

1 [Urging the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families to Expediently Negotiate an
2 Updated MOU for the Free City College Program]

3 **Resolution urging the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families to uphold the**
4 **principles of the Free City College program by expediently negotiating an updated**
5 **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the San Francisco Community College**
6 **District.**

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8 WHEREAS, In 2016, The voters of San Francisco and the Board of Supervisors
9 overwhelmingly supported the creation of the groundbreaking Free City College program to
10 make City College of San Francisco tuition free for San Franciscans and provide additional
11 support for those already on financial aid; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2017, The first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City
13 and City College created a pilot program so that any San Francisco resident taking credit
14 courses would be eligible for the Free City College program to offset enrollment fees and
15 other education related financial support; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2019, a new, 10-year MOU established a long-term funding commitment
17 and expanded the Free City College program, with the City contributing a CPI indexed
18 amount, starting with \$15 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020 subject to budgetary and
19 fiscal provisions of the Charter; and

20 WHEREAS, Free City College served approximately 78,000 students from 2019-2023,
21 with nearly 17,000 San Franciscans accessing higher education through Free City College in
22 2022-23; and

23 WHEREAS, In 2024, due to the City's looming \$800 million deficit as well as declined
24 enrollment in the Free City College program during the pandemic, the City intends to cover
25 the full expenses of the program without putting CCSF or the program into a deficit, but has

1 reduced appropriations from \$16.9 million to \$9.3 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 and
2 to \$7.2 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026; and

3 WHEREAS, The Free City College MOU created a reserve fund to ensure the flexibility
4 to withstand fiscal and enrollment changes and included a provision for reserves to be
5 returned to the City if in excess of 50% of the annual allocation; and

6 WHEREAS, In the past several years, the program has accumulated both reserve
7 funds and unspent funds that the City intends to access to help close the current budget gap;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, While the change in financial circumstances necessitates the negotiation
10 of an updated MOU, this should not override the basic tenets of the Free City College
11 program and its mission of educational access and opportunity for San Franciscans; and

12 WHEREAS, The City is still obligated to fulfill its commitment to the purpose and vision
13 for Free City College, which is based on the premise that every San Franciscan should have
14 access to advancing their educational and career goals; and

15 WHEREAS, The Free City College Oversight Committee, with its diverse
16 representation of stakeholders and depth of consideration for the program, has explored and
17 proposed numerous program improvements, enhancements, and expansions to further
18 support equity and San Francisco's most vulnerable students, including the successful
19 elimination of outstanding student debt from 2017-2022; and

20 WHEREAS, City College credit enrollment is increasing, with Fall 2024 currently at
21 14% over Fall 2023, while Spring 2024 was 12% over Spring 2023, which will in turn increase
22 the number of students accessing the Free City College program; and

23 WHEREAS, The long-term sustainability and stability of City College is dependent on
24 increasing enrollment, with Free City College acting as an important factor to attract and retain
25 San Francisco students;

1 WHEREAS, While enrollment has declined across many State educational institutions,
2 there must be interventions to reverse this trend; and

3 WHEREAS, Free City College was developed to serve a diverse range of students,
4 including but not limited to workers in need of training and re-training, low-income and
5 immigrant communities, veterans and the disabled, lifelong learners, first-generation college
6 attendees, full and part-time students in need of second and third changes, as well as
7 students transferring to four-year institutions; and

8 WHEREAS, The City of San Francisco as a whole and our democracy benefits from a
9 more educated and skilled populace and fostering a college-going culture in the City; and

10 WHEREAS, City College remains an integral part of San Francisco's economic
11 recovery in supporting workforce development and skill enhancement programs that support
12 the success of residents; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the DCYF to negotiate an updated
14 MOU for the Free City College program with City College in good faith, with guidance and
15 participation from the Free City College Oversight Committee throughout the process, that
16 ensures its long-term success and that upholds the basic principles of the program to offer all
17 San Francisco residents access to education; and be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges DCYF and City College
19 to ensure that the MOU centers equity and offers more support for vulnerable students with
20 the least opportunities for other financial aid and who face other hardships in pursuing their
21 education; be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges DCYF and City College
23 to consider expanding other collaborations to increase participation in Free City College
24 through more robust partnerships with the Office of Economic Workforce Development,
25 Department of Early Childhood, and other agencies that have workforce programs; be it

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges DCYF and City College
2 to ensure that an updated MOU for the Free City College program does not add more
3 operational barriers such as means-testing students or restricting eligible courses; and be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges DCYF and City College
5 to collaborate and include in the updated MOU more robust data collection and sharing on the
6 students in the program, as well as clearer processes for timely and accurate information
7 about the program’s work and impact for San Franciscans; and be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges DCYF and City College
9 to consider the fiscal health for both the City and City College while also ensuring that
10 financial contributions for the Free City College Fund is both secure and responsive to future
11 increased enrollment and participation; and be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the
13 Board, upon passage, to transmit copies of this Resolution to the Director of the Department
14 of Children, Youth, and Their Families; the Interim Chancellor of the City College of San
15 Francisco; the City College Board of Trustees, and the Free City College Oversight
16 Committee.

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