



Children, Youth and Recreation Commission

INFORMATION CALENDAR

March 23, 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**From:** Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission  
**Submitted by:** Elisa Batista, Chairperson  
**Subject:** Children, Youth and Recreation Commission FY2021 Work Plan

**INTRODUCTION**

The Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission has updated its work plan, which outlines Commission objectives for the upcoming fiscal year. This work plan includes making recommendations to the City Council to further the goals of 2020 Vision during a pandemic that has disrupted learning; identify the needs and gaps in services for Berkeley Youth; and examine out of school time/afterschool resources for Berkeley youth.

**CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS**

At a Special Meeting on February 1, 2021, the Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission approved the Commission's FY2021 Work Plan, which will be used to guide the Commission's work throughout the year.

**M/S/C** (Kelkile/Capitelli/U) to approve the work plan and submit an Information Report to the City Council.

**Ayes:** Batista, Capitelli, Kelkile, Marchesini, Pelley, Richards

**Noes:** None.

**Absent:** None.

**Leave of Absence:** None

**BACKGROUND**

See attached Work Plan.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

No environmental impacts or opportunities were identified as a result of this recommendation.

**POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION**

Based on Commission research and public input, new initiatives and recommendations to City Council may be submitted to City Council at such time deemed necessary.

**FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION**

No fiscal impacts identified at this time.

**CONTACT PERSON**

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Elisa Batista, Chairperson

Attachment 1: Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission FY21 Work Plan

# CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND RECREATION COMMISSION ANNUAL WORK PLAN FY21 (Approved on February 1, 2021)

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission shall be an advisory board and shall seek to achieve equity in policies, programs, planning efforts, activities, and funding associated with youth, families, early childhood education, recreation, and other related City-sponsored activities.

## BACKGROUND

Upon City Council's receipt of this plan for fiscal year 2021, Berkeley's youth will have lived a year through an unprecedented, deadly pandemic. A generation of our kids have had their lives turned upside down, and at great costs to their learning and education. They not only have lost months of schooling due to school closures and delays setting up virtual classrooms, but also the 2020 summer break, in which many camps were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, our youth have suffered through unprecedented social, mental, and emotional distress due to the isolation of being homebound all of this time with inadequate academic stimulation or socialization with peers. Our most vulnerable students--the homeless, those living in crowded housing conditions, undocumented or those living in low-income immigrant households, Black, Indigenous, and students of color, and those students who self-identify as LGBTQ+--are even more isolated and disconnected from reaching their potential, and academic and personal goals. It is crucial that we as a community come together to support our youth during a devastatingly difficult time, and bridge the academic achievement gap that already existed before the pandemic, and is now further exacerbated as BUSD adjusts with the realities that not all of our students had adequate access to housing, technology, food, and healthcare prior to the pandemic. (Superintendent Brent Stephens sent a letter to all BUSD families at the start of shelter-in-place orders in March 2020, outlining all of these challenges.)

**Considering these challenges and exacerbated learning gap, the Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission respectfully submits the following FY 2021 recommendations and work plan to Berkeley City Council:**

**1. Acknowledge that the existing inequities that our youth face have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic**, including shelter-in-place orders, school, day care, and camp closures, and delayed virtual schooling. In the event of future pandemics and/or other emergencies that require students to shelter in place, we urge Council, BUSD, and other relevant entities to make permanent access to Internet and technology for all students.

## **CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND RECREATION COMMISSION ANNUAL WORK PLAN FY21 (Approved on February 1, 2021)**

### **2. Help schools, camps, afterschool programs, day care centers, and recreational programs open safely.**

- a. Ensure that every child has access to a mask and that schools have hand sanitizer and other protective equipment needed to operate safely.
- b. Ensure that there are adequate counselors and mental health programs: **Attachment 1** support students.

### **3. Create and implement Community Agency Grant evaluation process.**

- a. Develop a process to work closely with 2020 Vision staff to evaluate the progress of grantees as to their projected outcomes.
- b. Receive regular updates on grantees from 2020 Vision staff noting particular impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.
- c. Make recommendations to City Council on grantees who are not able to adjust to the pandemic and provide services to families.

### **4. Collaborate with other commissions to mitigate mental health impacts**

- a. Reach out to the Youth Commission to see how we can better support our youth during an isolating time.
- b. Reach out to the Mental Health Commission to see how we can better support our youth during an isolating time.

**5. Encourage housing development projects that set aside units for low and middle-income families with children.** According to data by Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, about a quarter of children in Alameda County live in crowded housing conditions, which is not conducive to learning and could spread the virus when essential workers return to crowded homes. In addition to studio apartments and one-bedroom apartments for individual renters, we should incentivize through the zoning ordinance the creation of three-to-four-bedroom homes for families with children.

**6. Help BUSD families that lack Internet and a computer at home, permanently obtain the laptops and any related technology that they received on loan during the pandemic.** Making this investment now could help curb further delays in virtual schooling due to the physical closures of school facilities.

- a. Support low-cost access to broadband and ensure that all children and families have continued access to up-to-date equipment post-pandemic. One way is to negotiate community benefits in the city's contract with Comcast and other broadband providers.