

The Impact of San Francisco's Dream Keeper Initiative

Two Years of Progress



Analysis and Recommendations

Produced by HR&A Advisors
in partnership with the Jumuiya Research Institute

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 4, 2020, Mayor London Breed and Supervisor Shamann Walton announced that they would be reinvesting \$120 million over two years into San Francisco’s diverse Black communities. The Dream Keeper Initiative was a result of that reinvestment.

Launched in February 2021, The Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI), led by HRC, is the steward of \$60 million in annual investment that aims to address and remedy racially disparate policies so that the dreams of young African Americans and their families are no longer deferred, and they have the needed resources and support to thrive in San Francisco.

During the summer of 2020, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) conducted an extensive and collaborative community engagement process to inform the initial allocation of these funds. Through more than 60 community meetings, listening sessions, coalition convenings, and surveys that reached over 700 respondents, HRC heard profound frustrations about decades of systemic exclusion and divestment from members of San Francisco’s diverse Black communities.

Beginning in summer 2022, HRC, the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development, and the San Francisco Foundation invited HR&A Advisors, in partnership with the Jumuiya Research Institute, to explore the impact that DKI has had in its first two years and develop a series of recommendations to strengthen and sustain this initiative in the years to come. **In the two years since it began, this research team has found that DKI is beginning to live up to its mission as a critically important, historical effort to redress historical damage and divestment in San Francisco’s diverse Black communities.**

This analysis of DKI uses an impact model similar to other large-scale, interdisciplinary strategies and is informed by a public health approach that projects possible impact over a decade of implementation.

Outputs (0-1 years of implementation)	Implementer outcomes (1-3 years of implementation)	Intended beneficiary outcomes (4-6 years of implementation)	Community-wide impact (7-10 years of implementation)
During the start-up phase, this impact model measures evidence of program delivery (e.g., grants awarded, services provided)	Once implementation is fully ramped up, this impact model measures changes in the practices of City employees and grantees implementing DKI	Once DKI services are available for several years, this impact model measures changes among community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKI programs	If the City of San Francisco maintains sustained, significant funding for DKI, this impact model measures evidence of community-wide impact among San Francisco’s diverse Black populations

Given this model for change, this report specifically explored the following research questions:

- o **Community accountability:** In the first two years of DKI, has DKI been accountable to community needs and ideas?

- o **Trust:** Are the City departments implementing DKI beginning to shift how the City partners with Black-led and Black-serving organizations, and do grantees see these changes in City practice as beginning to repair trust between government and the communities it has marginalized?
- o **Addressing structural racism:** Are DKI programs seen by community members and grantees as **reparative** (meaning they directly address historical government harm and divestment) and **proactive** (meaning they support building a better future)?

This recent project paid particular attention to how DKI, in its first two years of implementation, is upholding the value of trusting communities to determine how public funding should be used to address their needs. This research project investigated whether DKI is (1) creating new opportunities for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to secure public funding; and (2) deferring to these organizations on how best to serve their communities. To answer these research questions, this project conducted:

- Surveys of and interviews with 40 City employees implementing DKI programs
- Surveys of 50 Black-led and Black-serving organizations that have received grants to implement DKI programs; as well as narratives and impact reports from eight City departments implementing DKI programs
- A series of focus groups facilitated by the Jumuiya Research Institute focused on six specific DKI programs: Arts and Culture; Brighter Futures; Economic Mobility; Health & Wellness; Mini Grants; and Home Ownership. In total, 34 grantees and over 70 community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKI programs and services participated in these focus groups.

The goals of this report are to provide the City of San Francisco and the Human Rights Commission with actionable analysis and recommendations to strengthen and sustain the Dream Keeper Initiative by:

- Investigating how the City has engaged community members to set its programmatic priorities and has remained accountable to community needs and ideas;
- Exploring how DKI is challenging the City to partner with Black-led and Black-serving organizations;
- Documenting how grantees are serving their communities in new and more effective ways through the DKI; and
- Informing the future allocation of DKI funding across priority areas.

FINDINGS OVERVIEW

This research project's overarching finding is that San Francisco's City government, through DKI, has remained largely accountable to community needs and ideas, and has begun to shift how the City partners with Black-led and Black-serving organizations. DKI has the potential to continue incubating a model for anti-racist local government action and community partnership and accountability. This blueprint for anti-racist local government can be replicated in other parts of San Francisco's City government and in other cities across the country.

Finding #1: Through DKI, new community-desired services are beginning to reach San Francisco's diverse Black communities

All (100%) of the DKI grantees surveyed for this project agreed that DKI is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in San Francisco's diverse Black populations, and nearly all (91%) of grantees reported that DKI funding has helped their organization provide a service to their community that the organization otherwise would not have the resources to provide.

These services are beginning to reach and serve San Francisco's diverse Black communities in the following ways:

Arts and Culture

DKI funding has enabled Black-serving and Black-led arts organizations to expand their capacity and helped realize performances and experiences that center and uplift Black voices. Through DKI, the Arts Commission invests in arts and culture organizations to anchor support for the cultural assets and economic vitality in historically Black and African American communities facing rapid change. The \$2.11M in funding has supported four grantees over the last two years.

Together, these grantees have produced 126 events and performances, hired, and partnered with over 130 artists, and reached over 15,500 participants with funding from DKI. With DKI support, a grantee released a studio album in events that highlight Black culture and preserve Black art. According to one grantee, "Since receiving [DKI funding], so many other doors and opportunities have become available... the funds allowed us to take part in conversation that we were never aware of previously because of the lack of funding and resources."

In the focus groups, community members and grantees also reported that DKI funding has helped artists create work for Black audiences, about the Black experience in San Francisco. One community member reported that, "there's something truly uplifting about seeing someone like you on the stage." Another community member shared that, "our work gives folks the ability to understand how the past has shaped their present condition and the courage to step out into the future with renewed optimism." And a grantee reported that, "we [have been able to showcase through DKI] the impact arts can have on uplifting, inspiring, and empowering a community to move from despair to enlightenment."

According to one community member who participated in DKI Arts programming, the direct financial support made a meaningful difference for participating artists. Once community member shared that, "since artists have been underpaid most of their career, they lack savings to sustain themselves in the long-term." Another community member reported that, "without the structure that the Creator's Lab provided I don't believe I would have been able to produce the pages I wrote during the course of the program."

Economic Mobility and Workforce Development

This research project found that DKI has helped Black-serving and Black-led organizations adapt and offer new programming and services to advance economic mobility for San Francisco's Black community and that DKI has helped the Office of Workforce Development (OEWD) create new training programs, coupled with direct cash transfers for participants, that have been effective at helping to connect people to a pathway to their career dreams.

OEWD received roughly \$32.2 million in the previous fiscal year through DKI. This funding supports 30 different community-based organizations and nonprofits who deliver 50 unique programs and initiatives that directly serve San Francisco's Black community. These programs fall into three broad categories: 1) supporting the Black arts and cultural communities either through artist residencies, training programs, or some combination of the two; 2) workforce development training or support through training, certification, or educational assistance and direct cash stipends; and 3) technical and financial assistance for small or emerging Black-owned businesses.

OEWD's DKI funding has allowed service providers to train over 280 entrepreneurs, launch 201 businesses, and open 34 new storefronts to date, including 17 businesses within In the Black Marketplace. Additionally, more than \$2,765,000 was granted to entrepreneurs in start-up capital.

More than half of the individuals trained in workforce programming have obtained employment earning, on average, \$27.36 per hour. Funding also grew the early educator career pipeline, adding nine new licensed Black-led Family Child Care and 22 Black educators working to obtain their license.

According to one community member who participated in a DKI Economic Mobility program, the program "boosted my hope to have a thriving business with beautiful pictures of my products and an easy website to navigate, which is crucial during the pandemic when customer interface is so challenging."

Home Ownership

This research project found that DKI is making homeownership dreams real for a growing number of Black people in San Francisco. DKI's \$20 million in annual funding for the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) supports two programs: The DKI Down Payment Assistance Loan Program (DK-DALP), through which successful applicants can receive up to \$500,000 to help cover the cost of a mortgage down payment. The program also includes a \$30,000 wealth build grant. Similarly, MOHCD's Senior Home Repair Program (SHRP) helps low- to moderate-income older adults in historically underserved communities with property rehabilitation. Individuals can receive up to \$50,000 to cover repairs that range from accessibility improvements, like installing ramps, to HVAC repairs and roofing.

DKI funding through MOHCD has reached over 785 households through outreach and DK-DALP has 116 active applicants. DK-DALP wealth-building grants have allowed 22 families to own their own homes, with three additional families on the way. Comparatively in the last five years, the City's general DALP funding served 111 homeowners, only five of whom identified as Black. DKI engagement in the DALP program leveraged a 380% increase in the number of Black homeowners served.

According to one community member who participated in DKI home ownership programs, "just to see my son become a homeowner in San Francisco – especially as a single Black man – I'm just over the moon. It's just a blessing. It wouldn't have happened anywhere else but through DKI Down." According to another community member, "my story can stand on its own – I'm a single woman, I have a day job at a tech company, I'm clearly not an engineer but I make a decent salary which is why I can pay rent. But in this really expensive housing market, I would fall through the cracks too if it weren't for great programs like DALP and DK-DALP."

Health and Wellness

DKI's \$18.23 million investment helped the Department of Public Health (DPH) to partner with grantees to address specific health disparities of Black San Franciscans.

The grantees supported by DKI DPH funding have collectively supported hundreds of families with services that span physical and mental health, and have helped to coordinate leadership, resource referrals, preventative care, case management, increased access and awareness, community building and more. According to one grantee, “the intentionality of the [Dream Keeper Initiative] allows for explicit action, time, dedication of resources, and to speak of the needs of Black African Americans. That level of focus and detailed planning, outreach, prioritization, and additional capacity allowed us to do more in a year than we could do the years before.”

According to one community member who participated in DKI DPH-supported training, “participating in this training reestablished a sense of community and broadened the network of more incredible Black birth workers in the Bay Area, bridging gaps in accessibility to experienced trainers who can develop personalized professionals in the field who support and propel program participants forward in this broad range of healing work.”

Youth Development and Brighter Futures

This research project found that DKI funding has not only allowed grantees to provide critical intensive services to under-resourced Black children and youth and create dedicated community spaces for Black families, it has also empowered Black youth to change narratives of historic inequity through targeted and specialized programming. The \$3.76 million in annual DKI funding allocated the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) to partner with 13 grantees, who have collectively provided nearly 1,000 children, youth, transitional age youth, and families with services that span education, health and mental health, leadership and career development, case management, financial, housing, community building and more.

DKI DCYF funding supported the flagship ‘Brighter Futures’ program—a holistic, intergenerational model of support for Black children focused on the stabilization of Black families and households. The Brighter Futures program has provided wraparound support services for more than over 100 individuals across 30 families and has held regular check-ins with 17 families, including in-person house visits, phone calls, events and gatherings to discuss the needs of each family. Support services include financial, academic, as well as connection to resources for housing, mental health, and other needs as they arise.

Additionally, through DKI, DCYF was able to direct financial resources to youth-serving organizations that were filling an important gap for Black children, youth, and families. This included supporting basic needs such as regular meals and fresh vegetables to providing educational resources such as access to school and extracurricular programs, tutoring and homework support, career exploration workshops, and more. Grantees were also able to provide resources and wraparound services spanning housing, finance, and mental health and wellness.

According to a community member who has participated in this program, “This money gave people a reason to live again. To believe that someone actually gave a damn.” According to another community member who participated in this program, “for many decades Black children were failed year after year and no one raised an eyebrow. For the first time in the history of San Francisco, we are providing an equitable framework to support our Black community and disrupt generations of disinvestments.”

Mini Grants and Capacity Building

Through DKI, over half-million dollars have been disbursed in mini-grants focused on Community Innovations. These mini grants have been awarded to grassroots organizations and civic-minded community members to support community-centered and community-driven events for San Franciscans. HRC's DKI grants have supported 57 organizations directly (and dozens of others indirectly).

DKI has not only made it easier for grassroots organizations to partner with local government and develop programs and services that are welcoming, culturally affirming, and meet Black people where they are, but it has also created new energy and strengthened infrastructure for collaboration and partnership, rather than competition, among grantees. This impact has been supported by HRC, which is the overall coordinator for DKI and also engages in direct funding and program partnerships with Black-led and Black serving organizations to deliver mini grants that support community innovation and technical assistance that helps organizations build their capacity.

Grantees shared that it was invaluable to have supportive grant administrators offering high-touch technical assistance for first-time applicants. One of those organizations shared, “the main programmatic/administrative challenge we encountered...was adjusting to the organization becoming a distributor of grants for the first time and the new workload that came with it.” A community member shared the importance, from their perspective, of DKI's intensive technical assistance for grantee organizations: “[The DKI grantee who provided the mini grant] had to build everything from the ground up. They had to think through outreach strategies, how decisions should be made, etc. Now that they've figured it out, they can share this information with new orgs. But at the start, they could have benefited from that training on starting a new initiative like this.”

One community member shared that, “Unlike other programs, the mini-grant program was unapologetically Black, uplifted the community, and trusted community leaders.” Another community member shared that the mini grant program “honored my intelligence and Blackness and didn't limit me in terms of where I could go.”

Finding #2: DKI is enacting ongoing, real community accountability and partnership

From conception to implementation, the research team found a significant through-line of community accountability and partnership running throughout DKI. Nearly all (96%) of the 50 grantees who responded to our survey agreed that it is important that DKI programs were shaped through community engagement, which suggests that these grantees see the way in which DKI funding has been allocated as responsive to the community needs and desires that the Human Rights Commission heard during its community engagement in summer 2020.

The general sentiment that emerged from focus group conversations with grantees is that DKI has shown integrity and consistency by being rooted in and responsive to community needs – setting DKI apart from other initiatives implemented in the past by City government to address the needs of communities that government has marginalized. According to one DKI grantee:

“The Black community in San Francisco has long had a history of non-Black communities taking initiatives for or on behalf of us, rather than with us. However well-intentioned

these initiatives may be, they are not created from within. Being part of the Dream Keeper Initiative truly takes the For Us, By Us (FUBU) approach, which is both empowering and allows us to speak for ourselves.” – *DKI grantee, fall 2022*

Finding #3: DKI provides dedicated funding and programming that is reparative of historical harm and proactive about building a better future

Both grantees and the City employees supporting this initiative shared that they see DKI as a reparative effort that addresses the challenges that San Francisco’s diverse Black populations have faced over the past fifty years.

All City employees (100%) implementing DKI see this initiative as helping to rectify historical underinvestment in San Francisco’s diverse Black populations. Additionally, 90% of the grantees we surveyed reported that DKI funding allows them to provide a service to their communities that they otherwise would not have the resources to provide.

Finding #4: DKI grantees believe that DKI funding is being disbursed with trust, an important element of beginning to repair the relationship between government and the communities it has marginalized

In interviews with the research team, City employees spoke about intentional efforts to work within existing City systems to shift the experiences that grantees have contracting with the City. This approach contrasts with the status quo in local government contracts in San Francisco and across the country; usually, local government contracts prescribe exactly how they want vendors to spend public funds to deliver programs and services.

These intentional efforts are being positively experienced by grantees. Nearly all (93%) of surveyed grantees agreed that the City employees who manage their Dream Keeper Initiative grants defer to their organization on the best way to serve their community.

Finding #5: Bolder investment is needed to address the scope and severity of structural racism

The research team heard resounding agreement that DKI funding and programs are addressing the impact of structural racism among San Francisco’s diverse Black populations. Nearly all (96%) of grantees surveyed agreed that DKI is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in the city’s diverse Black populations. However, the scale of investment is still not enough: according to one grantee, “you are in the desert, and you get a glass of water: sure, tastes good, but damn, I could use some more.”

Finding #6: DKI is building opportunity for Black-led and Black-serving organizations

DKI is beginning to create new economic opportunities for Black-led and Black-serving organizations, with the vast majority (90%) of surveyed grantees reported that the DKI is making it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City resources, as compared to other City programs. Additionally, nearly one-third (29%) of the grantees who hold City contracts to implement DKI programs are contracting with the City government for the first time. For these

organizations, this public funding is supporting new opportunities and resources to serve their communities.

Finding #7: DKI has the potential to influence other government practices

Based on the data, a strong foundation exists for integrating DKI's approach into how other parts of City government partner with and prioritize the communities they have marginalized. The vast majority (85%) of City employees surveyed agreed that DKI's programs and approach are strengthening other work within their departments and 91% agreed that it has been helpful to be part of a cross-agency initiative. Among City employees who support DKI, there is high interest for more cross-agency collaboration. One City employee reported, "[I hope HRC's DKI will continue to offer] support with sharing of best practices and continuing to lead efforts on evaluating impact through non-traditional City means."

RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

Recommendations for programmatic expansion

In the coming years, the research team recommends that DKI pursue even bolder new investment strategies in three programmatic approaches most closely linked to economic rights for all.

- **Bolder investment in guaranteed income.** In multiple existing DKI programs – such as workforce training programs or support for cultural producers – grantees offer direct cash transfer to program participants. In our research, we have consistently heard from grantees and from community members that these direct cash transfers are the foundation that makes participation in the program possible. In future DKI investments, we recommend incorporating direct cash transfers as much as possible.
- **Bolder investment in homeownership.** According to one community member, “older adults, Black seniors who are homeowners, if they sell, we will wipe out our community. We need to shore them up and ensure Black-owned homes extend beyond the lifespan of current homeowners.” To accelerate progress toward home ownership the City could offer higher levels of public investment in individual families seeking to close on their home. Another option would be to extend more flexible terms, by offering down payment assistance as a grant instead of a loan.
- **Bolder investment in entrepreneurship.** To build on early success and prioritize even bolder investment in Black entrepreneurship that reflects the scope and severity of the racial wealth divide in San Francisco, DKI could offer higher levels of capital investment in Black-owned businesses through OEWD's DKI programming.

Additionally, in the coming years, it is recommended that DKI invest in the staff implementing DKI programs.

- **Prioritize investments in DKI programs and services to support family-sustaining wages for grantee staff.** Many grantees reported that participants and grantee staff are finding it difficult to continue living in San Francisco amid rising housing costs and inflation. In the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget, the City should adjust existing DKI grants to support family-sustaining wages that can help grantee employees afford to stay in San Francisco.

Recommendations to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration through DKI:

- **Build a deeper community among City employees supporting the DKI** to surface implementation challenges, showcase wins, and create an opportunity for departments to learn from each other and replicate effective approaches. Several employees indicated they would like more regular information about the evolution of implementation throughout departments, to create more consistency in approach and collegiality across departments.
- **Offer confidential support for employees implementing the DKI outside of their departments**, to address what the research team heard from employees about the ways in which the changemaking work DKI can take a heavy toll. Confidential support will help address the isolation and frustration some employees shared with the research team: these employees said they felt marginalized by others within their departments, with their work referred to as “that Black thing” instead of recognized as a core component of the work that their department is and should be doing.
- **Implement trust-based, consistent, and simplified data and impact reporting with all DKI grantees.** These practices are not yet being implemented by all departments or employees supporting the DKI initiative, which has led to an inconsistent experience for DKI grantees. Some grantees, for example, shared experiences with delayed payment or overly burdensome reporting requirements, which can erode trust.
- **Create a unified set of 10-year impact goals for the DKI** to reinforce community and commitment among the departments implementing DKI programs and to reinforce the case for permanent funding for this initiative.

Recommendations to further integrate DKI into other government practices:

- **Leverage departmental Racial Equity Plans to encourage departments to absorb programs and approaches that have been incubated by the DKI.** As City leadership reviews departments’ racial equity plans each year, we recommend creating a standardized inquiry within this review about whether the department has provided sufficient support to its DKI staff and programs and whether the department has integrated any of the practices or programs incubated by this initiative.
- **Develop and deliver a skills-building series of anti-racist local government practices for all programmatic, procurement, and grantee support staff within City government.** In the coming year, we recommend that HRC develop and deliver a series of trainings for (1) all grantmaking staff within City government to expand use of practices that can help more organizations led by and serving marginalized communities secure public funding, and (2) all data and evaluation staff, as well as grantmaking staff, within City government to understand the importance and effectiveness of developing a trust-based reporting relationship with grantees.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The stakes for DKI are high: San Francisco’s diverse Black populations cannot wait any longer for the City to begin to unfurl the damage and divestment of the past fifty years. As one grantee shared with the research team, “when only 4% of San Francisco’s population is Black, we would probably have a better shot at avoiding extinction if we were an endangered bird. At least then the government would protect our housing. We are a vanishing people. Anything and everything should be done to [support] us.”

As the City stated in its [initial report](#) on DKI funding allocations, “there is no shortage of reports or data on African American people and their outcomes in San Francisco.” In San Francisco, being Black determines how you live, whether you live, where you live, your safety, the quality of your education, the quality of the air you breath, your health, your economic opportunity, and your likelihood of being displaced or arrested. [In commissioned study after commissioned study](#), researchers found data showing that the City is falling far short of the definition of racial equity articulated by the Government Alliance on Racial Equity: racial equity means “the elimination of racial disproportionalities so that race can no longer be used to predict success.”

The overarching finding of the research project is that Black joy, creativity, invention, and community persist in San Francisco and are affirmed by DKI, and that San Francisco’s City government is making progress in incubating a new model for local government action, partnership, and accountability that can become a blueprint for anti-racist local government that could be replicated in other parts of San Francisco’s City government and in other cities across the country.

This research project explicitly focused on how San Francisco City government is beginning to change its approach to meeting the needs of Black San Franciscans and repair the broken trust between community members and City government. Specifically, the research team worked to identify the ways in which DKI operates on three key premises:

- **Change how San Francisco City government prioritizes and partners with communities that it has marginalized.** This research project sought to explore how well DKI is upholding the values of inclusion of and responsiveness to the needs and ideas of San Francisco’s diverse Black populations.
- **Trust communities to determine how public funding should be used to address their needs.** This research project explored how well DKI is inverting the traditional local government approach – used by cities across the country – of excluding community-based organizations from program design, procuring only the kinds of programs and services that government thinks are needed, and then imposing inflexible funding streams and arduous reporting requirements on community-based organizations that contract with cities to deliver programs and services.
- **Bold investment in economic rights for all.** Many of the inequities in health and life outcomes San Francisco’s diverse Black communities experience can be tied back to economic rights – to who has assets and who has an opportunity to succeed. The research

team investigated how DKI is accelerating progress toward a just and equitable economic future, one in which there are economic rights for all.

The following pages present findings and analysis on DKI’s community impact and progress in changing government practices during the first two years of this initiative.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

FINDING #1: Through DKI, new community-desired services are beginning to reach San Francisco’s diverse Black communities

DKI funding has given Black-led and Black-serving organizations the opportunity to expand their reach to serve San Francisco’s diverse Black residents. Below are findings about how these services and programs are beginning to reach and impact communities.

Arts and Culture



DKI Arts Commission Grantee, San Francisco Theatre Bay Company, launched their first annual New Roots Theater Festival – a two-day cultural festival dedicated to the stories of marginalized identities in the Bay Area (Photo: SFBATCO).

Black art and culture have deep roots in San Francisco, but it has often been forgotten, overlooked, or destroyed. Fillmore District, for example, used to be known as “Harlem of the West” for having one of the largest jazz scenes on the west coast, before falling to urban renewal

during the late 1960s and 1970s ([KQED](#)). Around the same time, the signing of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson and the founding of the California Arts Council in 1976 increased funding to the arts, but dollars were mostly funneled into white-dominated ballets, operas, and symphonies, while much less went into the Black community ([William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#)).

The DKI planning process uncovered a great community desire and need to create spaces for Black art, not only to recognize and celebrate Black talent, style, culture, and history, but more importantly to give voice to a community that has long been ignored. During the initial community engagement process led by HRC in the summer of 2020, the hundreds of people surveyed asked for greater investments to increase access and resources to arts and cultural learning and expand Black expression and community building through art. In response, HRC allocated \$2.11 million in the first two years of DKI to funding Black arts and culture organizations and programming through the Arts Commission.

Today, the San Francisco Arts Commission is committed to creating a city where all artists and cultural workers have the freedom, resources, and platform to share their stories, art, and culture, and where race does not predetermine one's creative success. DKI has only reinforced this vision, allowing the Arts Commission to invest in arts and culture organizations to anchor support for the cultural assets and economic vitality in historically Black and African American communities facing rapid change. The \$2.11 million in DKI funding has supported four grantees over the last two years, including the African American Art & Culture Complex (AAACC), the African-American Shakespeare Company (AASC), the African American Theatre Alliance for Independence (ATTAIN) and the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company (SFBATC).

DKI funding has enabled these Black-serving and Black-led arts organizations to expand their capacity and helped realize performances and experiences that center and uplift Black voices. Together, these grantees produced 126 events and performances, including jazz concerts, theater and musical productions, visual arts exhibitions, community workshops, artist collaborations, and much more; hired and partnered with over 130 artists and culture producers; and reached over 15,500 participants with funding from DKI. One grantee released a studio album that highlights Black culture and preserves Black art. According to one culture producer who benefited from DKI-funded programs, "Without the structure that the Creator's Lab provided I don't believe I would have been able to produce the pages I wrote during the course of the program. And thanks to the showcase, I was able to hear my work read in front of an audience for the first time, where I received my most important feedback."

With DKI Arts funding, the **African American Art & Cultural Complex (AAACC)** launched an 18-month hybrid program in February 2022 that connects Black creatives with funding opportunities to develop creatively and professionally in San Francisco. Supported by DKI Arts funding, the **San Francisco Bay Area Theater Company (SFBATCO)** launched their first annual New Roots Theater Festival – a two-day cultural festival dedicated to the stories of marginalized identities in the Bay Area. The festival was a compilation of 8 different projects, 32 different performances at the Brava Theater Center, and engagement with over 100 artists and production personnel, over 80% of whom identified as Black, African, or African American. With DKI Arts funding, the SFBATCO launched the Creators Lab, an incubator for original theatrical works by emerging artists that lasted four weeks. A cohort of 8 artists were able to develop either their first 15-30 minutes of audiovisual work, or 15-30 pages of a written piece. Participants received a \$400 stipend and met twice a week to attend in-person workshops, as well as have their work

critiqued by their peers. The Lab culminated in an opportunity to present a draft of their piece at a cohort showcase. According to one of the grantees, it is rare to have this type of program offered for free and to also pay people for their creative time, which was only made possible through DKI. Ron Chapman was part of the first cohort and successfully presented scenes from his original play, *The Scientist* (working title) at the Creators Lab showcase. His play is about the relationship between a Black scientist and his son, and he uses the scientific process as a framework to help himself and his son better understand the world around them.

For some grantees, DKI funding allowed them to build greater operational and organizational capacity, including helping to stabilize budgets and long-term revenue goals, conduct audience development and marketing planning, and support new productions and artist collaborations. DKI Arts grantee AAACC was able to restructure their organization, creating six targeted teams to lead all aspects of DKI art services, including art administration, documentation, tech/IT, research & assessment, marketing, communications & promotions, and health, wellness & self-care. Located in the historic Fillmore/Western Addition neighborhood in a 32,000+ square foot facility, the complex is one of seven cultural centers in San Francisco's Arts Commission program. DKI funding provides crucial financial support that helps bolster the longevity and sustainability of these important arts and cultural institutions.

DKI Arts funding supported art organizations and initiatives that were designed by Black community members and focused on Black experiences for Black audiences. As DKI Arts grantee AATAIN describes their work, "the organizations and artists involved anchor the initiative by offering guidance, instruction, mentorship, and direction crafted from their own stories of struggle, survival, and triumph." DKI funding was able to celebrate Black artists and stories, including *HALIE*, a new musical celebrating the life of gospel legend and Civil Rights activist Mahalia Jackson, and *Night at the Black Hawk*, a piece by Geoffrey Grier about the artists and musicians at the Black Hawk Jazz Club. As another DKI Arts grantee described, "the stories we tell will provide context and knowledge of the extent of racist legacies that continue to impact Black mental health... We want to make our audiences aware of the challenges that exist today and prepare them to acknowledge the negative impacts of the learned coping behavior that we have used to function as marginalized individuals in American society."

DKI funding also supported inclusive community building and educational arts programming. For example, Idris Ackamoor & Cultural Odyssey (a member of AATAIN) used DKI funding to run *The Medea Project: Theatre for Incarcerated Women/HIV Circle*, a community-based program offering community performances, educational conversations, and workshops for women who are currently or formerly incarcerated, women who are HIV positive, college students, and others. They also led free, interactive workshops that taught participants how to use digital and online platforms to engage art students.

During the focus groups with grantees and community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKI Arts and Culture programs, the research team explored the impact of DKI's direct financial support for Black cultural producers and the meaningful difference it made for participating artists and Black-serving, Black-led arts organizations. According to community members who participated in DKI Arts programming, the direct financial support made a meaningful difference for participating artists. One community member who benefited from DKI Arts and Culture funding shared that, "since artists have been underpaid most of their career, they lack savings to sustain themselves in the long-term." Another community member who benefited from DKI Arts funding reported that, "we need DKI funding to continue with our progress. If you

stop watering a plant, it will die... San Francisco's [Black artists and creators] requires the resources provided to the DKI, or we may not survive."

In the focus groups, community members and grantees also reported that DKI funding has helped artists create performances for Black audiences, about the Black experience in San Francisco. One community member reported that, "there's something truly uplifting about seeing someone like you on the stage." Another community member shared that, "our work gives folks the ability to understand how the past has shaped their present condition and the courage to step out into the future with renewed optimism."

Economic Mobility and Workforce Development



DKI Economic Mobility grantee En2action is a Black and women-led nonprofit supporting Black-owned businesses with digital marketing skills and other technical assistance to promote equitable growth. (Photo: En2action)

Economic outcomes for San Francisco's Black community reflect a tale of two cities. While the Bay Area has experienced record job growth and opportunities over the last twenty years, this economic prosperity is not equitably distributed. Even before COVID, Black unemployment rates were in the double digits, reaching 14 percent in 2019, compared with just 4 percent for white residents. This sharp disparity in employment opportunities manifests in several ways. The median household income for white San Franciscans (\$111,000) is roughly \$80,000 more than Black residents, who have the lowest median household income out of any demographic cohort at just \$31,000. Roughly 30 percent of Black San Franciscans live below poverty.

In the community engagement process that informed the allocation of DKI funding, community members urged the City to invest in Black businesses, workforce development programs, and help local non-profits build their capacity so that they could continue to serve their neighborhoods. Recognizing how much one's economic security also influences other life outcomes, HRC responded to the community's demands and now allocates the largest portion of its annual DKI funding to advancing economic justice.

The Office of Workforce Development (OEWD) received roughly \$32.2 million for the first two years of DKI. This funding supports 30 different community-based organizations and nonprofits who deliver 50 unique programs and initiatives that directly serve San Francisco's Black community. These programs fall into three broad categories: 1) supporting the Black arts and cultural communities either through artist residencies, training programs, or some combination of the two; 2) workforce development training or support through training, certification, or educational assistance and direct cash stipends; and 3) technical and financial assistance for small or emerging Black-owned businesses.

This research project found that DKI has helped Black-serving and Black-led organizations adapt and offer new programming and services to advance economic mobility for San Francisco's Black community and that DKI has helped OEWD create new training programs, coupled with direct cash transfers for participants, that have been effective at helping to connect people to a pathway to their career dreams. OEWD's DKI grantees have trained over 280 entrepreneurs, helped to launch 201 businesses, and opened 34 new storefronts to date, including 17 businesses within In the Black Marketplace. Additionally, more than \$2,765,000 was granted to entrepreneurs in start-up capital.

More than half of the individuals trained in workforce programming have obtained employment earning, on average, \$27.36 per hour. Funding also grew the early educator career pipeline, adding nine new licensed Black-led Family Child Care and 22 Black educators working to obtain their license.

As an example, through DKI Economic Mobility funding, and **Code Tenderloin**, a volunteer-run group, launched a collaborative with local organizations and businesses to help market the Tenderloin District. As another example, with DKI Economic Mobility funding, the **San Francisco Housing Development Corporation** secured a 10-year lease, using city and private funding, at 1567 Fillmore Street to transform a former Money Mart into a 1,500 square foot retail space that will showcase hyperlocal Black entrepreneurs. After an extensive branding and communications strategy with a local partner, SFHDC has named the space *In the Black* and officially opened in December 2022. The retail location will offer dedicated space at a subsidized rent for 11 businesses, plus additional pop-up space for over 20 vendors. In the Black will also feature experimental retail offerings, including in-store classes and community programming. SFHDC anticipates retailers will have roughly \$4,000 in monthly in-store sales during their first year in business; businesses will retain 100 percent of their sales revenue. And as a third example, with DKI Economic Mobility funding, **En2action** - a Black and women-led nonprofit with a mission to engage, empower, and inspire action that promotes equitable growth, builds resilient communities, and achieves transformative social good - launched the Sell Black initiative, a 12-week technical assistance program that helps Black-owned businesses with digital marketing skills. This program was developed after seeing that Black-owned businesses were struggling to make the transition to e-commerce and missing out on potential revenue during the early stages of the pandemic.

During the focus groups with grantees and community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKJ Economic Mobility programs, the research team explored the impact of technical and financial assistance for small or emerging Black-owned businesses. According to one community member who participated in the focus group, the program “boosted my hope to have a thriving business with beautiful pictures of my products and an easy website to navigate, which is crucial during the pandemic when customer interface is so challenging.”

Home Ownership



Through DKJ, MOHCD has expanded its homeownership support for Black San Franciscans (Photo: MOHCD).

From urban renewal to legal restrictions on homeownership and wealth generation, the U.S. has had a long history of racist and inequitable policies. These policies played out on a local scale in San Francisco. During the Second World War, the Western Addition neighborhood saw an influx of Black Americans working in manufacturing and other industrial wartime jobs. Between 1940 to 1950, Western Addition’s Black population expanded from just over 2,000 to nearly 15,000 residents. The neighborhood thrived with Black-owned businesses, restaurants, and a growing cultural scene. However, this sense of community was short-lived. Given the neighborhood’s proximity to downtown, the City saw the value of this land and sought ways to remove its Black residents. As early as 1948, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors designated the area for redevelopment and began to displace residents. By the late 1960s, nearly 30,000 residents – many of them Black – were displaced and went to live in the City’s public housing units ([FoundSF](#)).

While these events on both the local and national level happened over fifty years ago, it has created a dramatic and lasting impact. Homeownership is often one of the few ways Americans can accumulate wealth, yet this was not an option available to many Black Americans until the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Black San Franciscans have the lowest median household income in San Francisco - \$31,000 compared to \$116,000 for white families in 2019. Black San Franciscans also have the lowest homeownership rates in the city out of any other racial or ethnic cohort, at just 31 percent (HRC, Investment of Funds to Support the Black Community in San Francisco).

During the initial community engagement process in summer 2020 that informed allocation of DKl funds, homeownership and wealth building were some of the key themes that emerged. Community members called for “Greenlining Black neighborhoods” with capital and credit, financial empowerment, and strengthening access to below market-rate homeownership. In response to these community desires, DKl allocates \$20 million in annual funding for the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) to support two programs: (1) the DKl Down Payment Assistance Loan Program (DK-DALP), through which successful applicants can receive up to \$500,000 to help cover the cost of a mortgage down payment. The program also includes a \$30,000 wealth build grant; and (2) the Senior Home Repair Program (SHRP), which helps low- to moderate-income older adults in historically underserved communities with property rehabilitation. Individuals can receive up to \$50,000 to cover repairs that range from accessibility improvements, like installing ramps, to HVAC repairs and roofing.

DKl is making homeownership dreams real for a growing number of Black people in San Francisco. As of July 1, 2022, MOHCD’s DKl programs have reached over 785 households. DKl Funding through MOHCD has reached over 785 households through outreach. DK-DALP has 116 active applicants and the program’s wealth-building grants have allowed 22 families to own their own homes, with three additional families on the way. Comparatively in the last five years, the City’s general DALP funding served 111 homeowners, only five of whom identified as Black. DKl engagement in the DALP program leveraged a 380% increase in the number of Black homeowners.

The Senior Home Repair Program has received seven applications from senior homeowners, four of which have received a MOHCD approval to begin the home repair process, and three of which have already identified contractors to start rehab.

During the focus group with community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKl homeownership programs, the research team explored the program’s impact on family wealth building. During the community focus groups, all community members noted that due to the high cost of living in the Bay Area, they felt that owning a home was impossible before hearing about the DKl program. Participants appreciated that the homeownership program felt more accessible than other City programs, like the housing lottery, and that it turned the dream of owning a home in San Francisco into a reality.

According to one community member who participated in the focus group, “just to see my son become a homeowner in San Francisco – especially as a single Black man – I’m just over the moon. It’s just a blessing. It wouldn’t have happened anywhere else but through DKl Down.” According to another community member, “my story can stand on its own – I’m a single woman, I have a day job at a tech company, I’m clearly not an engineer but I make a decent salary which is why I can pay rent. But in this really expensive housing market, I would fall through the cracks too if it weren’t for great programs like DALP and DK-DALP.” A third community member shared, “It’s not

just about getting the house; it's about those experiences of going to the realtor, going to the lender, experiencing that, and getting exposed to it. It's basically for people who have families who have never owned a house – that experience of not having a house and then getting one was really rewarding. I cherish that experience.”

Health and Wellness



Through DK1, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates and the Food as Medicine Collaborative partnered to provide Black/African American participants of Food Pharmacy programs in San Francisco with the highest quality, culturally relevant food. (Photo: BPHCA)

The disparity in the health and well-being of individuals along racial lines is, in some part, due to the unequal access and quality of healthcare delivered to economically marginalized groups, people of color, and in particular San Francisco's diverse Black populations. In San Francisco, as with most other parts of the country, the differences in availability and quality of care are rooted in both conscious and unconscious bias among practitioners, healthcare staff, and policy makers that initiate practices and policies that result in inequitable outcomes for Black San Franciscans.

These issues of [health inequity](#) are long-standing and troubling. For decades the life expectancy for Black residents is the lowest of all other ethnic groups in San Francisco, as Black people stand to live nearly 10 years less than white, Asian, and Latino residents. Black infants are five times more likely to die within a year than white infants in the same resident pool.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic further revealed existing racial fault lines in the ways the Black San Franciscans experience public healthcare, access, and treatment. The overrepresentation of African Americans among confirmed COVID-19 cases and number of deaths underscores the

fact that the coronavirus pandemic, far from being an equalizer, has amplified or even worsened existing social inequalities tied to race, class, and access to the health care system.

Adding disparities in health and wellness was a priority that community members elevated during the community engagement process that informed the initial allocation of DKJ funding. During this engagement process in 2020, HRC surveyed 235 youth, more than 70% of whom identify as Black or African American and who live and work in San Francisco, and 81% of whom believed the funds for DKJ should be allocated to mental health and wellness. In response to community desire, DKJ allocated \$18.23 million in the first two years of DKJ to the Department of Public Health (DPH) to address specific health disparities of Black San Franciscans. DKJ has helped families experiencing dislocation and non-connectedness in life and death circumstances and supported the training and professional development of grantee staff that has enabled new levels of capacity and workforce development in public health. DPH contracts with several organizations to implement DKJ-funded programs, including 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, Adult Probation Department, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, HealthRight 360, Heluna Health, Homeless Children's Network, Phoenix Project, Positive Resource Center, San Francisco Public Health Foundation, and Study Center.

These organizations supported by DKJ DPH funding have collectively served hundreds of families with services that span chronic physical and mental health, and have helped to coordinate leadership, resource referrals, preventative care, case management, increased access and awareness, community building and more. According to one DKJ Health and Wellness grantee, "the intentionality of the [Dream Keeper Initiative] allows for explicit action, time, dedication of resources, and to speak of the needs of Black African Americans. That level of focus and detailed planning, outreach, prioritization, and additional capacity allowed us to do more in a year than we could do the years before."

3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic is a Bayview Hunters Point nonprofit that works to provide young residents with access to healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities. Through DKJ Health and Wellness funding, 3rd Street was able to offer additional clinical supervision and program direction to clinicians, which helped them respond to the needs of Black youth.

With DKJ Health and Wellness funding, **Heluna Health** is delivering a free, stipend-based certified lactation education specialist (CLES) training for San Francisco's Black community members and those with close ties to the city and county. Participants currently work in local hospitals, clinics, community-based organizations that provide services to Black families, and the general community. As of August 2022, of the 28 people who initiated training, 21 have completed CLES coursework. According to a participant in this training, "this training reestablished a sense of community and broadened the network of more incredible Black birth workers in the Bay Area, bridging gaps in accessibility to experienced trainers who can develop personalized professionals in the field who support and propel program participants forward in this broad range of healing work."

HealthRight 360 is implementing a Bereavement Fund with support from DKJ Health and Wellness funding. The Fund is used to support families in need to pay for mortuary and burial assistance, church fees, repast fees, cultural rituals, escort/transportation on services, airfare, hotel stay, clothing or other emergencies/needs related to the death of a loved one. This Fund is also used for families that may need a temporary hotel stay due to safety reasons. It helped roughly 100 families last year, with plans to double the program's reach by the end of this year

During the focus groups with grantees and community members who are the intended beneficiaries of DKI’s Health and Wellness programs, the research team explored the impact of training aimed at increasing workforce capacity. According to one community member who participated in DKI DPH-supported training, “Being in a space with other Black women where we can relate on experiences was very important to me. [Other classes and programs were] usually very white spaces, so it was very refreshing for me...we were all able to connect, I felt very honored. It wasn’t something where we didn’t understand [each other] because in a lot of other communities or spaces, a lot of people don’t necessarily understand what it’s like to be a Black person or Person of Color so it is easier for them to not understand or take offense.”

Youth Development and Brighter Futures



DKI Youth Development grantee MyPath supported 18 youth in its 2021-2022 Advocates and Innovators cohort, a year-long leadership development and advocacy program that helps high school youth build financial empowerment and mobility (Photo: MyPath).

The disparities and inequities facing San Francisco’s Black children, youth, transitional age youth (TAY), and their families remain significant and have only been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic. According to the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families most recent Community Needs Assessment, Black youth ages 0-17 experience the greatest poverty with 82% living in families earning below 300% of the federal poverty level, compared to 47% across all

San Francisco youth. Black youth experience the highest suspension rates at school – 9%, which is 4.5 times higher than all SFUSD students; the highest chronic absenteeism; and less than half of Black students met UC/CSU graduation requirements in the 2020-21 school year. Most tragically, 12 of every 100,000 Black 10–24-year-old youth died by suicide in 2020 – double the rate since 2014 and now twice the statewide average.

In the 2020 community engagement process that informed the initial allocation of DKI funds, community members shared a desire for investment in education and multi-generational family support. In response, HRC allocated \$3.76 million in funding for the first two years of DKI to DCYF to implement two programs: Brighter Futures and Education and Enrichment. With DKI funding, DCYF has supported 13 grantees over the last two years, including: Bay Area Community Resources, Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, Catholic Charities CYO of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Collective Impact, Felton Institute, Flourish Agenda, MyPath, National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, Our Kids First, San Francisco Rebels Basketball, The Village Project, Young Community Developers, Inc., and Youth First.

DKI funding has not only allowed grantees to provide critical intensive services to under-resourced Black children and youth and create dedicated community spaces for Black families, it has also empowered Black youth to change narratives of historic inequity through targeted and specialized programming.

With DKI funding, **Collective Impact**, whose mission is to provide youth, families, and programs with the tools and resources to succeed, has managed the flagship ‘Brighter Futures’ program—a holistic, intergenerational model of support for Black children focused on the stabilization of Black families and households. Collective Impact works with five community partners in the Tenderloin, Western Addition and in Potrero Hill. The Brighter Futures program has provided wraparound support services for more than 100 individuals across 30 families and has held regular check-ins with 17 families, including in-person house visits, phone calls, events and gatherings to discuss the needs of each family. Support services include financial, academic, as well as connection to resources for housing, mental health, and other needs as they arise.

Through DKI, DCYF was able to direct financial resources to youth-serving organizations that were filling an important gap for Black children, youth, and families. This included supporting basic needs such as regular meals and fresh vegetables to providing educational resources such as access to school and extracurricular programs, tutoring and homework support, career exploration workshops, and more. Grantees were also able to provide resources and wraparound services spanning housing, finance, and mental health and wellness. These initiatives help to reduce the achievement gap and ensure that each child has equitable access to quality education and resources. When the Little Free Library opened at the **Hunters Point Boys and Girls Club**, one child commented, “Yes, we finally get to have a little free library in our neighborhood that we can visit whenever we want! I can't wait to bring all my cousins here to grab a book.”

With DKI Health and Wellness funding, DCYF grantees were able to create **dedicated** new community and affinity spaces designed for Black families and children by Black-led and Black-serving organizations. Through **Young Community Developers**, the **African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC)** has used and will continue to use DKI funding to create Black family affinity spaces to listen to the voices of Black families, educate one another, and build their ability to advocate for more equitable educational experiences for Black students. **The Good Rural** opened the Novation Lab in January of 2022, a dedicated space to give voice to the

needs of the legacy African American childcare providers, facilitate dedicated space to cultivate the African American childcare industry, support childcare providers that care for African American children, and provide educational support and resources to the underserved children and their families as a whole. The lab serves as a community navigator hub providing highly curated advising, mentorship, therapy and more to legacy and new African American businesses with a particular focus on innovation and entrepreneurship.

According to a community member who has participated in the Brighter Futures program, “This money gave people a reason to live again. To believe that someone actually gave a damn.” According to another community member who participated in this program, “for many decades Black children were failed year after year and no one raised an eyebrow. For the first time in the history of San Francisco, DKI is providing an equitable framework to support the Black community and disrupt generations of disinvestments.” Other participants appreciated the personalized touch they received from Brighter Futures, compared to other programs they may have joined in the past, and commented that the one-on-one support allowed them to access important resources like housing or job training that they were otherwise unsure of how to receive. One community member shared, “[Code Tenderloin] reached out to me and my family during a time when we needed help. It feels good to have people in my community reach out and give me the support I need.”

Mini Grants and Capacity Building



As a DKI partner, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco (BGCSF) is offering Black-serving and Black-owned community-based organizations and nonprofits technical assistance and capacity-building support and guidance (Photo: BGCSF).

In San Francisco, promises to materially advance the rights of Black people have not been kept. This reflects decades of failure in local government to understand how to work with Black communities. Historically, Black-led organizations in San Francisco have not enjoyed the trust of local government to define success for themselves and to take ownership of the solutions to the challenges their own communities face—a situation that has led to siloed investments and culturally incompetent programs that have ultimately produced poor outcomes for Black communities.

As part of the community engagement work that inspired DKI, HRC heard from many community-based organizations that felt strongly that City of San Francisco's agencies underfund Black-led organizations, undervalue their contributions, and set programs up for failure by policies out of touch with community needs. Black-led organizations have consistently expressed frustration with systems leaders in City government about the failure to appreciate their reality, which often involves serving more people with greater, more complex challenges than their White-led counterparts, and "not being trusted to do the work."

The DKI planning process helped to affirm that the Black community in San Francisco wants to see the needs of Black residents and households met in ways that are intergenerational, intersectional, and culturally affirming; understands the importance of creating improved access to technical assistance for Black-led organizations and emerging civic leaders to build their capacity to serve needs in their own communities; and is calling for innovative practices to uplift Black communities, including those that provide opportunities for community members to author their own stories and shift the collective narrative of Black communities in San Francisco.

Through DKI, HRC is managing a set of interrelated grant programs that are responsive to those affirmations. HRC is the overall coordinator for DKI, but it is also engaging in direct funding and program partnerships with Black-led and Black serving organizations, hoping to serve as a model for other departments in reimagining the ways that government partners work with these organizations to meet the foundational needs of Black residents in ways that are more holistic, culturally-affirming, and ultimately transformational. HRC's DKI grants have supported 57 organizations directly (and dozens of others indirectly) to advance a range of DKI goals, including Brighter Futures (in partnership with DCYF), Capacity Building, Community Innovations, Educational Enrichment, Economic Justice, Black Transgender Initiatives, and Narrative Shift.

DKI has not only made it easier for grassroots organizations to partner with local government and develop programs and services that are welcoming, culturally affirming, and meet Black people where they are, but it has also created new energy and strengthened infrastructure for collaboration among grantees.

Grants focused on Capacity Building have helped Black-led and Black serving organizations to build organizational infrastructure that supports their stability and growth. Organizations have benefitted from a variety of services as a result of the grants, including to support their fiscal management, fundraising, communications, strategic planning and business operations (for example, for childcare providers). Grantees and beneficiary organizations have also benefitted from personal development activities and networking opportunities.

Mini-grants are a DKI innovation that allows organizations to access public funds without going into contract with the City. This means that organizations that do not currently qualify for and/or have capacity to apply for City grants or contracts can still access smaller pots of funding for their innovative ideas or events. This through-funding model allows the grantee who manages the mini grants to cut the red tape and make access streamlined and simple. Community innovations funded through mini grants have included standing up a Youth Empowerment Board; hosting wellness retreats for Black women in leadership, peace vigils and community barbecues; expanding food delivery for seniors; and expanding programs advancing children's social, academic, and creative potential.

During the focus groups with grantees and community members who are the intended beneficiaries of mini grants programs, grantees shared that it was invaluable to have supportive grant administrators offering high-touch technical assistance for first-time applicants. One of those organizations shared, “the main programmatic/administrative challenge we encountered...was adjusting to the organization becoming a distributor of grants for the first time and the new workload that came with it.” A community member shared the importance, from their perspective, of DKI’s intensive technical assistance for grantee organizations: “[The DKI grantee who provided by mini grant] had to build everything from the ground up. They had to think through outreach strategies, how decisions should be made, etc. Now that they’ve figured it out, they can share this information with new orgs. But at the start, they could have benefited from that training on starting a new initiative like this.”

In the focus group with community members, several mini grant recipients also reported on the positive impact of these grants. One community member shared that, “Unlike other programs, the mini-grant program was unapologetically Black, uplifted the community, and trusted community leaders.” Another community member shared that the mini grant program “honored my intelligence and Blackness and didn’t limit me in terms of where I could go.”

GOVERNMENT CHANGE

Finding #2: From conception to implementation, the research team found a significant through-line of community accountability and partnership running throughout DKI

During the summer of 2020, the Human Rights Commission conducted an extensive and collaborative community engagement process to inform the initial allocation of Dream Keeper Initiative funds.

Nearly all the 50 grantees who responded to the research team’s survey agreed that it is important that DKI’s programs were shaped through community engagement, which suggests that these grantees do see the way in which DKI funding has been allocated as responsive to the community needs and desires that HRC heard during its community engagement in summer 2020.

I think it is important that DKI programs were shaped in response to community engagement, and would like this approach to be more widely used by City government	Strongly agree	76% (37 respondents)
	Agree	20% (10 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	4% (3 respondents)

Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents

According to one DKI grantee, the Dream Keeper Initiative has shown integrity and consistency by being rooted in and is responsive to community needs – setting DKI apart from other initiatives implemented in the past by City government to address the needs of communities that government has marginalized:

“The Black community in San Francisco has long had a history of non-Black communities taking initiatives for or on behalf of us, rather than with us. However well-intentioned these initiatives may be, they are not created from within. Being part of the Dream

Keeper Initiative truly takes the For Us, By Us (FUBU) approach, which is both empowering and allows us to speak for ourselves.” – Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022

According to the 40 City government employees who implement DKl, there is universal agreement that it is important that DKl programs were shaped through community engagement. Critically, these surveyed employees also expressed universal agreement with the statement that DKl’s approach to community-informed programming should be replicated by other parts of City government.

I think it is important that DKl programs were shaped in response to community engagement, and would like this approach to be more widely used by City government	Strongly agree	55% (22 respondents)
	Agree	45% (18 respondents)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKl; 40 respondents

The City employees who implement DKl all have experience working directly with or in community – another significant through-line that connects DKl to the communities it serves.

Prior to your role with the Dream Keeper Initiative, how much experience did you have working directly with or in community?	Some experience	25% (10 respondents)
	Extensive experience	75% (30 respondents)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKl; 40 respondents

According to one City government employee who responded to our survey, it is important that HRC has continued to engage the community as DKl has moved into implementation. This employee emphasized the value of the monthly community meeting hosted by HRC:

“I have particularly appreciated the consistency of community engagement, always having a place monthly where any community members can show up, engage with Dream Keeper Initiative partners, and hold the City accountable.” – City employee, fall 2022

Finding #3: DKl is providing dedicated funding that City employees and grantees view as rectifying long-unmet needs and historical underinvestment in San Francisco’s diverse Black populations

Both grantees and City employees supporting DKl see DKl as a reparative effort that addresses the challenges that San Francisco’s diverse Black populations have faced over the past fifty years. According to one grantee:

“San Francisco’s Black population has endured challenging times in the last fifty years. For our population to rebound from this destruction, care, attention, and

resources must be bestowed upon the community to survive... We need Dream Keeper Initiative funding to continue with our progress.

If you stop watering a plant, it will die. Likewise, if the resources required by a business are not provided, the company will not survive. San Francisco's [Black population] requires the resources provided to the Dream Keeper Initiative, or we may not survive." –*Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022*

Like grantees, all City employees implementing DKI see this initiative as helping to rectify long-unmet needs and historical underinvestment in San Francisco's diverse Black populations.

I believe that DKI is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in San Francisco's diverse Black populations	Strongly agree	50% (20 respondents)
	Agree	50% (20 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKI; 40 respondents</i>		

Not only do grantees see the DKI as a reparative effort that is part of addressing the damage that has been done to diverse Black populations over the past 50 years, the grantees we engaged also see this initiative as supporting “regrowth” and a brighter future for the Black community in San Francisco. According to one grantee:

“In 1970, the African population of SF was reaching 100,000, now that number is approximately 36,000 on a good day. It is important for the regrowth of the community that it be informed of its unique history and contributions to the growth and wealth of the Bay area. [The Dream Keeper Initiative is helping us to tell] the African American story, which must be told to motivate and enrich the mental health and drive... growth [of] the present and future social environment.” –*Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022*

In addition to seeing DKI funding as both reparative and proactive, grantees also see the funding available through this initiative as filling a gap: overwhelmingly, the grantees surveyed reported that DKI funding allows them to provide a service to their communities that they otherwise would not have the resources to provide.

Dream Keeper Initiative funding has helped my organization provide a service to our community that we otherwise would not have the resources to provide	Strongly agree	80% (40 respondents)
	Agree	10% (5 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	10% (5 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

The fact that the vast majority of grantees (90%) report that DKI funding allows them to provide a service they would otherwise not have the resources is both a positive and a negative finding:

- It is positive because it suggests that the HRC effectively determined the initial funding allocations for DK1 with strong intentionality about how these funding streams would make long-needed reparative and proactive programs possible in communities that City government damaged and marginalized.
- However, this finding can also be read as a worrying signal and an urgent call for improvement across the rest of San Francisco's City government. DK1 is a \$60 million annual commitment in funding – a small percentage of the billions of dollars that the City invests every year in programming and services for San Francisco's residents. Given the profound inequities and historical harm that San Francisco's diverse Black populations face – and the role that City government has played in perpetrating these harms – it should not be that Black-led and Black-serving organizations can only secure critically needed funding to deliver reparative and proactive services to their communities through just one of the City's funding streams. Every part of City government should examine how they can adjust their procurement practices and programmatic investments to better prioritize the needs of San Francisco's Black populations and the community-based organizations that serve them.

Finding #4: DK1 grantees believe that DK1 funding is being disbursed with trust, an important element of beginning to repair the relationship between government and the communities it has marginalized

In interviews with City employees, the research team heard about intentional efforts to work within existing City systems to shift the experiences that grantees have contracting with the City. For example, some City employees told us that they have made the funding within their DK1 contracts flexible so grantees can determine how to adjust their objectives and approach to best meet community needs. This approach contrasts with the status quo in local government contracts in San Francisco and across the country; usually, local government contracts prescribe exactly how they want vendors to spend public funds to deliver programs and services.

As another example, some City employees shared that they have minimized reporting requirements, only requiring the data that is necessary from their grantees and inviting grantees to report into City government on the indicators that grantees themselves see as most important and meaningful. According to one employee from OEWD, they are offering “greater flexibility with our contract's performance outcomes and developing deliverables in partnership with Dream Keeper Initiative grantees.” This approach to reporting also diverges from the status quo in local government operations in San Francisco and across the country. Usually, local government contracts include extensive and rigid reporting requirements, which can require vendors to devote significant resources and staff time to fulfill. The status quo in reporting requirements for vendors is defined by a need to ensure that vendors are “compliant” with the terms of a contract, while the more flexible approach being incubated in some Dream Keeper Initiative programs is rooted in trust, community responsiveness, and non-punitive forms of accountability.

Another City employee shared with us that they see their job as “advocating [within City government] for the specific needs of providers” – in other words the DK1 grantees with whom they work. This attitude – one of support for and service to grantees – reflects an intentional shift in approach that many City employees are bringing to their DK1 work.

This intentional approach from City government is felt by grantees implementing DK1 programs. Nearly all (93%) of the grantees we surveyed agreed that the City employees who manage their

Dream Keeper Initiative grants defer to their organization on the best way to serve their community.

I feel that the City employees who manage my Dream Keeper Initiative grant(s) defer to my organization to determine how best to serve my community, and they give us some flexibility in how to spend our grant dollars to best meet our community's needs	Strongly agree	70% (35 respondents)
	Agree	20% (10 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	10% (5 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

Rigid, prescriptive program delivery and reporting requirements for local government contracts tend to be driven by two factors: (1) local government is worried about fraud or misuse of funds, and therefore creates extensive processes to help ensure that vendors are using public funding as intended; and (2) local government programs supported by federal or state funding must comply with the program delivery and reporting requirements that have been set by federal and state government.

While rigid, prescriptive program delivery and reporting requirements may be well-intentioned, the impact can be profoundly negative for community-based organizations that want to seek funding from local government. These community-based organizations may not have the administrative resources (staff, existing funding) needed to navigate complicated and lengthy procurement processes or to comply with extensive reporting and compliance requirements. This can lock many community-based organizations out of opportunities to secure public funding. When local government emphasizes compliance over trust, it can also exacerbate the profound distrust of government among organizations that are led by and serve members of the communities that government has marginalized.

While it is important to note that the Dream Keeper Initiative has been able to incubate these new trust-based practices because the funding on which this initiative relies is City tax levy – meaning that the City is able to set the parameters for program delivery and reporting requirements – there are still important lessons that other parts of San Francisco’s City government can learn from the Dream Keeper Initiative about how to approach trust-based partnership with grantees.

Finding #5: Even bolder levels of investment are needed to address the scope and severity of structural racism

The research team heard resounding agreement that DKI’s funding and programs are beginning to address the impact of structural racism among San Francisco’s diverse Black populations. According to one grantee:

“The Dream Keeper Initiative has renewed hope among Black and Brown business owners, educators, non-profit organizations, and artists. Because of the Dream Keeper Initiative, we are starting to open the door for dreams again, especially coming out of the COVID-19

pandemic. We can see the shift and our morale is being built and lifted.” -Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022

According to another grantee:

“For many decades Black children were failed year after year and no one raised an eyebrow. For the first time in the history of San Francisco, we are providing an equitable framework to support our Black community and disrupt generations of disinvestment.” -Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022

Nearly all (96%) of grantees we surveyed agreed that DKI is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in the city’s diverse Black populations:

I believe that the Dream Keeper Initiative is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in San Francisco’s diverse Black populations	Strongly agree	76% (38 respondents)
	Agree	20% (10 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	4% (2 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

This opinion was shared by all of the City employees we surveyed, who universally agree that the DKI is redressing the effects of historical and structural racism:

I believe that DKI is addressing long-unmet needs and underinvestment in San Francisco’s diverse Black populations	Strongly agree	50% (20 respondents)
	Agree	50% (20 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKI; 40 respondents</i>		

Additionally, nearly all (96%) of the grantees we surveyed agree that the Dream Keeper Initiative is an important and needed use of public funding:

I believe Dream Keeper Initiative funding is proving to be a good use of the City’s budget	Strongly agree	82% (41 respondents)
	Agree	14% (7 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	4% (2 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

Like grantees, City employees universally viewed the Dream Keeper Initiative as a good public investment:

I believe DKI funding is proving to be a good use of the City's budget	Strongly agree	60% (24 respondents)
	Agree	40% (16 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKI; 40 respondents</i>		

While we heard overwhelming support for DKI, we also heard from both grantees and City employees that the scale of the Dream Keeper Initiative’s funding is not enough to fully redress and rectify decades of divestment. According to one grantee:

“You are in the desert, and you get a glass of water: sure, tastes good, but damn, I could use some more.” -Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022

Many grantees reported that they are struggling to meet client needs as San Francisco becomes increasingly expensive. Multiple organizations indicated that while Dream Keeper Initiative funding has helped them create and develop programming, participants and grantee staff are finding it difficult to continue living in San Francisco amid rising housing costs and inflation.

In the coming years, we recommend that the City scale its investment in the programs and services that receive support through the Dream Keeper Initiative. The first two years of funding are beginning to deliver hope and relief, but the level of investment that Black-led and Black-serving organizations are currently receiving is not yet bold enough to meet communities’ needs and address the scope and severity of structural racism in San Francisco. We present additional recommendations on the programs we recommend scaling first and most boldly in the final section of this report (“Strengthening and Sustaining the Dream Keeper Initiative in the Years to Come, page 73).

Finding #6: DKI is building opportunity for Black-led and Black-serving organizations

During the [2020 community engagement process](#) that informed the initial allocation of DKI funding, there were “numerous comments from participants in the online meetings expressing frustrations with the tone and tenor of systems leaders in city government. Many nonprofits noted they were denied grant funding because they lacked the “capacity” and “weren’t trusted to do the work.”

The research team found that the Dream Keeper Initiative is beginning to impact this narrative and creating new opportunities for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to secure public funding.

Overwhelmingly (91%), the City employees surveyed across eight City agencies believe that DKI is making access to City resources more equitable for Black-led and Black-serving organizations, as compared to other City programs:

I believe that the Dream Keeper Initiative has made it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City resources	Strongly agree	50% (20 respondents)
	Agree	40% (16 respondents)
	Disagree	10% (4 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKI; 40 respondents</i>		

Many City employees shared the intentional practices they are implementing to make it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to secure City grants and use these City grants to support successful implementation. For example, one City employee shared that:

“I am supporting new systems to expand Black residents' participation in the selection of grantees, making time to show up and listen more, leveraging the community engagement of the Human Rights Commission, and expanding technical assistance for Black residents who want to provide or expand their partnership with the City.” -City employee, fall 2022

This intentional effort from the City is having an impact. The vast majority (90%) of the grantees we surveyed reported that DKI creating more equitable access for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City resources, as compared to other City programs.

I have seen the Dream Keeper Initiative make it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City resources, as compared to other City programs	Strongly agree	60% (30 respondents)
	Agree	30% (15 respondents)
	Disagree	8% (4 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	2% (1 respondent)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

Additionally, because of this intentional effort from City employees to make it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City funding, nearly one-third (30%) of the grantees who hold City contracts to implement DKI programs are contracting with City government for the first time. For these organizations, this public funding is supporting new opportunities and resources to serve their communities.

Is the Dream Keeper Initiative the first time that your organization has received funding from City government?	Yes	30% (15 respondents)
	No	62% (31 respondents)
	Unknown	8% (4 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

The City's intentional effort to make it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access public funding represents a significant new revenue stream for some grantees: just over half (53%) of the grantees we surveyed attribute more than 25% of their total annual budget to DKI.

What percentage of your organization's budget is supported by DKI funding?	0-25%	46% (23 respondents)
	26-50%	32% (16 respondents)
	51-75%	14% (7 respondents)

	76-100%	8% (4 respondents)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of DK1 grantees; 50 respondents</i>		

It is important to underscore that the City employees implementing DK1 have made it easier and more equitable for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City funding without systemic changes to the City’s procurement policies or practices. This progress has been the result of staff behavior change and intention, not the result of systems change.

Beyond the Dream Keeper Initiative, it may be that Black-led and Black-serving organizations are continuing to have the same frustrating experiences with city government (in 2020, “many nonprofits noted they were denied grant funding because they lacked the “capacity” and weren’t trusted to do the work). In the coming year, we recommend that the staff who have leveraged DK1 to make it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City grants develop a training for all grantmaking staff within City government to expand use of practices that can help more organizations led by and serving communities that government has marginalized secure public funding.

Finding #7: DK1 has the potential to influence how other parts of government partner with and prioritize the communities they have marginalized

The research team investigated whether DK1 is beginning to change how other parts of City government work, beyond the programs that receive dedicated DK1 funding. This broader integration into City government could be seen, for example, in approaches incubated within the DK1 being adopted by other parts of government to strengthen how the City awards funding to and supports community-based organizations; conducts community engagement; and offers staff development and support.

In our research, we found a strong foundation for integrating DK1’s approach into how other parts of City government work. For example, the vast majority (85%) of City employees we surveyed reported that the Dream Keeper Initiative’s programs and approach are strengthening other work within their departments.

The Dream Keeper Initiative’s programs and approach are strengthening other work within my department not directly related to DK1	Strongly agree	37% (15 respondents)
	Agree	55% (22 respondents)
	Disagree	5% (2 respondents)
	Strongly disagree	3% (1 respondent)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents</i>		

Additionally, nearly all (91%) of the City employees we surveyed reported that it has been helpful to DK1 work within their department to be part of a cross-agency initiative. City employees shared that, in the coming years, the hope to see HRC strengthen cross-agency collaboration by, for example, developing model contracts, data collection tools, and other tools that can support trust-based grantmaking.

It is helpful to my DK1 work within my department to be part of a cross-agency initiative	Strongly agree	47% (19 respondents)
	Agree	45% (18 respondents)
	Disagree	5% (2 respondents)

	Strongly disagree	3% (1 respondent)
<i>Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DKI; 40 respondents</i>		

While the foundation for integrating DKI-inspired approaches into how the rest of City government works is promising, we have not found that this integration is happening in a robust or systemic way. During the first two years of the DKI, the research team found that HRC (as the leaders of this citywide initiative) and each of the departments implementing this initiative have been largely focused on awarding funding, supporting grantees, and beginning new programming and services. This focus on implementation makes sense as a priority within the first two years of any significant initiative that spans multiple city agencies. In the coming one or two years, as implementation and grantee support become more routine, there is an opportunity for HRC and all departments involved in DKI to focus on sharing DKI's successes and approaches within and across departments to inform how other parts of government, beyond those directly tied to DKI implementation, prioritize racial equity. The final section of this report presents recommendations to support this integration over the next few years.

STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING IN THE YEARS TO COME

In the first two years of implementation, this research project found that the City has achieved rapid impact – and that DKI is beginning to rebuild frayed trust between City government and the diverse Black populations it has marginalized. The first two years were the start-up phase. DKI's focus for the next few years will be on achieving lasting impact: shifting City policies and practices in durable ways and sustaining funding for programming that addresses gaps and ongoing needs for investment and support in diverse Black communities across the City. As one grantee shared:

When only 4% of San Francisco's population is Black, we would probably have a better shot at avoiding extinction if we were an endangered bird. At least then the government would protect our housing. We are a vanishing people. Anything and everything should be done to [support] us.

The Dream Keeper Initiative is wonderful, but it is the beginning. This needs to be a marathon. We need to protect the [progress we have started to make]. We need to stop the bleeding." -Dream Keeper Initiative grantee, fall 2022

The following pages contain recommendations for the HRC to prioritize attention and investment in the next few years to strengthen and sustain DKI as it moves from the start-up phase into full-scale implementation and broader integration into City government. These recommendations fall into three categories:

- Recommendations for programmatic expansion
- Recommendations to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration
- Recommendations to integrate the Dream Keeper Initiative's approach into other City government policies and practices

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMMATIC EXPANSION

HRC has articulated a new framework for a just and equitable economic future, one in which there are economic rights for all. DKI is already playing a role in accelerating progress toward this future by investing in Black futures. In the coming years, DKI should make additional programmatic investments that reflect an even bolder investment in economic rights.

According to one community member, with sustained and deep investment through the Dream Keeper Initiative, "young people should begin to feel they have a chance to succeed."

One grantee wrote that more investment in Black economic opportunity will mean that "our families being able to build generational wealth."

And another community member shared that, "The Dream Keeper Initiative has been a jumpstart for me. [With continued, deep investment, it could] remove the barriers set up in our society that prevent people from having housing and

economic opportunity. It could eliminate the barriers and give us more opportunity than we have right now.”

We recommend that the City of San Francisco continue to accelerate progress toward economic rights for all by:

1. **Prioritize investment in DKI programs and services to support family-sustaining wages for grantee staff.** Many grantees reported that they are struggling to meet client needs as San Francisco becomes increasingly expensive. Multiple organizations indicated that while Dream Keeper Initiative funding has helped them create and develop programming, participants and grantee staff are finding it difficult to continue living in San Francisco amid rising housing costs and inflation. As an initial step, we recommend that beginning in spring 2023, HRC create a tool that all departments implementing DKI programming can use to help their grantees assess whether the level of funding they are receiving is supporting family-sustaining wages that can help their employees afford to stay in San Francisco. The results of this inquiry should inform how DKI adjusts its grants in Fiscal Year 2024 and beyond.
2. **Pursuing bold new investment strategies in three programmatic approaches most closely linked to economic rights for all.** We recommend that one of the City’s goals should be to have departments embrace programs that have been incubated using DKI funding into their own departmental budgets. As this integration occurs, HRC may have opportunities to reinvest DKI funds into new programs and strategies. If HRC has an opportunity to make new investments in the third year of this initiative, we recommend prioritizing:
 - **Bolder investment in guaranteed income.** In multiple existing DKI programs – such as workforce training programs or support for cultural producers – grantees offer direct cash transfer to program participants. In our research, we have consistently heard from grantees and from community members that these direct cash transfers are the foundation that makes participation in the program possible. For example, some community members shared that were it not for this guaranteed income source, it would not have been possible for them to invest the time needed to succeed in a training program that has helped to connect them to higher paying jobs that are more closely tied to their ambitions and dreams. In future DKI investments, we recommend incorporating direct cash transfers as much as possible.
 - **Bolder investment in homeownership.** Throughout our research, grantees and community members highlighted the urgent, pervasive need to protect housing for San Francisco’s diverse Black communities – in many instances, the need for affordable, quality, stable housing was the most pressing community need. According to one community member, “older adults, Black seniors who are homeowners, if they sell, we will wipe out our community. We need to shore them up and ensure Black-owned homes extend beyond the lifespan of current homeowners.” While MOHCD has had initial success helping 22 families purchase their home, with another three families in the process of purchasing a home, we recommend that future DKI investments prioritize accelerating homeownership for Black San Franciscans. One way to do this would be to offer higher levels of public investment in individual families seeking to close on their

home. Another option would be to extend more flexible terms, by offering down payment assistance as a grant instead of a loan.

- **Bolder investment in entrepreneurship.** Following decades of divestment and structural racism, DKI can be one vehicle that helps to support prosperity as a birthright for Black San Franciscans. But the reality now is that many Black San Franciscans are systemically locked out of prosperity. In the past two years, DKI programs implemented by OEWD have shown remarkable success and helped 201 Black-owned businesses and 400 individuals unlock new opportunity and capital. We recommend that the City build on this early success and prioritize even bolder investment in Black entrepreneurship – investment that reflects the scope and severity of the racial wealth divide in San Francisco. One way the City could do this would be by offering higher levels of capital investment in Black-owned businesses through the Office of Workforce Development’s Dream Keeper Initiative programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

The research team heard a high level of interest among City employees for stronger cross-departmental collaboration to elevate, amplify, and strengthen work within and beyond DKI. Specifically, we heard from City employees that, in the next year, they would like the HRC team that oversees that Dream Keeper Initiative to:

- “Keep sharing/crowd-sourcing -- from Departments and grantees -- sample language or tools that can be used by all departments implementing Dream Keeper Initiative programs in grant agreements and data collection/performance management systems to set clear expectations for grantees and departments.”
- “Continue to support [departments] by sharing best practices and continuing to lead efforts on evaluating impact through non-traditional City means.”
- “More support and data collection assistance would be great. As well as providing narrative reports that highlight client, provider, and program success.”

Universally, according to the survey administered through this research project, all the City employees who support DKI – working at eight different City departments – find the work they do to support this initiative to be personally meaningful. However, while these City employees are committed to the importance of the work they are doing through the Dream Keeper Initiative, we found that there is an opportunity for the Human Rights Commission to continue to reinforce the mission, strategy, and approach of this initiative in the coming year.

We recommend that the Human Rights Commission continue to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration through the Dream Keeper Initiative by:

3. **Building deeper community among City employees supporting DKI.** HRC already convenes a monthly meeting for all departments involved in the initiative. We recommend that this meeting continue in the coming years and that HRC create intentional programming during these meetings to surface implementation challenges, showcase wins, and create an opportunity for departments to learn from each other and replicate effective approaches. HRC could also offer twice annual reflection and strategy retreats

(potentially half-day, in person meetings) for City employees supporting this initiative as an opportunity for greater community building.

4. **Offering confidential support for employees implementing DKI outside of their departments.** In our research, we heard from some employees that the changemaking work of DKI can take a heavy toll. Some employees said they felt marginalized by others within their departments, with their work referred to as “that Black thing” instead of recognized as a core component of the work that their department is and should be doing. Some employees shared with us that they did not feel supported by their supervisors and did not feel empowered by their departments to implement their Dream Keeper Initiative programs in the ways they thought would best serve San Francisco’s diverse Black populations. In the coming year, we recommend that the Human Rights Commission establish a formal, funded support network for the City employees who are supporting this initiative. This could involve cross-departmental cohorts (such as regular meetings just for grantmaking staff, without supervisors) where staff can share their experiences and seek support from their peers. This could also involve offering a dedicated support service through the City’s Employee Assistance Program for City employees who are working on anti-racist changemaking within City government and are seeking confidential support outside of their department.
5. **Creating a toolkit that can support all City employees implementing DKI in leveraging this initiative to create more opportunity for and deeper partnerships with Black-led and Black-serving organizations.** In the coming year, we recommend that City staff who have had success, through the Dream Keeper Initiative, in making it easier for Black-led and Black-serving organizations to access City grants develop a toolkit for all grantmaking staff across this initiative. Developing this toolkit will create an opportunity for cross-department collaboration and offer the Human Rights Commission an opportunity to celebrate and elevate best practices that are being incubated within the initiative. And disseminating this toolkit will create an opportunity for greater clarity, consistency, and community across all City employees supporting the Dream Keeper Initiative. These tools could be a starting point for policy-level change in all of the City’s contracting and grantmaking.
6. **Creating a toolkit that can support all City employees supporting DKI in implementing trust-based, consistent, and simplified data and impact reporting with their grantees.** In the coming year, we recommend that City staff who have had success, through the Dream Keeper Initiative, in building trust with grantees by minimizing reporting requirements and inviting grantees to report on and define their own success develop a toolkit that can be used by all grantmaking staff across this initiative. Developing this toolkit will create an opportunity for cross-department collaboration and offer the Human Rights Commission an opportunity to celebrate and elevate best practices that are being incubated within the initiative. Additionally, this toolkit will help to create a more consistent experience for Dream Keeper Initiative grantees regardless of the department from which they receive a grant.
7. **Creating a unified set of 10-year impact goals for the Dream Keeper Initiative, to reinforce community and commitment among the departments implementing Dream Keeper Initiative programs and to reinforce the case for permanent funding for this initiative.** In the coming year, we recommend that the Dream Keeper Initiative make public

on its website an indicator chart that lays out how, with sustained attention and investment, the Dream Keeper Initiative could first begin to improve the lives of grantees and community members directly supported by the Dream Keeper Initiative, and eventually lead to community-wide impact for San Francisco's diverse Black populations. Creating this indicator chart and then regularly asking all departments implementing Dream Keeper Initiative programs to share data with the Human Rights Commission to track progress toward these outcome and impact goals, will help hold the City accountable for delivering on the promise of the Dream Keeper Initiative. Below, we share proposed measures for outputs, outcomes, and impact over the next ten years. True to the mission and vision of the Dream Keeper Initiative, the ten-year impact statements were shared with us by community members and Dream Keeper Initiative grantees in response to the prompt: "if Dream Keeper Initiative funding were to continue for the next ten years, how do you think this would impact your community?" Recommended 10-year impact measures are included in the appendix to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FURTHER INTEGRATE THE DREAM KEEPER INITIATIVE'S APPROACH INTO OTHER CITY GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

During the first two years of DKI, we found that HRC (as the leaders of this citywide initiative) and each of the departments implementing this initiative have been largely focused on awarding funding, supporting grantees, and beginning new programming and services. This focus on implementation makes sense as a priority within the first two years of any significant initiative that spans multiple City agencies.

In the coming years, as implementation and grantee support become more routine, we hope to see the Human Rights Commission and all departments involved in the Dream Keeper Initiative focus on sharing the Dream Keeper Initiative's successes and approaches within and across departments to inform how other parts of government, beyond the Dream Keeper Initiative, prioritize racial equity. As one City employee shared:

"We need to build the infrastructure within City government to maintain change" – *City employee supporting the Dream Keeper Initiative, fall 2022*

We recommend that the City of San Francisco further integrate the Dream Keeper Initiative into other government practices by:

8. **Leveraging departmental Racial Equity Plans to encourage departments to absorb programs and approaches that have been incubated by the Dream Keeper Initiative.** In our analysis of the progress of specific departments earlier in this report, we elevated the ways in which each department's commitments in its racial equity plan relies, at least in part, on the success of its Dream Keeper Initiative programs. As City leadership reviews departments' racial equity plans each year, we recommend creating a standardized inquiry within this review about whether the department has provided sufficient support to its Dream Keeper Initiative staff and programs and whether the department has integrated any of the practices or programs incubated by this initiative.
9. **Develop and deliver a skills-building series of anti-racist local government practices for all programmatic, procurement, and grantee support staff within City government.**

In the coming year, we recommend that the Dream Keeper Initiative develop and deliver a series of trainings for(1) all grantmaking staff within City government to expand use of practices that can help more organizations led by and serving marginalized communities secure public funding, and (2) all data and evaluation staff, as well as grantmaking staff, within City government to understand the importance and effectiveness of developing a trust-based reporting relationship with grantees. This series of training will be an opportunity to elevate the effective practices that are being incubated within the Dream Keeper Initiative, raising the profile of this initiative's work among City employees not currently involved in this initiative. If the Mayor and/or departmental leadership mandate these trainings, this will also be an opportunity to urge more employees within City government to adjust their practices to better serve the communities that the government has marginalized.

APPENDIX

Survey Respondents

This research project prioritized the experiences, needs, analyses, and ideas of community members served and engaged by DKI and of the grantees and City employees who are implementing DKI. We invited all 85 organizations that have received grants from the City to implement Dream Keeper Initiative programs – across seven City departments – and all City employees who spend any amount of time supporting DKI to complete surveys. We received responses from 50 grantee organizations (a 58% response rate) and from 40 City employees representing eight City departments (a 71% response rate). Of note, 25 people were hired across City agencies over the past two years to support DKI full time.

In administering the survey, we were explicit that HR&A Advisors would protect the identity of all people who complete the surveys – meaning that all answers were anonymized. While protecting individual anonymity, below are the characteristics of the grantee organizations and City employees who responded to our surveys.

Dream Keeper Initiative Grantees – 50 survey respondents

Takeaways

- Among the 50 organizations who responded to our grantee survey, there was important diversity in the size of the organization; the kinds of Dream Keeper Initiative programming that the organization implements; and prior experiences contracting with City government.
- Nearly a third (29%) of organizations that responded to our survey have never received funding from the City prior to the Dream Keeper Initiative, even though many of these organizations have been in operation for more than a decade.
- For the vast majority of respondents (78%), Dream Keeper Initiative funding represents less than half of their total annual operating budget, meaning that other funding sources (such as community contributions or philanthropic support) provide a significant source of revenue to help these organizations serve their communities.

The majority (54%) of organizations that responded to our survey have fewer than 10 employees, however there was also significant representation from organizations with 11 to 50 employees and more than 100 employees.

Number of employees	1 to 10	11 to 50	51 to 100	101 to 250	251+
	54% (27)	30% (15)	0%	14% (7)	4% (1)

Source: HR&A survey of DKI grantees; 50 respondents

The vast majority (74%) of organizations that responded to our survey have been in operation and serving their communities for more than ten years.

Years organization has been in operation	Fewer than 6 months	Six months to one year	One to two years	Two to five years	Five to ten years	10+ years
	0%	4% (2)	4% (2)	4% (2)	14% (7)	74% (37)

Source: HR&A survey of DK1 grantees; 50 respondents

Nearly a third of survey respondents had never received funding from City government prior to the Dream Keeper Initiative (the survey question did not specify San Francisco City government). This figure includes both new organizations (those in operation for fewer than five years) and organizations that have operated for longer than a decade.

Is the Dream Keeper Initiative the first time that your organization has received funding from City government?	Yes	30% (15 respondents)
	No	64% (32 respondents)
	Unknown	7% (3 respondents)

Source: HR&A survey of DK1 grantees; 50 respondents

The vast majority (78%) of the organizations who responded to our survey receive less than half of their total annual operating budget from the Dream Keeper Initiative, meaning that other funding sources (such as community contributions or philanthropic support) provide a significant source of revenue to help these organizations serve their communities.

Percent of the organization's total annual budget supported by the Dream Keeper Initiative	0 – 25%	26 – 50%	51 – 75%	76 – 100%
	46%	32%	14%	7%

Source: HR&A survey of DK1 grantees; 50 respondents

City Employees Supporting the Dream Keeper Initiative – 40 survey respondents

Takeaways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the 40 City employees who responded to our survey (out of 56 City employees to whom the survey was sent), there was important range in the City departments for which the employees work; the length of time employees have been working for the City and County of San Francisco; the percentage of working time that employees devote to supporting the Dream Keeper Initiative; and the role that employees play within their departments (e.g., programmatic staff or supervisors).

- There is a strong indication that many of the City employees who support the Dream Keeper Initiative intentionally sought out this work, and all 40 City employees (100%) who responded to our survey indicated that the work they do through the Dream Keeper Initiative is personally meaningful to them, with 85% of respondents strongly agreeing with this statement.

Among the 40 City employees who responded to our survey, there was representation from eight City departments, with approximately three quarters of responses (78%) coming from employees of the Human Rights Commission, the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development – which are responsible for roughly 74% of the budget of the Dream Keeper Initiative.

City department for which the employee respondent works	
Arts Commission	8% (4)
Department of Children, Youth, and their Families	6% (3)
Department of Human Resources	2% (1)
Department of Public Health	2% (1)
Fire Department	2% (1)
Human Rights Commission	20% (10)
Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development	26% (14)
Office of Economic and Workforce Development	30% (15)
Other	2% (1)

Source: HR&A survey of DK1 grantees; 50 respondents

Half of the employees who responded to our survey have supported the Dream Keeper Initiative for more than a year, suggesting that they have been with the initiative since it began in 2020 or soon after its launch. The other half of the employees who responded to our survey have supported the Dream Keeper Initiative for less than one year.

Length of time the employee has worked for City government on the Dream Keeper Initiative	Fewer than six months	Six months – one year	One to two years
	12% (5)	38% (15)	50% (20)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents

More than half (53%) of the employees who responded to our survey have worked for City government for longer than five years (given how the survey was worded, this could have included other municipal governments). Nearly a third (30%) of the employees who responded to our survey have worked for City government for less than two years (given how the survey was worded, this could have included other municipal governments).

Length of time employee has worked for the City of San Francisco	Six months to one year	One to two years	Two to five years	Five to ten years	10+ years
	18% (7)	12% (4)	20% (8)	18% (7)	35% (14)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents

All 40 City employees (100%) who responded to our survey indicated that the work they do through the Dream Keeper Initiative is personally meaningful to them, with 85% of respondents strongly agreeing with this statement.

The work I do through the Dream Keeper Initiative is personally meaningful to me	Strongly agree	85% (34)
	Agree	15% (6)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents

There was range among City employees who responded to our survey with respect to the amount of time they devote to supporting the Dream Keeper Initiative, with approximately one third (29%) devoting nearly all of their working time to this initiative and approximately one third (28%) devoting less than 20% of their working time to this initiative.

Percent of time spent working on the Dream Keeper Initiative	0 – 20%	21 – 40%	41 – 60%	61 – 80%	81 – 100%
	38% (15)	18% (6)	9% (4)	6% (2)	30% (12)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents

There was also a range among the City employees who responded to our survey with respect to their role as it relates to the Dream Keeper Initiative. There was strong representation from program staff (41%) and from Deputy Directors/Managers (44%), suggesting that the responses reflect the perspectives of those implementing the programs and regularly interfacing with grantees and community members, as well as those who play leadership roles within their City departments.

Role as it related to the Dream Keeper Initiative	Program staff	Supervisor	Deputy Director / Manager	Department Head
	41% (15)	12% (6)	44% (18)	2% (1)

Source: HR&A survey of City employees supporting DK1; 40 respondents

Focus Group Participants

During the months of November and December 2022, the Jumuiya Research Institute conducted eleven focus groups with Dream Keeper Initiative grantees and community members who are the intended beneficiaries of Dream Keeper Initiative programs.

The goal of these focus groups was to explore six specific unique programmatic innovations within the DKI universe:

- Arts and Culture
- Brighter Futures
- Economic Mobility
- Health and Wellness
- Home Ownership
- Mini Grants

In total, 39 grantee organizations implementing the six programs we focused on in the focus groups were invited to and participated in the grantee focus groups.

For community members who are the intended beneficiaries of one of the programs that is part of the Dream Keeper Initiative, the goal of the focus group was to learn more about these community members' experiences, including how it felt to participate in the program and whether community members felt their identity and needs were understood and honored. In total, more than 70 community members participated in these focus groups.

During each focus group, the Jumuiya Research Institute was explicit that they and HR&A Advisors would protect the identity of all people participating in the focus group – meaning that all of the information we learned through the focus groups is presented anonymously in this report.

Recommended 10-Year Impact Measures

Dream Keeper Initiative goal + investment priority	Outputs (0-1 years of implementation)	Short-term outcomes (1-3 years of implementation)	Long-term outcomes (4-6 years of implementation)	Community-defined impact (7-10 years of implementation)
	<i>During the start-up phase, we expect the following evidence of program delivery:</i>	<i>Once implementation is fully ramped up, we expect the following evidence of changes among City employees and grantees involved in implementing the Dream Keeper Initiative:</i>	<i>Once DKI services are available for several years, we expect the following evidence of changes among community members who are the intended beneficiaries of Dream Keeper Initiative programs:</i>	<i>If the City of San Francisco pledges sustained, significant funding for the Dream Keeper Initiative, we will begin to see evidence of community-wide impact among San Francisco's diverse Black populations:</i>
Culturally affirming spaces that celebrate Black people	# Black-curated spaces that are supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding # People participating in activities/visiting spaces supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding	% increase in the number of all City contracts awarded to Black-led organizations for publicly funded placemaking initiatives, performance venues and other place-specific projects	Increase in number of spaces designed and curated by Black people (reaching youth, LGBTQ+, Seniors, people with disabilities) Percentage of visitors that re-visit culturally affirming spaces	"There would be real change in the morale of community members who come to believe in themselves, their children and their community."
Growing financial health and economic wellbeing	# Community members served through economic development and working programming supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding # Community members served through	% People report improvement in meeting foundational needs % employers specifically recruit and hire talent from within Black community % increase in number of	% of Black community members who report improvement in meeting foundational needs Increase in student graduation and proficiency rates Percentage of people earning	"Our families being able to build generational wealth" "I have a vision that SF eliminates all the barriers to acquiring a permanent home"

	homeownership programming supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding	homeowners % increase in new Black-owned businesses	self-sustaining wage (increase in income)	
Transformative, intergenerational social emotional wellness	# Youth referred/served in educational programs supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding # Families served through programming supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding	Increase in percentage of Black people participating in mental wellness programming supported by the Dream Keeper Initiative Increase in the availability of culturally relevant mental and physical health professionals, specifically Black-focused wellness programming	Increase in percentage of Black people in San Francisco who feel holistically healthy	“Young people should begin to feel they have a chance to succeed. Stress levels should reduce leading to better health within the community” “Our families being able to hold our schools accountable without retribution, so every Black family knows we are here to support them with their baby’s education needs and we will support our Black students who are graduating, giving them whatever they need for the second stage of life” “Seeing the Black doula program expand as a resource that ALL SF hospitals recommend”
Black-led and Black-centered narrative shift	# Dedicated grants to support Black-led narrative shift supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding	% of DKI grantees and program participants who feel a sense of cultural autonomy	% of Black community members who feel positively represented in media, programs, and marketing materials % of Black community members who can imagine future in San Francisco	“We should see a group of citizens feeling valued and empowered to reach dreams that have appeared out of reach in the past.” “There would be a significant shift in the quality of life for the Black community. No longer would our community feel that goals are not attainable.”
Better access to public resources	# Organizations that utilize capacity building services	# Black-led organizations who are grantees of the	Widespread adoption of trust-based City	“Having Black representation at every level – people

<p>and strong infrastructure among Black-led and Black-serving organizations</p>	<p>supported by Dream Keeper Initiative funding</p>	<p>City of San Francisco that are financially solvent</p> <p>% Black-led organizations who are grantees of the City of San Francisco who have completed capacity building training</p>	<p>funding practices and strategies across City departments (i.e. elimination of City corrective action practice)</p> <p>Availability of organizational reserves and reduced need of fiscal sponsors among Black-led organizations that contract with the City of San Francisco</p> <p>Black-led organization can serve more people (# of people served on annual basis)</p>	<p>administering the money, making the decisions. Universal training for City employees who do not look like us – they sometimes miss the mark.”</p> <p>“We could plan for our organization's development for the next several years, ensuring that we have the right people on our team and providing them with the time to grow which thereby provides stronger programming and access for our Black community.”</p>
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