



Access to Quality Youth Programs

Excerpted from:

Measuring What Matters: Neighborhood Research for Economic and Environmental Health and Justice in Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo



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In partnership with West County Toxics Coalition, Neighborhood House of North Richmond, Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization, Historic Triangle Neighborhood Council, Morada de Mujeres del Milenio, North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance, and Richmond Progressive Alliance

With support from The California Wellness Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Y & H Soda Foundation, Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, California Environmental Protection Agency, Firedoll Foundation, Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation, and The California Endowment

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ACCESS TO QUALITY YOUTH PROGRAMS



West Contra Costa youth cut the ribbon at the October 2008 opening ceremony of the RYSE Center, a comprehensive new youth center in Richmond.

When Carolina Garcia set out with fellow youth leaders from Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO) to interview her peers, she found of the 400 Richmond youth they talked to, 96% personally knew a victim of homicide. To develop a deeper understanding of the pressures and needs young people feel growing up in Richmond, CCISCO carried out surveys of 137 local youth in 2000. Two-thirds felt there were not enough things to do or safe places to go to enjoy themselves, and only 22% said they had ever been to a community center.¹ The research also showed a significant lack of program opportunities for youth aged 15-20.

Migdalia Villegas, an 18-year-old Richmond resident, feels that “having youth community centers is important because young people can spend their time in something productive instead of being out on the streets—and can gain skills that could be helpful in their future.” Research supports Migdalia’s perspective: youth is a time when young people need constructive opportunities to develop the attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that can carry them forward to healthy adulthood.²

Support can be particularly important for low-income and youth of color who face many environmental disadvantages that contribute to greater difficulties in early

adulthood.³ Only a quarter of youth hours are spent in school.⁴ In low-income urban settings, violence, high rates of unemployment, low-performing schools, discrimination, and unsafe park conditions can increase the need for programs during non-school hours.^{5,6}

Young people are more likely to become victims of crime during non-school hours.^{7,8} Most juvenile crime is committed between 2:00 and 8:00 p.m., with a spike occurring immediately after school.⁹ An evaluation of youth programs across the country found that participants were less likely to have committed a violent crime and less likely to have used or sold drugs in the past

month than their peers.¹⁰ The participants also valued the sense of safety and belonging, having a “place to keep off the streets” while acquiring positive values and role models.^{11, 12, 13}

Programs can also reduce the educational gap between social groups. Students in low-income inner-city neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to lose a substantial portion of their school-year academic gains over the summer months.¹⁴ Youth programs can offer the opportunity to build on what they have learned in school, explore new interests, increase self-confidence, develop skills, and set higher goals for their future.^{15, 16} Program participation has also been shown to increase cardiovascular fitness and decrease obesity.^{17, 18} While employment has unique value for youth, the benefits of recreational, art, and social programs cannot come from employment alone.



Photo: istockphoto.com/poco_bw

WHAT DID OUR RESEARCH FIND?

CCISCO and the Pacific Institute conducted a survey to document the availability of youth programs serving youth from the West County communities of Richmond, San Pablo, and North Richmond. Since anecdotal information suggested programs for 15-20-year-olds were particularly lacking, and this group is also susceptible to higher rates of crime, we focused our research on programs for them. For this indicator, we defined youth programs as voluntary, structured programs delivered after school, on weekends, or over the summer months and serving West County youth. The survey encompassed recreational, artistic, or educational programs, and did not include youth employment, which offers a different set of benefits. The goal was to document the existence of all programs of this type, with a particular focus on the number of program spaces available, accessibility for low-income youth, and the extent of youth involvement in program design.

Forty-three programs were identified by gathering information from the School District, the Cities of Richmond and San Pablo, program outreach materials, and by asking program staff to identify other existing programs (see Research Methods for list). We contacted the 43 program providers by making at least five phone calls and mailing a questionnaire to each. Of the 32 programs that responded, 20 served 15-20-year-olds through youth programs, five served youth through employment or paid job training programs, and seven did not serve youth in this

Surveyed programs have 2,409 spaces, enough for 22% of West County youth.

age group. Our analysis only looks at the 20 programs serving this age group.

The results of the survey serve as a snapshot of youth programs available to West County youth. This indicator is not intended to demonstrate supply of youth programs in relation to demand, but instead to illustrate the potential availability of quality youth programs. We recognize that not all youth can participate in programs because they are occupied with employment, family obligations, team sports, or religious or other activities. Due to limited record-keeping by program providers, the information on participant age, attendance, and residence may be estimates made by program staff. We are not aware of any programs we did not contact, but without a centralized public listing of all program providers, we cannot be certain we reached all programs in the area.

Many factors determine participation in youth programs. Results presented in Table 1 consider number of program spaces available and program cost for low-income youth. For many youth, program cost can be a significant barrier to participation. Youth that live in households with less than \$30,000 annual household

Table 1: AVAILABILITY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS FOR WEST COUNTY YOUTH (RICHMOND, SAN PABLO, AND NORTH RICHMOND)

Number of youth aged 15-20 living in West County	10,994
Number of spaces available for West County youth aged 15-20 in surveyed programs	2,409
Percentage of West County youth potentially served by surveyed programs	22%
Number of low-income youth aged 15-20 living in West County ¹⁹	3,710
Number of spaces available for low-income West County youth aged 15-20 in surveyed programs	1,613
Percentage of low-income West County youth potentially served by surveyed programs	43%

Demographic data source: U.S. Census, 2000

income (150% of the federal poverty threshold) qualify as low-income in this study.

West County is home to approximately 10,994 youth aged 15-20; of these 3,710 are low-income. Our survey of programs tallied 2,409 spaces, enough for less than one-quarter of all West County youth, by combining the number of youth participants and the number of unfilled spaces reported by the surveyed programs. For low-income West County youth, free or low-cost spaces could potentially serve 1,613 youth, benefiting less than half of this group. Spaces for low-income youth were determined by tallying the number of full or partial scholarships available for West County youth. If scholarships were not applicable because programs were free of cost, all available program spaces were included.

The positive contributions of youth programs also greatly depend on the quality, not just availability, of programs. Results presented in Table 2 report the percent of programs that involved youth in program design, facilitated youth setting their own goals, and employed a multilingual staff.

Three-out-of-four programs do not have a formal process for involving youth in program design. Less than half (45%) offer a structured way for youth to set goals for themselves. Nearly 75% of the programs have staff that speak Spanish, while one-fourth have staff that speak languages other than English or Spanish (including Cambodian, Chinese, “an Indian language,” and sign language), and one-fifth have staff that only speak English.

Table 2: KEY ASPECTS OF YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY

In planning your program, do you have a formal process for getting youth input on what the program should include?	Yes 25%	No 75%
During the program, is there a specific time when youth are asked to set goals for themselves?	Yes 45%	No 55%
Besides English, what other languages does your staff speak?	Spanish – 75% Other – 25% None – 20%	

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WEST COUNTY?

The findings demonstrate a gap between the supply and potential need for youth programs in West County: about 57% of youth in low-income families and some 78% of all West County youth may be left without access to the positive community resources, activities, and environments youth programs can provide. Moreover, although spaces may be available, research has demonstrated that youth involvement in program design is a strong predictor of participation.²⁰ In the 2006 CCISCO survey, 79% of Richmond youth indicated that they would attend recreation centers if their input was solicited in program development.²¹ But in this research, 75% of the programs surveyed do not involve youth in program design, and half do not have youth individualize the program by setting goals for themselves.

Many program providers spoke of the challenges of attendance for 15-20-year-olds, one of which is the difficulty

in promoting the program to this age group. Richmond youth confirm this comment: the 2006 CCISCO survey reports that 57% of youth said they did not know about the programs available when asked why they did not attend youth recreation centers. The difficulty the Indicators Project survey had in finding existing programs and contacting program staff also illustrates this challenge.

Although our survey did not include youth employment programs, it is noteworthy that the City of Richmond has taken steps to increase such opportunities for its youth. In summer 2008, the city-run YouthWORKS program hired 515 Richmond youth aged 15-21, providing programming for an estimated 5% of area youth in this age group.²² Employment programs could be expanded and supplemented by additional sports, computer, art, and dance offerings, which 79% of youth surveyed by CCISCO said they would participate in at community centers.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Provide adequate funding to ensure that all youth programs have program staff and evaluation resources.

With less than one quarter of West County youth aged 15-20 being served by the programs surveyed, there is a clear need for increased funding to expand current programs and establish new ones.

Work with youth leaders to engage their peers and ensure that all new programming is designed with the active input of youth.

The City of Oakland created the *Oakland Youth Advisory Commission*, a group of 25 volunteers aged 13-21 appointed by the mayor and City Council to advise the city on youth issues.²³ The communities of Richmond, San Pablo, and North Richmond could investigate employing such a model.

Create a central directory of youth programs available for this age group of older teens.

While the City of Richmond and San Pablo and West Contra Costa County School District each have produced materials listing youth programs, the listings are not comprehensive and are particularly lacking opportunities for 15-20-year-olds. The Community Engagement Office of the district has recently initiated discussion on development of a centralized directory,²⁴ which could help address promotion/outreach issues, particularly if it is available both in print and online. A central web address could also serve as a means of surveying and involving youth in program design and needs.²⁵



Photo: Dreamstime.com/Kcphotos

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND CHANGE

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)

724 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 94553

925.313.0206

www.ccisco.org

CCISCO is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, interfaith federation of 25 congregations and youth organizations representing over 35,000 families across the county, most of whom are low and moderate income. CCISCO is committed to building civic engagement and increasing public participation by those most affected by injustice and inequity.

Richmond City Council Meetings

www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=29

Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at City Hall, 1401 Marina Way South.

San Pablo City Council Meetings

www.ci.san-pablo.ca.us/main/citycouncil.htm

Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at City Hall Council Chambers, 13831 San Pablo Avenue.

West Contra Costa Unified School District

Marin Trujillo, Community Engagement Coordinator

1108 Bissell Avenues, Richmond, CA 94801

510.307.4526

mtrujillo@wccusd.net

The Community Engagement Office produces a yearly Summer Resource Guide for all activities and programs offered for West County youth. Look for it online at: www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/community_engagement/WCCUSD_Summer_Resource_Guide-2008.pdf

Richmond YouthWORKS, City of Richmond

330 25th Street, Richmond, CA 94804

510.307.8019

www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=662

YouthWORKS focuses on youth development, employment, and training for high-school-aged youth and young adults.

RESEARCH METHODS

Data	What it is	Where to get it
Number of spaces available for West County youth aged 15-20 in the programs surveyed	Number of youth program spaces, both filled and unfilled, as reported by surveyed programs	Survey results are available from Pacific Institute; however, program names will be kept confidential.
Number of spaces potentially available for low-income West County youth aged 15-20 in the programs surveyed	Number of scholarships available for low-income youth as reported by surveyed programs	Survey results are available from Pacific Institute; however, program names will be kept confidential.
Number of youth aged 15-20 and 15-24 living in West County	U.S. Census data with total population broken down by gender and age	Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data – Table P8 http://factfinder.census.gov
Number of West County youth living at or below poverty level	U.S. Census data with poverty status in 1999 by gender and age. For this age group, data is only available for youth ages 15-24	Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data – Table PCT49 http://factfinder.census.gov
Number of West County families with children 18 or older living in or below poverty	U.S. Census data with poverty status in 1999 of families with children 18 or older	Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data – Table P90 http://factfinder.census.gov
Number of West County families with children 18 or older living in or below 150% poverty	U.S. Census data with family income status in 1999 of families with children 18 or older	Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data – Table PCT38 http://factfinder.census.gov

Calculate *number of spaces available for West County youth*:

With data collected from phone and mail questionnaires, total the number of youth participants and the number of unfilled program spaces.

Calculate *number of spaces available for low-income youth 15-20 living in West County*:

With data collected from phone and mail questionnaires, total the number of full or partial scholarships potentially available for West County youth. If scholarships were not applicable because programs were free of cost, all available slots were included.

Calculate *number of low-income youth 15-20 living in West County*:

The Census does not provide data on income level for this 15-20 age group, but does provide data on poverty status of youth as well as income level and poverty status for families; therefore, available data was used to estimate the *total number of low-income youth aged 15-20*. To calculate this figure a ratio of *number of families in poverty over number of low-income families* was applied to *number of youth in poverty*. The above calculation however yields *number of low-income youth aged 15-24* (the Census breaks down youth poverty status in this age group), therefore we applied to this number the ratio of *total youth aged 15-20 and 15-24* to determine *low-income youth aged 15-20*.

For a more detailed breakdown of research methods or a copy of the questionnaire, contact the Pacific Institute: 510.251.1600 or info@pacinst.org.

Programs Identified and Contacted for the Youth Program Survey

Programs Surveyed (The following programs were reached through phone or mail.)

Programs serving youth aged 15-20 years

Program	Address	Telephone	Type of Organization
After School – Bright Futures Program	724 Kearney Street, (Room 15), El Cerrito	510.528.5319	School District
Bay Area Peacekeepers	Address not available	510.672.3477	Private
Bay Area Rescue Mission's King's Club	P.O. Box 1112, Richmond	510.215.4552	Private
Disabled People's Recreation Center	1900 Barret Ave., Richmond	510.620-6814	City of Richmond
East Bay Center for the Performing Arts	339 11th St., Richmond	510.234.5624 x15	Private
Education Unlimited	1700 Shattuck Ave., #305, Berkeley	510.548.6612 / 510.547.6612	Private
EOPS Program – Contra Costa College	2600 Mission Bell Dr., San Pablo	510.235.7800 x4515	Community College – University
Wrap Around Program – West Contra Costa Youth Service Bureau	84 Broadway, Richmond	510.215.4671	County
Hilltop Family YMCA	4300 Lakeside Dr., Richmond	510.222.9622	Private
Martin Luther King Community Center	360 Harbor Way South, Richmond	510.620.6821	City of Richmond
Metas Program	2600 Mission Bell Dr., H-31, San Pablo	510.235.7800 x4608	Private
Parchester Community Center	900 Williams Dr., Richmond	510.620.6823	City of Richmond
Richmond Arts Commission	3230 McDonald Ave., Richmond	510.620.6952	City of Richmond
Richmond Library	325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond	510.620.6524	City of Richmond
Richmond Recreation Complex	3230 McDonald Ave., Richmond	510.620.6795	City of Richmond
Richmond Youth Media Project	1250 23rd Street, Richmond	510.295.3993	Private

Program	Address	Telephone	Type of Organization
School to Career Program – Service Learning Program	1108 Bissell Ave., Richmond	510.620.6793 / 510.307.4565	School District
Teen Scene Program – City of San Pablo Recreation	13831 San Pablo Ave., Building 5, San Pablo	510.215.3207	City of San Pablo
W.C.C. Salesian Boys and Girl's Club	2801 Moran Ave., Richmond	510.215.4648	Private
Y.E.S. (Youth Enrichment Strategies) Summer Camps	2811 Macdonald Ave., Richmond	510.232.3032	Private

Programs not serving youth aged 15–20

Richmond Swim Center	South 45th and Fall Aves., Richmond	510.620.6654	City of Richmond
College for Kids	2600 Mission Bell Dr., San Pablo	510.235.7800 x4564 / x4407	Community College
National Institute of Arts and Disabilities	551 23rd St., Richmond	510-620-0290	Private
Rubicon	2500 Bissell Ave., Richmond	510.412.1725	Private
Shields Reid Community Center	1410 Kelsey Ave., Richmond	510.620.6822	City of Richmond
West Contra Costa YMCA	263 South 20th St., Richmond	510.222.9622	Private
May Valley Community Center	3530 Morningside Dr., Richmond	510.620.6890	City of Richmond

Programs serving youth through employment or paid job training

City of El Cerrito Summer Recreation Program	7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito	510.559.7006	City of El Cerrito
North Richmond Family Service Center	1535 Third St. Suite D, Richmond	510.374.7049 / 510.231.8320	County
Opportunity West	3700 Barrett Ave., Richmond	510.236.5812	Private
Richmond Art Center	2540 Barrett Ave., Richmond	510.620.6772	Private
Youth Entrepreneur Program – Richmond Main Street Initiative	1000 Macdonald Ave. Suite C, Richmond	510.236.4049	Private

Programs Not Reached (The following programs could not be reached by phone or mail.)

Booker T. Anderson Community Center	960 South 47th St., Richmond	510.620.6720	City of Richmond
City of Richmond	3230 McDonald Ave., Richmond	510.620.6798	City of Richmond
El Sobrante Boys and Girls Club	4660 Appian Way, El Sobrante	510.223.5253	Private
Hilltop Family YMCA	4300 Lakeside Dr., Richmond	510.222.9622	Private
Nevin Community Center	598 Nevin Ave., Richmond	510.620.6813	City of Richmond
Puente	2600 Mission Bell Dr., San Pablo	not available	Community College/Univ.
Pt. Richmond Community Center	139 Washington Ave., Richmond	510.233.6881	City of Richmond
Richmond Ravens	P.O. Box 1864, El Cerrito	not available	Private
RYSE Center (new program opened after research completed)	205 41st St., Richmond	510.374.3401	Private
San Pablo One Stop Career Center	2300 El Portal Dr., Suite B, San Pablo	510.412.6743 / 510.374.3203 /	East Bay Works
San Pablo United Youth Soccer Club	1818 Sanford Ave., San Pablo	510.685.9491	Private
West County ROP	77 Santa Barbara Rd., Pleasant Hill	925.942.3408	County

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- 22 City of Richmond, Youth Works. Retrieved on October 9, 2008 from <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=662>.
- 23 For more information about the Oakland Youth Commission, visit <http://www.oak-yac.org/>.
- 24 M. Trujillo, Community Engagement Coordinator, West Contra Costa Unified School District, personal conversation, September 2008.
- 25 Examples of such online resources include Shining Stars directory in Oakland, online at <http://www.oaklandhumanservices.org/ohsresources/shiningstars/directorylist.asp>, and the San Francisco Unified School District's CBO Resource Guide, online at <http://www.dcyf.org/Content.aspx?id=990¬e=1452>.

