

Attachment A:

**YOUTH COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025**



"MOST IMPORTANTLY, I'VE LEARNED JUST HOW POWERFUL YOUNG VOICES ARE IN DRIVING CHANGE. IT HAS INSPIRED ME TO REMAIN INVOLVED IN LOCAL POLITICS AND TO KEEP ADVOCATING FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST." - KATIE LIANG

**"OYC HAS ALSO GIVEN ME GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PART OF MEANINGFUL CHANGE THAT I ONCE BELIEVED WAS OUT OF REACH."
-MICHELLE WONG**

I FELT SO UPLIFTED AND SUPPORTED WHENEVER I SHARED SOMETHING IN OYC. THIS CONFIDENCE I GAINED HELPED ME TO REALLY SUCCEED IN ANYTHING I PUT MY MIND TO." - AMBER JOHNSON



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I. Oakland Youth Commission Appointees

Name	District	School	Age	Years Served
Mia Hatfield	1	Oakland Tech High School	18	4
Haniel Kebede	1	Oakland Tech High School	18	2
Olivia Richardson Feldman	2	Lick Wilmerding	18	2
Ana Xu LI	2	Oakland Tech Alumni; UC Berkeley	19	2
Kayson Naik	2	Head Royce	15	1
Calupe Kaufusi	3	Mcclymonds High School	15	2
Tengis Turmur	3	Oakland Tech High School	18	1
Quincy Russell	3	College Prep	16	3
Ashley Tchanyoum	3	Oakland Tech High School	16	1
Bryce Hunt	4	Lick Wilmerding	17	3
Edamevoh Ajayi	4	Oakland Tech High School	16	1
Diego Garcia	4	Skyline High School	18	1
Nathan YuHeng Li	5	Arroyo High School	17	3
Katie Liang	5	Oakland High School	18	2
Steve Nguyen	5	Oakland Tech Alumni; UC Berkeley	20	2
Michelle Wong	5	Oakland High School	18	2
Amber Johnson	6	Oakland High Alumni; UC Berkeley	19	2
Sofia Castro	6	Skyline High School	18	1
Ella Killingsworth	7	Skyline High School	18	1

II. Letter from Sara Tiras, Lead Staff to the Oakland Youth Commission

Dear City Council Members,

What a year! As our city and country experience unprecedented political turmoil, the Oakland Youth Commission (OYC) continues to lead and advocate towards a more equitable and just future. Oakland youth commissioners were leading throughout the Town – infused through local media outlets and community organizing efforts and served as a strong reminder of the power of youth voice in making change.

This term, the OYC welcomed 7 new youth, increasing our BIPOC representation from 80% to 95% and Oakland public school representation from 70% to 79% from the previous year. In addition, overall attendance improved from the previous term and for the first time in years, no youth commissioners vacated their positions mid-term.

In addition to our 16 annual commission meetings, we continue to host two retreats a year to allow our group ample time to build their leadership skills and relationships with each other to strengthen our work throughout the year. Our group continued to create many strong connections with each other, for many of them, this is the only space that brings together youth from very different backgrounds and a wide range of experiences within Oakland. Over and over, they express appreciation for the chance to get to know one another as part of their experience on the commission.

Our five ad-hoc committees focused on Youth Vote, Recast, Digital Equity, Adulthood and Youth Empowerment education, and advancing the CTE Hub. Our main focus this year was in launching the first ever Oakland youth vote! We made history as the first major urban city in America to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in school board elections. This took up the bulk of our energy and we couldn't have been more proud to play a leading role in educating, and mobilizing our city's youth to register and turn out to vote. Youth commissioners were at the forefront of every effort to do this.

Lastly, one special highlight this year was receiving Assemblymember Mia Bonta's *Youth Organization of the Year Award*! In a district full of vibrant and powerful youth organizations, we were deeply honored to be seen and recognized for our hard work.

The following pages of this annual report details the various aspects of our work and celebrates the many hours of dedication of our youth commissioners.

Thank you,

Sara Tiras
Lead Staff to the Youth Commission
Program Analyst II, Children and Youth Services

III. Youth Leadership Development

A. Internal Trainings

The Oakland Youth Commission (OYC) is more than just a commission, it is also a leadership development program that provides training, mentorship, and thoughtful planning to integrate young people into government affairs typically designed for adult participation.

The OYC staff planned several workshops to expand OYC member knowledge and skills necessary for their effectiveness in their roles as commissioners. Our internal workshops have become an integral component of our programming and require a considerable time commitment from our commissioners outside of regular commission meetings. The trainings we covered throughout this year were:

- Local Government 101
- Campaign Building 101
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Adulthood and Youth Empowerment
- How to Write and Give Public Comment
- Resume Writing and Building

In our annual end of the year evaluation, OYC reported **gaining leadership skills** in the following areas (percentage of youth commissioners who reported growth):

- Personal confidence in sharing your ideas - **100%**
- Increased awareness of city issues and local politics - **90%**
- Restorative Justice Circles - **90%**
- Confidence speaking with city leaders, and elected officials - **84%**
- Resume writing - **84%**
- Public Speaking - **68%**
- Writing Public Comment - **63%**
- Participating in a campaign - **63%**
- Social Media Strategy and/or Content Creation - **53%**
- Registering Voters - **53%**
- Planning and facilitating meetings - **42%**
- Event Planning - **32%**

B. Commission Meetings

The OYC meets twice a month, following the regular school calendar, from September–June and takes a summer recess in July and August. The OYC invited several guest speakers from the City of Oakland Departments and a few community organizations to present and educate our youth commissioners on city affairs.

Youth Commission Manager, Sara Tiras, has instituted a practice of setting up a pre-meeting with each presenter before they come to the commission to plan a presentation that is engaging and accessible to youth to learn well and be able to share their ideas in a meaningful way.

City staff have been very open and grateful for the suggested ideas, changes, and ways to adapt their presentations for youth audiences. In fact, at recent meeting with Adam Barr from Department of Workforce Development, Adam was so impressed with the tips for engagement he suggested we co-present to the Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) and reached out to Carina Lieu to get on the calendar to share with city staff the lessons he learned from Sara about making presentations more effective and inviting to receive useful feedback.

OYC meetings included presentations and youth feedback sessions from the following City Leaders, Departments, and Organizations:

- Former Mayor Sheng Thao
- Ruth Meza and Celina Chan, Department of Transportation
- Holly Joshi and Brooklyn Williams, Department of Violence Prevention
- Khalilha Haynes, Department of Planning and Building
- Bobby Zaidi, Democracy Dollars
- Jackie Palmas, Youth Leadership Council (YLC)
- Kurry Foley, Finance, Department of Human Services
- Patrick Messac and Cinthia Diaz, Oakland Undivided
- Tony Parsons, Oakland Thrives
- Assembly Member Mia Bonta
- Adam Barr, Department of Workforce Development
- Councilmember Zac Unger
- Councilmember Rowena Brown

C. Youth Commissioner Accolades

Joining the youth commission is an honor and privilege. Being on the youth commission is yet another way for our Oakland youth to demonstrate their excellence and build their skill set that makes them competitive in their pursuit of their goals post high school. This year, we had 11 commissioners who just graduated high school, and were accepted to a range of prestigious Universities. We are proud of our OYC Graduates' accolades:

- Katie Liang, Graduated Oakland HS, Attending University of Pennsylvania
- Olivia Richardson Feldman, Graduated Lick Wilmerding, Attending Northwestern University
- Bryce Hunt, Graduated Lick Wilmerding, Attending Stanford University
- Michelle Wong, Graduated Oakland HS, Attending UC Berkeley
- Diego Garcia, Graduated Skyline HS, Attending UC Davis
- Sofia Castro, Graduated Skyline HS, Attending San Jose State
- Ella Killingsworth, Graduated Skyline HS, Attending Berkeley City College
- Mia Hatfield, Graduated Oakland Tech, Attending Chico State
- Tengis Tumur, Graduated Oakland Tech, Attending Cal Poly
- Haniel Kebede, Graduated Oakland Tech, Attending Berkeley City College
- Nathan Li, Graduated Arroyo HS, Attending Berkeley City College



Commissioners Ashley Tchanyoum and Katie Liang pictured with OYC Staff, Sara Tiras (center) received the OUSD District Student Leadership Awards.

IV. Youth Voice in City Affairs

In addition to giving feedback and input during commission meetings, the Youth Commission used their platform to speak up for youth power in city affairs in a variety of other ways.



OYC Co-Chair Amber Johnson and Staff Sara Tiras lead city staff in the our annual Adulthood and Youth Empowerment Training for 17 city employees.

A. Leading Youth Empowerment and Adulthood Trainings in the Community

CityWide Training

Two years ago, OYC youth and staff worked together to develop training on Adulthood and Youth Empowerment. This year on January 29 2025, we offered our third annual training for city employees and had about 25 employees attend the training session.

This year two new youth commissioners stepped up to facilitate the training: Amber Johnson (D6) and Olivia Richardson Feldman (D2) along with OYC Staff, Sara Tiras. Youth presenters facilitated the discussion among participants to think about, or think back on, their perspectives as young people through conversations about times they were made to feel marginalized by adults as youth as well as times they felt empowered as young people and the difference between those experiences. The training included a breakdown of power, oppression, intersectionality, and used Hart's Ladder of Youth Empowerment as a guide. The final component of the training provided participants with a list of ways to incorporate youth perspective in their work as adults and city employees.

CASA Volunteers

Amber and Olivia led the training again for over 30 volunteers at CASA who work as adult allies to foster youth navigating the court system. Many well meaning volunteers don't have the training and framework to understand the powerlessness and experiences of foster youth from a framework of oppression and youth empowerment. The training was really inspiring and empowering for many of the CASA volunteers who shared how helpful it was to them in their work. Participants wrote in their evaluation:

"I really liked the professional facilitation – kept the presentation moving. And I enjoyed having the perspective of the youth council – particularly on this subject! Very refreshing and well done."

"A really great presentation, very impressive youth, and very thoughtful ways to participate. So engaging!"

"I liked the organization and engagement throughout. I love that it was a topic I haven't explored a lot before, and it felt like it was set up to help us ease into it."

OUSD Students

OYCs third training was for OUSD Middle School Students at the All City Council's Conference on March 6 at Mills at Northeastern University campus. We had over 30 middle schoolers in attendance, and three new facilitators led the training: Katie Liang (D5), Michelle Wong (D5), and Nathan Li (D5). They did an exceptional job of holding the space, giving youth a chance to engage and enjoy the workshop while also holding high expectations for them and their behavior.

We hope to continue to offer the Adulthood and Youth Empowerment training annually to city employees with the goal of promoting and broadening meaningful and empowering forms of youth engagement in all city departments and in the greater Oakland community. We also plan to continue to present at other youth conferences such as ACC whenever possible.



Youth commissioners lead OUSD Middle School students at the annual ACC Ethnic Studies Conference in March 2025

B. ReCAST Youth Board

ReCAST, which stands for Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma, is a federal grant program which funds youth-led projects in Oakland that center healing and joy. Youth across Oakland are part of the youth-granting board to review grant proposals which address community health, injustice, trauma, and healing. This year, mini-grants of \$4,000 were awarded to Oakland Youth (ages 13–23).

For the second year in a row, our youth commissioners were interested in the program and decided to make ReCAST one of our projects. This year’s youth board consisted of nine members with six being youth commissioners. Ana Xu Li, Michelle Wong, Ella Killingsworth, Sofia Castro, Katie Liang, and Ashley Tchanyoum were part of the cohort that designed the grant application and grading rubric to decide which programs would receive grants. They learned about the importance of youth philanthropy and received hands-on experience with the grant-making process.

The initial meetings were in-person and the following meetings were online as they brainstormed the top priorities in our communities to categorize different project proposals. Additionally, they developed an application, project criteria, and outreach plan. During the final meeting, they looked at the applications of potential contenders by analyzing their strengths and weaknesses. They reviewed 10 grant proposals and granted \$40,000 to fund their projects.

Using a scoring rubric, they selected which projects received funding. It seemed to be a natural fit for youth commissioners to collaborate with city programs, learn about philanthropy and the grant process, and use their leadership to empower other Oakland youth.

Lastly, several commissioners on the board attended the ReCAST Grantee Launch where grantees were celebrated and had the opportunity to share more about their project to their community. Youth commissioners were given the platform to reflect on their experiences working with ReCAST as well.

C. Community Events

Oakland Ballers Youth Vote Fundraiser



On August 17, 2024 we held a fundraiser for Youth Vote in collaboration with the Oakland Ballers. In addition to earning a donation for every ticket we sold, we also tabled at the game to get the public aware, ready and excited to vote for their school board representative. We connected with several school board members who came out in support. When speaking with Ballers fans, we made connections with teachers, students, and families who were eager to register to vote and learn more about youth vote.

Town Nights

Youth Commissioners tabled for Oakland Youth Vote at two Town Nights events in June and August in Fruitvale Village.

Vote Smart Summit at City Hall

Youth Commissioners were invited to speak and present to attendees at the Vote Smart Summit on Saturday September 21, 2024 hosted by the San Francisco National Pan-Hellenic Council. We shared the background history of how Oakland youth vote came to be, and what our local organizing efforts included to inspire, engage, and inform first time youth voters.

Oaklandside Changemakers Event

A few times a year, Oaklandside newspaper hosts a “Changemakers” event highlighting one sector of Oakland (music, sports, etc.). On November 20, 2024, Oaklandside hosted one on Youth Leadership at the New Parkway Theatre in Oakland and invited our co-chair Amber Johnson to speak on a panel with other notable youth and adults who all work in youth leadership organizations.

Amber was a powerful voice on the panel and highlighted her experience on the Youth Commission by sharing:

“I honestly would say that the thing that really kickstarted my empowerment as a student advocate was the Oakland Youth Commission...The Oakland Youth Commission immerses youth into city government, we learn about what is going on in Oakland and how to better Oakland...its a great way to learn about your city which is why I wanted to step up and take on a leadership role.”



Oakland Museum Event

On Sunday, Jan 19, 2025 the Oakland Museum hosted an event as part of a series called “Community Conversations: Reclaiming Democracy, Building Belonging” in partnership with The Othering & Belonging Institute (OBI). A primary goal of this program was to cultivate dialogue by providing a platform for discussion with a lens toward bridging across differences. The event opened with a dance performance to go and was an interactive experience with audience participation.

OYC Co-Chair Olivia Richardson Feldman, joined the panel with notable community leaders John A. Powell, Director of the OBI and Professor at the UC Berkeley and Ernestine Nettles, President of the Oakland League of Women Voters. On the panel, Olivia shared some wisdom about reaching for interconnectedness:

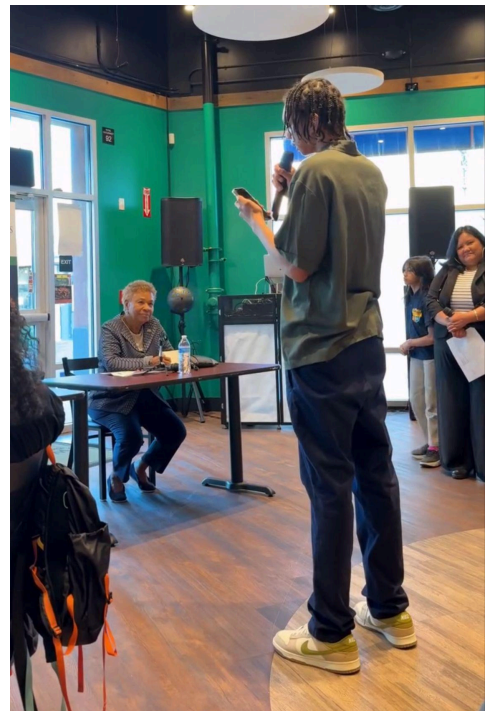


“In a functioning democracy, where everyone feels like they belong, it is because we understand that our fates are linked as humans regardless of our differences. We recognize our humanity and see each other through a lens of empathy.”

Mayoral Candidate Forum

During the Mayoral Special Election campaign, one of our District 3 youth commissioners, Calupe Kaufusi was invited to co-facilitate a Mayoral Candidate Forum with Mayor Lee and then candidate Loren Taylor at Sweet Fingers Restaurant in East Oakland. We were honored to have Calupe’s leadership spotlighted and represented in the electoral process.

Pictured left: Calupe asks then mayoral candidates Barbara Lee and Loren Taylor a question.



Mia Bonta's Assembly District 18 Awards



The Oakland Youth Commission was selected by Assembly member Mia Bonta, to receive the “Youth Organization of the Year” award.

On January 25, 2025 we attended the ceremony in Alameda, in which she honored many leaders, organizations, and businesses in District 18. We were deeply honored to be recognized for the work we have been doing in the city. We were also excited to meet Mayor Lee as she was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the same event.

D. Social Media Engagement

Social Media serves as a cornerstone for engaging with Oakland youth and the broader community. This year we gained over 2,000 followers. We continued our work highlighting Oakland district leaders and places, and sharing local events and resources relevant to young people.

District of the Month

For the second year in a row, we continued to highlight one district of the month. This is an easy and digestible way to teach our followers where each district is located, who represents them on the City Council, the School Board, and the Oakland Youth Commission.

Commissioner Interviews

As part of our Commission of the Month feature, we interviewed each youth commissioner from the district of the month. We had each commissioner choose either a city park, library, or main street area in their district as the location to film and asked them 10 questions to get to know them. This helped our viewers learn where each district is, and get a feel for who our city youth commissioners are. Our

commissioners loved creating these videos and they each got between 500–1500 views.

Mayoral Updates

Another new feature we did this year was a few breakdowns on the mayoral rec-call and special election to help youth understand what was happening in our local government. We featured different youth commissioners in a series of 3 videos breaking down the 1) Recall Election of Mayor Sheng Thao 2) Interim Mayoral Period and 3) The Special Election to elect a new mayor. These videos racked up over 3,000 views and were circulated widely. This showed us that people were interested and eager to see and hear youth explain local politics in a digestible way. We will continue to produce more content like this in the future.

Additionally, we rely on social media to engage our audience with our ongoing efforts to advocate for the implementation of Oakland Youth Vote, Digital Equity in the State, sharing updates and opportunities with ReCAST, CTE Hub, and our work within city government. We believe our increased enrollment and interest in joining the youth commission is also in part due to our increased social media visibility and engagement.

V. Policy Work

A. Oakland Youth Vote

OYV Coalition – Core Leaders Committee

We have been a key member in the Oakland Youth Vote Coalition for the past 5 years. One core component of the OYV Coalition is that we have a designated group of 20 youth leaders we work closely with at each phase of the campaign. This year we had five youth commissioners join the CLC: Katie Liang, Diego Garcia, Edamevoh Ajai, Ashley Tchanyoum, and Mia Hatfield.

Our youth commissioners played a visible and central role in every aspect of the work: registering their peers, tabling at school and community events, recruiting teachers to use our curriculum, co-planning events, giving speeches, speaking with the press about youth vote, filming informational videos, hosting candidate forums, and more.

Registering Voters

Once we got the green light from the Registrar of Voters that Oakland youth would officially be able to vote in the November school board election, we only had two months to register students and get the word out. Our youth commissioners, along with their peers on the CLC, got to work and were able to register around 1,500 youth.

In August we invited the League of Women Voters (LWV) to come train our adult and youth leaders on the registration process so we could learn from their years of work registering students in schools. The registration process isn't straightforward, or accessible in many ways. From what we learned, it became clear that we needed to run a massive registration drive at every school via paper registration forms and with supportive assistance to teachers and school leaders. We applied to pick up bulk registration forms from the Registrar, 500 at a time, and got to work distributing and training teachers and students to do the work.

We did this through tabling at community events (pictured here at Town Nights in Fruitvale), tabling at lunch during school, making announcements in classes, and recruiting teachers to register voters in their classrooms. We also coordinated support in classes through youth volunteers and our community partners at League of Women of Voters (LWV) because the process is complex and requires a lot of 1-1 attention to students who are completing the forms.



We also created informational content for our social media as well as posters that we posted in school hallways to inform students how to register, deadlines, and where to go if they had questions.

Here are several of our youth commissioners featured in one of the [informational videos](#) they filmed with the school district media outlet, KDOL, encouraging their peers to register and vote.

Youth Vote Kick Off and Press Conference

In order to kick off early voting and celebrate the very first youth voters in our city to drop off their ballots – we organized an event on the steps of the County Courthouse on October 16, 2024. We invited media outlets to come and document our youth making history.



Two youth commissioners, Edamevoh and Diego, MC'd the event (pictured center left). While two other youth commissioners, Ashley Tchanyoum and Katie Liang (pictured right), gave impassioned and inspiring speeches encouraging their peers to vote. Three youth commissioners from eligible districts (Ella Killingsworth, Michelle Wong, and Ashley Tchanyoum) were among the first Oakland youth to drop their ballots in the drop box – a photographic moment captured by the press.

The event was covered in several media outlets and was beautifully documented by local media, KDOL, here in this [video promo](#). Other news outlets that came and covered our event:

Oaklandside:

<https://oaklandside.org/2024/10/17/election-2024-oakland-youth-vote-rally/>

KQED:

<https://www.kqed.org/news/12012537/young-people-in-oakland-and-berkeley-are-casting-ballots-for-the-first-time-heres-what-it-looks-like>

LA Times:

<https://www.kqed.org/news/12012537/young-people-in-oakland-and-berkeley-are-casting-ballots-for-the-first-time-heres-what-it-looks-like>

Distributing our Civic Engagement Curriculum to Oakland High Schools

Last year, OYC Staff, Sara Tiras, co-wrote a Civic Engagement curriculum with Oakland Kids First staff Domenichi Morris. It was developed with youth and teacher input and tested in a teacher focus group at Skyline High School.

In August 2024, we published the curriculum and made it free for [download here](#) on our Oakland Youth Vote website.

Getting the curriculum into the high schools was a key component of our work to educate and empower Oakland youth to become voters. OYC Staff, Sara Tiras, coordinated with OUSD's District Leaders to lead Professional Development trainings for over 30 secondary teachers.

Additionally, Sara Tiras assembled a core group of "Teacher Champions for Youth Vote" – designated one teacher per school site who would support the adoption of the curriculum and coordinate efforts on campus to register and empower students to vote. Sara hosted a few zoom meetings for this cohort and then frequently made visits to each campus to distribute registration forms, pick up completed forms, and offer any other necessary support.

Youth-Led Candidate Forum



Youth MC's (left) ask questions to school board candidates for Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7

For the past several years, the OYV Coalition has hosted a youth led candidate forum for school board elections. This marked the first year we organized the event, and students weren't just doing a "mock vote" but participated as actual voters who could cast their ballots.

Once again, our youth commissioners took on leading roles as MC's, panel moderators, and support volunteers to make sure the event went well. We had over 200 people in attendance and the event was once again a growing display of holding school board directors accountable to the people they serve – students!

Expanding Youth Vote

In the wake of Oakland's groundbreaking move to implement youth vote, several cities throughout the country have reached out to our coalition with questions and a desire to connect and learn about the success of our movement. After November, we have shifted our focus to documenting our movement and sharing our work with others.

Youth Power Event at KALW



Youth commissioners speaking on a panel about Oakland Youth Vote in San Francisco at local radio station KALW.

On February 11, the Youth Commission was invited to speak on a panel at San Francisco's public radio station, KALW, to share an overview of our campaign and advice for other youth interested in trying to pass youth vote in their cities.

The event drew about 75 youth from the Bay Area across several cities – San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, and San Mateo. There were about 5 panels that spoke on their engagement work with elections, and it was aired on the radio.

KALW hopes to host an event like this a few times a year to keep youth organizing connected and sharing resources and inspiration across the Bay Area.

In addition, youth commissioners were interviewed by an outside consultant (hired by Oakland Kids First) for an evaluation of the first ever Oakland youth vote. The evaluation will be used as a guide for the district for how to improve future youth voter engagement and also as a tool for dissemination to other cities interested in learning from our work.

Our presentation can be listened to here:

UC Berkeley Youth Vote Symposium



Post election, UC Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy reached out to our coalition interested to showcase our work in a Youth Vote Symposium on April 30.

UCB invited people across the country interested in replicating our work. We were thrilled to have several youth commissioners speak on the panel, and OYC Staff, Sara Tiras was invited to moderate one of the panels as well. There were also staff

from the Registrar of Voters, election legal consultants, city council members, and other district and community leaders who spoke as well.

The event drew about 50–60 attendees, many from out of state. We had many interested organizers, researchers reach out to connect with us following the event.

Systematizing Youth Vote

Since the election, we have been working on a proposal to get the school district to “systematize” our best practices so we can ensure that youth vote will carry on in future elections and we are city and school district that proudly supports civic engagement and youth voting.

In order to develop our proposal, we decided to hold a few informational delegations with key district leaders. This Spring we met with three leaders 1) President of the School Board, Jenifer Brouhard 2) Head of the Office of Equity, Raquel Jimenez and 3) District Chair of Social Studies, Vonzelle Reed. Youth Commissioners led and facilitated these meetings to share out our work to get students ready to vote, and asked questions to solicit ideas for our best path forward to institutionalize these practices within the district. We continue to develop our proposal and plan to bring it to the School Board in the coming few months.



*Youth
Commissioner
Diego Garcia
speaks with OUSD
District Chair of
Social Studies,
Vonzelle Reed.*

B. Housing for Transitional Aged Youth

The Youth Commission continues its commitment to advocating for homeless and housing insecure youth and young adults through our support for the CTE Hub.

Career Technical Education (CTE) TAY Hub Coalition

The OYC continued to be an active member of the The CTE TAY Hub, a housing complex initiative where transitional age youth who are housing insecure can live and receive a variety of resources to help them through the pivotal transition from youth to adulthood. The housing campus will provide college and career counseling, mental health services, and a variety of other wrap around services. The Youth Commission continues to work with the CTE TAY Hub coalition of over 25 organizations to plan the design of this housing project and advocate for continued investment and funding in seeing this project to fruition. We had three youth commissioners work with this coalition, Bryce Hunt, Calupe Kaufusi, and Quincy Russell. Their focus included three aspects of planning this year:

1. Public comment to emphasize the impact the CTE Hub will have and reinforce support from the OUSD School Board to continue the work for the Hub. Commissioner Calupe Kaufusi spoke out in support of the hub and talked about the impact it would have specifically on disconnected youth of color.
2. Meeting with workforce development leaders to consider what pathways and programs the hub should include.
3. Continue to pressure the School Board to advocate for the timely need to start construction at 1025 2nd Ave. The site has become an abandoned building that has been a gathering place for unhoused people and unfortunately led to increasing violence, drug use, and blight that disrupted the lives and educations of many youth in the surrounding block.



CTE Hub Coalition leaders pictured after a school board meeting on September 19, 2024 after securing support from the School Board to move forward with plans demolish the site at 1025 2nd Ave to begin construction on the Hub.

to

C. Digital Equity Campaign



The Oakland Youth Commission continued to stay connected to Oakland Undivided and the fight for digital equity in Oakland. Patrick Messac and Cinthia Diaz from Oakland Undivided came to present to the Youth Commission on updates to the plan and advocacy work. Following their presentation in March, we joined them for another Day of Action at the State Capitol on April 30, 2025.

Youth Commissioners, Katie Liang and Bryce Hunt, went with staff Sara Tiras to meet with statewide lawmakers to share their stories as youth and students as to the importance of having access to high speed, affordable, internet plans. Lawmakers will be voting on whether or not to require Internet Service Providers to provide a quality and affordable statewide \$15/month plan similar to one that recently passed in New York.

VI. Looking Ahead

As is every year, some of our long term commitments will roll over into the next term as we continue to advocate for youth vote, CTE Hub, awareness of Adultism and Youth Empowerment, and Digital Equity in Oakland. The new commission will vote to approve our ad-hoc committees and core projects for the next term in 2025–26.

At the end of this term, the OYC had 12 youth commissioners step down due to moving outside of Oakland for college, or aging out. We have 8 youth commissioners returning and 9 new commissioners joining. We are proud that our visibility in the city continues to grow and as a result, we received the most applications we have in many years. We had over 60 applications from Oakland youth and interviewed 24 applicants.

VII. Youth Commissioner Reflections

We conclude our report with reflections from each commissioner on what they have learned and how they have grown from their time serving as a youth commissioner.

Commissioner	Amber Johnson	Olivia
Role	Co-Chair; D6 Commissioner	Co-Chair; Commissioner At Large
Committees	Adultism Trainer; Executive Committee	Adultism Trainer; Executive Committee
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	<p>From my time on the commission, I've learned a lot more about city government specifically through learning about city issues & the efforts being made to fix these issues. I learned how Oakland has tons of commissions focused on specific things & got to hear from a lot of those commissions in the last 2 years. I also learned a lot more about the amount of & the impact of student/ youth activism in my city. Although I've been involved in advocacy work for a while, I wasn't really able to create such an immense impact such as Oakland Youth Vote or Oakland Undivided did & to see it happen was such an empowering experience.</p>	<p>I learned how much power youth actually have in a city and nation. From all of the actions we participated in, to the mature conversations at our meetings we put in so much to make the city a better place, and we did. I also learned that youth can lead things on their own. We made such an impact with just one advisor.</p>
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	<p>When I applied to be on the commission, I knew that there were specific perspectives I wanted to make sure to bring to the space. As a person of color who is system-impacted, low income, grew up with a single mom of five kids, I knew I would have a lot to say. I am not shy when it comes to speaking my mind but at times being vulnerable has made me feel like a charity case or has made me</p>	<p>I became more and more engaged as I spent more time on the commission. From subscribing to the Oaklandside to attending community events, I became more of an active member of my town than I was before. I grew as a leader as Co-Chair alongside Amber, by stepping into a leadership role where much more was expected of me.</p>

	<p>feel looked down upon – but I never felt that way within OYC. I felt so uplifted & supported whenever I shared something in OYC. This confidence I gained through OYC also helped with me no longer holding back in assignments or in applications which helped me to really succeed in anything I was putting my mind to. I got more involved with my community which is something I started to do through OYC.</p>	
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Commissioner	Calupe Kaufusi	Mia Hatfield
Role	Commissioner At Large	Commissioner At Large
Committees	CTE Hub	Youth Vote
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	<p>I learned how to speak confidently and let my ideas be known . I also learned how to communicate and work as a group to achieve goals and more. Being on the commission helped me see problems and issues I never would've seen if I had not joined.</p>	<p>I gained so much knowledge this year especially on youth vote campaign and how to get people to register and vote for there school board candidates. I also learned how to write public comments for numerous city council meetings.</p>
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	<p>As said before I learned speak confidently and more importantly speak as a leader. I've improved massively in many ways over the year by learning do's and Don'ts. I've stopped fidgeting ,started speaking louder and hopefully I improve more in the following years.</p>	<p>How I grew as a leader is I learned that everybody learns differently and at a different speed and you have to take that consideration in when you are teaching someone.</p>

Commissioner	Sofia Castro	Ella Killingsworth
Role	Commissioner At Large	D7 Commissioner & Social Media Officer
Committees	ReCAST	ReCAST
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	I learned a lot about the issues in our city and how they are handled. The Youth Commission gave me the chance to be in city hall and hear about what is going on in our city and just how much power our youths voices hold. I was able to see our city from a different perspective and hear voices that I have never heard before.	That a lack of knowledge doesn't mean a lack of interest. When talking to students at my school or even just my friends, they ended up being pretty engaged when talking about our local politics. So, seeing how even small steps in spreading awareness can effect our city was pretty knowledgable.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	I feel like my confidence grew a lot when it came to sharing my ideas and thoughts. I gained a lot of knowledge from hearing so many different perspectives and meeting new people with the most incredible minds. The Youth Commission have introduced me to a completely new world which has helped with my growth this past year.	I feel as though I grew as a leader in more of a social stance then an action taking one (which I hope to improve on as well). I wasn't afraid to communicate with the people in our commission, along with taking these skills into the real world when talking to my peers, or interviewing for jobs. And I hope to carry this new confidence with me throughout the rest of my life.

Commissioner	Ashley Tchanyoum	Edamevoh Ajayi
Role	Commissioner At Large; Operations Officer	D4 Commissioner
Committees	Oakland Youth Vote; Executive Committee	Oakland Youth Vote
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	I learned how to plan events. I learned how to table. And I learned how to speak to city officials.	I learned how to communicate confidently and clearly with strangers through the Oakland Youth Vote campaign. I learned how to confidently express my opinions and ideas due to being in a safe space during the meetings. I also gained better facilitation skills and open-mindedness to different ideas from the public speakers.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	I know now how to present myself while on public record. I've met with committees I didn't know existed prior. And I know more about Oakland government as a whole.	I grew in my ability to engage with people from different backgrounds and to be patient with people who have different perspectives. I felt that I met a lot of new people and really got to know how different everyone in Oakland truly is. I also got a better idea of the struggles many different people in different age groups go through due to their backgrounds

Commissioner	Bryce Hunt	Kayson Naik
Role	Commissioner At Large; Social Media Officer	D2 Commissioner
Committees	Digital Equity; CTE Hub; Executive Committee	N/A
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	I learned about the power that I have to make a difference. Being on the Youth Commission taught me that my voice matters, and that people actually value my input. I also learned so much more about the different community organizations in Oakland, and I gained a better understanding of the inner workings of our government and systems.	Learning about city government has been one of the invaluable things i have learned from my one year on the commission. Getting presentations and seeing first hand how are city functions and navigates through(many) challenges has inspired me to be more active in policy, even if I don't want to do policy in the future/in my adulthood. I think that's very interesting, because it shows that someone may not be super passionate about policy but may still take an interest in it and care fire it, which in turn creates a more knowledgeable and involved community/city.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	My first step of growth as a leader was running and being elected as Media Officer on the executive committee. This gave me a new sense of responsibility on the Commission. My growth as a community member came from my involvement in initiatives like Oakland Undivided and the CTE TAY Hub, where in both cases I got to speak on behalf of marginalized communities and give a voice to the wonderful work these organizations do.	I think the 2024 annual report helped me enhance my leadership skills- speaking in front of city council allowed me to be more comfortable with "important government people." Additionally, giving youth perspective during presentations from various groups and committees has helped me grow as a spokesperson for youth.

Commissioner	Quincy Russell	Ana Xu Li
Role	D3 Commissioner	Commissioner At Large
Committees	CTE Hub	N/A
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	<p>Something I learned over the course of this year was how to voice my thoughts and opinions on issues that affect my community. In presentations given to us, I was able to effectively communicate how I thought each proposed action could either positively or negatively impact the ones that live at around the sight of impact. I especially gained the perspective of seeing how others can be impacted by city government choices this year. I LOVE THE OYC!</p>	<p>I appreciated that this year had a lot of continuation with topics we started discussing last year with digital equity and youth vote for example where last year we started familiarizing ourselves with the two causes but were able to see the results and some of the culminations of that work such as with Youth Vote conducting elections. Similarly with speakers coming back like Dr. Holly Joshi where we were able to learn not only about her career but more about the inner workings of how human trafficking works, the signs, and some of the tactics to combat it that are in place. Lastly, we were exposed to more city departments I wasn't aware about.</p>
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	<p>Through my participation in the OYC, I was able to learn how to use my voice on issues that matter and affect the community around me. Seen in commission meetings and actions, I was excited to use my voice and knowledge to inform others how they can improve the lives situations of people who are experiencing times of struggle and inform the community about the purposed changes happening to their neighborhoods.</p>	<p>I think this year because I was farther away than last year since my first year of college started a lot of my engagement with the topics we learned in the commission was starting conversations with people I met on campus. Because of the nature of being away I also missed more meetings that I would've liked but with that came placing myself accountable for my absences. I tried my best to make it to all possible meetings, communicate when I wasn't able to make it and more importantly making up the time with the content I missed.</p>

Commissioner	Michelle Wong	Katie Liang
Role	Commissioner At Large Ethics Officer	D5 Commissioner
Committees	Adultism Trainer; ReCast; Executive Committee	Youth Vote; ; ReCast; Digital Equity; Adultism Trainer
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	As an Oakland youth and resident, I wasn't aware of the many issues that our city and local organizations had been tackling. Through our regular commission meetings, I learned about what work has been done to better our city which has not only been beneficial in educating myself, but it also gave me a platform to voice my opinions. I was able to meet fellow commissioners who came from different backgrounds and schools which gave me a new perspective on the many youth stories that often go unheard in political settings and conversations.	Being part of the Oakland Youth Commission these past two years has taught me a lot. I've developed a deeper understanding of how local government operates and why active civic participation is essential. This experience has helped me develop leadership skills and the confidence to share my ideas and opinions with city and state leaders. Most importantly, I've learned just how powerful young voices are in driving change. It has inspired me to remain involved in local politics in college and to keep advocating for the issues that matter most.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	Participating in commission meetings allowed me to grow as both a leader and community member as I shared insightful and nuanced discussions with the commission. We also participated in many engaging activities with our guest presenters which allowed me to deepen my understanding on city issues. Being part of different committees within OYC has also given me great opportunities to be part of meaningful change that I once believed was out of reach. I was able to develop my overall confidence and public speaking skills by becoming more	Participating in the Oakland Youth Commission has helped me grow by teaching me the importance of active listening and collaboration when working with diverse groups. Through committee work and trainings, I developed stronger communication and problem-solving skills. For example, on the Oakland Youth Vote Committee, I suggested visiting social studies classrooms at Oakland High and giving presentations to engage more students in voting for School Board candidates. These experiences have strengthened my ability to lead with confidence and a

	comfortable with exposing myself to new experiences. From dropping my ballot in front of the courthouse to leading an adultism and youth empowerment training to young students, I continue to be empowered by my community and peers.	commitment to increase community engagement
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Commissioner	Haniel Kebede	Diego Garcia
Role	D1 Commissioner; Secretary	Commissioner At Large; Organizing Officer
Committees	Executive Committee	Youth Vote; Executive Committee
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	I got to see how much initiatives like Oakland Youth Vote and the underpass project by OakDot progressed since last year. I also gained more leadership and facilitation skills by joining the executive committee.	During my time on the Youth Commission, I was able to learn so much about our city's government like how elections work, who is in charge of what, what council members and mayors do, and how our city budget works. I learned about the importance of youth voices in shaping our local elected officials decisions and how collaboration between young people and civic leaders can lead to meaningful change. Lastly, I learned how to advocate for not only myself, but for my peers and the issues affecting my communities.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	I joined the executive committee as the secretary this year. Coming early to meetings and signing for facilitation roles helped me improve my leadership and public speaking skills. I also believe that taking on the role of secretary allowed me to stay focused on the presentations and arguments being made during discussions, which I appreciate.	I believe I have completed and fulfilled my responsibilities as a youth commissioner. I actively participated in meetings and shared my perspective on important issues that affect Oakland. I believe I brought dedication and a willingness to listen and collaborate with the commission

Commissioner	Steve Nguyen	Nathan Li
Role	Commissioner At Large	Commissioner At Large
Committees	N/A	Adulthood Trainer
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	<p>Through my experience being on the Youth Commission, I learned how to be an active and engaged resident of Oakland. I believe the experience of being able to work of extremely talented and passionate group of youths on the commission allowed me to be able to understand and listen to experiences and perspectives of others. I was able to gain different insights on the functioning's of a city and interact with people from different departments that play a core in shaping Oakland such as transportation, urban design, digital equity, and first respondents.</p>	<p>Being on the Youth Commission for the past three years has taught me countless invaluable lessons. It has taught me how to use my voice to speak in front of public officials, how to engage in public policy, how to effectively write and give public comments, and, most importantly, how to connect with my community. These couple of skills that I briefly listed only begin to scratch the surface of the lessons that have helped shape me into the leader that I have grown into.</p>
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	<p>I believe I grew as a community member through my participation on the commission since I had the opportunity to work with youths across Oakland. This experience thought me the value of collaboration and unity. I also believed I was able to grow as a leader through my active contribution during commission meetings and lead the conversation and listen when needed too.</p>	<p>Through the Oakland Youth Commission, I watched myself alongside other commissioners grow into passionate advocates for social justice. By attending the bi-weekly commission meetings, where we met with community leaders and city department staff, I learned how to be actively engaged in public policy to help uplift youth and community members. Additionally, by working in subcommittees like Restorative Justice, Adulthood, and YPAR, I learned how to be a leader who demonstrates passion for improving his community issues and one is willing to tackle difficult situations for a solution.</p>

Commissioner	Tengis Turmur
Role	Commissioner At Large
Committees	N/A
What did you learn from being on the OYC?	I learned different aspects of Oaklands political system and how they pass bills. Without OYC I would have never understood how these systems work and the multiple commissions that work hard to contribute to these changes in Oakland. I gained the knowledge that a lot of time and data is required to make every action within Oakland, and that it is a lengthy process.
How did you grow as a leader and community member?	I gained the confidence to talk to everyone. Which honestly I found to be the most difficult part, worried about whether or not I would be accepted. But I saw how I've grown throughout the year, OYC gave me a sense of pride, knowing I had the ability to push my boundaries of socializing and to utilize talking as a skill to form connections with people