

CHILD AND YOUTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
A CITY WHERE CHILDREN AND
YOUTH CAN THRIVE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
WHAT WE STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH	5
LETTERS	
EARLY CONCEPT AND ADVOCACY.....	7
LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH SUCCESS	8
LETTER FROM THE YOUTH COMMISSION	9
DATA ABOUT SAN DIEGO'S YOUTH	
CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SAN DIEGO	10
ALIGNMENT WITH KEY CITY STRATEGIC PLANS	
CYP ALIGNMENT WITH THE VARIOUS CITY STRATEGIC PLANS.....	14
CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN FOCUS AREAS	15
CREATING A CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN	
METHODS AND OBJECTIVES	18
TIMELINE	19
APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	20
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	21
DEFINING THE CYP FOCUS AREAS	
1. EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS	28
2. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	32
3. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT	36
4. ENGAGING ACTIVITIES	43
5. CHILD CARE	46
CHILD AND YOUTH ACTION PLAN	50
FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT	51
PRIORITIZING THE OBJECTIVES	57
SOURCES	58
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	59



Office of Child
and Youth Success

A photograph of several tall palm trees in the foreground, with a city skyline visible in the background under a blue sky. The city lights are visible, suggesting dusk or dawn. A teal banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, Mayor Todd Gloria and City Council approved funding to establish and bring to reality the creation of the **Office of Child and Youth Success (OCYS)**. The office aims to serve as a connection point for residents seeking supportive services and programming for children and youth ages 24 and below. The Child and Youth Plan (CYP) was developed with leadership and partnership from youth and community based organizations across San Diego. The OCYS management and student interns led much of the development, particularly throughout the specific lived-experience topic areas, community-engagement process, and through the facilitation of the small group discussions positioned through community design input sessions. This initial plan shall cover the next two years of identified objectives that are aligned with a specific goal and grounded in research, policy, and practice from proven frameworks in Positive Youth Development (16), Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (17), and National League of Cities Early Equitable Care and Education Framework (15). Each objective is aligned with an action grounded in the applicable framework.

“The CYP is a roadmap outlining the next two-years, that aims to create innovative and sustainable solutions and provide for a shared framework with local education agencies, various public and private partners, and community stakeholders, all who share a vision for improving outcomes for children, youth and families in America’s Finest City”.

The CYP includes common themes and highlights from the town halls and focus groups related to each of the identified focus areas. The subsequent steering committees, attended by experts in youth programming, were organized around these five identified focus areas. The City will partner with the County of San Diego, along with other regional stakeholders, to implement support with the County of San Diego’s Child Care Blueprint, which lays out goals, strategies, and actions aimed at improving the broken landscape and structures affecting child care access and the workforce who provide these imperative services. The City’s adopted Economic Development Strategy also lays out specific tactics and metrics aimed at strengthening the child care system for the workforce and families. Both of these plans shall be a consideration for a shared framework of goals to solve the impeding child care crisis identified in the CYP as Focus Area 5.

Understanding the City Landscape of Children and Youth

The data summary provides a glimpse into the inequities that exist within certain areas of San Diego and within the specific populations of youth. Studying the data collected here and by various partners will help benchmark our current child and youth landscape disparities to determine the best path forward to address system weaknesses in those identified areas.

Lived Experiences Shape our Future

For the context of the City of San Diego’s CYP, Child Care address programs for those twelve years of age and younger, Youth and Young Adult action strategies are intended for those twenty-six years and younger. These definitions are not intended to exclude certain aged individuals from participating in age-appropriate action strategies, therefore, there may be cross-over when there are programs developed and deployed. The CYP includes a summary of youth-led research, conducted by OCYS interns, on lived experience topics in each of these focus areas, including system weaknesses and opportunities. It is imperative that the Plan cannot solely rely on data, but understanding real lived experiences by the most marginalized youth in San Diego.

CYP Focus Areas



Education & Career Pathways



Economic & Workforce Opportunities



Youth Empowerment



Child Care



Engaging Activities

WHAT WE STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH

MISSION

The Office of Child and Youth Success is dedicated to prioritizing San Diego's youngest community by providing equitable access to programs, resources, and services that aim to improve social, emotional, health, and educational outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

Through trust, transparency, equity, and inclusion, the City of San Diego, Office of Child and Youth Success will coordinate a network of community stakeholders that contribute to a shared vision for delivering high-impact solutions to challenging circumstances for young people and caregivers who strive to build a community where they can thrive.

VISION



Create a culture of trust and transparency into the planning, developing, and execution process of the CYP to implement shared goals that address systemic inequities and challenges affecting children, youth, and their families today.



Create children and youth-centered partnerships with various local stakeholder groups and state and national conveners, to centralize processes that affect the ability to execute the CYP goals.



Leverage public and private resources and assets to support long-term sustainable programs, resources, and services that are grounded in evidence-based frameworks, which address the identified system weaknesses.

Goal 1:

Strengthen resources for programs that identify and deliver solutions that address disparities and improve access to opportunities for developing skills and connecting to strong career pathways that are in demand in the current job market, reskilling and upskilling to close talent gaps.

Goal 2:

Foster equitable opportunities for children and youth that promote strategies to obtain the necessary qualities to be resilient in economic downturns changes and secure competencies to provide long-term workforce skills and abilities.

Goal 3:

Coordinate safe, supportive and inclusive spaces and opportunities that promote child and youth empowerment within each community through coordinated partnerships that provide the ability to lead oneself to be respectful, responsible and contributing members of their community.

Goal 4:

Create engaging activities for youth and children that expand their life experiences and promote fun and enriching activities that inspire community-based activities which foster creativity and inspiration.

Goal 5:

Increase safe, quality and affordable early learning and care opportunities for San Diego families by strengthening systems, partnerships and resources for operations, facilities, funding, education (workforce) and recruitment.



Office of Child
and Youth Success



LETTERS



In 2021, A coalition of children and youth serving partners came together to advocate for the creation of a child and youth office at The City of San Diego and establish a vision in anticipation for the creation of an office dedication to children and youth priorities. The supporting agencies created an early concept for the office that would serve as a “proof of concept” (16) to establish a child, youth, and family framework for city programs, services, and intergovernmental relations. The office would support in accessing resources for children, youth, and caregivers so that raising a family in San Diego would become less burdensome than what the prior generations have had to endure.

Early concepts for The Office of Child and Youth Success according to supporting agencies, written by Funding The Next Generation Advisors, and various advocates should accomplish the following goals:

- 1. Elevate the priority and focus on making San Diego a driver of economic mobility through investments in the conditions and opportunities for children, youth, and their families;*
- 2. Center the voices of children, youth, and their families in city budgeting and in operations where they are directly impacted;*
- 3. Build authentic partnerships and impactful initiatives with community-based organizations and philanthropy to improve the ecosystem of supports and services for children, youth, and their families;*
- 4. Establish a node for collaboration among the San Diego Unified School District, San Diego Community College District, San Diego Public Library, and San Diego Parks and Recreation to expedite city support for school district priorities and leverage joint use of taxpayer resources managed by the city and school district;*
- 5. Ensure that the City is competitive for federal and state funding opportunities for children, youth, and their families with entities such as the National League of Cities;*
- 6. Facilitate changes in policies and benefits to make San Diego an exemplar family-friendly employer;*
- 7. Drive changes in long-term bottom-line metrics of child, youth, and family success, such as increased child care availability, quality, and affordability; reduced family housing insecurity; reduced child poverty; increased food security; increased youth employment; increased college matriculation and graduation; and increased women's labor force participation; and*
- 8. Help shape the City's response to COVID-19's disproportionately negative health and economic impacts on San Diego's Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color.*



A LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH SUCCESS

Dear San Diego Community,

The creation of the first-ever Child and Youth Plan is critically important so that supporting children, youth and families in our vibrant community becomes a main strategic goal for the City of San Diego. It is imperative that we work together to ensure that the City's children and youth have equitable access to essential resources and opportunities that will shape their future.

First and foremost, we must prioritize creating safe, quality, and nurturing environments where all children, youth have opportunities to thrive and have fun. For example, engaging and accessible child care and enriching out-of-school-time camps for children provide pivotal opportunities to develop and foster social skills, cognitive abilities, and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, we must address the needs of parents and caregivers by providing engaging activities that are both affordable and accessible for their children. Many families face the challenge of finding suitable activities that not only align with their budget but also provide a diverse and entertaining environment for their children. By offering a range of affordable options and ensuring the well-being of the child is the first priority, we can alleviate the concerns of caregivers and enable them to confidently enroll their children in accessible enriching experiences.

Equally important is ensuring that our youth have access to career and workforce pathways. As they transition into adulthood, it is crucial to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the ever-evolving and competitive job market. By offering career guidance, vocational training and internships, we can empower our youth to explore their passions, develop valuable skills and make informed decisions about their future.

By focusing on supporting children, youth and families in our community, we not only invest in their individual well-being but also contribute to the overall economic growth and prosperity of San Diego. A strong foundation for our children and youth translates into a brighter future for our community.

I am grateful for the individuals and the organizations that played an important role to create this plan and urge the community to continue supporting opportunities by advocating for funding and spreading awareness about the importance of these initiatives. Together, we can create a city where every child has equitable and inclusive opportunities to thrive and pursue their dreams, and every caregiver feels confident in their child's well-being.

Thank you for your attention and support. Together, let us create a city that nurtures and empowers children, youth and young adults to be contributing members of their communities.

With Gratitude,

Andrea O'Hara

Executive Director
Office of Child and Youth Success

A LETTER FROM THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO'S YOUTH COMMISSION

Youth participation and engagement within our political, social and economic systems is crucial for the development of policies and the creation of programs that advocate for youth success. As youth, our lived-experiences, perspectives and the knowledge we hold are all necessary additions to the policies and programs created to address system weaknesses. Because of youth perspectives, our voices need to be incorporated into the solution-making process of issues that affect children and youth.

Historically, youth have been underrepresented, and more so, those who identify as have immigrant, LGBTQ+ and opportunity youth. Youth possess the knowledge to advocate for our future and to ensure that San Diego becomes a city for sustainable development, social change and economic growth. To ensure youth success, we must first empower our youth with the skills necessary to build confidence to advocate for the needed change.

The first-ever Child and Youth Plan is a crucial step towards supporting the development of children, youth and families in San Diego to advocate for the opportunities needed to address the weaknesses. We are hopeful that a Child and Youth Plan will empower and incorporate the voices of young leaders in San Diego, especially South San Diego, and areas like the Promise Zone, where youth voice has been ignored for far too long. As youth commissioners, we will rely on this plan to start advocacy and action necessary to invoke the change needed in our community.

The greatest gifts a community can give its children are safe and inclusive spaces with adequate support, opportunities and pathways for growth, and appropriate environments for healthy exploration. Becoming part of the Youth Commission supports advocacy for resources, policies, and practices that help youth feel secure, valued and accepted. The Youth Commission is important with helping the community because it helps to elevate and strengthen youth voices and leadership abilities while collaborating with our local government. As a key stakeholder in San Diego, we are inspired and dedicated to build trust, build bright futures, and help create a sustainable blueprint for generations to come.

Emily Wong

Youth Commissioner, District 1

Lara Mertens

Youth Commissioner, District 3

Princess Dunn

Youth Commissioner, District 4

Jesus Martin Gallegos-Munoz

Youth Commissioner, District 8

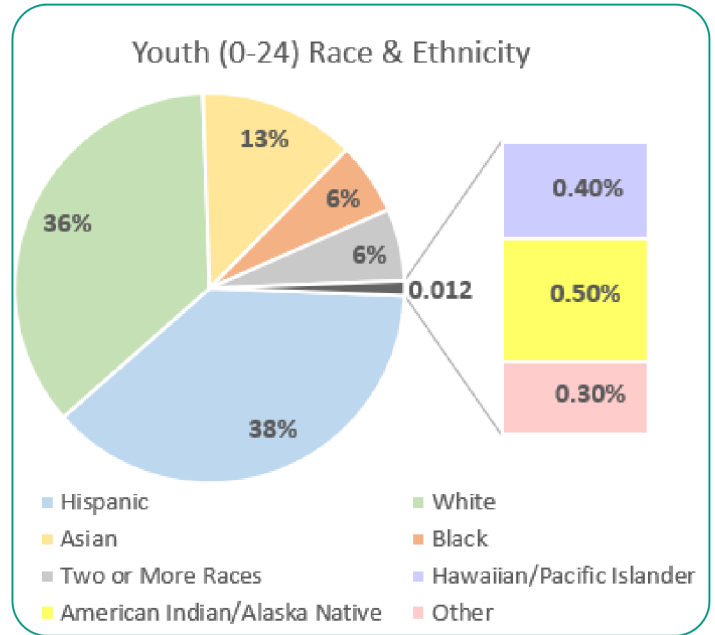


DATA ABOUT SAN DIEGO'S YOUTH

Data Summary

Children and Youth Living in San Diego (1)

Age	Number
Under 5	69,875
5 - 9	67,335
10-14	72,120
15-17	72,704
18-24	157,342
TOTAL	409,376



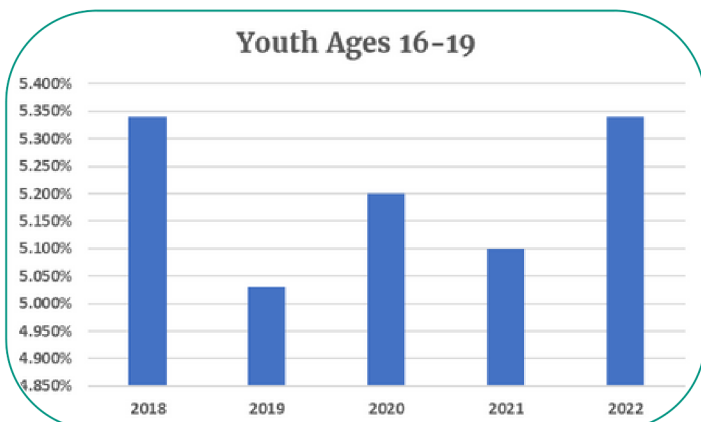
Highest Concentrations of Children & Youth

Ten ZIP codes comprise nearly half of San Diego's child and youth population:

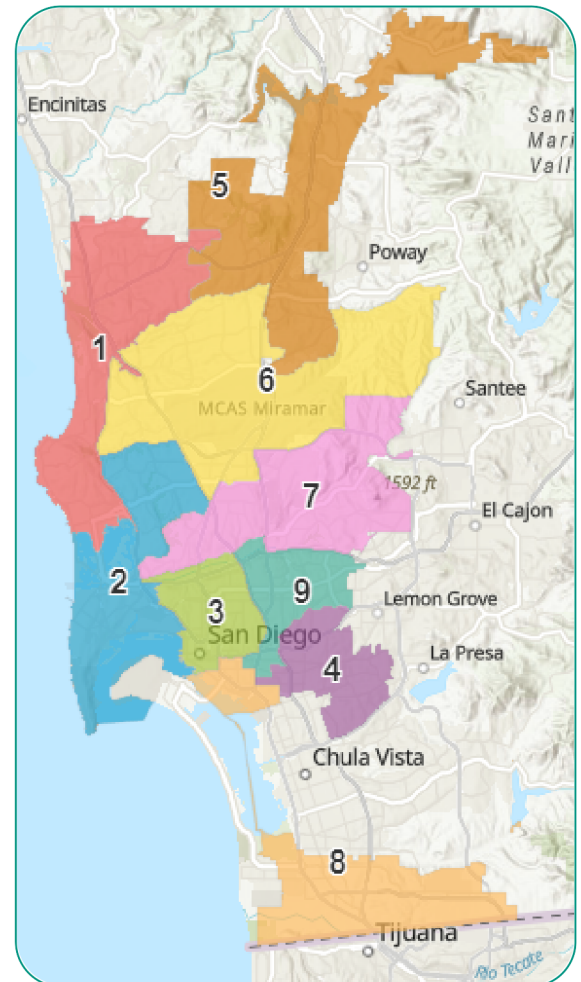
- 92154 (District 8) - 6%
- 92126 (D6)- 6%
- 92105 (D3, D4, D9) - 5%
- 92130 (D1) - 5%
- 92115 (D4) - 5%
- 92114 (D4) - 5%
- 92101 (D3) - 4%
- 92113 (D4, D9) - 4%
- 92129 (D5, D6)- 4%
- 92127 (D5) - 4%

Disconnected Youth

This chart identifies the percentage of disconnected youth in the age range of 16-19 living in San Diego County. Disconnected youth are not enrolled in school and who are unemployed or not in the labor force. (9)



City of San Diego Council Districts



Data Summary

Education

Education Levels of San Diego Youth

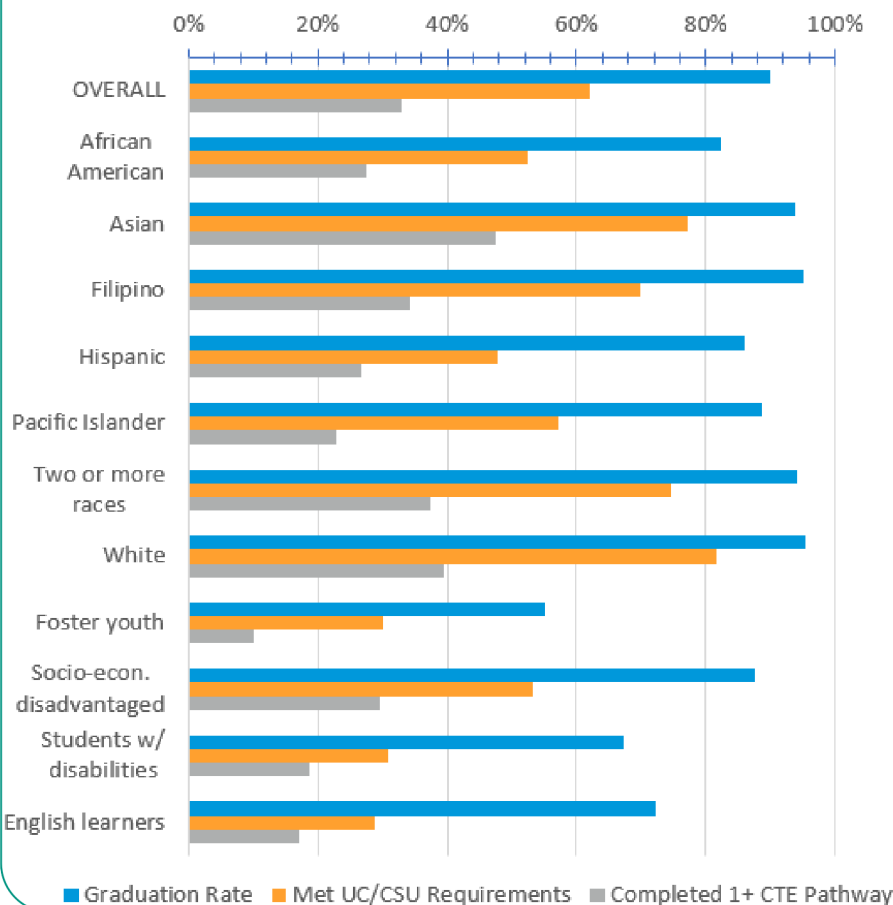
- **46%** of youth, age 18-24 hold some college work or an associate's degree.
- **16%** hold a bachelor's degree. (9)

Chronic Absenteeism

- **27%** of SDUSD students were categorized as chronically absent in 2023. (9.5% decline from 2022)
- All student groups were in the "medium" range for chronic absenteeism, with the highest rates among students with disabilities (37%), foster youth (36%), English learners (36%), Hispanic (36%), Pacific Islanders (35%), socioeconomically disadvantaged (35%) and African American students (30%). (10)

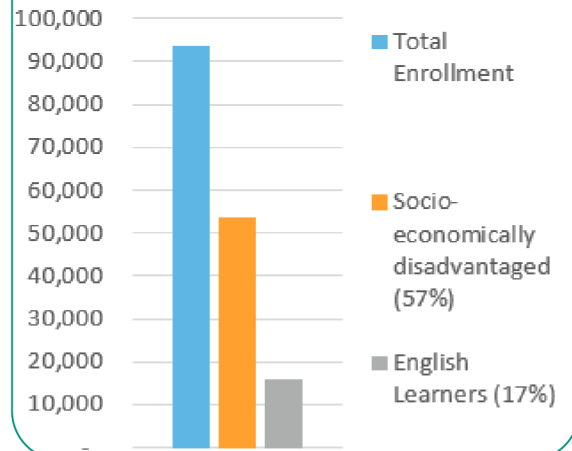
College and Career Readiness

College & Career Readiness Rates - SDUSD (10)



San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) is the school district serving the **vast** majority of students who live in the City of San Diego, with an enrollment of 93,893. (10)

SDUSD Students



Total School Enrollment-County of San Diego (13)

Enrolled in school	352,737
Enrolled in preschool	5.4%
Enrolled in Kindergarten	4.5%
Grade 1 to 4	16.4%
Grade 5-8	16.4%
Grade 9-12	17.1%
College Undergraduate	31.6%
Graduate, Professional School	5.2%

Data Summary

Socio-Economics and System Supports

Youth and Public Transportation

- In the first year of the **Youth Opportunity Pass**, providing free access to San Diego Metropolitan System (MTS) riders, 18 and under, **youth ridership has tripled** to 32,000 riders in April 2023. (11)
- **79%** of youth surveyed **plan to keep using public transportation** as adults, and **77%** said riding **public transportation feels safer** than other travel methods. (11)

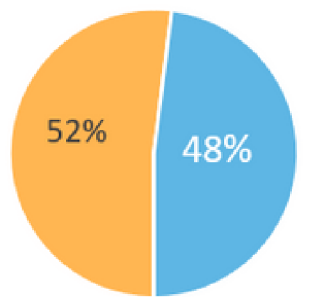
Youth in Foster Care

- SDUSD enrolls about **268 students who are in foster care**. (7)
- Within San Diego County, Black children are about 5% of the population but make up 12% of the children referred to Child Welfare Services. (8)
- Hispanic/Latinx and Black youth are more likely to remain in extended foster care than than White children. (8)

Child Care

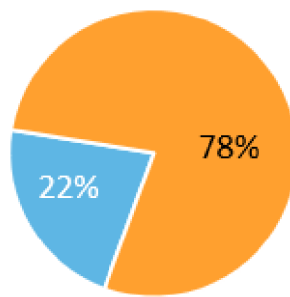
Data for San Diego County overall (12)

% of children with available licensed child care option



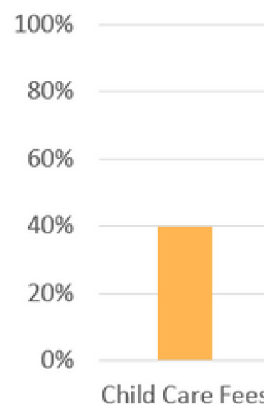
■ Available ■ Unavailable

Child care providers



■ Making a profit

Median Income



Average percent of median income spent on child care fees by a family with two young children

Socio-Economic Highlights

- **14%** of San Diego children, ages 0-17, live below the **federal poverty threshold**.
 - African American/Black children experience the highest rates of poverty (30%), followed by Hispanic/Latinx (22%). (2)
- Across San Diego County, rates for **unhoused students** are highest among Native (7.7%), Black (6.4%), Hispanic or Latino/a (5.1%), and Pacific Islander students (5.1%). The overall County rate is 3.5%. (14)
- **49%** of 0-17 year-olds live with **at least one parent who was born outside of the U.S.**
- **10%** of San Diego youth, ages 0-24, were **born outside of the U.S.**(3)
- **43%** of 11th grade SDUSD students have at least one **parent with a 4-year degree**.
 - 17% do not have a parent with a high school diploma, and 16% do not have a parent with formal education beyond a high school diploma.(4)
- About **40%** of SDSU students and **30%** of San Diego Community College District students are considered **first-generation college students**. (5, 6)

Data Sources

- 1) US Census Bureau, American Community Survey Estimates, 2022
- 2) Kidsdata.org, 2020
- 3) U.S. Census Bureau, 2022
- 4) Kidsdata.org, 2019
- 5) SDSU News Center, 2021
- 6) SDCCD Facts on File Report, 2022
- 7) Kidsdata.org, 2021
- 8) San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency, 2023

- 9) US Census Bureau, 2020
- 10) CA School Dashboard, CDE, 2023
- 11) SANDAG, 2023
- 12) University of San Diego, San Diego County Childcare Landscape, 2022
- 13) U.S. Census Bureau: 2017-2021 5- year estimates according to the 2021 Cities Demographics
- 14) San Diego Economic Equity Report, San Diego Foundation, 2023



Office of Child
and Youth Success



ALIGNMENT WITH KEY CITY STRATEGIC PLANS

ALIGNMENT WITH THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Protect & Enrich Every Neighborhood

Communities are connected to safe public spaces that offer opportunities to learn, grow and thrive.

Foster Regional Prosperity

Economic growth and opportunity happens in every community, for every San Diegan.

Champion Sustainability

San Diego offers livable, sustainable communities for all, now and in the future.

Create Homes For All Of Us

Every San Diegan has access to secure, affordable housing

Advance Mobility & Infrastructure

San Diegans have transportation and infrastructure and options that are efficient, safe and convenient



The City of San Diego's Strategic Plan focuses on the vision, mission, operating principles and priority areas for 2022 and beyond. The action-oriented plan outlines the specific outcomes, expected results and related strategies on which City leaders and employees will work collaboratively to deliver what our community needs. As part of the City's commitment to transparency, the City provides an online dashboard to keep the public updated on different areas of progress over time.

The Child and Youth Plan focuses on aligning the identified objectives with the following three strategic goals:

- Protecting and Enriching Every Neighborhood
- Championing Sustainability
- Fostering Regional Prosperity

Strategic alignment between various City plans allows those groups responsible for addressing the goals and objectives, the ability to visually see the plans' initiatives and compare strategies and opportunities. The ability to collaborate with other City departments and external stakeholders through cross-functional collaboration can increase output efficiency, drive strategy and promote fiscally responsible programs.

CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN FOCUS AREAS STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

	Education and Career Pathways	Economic and Workforce Development	Youth Empowerment	Engaging Activities
Equity Forward Master Plan City of San Diego				
Mobility Master Plan Sustainability and Mobility Department				
Affordable Home Master Plan City Planning Department				
Economic Development Strategic Plan Economic Development Department				
Arts and Culture Master Plan Arts and Culture				
Parks Master Plan Parks and Recreation Department				
Library Master Plan San Diego Public Library				
Welcoming San Diego Strategic Plan Office of Immigrant Affairs				

CREATING A CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN

CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN

The City of San Diego's first Child and Youth Plan is a roadmap of solutions created from a wide range of engagement activities and community inputs on topics critical to youth well-being and success. The data collected creates the foundation for a roadmap of solutions that benefit children, youth, and families in America's Finest City. This is the City of San Diego's first Child and Youth Plan.

METHODS

Creating the Child and Youth Plan is a coordinated effort through community conversations, focus groups, town halls, and various ecosystems, focused on specific age-ranges of children and youth. The City will focus on implementing goals and objectives that align with City strategic plans to increase output efficiency, drive strategy, and promote fiscally responsible programs.

OBJECTIVES

The City of San Diego's Child and Youth Plan is the intentional roadmap that creates a shared vision of services, programs, and resources that will support equitable cross-generational solutions for sustainable goals that uplift the voices of children, youth, and families in San Diego.

The Child and Youth Plan (CYP) builds off of community conversations lead by intentional focus groups and steering committees shaped with cross-sector leaders represented by a broad range of organizations, institutions, and individuals that possess lived and technical experience in contributing, supporting and leading in their sector. It is with these voices and co-creating with OCYS and youth organizations that the Child and Youth Plan was created.





TIMELINE



PHASE 1
 SEPTEMBER 2022
 TO
 JUNE 2023

Phase One of the Child and Youth Plan (CYP) focused on selecting Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego that had experience and skills in organizing Youth and Family virtual and in-person focus-groups. The organization was responsible for ensuring equitable and inclusive virtual and in-person focus groups. Additionally, the Office of Child and Youth success established steering committees with diverse organizations who co-created with youth leaders age specific ecosystems. This parallel path provided for the framework to successfully create diverse community engagement.

PHASE 2
 JULY 2023
 TO
 JUNE 2024

Phase Two of the Child and Youth Plan is the design phase. The Office of Child and Youth Success, in collaboration with SAY San Diego, designed an actionable plan to address inequitable and disproportionate systems based on feedback collected during the town halls, focus groups, and steering committees. The design phase provides the actionable strategies and recommendations needed to satisfy any concerns and deficiencies identified in the current programs, services, and resources identified.

PHASE 3
 JULY 2024
 TO
 JUNE 2025

Phase Three of the Child and Youth Plan will be the implementation phase. The Office of Child and Youth Success, in collaboration with the steering committees and partner organizations, will begin to address the areas of goals, objections, actionable strategies through the potential partners in a specific timeframe.

OUTREACH

Children and Youth Serving Organizations

The children and youth steering committees were comprised of individuals representing cross-sector organizations that serve children, youth and caregivers. The committees provided input, concepts, aspirations, and solutions that support San Diego’s youngest community and the support the systems as identified during analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.



YOUTH & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CITY COUNCIL, COMMITTEE, AND ORGANIZATION OUTREACH

The Office of Child and Youth Success conducted outreach to all nine City Council Offices, Community Neighborhood Service Committee, Parks & Recreation Board, to solicit their feedback on their expectations for OCYS. San Diego County Office of Education - Local Planning Council.



VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The first outreach event was conducted virtually occurring in collaboration with the City Council representative for each nine areas. Over 100 individuals attended to provide initial thoughts and input on creating a Child and Youth Plan.



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT FOCUS GROUPS

Next, throughout the summer of 2023, occurring in person and virtually, over 33 focus groups were conducted that were majority youth and youth young adults, resulting in close to 300 youth providing feedback on their needs in the community.



COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION STEERING COMMITTEES

Thirteen Steering Committee Meetings were scheduled over a 4-month period to include experts skilled at working with, and providing resources for youth and young adults. Over 85 organizations and community stakeholders came together to review the draft plan, discuss objections, develop action strategies, and create actions, timeframe that would ultimately create the plan.



ONLINE FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITES- PRIORITIZING OBJECTIVES

An online feedback form was posted on the City website for 60 days so that individuals can share responses, comments, and suggestions for the working draft plan. Additionally, OCYS presented the plan to a group of college students enrolled in the school of public affairs at SDSU. Students had the opportunity to prioritize the objective areas and provide input on the plan as an assignment.

TOWN HALLS

OBJECTIVES + ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

FOCUS AREAS OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH PLAN

EDUCATION + CAREER PATHWAYS

ECONOMIC + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

CHILD CARE

Town hall participants broke into small discussion groups that were organized by age: 14-17 years old; 18-24 years old; and 25+ years old. Each group included members of the OCYS and SAY outreach team, who were primarily youth or young adults to facilitate the discussion and take notes. The discussions applied general questions to each of the CYP focus areas.

What's working well today?

Barriers + challenges

Community support for a successful future

Ideas + opportunities for the future

DIGITAL + PRINT MEDIA

- Media Release from City Communications
- Over 200 flyers printed and dispersed
- Media Kit emailed to local community partners for cross-posting
- Social Media Posts on Instagram and Twitter

TELEVISION APPEARANCES

- NBC Telemundo
- KUSI in the morning
- Local Fox evening news

COLLABORATION WITH COUNTY AND EDUCATION PARTNERS FOR CROSS-PROMOTION

- San Diego Unified, San Diego Community College District, San Diego County Office of Education, and County of San Diego Live Well Office

SUMMARY REPORT OF VIRTUAL TOWNHALLS

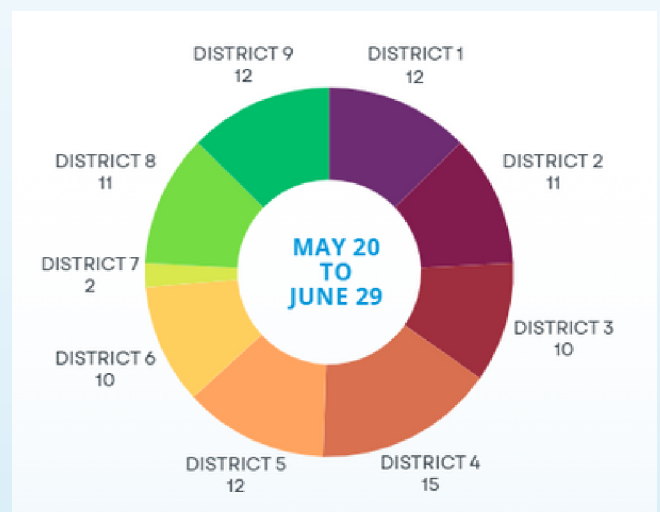


Virtual town hall meetings occurred during Phase 1 in developing the CYP. These also allowed for communities to provide public input on focus areas for the Child and Youth Plan. To support reaching all parts of the city, OCYS partnered with each City Councilmember’s office to co-host a town hall. Each town hall occurred virtually on the Zoom video conference platform and was available in multiple languages if requested by registrants. The agenda for each town hall included a welcome and introduction by the OCYS executive director, and a co-hosting City Councilmember; an overview of the Child and Youth Plan; and community discussions in small breakout groups to gather input on each focus area of the CYP. The town halls were organized and facilitated by Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego.

AGES OF PARTICIPANTS



DISTRICT 1	June 28, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Joe LaCava
DISTRICT 2	June 29, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Jennifer Campbell
DISTRICT 3	June 14, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Stephen Whitburn
DISTRICT 4	June 3, 2023, 10 a.m. - noon Council President Pro Tem Monica Montgomery Steppe
DISTRICT 5	May 30, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Marni von Wilpert
DISTRICT 6	May 25, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Kent Lee
DISTRICT 7	June 1, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Raul Campillo
DISTRICT 8	May 31, 2023, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Councilmember Vivian Moreno
DISTRICT 9	May 20, 2023, 10 a.m. - noon Council President Sean Elo-Rivera



SUMMARY REPORT OF YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS



INTRODUCTION

In Phase 2, OCYS conducted 33 Focus Groups to expand on what was learned through the virtual town halls. The purpose of Focus Groups and Listening Sessions were to provide youth, young adults and their families a judgment-free platform to express their thoughts, ideas and concerns about the issues and challenges youth and young adults in San Diego face today and expect in the future.

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

OCYS partnered with Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego, and grassroots partners to develop and conduct a multi-pronged communications and outreach approach. Additionally, young adult interns were identified and supported to lead these facilitation and note-taking efforts. This was a priority to ensure the youth providing their feedback felt comfortable during the sessions.

Interns were provided training and capacity building opportunities on how to run focus groups, both in-person and virtually. Topics included facilitation, note-taking and communication with organizational partners. The utilization of interns as part of this work has provided young adults interested in the field of public health, city government and working with youth-serving organizations the opportunity to learn new skills, put their education into practice and connect with city government.

INFORMATIONAL FLYERS

Flyers created to use as social media content to promote the anonymous questionnaire that was shared with partners, youth groups and on social media to engage those who were not able to participate in a focus group/listening session. SAY also provided direct recruitment to youth who have historically been underserved with resources pertaining to the focus areas so that their voice was elevated in the process.



FOCUS GROUP DATE	ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNER	
6/18, 6/24, 6/25, 6/30, 7/9, 7/15, 7/19, 7/21,	House of Restoration Community Connections	
6/22, 8/1, 8/3, 8/7, 8/9, 8/14, 8/18, 8/22, 8/29, 9/13, 9/15, 9/20, 9/21, 9/28	SAY San Diego	
6/23, 6/25, 7/9, 7/23, 7/28, 8/1, 8/3	Project AWARE	

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

FOCUS AREA	DESCRIPTION	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Youth Empowerment	<p>“Youth empowerment is about being able to pursue your dreams and interests with help if you need it, without others judging you – basically, to be what you want to be.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find resources to make positive changes in your life and in your community? • How would having a mentor figure improve your life? That could be personally, academically, or professionally. • What supportive services are available to help people struggling with mental health?
Education + Career Pathways	<p>“Education is about how your community gets you ready to graduate and take the next step to college or the workforce, depending on their individual path and goals.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us about some of the opportunities your peers have access to that you wish you had? • What types of educational opportunities are offered in your community that align with what you want to study, or the type of career you want to pursue after graduation? • What is one thing that would have made a difference or had a positive impact in your educational journey?
Economic + Workforce Development	<p>“Opportunities that can be obtained through valuable apprenticeships, mentorships and internships. For people who are not academic all-stars, may see their strength flourish in a career focused on a trade that does not require a college education.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources does your community offer to support you in preparing for internships or jobs in the field you are interested in? How has your cultural background/social identity affected you in getting a job, internship, or other positions? • What do you think your community could do to support you in learning how to manage your money effectively? What does being financially stable mean to you? • What factors or resources do you rely on to ensure access to safe sleeping arrangements and housing?
Engaging Activities	<p>“Engaging Activities is about ensuring our neighborhoods are positive places for youth with fun things to do and good places to go. That could be being part of a sports team, exploring your hobbies, or spending time with friends”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes it difficult to engage in activities, events, programs outside of your neighborhood? • What kind of safe spaces (physically and emotionally) do you seek or wish to have when you're not at home, work or in your community?
Child Care	<p>“The City of San Diego is working to increase the safety, affordability, and accessibility of child care and early education opportunities.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some ways your community can support you with child care needs? Do you know of any available and affordable child care resources? • If you had to care for your own child or sibling(s), how has it impacted your opportunities related to school/work? • What kind of camps or after-school programs would have made a meaningful difference in your personal growth and development?

SUMMARY REPORT OF FOCUS GROUPS



A number of common themes came through the Youth Focus Groups/Listening Sessions, including:

"Many identified that cultural differences, gender and ethnicity were all factors that impact access to resources."

"There is a need for inclusive, safe spaces and mentorship. Many stated that mentors would make an enormous impact in their educational and professional journeys."

"Resources to help understand the idea of identity, and how to help someone figure out the right path for them."

"Many identified that cultural differences, gender and ethnicity were all factors that impact access to resources."

"There should be a centralized place for various types of resources."

"Neighborhood safety and homelessness is a concern."

"There is a lack of resources on and off school campuses, such as mental health resources, financial literacy courses or workshops, mentors, and tutoring."

"In addition to academics, there is a need for learning the basic skills to survive as an adult."

"Youth are experiencing a lot of stress, now more than ever."

"There are limited public transportation resources especially accessibility on school campuses and in their communities."

"More community centers are needed to keep youth safe."

"Gang violence in neighborhoods poses a challenge when it comes to finding jobs, getting an education and traveling outside one's neighborhood."

"There is a need for strong social safety nets, including the demand for safe spaces does the LGBTQIA+ community."

"Provide better access to basic needs, such as housing, transportation, child care and mental health services."

"There is a need for financial literacy classes, free anger management, counseling/courses, and access to internships and career opportunities to try different fields and careers in high school."

"Educators need more training to support students with health/mental health issues."

SUMMARY REPORT OF ONLINE SURVEY

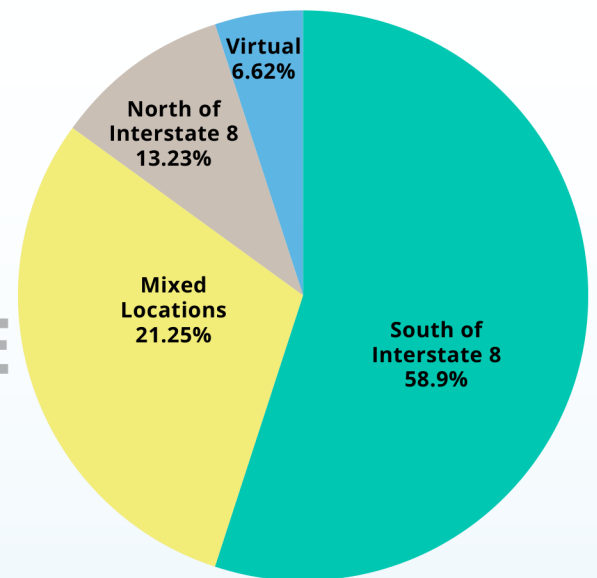


Age ranges from the youth participants were 14-30 years of age, with a hand-full of young participating between the ages of 8-14. Primarily, the focus groups encompassed youth ages 14-18. Some focus groups included youth ages 19-25. Although the majority of the focus groups were mixed-races, the summary below is an estimation of how the youth identified. The partner organizations facilitating the focus group provided 229 gift cards as incentives to participate.

Number of Youth identifying as BIPOC and other	161	Number of Youth identifying as Refugee/ New Immigrant	7
Number of Youth identifying as Asian	20	Number of Youth identifying as Female only	62
Number of Youth Identifying as Hispanic/Latinx	99	Youth that identified as LGBTQIA+	25

Location of the Youth Focus Groups

North of Interstate 8 - 38 participants
 South of Interstate 8 - 169 participants
 Mixed locations: 61 participants
 Virtual: 19 participants
Total = 287 participants

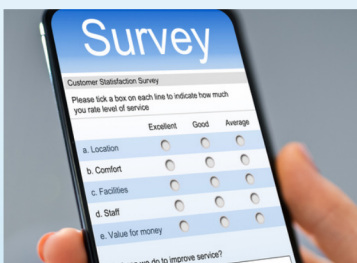


ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

To accommodate individuals who were unable to participate in a Town Hall or Focus Group/Listening Session, an online questionnaire encompassing similar topics was available on the Office of Child and Youth Success website. The link was emailed to community partners, schools, and promoted after every town hall.

The questions were organized into these topics:

- **Youth Empowerment:** How our youth pursue their dreams and interests with help and without judgement. How can we make it better?
- **Education and Career Pathways:** How school gets youth ready to graduate and take the next step to college or the workforce, depending on their goals?
- **Economic and Workforce Development:** How we ensure there are non-college choices like job training, trade schools, and other options. What makes it difficult to live here?
- **Engaging Activities:** How we make our neighborhoods positive places for youth with fun things to do and places to go. What makes our city special and a fun place to grow up?
- **Child Care:** How we make child care and early education safer, more affordable, and more available?



Over 60% of respondents to the online survey were youth. A total of seventy one (71) individuals answered the anonymous questionnaire, 70 in English and 1 in Spanish.

STEERING COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES



The Steering Committees were formed through outreach to local organizations that have a vested interest in improving systems for children, youth, and families. In coordination with SAY San Diego and the Office of Child and Youth Success, Steering Committee organizations attended up to twelve meetings to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that the San Diego community possesses in areas of economic and workforce development, career and education pathways, youth empowerment, and engaging activities. The youth interns employed by SAY San Diego and the Office of Child and Youth Success were trained to lead the facilitation of these intentional conversations. The organizations shared their knowledge and expertise in the identified focus areas.

The feedback was collected through an interactive meeting tool and then transposed into the creation of the Goals, Objectives, and recommendations.

Identifying System Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

<p>MEETING ONE October 2023</p>	<p>Strengths: Focused on what organizations do well, qualities of successful programs, and great skills, and unique resources that exist in the community.</p>
<p>MEETING TWO November 2023</p>	<p>Weaknesses and Threats: Focused on organization’s areas of weaknesses or challenges that pose a limit on deployment of resources.</p>
<p>MEETING THREE December 2023</p>	<p>Opportunities: Focused on exploring new ideas and opportunities that provide an impactful system of resource capacities.</p>

- ECONOMIC + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION + CAREER PATHWAYS
- YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
- ENGAGING ACTIVITIES
- CHILD CARE





Office of Child
and Youth Success



FOCUS AREA OF EDUCATION & CAREER PATHWAYS



FOCUS AREA 1

Goal Statement:

Strengthen resources for programs that identify and deliver solutions that address disparities and improve access to opportunities for developing skills and connecting to strong career pathways that are in demand in the current job market, reskilling and upskilling to close talent gaps.

SUMMARY FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL AND FOCUS GROUPS MEETINGS

Common themes and highlights about Education and Career Pathways from the Town Hall and Focus Groups meetings include:

- While education is primarily the responsibility of schools, education and learning occur in broader settings and are reflected in many types of achievements.
- Students should be encouraged to explore options for their education and enrichment efforts, including in their initial steps in career development, such as a range of degrees, accreditations, and certifications.
- Exploring options may occur through career fairs, internships, hands-on experiences, and community engagement.
- School curriculum should include a greater focus on life skills such as financial literacy, healthy and active living, and similar topics.
- As our city continues to welcome a greater diversity of cultures and languages, education and support systems must continue to diversify their outreach, communication, and service delivery.
- There were concerns regarding students' access to courses that align with their future career aspirations. The current school curriculum often falls short in adequately preparing students for the workforce and college.
- Additional access to mentors and tutors would be an invaluable support for students' educational and career journeys.
- Desire for a more diverse set of elective courses, including home-economics, a broader array of language courses, and specialized classes for college preparation skills.

SYSTEM STRENGTHS

- Diversity of employment opportunities exist in our region.
- Opportunities exist early in life for many youth.
- Holistic experiences are available that include work-based learning and mentorships.
- Career readiness opportunities are available in some areas through local education partners.
- Volunteer opportunities are available for youth to gain needed experience for college applications.
- Community outreach and support systems are available in most areas.
- Educational case management is offered to support with career coaching.
- One-on-one meetings are available in most high-school and charter schools for referrals to tutors, mentors, and college preparation.
- Continued education support for future educators are free to low cost.
- School districts offer dual enrollment in college courses for high school students.
- San Diego youth are diverse, multi-lingual, global citizens bringing knowledge to peers and colleagues.

SYSTEM WEAKNESSES

- We need to acknowledge employers are large part of creating pathways (building bridges).
- Rules and program creation is out of the hands of organizations and offered to larger corporations.
- There is a lack of sustainable funding to support collaboration and partnerships.
- Staff capacity to being able to support the youth that are seeking supportive services and programs.
- The public perception of the youth that are receiving the needed services.
- Families face multifaceted inequities.
- Funding to help lead collaboration with other agencies is needed.
- Keeping up with resource updates is challenging.
- Having direct access to youth to provide services.
- There is limited education around the types of services being offered: mental health education, specifically
- Finding partnerships and visibility within the community is challenging.
- Marketing the programs is a weakness.
- Transportation access, affordable housing & livelihood, school structure
- Well-known organizations are typically recognized first for funding opportunities.
- A priority list is needed to determine the need for the individual.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH RESEARCH

Youth interns were tasked with identifying and researching system weaknesses that are affecting children and youth's ability to reach their maximum potential. These topics are rooted through lived-experiences, and refined by exploring community circumstances and passionate research. Conducting research looked different to each intern and after various topic refinement, the following system weaknesses were chosen as topics that present areas for opportunities to address the community deficiencies.

TOPIC	SUMMARY
<p>Critical Life Skills and Mentorship</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth feel that schools are not preparing students for graduation with the knowledge of adequate critical life skills, such as; personal finance, time management, goal-setting, budgeting, critical thinking, self-care, communication, and problem-solving.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Creating programs and developing curricula would help the most vulnerable youth with navigating a career pathway and preparing them for difficult situations. Critical life skills are often overlooked in basic education curricula. Mentorships or critical life skill programs in schools or community centers could help the most vulnerable students overcome challenges with social, economic, and emotional needs. Additionally, advocating for policy change that require all 12th grade students to seek out a qualified mentor or participate in a program that offers critical life skill education that encompasses; personal finance, time management, goal-setting, budgeting, critical thinking, self-care, communication, and problem-solving.</p>
<p>Education System Collaboration (Student Chronic Absenteeism)</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth feel that parents and guardians do not understand the importance that school attendance for students has on adulthood success. Chronic absenteeism has nearly tripled post-pandemic. According to the National League of Cities, between the 2018-19 and 2021-22 school years, chronic absence increased from 12.1% to 30% in California. The students who are chronically absent are disproportionately students of color and students from vulnerable populations, such as youth in foster care, students experiencing housing instability, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Educators could acquire the barriers to attendance during school enrollment to better support with transportation, health, school climate, and personal challenges. Additionally, a system of support should be established between the youth and their guardians after a series of absences.</p>
<p>Education System collaboration (Adulthood Transitions)</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth noticed that among their peers there is a lack of awareness to resources that support with adulthood transitions. Young adults are missing out on critical opportunities which could support them during difficult times due to their unawareness of available resources in the community.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: There is an urgent need for improved communication and outreach efforts between schools, families, and community groups to ensure that valuable resources reach those who need them to reach their full potential.</p>

TOPIC	SUMMARY
<p>Arts & Culture</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth have expressed the need to revitalize the City's Arts & Cultural programs and activities aimed for youth and young adults. Additionally, Youth have expressed the desire to provide equitable and quality STEAM opportunities throughout our public spaces to address the inequities of BIPOC students having inequitable access to career pathways related to STEAM occupations. STEAM is an educational movement that stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Providing this learning approach to the youth will help nurture their long-term academic skills and broaden their perspectives and pathways. Students will learn to incorporate creativity to the issues and challenges they face. Research performed in summer of 2023 showed that on average 90% of arts organizations were still closed or partially closed after the pandemic. Amounting to an estimated \$96.6 million lost revenue. Of those organization that were able to reopen, 95% reported program reduction, Amounting in \$79.4 million. 65% of the organizations that reopened reported a decline rate of donations that had previously help to sustain programming and offer scholarships to the lower wage-earning families.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Investment in arts aimed at youth and young adults could ensure the overall improvement in social and mental health and decrease the number of opportunity youth who have yet to cultivate their creative expression in a meaningful way. Additionally, opportunity youth who are struggling with finding arts and culture employment could use these types programs and activities as a way to gain a career path or future entrepreneurship opportunities.</p>
<p>Literacy & Technology</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth observed that teens and young adults allocate a greater portion of their time to digital media and less time to reading. Extensive polling and research findings shed light on a rather concerning trend among the younger generation. Data showed that not only are less youth reading, but according to the San Diego Council on Literacy, only 43% of 3rd graders in San Diego Unified meet the standard for language arts. Additionally, fewer than 20% of young individuals report engaging in the act of reading a book, magazine, or any form of literary media purely for pleasure, while a striking 80% express a preference for using social media platforms as their primary source of entertainment and engagement during their leisure time. This shift in leisure preferences reveals a considerable disconnect between the traditional enjoyment of reading and the contemporary allure of social media. The data underscores the evolving landscape of recreational activities, where digital connectivity and social interaction via online platforms have become the dominant choices for youth, potentially posing challenges for the promotion of literacy and a culture of reading for enjoyment.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: A significant investment in creating a sustainable support system for literacy engagement would create the largest Return on Investment (ROI) for youth programming. The data pointed out that 70% of white students are proficient while a disproportionate Black students at 40% and Latinx students at 44%. Investment in early learning and out of school time opportunities for younger students presents more opportunities to be engaged in literacy at an earlier age.</p>



Office of Child
and Youth Success



FOCUS AREA OF ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



FOCUS AREA 2

Goal Statement: Foster equitable opportunities for children and youth that promote strategies to obtain the necessary qualities to be resilient in economic downturns changes and also secure competencies to provide long-term workforce skills and abilities.

SUMMARY FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL AND FOCUS GROUPS MEETINGS

Common themes and highlights about **Workforce Development** from the Virtual Town Hall (VTH) meetings and Focus Groups.

- Non-college pathways and opportunities for advanced education and career development should be better promoted, respected, and supported.
- Through expanded partnerships with trade and vocational programs, school districts can further expose all youth to these options and provide affiliated curricula, internships, and credits that count in earning a high school diploma.
- Resources such as public transportation, mental health supports, child care, and others that are tied to the one's ability to work are critical.
- Youth and young adults who particularly struggle to see themselves on a college pathway for a variety of reasons (e.g., career interests, financial constraints, accessibility) should be prioritized in opportunities and supports for alternative pathways.
- Perspectives about workforce development were often shaped by the communities in which participants live. While some noted that their schools regularly organize job fairs, provide access to academic programs, and offer job readiness courses, others noted a lack of opportunities in their communities.
- A majority of participants stated that their ethnicity does not affect their access to opportunities, yet several voiced different opinions, identifying their age, appearance, and color of their skin as impacting their available opportunities.
- A need for comprehensive financial literacy courses, including topics like building credit, navigating taxes, effective money saving strategies.

SYSTEM STRENGTHS

- High school students are able to obtain college credits.
- There are opportunities to align education with professionals.
- Many opportunities offer compensation for participation.
- Incentives are available for first-born college students.
- Mentorships are available.
- Understanding funding and resources that are available to address the challenges.
- Diverse employment opportunities are available.
- Many career pathways have multiple entry points.
- Interest-based programs for youth are available.
- Community partnerships are formed for accessing resources
- Preventative programs are available to meet the whole family.
- Diverse post-high school options are available.
- Staff commitment is recognized.
- Organizations collaborate with families and support systems.
- College readiness programs are available.
- There is a shared service alliance.
- Virtual learning on various platforms is available.

SYSTEM WEAKNESSES

- Overemphasis on college readiness in public schools leads to a lack of support for students pursuing vocational careers and programs.
- There is a lack of trust in government procurement process, fueled by concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse.
- There are often long waitlists for referrals and after school hour programming access is limited.
- School districts prioritize competition over collaboration, focusing on admission and graduation rates due to financial incentives.
- Legal issues and bureaucracy overpower youth-serving organizations when making procedural changes.
- Language regarding alternatives to college should be revised.
- A directory and/or community calendar for resources of all organizations and departments is lacking.
- Small organizations feel compelled to change objectives in order to secure funding.
- A gap for learners with special needs exists.
- There is bias surrounding "alternative" college paths.

There is an absence of applied apprenticeships and trade exploration curricula is not required in middle school, high school, and community college.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH RESEARCH

Youth interns were tasked with identifying and researching system weaknesses that are affecting children and youth's ability to reach their maximum potential. These topics are rooted through lived-experiences, and refined by exploring community circumstances and passionate research. Conducting research looked different to each intern and after various topic refinement, the following system weaknesses were chosen as topics that present areas for opportunities to address the community deficiencies.

TOPIC	SUMMARY
Youth Businesses (Entrepreneurship)	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth notice that in certain regions, limited job opportunities that promote career advancement for young adults are a prevailing concern. Venturing into creating a business at a young age can offer numerous advantages, however, young adults have limited guidance and resources on entrepreneurship as a career opportunity, especially in communities where the college level education demographics is low. Handling a business can teach youth many skills that will help establish foundational life skills, such as critical thinking, innovation, networking, self-discipline, problem-solving, and teamwork. Skills such as these will set youth up for their long-term success in many areas of their life. According to a news article by CNBC, 60% of teens are thinking differently about their future employment and are more attracted to starting their own businesses. Based on a survey, 45% of them want to learn from experienced business owners and 37% are interested in learning more through integrated or after-school entrepreneurship programs. Results less prove significant interest and should be considered highly for middle and high school curriculums.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Prioritizing entrepreneurship courses in the education systems and through local community spaces support young adult entrepreneurship. Additionally, providing incentives to small-business owners to provide workshops about their journeys and lived-experiences of entrepreneurship.</p>
Planning + Placemaking	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth communicated the idea of placemaking is lacking in our community. They described this as a collaborative process that centers on a community's physical, cultural, and social identities to guide the design of public spaces. The aim is to create safe and enjoyable public spaces accessible to all, with a particular emphasis on improving the equitable distribution of quality public spaces in underserved communities. Additionally, the connection between families of various income levels is rooted in smart growth principles. Neighborhoods featuring a diversity of housing types tend to attract residents from different income brackets.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: By creating more of these mixed-use neighborhoods, we can offer children unique educational opportunities. The fusion of placemaking and smart growth principles is pivotal in fostering communities with a strong sense of belonging for their residents. Creating a seamless and sustainable funding source for the maintenance and construction of public spaces is a multifaceted endeavor that demands careful planning and execution. By implementing smart growth principles and promoting effective place-making in public spaces, we can bring together families from various income levels and create opportunities for youth to thrive.</p>
Transportation	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth and young adults that rely on public transportation face challenges accessing due to the lack of understanding and education it takes to access the services. The lack of access hinders the ability to use public transit with ease and makes transportation to school, jobs/internships, after-school activities, and other destinations a challenge and even discouraging. According to transportation data, youth represent about 26% of the region's population, nonetheless, young people under 19 years of age make up only 10% of bus riders and only 7% of trolley riders.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Transportation and transit departments should invest in providing resources and education to youth on the digital systems used to access public transit. Increased promotion in high schools will also bring awareness to the capabilities and accessibilities public transit can have for youth. Additionally, ensuring that public transit is safe and inviting for young people would create a more welcoming environment and access to job opportunities outside of their walkable neighborhood.</p>

TOPIC

SUMMARY

Juvenile + Criminal Justice

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth observed an over representation of black and brown youth when looking at statistical data when it came to arrest and higher rates of prior contact with the criminal justice system. The youth that researched this topics compared the statistical data with the number and the locations of police stations, with a focus on Southwestern (SW) versus Northern (North) stations. Additionally, studying the ARJIS (Automated Regional Justice Information System) information system to see the locations of the law enforcement agencies, the recent neighborhood field reports, and volume of arrests.

OPPORTUNITY: Analyzing the data and information gathered by the various systems may provide insights into the disparities in arrests and overrepresentation of black and brown youth in the criminal justice system in comparison to their population proportions. This research can serve as a foundation for understanding and addressing over policing practices and serve as a tool to understand how intervention could reduce youth behind bars. This studying and investment of resources may require reallocating funding towards intervention and rehabilitation centers as well as, creating youth diversion programs. There may be hesitancy in the community to shift away from punitive measures due to concerns that it could increase safety risks. Balancing the need for intervention and rehabilitation and the safety of the community will be a crucial aspect of addressing the incarceration of youth and promoting more effective, sustainable solutions.

Financial Literacy

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth stated that credit card companies are focusing their efforts on college campuses to persuade students to apply for credit cards. These companies attract students with various offers and incentives, luring youth into accumulating credit card debt and becoming saddled with high-interest debt, which can have adverse effects on their financial stability for years.

OPPORTUNITY: Creating barriers for credit card companies to be on college campuses could decrease the accessibility to easily targeted youth. Additionally, providing credit card debt education and financial literacy courses as part as high school curriculum would educate those who would be of on seeking credit cards as a form of financial stability and the risks associated with credit cards.



Office of Child
and Youth Success



FOCUS AREA OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



FOCUS AREA 3

Goal Statement: Coordinate safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces and opportunities that promote child and youth empowerment within each community through coordinated partnerships that provide the ability to lead oneself to be respectful, responsible, and contributing members of their community.

SUMMARY FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL AND FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Common themes about Youth Empowerment from the Virtual Town Hall (VTH) and Focus Group meetings:

- Overall, our community and civic institutions must strive to “meet youth where they are,” providing support and encouragement in ways that are meaningful, relevant, and accessible to each person.
 - Empowering youth and young adults mean they feel heard, valued, respected, supported, and included in the community.
 - Ensuring the security of youth and caregivers’ basic needs is foundational to their ability to pursue their dreams and thrive, including but not limited to finances, safety, housing, healthcare, childcare, mobility, mental health, and similar needs.
 - Mentorship and positive examples—whether personal, academic, or professional—that provide guidance to youth and young adults are valuable and should be provided by those who reflect a given youth’s culture, race, ethnicity, lived experiences, and similar characteristics.
 - Building community awareness of current and future resources, supports, and programs must continue to improve via multiple methods, such as outreach, workshops, topical websites, social media, and other youth-oriented methods.
 - Need for a dedicated website/center aimed at centralizing resources.
 - Accessibility of supportive services for people’s mental health is varied; some schools/communities offer dedicated programs, while they are absent in other schools/communities.
-

SYSTEM STRENGTHS

- Systems are focusing on teaching the value of vulnerability as a strength.
 - Organizations that create close connections with youth could catch issues before they are exacerbated.
 - Many organizations cultivate consistent, brave, and safe spaces for youth, including artistic and creative outlets.
 - Many organizations foster a youth-centered approach, including youth-led forums.
 - Many organizations involve people with lived experience in providing relevant services.
 - By delivering trauma informed care, organizations empower youth to live their experiences and encourage social emotional learning tools.
 - Organizations hold reasonable expectations for youth, there seems to be momentum building in youth involvement.
 - Multifaceted approaches are adopted.
 - Technology integration can keep youth connected with programs.
 - Gardening and environmental workshops are available to promote nature-forward programming.
 - Intentional revenue streams support youth programming.
 - Fun community engagement opportunities include paid internships and after school programs.
 - Social media education, responsibility, and healthy use on consumption are beginning to be a norm.
 - Many organizations place family voice and choice at the center of decision making.
 - Drug education, mental health supports systems, and community involvement are available.
 - Culture and identity focused resources are available.
-

SYSTEM WEAKNESSES

- Practical and sustainable approaches are needed for preventing and supporting trauma, encompassing both trauma-informed and non-trauma informed care.
 - Connections and resources are often limited with community and neighborhood partners.
 - There is a lack of partnerships and collaborations between organizations, trust among leaders, and bureaucratic obstacles with school districts. There is often lack of follow up with youth.
 - Gentrification affects equitable support and opportunities for youth.
 - There are high expectations and lack of support for youth. Many youths feel unrealistic expectations when trying to reach the next level.
 - More civic/local government classes are needed to help youth feel more comfortable and empowered to voice their opinion to policy makers.
 - Program funding and distribution at the district level is inequitable.
 - Organizations face challenges in making resources accessible to youth, including time constraints and limited flexibility due to youth's schedules, capacity levels, and lack of understanding and outreach to meet youth's basic needs (e.g., housing concerns, transportation, economic strife).
 - Groups and neighborhoods should be identified and specified, to effectively assist those who require support.
- Organizations face challenges of addressing threats and hate groups while still supporting BIPOC and LGBTQIA youth.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH RESEARCH

Youth interns were tasked with identifying and researching system weaknesses that are affecting children and youth's ability to reach their maximum potential. These topics are rooted through lived-experiences, and refined by exploring community circumstances and passionate research. Conducting research looked different to each intern and after various topic refinement, the following system weaknesses were chosen as topics that present areas for opportunities to address the community deficiencies.

TOPIC	SUMMARY
<p>Self-Care (Healthy & Inclusive Relationships)</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth feel that there is a lack of education for teenagers and youth adults on the importance of cultivating healthy relationships is lacking. This educational gap is particularly concerning in the context of the prevalent issue of intimate partner violence, which has detrimental effects on the well-being of today's youth.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Provide inclusive programming at recreation centers and libraries for services that promote healthy relationships. Additionally, fostering a stronger connection with at risk youth by creating city spaces that offer programs for those who identify as LGBTQIA+ allowing for a feeling of belonging in our community.</p>
<p>Self-Care (Human Trafficking)</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth notice that in San Diego, Children and young adults are often vulnerable to falling victim to human trafficking due to the lack of resources and knowledge necessary to recognize when they are being exploited or targeted. Nationally, the average age at which individuals are coerced into trafficking is between 12 to 14 years old, but in San Diego County, this heartbreaking average age of entry rises to 16 years. Alarming, a significant proportion of these victims belong to the LGBTQ community, encompassing both young boys and girls.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Create human trafficking awareness events to educate the community of the signs of trafficking to bring more awareness about exploited. Additionally, create collaborative partnerships with the schools to education middle and high schoolers on the signs of being exploited.</p>
<p>Philanthropy</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth noticed a shortage of youth volunteers supporting the the younger and older generation, which may be caused by variations in varying high school graduation requirements. Community service hours are not mandatory for receiving a high school diploma in some school districts, yet required in others.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Providing introductory community service requirements for high school students can offer younger individuals the chance to contribute their time and skills to support their community. This could serve as a starting point for many youths who have not previously been exposed to community service outside of their school environment.</p>

TOPIC

SUMMARY

Healthy Food and Nutrition Education

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth found children in specific communities' face challenges in accessing nutritious food due to limited availability of farmers' markets and the high prices of grocery store produce. Neighborhoods in rural parts of the city as well as in the southwest and south-central areas of San Diego. Research showed that these areas are more prone to experiencing food deserts, defined as residential areas with limited or no access to affordable and nutritious food. Data from the 2019 State of the Food System Report reveals that approximately one out of every seven residents in the San Diego region experiences food insecurity, and about 13% of the county's population resides in a food desert.

OPPORTUNITY: Investment and incentives for small businesses that provide greater access to fresh and quality produce can promote healthier food options for underserved communities. Additionally, establishing community gardens in or near large urban developments can also be dual purpose by feeding the community and providing education to youth on the importance of fresh produce for health, creating sustainable ecosystems, and also offering education on career pathways in the agriculture.

Food + Nutrition Education

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Child Welfare/Social Services (Access to Food)

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth that were previously in foster care voiced that they often missed out on crucial financial support that could significantly impact their lives due to guardian EBT issues. As the County researches EBT issues, younger foster youth are left without easy access to food.

OPPORTUNITY: Providing food or financial assistance to foster youth, regardless of age, while EBT issues for guardians are being resolved is a necessity to ensure foster youth have access to food outside of the school day. Local community centers and libraries could support in these efforts by creating emergency food pantries open on the weekends.

TOPIC

SUMMARY

Food Swamp Locations

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth voiced a concern regarding the concentration of fast food restaurants and convenient stores in high poverty areas. Many San Diego neighborhoods more accurately fit the description of "food swamps," characterized by their high exposure to high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks. Southeastern San Diego is an example of such a food swamp. A study conducted by SDSU on the food landscape in that region revealed that there are more fast-food establishments in the area than fresh produce retailers.

OPPORTUNITY: Creating policy around permitting for new fast food restaurants and convenient stores in urban dense areas should be limited to ensure there is equally enough access to stores that offer fresh produce. Greater access to fresh and quality produce can promote healthier food options and eating habits. Additionally, establishing community gardens can also educate youth on how to grow their own produce and teach them the value of food and nutrition.

Environmental Concerns on Drinking Water Safety

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth reported that they see certain areas of the city lacking preventive measures to safeguard children from the risks of consuming water contaminated with lead due to the lack of investment in the education and city infrastructure. A report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office revealed a concerning lack of testing for lead in school water systems. Approximately 41% of school districts, serving 12 million students, had not conducted lead testing in 2016 or 2017. Moreover, 16% of school districts were unsure whether any lead testing had been performed. Any level of lead exposure is unsafe for children and can result in severe, lifelong health and well-being consequences. Children who spend a significant portion of their day in under-licensed care facilities are at a higher risk of exposure.

OPPORTUNITY: School districts should work with cities to leverage creative financing to ensure there is a stronger focus on lead poisoning prevention in buildings. Ensuring funding is allocated to support education and city building infrastructure to abate lead and create prevention plans.

Environmental Equity with Cool Zones

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth found that many residents that live in areas designated as community of concerns and low-income communities suffer with having access to adequate Cool Zones that are within walking distance, underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue. The distribution of Cool Zones throughout the City of San Diego appears to be historically inequitable, with a notable lack of coverage in areas within the Promise Zone. These regions are particularly vulnerable to heat-related illnesses during the summer, making it even more critical to expand Cool Zone access in these underserved areas. Moreover, it is important to note that between 1991 and 2020, there were 77 heat illness or injury-related deaths among San Diego County residents, highlighting the critical need for proactive measures to combat heat-related health risks in the region.

Opportunity: Cool Zones not only offer relief from extreme heat but also serve as vital spaces to strengthen the bonds within the community, particularly among children, youth, and families. The shared use of these facilities can promote social interaction and create a sense of togetherness, contributing to the overall well-being and resilience of the community.

TOPIC

SUMMARY

Youth Advocacy

SYSTEM WEKANESS: Youth reported there seems to be a lack of support for the youth wanting to learn about civic engagement and advocacy. Two years following the reestablishment of San Diego's Youth Commission by the Mayor, teenagers and young adults who were appointed to the Commission express dissatisfaction with the City's lack of support and its failure to create an environment conducive to their success. This opinion seems to be consistent with most youth desiring to be more involved in government's decision making.

OPPORTUNITY: Decreasing youth struggling with unclear directives, inadequate training, and a lack of engagement by providing opportunities for a clearer path for youth to understand their role in City civics.

Civic Engagement

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth noticed that young voter turnout is low in California and there lacks, in their opinion, inefficient civic education and confusion navigating elections. While youth voter turnout remains low across the country at 51%, California falls below the national average, with a rate of around 47% according to research. Despite this, many individuals aged 18-25 have demonstrated a strong affinity for activism in recent decades, indicating a potential interest in engaging more directly in civic affairs. However, many young voters identify specific barriers that discourage them from participating in elections.

OPPORTUNITY: Creating strong civic education at the City and County level for youth, and in turn collaboration with schools districts can create more education around the process. Additionally, creating bipartisan education is extrem important, yet can also very challenging.

Child Welfare/Social Services (Foster Youth Placement)

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Former foster youth identified several barriers to finding suitable placements for foster youth include elevated rates of physical and general abuse among teenagers aged 15 to 17 that resulted in their entry into the system, as well as issues related to mental illness, runaway behavior, trafficking, drug use, and overdoses, all of which complicate the placement process.

OPPORTUNITY: Solutions for this system weakness is challenging, however, creating visibility around this issue would be the first step in system changes. Finding opportunities for workforce and career collaboration with caregivers could be one viable opportunity that would allow youth to create their own financial freedom so they are not reliable on the system to dictate their financial future.

Faith

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth noticed that LGBTQIA+ community members who struggle with their relationship with faith lack safe communities that will accept and nurture their social identity. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community who have religious affiliations often grapple with their sense of belonging in their house of worship. Research shows that LGBTQIA+ young adults who consider religion important may have increased odds of recent thoughts of suicide. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ adults who left their religion due to conflicts with their sexual identity may face higher odds of attempting suicide compared to their peers who did not experience such conflict (Lytle et al., 2018; Gibbs et al., 2015).

OPPORTUNITY: Encouraging places of worship to participate to offer services and comfort to those who feel a lack of belonging in their faith. This could be accomplished by inviting house of worship to participate in festivals and events that are specific to the LGBTQIA+ community.

TOPIC

SUMMARY

Mental Health of Foster and Unsheltered Youth

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth and children in the foster system do not have adequate support to obtain existing mental health services. Former foster youth are at a heightened risk of experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, which can have severe consequences. Children who experience homelessness face significantly increased rates of emotional, behavioral, and both immediate and long-term health issues. These young individuals often lack parental or familial support, making it vital to provide them with additional resources and establish partnerships between various entities that can positively impact their lives. These challenges can contribute to poor self-esteem and a negative self-image, which in turn can lead to poor mental health outcomes and put youth at risk for substance abuse and suicide.

OPPORTUNITY: While there are mental health resources available, the current system faces issues with access and affordability. Having a dedicated funding stream for youth ages 18-26 that would allow youth to access mental health resources free or heavily subsidized is essential to removing barriers. This collaborative approach can contribute to nurturing and enriching the lives of foster youth, providing them with the necessary support and opportunities for a better future. Addressing these barriers is crucial to ensure that former foster youth and other vulnerable populations can access the mental health support they need in a timely and effective manner. There is currently no City adopted guide or educational materials tailored towards early prevention, identification and addressing mental illness among primary and secondary school students. Identifying and addressing early signs of mental illness can assist efforts to curb the alarming high rate of suicide among children and youth. Further, mental health literacy can improve emotional intelligence and disrupt generational trauma patterns

Mental Health and the Power of Peer Mentorships

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth voiced that there is not enough opportunities to create social connections and networks when transitioning from elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school. Mental illness can be exacerbated by factors such as social isolation and life transitions, and students facing mental health challenges may lack a robust support network. One notable absence in San Diego schools is the lack of peer-to-peer mentorship programs.

OPPORTUNITY: Creating Initiatives like the “Boomerang Project’s Link Crew” have shown their potential to make a positive impact on children and youth by providing essential peer support and mentorship, which can be instrumental in addressing mental health issues and improving overall well-being. The City can support these initiatives by expanding the accessibility by mirroring services at libraries, recreation centers, and on-campus events hosted by OCYS.

Public Healthcare (Vaping Devices)

SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth discovered that most teens remain unaware of the chemicals and contained within vape devices and that those constituents have the probability of making the user addicted. A concerning statistic indicates that 1 in 4 high school students currently engages in vaping, with the number of teenage vapers more than doubling within just two years. Between 2017 and 2018, e-cigarette usage surged by 78% among high school students, rising from 11.7% to 20.8%, and by 48% among middle school students, increasing from 3.3% to 4.9%. It’s worth noting that many of these students who partake in vaping remain oblivious to the specific contents of the vape products they use.

OPPORTUNITY: Providing addiction curriculum in standard middle school health classes and offering workshops at libraries and recreation centers that are dedicated to addictive constituents education could decrease the amount of new users and inform youth of the affects before they begin experimenting.



Office of Child
and Youth Success



FOCUS AREA OF ENGAGING ACTIVITIES



FOCUS AREA 4

Goal Statement: Create engaging activities for youth and children that expand their life experiences and promote fun and enriching activities that inspire community-based activities which foster creativity and inspiration.

SUMMARY FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL AND FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Common themes about **Engaging Activities** from Town Hall and Focus Group meetings:

- Activities that promote positive youth development continue to be as important as ever: arts, culture, activities, sports, and more.
- The City and community-based organizations must continue investing in such programs and services in all parts of the city, particularly in those areas that have been under-served or under-invested.
- Safe, secure, and clean neighborhood spaces like parks and community centers that are well-equipped, programmed, and accessible for serving youth, young adults, and their caregivers are needed.
- Programs, services, and facilities should also be designed and used to support mentorship, civic engagement, education, career development, and other aspects of holistic growth and development.
- Affordability and accessibility must be closely considered for each neighborhood, including user fees, locations, distances, transportation options, and safety.
- The biggest barrier to involvement in activities outside of their neighborhood/community is lack of transportation and lack of money, including limited public transit, unavailability of a personal vehicle, or the cost of ride share services.
- Neighborhood safety is a concern, including gang violence, racial profiling, drug use, and the presence of unsheltered people.
- Safe spaces -- both emotionally and physically -- include friends' houses, libraries, parks, school clubs and afterschool programs. Having a sense of trust and reliability often defines the idea of safe places.

SYSTEM STRENGTHS

- Communication between organizations is strong and organizations are willing to push their families in other directions to get them the services they need.
- San Diego has amazing places and activities for children to engage with, and our natural environment offers a great learning opportunity.
- Organizations have a willingness to partner for grant proposals and/or overall involvement in youth services.
- There is a growing interest in developing community schools.
- Access to afterschool programming is increased, and there is federal interest in investment.
- Organizations have professional expertise leading lessons and guiding programming.
- Organizations are culturally sensitive to students and families.
- There is inclusive education and social justice -- diversity.
- Different modalities of learning are present.
- Varied strengths and specialties exist across the system.
- The social-emotional aspect of learning is incorporated into many programs.

SYSTEM WEAKNESSES

- Resources are lacking to adequately secure funding and control structure of programs.
- sustainable funding is lacking to support collaboration and partnerships.
- Staff capacity is not sufficient.
- Families face multifaceted inequities.
- Funding is needed to help lead collaboration.
- Organizations are challenged to keep up with resource updates.
- Apprenticeship for youth programs are lacking.
- Education is limited on the types of services being offered, e.g., mental health education, specifically finding partnerships and visibility within the community.
- Marketing is needed to make supportive programs visible to the youth community.
- Transportation access is limited.
- Affordable housing in livable neighborhoods is needed.
- School structure is a weakness.
- Well-known organizations are recognized first for funding opportunities.
- A priority list is needed to determine the need.
- There appears to be gate keeping of resources by government agencies.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH RESEARCH

Youth interns were tasked with identifying and researching system weaknesses that are affecting children and youth's ability to reach their maximum potential. These topics are rooted through lived-experiences, and refined by exploring community circumstances and passionate research. Conducting research looked different to each intern and after various topic refinement, the following system weaknesses were chosen as topics that present areas for opportunities to address the community deficiencies.

TOPIC	SUMMARY
<p>Physical Healthcare, Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA)</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth believe the majority of their peers are not receiving the recommended amount of daily physical activity, which can contribute to their low mental health. High crime rates and unsafe neighborhoods in certain areas of San Diego areas are preventing youth from playing outside and engaging in physical activities. According to youth research, children living in neighborhoods in the lowest crime quartile based on police reports had the highest MVPA, while children in the highest crime quartile had the lowest total and neighborhood MVPA. The results highlight almost a 40 min per day lower total MVPA between children with any neighborhood activity in the highest versus lowest crime quartiles based on police reports.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Creating safe, supervised, and free physical activity opportunities is not just an investment into decreasing future crime rates but also investing in the physical and mental health of youth. An easy way to accomplish this task would be to create physical activity mentorships and volunteer activities that are safe and affordable located in the historically disadvantaged communities., additionally, ensuring that the schools in those neighborhoods have equal access to rigorous sports activities before and after school.</p>
<p>Engaging Activity Visibility</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth noticed that it was difficult to access the City's available programs and activities, especially for youth and families. From recent town hall meetings held online, some members of the community did not know about all the events going on in the City of San Diego.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: Although there is an accessible events listing on the City of San Diego website, not everyone will have digital access to the website given different circumstances. Collaborating with the schools and ensure the communication from City activities makes its way to children, youth, and families, would be an easy and cost effective solution to cross-promote activities. Additionally, schools can support with communication in various languages considering they understand the language and culture needs of each community.</p>
<p>Environmental Pollutants</p>	<p>SYSTEM WEAKNESS: Youth voiced that industrial and populated areas in San Diego are grappling with an extreme environmental pollution burden, placing its children, youth, and families at significantly higher risks of cancer and pulmonary diseases. According to the EPA, residents of Barrio Logan, San Diego, face an 85-95% elevated risk of developing cancer compared to the rest of the United States (source: Next City). In addition to the immediate health hazards, the prevalent air pollution in Barrio Logan exacerbates the community's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. The presence of particulate matter in the air hampers outdoor activities, making it difficult for residents to play outside, walk to work or school. This limitation in lifestyle opportunities perpetuates health disparities.</p> <p>OPPORTUNITY: It is crucial that the City of San Diego continue to invest in green spaces and a revitalization of these areas to decrease the environmental burden on these children, youth, and families. An investment in repurposing roofs into "green-roofs", and decreasing the permits issued to commercial businesses that have a large environmental footprint should also be studied to reverse the environmental damage.</p>

ENGAGING ACTIVITIES



FOCUS AREA OF CHILD CARE



FOCUS AREA 5

Goal Statement: Increase safe, quality, and affordable early learning and care opportunities for San Diego families by strengthening systems, partnerships, and resources for operations, facilities, funding, education (workforce), and recruitment

SUMMARY FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL AND FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Common themes from Town Hall meetings about on Child Care and Early Learning. The Focus Area of Child Care for the Child and Youth Plan is pulled from the alignment with The County of San Diego Child Care Blueprint.

- While child care is a foundational support to an entire community's quality of life and economy, youth, young adults, and caregivers experience the most direct impact.
 - Youth and young adults who are also parents or caregivers—whether as a child's parent or older sibling—can hamper their education and career pathways without adequate child care support.
 - Quality child care supports affect early learning, which comes from a child care workforce that is well-trained and earning livable wages.
 - More safe and secure spaces for providing child care should be explored in each neighborhood and employment center, such as at City of San Diego facilities, to improve accessibility to those in need.
 - Improving affordability levels should be explored by the City and major employers. Centralizing information for finding, accessing, and affording child care will be helpful for caregivers.
 - Need for a safe and verified source of affordable and accessible child care.
 - Additionally supports needed for child related care, including breastfeeding, diaper change, food assistance, and longer maternity/paternity leave. Need for more inclusive space in affordable child care resources, including safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community.
 - Many of the existing programs do not have enough space available to accommodate the community need Training is needed for child cares professionals including home providers, such as trauma informed care, cultural competency, caring for children with disabilities, implicit bias and stigma and CPR. Stressors related to child care increased instability and mental health needs.
-



GOAL 1

The child care¹ workforce is well-trained, supported, valued as a profession, and paid competitive wages.²



GOAL 2

Safe and quality facilities are developed and renovated to expand child care programs, particularly in geographic areas where child care is scarce or family demand outpaces supply.



GOAL 3

All families have access³ to child care that meets their needs and preferences⁴ and supports their children's learning, physical and mental health, and social-emotional development.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHILD CARE BLUEPRINT VISION

“San Diego County is a place where every family has access to child care that meets their geographic, scheduling, cultural, language, and economic needs; the child care provider workforce is highly valued and financially thriving; and all types of child care settings support children’s healthy development.”



San Diego County's Child Care Blueprint was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 2023 with support from many child care advocates; private, public and nonprofit organizations; and municipalities. It is a two-year strategy to improve access, equity, and the quality of child care throughout the region. The City of San Diego is formally mentioned in many of the strategies that support in progressing the identified blueprint goals.

OCYS participated in various design sessions with community partners and stakeholders who have been serving the City of San Diego community for many years through direct child care services, resources, and wrap-around support. It is through the work of the many community supporters and direct service providers that this first-ever blue print was created for San Diego County. OCYS is proud to partner and collaborate to achieve the goals identified in the County Blueprint.



GOAL 2

Safe and quality facilities are developed and renovated to expand child care programs, particularly in geographic areas where child care is scarce or family demand outpaces supply.

Strategy	Action	Timeline
2.1) Simplify the experience of entities seeking to secure, improve or develop child care facilities by making the expertise and resources user-friendly and readily available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer navigation hub to increase licensed slots through facility improvement or development Host facilities workshops to share knowledge, stoke enthusiasm, & deepen networks Convene on facility expansion to review upcoming projects, create strategic relationships, and help navigate/expedite. 	Future potential
2.2) Advocate for changes to local policies and Community Care Licensing (CCL) regulations and practices that will remove obstacles to improving existing and developing new child care facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local advocacy campaign for the following changes: Zoning & permitting reforms that facilitate the addition or expansion of child care facilities Inclusion of child care and child- & family-friendly design in community development plans Innovations, e.g., acting as master leaseholders, community land trusts, etc. 	Now
2.3) Advocate for cities to include financing investment mechanisms in redevelopment plans to expand facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess possibility of utilizing development tax dollars for child care facility expansion 	Now
2.4) Identify existing public land or building that can be repurposed for child care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify where buildings or land owned by the City could incorporate/repurpose for early care and education at little or no cost to provider through long-term lease agreements. Coordinated approach to promote Request for Proposals (RFPs) and provide technical assistance to support successful proposals. 	Now
2.5) Embed child care centers into new developments based on early recommendations from the regional co-location report, co-authored by the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) and Children First Collective (CFC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Housing and Community Development to include incentive points on local NOFAs to integrate early learning and care spaces (centers and family child care) including surplus land and affordable housing developments. Consider streamlined or expedited permitting allowances and processes for co-located projects. Include child care as a component in community planning for City and County planning commissions, regional planning, land use development, etc. 	Now



GOAL 3

All families have access³ to child care that meets their needs and preferences⁴ and supports their children's learning, physical and mental health, and social-emotional development.

3.1) To address the subsidy gap, create a program to provide financial assistance, through a phased in approach, to families who earn an increasingly higher percentage of Area Median Income (AMI).	a) Build on identified and successful community funding models. Incorporate system-level evaluation of publicly funded programs.	Now
3.2) Establish a program to support vulnerable families with child care.	a) Design a program to assist unhoused families and reentering the workforce with child care.	Future potential



CHILD AND YOUTH ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT

Education and Career Pathways
Economic and Workforce Development
Youth Empowerment



Focus Areas 1, 2, and 3 will specifically focus on cultivating a youth landscape that strengthens, fosters, and coordinates systems of support to address various system weaknesses we heard exist while developing the CYP. The Office of Child and Youth Success will work to adopt the US Agency International Development (USAID) cross-sectoral Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (17). PYD is an intentional, prosocial approach that intentionally includes youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families with an intent to constructive; recognize, and leverage young people’s strength. PYD has proven that including intentional youth-centered approaches will foster positive relationships with adults and further build upon the support needed to leverage their leadership strengths. The adoption of the PYD approach will provide for youth and young adults to collaborate together to create opportunities and that have not been fully developed in traditional educational and community settings. The action strategies implemented shall create opportunities for critical skill building, promote innovation and equitable career pathways, cultivate settings where they feel valued and heard in a joyous and pleasant environment, provide for confidence building, and most importantly, allow for youth and young adults to foster relationships and bond with peers and mentors. Considerations for measuring success of the programs will have a direct correlation of the invests into each focus area, additionally, the developed actions acknowledge the unique differences that youth and young adults carrying with them. therefore, PYD suggests recognizing the following when deploying the action strategies:

- Age, developmental stage, and life stage considerations
- Gender considerations
- Cultural considerations
- Language and literacy considerations
- Physical and social position considerations

Engaging Activities



Focus Area 4 is focused on creating engaging activities for youth and children that expand their life experiences and promote fun and enriching activities through community-based activities that foster creativity and inspiration. The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (18) will be adopted to guide this work. Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to increase positive outcomes for children and families. The framework is an approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect through building five key Protective Factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

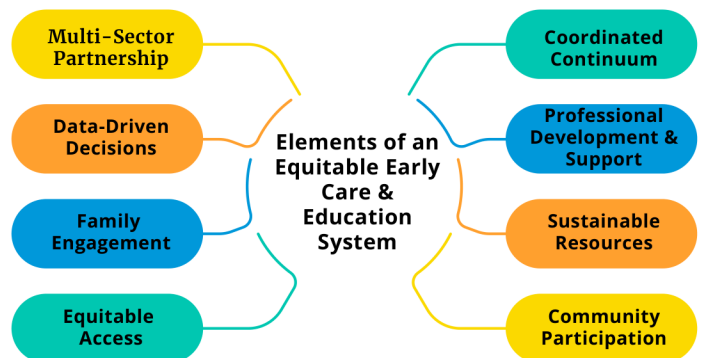
By using this framework, OCYS will plan for strategies and activities that are grounded in the Strengthening Families approach, focusing on services and resources for engaging activities that support families to build protective factors.

“At all levels of implementation, parents are crucial partners in authentic and effective application of the Protective Factors Framework. Parent partnership begins at the program and service level, where collaboration is based on building relationships between providers and parents.” (18)

Child Care



Focus Area 5 will align the OCYS child care action strategies identified in the San Diego County Blueprint with the National League of Cities (NLC), Equitable Early Care and Education framework (15). The framework envisions public and private sectors working together to ensure the community has the policies, resources and infrastructure for creating an aligned and equitable early care and education system. Adopting the framework acknowledges that aligned and equitable systems of early care and education can result in an increase in services and the ability to ensure adequate supply and access in all neighborhoods. Additionally, it can improve the ability to build upon gains as young children grow and move from one program to the next. This approach responds to a need to deepen partnerships beyond coordination to the identification of shared goals and accountability among partners for outcomes. The framework identifies eight elements of an equitable early care and education system that will ground OCYS as programs are developed:



Focus Area 1

Education and Career Pathways

Goal Statement: Strengthen resources for programs that identify and deliver solutions that address disparities and improve access to opportunities for developing skills and connecting to strong career pathways that are in demand in the current job market, reskilling and upskilling to close talent gaps, Aligning with with the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (17).

	Objective	Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Potential Partners
1.1	Expand access to municipal career pathways for youth.	Private and public organizations, educational institutions, and workforce agencies to highlight career opportunities for youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the public on various municipality jobs through youth provided presentations. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-12 and higher education agencies
1.2	Highlight the need for apprenticeship expansion in young adults.	Educational visits with the trade industry to increase youth awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with public and private organizations to highlight career pathways. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and private organizations
1.3	Highlight the need for apprenticeship expansion for youth in grades 9-12.	Programs with educational partners that support the creation of youth mentorship and apprenticeship programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with public and private organizations to highlight career pathways. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-12 and higher education agencies
1.4	Foster awareness on learning disparities among students based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disabilities.	Educational disparities that exist within the City of San Diego correlated with geospatial mapping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the public by making visible available geospatial mapping of educational disparities. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Partners Non-profit Partners
1.5	Cultivate opportunities for youth to provide input on curriculum needed to align with San Diego's key industries.	Forums to include youth in the review and input of curriculum before its adoption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the youth on the processes for which curriculum is developed and their opportunity to provide input into the adoption of curriculum. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Partners
1.6	Prioritize equitable resources for youth to access housing, transportation, food access.	Objectives that are dedicated to cross collaboration/promotion for youth focused opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direct services for youth struggling to find resources. Collaborate with other agencies to make services more visible and accessible. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direct investments Non-Profit Partners
1.7	Support developmentally challenged youth with career pipelines.	Educational visits and career fairs with the industries that offer opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with public and private organizations on opportunities for youth exercising disabilities. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies Private organizations non-profit partners

Focus Area 2

Economic and Workforce Development

Goal Statement: Foster equitable opportunities for children and youth that promote strategies to obtain the necessary qualities to be resilient in economic downturns changes and also secure competencies to provide long-term workforce skills and abilities. Aligning with with the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (17).

	Objective	Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Potential Partners
2.1	Provide opportunities to learn the importance of strategies towards financial self-sufficiency.	Literacy education classes for youth and young adults through private partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide presentations and activities associated with financial self-sufficiency. • Collaborate with other agencies to develop presentations to support youth in financial self-sufficiency. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private organizations • Non-profit partners
2.2	Create opportunities that focuses on healthy relationships with money and financial security.	Financial security freedom marketing campaign directed to youth and younger adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide presentations and activities associated with healthy relationships with money and financial security. . 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit partners
2.3	Partner with private and public organizations to create entrepreneurship education and opportunities.	Resources directed to youth and young adults who are interested in starting or expanding a business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address city barriers preventing growth in entrepreneurship. • Provide direct service education on entrepreneurship. • Collaborate with other agencies for youth outreach and support. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing direct funding • Education Partners • Non-profit Partners
2.4	Engage youth led small business owners to encourage other youth to embrace entrepreneurship opportunities.	Entrepreneurship panels for youth and young adults to understand pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other agencies to provide presentations and activities to engage youth. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal city departments
2.5	Partner with local education agencies and trade organizations to promote mentorships through personal and professional relationships with youth.	Mentorships programs to promote local trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the public on the importance of mentorships in local trade organizations. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agencies • Private organizations • non-profit partners
2.6	Facilitate programs for youth to develop leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, time management, professionalism, program solving, and communication skills.	Critical life skill programs aimed at foster youth and young adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide presentations and activities associated with critical life skills. • Collaborate with other agencies to develop presentations to support youth in critical life skills. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit partners

Focus Area 3

Youth Empowerment

Goal Statement: Coordinate safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces and opportunities that promote child and youth empowerment within each community through coordinated partnerships that provide the ability to lead oneself to be respectful, responsible, and contributing members of their community. Aligning with with the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (17).

	Objective	Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Potential Partners
3.1	Safeguard opportunities for young people to be involved in the planning and problem solving processes for City and policy initiatives.	Safeguard youth seats on City Commissions and Boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers that affect youth participation in these municipal spaces. Provide direct services to support in civic engagement. Collaborate with other agencies. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
3.2	Support trauma informed care support systems that are free of discrimination, criticism, harassment or any emotional harm.	Partner with non-profit and community based organizations specializing in trauma informed care systems of practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with other agencies to highlight resources and programs that support in these areas. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit partners
3.3	Provide physical space where children and youth feel safe to foster their creative skills free of physical harm or threat.	Promote city spaces where safe and non-discriminatory creative programs exist to allow for creative expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direct services that offer equitable accessibility. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit partners
3.4	Create leadership conference opportunities for young people to connect and network with like-minded peers.	Implement an annual youth summit that is dedicated to bringing solutions to the system weaknesses identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and provide workshops and conferences that promote youth empowerment. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit partners Public and Private partners
3.5	Provide mentorship opportunities to youth experiencing educational intervention.	Create opportunities for youth to have pathways to learn about municipal careers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with public and private organizations to highlight career pathways. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit partners
3.6	Centralized resource application dedicated to youth and young adult services.	Partner with agencies providing wrap-around services to support vulnerable youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with other agencies to highlight resources and programs that support in these areas. Provide direct services that offer equitable accessibility. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Partners Non-profit Partners
3.7	Consider barriers of disconnected youth for entry-level job opportunities.	Remove barriers for entry to entry-level positions that have historically discouraged disconnected youth from applying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with other agencies to highlight resources and programs. Address city barriers that affect youth job-seeking Provide direct services that offer equitable access trainings to municipal careers. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies Internal city departments Education partners Non-profit partners

Focus Area 4

Engaging Activities

Goal Statement: Create engaging activities for youth and children that expand their life experiences and promote fun and enriching activities that inspire community-based activities which foster creativity and inspiration. Aligning with Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (18).

	Objective	Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	Potential Partners
4.1	Create engaging spaces for children, youth and families to build strong relationships that create mutual respect and inclusive activities.	Provide creative early learning opportunities in City spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align future projects with the strengthening families framework. Collaborate with other agencies. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.2	Provide a central database for children, youth and families with information and resources to access engaging programs.	Create an easily accessible database for engaging programs for children and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direct services Collaborate with other agencies to promote program resource databases. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.3	Prioritize early education opportunities for children 0-4 yrs. old, at low or no cost.	Develop early education programs that support children ages 0-4 yrs. old.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers Provide direct services that increase early learning opportunities that engage families and children together. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.4	Provide inclusive activities that consider all ages and cultures.	Ensure City equity plans are considered when renewing and developing children and youth plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers Provide direct services that increase equitable and accessible activities that engage families and children. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.5	Consider youth with disabilities when creating engaging activities.	Create programs dedicated to children and youth with mental and physical disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers Provide direct services that increase early learning opportunities that engage families and children together. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.6	Ensure bilingual resources are provided during engaging activities.	Ensure bilingual resources are available at community events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide early learning bilingual opportunities that engage families of all ages together. 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.7	Promote safe spaces in under-resourced neighborhoods.	Ensure community spaces are well-lit and heavily activated with programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers that create unsafe community spaces. Collaborate with other agencies. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners
4.8	Explore opportunities and programs that support with increasing literacy rates.	Create literacy, reading and historical storytelling programs in neighborhoods that have low literacy rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address city barriers Provide direct services that increase early learning opportunities that engage families and children together. Collaborate with other agencies. 	Within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal city departments Non-profit partners

Focus Area 5

Early Learning / Child Care

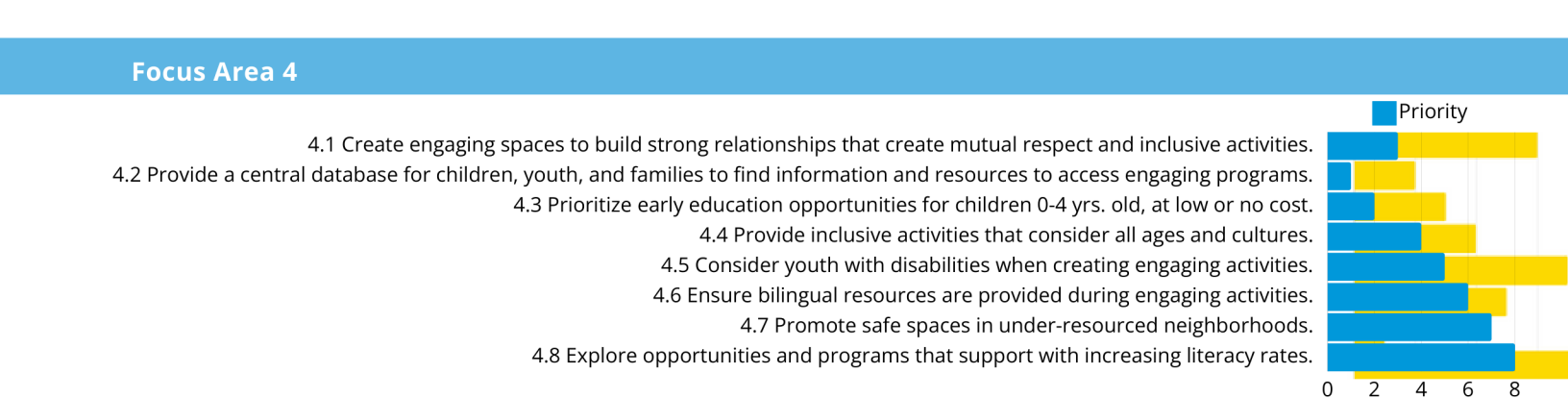
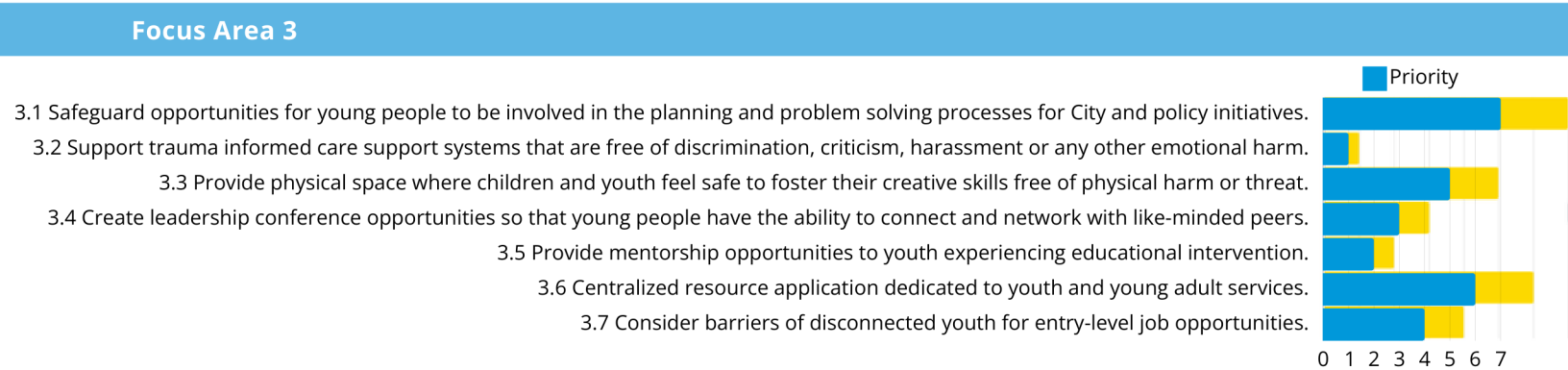
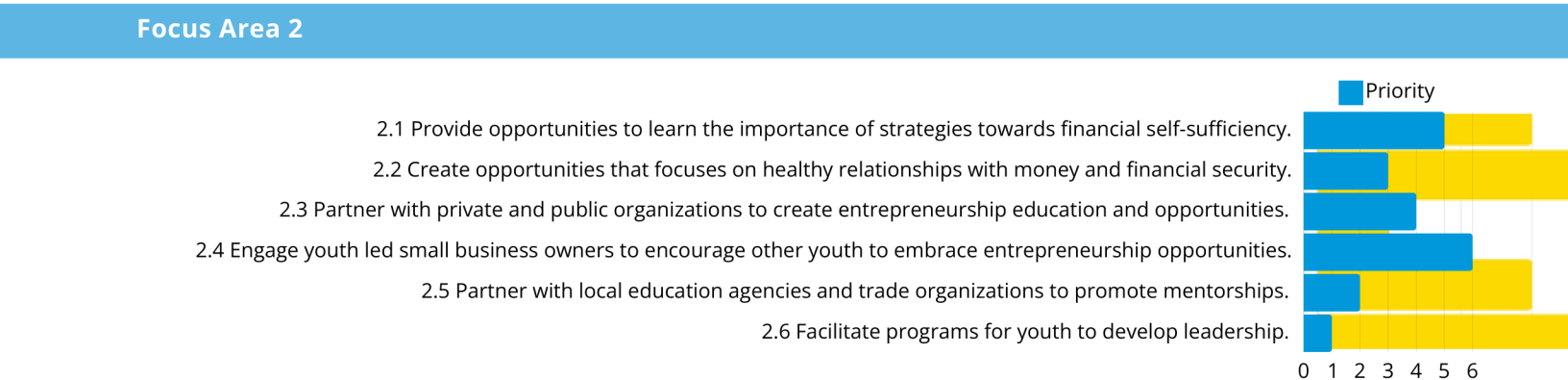
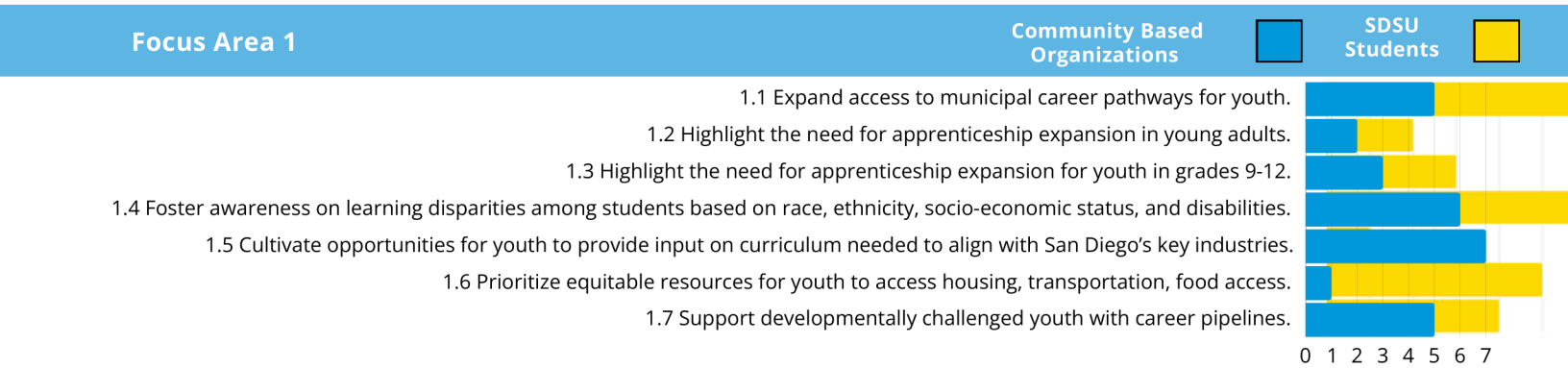
Goal Statement: Increase safe, quality, and affordable early learning and care opportunities for San Diego families by strengthening systems, partnerships, and resources for operations, facilities, funding, education (workforce), and recruitment. Aligning with National League of Cities (NLC), Equitable Early Care and Education framework (15).

	Objective	Recommendation	Actions	Time-frame	Potential Partners
5.1	<p>Increase child care facilities on City property</p> <p>Increase child care facilities included in new development plans</p> <p>Increase slots for infant, toddler, and preschool child care in facilities on City property</p>	Partner with the County of San Diego and other identified partners to implement the strategies and actions of the Child Care Blueprint that reference the City of San Diego and /or OCYS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene City and community partners on facilities expansion to review upcoming projects, create strategic relationships, and navigate and expedite processes to simplify the experience of entities seeking to secure, improve or develop child care facilities. Work with City partners and Community Care Licensing toward changes in zoning and permitting, inclusion of child- and family-friendly community development plans, and innovative solutions to improving and developing child care facilities. Work with Economic Development Dept. to assess the possibility of using development dollars for facilities expansion to include innovative financing mechanisms in redevelopment plans. Identify where buildings or land owned by the City could include child care at little or no cost to providers through long-term leases. Work with City partners to include incentive points in Notices of Funding Availability for developments that integrate child care spaces into new development based on recommendations from the regional co-location report. Support the City to include child care as a component in all community planning. Build on local efforts to identify successful community funding models for addressing the child care subsidy gap, and provide financial assistance. 	Within 2 years	See Child Care Blueprint
5.2	Expand access to city parks and recreation space to be operated by community providers for licensed child care.	Implement Measure H by creating spaces for licensed early learning and care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Parks and Recreation to identify spaces and facilities suitable for licensed child care. Identify and secure funding for facility upgrades and/or procurement. Conduct facility upgrades and/or procurements. Issue solicitations for child care operators. 	Within 2 years	City of SD Parks & Recreation Department; Community Child Care Operators
5.3	Expand access to city parks and recreation space to be operated by community providers for license-exempt early learning programs.	Repurpose space to expand equitable early learning options for pre kinder programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Parks and recreation to identify spaces and facilities suitable for safe operation of license-exempt early learning programs. Identify and secure funding to provide for free/reduced cost programs in identified Communities of Concern. Issue solicitations for child care operators. 	Year 1	City of SD Parks & Recreation Department; Community Child Care Operators
5.4	Support families and workers by strengthening child care systems.	Partner with the City's Economic Development Department to uplift the child care workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding sources to make child care more affordable for families. Support local college collaborations to track equitable access and career pathways in ECE. Explore partner-led early childhood lab schools. 	Within 2 years	City of SD EDD; local colleges and universities; providers

PRIORITIZING THE FOCUS AREA OBJECTIVES

Community and youth participation was a critical part of defining the objective areas and an essential piece of developing the first Child and Youth Plan. In addition to input received on the objective areas, action strategies, timeframe, and potential partners, approximately seventy-five participants, 50% who were youth/young adults ages 20-26, and 50% of community based organizations who are serving youth and young adults through direct services, prioritized the focus area objectives. Data collection is important to ensure the office can focus on the most essential priorities for the purpose of program implementation.

Over the next two years, OCYS will continue outreach and expand on prioritization of the objectives through collaboration and workshops with youth and young adults. The below scale is the representation of the first two prioritization exercises. As the CYP is rolled out, prioritization exercises will continue to occur so that resources to create opportunities can be executed efficiently.



SOURCES

- (1) US Census Bureau, American Community Survey Estimates, 2022
- (2) Kidsdata.org, 2020
- (3) U.S. Census Bureau, 2022
- (4) Kidsdata.org, 2019
- (5) SDSU News Center, 2021
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- (9) US Census Bureau, 2020
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- (11) SANDAG, 2023
- (12) University of San Diego, San Diego County Childcare Landscape, 2022
- (13) U.S. Census Bureau: 2017-2021 5- year estimates according to the 2021 Cities Demographics
- (14) San Diego Economic Equity Report, San Diego Foundation, 2023
- (15) National League of Cities, Equitable Early Care and Education. https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/YEF_Equitable-Early-Care-and-Edu_032818.pdf
- (16) San Diego for Every Child OCYS Concept Paper. https://www.sandiegoforeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CYS-Concept-Paper_Final_f.pdf
- (17) Positive Youth Development (PYD Framework. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>
- (18) The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego

A special thank you to Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego and Andy Pendoley, Pendoley Strategies + Communications, for their facilitation, organizing and oversight with the creation of the Child and Youth Plan.

City of San Diego

Councilmember Joe LaCava- District 1

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Councilmember Marni Von Wilpert – District 5

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District 2 - Kayla Ruthven

District 3 - Lara Mertens and Wyatt Spencer

District 4 - Princess Dunn

District 5 - Isabella Marie Santos

District 6 - Aiden Yun-Jen Lin

District 7 - Sienna Duggan

District 8 - Jesus Martin Gallegos-Munoz

Mayoral Appointment - Chantel Perry

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Office of Child and Youth Success Supporting Agencies

ABC Youth Foundation
Alpha Omega
Barrio Logan College Institute
Big Brothers Big Sisters
BIPOC Support Foundation
Brain Balance of Greater San Diego
Casa de Amparo
Casa Familiar
Center for Community Solutions
Cesar Chavez Learning Clubs
City of San Diego
Community Wraparound
Dreams+Ducats'
EdNavigator
Educational Enrichment Systems
First 5 San Diego
Episcopal Community Services, Inc.
Fleet Science Center
For the People
Friday Night Live Chapters
Girls Inc of San Diego
Hoover Community Connection, Inc.
House of Restoration Community Connections
Inner City Athletic Program
La Jolla Band of Mission Indians
La Jolla Presbyterian Church
La Maestra Clinic
Lifeline Community Services
Light of the World Church
MAAC
Mid-City CAN
Multi-Unit Housing Properties
Native Hawaiian/API Network
Neighborhood House Association
Network
New Americans (PANA)
Ocean Discovery
Open Heart Leaders
Pacific Public Affairs
Pacific Southwest
Pala Band of Mission Indians
Parent Institute for Quality Education
Parent Voices San Diego
Partnership for the Advancement of
Pauma Band of Mission Indians
People's Alliance for Justice
Poway Unified School District
Price Philanthropies
Project Aware
Promises2Kids
Reality Changers
REEL Teens
Rincon Band of Mission Indians
RISE Research & Evaluation
San Diego 350
San Diego Center for Children
San Diego Community College Board
San Diego Creative Youth Development
San Diego Discovery Museum
San Diego for Every Child
San Diego Office of Education
San Diego Unified School District
San Diego Wildlife Alliance
San Diego Workforce Partnership
San Diego Youth Services
San Dieguito Alliance
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians
SAY San Diego
Sycuan Band of Kumeyaay Nation
Teens Rise Foundation
The Prebys Foundation
The Urban Collective
The Chicano Federation
TOOTRiS Child Care On-Demand
UC San Diego
UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council
UCSD Health (YLC)
UDW Local 3930
UNICEF USA
United Way of San Diego
United Way of San Diego County
UPAC
Urban Corps
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
Words Alive
YMCA of San Diego County
Youth Will__