

Safety on Public Transportation For Girls

Presented by Alliance for Girls



Alliance For Girls* (AFG)

AFG mobilizes girls' champions to address barriers facing girls, create conditions for their success, and advance systemic change to achieve equity.

We are the largest regional alliance of girl-serving organizations and leaders in the country. Our membership includes 100+ organizations that employ 2,400 people with more than 5,100 volunteers serving more than 300,000 girls across the Bay Area.

We Believe:

- That those closest to the problem are closest to the solution
- In moving beyond the gender binary
- That diverse leadership is more effective leadership
- In the power of the collective

*“Girls” refers to gender-expansive youth (cis girls, trans girls, non-binary youth, gender non-conforming youth, gender queer youth and any girl-identified youth).

Our Coalition

- Santa Clara Office of Women's Policy
- Family Violence Law Center
- Futures Without Violence
- San Francisco Department on the Status on Women
- Bay Area Women Against Rape
- Girls Inc of Contra Costa County
- YWCA SV
- CURYJ
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Bay Area
- The Women's Building
- The Unity Council
- Ignite
- CARAS: Community Agency for Resources, Advocacy and Services
- GirlVentures
- Bill Wilson Center Youth Impact Partnership

Our Process

Meeting Girl's Needs Initiative

- (1) engage in research and data collection on the lived experiences of girls of color in the community
- (2) educate girl champions' and key stakeholders on girls' needs
- (3) amplify and advance solutions to girls' expressed needs through the establishment of girl-centered policies, practices, and programs
- (4) enable implementation of promising solutions
- (5) implement and evaluate the impact of MGNI solutions on girls' expressed needs.



Pictured: Images from Alliance for Girls community town halls in the Bay Area.

Together, We Rise Report (August, 2019)

- High school girl-led research report AFG completed in partnership with the Women's Foundation of California.
 - Youth researchers: Gabrielle Battle, Maren Frye, Esme Kalbag, Anna Sara Mehouelley, Sofia Orduña, Sasha Williams, and Andrea Zamora.
- The report identified:
 - the severity of the public safety crisis facing girls in schools, on public transportation and in the community,
 - the gaps in the social safety net for the most marginalized girls in our communities including young mothers, and
 - the impact of harmful gender norms on girls' daily lives, including the normalization of violence.
- Across Oakland, San Jose, and San Francisco, we heard from a total of 63 girls who shared their struggles, their dreams, and their recommendations for change.

Safety on Public Transportation

- At every listening session, nearly all the girls talked about everyday instances of being physically or verbally harassed as they took the bus to and from school or traveled by BART to meet up with friends.
- Girls of color are particularly vulnerable.
- Girls want bystanders who witness harassment to intervene and support them.
- Experiencing harassment impacts how girls navigate public spaces.



Stories from Girls: Together, We Rise (Pg.30)

“That happened to me once. I made the mistake of sitting in the back [of the BART train]. This grown, buff man sat behind me. I got off on San Bruno. He gets off too. I started walking. I see he was following me. I stopped. He stopped.....

I ran so fast that day. It was in the dark, too.”

Stories from Girls: Together, We Rise (Pg.30)

“I feel like . . . you have to learn to be conscious of where you are.

When you are on the bus.

You have to think about where you sit . . . next to the door,
not next to someone who will hurt me .”

Stories from Girls: Together, We Rise (Pg.30)

“One guy touched me when I was wearing a dress. Some guy just rubbed my thigh.

They ask me if I’m legal yet and I say, ‘I’m a case.’ They say, ‘As long as your parents don’t know.’

My friend has junk in her trunk, and one guy spanked her butt.”

Stories from Girls: Together, We Rise (Pg.30)

“We cannot do anything to avoid it.

There are so many people around.

It happens on the bus.

They hear you and know, but they don't step in.”

Safety on Public Transit Matters

- 45.3% of 274 students in East Contra Costa surveyed did not feel safe on BART
(One Day At A Time, Youth Transportation Justice Report) December 2019
- California, A Statewide Assessment of Sexual Harassment and Assault,” published in May 2019, among all women surveyed, most (77%) reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces with 29% reporting the harassment took place on mass transit.

Due to Safety Issues, youth/young adults said that they DID NOT:

- Make it to school (44%)
- Be able to go shopping (41.4%)
- Access recreational and learning or community resources (24.1%)
- Make it to work (12.9%)
- Make it to medical appointments (10.3%)
- Find a job (9.5%)
- Keep a job (6.9%)

Centering Girl's Voices

- **324 girl's** voices from our research report series on girls lived experiences.
- **140** attendees at 3 Bay Area town halls
- **46** attendees at a community meeting on safety for girls on public transit including Alliance for Girls members, girl leaders, Betti Ono artists/cultural strategist, and BART staff.
- **26 girls** from Black Girl Brilliance Program at Montera Middle School with BART staff.
- **30 girls** from the Unity Council Latina Empowerment and Achievement Program at Skyline and Fremont High Schools with BART staff.



Pictured: President Lateefah Simon speaking at the community meeting on safety for girls on public transportation.

Our Recommendations: Education, Resources, and Awareness

- BART to launch a campaign on gender based violence and sexual harassment awareness and prevention in partnership with AFG, Betti Ono and youth leaders. Campaign includes:
 - Train and station posters
 - Pop up educational events in BART stations
 - Social media educational videos produced by youth
 - Bystander intervention training sessions for transit riders
- Create a website page outlining reporting process and expectations for gender based violence and sexual harassment on BART.
- BART Communications staff and Art Program Manager have been part of planning and outreach process.

Our Recommendations: Policy Change and Upgrades

Approve resolution and working group will return with recommendations such as:

- Update the code of conduct to prohibit gender based violence sexual harassment.
- Ensure well lit safe pick up zones and waiting areas at stations.
- Gather disaggregated data from riders on safety (peak harrassment times, location, etc).
- Integrate focus on safety from a gender lens during upcoming station modernization processes.
- Use existing technology (BART Watch app, digital signs) at BART to encourage reporting and push an awareness messages.

When girls thrive, we all do!

