 1021, MEA, MAA and Local 21. The annual budget was approximately \$36.0 million. With my leadership, the Department managed the automated child support system for 55 of the 58 counties in California. My goal has been to create service delivery models that keep pace with the needs of families today, meets parents where they are and where they want to be and aligns with the state and county strategic plans that children can continue to count on their parents for the financial and medical support they need to be healthy and thriving.

MEETING PARENTS WHERE THEY ARE

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES DELIVERED TO COUNTY JAIL PODs and DETENTION CELLS – FULL SERVICE

SFDCSS established a formal relationship with the County Sheriff's Department to provide onsite child support services to incarcerated parents in all County Jail Facilities for mother's and father's. **Since its inception in 2007, outreach coordinators, caseworkers and attorneys have met with imprisoned parents in all jail pods and holding cells** within the San Francisco County jail system to discuss and respond to client concerns and modify orders. SFDCSS collaborates with Prisoner Legal Services to work with parents we cannot reach through our regular jail visits (i.e., maximum security). As of SFY 20-21, the jail outreach initiative has identified more than 2,600 unique parents whose whereabouts were previously unknown and are associated with more than 3,800 statewide cases with overall debt owed more than **\$23 million**. Once released parents must communicate with the child support program to re-introduce payment. For FFY 2021, the Default order rate is 28% of all Judgments obtained. As of March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, in-person jail visits were suspended. SFDCSS and the County Sheriff's Department are implementing virtual visits that will reinstate face-to-face support for incarcerated customers.

COLLABORATION WITH ADULT PROBATION

When enactment of the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 (AB109), San Francisco County had a recidivism rate of over 73%. At the same time over 65% of all child support orders in San Francisco, established as default orders without non-custodial parent involvement largely due to parents locate issues. While the child support program has direct interface with federal and state correctional systems, no such interface exists at the county level. Absent connection with the non-custodial parent, parents existed the system with massive debt responsibilities that hampered their ability to successfully re-renter. **Together, the San Francisco Adult Probation Department (SFAPD) and the Department of Child Support Services (SF DCSS) established the first on-site full service delivery of child support assistance in California at the Community Assessment and Services Center (CASC).** This partnership reengages low-income Parents Paying Support (PPS) and Parents Receiving Support (PRS), who are justice-involved, through early intervention strategies that promote successful reentry of these parents. We have successfully located parents through collaborating opportunities like workshops, presentations, events, and liaisons. Reaching out to parents to assist them with parentage and support order establishment, modification of existing orders (which may include the gradual reintroduction of guideline support obligations), and their out-of-county case management needs. This partnership reduces the negative impact that full child support enforcement may have on the successful reintegration of post-release parents and the increased recidivism rates while prioritizing positive parent-child relationships.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES CONTINUED

CUSTODIAL AND NONCUSTODIAL PARENT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM (C-NET)

The Custodial and Noncustodial Parent Employment and Training Program (C-NET) **responds to parents struggling to pay child support owed and face considerable barriers to employment that include lack of permanent housing, substance abuse, anger and rage issues, and multiple incarcerations. Incarcerated parents who owe child support and wish to reunify with their children (typically female) face child support debt owed while in foster care. This accumulated debt presents a significant challenge to reunification. Upon release, depending on child support received to help meet their children's basic needs, leading to successful reunification.** This initiative results showed that noncustodial parents who are unemployed or underemployed Court-ordered work searches are insufficient. Motivation is not the primary issue - a criminal history is! C-NET requires parents **to work cooperatively with organizations affiliated with the SFDCSS that address employment readiness issues, promoting the stability of the family. Obligated parents must regularly report to SFDCSS for review and consideration of child support. Participants in C-NET obtain assistance through our partners at Goodwill Industries and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development's Neighborhood Access Points for education, employment assessment and training, and other resources to help the participant stabilize.** Referral services are available to both custodial and noncustodial parents.

DADS MAKING A DIFFERENCE (DADs)/Fatherhood Challenge

"DADs" is a collaboration between SFDCSS, the Department of Public Health, and HOPE SF designed to serve families residing in public housing. **The DADs initiative provided parents living in redevelopment sites with a 16-week culturally sensitive, evidence-based intervention (Supporting Father Involvement) designed to increase fathers' involvement with their young children and with the mothers of their children to reduce abuse and neglect in at-risk families.** Based in the needs and complexities of the co-parenting relationship and stressors that affect the family unit. SFDCSS supports DADs by referring Wellness Centers, DADs works with families to provide structured activities, discussions, and exercises that address the eligible participants to the initiative within its caseload and offering enhanced case management services and participation incentives. Additional support considerations include providing onsite Resource Hours and support during intake/orientation activities.

DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM (DRP)

The Debt Reduction Program (DRP) implemented in May 2021 and **provided parents who owe past-due child support payments to the government the opportunity to reduce the amount they owe.** Before DRP, California's Child Support Program offered the Compromise of Arrears Program (COAP). DRP improves on the arrears management solution offered through COAP for parents who would otherwise not be able to pay their case balance. DRP differs from COAP by determining program eligibility and the amount of debt reduced based on the parent's income and assets, cost of living for their county of residence, and household size. Repayment options offer either a lump sum or monthly payments. If it is determined that a parent's situation makes it unlikely to pay off their total child support debt owed to the government within twelve months, they may qualify for a reduction.

ENHANCED PARENTAGE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (POP) OUTREACH PROGRAM

In early 2011, SFDCSS launched its Enhanced POP Outreach Program. The program's goal is to **increase the establishment of parentage for children born to unmarried parents. The SFDCSS developed relationships with local healthcare providers to educate their staff and clients on the child support program to meet this goal.** SFDCSS also provided in-person presentations to expectant parents in prenatal regular meetings with hospital birth clerks at all San Francisco birthing hospitals. **Meetings with hospital and medical clinic staff, including nurse-midwives, medical-social workers, health education workers, and public health nurses.** The Department distributed outreach materials to hospitals and medical clinics, including POP materials in pre-and post-birth

PROGRAM INITIATIVES CONTINUED

hospital packets. A bi-annual parentage newsletter for perinatal-care staff, the establishment of a direct telephone line created and distributed to provide expectant parents with confidential consultations with SFDCSS staff, the establishment of a parentage section of the SFDCSS website, and facilitation of the POP program for incarcerated parents. As of FFY2021, San Francisco's Parentage Opportunity Program **obtained 1,848 filed declarations.**

ENHANCED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT COLLABORATIVE (EPIC)

The EPIC establishment model **focuses on establishing and maintaining communication with Parents Paying Support (PPS) at the beginning of the life of the case that is inclusive and nonthreatening.** The child support program focuses on encouraging PPS and educating them regarding their responsibility for their children and the role of the child support agency. By working with parents instead of against them, our agency has established orders that parents paying support (PPS) and their children can be successful. Before EPIC, the process of establishing a child support order was highly system-driven and did not encourage comprehensive customer service and outreach to PPS. At the time of EPIC's implementation in 2004, 60% of our established orders were by default and presumed income orders comprised 21% of these Default orders. Since the performance of EPIC, default order rate has reduced by more than half (20% as of December 2020; the statewide total is 59.3%). The outcomes of the EPIC process have been a positive impact on the agency's arrears management and performance targets. With 70% or more of our child support orders established through voluntary Stipulation or court hearing, parents are more willing to pay their obligation each month because they were involved in the process and understood the purpose of the child support program. For FFY 2021, the default order rate of all judgements obtained 28%.

PROACTIVE CASE ACCOUNTING AUDITS

The Finance Audit and Case Team (FACT) is responsible for all case-related accounting functions for San Francisco's customers. In 2017, the team implemented a multi-year effort to audit case accounts converted from the "legacy" case management system without prior audit. By doing so, the team ensures that case records reflect accurate accounting for parents of San Francisco's child support program. For FFY 19-20, **the team completed 302 audits through this project. The audits resulted in overall account adjustment reductions of \$60,655.**

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITY, PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT (HOPE SF)

SFDCSS recognizes that acquiring stable and affordable housing in San Francisco can challenge the customers we serve. In alignment with SFDCSS's Mission Statement to empower parents to obtain economic self-sufficiency to provide and care for their children, SFDCSS has established a liaison with HOPE SF. **The Mayor and the Board of Supervisors created the HOPE SF initiative to transform eight of San Francisco's most distressed public housing sites.** By rebuilding distressed public housing sites, increasing affordable housing and ownership opportunities, and improving the quality of life for existing residents and the surrounding communities. **The SFDCSS liaison works with clients referred by HOPE SF to review and remove any unintentional barriers to housing created by child support enforcement.** Clients referred to SFDCSS receive enhanced case management support that seeks to address their child support delinquency and provide solutions to bring their account into compliance and restore their standing as prospective housing tenants.

ENHANCEMENTS FOR PERFORMING COMMUNITY OUTREACH (EPCOT)

The Enhancements for Performing Community Outreach and Tracking (EPCOT) system provides data management on the SFDCSS community and customer service efforts. Program teams reach out to the community in various methods to engage parents in their child support cases. **The staff attends multiple fairs and festivals and gives presentations at various community organizations and agencies to educate the community regarding child support. Through these activities, the team identifies those individuals with child support cases, schedules**

PROGRAM INITIATIVES CONTINUED

appointments, and meets with them to assist in all aspects of their child support case(s). Additional outreach activities include television and radio.

COLLABORATION WITH CITYWIDE INITIATIVES – PARENTING TIME PLANS

Child support collections represent 45% of family income for low-income families that receive it. With this in mind, increasing the reliability of child support payments is a priority of the child support program. Parenting Time (also known as visitation or access) refers to the amount of court-ordered time a child spends with each parent. Of the many considerations that influence the amount of a child support order, the amount of time each parent spends with the child is the most significant. Parents Paying Support (PPS) who are involved with their children are more likely to pay child support, and PPS who pay child support are more likely to stay involved in their children's lives. The Human Services Agency and DCSS collaborated to provide mutual program clients DCSS enhanced case management. DCSS assisted parents with establishing voluntary parenting time plans and encouraged parents to pay support and participate in fatherhood programming while working with them to resolve outstanding concerns related to their child support case. Through this collaboration, DCSS promotes fatherhood awareness, and engagement increases access to Family Court services and court-approved parenting time plans, thus improving child support outcomes for participating families.

FAMILIES RISING

Families Rising, an anti-poverty initiative introduced by then-Mayor Ed Lee, focuses on intensive resources, wrap-around services, and case management across City departments and nonprofit providers to serve at least 500 of the City's most at-risk families. **The initiative aims to give these families meaningful pathways out of poverty while disrupting its intergenerational cycle. SFDCCS supports Families Rising by applying our Parenting Time Plan workflow, an innovative, collaborative partnership with the Superior Court, Family Court Services, the Family Law Facilitator, and domestic violence community representatives.** For parents who volunteer to participate, our workflow streamlines the establishment of a Parenting Time Plan (also known as a custody and visitation order) during support order establishment. It assists the family with making their co-parenting arrangements more efficient.

PROMISE PROJECT

SFDCCS, in collaboration with the Promise Project, launched this pilot to use the outcomes and lessons learned to inspire more innovation and investment in the child support program to help more parents relieve their child support debt. **The Promise Project is a public/private partnership that explores debt repayment alternatives. Private funding offers participants the option of a 0% interest loan to repay arrears owed to the other parent.** Arrears owed to the other parent are paid in full and the participant repaying Promise at 0% interest; government owed arrears are waived at no cost to the participant. To date, the pilot has served 20 participants and paid more than \$43,000 through 0% interest loans, and waived more than \$50,000 on arrears owed to the government.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION

SFDCCS recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting job losses have placed a tremendous financial burden on parents with support obligations. **SFDCCS collaborates with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and Goodwill Industries of San Francisco to connect parents paying support (PPS) to local jobs and supportive services. This initiative provides sustainable local living wages, technical and transferable employment skills, and adult executive functioning skills.** This collaboration identifies and prioritizes displaced SF-resident parents actively seeking employment and connects them to OEWD and Goodwill Industries of San Francisco. Benefits of participation include access to work and supportive services, career advisement,

PROGRAM INITIATIVES CONTINUED

reinstatement of driver's license, stayed enforcement, expedited support order modification, and referral to debt reduction options.

PROACTIVE STATE-ISSUED LICENSE RELEASE

The child support program suspends driver, business, and state-issued professional and recreational licenses (such as fishing) due to non-payment of court-ordered child support obligations. Other agencies can suspend driver's rights and professional licenses for different reasons and find that our customers have multiple suspensions in place. Suspended driving privileges may negatively affect a parent's ability to obtain or maintain employment. In response, **we have implemented proactive case reviews for compliance with license release terms and flexible release options for parents who have a reduced ability to pay.** In addition to license reviews, **we collaborate with citywide efforts to identify solutions for City residents who face challenges with driver license suspension due to the inability to pay court fines and fees.** In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency effective March 2020, California DCSS temporarily suspended automatic submission of state-issued licenses.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY TOY AND BOOK FESTIVAL

In collaboration with the Mayor's Office, the San Francisco Fire Fighter's Union Local 798, and the San Francisco Public Library, SFDCCS hosts the Annual Holiday Toy and Book Festival every December. The Toy Festival held at San Francisco's historic City Hall, includes children ages 12 and under and provides age-appropriate toys and books along with an opportunity to meet Santa Claus. **Each year, the Festival attracts 1,100 local children, many of whom visit City Hall. San Francisco's public schools, community-based organizations, and SFDCCS offices invite children.**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR: ENHANCED TRANSITIONAL JOB DEMONSTRATION PROJECT (ETJD)

In collaboration with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the San Francisco Human Services Agency, and Goodwill of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin Counties, SFDCCS won an Enhanced Job Training Demonstration grant from the Department of Labor for its "Transitions SF." **Transitions SF targeted noncustodial parent's ages 18-59, with minor children, who resided in San Francisco and identified by SFDCCS as either delinquent in child support payments or non-job ready.** Recruitment began in November 2011 and ended in December 2013, with the project meeting its enrollment goal of 1,000 noncustodial parents. We anticipated that successful graduates of Transitions SF would move from subsidized employment to permanent employment, increasing their child support payments versus recipients of standard job placement services who paid during the funded employment period. **SFDCCS provided specialized, intensive services to Transitions SF participants to assist them with modifying child support orders, repaying arrears, and getting child support obligations in line with their income and ability to pay.**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE

The child support program developed the Family Violence Indicator (FVI) for case managers to flag domestic violence cases where the enforcement of child support obligations may be dangerous. **The Department experienced unprecedented growth in the number of clients exposed to family violence:** in 2009, the Department served 391 clients exposed to family violence; in July of 2011, there were 1,901 open cases flagged for family violence. In response, **SFDCCS has trained caseworkers and attorneys to communicate effectively with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and work with noncustodial parents, securing child support for the custodial parent. The case management response for cases assigned to the domestic violence prevention initiative focused on providing the noncustodial parent with increased outreach, education, and a structured case management model that promoted a commitment to child support payments and reduced the likelihood**

PROGRAM INITIATIVES CONTINUED

of violence. SFDCSS educated noncustodial parents on their rights and responsibilities with the child support program. SFDCSS made referrals to collaborating community-based organizations for those struggling and who required employment assistance.

Parental briefings occur before any action that SFDCSS would take on the case reducing surprise and concern that feed frustration. Parent intimidation or threats of retaliation, would never be tolerated and required SFDCSS to refer the matter to the District Attorney or Adult Probation revocation probation. The Department has adopted the domestic violence preventative initiative as the standard response to all cases flagged for family violence.

COLLABORATION WITH CITY COLLEGE

In 2006, **SFCSS initiated a pilot program in collaboration with City College of San Francisco provide child support services to student parents in the case management areas of debt forgiveness and order modification.** Student parents also could enter into informal and voluntary parenting time plans/ family plans that enabled them to attend school and complete their educational goals. In 2014, **SFDCSS, in collaboration with Family Court Services, Domestic Violence Advocates, and other stakeholders, plan to reengage with City College of San Francisco. The partnership linked services to an existing on-campus provider to facilitate student parents' voluntary court-ordered parenting time/family plans.** The project, implemented in March 2015 with the Southeast and Mission campuses, strengthened family relationships while expanding access to CSS for residents and supporting student parents with meeting their educational goals.

Profile

Neil

Thapar

First Name

Last Name

Pronouns

Email Address

Street Address

City

Suite or Apt

State

Postal Code

What City Council district do you live in?

☒ District 4

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

Employer

Job Title

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Budget Advisory Commission: Submitted

Interests & Experiences

Please tell us how your qualifications and participation will relate to the requested board and/or commission's mission.

I've been a resident of Oakland for eight years, living in district 4. I've engaged in local grassroots advocacy and organizing on issues related to food justice and participatory budgeting. I've organized clean ups in my local neighborhood, as well as sparked connectedness among neighbors by reviving a block party tradition on my street. I am an attorney and nonprofit leader who understands and focuses on community-led governance while having the competence to understand city administrative processes and functions as well as the legal landscape that influence those processes and functions. My commitment is to racial, economic, and climate justice and to repair the harms of disinvestment in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. A more equitable budget is a strong tool for achieving that goal, when it is informed by deep community participation and meaningful engagement and clear understanding. The role of the budget advisory commission is to improve the city's ability to execution of accountable budgeting and decisionmaking. My background in advocacy for transparent, participatory, and equitable decisionmaking regarding the city's budget supports my qualification and personal mission to improve and hold accountable city budgeting that reflects the will of the people of Oakland.

Please submit your resume or curriculum vitae. You may upload a document. (A Word format is preferred.) Alternatively, you may paste the text of your resume in the field provided below.

[Neil_Thapar_Resume_20241209_.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume

Please paste the text of your resume or curriculum vitae below.

Please click the acknowledgement below.

Service on City of Oakland boards, commissions, and committees may require filings of the FPPC's Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700). Upon appointment and determination of filing status, I will comply with all filing obligations.

☒ I Agree *

NEIL THAPAR

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Minnow, Oakland, CA

Co-Director & Co-Founder, November 2019 – Present

- Democratically govern a non-hierarchical nonprofit organization alongside 3 Co-Directors
- Provide relationship-based technical assistance to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color land-based projects focused on legal structures and governance for community ownership of land democratic governance.
- Participate and share leadership in statewide and national initiatives to challenge philanthropy to redirect millions of dollars towards community-based land acquisition projects, including The People's Land Fund, Liberating Investment in the Food and Farm Ecosystem, and Climate Justice Alliance.

Sustainable Economies Law Center, Oakland, CA

Food and Farm Director, April 2016 – December 2020

Food and Farm Attorney, April 2014 – April 2016

- Directed SELC's Food & Farm Program which provides legal support to small-scale food and farm enterprises, advocates for policies that support economic empowerment through cooperative ownership of land and enterprises, and educates entrepreneurs to navigate legal barriers and create a more sustainable and just food system.
- Developed and applied legal frameworks for community ownership of farmland to preserve affordability and address racial inequity in land ownership.
- Provided legal advice to clients on entity formation, employment law, land use, tax exemptions, governance and other topics.
- Led statewide legislative campaigns to protect seed sharing through libraries and other community organizations.

Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz

Freelance Researcher/Writer, January – May 2013

- Wrote eleven case studies on social justice issues related to agriculture for inclusion in the Center's apprenticeship teaching manual.

Agro-Ecological Farm Apprentice, April – October 2012

- Facilitated group discussions during this six-month farm apprenticeship on issues in agriculture, including: community activism, labor issues, and social justice.

Center for Food Safety, San Francisco, CA

Contract Attorney, August – December 2011

Law Clerk, January – August 2010

- Supported staff attorneys in litigation regarding genetic engineering of crops and animals under federal environmental and administrative laws.
- Drafted administrative comments to the EPA on proposed pesticide labeling rules.

EDUCATION / CERTIFICATES

Center for Agroecology, University of California, Santa Cruz, Certificate in Ecological Horticulture, 2012

University of California, Hastings College of the Law, J.D., 2011

University of California, Los Angeles, B.A., Economics / International Area Studies, 2007

ACTIVITIES / AFFILIATIONS

- Member, Community Democracy Project, August 2019 – December 2023
- Member, California Farmer Justice Collaborative, June 2017 – December 2020
- Member, State Bar of California, 2011 (CA Bar License #280396)
- Council Member & Executive Committee Member, Oakland Food Policy Council, October 2014 – April 2019
- Board Member, Ecology Center, April 2018 – April 2019
- Farm Advisor Captain, Kitchen Table Advisors, January 2015 – November 2017

PRESENTATIONS / WORKSHOPS

- *Racial Equity in Extension: Catalyzing Land Sovereignty and Tenure for Indigenous Communities and Farmers of Color*, Webinar, December 9, 2021
- *Beginning Farmer Movements and the Land Access Challenge: Learning from Land Reform Within the “Global North” as a Way to Reimagine Private Property*, Webinar, January 13, 2021
- *Subversive Economies in the Food System*, Panel, November 19, 2018, San Francisco, CA
- *Remaking the Economy: Who will own the land?*, Webinar, December 13, 2018
- *Introduction to Cooperatives for Farmers*, Presentation, September 5, 2018, Santa Cruz, CA
- *Reclaiming Food and Farm Systems as a Commons*, Keynote, April 14, 2018, Vacaville, CA
- *Creative Financing Strategies for Farmland Succession*, Panel, January 27, 2018, Asilomar, CA
- *Employment Law for Urban Farmers*, Workshop, August 4, 2017, Richmond, CA
- *Selling Produce from Urban Farms*, Workshop, November 10, 2016, Oakland, CA
- *Advocating for a Seed Commons*, Keynote, July 7, 2016, Decorah, IA
- *Creating the Legal Structure for a Just Food System*, Presentation, March 15, San Francisco, CA
- *Basics of Farm Law*, Workshop, October 13, 2015, Sebastopol, CA
- *Alternative Legal Approaches to Food Justice*, Webinar, April 2, 2015
- *Opportunities for Lawyers in Food Justice*, Keynote, February 6, 2015, Eugene, OR