

**BEN BARTLETT**

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

CONSENT CALENDAR  
September 16, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author)

Subject: The Parent Writing Circles Initiative- Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds to General Fund and Grant of Such Funds

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution approving the expenditure of funds, including \$500 from the discretionary Council Office Budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett, to The Parent Writing Circles Initiative. The funds will be relinquished to the City's General Fund from the Discretionary Council Office Budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett and the Discretionary Council Office Budgets of any other Councilmembers who would like to contribute.

**BACKGROUND:**

Nearly one in five households in Berkeley has children. We recognize that parents and caregivers play a vital role in preserving our community's rich culture, traditions, and values. Too often, young parents and families from underrepresented communities struggle to access community building blocks for healthy relationships. To support and strengthen these critical relationships, we are pleased to fund the Parent Writing Circles initiative. The program is guided by Milani Pelley, a poet and teaching artist with California Poets in the Schools.

These circles offer a safe and supportive space where Berkeley parents and caregivers can connect with their children through the engaging art of poetry. These circles function as true community centers. They offer opportunities for participants to reflect deeply, share openly, and connect with others, ultimately aiming to increase literacy and close achievement gaps. Writing here is a powerful tool for healing, preserving, and empowering individuals. This program seeks to empower parents' experiences and forge meaningful relationships in a positive environment.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:**

No negative impact.

**FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION**

There is no impact on the General Fund; \$500 is available from the discretionary budget

of Councilmember Ben Bartlett's office.

CONTACT PERSON:

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Parents of Berkeley Writing Circles Presentation

Attachment 1:

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE  
EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR A  
DONATION TO THE PARENTS OF BERKELEY WRITING CIRCLES

**WHEREAS**, Councilmember Ben Bartlett has funds in his office expenditure account,  
and

**WHEREAS**, The Parents of Berkeley Writing Circles, will receive funds for \$500 from  
Councilmember Ben Bartlett's office expenditure account; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parent Writing Circles program offers parents and caregivers in  
Berkeley a creative and supportive space to share their stories, express themselves,  
and reflect on the joys and challenges of parenting through poetry and writing; and

**WHEREAS**, this program strengthens our community by celebrating parenthood,  
building meaningful connections among families, and promoting emotional well-being,  
all of which contribute to a more compassionate and connected Berkeley; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Berkeley that  
funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their office budgets, of an  
amount to be determined by each Councilmember, shall be granted to The Parents of  
Berkeley Writing Circles

Attachment 2

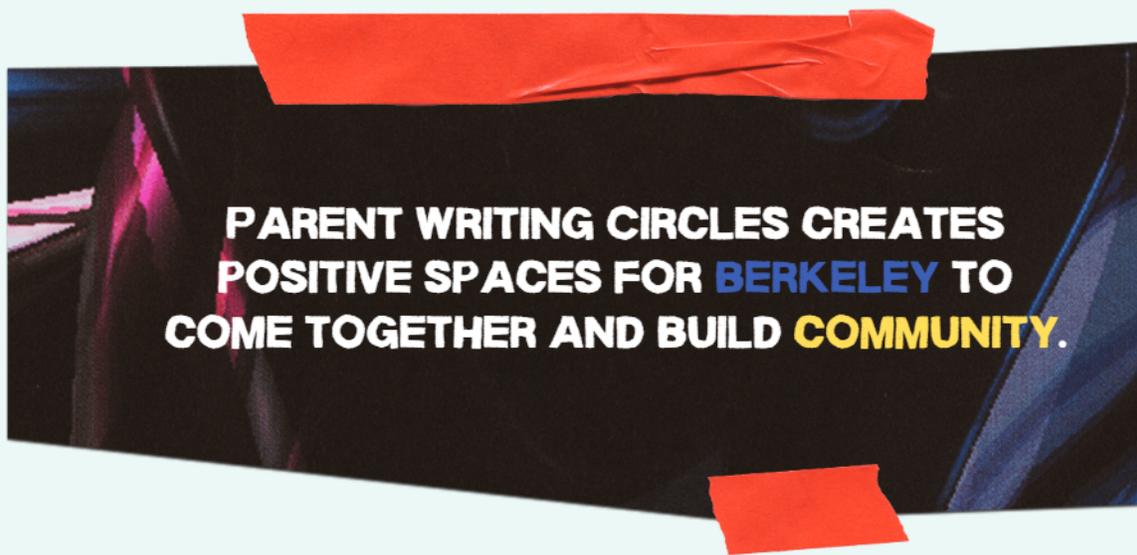
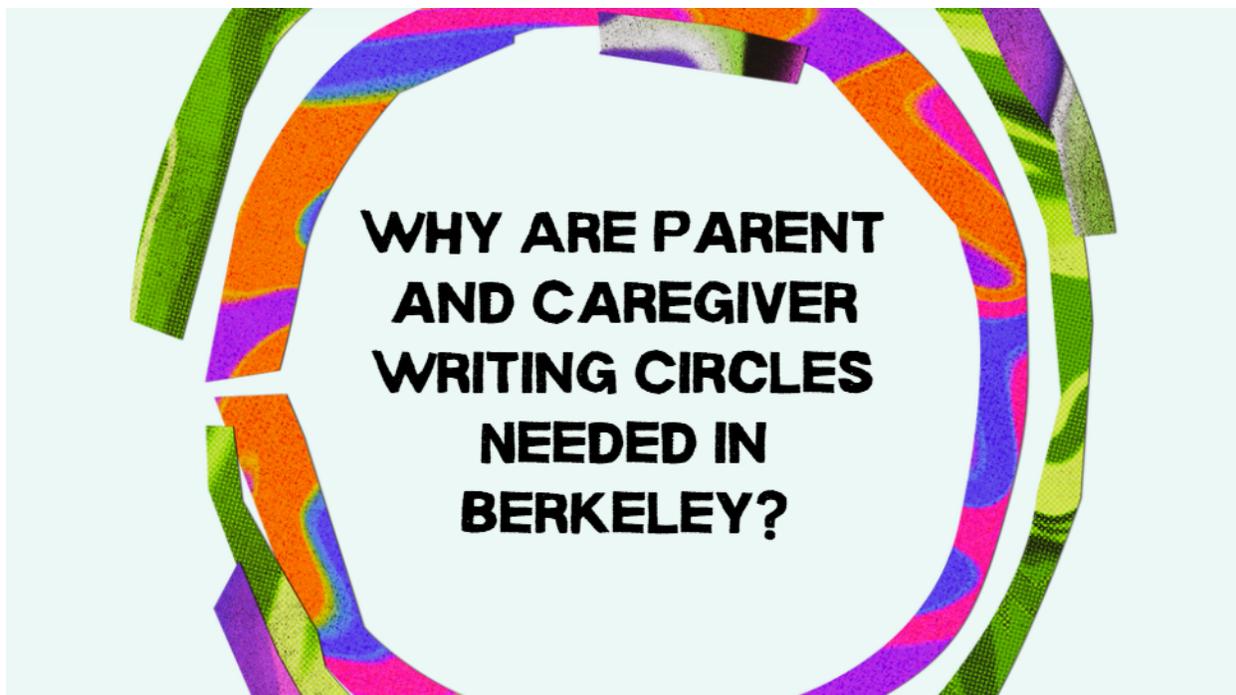
**PARENTS OF BERKELEY  
WRITING CIRCLES**

**MILANI PELLEY**

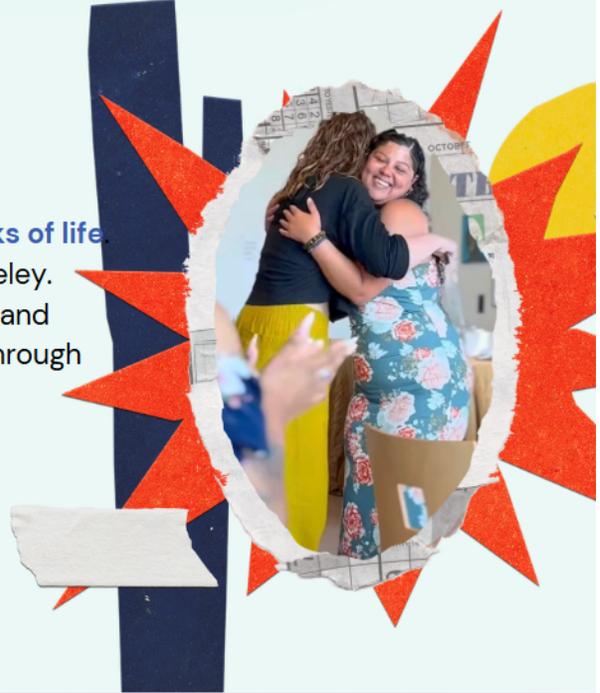
California Poets in the Schools 60

**MILANI PELLEY**

Poet, educator, mother, innovator, and artist from Berkeley. Known for her work documenting and celebrating parenthood experiences through poetry. Milani has performed at the Opera House in San Francisco and for activists Will i.am, Saul Williams, Jesse Jackson, and Angela Davis. She solely represented Oakland in the Women of the World Poetry Slam in 2010. Milani was also apart of Team Oakland 2010, placing top four in group-piece finals, and a member of Team Oakland in 2011, ranking top ten in the nation. A Poet-Teacher for California Poets in the Schools since 2022, bringing literary arts to Berkeley schools and the Berkeley community.



Berkeley is known a city made up of **many walks of life**. About **19%** of households have children in Berkeley. Parent Circles allows parents to share, discuss, and explore both **parenting** and **life experiences** through poetry.



**Poetry** is a healing, creative outlet, as well as a tool of documentation. The Parents of Berkeley Writing Circles **validates** parents' **narratives** and **builds trust** and **community** amongst Berkeley's parents.

