

May 10, 2023

Gerardo Ruvalcaba
Assistant General Manager
Economic and Workforce Development Department
City of Los Angeles



Subject: COMMENTS PY 2023-24 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the PY 23-24 Workforce Development Annual Plan. As you know, COVID-19 and its economic fallout have caused significant harm to many Los Angeles communities. As advocates for Los Angeles opportunity youth population, we appreciate the plan's workforce strategies for opportunity youth and particularly the subset of opportunity youth—system involved young adults.

The [2021 Data Report on the City of Los Angeles Opportunity Youth](#) highlights the sharp rise in opportunity youth (ages 16-24) who are neither in school nor at work. Specifically, **the most recent data available indicated a 38% increase** in the number of teens and young adults in the city **who are out of school and out of work** between 2019 and 2021 (49,000 and 62,000, respectively; American Community Survey). As a result, **this trend is reversing much of the progress we've made in the city over the past decade.**

[Strategies 1 and 2 in the draft plan](#) begin to address youth disconnection, and early program investments have and continue to be valuable. Given this substantial and pressing need, **we encourage the City of Los Angeles strengthen its role in the LA Performance Partnership Pilot (LA P3), facilitating collaboration among public educational, workforce, and support systems as well as the business community to address the needs of young adult to enter the workforce and educational opportunities.** These efforts will further help address the needs of young adults who are looking to enter the workforce and access educational opportunities, including specific strategies to boost these efforts could further enhance the plan.

Lastly, we challenge the City and County of Los Angeles workforce development systems to **prioritize all young adults who identify as homeless through LA Homeless Service Agency Youth Coordinated Entry System to receive prioritized services for workforce, education and support services needs while they are transitioning to permanent housing.** Currently, young adults experiencing housing insecurity often do not receive workforce, education, or support services until they are in stable housing situations. This means that many youths do not receive the crucial services they need when they need them. As a policy, the City and County should initiate assessments and begin providing all available workforce and education services as soon they request housing assistance at a coordinated entry point.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lauri Collier'.

Lauri Collier
Director | LA Opportunity Youth
Collaborative
Alliance for Children's Rights

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Robert Sainz'.

Robert Sainz
President and CEO
New Ways to Work

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lauri Collier'.

Lauri Collier
Managing Director | California
Opportunity Youth Network
New Ways to Work

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jenifer Jayme** <Jenifer.Jayme@npower.org>

Date: Thu, May 11, 2023, 12:41 PM

Subject: Comments on EWDD 23-24 Plan

To: ewdd.planning@lacity.org <ewdd.planning@lacity.org>

Dear EWDD –

Greetings from NPower. We are a national 501c3 nonprofit organization focused on tech workforce training for underrepresented people and underserved communities. We have staff and programs in Los Angeles, and are writing to provide comments on the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board's Draft 2024 Plan. In addition to all of the fine work you have listed, we thought you might want to include mentioned of the following activities. Hope you find this helpful. I would be happy to meet with a representative from EWDD to discuss these and our related work:

- **Los Angeles Tech Career Accelerator (Strategic Initiatives 2, 3, 4, 5):** In January 2023, in partnership with the LA Workforce Development Board and LA Economic Development Corp, NPower launched a Los Angeles Tech Career Accelerator designed to upskill racially marginalized and economically disadvantaged Los Angeles residents to start new IT careers. Funded by an AB628 Breaking Barriers To Employment grant from the California Workforce Development Board, the NPower Los Angeles Tech Career Accelerator will engage 150+ diverse low-income young adults (18-26), veterans and military spouses in a free six-month training and job placement program that provides comprehensive support to start new upwardly-mobile IT careers. The program leads to multiple industry-recognized certifications, and will enrich the Los Angeles workforce with skilled IT and cybersecurity talent to fill in-demand jobs in every industry from entertainment to transportation logistics.
- **Education and/or Employment Outcomes for Disconnected Youth (Strategic Initiative 2):** The LA Tech Career Accelerator will specifically engage Disconnected Youth ages 18-26 in a proven six-month tech workforce training program that leads to industry certification, and fast-tracks them into a new career. In addition to securing placement in an upwardly-mobile tech-industry job, many trainees will use this experience as a springboard to pursue a 2-year or 4-year degree.
- **Gender Equity / Women In Non-Traditional Employment Sectors (Strategic Initiative 5):** The IT industry has struggled with an enduring lack of diversity in its workforce, and is one of the sectors in which women are underrepresented. The LA Tech Career Accelerator has a special mandate to ensure at least 40% of trainees are women, and features special outreach efforts to engage more women with emphasis on women of color.
- **The 'Internet For All' Digital New Deal (Strategic Initiative 4):** Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act approved in 2022, the US has authorized an historic multi-billion-dollar investment in the country's infrastructure which will directly benefit Los Angeles businesses and residents in 2023-24. The Covid Pandemic exposed stunning disparities in access to broadband service and digital skills. High speed internet access and basic navigation skills are now essential for people to access education, health, employment, and other vital services and opportunities, yet thousands of Los Angeles residents still lack adequate broadband service or the devices and skills to use it. This lack of Digital Equity only perpetuates other disadvantages. California has organized statewide efforts to close the 'Digital Divide' under the Broadband For All banner, and is now engaging stakeholders from every city to formulate new plans for Digital Equity, which will be backed by unprecedented funding on the scale of FDR's "New Deal" that once transformed the country. Historic investments in infrastructure will fund business opportunities, job training and jobs in a variety of fields - from construction teams needed to lay the fiberoptic cable that brings internet connectivity to underserved communities, to entry-level Digital Navigators who can help people sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program, to advanced Help Desk Analysts and Cybersecurity specialists. Los Angeles is prepared to capitalize on these investments, aligning our plans with Broadband For All initiatives wherever possible. (All who represent workers and businesses on the 'wrong side of the Digital Divide' are encouraged to stay abreast of developments and forthcoming RFPs by exploring the Broadband For All site and attending Outcome Area Working Group meetings.)

Jenifer Jayme | Senior Director for Institutional Development

NPower California

(408) 455-5643 Cell

book a time with Jen



May 12, 2023

Carolyn M. Hull
General Manager
Economic & Workforce Development Department
The City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board
1200 West 7th Street,
Los Angeles, California 90017

Re: Public Comment - City of Los Angeles Year 24 Workforce Development Board Annual Plan

UNITE-LA would like to applaud the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board for your leadership and steady commitment to work experiences for young adults, especially for system-involved youth over the past decade. It's imperative that the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board (WDB) continues to reaffirm the responsibility of the 2019 operational agreement signed between all Workforce Development Boards in Los Angeles, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Department of Children's Family Services (DCFS), Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and LA County Probation to commit to a regional and collaborative effort to establish and strengthen a seamless service delivery system that will maximize the leverage of resources and increase coordination and integration of services for foster and system-involved youth across two counties. Moreover, the strategies outlined in the Annual Plan should center Opportunity Youth (OY) throughout all forms of programming that the City of LA is overseeing. UNITE-LA praises the shared vision of the WDB, Mayor, City Council, and the Economic & Workforce Development Department (EWDD), and we would like to offer the following recommendations for the Year 24 WDB Annual Plan:

Year 24 Annual Plan Considerations

1) STRATEGIC INITIATIVE NO. 1 – Support Regional Efforts to Reduce Homelessness by Providing Pathways to Sustainable Employment, Training and Education, and Connecting Participants to Supportive Services

In recognition of the precarious situation of reducing homelessness in Los Angeles, we are excited to see the City collaborating with the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA) to bring about a thoughtful action plan around the LA:RISE Youth Academy. However, remembering the goals of the 2019 operational agreement, we would also like to see similar coordinated efforts with DCFS for youth exiting foster care. Collaboration and strategy across all systems are needed to alleviate the cycle of homelessness, which is greater for youth who are system-involved and aging out of the system. The city should have special carve-outs for a number of the academy slots devoted to serving transitioning foster youth.

2) STRATEGIC INITIATIVE NO. 2 – Increase Education and/or Employment Outcomes for Disconnected Youth

We strongly encourage the WDB to work together, alongside community partners and youth, to clearly articulate a vision and measurable goals for our youth workforce development services. Short-term work

experience programs like Youth@Work/Hire-LA's Youth play a significant role in connecting underserved youth to foundational early career exploration opportunities. The City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board should also work together with the County of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board to establish local goals and metrics for the success of these programs to better understand the true impact on youth participants and to inform continuous improvement strategies.

Additionally, funding to relieve barriers for youth for outreach, enrollment, persistence, and evaluation needs to be identified. Investment in training and upskilling staff on youth development frameworks to effectively engage Opportunity Youth (OY) could help build relationships with OY and center youth assets to boost enrollment. Stipends while training and social safety nets are critical for the sustainability of trainees to persist and complete youth workforce opportunities. Tracking employment outcomes post-program completion is needed to ensure the breadth of services provided meets its intended goal. Transparent accessible data sharing across all stakeholders is needed to measure results. Lastly, ongoing evaluation of programming is needed to ensure that the redesign and coordinated effort are being met.

3) STRATEGIC INITIATIVE NO. 3 – Increase Employment Opportunities for All Angelenos Through Partnerships with Major Economic Drivers in the Region

OY have shared that the program opportunities have not been lucrative enough, and access to high-quality jobs has been an obstacle for many individuals. It's imperative that all programs have goals that clearly outline a specific call-out for OY and should not be seen as just adult-level opportunities. OY deserve equitable access to economic opportunities and thriving jobs in Los Angeles.

4) STRATEGIC INITIATIVE NO. 4 – Facilitate Increased and Equitable Access to Jobs That Provide High Wages/Salaries and Opportunities for Career Advancement/Upward Mob

We admire the undertaking to ensure the workforce system has a pipeline of engaged employers ready to support the training and employment of Angelenos for jobs of today and the future. It would also be helpful if there was an employer partner map/depository from all workforce providers in LA to showcase which providers are working with which employers.

Likewise, we would also like to see the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board work together with the LARPU to form an employer engagement committee, where each WDB commits to a seven-WDB strategy on a regional approach to employer engagement. Similarly, there is no coordinated effort to engage with the business community and the needs of businesses are not being met. This employer engagement committee would work closely with businesses to construct a youth workforce program that reflects the growing need for talent development in the LA region.

5) STRATEGIC INITIATIVE NO. 6 – Increase Accessibility to Sustainable Employment Opportunities for High-Barrier Populations Through Targeted Workforce Development Strategies

Foster youth, DACA, and undocumented youth need to be explicitly called out more throughout this plan, as their enrollment numbers for youth workforce programs continue to be remarkably low. Often times their labeling has been embedded into other categories of vulnerable populations, which prevents



identifying direct efforts to strategically address ways to prevent further disconnection. It is critical that the WDB, partners with agencies to provide support for DACA, undocumented, and foster youth, to increase successful enrollment and completion of our programs.

We look forward to continuing to partner with the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board to build the capacity of L.A.'s workforce system to effectively engage young people from our region's most vulnerable communities –including foster, homeless, and justice-involved youth—to support their paths to successful careers and economic security. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and we look forward to scheduling a time to meet soon to provide an overview of our historic partnership together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'A Bell'.

Alysia Bell
President
UNITE-LA