



## Health Workshop Summary

### Overview

The community workshop on health was held on Thursday, April 30, 2026, at the African American Arts and Cultural Center. The event brought together residents, community leaders, service providers, and other stakeholders to discuss health priorities, barriers to wellness, and opportunities to strengthen community health in the Fillmore and Western Addition neighborhood. The workshop began with a brief presentation, followed by small-group discussions, and ended with an opportunity for residents to learn about City programs and Community based organizations at resources tables.

Participants received a handout outlining draft priority areas and strategies informed by past community engagement, reports, and input from City agencies and community members. During the discussions, participants were asked to affirm these strategies, identify any gaps, and share which priorities would make the greatest positive impact for the neighborhood. Below is a summary of the comments, key themes, and top priorities that emerged from the group discussions.

### Themes

#### 1. Access to Information and Services

The most frequently discussed theme focused on the challenges residents face in finding, understanding, and accessing available resources. Participants emphasized that services often exist, but many residents are unaware of them or encounter barriers when trying to navigate complex systems. Participants recommended expanding outreach through community centers, health clinics, schools, recreation centers, and other trusted gathering places. There was also strong support for mobile services, including dental care, medical screenings, and preventative health resources.

Participants also highlighted the need for clearer information about government roles. Many expressed uncertainty about which agencies are responsible for issues such as housing conditions, public safety, health services, and program funding. Residents voiced the importance of greater transparency and more accessible communication about governmental responsibilities and decision-making processes

Participants expressed concerns about:

- Limited awareness of existing programs and services
- Lack of coordinated information-sharing across organizations
- Overreliance on digital communication channels
- Difficulty accessing services in a timely manner
- Need for trusted, neighborhood-based information hubs

## **2. Community Ownership, Representation, and Cultural Relevance**

Residents expressed a strong desire for services and programs that are designed, led, and informed by the community. Many participants voiced concerns about the loss of culturally rooted programming and the reduced influence of community members over long-standing neighborhood institutions. Many noted that these institutions have shifted in ways that have led to the loss of spaces and programs that once served as cultural anchors.

Participants emphasized the importance of culturally competent, community-rooted services that reflect the lived experiences of Black residents and other historically marginalized communities. They consistently noted that health outcomes improve when programs align with the culture, experiences, and priorities of the communities they serve.

Key themes included:

- Increasing Black-led leadership and decision-making
- Restoring culturally relevant programming
- Preserving community history and identity
- Ensuring residents have meaningful influence over neighborhood investments and services
- Strengthening trusted community institutions

## **3. Food Access and Healthy Living**

Food security emerged as a significant health concern. Participants connected access to healthy food with broader issues of chronic disease, quality of life, and community well-being. Participants also expressed interest in community gardens, expanded healthy food programs, and holistic approaches to nutrition and wellness.

Key concerns included:

- Grocery store closures and reduced access to healthy food options
- Transportation barriers to grocery shopping
- Limited accessibility of farmers markets due to cost or operating hours
- Food insecurity among seniors, families, and youth
- Interest in culturally relevant food options and Black-owned food businesses

#### **4. Youth and Family Support**

Participants consistently highlighted the importance of investing in children, youth, and families as a pathway to long-term community health. Residents emphasized the importance of preserving community spaces where young people can learn, gather, and build positive relationships.

Key priorities included:

- Youth education and leadership development
- Rights awareness and civic engagement
- Behavioral and emotional health supports
- Safe spaces for youth programming
- Strengthening community connection and belonging

#### **5. Senior Support and Mobility**

Supporting older adults was identified as one of the community's most urgent health priorities. Participants noted that many seniors face significant barriers to accessing essential services and maintaining their independence. Many participants stressed that addressing these barriers is essential to improving health outcomes and quality of life for seniors.

Challenges identified included:

- Transportation limitations
- Mobility challenges
- Difficulty accessing food, healthcare, and social services
- Social isolation
- Complex service systems that are difficult to navigate

#### **6. Mental Health, Trauma, and Healing**

Mental health was a major area of concern throughout the workshop. Participants discussed the impacts of violence, displacement, loss, and systemic inequities on individual and community well-being. Participants emphasized that mental health must be treated as a core component of community health rather than a separate issue.

A desire for more in-person connection was noted. Residents repeatedly expressed the importance of rebuilding relationships and social connections following the isolation experienced during and after the pandemic. Participants highlighted the need for more opportunities to gather, learn, and support one another in person.

Key concerns included:

- Community trauma related to violence and loss
- Grief and unresolved impacts of displacement
- Lack of accessible mental health resources
- Need for culturally responsive and community-based healing services
- Mental health support for youth and families

## **7. Community Spaces, Safety, and Infrastructure**

Residents highlighted the importance of safe, welcoming spaces that support connection, health, and community engagement. Many participants viewed community spaces as critical infrastructure that contributes directly to health, belonging, and resilience

Participants discussed:

- The need for community spaces that are open and accessible daily
- Interest in activating vacant storefronts for community use
- Concerns about safety and security in shared spaces
- The loss of gathering places that once provided support, information, and social connection

## **Community Priorities**

Based on the discussion, the following priorities were shared.

### ***Priority 1: Senior Support and Accessibility***

Residents identified improving services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities as a top priority. Participants emphasized that older adults should be able to access essential services safely, easily, and with dignity. Key areas of focus included:

- Transportation assistance
- Access to food and healthcare
- Mobility support
- Medical screenings and preventative care
- Reducing social isolation

### ***Priority 2: Increased Awareness, Connection, Communication, and Education***

Participants strongly supported efforts to improve how information is shared throughout the community. Residents consistently stated that better communication would improve access to services and strengthen community connections.

Recommended strategies included:

- Expanded outreach and community engagement
- Non-digital communication methods
- Trusted neighborhood information hubs
- Improved coordination among service providers
- Greater visibility of available programs and resources

### ***Priority 3: Mental Health and Youth Well-Being***

Mental health support emerged as a critical community need, particularly for youth and families. Participants emphasized that addressing trauma and supporting youth well-being are essential to building a healthier and more resilient community.

Key areas of focus included:

- Trauma-informed services
- Community-based mental health resources
- Grief and healing support
- Resources for neurodivergent youth
- Safe and supportive environments for young people

### **Top Priorities Shared at the Workshop**

Based on the dot exercise, the **top three strategies** are:

- **Strategy 1b:** Deliver health outreach through trusted spaces like barbershops, salons, housing sites, and faith-based organizations.
- Tie for the 2nd priority strategy:  
**Strategy 3b.** Increase safe, supportive spaces for youth, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals impacted by elder abuse through physical activity, connection, and violence prevention strategies.

**Strategy 4c.** Strengthen culturally responsive prenatal, maternal, and infant care for Black mothers

- Tie for the 3rd priority strategy:
  - Strategy 1c.** Implement neighbor-to-neighbor support for seniors and people with disabilities to call on nearby residents to assist with daily needs.
  - Strategy 2b.** Improve seniors' access to essential goods, services and health care appointments through SFMTA Accessible Services.

## **Conclusion**

Participants highlighted the interconnected nature of health, emphasizing that access to services, food security, community spaces, mental health resources, and culturally responsive programming are all critical components of a healthy community. Participants expressed a strong desire for more accessible information, greater community ownership of programs and services, increased support for seniors and youth, and investments that address both immediate needs and long-standing inequities.

A central message emerged throughout the workshop: **community health extends beyond medical care. Residents identified access to information, food security, mental health support, trusted community spaces, cultural connection, and strong support systems for seniors and youth as essential building blocks of a healthy community.** Participants called for solutions that are community-led, culturally responsive, and grounded in the lived experiences of neighborhood residents.