



Mayor Timothy M. Keller

EC-25-376

# CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Office of the Mayor

## INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

April 7, 2025

**TO:** Brook Bassan, President, City Council

**FROM:** Timothy M. Keller, Mayor



**SUBJECT:** Child Friendly Community Action Plan

The *Child Friendly Community Action Plan 2025* was created in response to Albuquerque City Council Resolution R-24-80, which mandated the development of a comprehensive youth-centered framework to guide policy and investment. Recognizing that Albuquerque's future hinges on the well-being of its youngest residents, this plan aligns the City with UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative. The report outlines a structured, citywide commitment to embedding youth voices into governance, prioritizing safety, inclusion, and access to meaningful opportunities.

The action plan is organized around four strategic focus areas:


1. Centering youth voice and leadership
2. Investing in youth through budgeting and policy
3. Strengthening community partnerships
4. Measuring progress and accountability.

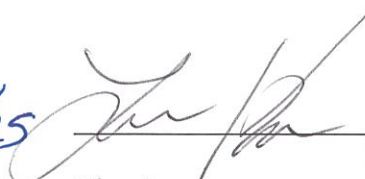
The plan lays out concrete goals, timelines, and mechanisms for coordination across City departments and partners. This plan positions the City as a national leader in youth-focused governance, ensuring that policy and budget decisions evolve in step with community needs and that young people are empowered to shape the city they grow up in.

## Child Friendly Community Action Plan

Approved:

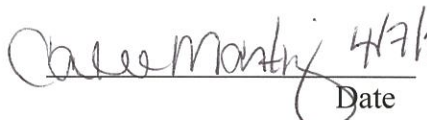
Approved as to Legal Form:

  
Samantha Sengel, EdD Date 4/7/25  
Chief Administrative Officer

  
City Attorney Date 4/7/2025

Recommended:

Recommended:

  
Associate Chief Administrative Officer Date 4/7/25

  
Director Date 4/7/2025

## **Cover Analysis**

### **1. What is it?**

The *Child Friendly Community Action Plan 2025* is a strategic framework to prioritize youth well-being through coordinated programming, policy alignment, and sustained investment.

### **2. What will this piece of legislation do?**

It directs the City to implement a comprehensive, cross-departmental approach to youth services, ensuring ongoing collaboration, increased youth participation, and the development of inclusive, accessible programs for children and families.

### **3. Why is this project needed?**

This plan is required by R-24-80.

### **4. How much will it cost and what is the funding source?**

Implementation of this plan will occur within existing departmental appropriations.

### **5. Is there a revenue source associated with this contract? If so, what level of income is projected?**

There is no revenue associated with this plan.

### **6. What will happen if the project is not approved?**

Without approval, the City risks falling behind in meeting the growing needs of its youth.

### **7. Is this service already provided by another entity?**

No other entity provides this level of coordinated, citywide youth programming and policy integration; while many partners contribute, this plan centralizes efforts.



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YOUTH CONNECT

# Child Friendly Community Action Plan

[cabq.gov/youthconnect](http://cabq.gov/youthconnect)

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## Introduction

In March 2025, the Albuquerque City Council passed Resolution R-24-80, introduced by Councilor Klarissa Peña, directing the administration to create a Child-Friendly Community Action Plan. This legislation was born out of a shared recognition that Albuquerque's future success depends on ensuring every child has access to opportunity, support, and a safe environment. The resolution underscores a citywide commitment to developing policies that prioritize the best interests of young people.

The action plan aligns Albuquerque with the UNICEF USA Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)—a global framework dedicated to upholding the rights of children and youth by embedding their voices, needs, and priorities into local governance, policies, and programs.

Specifically, the legislation calls for a collaborative and sustained effort to prioritize key pillars of youth well-being: safety, inclusion, equitable services, child participation, and play and leisure. By adopting this approach, the City of Albuquerque acknowledges that investing in youth is essential to long-term civic prosperity, social cohesion, and economic resilience.

To fulfill this vision, the Youth and Family Services Department has mobilized the Youth Connect initiative—a citywide, cross-departmental youth programming collaborative. The initiative has played a critical role in developing this action plan by strengthening interdepartmental alignment, uplifting youth voice, and formalizing collaboration across City systems. Together, we are working to build a city where young people are not only supported but actively shaping the communities they call home.



“This action plan is how we make good on a promise that young people will have a real voice in building the future of our city, making it the best place to grow up.”

— Mayor Tim Keller

## What is Youth Connect?

Albuquerque offers a wide range of programs for young people—but for many families, finding and navigating those opportunities isn't easy. That's where Youth Connect comes in. Led by the Youth and Family Services Department, this initiative brings City departments together to coordinate efforts and make youth programs more accessible, inclusive, and connected.

This work reflects the City's commitment to being the best place for families, ensuring every child can build a meaningful life. By emphasizing connection, inclusion, and accountability, Youth Connect establishes shared infrastructure and goals across departments, contributing to a stronger future for all Albuquerque youth.

Staff from across the City meet regularly through Youth Connect to share resources, align programs, and ensure families can easily access low-cost options—from summer camps and job training to outdoor adventures and therapeutic recreation. It's an all-hands-on-deck effort to support Albuquerque's youth and the families who raise them.



## The Youth Connect Mission

The mission of the City of Albuquerque's Youth Connect is to enrich lives and build a more inclusive, supportive city by connecting young people to meaningful opportunities.

Youth Connect is not just a resource hub—it is a citywide call to action recognizing that lasting change requires strategic coordination and sustained investment.

We take responsibility for meeting the diverse needs of Albuquerque's families by offering a wide range of programs and services year-round. These efforts support personal development, academic achievement, job readiness, civic engagement, and emotional wellness.

We work in collaboration with departments and partners to ensure that every program is safe, inclusive, and empowering—reflecting the City's deep commitment to its young people.







## **Focus Area: Centering Youth Voice and Leadership**

Over the past seven years, Youth Connect and participating departments have prioritized youth voice in the development, review, and improvement of programs. This has included youth surveys, teen focus groups, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, professional development for youth employees, and a shift to restorative practices in discipline and program retention.



## **Goal:**

The City of Albuquerque will continue to engage youth voice in the development, creation, review, and modification of youth programs and initiatives. This will be accomplished through the following methods:

- Youth surveys at the end of programs
- Part-time staff surveys
- Part-time staff (youth staff) professional development

## **Timeline:**

This work will be ongoing, with surveys taking place at the end of seasonal programs and professional development occurring at least twice per year.



## Focus Area: Investing in Youth Through Budgeting and Policy

The City of Albuquerque has consistently made a commitment to provide quality and inclusive programming for families at low costs. This commitment is reflected both in the budgets, as well as the priorities set by departments that directly serve youth.

### Goal:

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### Timeline:

Annually through the City of Albuquerque's budget cycle and goal setting.



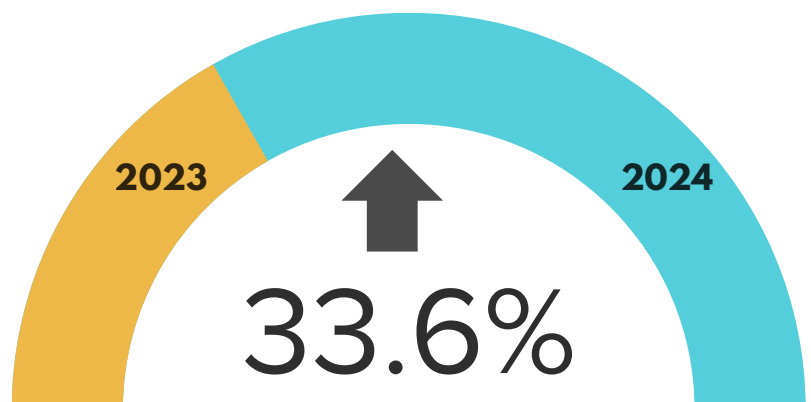
## Rising Demand for Youth Services (2023–2024)

### Year-over-Year Growth in Youth Attendance

A 33.6% increase in youth attendance—from 238,047 in 2023 to 318,025 in 2024—shows rising demand for inclusive, high-quality programs citywide. As more young people engage, future budgets must keep pace with:

- Growing program capacity
- Increased staffing
- Expanded access in underserved areas

Continued investment is essential to meet this momentum and ensure every young person has access to opportunity and support.





## **Focus Area: Strengthening Partnerships Across Community and Systems**

The City of Albuquerque proudly maintains strong partnerships with a variety of organizations and individuals to include the Albuquerque Public Schools, ABC Community Schools, the State of New Mexico Public Education Department, Bernalillo County, and a variety of non-profit organizations.



## **Goal:**

The City of Albuquerque will continue to maintain current partnerships with organizations and individuals, while also creating new and diverse partnerships and relationships. This goal will be accomplished through the following:

- Regular Youth Connect meetings to maintain inter-departmental communication and collaborations
- Regular meetings between administrators/managers of the City of Albuquerque and Albuquerque Public Schools
- Regular meetings with community partners and organizations.

## **Timeline:**

The timeline for this will be ongoing. Youth Connect and APS/CABQ meetings should occur minimally on a monthly basis.

**Youth Connect partners with more than 90 internal and external organizations to strengthen and expand youth summer programs.**

## Focus Area: Measuring Progress and Ensuring Accountability

One of the strongest achievements following the creation of ONE ABQ Youth Connect 7 years ago, has been the City of Albuquerque's ability to report out on youth programs as a whole organization, rather than through individual departments. The State of the Summer Report, a consolidated report on all City summer youth programs, published its 7th edition in 2024.

### Goal:

The City of Albuquerque will continue reporting on youth program accomplishments and challenges. This work will be done in the following ways:

- The Annual State of the Summer Report
- Quarterly Departmental Performance Measures
- Youth Connect Newsletters

### Timeline:

This work will be ongoing. The State of the Summer Report is published annually. Performance measures and Youth Connect Newsletters are produced quarterly.



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## State of the Summer Report

Highlighting key achievements and insights from Albuquerque's youth summer programs.

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E: [ccc@cabq.gov](mailto:ccc@cabq.gov)  
W: [cabq.gov/yc](http://cabq.gov/yc)

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### 2024 STATE OF THE SUMMER SURVEY BY THE NUMBERS:

**80%**

OF PARENTS WOULD  
RECOMMEND SUMMER  
YOUTH PROGRAMS TO  
OTHER PARENTS.

**78%**

OF PARENTS SATISFIED  
WITH THEIR FAMILIES  
EXPERIENCE WITH SUMMER  
YOUTH PROGRAMS.

**76%** OF PARENTS SAID THE PROGRAM  
THEIR CHILD(REN) PARTICIPATED IN  
HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT.





## Conclusion

Implementing the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Framework offers Albuquerque an invaluable opportunity to enhance youth well-being and engagement. By establishing clear, actionable goals grounded in this framework, the City continues to prioritize the rights, voices, and needs of its young residents.

Youth Connect has laid a strong foundation for inclusive and coordinated youth programming. This action plan builds on that success, outlining a pathway toward sustained impact through shared accountability, intentional investment, and youth-driven leadership.

As Albuquerque moves forward, the City will ensure that young people are meaningfully involved in shaping the services and systems that affect them. This meaningful work will serve as a baseline for future efforts, allowing the City to measure progress, set ambitious goals, and strengthen long-term outcomes. The strategies and metrics defined in this plan can also guide future budget development and staffing needs across departments, helping to ensure resources grow alongside demand and impact.

By committing to collaboration and continuous improvement, Albuquerque positions itself as a forward-thinking city that prioritizes youth-centered policy and practice. Through innovation and dedication, we will continue building a future where every young person in Albuquerque feels valued, heard, and supported.



### Contact Information

[cabq.gov/youthconnect](http://cabq.gov/youthconnect)  
P. 311 or 505-768-2000



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CHILD FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

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SPRING 2025