



Chesa Boudin
District Attorney

June 15th, 2021

San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Appropriations Committee
Chair Haney
Vice-Chair Safai
President Walton
Supervisor Ronen
Supervisor Mar

Attn: Budget and Appropriations Clerk Linda Wong
Linda.wong@sfgov.org

Re: Budget Requests

Dear Chair Haney and Members of the Budget and Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to express my office's formal support for two budgetary items scheduled to come before the Budget and Appropriations Committee. As many of you know, since assuming the position of District Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco, addressing the root causes of crime has been, and continues to be, a top priority of my office. The multitude of challenges created and exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have only served to strengthen my commitment to this approach, which will advance public safety in San Francisco.

With that in mind, I write now to support the request of Larkin Street Youth Services and other advocates that you support allocating funds to continue the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program for Transitional Aged Youth (TAY), and to support the integration of Behavioral Health Services in navigation centers, drop-ins, and emergency shelter programs.

Emergency Housing Vouchers for Transitional Age Youth

Over the past year and a half, San Francisco has undertaken extraordinary measures to protect its most vulnerable residents, and in particular, those who were sleeping on our streets or living in congregate shelter settings. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 to vulnerable members of our community who were experiencing homelessness, San Francisco responded with urgency to implement and scale innovative non-congregate shelter solutions to our unhoused neighbors to ensure that many had access to a safe place to live, while maintaining social distancing and insulating them from the pandemic.

One of these programs, the EHV program for TAY, was a critical instrument to prevent youth from sleeping on the streets in lieu of a traditional emergency shelter. The TAY EHV program is set to expire at the end of the Fiscal Year, leaving a void in our continuum of care for same-day shelter options for youth.

We respectfully request that the Committee consider \$620,000 in add-back funding for FY 21-22, to ensure that these resources are available to young people in our community who need it now more than ever.

Behavioral Health Services

Another consequence of the pandemic has been the immense strain it has wreaked on the mental health of so many. Nowhere has this been truer than for those who do not have a home. My office knows all too well the challenges unhoused San Franciscans struggling with mental health issues face; we have seen first-hand the consequences of untreated mental illness. The criminal legal system cannot continue to operate as the backstop for gaps in public health, and it is vital that our community act in a coordinated effort to prevent people from entering the criminal legal system to begin with.

To that effect, we support the Homeless Emergency Service Providers Association (HESPA) budgetary request to embed culturally competent behavioral health services within our emergency shelter system. By integrating behavioral health treatment and clinical teams into our emergency shelter model, individuals coming off the street can receive the services they need to thrive beginning on day one. Having trained behavioral health professionals will enhance these program's ability to strengthen their therapeutic alliances with people under their care, and ultimately promote better outcomes for these individuals and our community.

Accordingly, we request that the Committee consider HESPA's request of \$1,988,350 in FYs 21-22 & 22-23 for Behavioral Health Services in Shelters and Drop-Ins for Transitional Age Youth.

Thank you for your work in ensuring that the most vulnerable among us are cared for.

Sincerely,

Chesa Boudin

