



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: March 16, 2021

21

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

AMPLIFYING SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR YOUTH CAREER READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted our lives. But the pandemic has a disproportionate impact on youth – especially those youth who have previously experienced limited economic opportunity. A report published by the San Diego Workforce Partnership estimated the youth population, those between the ages of 16 to 24 years of age, to number approximately 417,000 in the region. Within this group, 43,000 individuals are considered “opportunity youth” - individuals who are not in school and not working. The report notes the “missed social and economic opportunity in developing these individuals to become thriving members of society.” We must not allow our youth to become so disconnected from society and must find ways to connect youth to employment opportunities through career readiness and workforce development.

In October 2020, the Board approved the development of the Live Well San Diego Youth sector which has the responsibility to hire youth ambassadors, provide training, lead townhalls, provide mentorship and engage youth in boards and commissions. To further amplify their voices and diversify to lived experiences of youth in the Youth Sector Program, I propose the formation of the Youth Environmental/Recreation Corp Program charged with addressing the economic needs of youth in our community.

Today, I am ask our County Board of Supervisors to establish the Youth Environment/Recreation Corp and provide \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and \$500,000 Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The Youth Environment/Recreation Corp will amplify the work of the Live Well San Diego Youth Sector by providing career readiness, workforce development in collaboration with other county entities.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER AND SUPERVISOR NORA VARGAS

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to the Board of Supervisors within 90 days with a proposal for development of the Youth Environment/Recreation Corp within the County to oversee, coordinate and implement the following:
 - a. Funding of Community Organizations that support youth career readiness, workforce development, mentorship and access to green spaces. Grants and youth career readiness programs should focus outreach and participation on low-income youth.
 - b. Department of Human Resources efforts to create County workforce, career development and employment training opportunities for youth.

2. Direct the Chief Administration Officer to refer to budget \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for the Youth Environmental/Recreation Corp Program.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no Fiscal Impact for Fiscal Year 2020-21 Operational Plan. Fiscal Impact of \$500,000 in costs for Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23. There will be a net change to General Fund and additional staff years depending on the development of the program.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

This action will support businesses in the community by providing funding to increase the number of youth internships and enhance environmental advancement in the County.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted our lives. But the pandemic has a disproportionately impact on the youth – especially those youth who have previously experience limited economic opportunity. A report published by the San Diego Workforce Partnership estimated the youth population, those between the ages of 16 to 24 years of age, at around 417,000 individuals in the region. Within this group, 43,000 individuals are considered “opportunity youth” - individuals who are not in school and not working. The report notes the “missed social and economic opportunity in developing these individuals to become thriving members of society.” We must not allow our youth to become so disconnected from society and must find ways to connect youth to employment opportunities through career readiness and workforce development.

During March and April of last year, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the sharpest unemployment spike in modern history. While youth may have fewer health complications due to COVID-19,

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they are greatly impacted by the downturn in employment and educational opportunities. Youth and those with less education are some of the hardest hit in our community by the current economic climate.

Youth are more likely to be employed in part-time and temporary positions and have fewer assets which increases their vulnerability during an economic downturn. According to a June 2020 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development report, youth are especially concerned about, “the toll on mental health, employment, disposable income and education.” A Center for Economic Policy Research report describes the dramatic impact of just one month of unemployment for 18-20 year-olds citing a 2% decrease in lifetime income.

The 2020 report published by the San Diego Workforce Partnership indicated:

- 417,000 youth ages 16-24 live in San Diego County with 38,000 who are not working.
- 2018 saw a slight increase of youth who are disconnected in our Region
- Opportunity Youth, defined as young people aged 16-24 who are neither working nor in school, are not just in one area of the county. Youth impacted are spread across the region with high pockets of Opportunity Youth in Fallbrook, Vista, Escondido, Lemon Grove, Chula Vista and National City.

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has offered after school and evening programs for many years at select DPR locations. In FY 2016-17, the Summer Night Lights program began operating at the Spring Valley Teen Center with a single pilot event for teens. The program grew to eight events in FY 2017-18. In FY 2018-19, DPR expanded the program to offer year-round activities and re-branded it as SD Nights (San Diego/Safe Destinations Nights). Part of the expanded program included the development of the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Squad, which provides employment opportunities for youth as young as 15 years old. For most of the participants, this is their first job. In the past two years the SD Nights program has hired 77 youth workers, to assist with planning and implementing over 200 events per year, keeping over 10,000 youth off the streets during critical hours. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down events and hiring, 10 of the SD Nights staff have been able to work in other parks, building their work experience and skill set, and 8 others have been accepted into collegiate level programs. DPR currently has over 80 employees in the opportunity youth age group serving as leaders in youth programs, performing administrative duties at recreation centers and the reservation desk and providing park maintenance and stewardship in parks. These positions are a path to full-time careers in DPR as Park Rangers, Park Maintenance Workers, Recreation Programmers, and Administrative Analysts.

The International Labor Organization estimates that efforts to move toward green economies will create 60 million new jobs worldwide by 2030. These jobs require relevant skills and training. The proposed Youth Environmental/Recreation Corp Program would provide skills and training opportunities to develop knowledge, practice skills, and gain work experience in this growing sector. Environmental issues are cross-sectional, impacting all sectors of our county. By investing in youth career readiness in these areas we can develop a future workforce of local stewards positioned for healing of community and environment.

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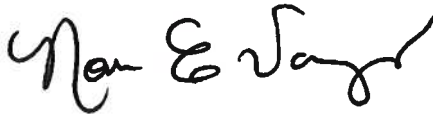
On June 2, 2020, the Board approved the Housing Our Youth Pilot Program in San Diego County aimed at supporting those youth experiencing homelessness. In addition, the board approved a pilot program of Fostering Academic Success in Education (FASE) aimed at providing wraparound supports for youth in the child welfare system through education partnerships. In October 2020, the Board approved the development of the *Live Well San Diego* Youth Sector which is tasked with leadership development, training, mentorship and youth participation on boards and commissions. The County is well positioned to amplify and support the needs of youth in our region.

San Diego County stands to benefit when our youth are connected to programs that support career readiness and workforce development. By investing in community organizations and programs that invest in our youth, we make an investment in the future of San Diego. I urge my colleagues to support these actions and invest in our youth.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The requested action supports the *Live Well San Diego* Initiative in the County's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and its vision for a San Diego that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving, by supporting youth career readiness as we navigate the economic recovery of COVID-19.

Respectfully submitted,



NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, District 1



TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Supervisor, District 3

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED

 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

October 27, 2020 (5), approved Proposal for the Development of the Live Well San Diego Youth Sector.

August 4, 2020 (21), approved Supporting Youth Engagement in Service in San Diego County.

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:

N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION
NUMBER(S):**

N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Office of Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer (District 3) and Office of Supervisor Nora Vargas (District 1)

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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