



The City of



Economic Development

MEETING NOTES

San Diego Promise Zone

Jobs and Education Working Group Notes

Thursday, March 20, 2025 | 2:30 – 4:00 PM

Via Zoom | (Meeting ID: 160 295 2326) | [Zoom Meeting Registration Link](#)

Working Group Goals: *Create jobs and improve educational opportunities*

In Attendance

California Department of Rehabilitation (Jeff Noyes), **City of San Diego – Economic Development Department** (Christie Marcella) **City of San Diego – Office of Child and Youth Success** (Tara Ryan), **City of San Diego - Promise Zone** (Oscar Silva, Donika Moreno, Domanic Riley, Roosevelt Williams III, Amber Weber, Daniel Hamilton), **Elementary Institute of Science** (Sarah Tuakli Cooper), **Grid Alternatives** (Elisabetta Baratti), **Junior Achievement of San Diego** (Juliane Douds), **Monarch School** (Roberta Sutton) **Reality Changers** (Ashley Morgan), **San Diego Art Matters** (Michael Angelo Camacho), **San Diego County Office of Education** (Ernesto Rivera), **San Diego Creative Youth Development Network** (Giselle Rocha, Shayla James), **San Diego Unified School District** (Alysse Peek), **San Diego State University** (Andrew Soliz), **San Diego Workforce Partnership** (Rachel Bereza), **SoCal Pre Apprenticeship** (Wanda Rogers), **University of California San Diego** (Raquel Aparicio), **United Way of San Diego** (Alyssa Abellar), **Wesley House** (Maria Khalifa), **Workshops for Warriors** (Lauren Welch), **XplorStem** (Vicki Meadows-Nienaber), **YouthWill** (Liliana Soriano)

Meeting Notes

Welcome, Agenda Review, Culture Share

- Sarah Tuakli Cooper kicked off the meeting by welcoming partners and reviewing the agenda.
- Guidelines for a respectful and effective meeting were shared and posted in the chat.
- Jobs and Education co-chair, Raquel Aparicio, led our **culture share**: In honor of National Reading Month, what was your favorite book growing up?

Partner Updates

- **San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE)**: SDCOE will be working with Monarch School on a Job Expo in the Promise Zone to be held on April 25 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. There will be training and job opportunities available for Promise Zone youth. Please contact Ernesto.rivera@sdcoe.net for more information.
- **Elementary Institute of Science (EIS) – STEM without Limits (March 27 from 6 – 7 pm)**: An armchair chat will be held at the Elementary Institute of Science on March 27 at

Click the following links to stay connected to the San Diego Promise Zone

[Newsletter](#) | [Website](#) | [New Website](#) | [Email](#) | (619) 236-6700 | 1200 Third Ave, 14th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

6:00 pm, to discuss DEI in STEM and how this initiative is under pressure due to the new administration's policies. This conversation will shift the narrative from fear to possibility, from uncertainty to strategy, and from division to collective action. Together, we will explore how STEM can continue to drive equity, progress, and innovation, ensuring that the future economy is built by and for everyone.

- **e3 Civic High Pathways to Possibilities Career Fair (April 20 from 8:30 am – 1:15 pm):** e3 Civic High is hosting the Pathways to Possibilities Career Fair, providing high school students the opportunity to explore career options, learn about educational pathways, and connect with professionals from multiple industries. See attached flyer for more details or email mwoods@e3civichigh.com.
- **San Diego Wesley House:** Wesley House is an organization that provides affordable supportive housing to low-income college students. It also provides a full-service food pantry, CALFresh application assistance, life-skills workshops, and mentoring/tutoring services. If you know someone who would be interested, please direct them to <https://www.sdwesleyhouse.org/>.
- **GRID Alternatives – Solar Corps:** Solar Corps is an 11-month full-time apprenticeship with GRID Alternatives for youth interested in the clean energy industry. Participants will receive monthly workshops, a 4-day in-person retreat, 80 hours of personalized professional development, and \$600 to spend on building towards their future. See flyer for more details.
- **GRID Alternatives – The Future of Solar Jobs:** In partnership with Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC), GRID Alternatives is providing hands-on training, support services, and career advancement for unemployed and underemployed youth who are interested in solar jobs. Youth will learn to install solar panels and learn valuable skills in a growing industry. See flyer for more details.
- **Workshops for Warriors (WFW) Welding for Warriors Program:** The 16-week accelerated training program in advanced manufacturing for veterans, transitioning service members, and civilians is now enrolling for classes. Earn certifications in welding and CNC machining. Classes Start April 28. See flyer for more details.
- **The Early Learning Nation Collective:** The ELN Collective is offering grants up to \$25,000 for community-driven initiatives supporting children prenatal to age 8. [Applications](#) are open through April 15, 2025.

Promise Zone Updates

- **We're Hiring! - AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate and Grants & Research Associate**
The SDPZ team has two positions open for an AmeriCorps VISTA Communications Associate and an AmeriCorps VISTA Grants & Research Associate, which are full-time for one year. See more details in the flyer.
- **Newsletter Update**
The [March newsletter](#) was published at the beginning of the month, featuring Raquel Aparicio, Director of Student Outreach and Engagement at the University of California,

San Diego, as the Community Spotlight. Links to the [newsletter archive](#) and [nomination form](#) were shared.

- **Jobs & Education Logic Model**

We have a new tool for Promise Zone partners to help them add their activities to the Jobs & Education logic model. [Click here for a google form](#) for you to enter your items, which our VISTAs will then transfer to the logic model.

Presentation: San Diego Promise Zone – 2025 Youth-led Career Expo (Donika Moreno)

- **Call to action:** Consider sharing your experience and any observations or reflections from this year's career expo.
- On Tuesday, March 18, the SDPZ hosted our 3rd annual Youth-Led Career Expo. With nearly 200 youth in attendance, 57 vendors (a 43% increase in employer participation), and 44 volunteers. This year's expo provided hands-on career prep, professional headshots, resume reviews, and more. Huge thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, and working group members for making it all possible!
- Tara Ryan shared about how she witnessed the young adult's confidence grow during the mock interviews and expressed interest in offering a similar event to students citywide.
- Amber Weber shared her emotional experience in the Recital Hall, where students tried on professional attire for their headshots. She observed a boost in their confidence as they felt good about how they looked.

Logic Models & Breakout Rooms

- **Call to action:** How can your organization support our collective objectives?

Subgroup 1 Objectives: *Mobilize community partners to develop strategies that increase educational and career support for Opportunity Youth*

- **Attendance:** Raquel Aparicio, Donika Moreno, Oscar Silva Andrew Soliz, Ernesto Rivera, Jeff Noyes, Maria Khalifa, Tara Ryan, Ashley Morgan, Alyssa Abellar
- Raquel emphasized the importance of sharing career fair events across organizations/networks to better connect students. She noted the groups ongoing challenge in building relationships with school district counselors, which limits our ability to share such information widely. She suggested inviting counselors to future working group meetings and encouraged members to consider who else should be brought into these conversations, as well as how we can better market events to Promise Zone students.
- Raquel also asked the group to consider what resources they can contribute to a toolkit designed to help industries/employers connect with youth in the Promise Zone.
- As a strategy to highlight opportunities for the youth in the Promise Zone, Donika suggested creating a "Job Board Submission" form for employers to submit job openings, which could be featured in the Promise Zone newsletter. She also reminded the group that about the Promise Zone's "Event Submission" form for partners to share upcoming events in the newsletter.
- Ernesto (SDCOE) share that they are working to strengthen school-partner relationships by organizing events where educators can visit apprenticeship program sites. This led to the discussion about maintaining sustainable connections with employers who

participate in the career expo. Donika emphasized the importance of following up with these employers post-expo to stay informed about job opportunities. Ernesto added that it would be valuable to have these organizations to present about any opportunities during working group meetings.

Subgroup 2 Objectives: *Build an infrastructure to help increase the number of students meeting school readiness and grade-level expectations*

- **Attendance:** Sarah Tuakli Cooper, Roosevelt Williams III, Daniel Hamilton, Oscar Silva, Domanic Riley, Vicki Meadows, Giselle Rocha, Julianne Douds, Michael Angelo Camacho, Shayla James, Roberta Sutton
- Vicki shared that starting educational programs in North County is easier compared to the Promise Zone due to less bureaucracy. She emphasized the challenge of getting resources to youth and questioned how to increase buy-in.
- J Douds shared that California now requires financial literacy as a graduation requirement for high school seniors starting in 2030. She represents Junior Achievement, an organization that serves schools where at least 51% qualify for free/reduced lunch, connecting students with mentors to provide hands-on learning and career support. J shared that Junior Achievement works with both large and small partners and helps working students balance school and jobs. Micheal Angelo suggested that J speak at an Economic Activity working group meeting and Domanic offered to coordinate the invitation. Vicki from XplorStem, expressed interest in reconnecting with Junior Achievement, having participated in their programs as a student.
- Michael highlighted that arts often exist in after-school spaces and referenced Elementary Institute of Science as an example. The group then discussed the inclusion of arts in the logic model. Amber mentioned Art Bus Express and Classics4Kids as potential partners.
- Michael also pointed out the lack of educators or education organizations at the meetings.

Wrap Up and Adjourn

- Digital Comment Box: <https://forms.gle/JSYK67jo28YRVQ7R6>
- Nominate community leaders for recognition in Promise Zone newsletter here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehhcidTURu9Xb6lywuyh4z4y9JgqDCFxmXdNgSheNjaDp8Hw/viewform?usp=sharing>

Next Meeting: April 17, 2:30-4:00 pm, via Zoom. [Register Here](#)