

1 [Administrative Code - Library Read to Recovery Program]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish the Library Read to**  
 4 **Recovery Program to provide at the Main Library and all Library branches free written**  
 5 **materials and books from mutual-help programs, for individuals who seek recovery**  
 6 **from substance-use disorders and non-substance-related addictive disorders.**

7 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
 8 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
 9 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
 10 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
 11 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
 12 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
 13 subsections or parts of tables.

11

12 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

13

14 Section 1. The Administrative Code is hereby amended by adding Chapter 123A,  
 15 consisting of Sections 123A.1, 123A.2, 123A.3, and 123A.4, to read as follows:

16 **CHAPTER 123A: LIBRARY READ TO RECOVERY PROGRAM**

17 **SEC. 123A.1. FINDINGS.**

18 (a) San Francisco's staggering loss of life due to accidental drug overdoses is a public health  
 19 calamity unseen in our City since the height of the AIDS crisis, with 2023's death toll of 811 total  
 20 overdoses marking, as of then, the deadliest year attributable to illicit drug use in San Francisco  
 21 history.

22 (b) As part of its response to this multi-dimensional crisis, San Francisco must find new and  
 23 innovative ways both to support and enlist the support of its large, diverse, and vibrant recovery  
 24 community, which has an essential and largely under-leveraged role to play in this crisis, to not merely  
 25 save more lives but change them for the better.

1 (c) Although frequently overlooked in the local, state, and national contexts of a new and  
2 unprecedented fentanyl-driven drug crisis, alcohol-related afflictions among adults and adolescents  
3 remain a leading preventable cause of death nationwide, as well as in San Francisco, lagging only  
4 slightly behind tobacco and illegal drugs.

5 (d) Mutual-help recovery programs, including many modeled on the 12-Step approach  
6 pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), are the most numerically successful interventions ever  
7 devised for recovery from alcoholism and addictions. For example, AA’s global reach was estimated  
8 as of 2023 to include some two million members, in more than 118,000 groups, spanning 180 nations.  
9 As of 2023, Narcotics Anonymous (NA) boasted more than 70,000 weekly meetings in 144 countries. A  
10 multitude of 12-step recovery traditions meet weekly in groups convened throughout San Francisco.

11 (e) Peer-reviewed research has found Twelve-Step Facilitation (TSF) to be more effective than  
12 many other treatments for increasing abstinence from alcohol and addictive substances and reducing  
13 intensity of use, with high-quality evidence suggesting that the approach also realizes substantial  
14 healthcare cost-savings among those with substance use disorders.

15 (f) Recent years have also witnessed significant growth in non-12-step, peer-run recovery  
16 groups, such as LifeRing Secular Recovery, which has included weekly meetings in San Francisco City  
17 Hall; Recovery Dharma, which is based on traditional Buddhist teachings and encourages meditation  
18 practices; and SMART Recovery (an acronym for “Self Management and Recovery Training”), which  
19 is an evidenced-informed recovery method grounded in Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT)  
20 and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to support individuals with substance dependencies or  
21 problem behaviors.

22 (g) San Francisco boasts an enormously vibrant and supportive recovery community, with  
23 more than 560 weekly AA meetings within the city limits alone, and dozens more meetings, including  
24 in-person, online, and hybrid meetings, that span Narcotics Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous, and  
25 other 12-step and non-12-step recovery traditions, with many people in recovery benefiting from more

1 than one program. The strength of San Francisco’s recovery community can additionally be found in  
2 its longtime support of non-profit facilities open to a multitude of abstinence-based recovery traditions,  
3 which include the Dry Dock on Greenwich Street at Fillmore Street in the Cow Hollow neighborhood,  
4 and the Castro Country Club on 18th Street at Castro Street.

5 (h) Abstinence-based recovery from substance- and alcohol-use disorders holds enduring  
6 promise exhibited by few other chronic health conditions, according to one meta-analysis of decades of  
7 studies, which notes that for individuals who maintain abstinence from addictive substances for four to  
8 five years, their “risk of relapse drops below 15 percent, the level of risk that people in the general  
9 population have of developing a substance use disorder in their lifetime.” See U.S. Department of  
10 Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, “Facing Addiction in America: The  
11 Surgeon General’s Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health,” Washington, DC: HHS, November 2016.

12 (i) Written materials and books are a foundational element in most mutual-help recovery  
13 traditions, and there is a compelling societal interest in lowering barriers to access to these resources,  
14 both in terms of cost and language access. Animated by this societal interest and the imperative of an  
15 unprecedented public health crisis, the Read to Recovery program is a groundbreaking step making  
16 San Francisco the first major U.S. city to offer free-to-keep universal access to written materials for  
17 programs serving those who seek to recover or maintain recovery from substance-use disorders,  
18 alcohol-use disorders, non-substance-related addictive disorders, and their related co-dependencies.

19 (j) In the General Election of November 8, 2022, more than 82% of San Francisco voters  
20 supported Proposition F, which renewed for another 25 years (through June 2048) the Library  
21 Preservation Fund, and specifically added authorization for the fund to be used to “acquire books and  
22 other materials and equipment.”

23 (k) Since the soft-launch of a pilot program in April 2023 through February 2024, Read to  
24 Recovery has shown great success in a limited rollout, distributing more than 3,000 books in support of  
25 San Francisco residents’ recovery journeys.

1           **SEC. 123A.2. DEFINITIONS.**

2           *For purposes of this Chapter 123A, the following definitions shall apply:*

3           “City Librarian” means the City Librarian or the City Librarian’s designee.

4           “Library” means the San Francisco Public Library.

5           “Mutual-Help Program” means a program comprised of a group of people who share a  
6 problem, such as a substance-use disorder or non-substance-related addictive disorder, and come  
7 together to provide problem-specific help and support to one another. Mutual-Help Programs may  
8 include, but are not limited to, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Cocaine Anonymous, Co-Dependents  
9 Anonymous, Compulsive Eaters Anonymous, Crystal Meth Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Gaming  
10 Addicts Anonymous, Heroin Anonymous, LifeRing Secular Recovery, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters  
11 Anonymous, Recovery Dharma, Self Management and Recovery Training (SMART Recovery), and Sex  
12 and Love Addicts Anonymous.

13           “Read to Recovery Program” means a program through which the Library provides free-to-  
14 keep written materials and books from Mutual-Help Programs for individuals who seek to recover or  
15 maintain recovery from substance-use disorders and non-substance-related addictive disorders.

16           **SEC. 123A.3. READ TO RECOVERY PROGRAM.**

17           (a) Program Outline. The Library shall establish the Read to Recovery Program, through  
18 which the Library shall make available to the public a wide selection of written materials and books  
19 from Mutual-Help Programs for recovery from substance-use disorders and non-substance-related  
20 addictive disorders. Written materials and books offered through the Read to Recovery Program shall  
21 be available in all languages, as reasonably available to the Library for acquisition and distribution.  
22 No Library membership card may be required for an individual to obtain written materials and books  
23 offered through the Read to Recovery Program, and such written materials and books shall be free to  
24 keep.

1           **(b) Implementation.** The Library shall implement the Read to Recovery Program under the  
2 direction of the City Librarian, who may adopt rules and regulations that further the purposes of this  
3 Chapter 123A. By no later than July 1, 2025, the Read to Recovery Program shall offer written  
4 materials and books at each of its Library branch locations, in addition to the Main Branch of the  
5 Library. Acquisition of written materials and books from Mutual-Help Programs shall be within the  
6 purview and discretion of the City Librarian. Mention of a specific Mutual-Help Program in this  
7 Chapter 123A does not bind the City Librarian to acquire written materials and books from that  
8 organization, nor does failure to mention a Mutual-Help Program in this Chapter 123A preclude the  
9 City Librarian from acquiring written materials and books from such an organization.

10           **(c) Informational Campaign.** The Library shall develop an informational campaign to educate  
11 the public on the Read to Recovery Program. Such campaign shall include, but need not be limited to,  
12 the use of print, online, social media, and public forums, and shall publicize the availability of free-to-  
13 keep written materials and books from Mutual-Help Programs. All forms of public notice provided  
14 pursuant to this subsection (c) shall comply with the requirements of the Language Access Ordinance,  
15 Chapter 91 of the Administrative Code, to provide vital information about the Library's program in the  
16 languages spoken by a Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons, as defined in Chapter  
17 91.

18           **SEC. 123A.4. UNDERTAKING FOR THE GENERAL WELFARE.**

19           In enacting and implementing this Chapter 123A, the City is assuming an undertaking only to  
20 promote the general welfare. It is not assuming, nor is it imposing on its officers and employees, an  
21 obligation for breach of which it is liable in money damages to any person who claims that such breach  
22 proximately caused injury.

23           Section 2. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
24 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the  
25

1 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
2 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

3

4 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
5 DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

6 By: /s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
7 JEN HUBER  
8 Deputy City Attorney

9 n:\legana\as2024\2400323\01748024.docx

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25