

Strategy #2: Strengthen Pathways to Opportunities

Along the Prevention/Mitigation Continuum

Prevention

“Most people want to work—they just need the access.”

—Resident

“Everyone needs an opportunity to grow and have the stars within reach.”

—Resident

“Create the conditions for people to be able to take advantage of opportunities.”

– Community-based provider

Objective 2.1—Develop clearer pathways to up-skilled permanent jobs and stimulate the economy through building partnerships with the business community and other entities.

Actions include:

- ❖ Work with various sectors, unions, and trade associations to increase training opportunities in the skills needed to secure high-quality jobs in health care, technology, green energy, climate/environment, manufacturing, transportation, construction, and other living-wage jobs, and address discriminatory policies and practices that maintain disparities in hiring, pay, and promotions.
- ❖ Create stronger connections between training programs and/or people seeking available job opportunities by developing stronger networks with industries and education institutions to ensure that employment opportunities are available after the completion of training programs.
- ❖ Expand additional supports, mentoring, coaching, and/or job readiness training for populations experiencing barriers in getting hired and/or maintaining employment—for example, those who are justice-involved, youth formerly in foster care, seniors, those who are undocumented, those experiencing homelessness, women in non-traditional jobs, those with language barriers, those who have little or no prior work experience, and others, and evaluate the effectiveness of these supports.
- ❖ Promote stronger economic activity by examining barriers to entry and solutions at all levels of government, including regulations, taxes, and/or incentives, particularly in marginalized areas.

Objective 2.2—Increase opportunities for equitable and higher-paying jobs, and jobs that offer a living wage across the County.

Actions include:

- ❖ Expand community-led actions and/or incentives for businesses to hire locally to the site of the project/business, with an emphasis on poverty-affected neighborhoods, and to create more local up-skilled living- and high-wage jobs.
- ❖ Study the use of ‘impact-weighted accounts’ that measure and show a company’s financial, social, and environmental performance and their impacts on customers, employees, and the larger community; encourage businesses operating locally to use them if they show promise as a best practice.
- ❖ Implement efforts to further revise County hiring practices to reduce or remove barriers to employment, streamline the hiring process, and increase entry-level wages, where needed, to ensure that all County jobs start at a living wage.
- ❖ Increase the number of new County contracts that include enough funding to pay living-wage salaries to persons fulfilling the contract terms.
- ❖ Support the Department of Public Social Services in its initiative to determine how best to help prepare families receiving CalWORKs benefits to get the resources they need to secure living-wage jobs, and expand that initiative to include those receiving General Relief benefits.
- ❖ Study the minimum wage amount to understand what the appropriate amount should be.

Objective 2.3—Advocate for high-quality schools and increased educational supports, particularly in under-resourced communities, that help students successfully transition to post-secondary education or secure permanent job opportunities.

Actions include:

- ❖ Support the expansion of high-quality individualized college counseling and application support, career counseling, and/or vocational training support at schools that meet the interests of the student.
- ❖ Support Community Schools initiatives that promote community engagement, partnerships, and resource development within communities surrounding individual schools.
- ❖ Increase supports for youth attending continuation and/or alternative schools to ensure they can access pathways to postsecondary educational opportunities and/or vocational training programs that meet their interests.
- ❖ Expand options for accessing certificate programs for those interested in pursuing them.

- ❖ Increase opportunities for youth to be connected to mentors, to be exposed to a variety of different professions and fields, and to develop skills and interests early on that may lead to career pathways.
- ❖ Support the expansion of tutoring programs, particularly those serving system-involved youth.
- ❖ Advocate for greater equity in how funding gets distributed to school districts, particularly for those with the highest level of disparities.

Objective 2.4—Expand supports available for helping people create and/or expand their own businesses or purchase a business through employee ownership or other opportunities.

Actions include:

- ❖ Expand one-on-one coaching for people wanting individual assistance on how to navigate opening a business from start to finish.
- ❖ Consider various sources and partnerships that could be available for offering streamlined zero-interest loans or grant opportunities to cover start-up costs, licenses, capacity-building, emergency safety requirements, or needed capital to purchase a business.
- ❖ Review areas where County license and permit requirements could be streamlined.
- ❖ Identify opportunities to support employee-ownership models.
- ❖ Increase education to businesses about the benefits of qualifying for, and registering as, a Section 3 Business with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- ❖ Increase educational opportunities for small businesses on capacity-building, sharing administrative and/or other infrastructure support, and creating cooperative businesses.

Objective 2.5—Increase programs that promote generating assets and creating and maximizing growth opportunities.

Actions include:

- ❖ Consider various mechanisms for offering zero interest loans or grant opportunities to people to cover the costs of applying to and necessary supplies for post-secondary school or training/certificate programs, technology requirements, or others.
- ❖ Partner with banks to increase the availability of matched-savings and incentive programs where people can save toward a down-payment for first-time homebuyers, tuition costs for themselves or their children, investment capital, retirement accounts, or other activities that help generate wealth.
- ❖ Develop a Baby Bonds or Children’s Saving Account program for other vulnerable populations that is similar to the Opportunity LA Children’s Savings Account program that was launched

through a partnership with the County, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Citibank.

- ❖ Work with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) and others to expand access to financial coaching at all ages that includes managing credit, credit repair, debt reduction, savings, and retirement planning; protecting against consumer fraud; foreclosure protection; building wealth and investing; purchasing a home; and establishing financial stability.
- ❖ Work with DCBA and others to increase alternative banking options to discourage the use of predatory lenders and increase enforcement against them.
- ❖ Support the efforts of the County's Center for Financial Empowerment.