



YOUTH COMMITTEE

Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:30 pm

**Almaden Room, Business and Administrative Services Center,
5730 Chambertin Dr, San Jose, CA 95118**

www.work2future.org

This meeting can be viewed live on computer, smartphone, and tablet at
<https://zoom.us/j/98952032087?pwd=WIU4Mks0VjV4OHJOeEZnZ1RXQlFZUT09>

PUBLIC COMMENT

To provide Spoken Public Comment *during* the meeting, please be present at the meeting location above. Fill in an available blue card and provide it to a meeting staff person.

Please limit remarks to the time limit allotted by the meeting chair, normally two minutes.

To submit written Public Comment *before* the committee meeting: Send by e-mail to Lawrence.Thoo@sanjoseca.gov by 12:30 pm the day of the meeting. The e-mails will be posted with the agenda as "Letters from the Public". Please identify the Agenda Item Number in the subject line of your email.

To submit written Public Comment *during* the meeting: Send e-mail during the meeting to Deanna.Walter@sanjoseca.gov, identifying the Agenda Item Number in the e-mail subject line. Comments received will be included as a part of the meeting record but will not be read into the record.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

MEMBERS | February 2024

Jack Estill,* *Committee Chair*
Partner
Coactify

Deryk Clark**
Division Director of Youth Development
Bill Wilson Center

Joseph K. Herrity**
Principal
Groundwork Social Sector Consulting

Sofia Jaquez
Youth Liberation Movement

Emily McGrath*
Senior Fellow, Director of Workforce Policy
The Century Foundation

Rafaela Perez*
Employment Services Director
Social Services Agency, County of Santa Clara

Steve Preminger*
Director, Office of Strategic & Intergovernmental Affairs
County of Santa Clara

Maria Vans
Youth Liberation Movement

Traci Williams*
Co-chair
South Bay Consortium for Adult Education
Director
East Side Adult Education

*work2future Board member

**Reappointment pending

YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING

February 12, 2024, 3:30 pm

work2future Business Services & Administrative Services Center, Almaden Winery,
5730 Chambertin Dr, San Jose

View online at: <https://zoom.us/j/98952032087?pwd=WIU4Mks0VjV4OHJOeEZnZ1RXQlFZUT09>

AGENDA

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL | 5 min |
| II. BUSINESS | 3:35 pm end |
| A. Approval of Minutes {Action}
<i>Jack Estill, Committee Chair</i>
Approve minutes of the November 29, 2023, Youth Committee special meeting. | 5 min
3:40 pm end |
| B. Chair's Report {Information}
<i>Jack Estill, Committee Chair</i>
Introductions and report on various matters of interest to the committee. | 10 min
3:50 pm end |
| C. Youth Forum Update and Recommendation Letter {Information}
<i>Amanda Otte, College and Careers Pathway Coordinator, San José Public Library</i>
Report on convenings of Youth Forum 2.0 and presentation of the Forum's recommendation letter. | 20 min
4:10 pm end |
| D. WIOA Youth Program Update PY 2023-24 {Information}
<i>Rick Robles, Project Director, Equus Workforce Solutions; Kayla Nicholls, Youth Programs Manager, International Rescue Committee</i>
Year-to-date report on enrollments and other metrics in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Program for Program Year 2023, July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024. | 10 min
4:20 pm end |
| E. Report on CWA Youth Summit {Information}
<i>Maria Vans and Sofia Jaquez, Youth Committee members</i>
Report on the California Workforce Association 2024 Annual Youth Summit held in Long Beach on February 7–8, 2024. | 10 min
4:30 pm end |
| F. Discussion of 2024 Youth Committee Goals {Information}
<i>Jack Estill, Committee Chair</i>
Committee discussion. | 20 min
4:50 pm end |
| III. OPEN FORUM
Members of the public can address the committee on matters not on the agenda. | 5 min
4:55 pm end |
| IV. OTHER
<i>Announcements, committee housekeeping</i> | 5 min
5:00 pm end |
| V. ADJOURNMENT | |

Please note: *Times to the right of agenda items are estimates only of the duration of the item and its approximate ending time. Actual times may vary, and items may be taken out of order at the discretion of the chair.*

CITY OF SAN JOSE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND COMMITTEE ROOMS

The Code of Conduct is intended to promote open meetings that welcome debate of public policy issues being discussed by the City Council, their Committees, and City Boards and Commissions in an atmosphere of fairness, courtesy, and respect for differing points of view.

1. Public Meeting Decorum:

- a. Persons in the audience will refrain from behavior which will disrupt the public meeting. This will include making loud noises, clapping, shouting, booing, hissing or engaging in any other activity in a manner that disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- b. Persons in the audience will refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance involving unwelcome physical contact.
- c. Persons in the audience will refrain from using cellular phones and/or pagers while the meeting is in session.
- d. Appropriate attire, including shoes and shirts are required in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms at all times.
- e. Persons in the audience will not place their feet on the seats in front of them.
- f. No food, drink (other than bottled water with a cap), or chewing gum will be allowed in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, except as otherwise pre-approved by City staff.
- g. All persons entering the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, including their bags, purses, briefcases and similar belongings, may be subject to search for weapons and other dangerous materials.

2. Signs, Objects or Symbolic Material:

- a. Objects and symbolic materials, such as signs or banners, will be allowed in the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms, with the following restrictions: § No objects will be larger than 2 feet by 3 feet.
- b. No sticks, posts, poles or other such items will be attached to the signs or other symbolic materials.
- c. The items cannot create a building maintenance problem or a fire or safety hazard.
- d. Persons with objects and symbolic materials such as signs must remain seated when displaying them and must not raise the items above shoulder level, obstruct the view or passage of other attendees, or otherwise disturb the business of the meeting.
- e. Objects that are deemed a threat to persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed. City staff is authorized to remove items and/or individuals from the Council Chambers and Committee Rooms if a threat exists or is perceived to exist. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to: firearms (including replicas and antiques), toy guns, explosive material, and ammunition; knives and other edged weapons; illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia; laser pointers, scissors, razors, scalpels, box cutting knives, and other cutting tools; letter openers, corkscrews, can openers with points, knitting needles, and hooks; hairspray, pepper spray, and aerosol containers; tools; glass containers; and large backpacks and suitcases that contain items unrelated to the meeting.

3. Addressing the Council, Committee, Board or Commission:

- a. Persons wishing to speak on an agenda item or during open forum are requested to complete a speaker card and submit the card to the City Clerk or other administrative staff at the meeting.
- b. Meeting attendees are usually given two (2) minutes to speak on any discussion item and/or during open forum; the total amount of time allocated for public testimony for each public speaker or for an agenda item is in the discretion of the Chair of the meeting and may be limited when appropriate. (California Government Code Section 54954.3; Council Policy 0-37) Applicants and appellants in land use matters are usually given more time to speak. Speakers using a translator will be given twice the time allotted to ensure non-English speakers receive the same opportunity to directly address the Council, Committee, Board or Commission.
- c. Speakers should discuss only the agenda item when called to speak for that item, and only topics related to City business when called to speak during open forum on the agenda.
- d. Speakers' comments should be addressed to the full body. Requests to engage the Mayor, Council Members, Board Members, Commissioners or Staff in conversation will not be honored. Abusive language is inappropriate.
- e. Speakers will not bring to the podium any items other than a prepared written statement, writing materials, or objects that have been inspected by security staff.
- f. If an individual wishes to submit written information, he or she may give it to the City Clerk or other administrative staff at the meeting.
- g. Speakers and any other members of the public will not approach the dais at any time without prior consent from the Chair of the meeting.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct which will disturb, disrupt, or impede the orderly conduct of the meeting may result in removal from the meeting and/or possible arrest.

All public records relating to an open session item on this agenda, which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act, that are distributed to a majority of the legislative body will be available for public inspection online at www.work2future.org and at work2future's Business and Administrative Services Center at the Almaden Winery Community Center, 5730 Chambertin Drive, San Jose, California at the same time that the public records are distributed or made available to the legislative body.

I

**Call to Order
& Roll Call**

II.A

Approval of Minutes

{ACTION}

YOUTH COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

November 29, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

STAFF: Melchor, Thoo, Walter

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chair Estill called the meeting to order at 3:38 pm.

Roll Call

Present: Estill, Herrity (attended via Zoom under the teleconferencing provisions in the Brown Act), Perez, Preminger, Vans, Williams

Absent: Clark, Jaquez, McGrath

All votes were taken by roll call.

II. BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes

ACTION: Mr. Preminger moved, Ms. Williams seconded, and the committee unanimously approved the acceptance of the October 12, 2023, Youth Committee Meeting minutes.

B. 2024 Schedule of Meetings

Lawrence Thoo, Strategic Engagement Manager, proposed the following dates for regular Youth Committee meetings in 2024:

1. Thursday, February 8
2. Thursday, May 9
3. Thursday, August 8
4. Thursday, October 10

ACTION: Ms. Williams moved, Ms. Perez seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed dates for regular Youth Committee meetings in 2024.

C. Election

Election of Committee Chair to serve a one-year term beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024.

ACTION: Mr. Herrity nominated Mr. John "Jack" Estill. There were no other nominations. Mr. Estill was elected unanimously to serve as Committee Chair through December 31, 2024.

III. OPEN FORUM

One public comment was presented by Mr. Paul Soto.

IV. OTHER

Monique Melchor, work2future Director, shared preliminary details about an outreach effort

planned for early 2024 targeting youth and families in San Jose Districts 3 and 5 in cooperation with the district offices.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Estill adjourned the meeting at 3:49 p.m.

Draft minutes prepared by D. Walter, reviewed by L. Thoo.

DRAFT

II.B

Chair's Report

{INFORMATION}

CHAIR'S REPORT

Youth Committee Chair Jack Estill will introduce guests and share information about matters of interest to the committee but not itemized in the agenda for this meeting.

###

ILC

**Youth Forum Update &
Recommendation Letter**

{INFORMATION}

YOUTH FORUM UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATION LETTER

Co-Chair of Youth Forum 2.0 and San José Public Library College and Careers Pathway Coordinator Amanda Otte will report on the conclusion of the Youth Forum and present a letter of recommendations from Youth Forum 2.0.

###

Attachment: Youth Forum 2.0 Final Recommendation Letter and attachments A–F



YOUTH FORUM 2.0 RECOMMENDATION LETTER

To: The Youth Committee of the work2future Workforce Development Board
From: Joe Herrity and Amanda Otte on behalf of the Youth Forum 2.0 Steering Committee
Date: January 19, 2023
Re: Recommendations to Support a Flourishing Youth and Young-Adult Opportunity Ecosystem

Dear Members of the work2future Youth Committee,

With respect and appreciation, the conveners of the [Youth Forum 2.0](#) recommend the work2future Youth Committee review, explore, and consider the following community-generated recommendations to strengthen the youth and young adult workforce development field in the region. We believe it is important the Committee take a broader view and consider how these recommendations can catalyze integration and coherence within the broader youth- and young-adult-serving ecosystem, of which workforce development is a critical component.

1. **Connect the ecosystem of programs and supports** across the providers and partners in the work2future region that deliver the 14 elements of WIOA Title I Youth Services, and adjacent services and supports, to facilitate alignment, reduce duplication, and foster connection among providers.
2. **Build an earn & learn pathway system** that better links SJ Works and WIOA (city-run programs) and other public and private investments to increase the total number of earn & learn placements and develop a continuum of opportunities.
3. **Connect school and work for Opportunity Youth and system-impacted youth** by linking re-engagement schools and WIOA work experience and on-the-job training resources to ensure the most vulnerable youth, who often have adult responsibilities, can participate in school and work in a coherent and connected manner.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Youth Forum 2.0 Approach

This letter provides actionable recommendations to the Youth Committee of the work2future Workforce Development Board (WDB) that emerged from the Youth Forum 2.0 (YF2). The YF2 convened more than 150 community members, including 25 young leaders with lived experience in systems and with the life

barriers in WIOA's priority youth populations, over 10 months through a six-meeting series, with the intent to crowd-source collective intelligence aimed at advancing an *Opportunity Ecosystem*. This letter is the culmination of that work.

The purpose of the YF2 was to support the youth- and young-adult-serving ecosystem in Santa Clara County in establishing a common vision for an *Opportunity Ecosystem* capable of reliably helping young people achieve the education and employment milestones necessary to succeed in the Silicon Valley economy. Importantly, the YF2, as a pilot model for intergenerational collaboration to improve public systems and agencies, focused on a particular slice of the *Opportunity Ecosystem*; the YF2 was intended to promote workforce development partnerships, programs, and employment expansion that focuses on the implementation of best practices defined by young people with lived experience in public systems.

The practical and immediate goal of the YF2 was to identify 1-3 actionable recommendations that could be advanced to the newly formed Youth Committee of the work2future WDB. The YF2 defined actionable via three criteria:

- 1) we have the local authority to decide
- 2) can be implemented within one year
- 3) can be measured through existing data sources

Importantly, recognizing that economic and social mobility in Santa Clara County have clear race, class, and geographic disparities, which are most acute for system-impacted young people, the YF2 sought to advance recommendations for young people furthest from opportunity.

In the last meeting of YF2, youth and adult participants reviewed a set of [Solution Ideas](#), which were built upon recommendations in the [YLM Advocacy Letter](#) and results of subsequent consideration and dialogue at the June and August meetings. The advocacy letter was developed as a result of the first three YF2 meetings, which included a workforce development landscape survey, participatory action research (survey & focus groups), and youth-led human-centered design. The set of solution ideas included five “actionable solutions” (using the above definition of actionable). It also included seven “system-level ideas,” which would require deeper collaboration and longer-term engagement, but are also critical to forging a coherent and effective youth- and young-adult-serving *Opportunity Ecosystem*. Every attendee had \$100 (play money) to invest in the solution idea(s) that they were most excited about/that they felt would have the greatest positive impact on young people moving forward.

The three community-generated recommendations listed on page one represent the three solution ideas with the highest level of buy-in from YF2 participants, as outlined in more detail in the [Investment Portfolio](#).

Why Focus on the Workforce Development Board

The WDB is the only public governance body solely focused on workforce development and is statutorily positioned between the larger education systems (K12, community college, and other training

institutions) and various social services young people furthest from opportunity rely on. For reference, see the purposes of work2future WDB as laid out in the bylaws:

“ARTICLE II: PURPOSES

2.1 Purpose: WORK2FUTURE BOARD was formed for the following purposes:

As a strategic convener, promote and broker effective partnerships among businesses, educators, organizations and local elected officials, and develop a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training and education programs to promote economic growth.

Provide public policy guidance for, and exercise oversight with respect to, WIOA activities within the workforce region, financed in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with the elected officials of the local workforce development area

The importance of a well-functioning workforce system in a broader youth-serving ecosystem cannot be overstated. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates, funds, and guides the Workforce Development Board (WDB) system. WIOA directs local WDBs in SEC 107 subsection (d) parts (3), (5), and (6) to act as a convener and broker, to facilitate comprehensive career pathways (as codified under WIOA), and to identify and disseminate proven and promising practices, including highlighting such practices from other communities. Importantly, local WDBs are positioned as key nodes in the larger system of K-12 education and community college, as well as the broader career technical education environment.

Additionally, under WIOA Title I Youth Services, 14 service elements must be made available to each program participant. These 14 elements constitute the makings of a robust and comprehensive youth and young-adult-serving ecosystem. Beyond that, WIOA Title I Youth Services also prioritizes serving those furthest from opportunity, including young people who have experienced the child welfare system, the juvenile justice system, homelessness, and/or early parenthood. This directs us toward system-to-system partnership to locate young people and creates the opportunity to serve them with linked and integrated resources that can create a “service stack” capable of fostering durable economic mobility.

Building on the First Youth Forum

The first Youth Forum (YF1), which ran from February 2021 to March 2022, culminated in three recommendations to the work2future Workforce Development Board. Those recommendations were to (A) form a formal youth committee, (B) ensure that two young people with lived experience were full members of that committee, and (C) to provide training and support to those young people to ensure their effective participation. Those recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Workforce Development Board in June 2022, resulting in the very committee to which this letter is addressed.

The creation of the Youth Committee offers an important opportunity for our community to think and build at a systems level. The Youth Committee is a youth-focused policy-level body embedded at the intersection of high school, community college, career technical education, and a variety of social services, via WIOA mandated and encouraged partnerships. It is explicitly positioned and authorized to work across those groups, and yet that is the hardest work to do. In that vein, and with the lessons of YF1, it felt important to continue to create intentional spaces where the voices of young people most proximate to issues could join together with the professionals charged with operating systems, programs, and services to identify the most meaningful opportunities for progress.

YF1 represented an important advance in our community in how we engage with lived experience to strengthen our collective understanding. Learning to incorporate the voices of young people closest to the issues allowed us to broaden our perspective and strengthen our collective understanding. YF1 built upon nearly a decade of work by the Opportunity Youth Partnership (OYP) to move San Jose and Santa Clara County toward an integrated system of services anchored on educational advancement and career attainment for young people furthest from opportunity.

We urge the Youth Committee to consider its work and charge broadly. Another body that meets in a perfunctory manner a handful of times per year will not advance our youth-serving ecosystem in meaningful ways. Some might argue that is a charge too tall for such a committee, but the Youth Committee and work2future will build on the strong foundation described in the paragraph above, and will not be alone in efforts to design and implement action plans based on the recommendations of YF2 participants.

The YF2 shows that dozens of people will show up and engage deeply in these conversations, and both YF1 and 2 show us young leaders are ready to engage in bringing their lived experience expertise to bear and that intergenerational dialogue leads to new ideas and meaningful progress.

Opportunities for Partnership

The San José Public Library is actively developing workplans to address the first recommendation to “Connect the ecosystem of programs and supports,” as well as the system-level solution idea with the highest level of investment among YF2 participants: to “Establish a common college, career, and well-being framework across the county.”

In order to “Connect the ecosystem of programs and supports,” Library staff are initiating plans to build an online tool that facilitates connections and collaboration among the ecosystem of workforce-related services, supports, and providers by making the whole “system” visible with the intent to support cross referrals, interagency connections, and, ultimately, better-coordinated services.

The plan is to work with Youth Forum participants to design an inventory of workforce development service providers that is filterable and includes information about specific services offered, eligibility

criteria, and other distinguishing features. End users would include Library/City staff, community partners/community-based organizations, and community members seeking job/career support.

As of the writing of this letter, no such service or tool exists in Santa Clara County. The Library is uniquely situated to lead this work on behalf of our community, having established a level of trust among relevant partners and community members alike – all of whom will be critical partners in the design and implementation of the project plan. The project is aligned with the strategic vision for how the Library and the City of San José should be supporting youth and adults on pathways to college and career, which includes support for helping people effectively and efficiently navigate aspects of the workforce development system. It is also aligned with the Library's mission to ensure that every member of the community has access to a vast array of ideas and information.

In order to “Establish a common college, career, and well-being framework across the county,” the Library is in the process of working with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to develop a set of shared strategies, frameworks, and tools for youth and adults as they navigate systems of higher education and workforce development. Library and SCCOE staff aligned on a need to center the lived experiences of young people who are furthest from opportunity (e.g., opportunity youth) and to design supportive systems to meet their needs through an intergenerational partnership approach. Together, the Library and SCCOE aim to:

- Establish a comprehensive framework built around critical life-skill, academic, and career-ready milestones that articulates what we must deliver to every young person in Silicon Valley to ensure equitable conditions for success (e.g., mentor-supported personal success planning, interactive site tours and workplace challenges, and earn and learn opportunities through internships or apprenticeships);
- Identify early adopters and points of access that will help to expand work-based learning opportunities within the City and County ecosystems, including growing governmental and educational agencies serving as hosts for unpaid and paid work-based learning placements; and,
- Encourage career exploration in high-need, high-opportunity, and high-wage career pathways, including:
 - Educator and other school-based career pathways;
 - City career pathways;
 - Sustainable tech and other climate responsive pathways; and,
 - Other in-demand career pathways that may include post-secondary educational opportunities other than college (e.g., apprenticeships).

The Youth Committee and work2future will be vital partners in the work ahead and should seize opportunities to lead and co-design action plans aligned to the recommendations herein.

Respectfully,

Joe Herrity and Amanda Otte on behalf of the Youth Forum 2.0 Steering Committee



YOUTH FORUM 2.0

PURPOSE

To support the youth- and young-adult-serving ecosystem in Santa Clara County in establishing a common vision for an Opportunity Ecosystem capable of reliably helping young people to achieve the education and employment milestones necessary to succeed in the Silicon Valley economy.

The Youth Forum is intended to promote workforce development partnerships, programs, and employment expansion that focuses on the implementation of best practices defined by young people with lived experience.

WHAT

- A structured, time-bound community of learning that infuses the expertise of lived experience to strengthen the existing system and bring all parties together to find actionable policy and programmatic changes that can meaningfully improve ecosystem conditions for young people in Santa Clara County.
- A six-meeting series from December 2022 to October 2023; a 1.5-2 hour meeting held every other month.
- Convened by the Youth Liberation Movement, Lighthouse Silicon Valley, and the San Jose Public Library.
- The Youth Forum will convene with an explicit goal to establish at least one, and up to three, measurable policy recommendation(s) to inform the new work2future Youth Council in its first year of operation.
- A generative process that, uniquely, begins with centering lived experience, and employs proven practices like landscape mapping, participatory action research, human centered design, and youth and adult partnership to explore new territory.

WHY THIS? WHY NOW?

The Youth Forum 2.0 builds on the success of the first Youth Forum (hosted Feb 2021–March 2022), which led to recommendations to the work2future Workforce Development Board to create a Youth Committee to support the development of effective youth workforce policy. Critically, this recommendation included a requirement to have at least two young people with lived experience as full voting members of the committee. This was unanimously adopted by the board in June.

This Youth Committee creates a youth-focused policy level body embedded at the intersection of high school, community college, career technical education, and a variety of social services, with a legal mandate under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to act as a convener and broker (SEC 107 (d) (5)), and to facilitate comprehensive career pathways as defined under WIOA (SEC 107 (d) (5)).

Recognizing that economic and social mobility in Santa Clara County have clear race-based and placed-based disparities, which are most acute for system impacted young people, the idea is to employ Targeted Universalism to find solution in support of our least resourced young people that will pave the way for solutions that can scale equitably to ensure every young person has a shot at economic success.

FORMAT

	Listen, Learn, and Ideate			Identify Actionable Solutions		
Meeting	1 Defining the current system	2 Illuminating youth perspective	3 User journey	4 Aligning on vision	5 Exploring policy solutions	6 Exploring programmatic solutions
Purpose	Use landscape mapping to clarify the current youth workforce ecosystem, to include strengths and gaps	Use participatory action research surveys and focus groups to illuminate youth and young adult perceptions of the youth workforce ecosystem	Use human centered design to highlight key elements of “user journey,” and uncover critical nuances in service of the desired state	Align on shared vision and filter emergent solutions	Identify program-level solutions	Identify needed local policy changes (and state policy if necessary)
Pre-work by the convening partners	Learning tour and deep-dive mapping of the broad youth workforce ecosystem	Participatory action research (PAR), survey of 100-200 young people and 3-4 focus groups	Human-centered design experience (HCD) with young people from across the county	Survey Youth Forum participants to identify their highest aspiration for the youth workforce ecosystem, commitments, and to identify constraints	Tools to consolidate feedback and highlight the opportunity to create; brief report sharing best practices for integrated youth workforce development from other communities (via survey of the Aspen Institute OYF network)	Brief report identifying critical enabling policies from other communities.



For more information, contact joe@groundworkconsulting.org

Youth Forum 2.0 Activated Organization List

Allcove

Applied Materials Foundation

Bill Wilson Center

Center for Employment Training

Center for Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing

City of San Jose

City Manager's Office

Library

Office of Economic Development/work2future

PRNS (SJ Youth Empowerment Alliance)

Comerica Bank

East Side Union High School District

Envision Your Pathway

Equus (WIOA vendor)

Escuela Popular

Five Keys Charter School

Fresh Lifelines for Youth

Groundwork Consulting

Heising Simons Foundation

International Rescue Committee (WIOA vendor)

Job Corps

JobTrain

Juma Ventures

Kids in Common

Lighthouse Silicon Valley

MetroEd

Mission College

National Center for Youth Law

New Ways to Work

Pivotal

Razing the Bar

San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development

San Jose Conservations Corps & Charter School

San Jose Evergreen Community College District

San Jose Public Library Foundation

San Jose State University

Santa Clara County

Behavioral Health Services

Office of Supportive Housing

Probation Department

Social Serves Agency

Santa Clara County Executive Offices

Office of Immigrant Affairs

Reentry Services

Santa Clara County Office of Education

Alternative Education

College and Career Pathways

Educational Services

Opportunity Youth Academy

Shine Together

SIATech

Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Sobrato Family Foundation

South Bay Consortium for Adult Education

The Tech - STEM Pathways Steering Committee

United Way Bay Area

West Valley Community College

Year Up

Youth-Led Organizations and Youth Advisory Groups

Resilience Corps

Youth Liberation Movement

Youth Advisory Council

Razing the Bar

COYN Fellowship

Youth Impact Partnership

Youth Action Board of Santa Clara County

HyphyX Educated Academy

Envision Your Pathway

San Jose Conservations Corps & Charter School

Fresh Lifelines for Youth

Summary of Participation

55 organizations were activated, including 11 youth-led organizations and/or youth advisory groups.

145 people participated in meetings, including 25 youth/young adults.

23 organizations contributed information about services offered via the Workforce Development Ecosystem Survey (Asset Mapping Data Collection Tool).

247 young people shared substantive data through the Youth and Young Adult Experience Survey (Participatory Action Research Tool).



Youth Forum 2.0 - Solution Ideas

This document outlines two sets of solutions based on research and discussions from the past year of Youth Forum work. Many of these ideas were solidified through phone calls with Youth Forum participants in the last two months. Below, under the header “Actionable Solutions,” are ideas that reflect our most immediate charge to make 1-3 recommendations to the newly formed Youth Committee of the work2future Workforce Development Board (WDB). Actionable is defined as (1) within the jurisdiction/authority of local entities; (2) can be implemented within one year; and (3) can be measured with existing data sources. This is absolutely critical as the work2future WDB is the only agency focused on workforce development, and it sits between the larger education systems (K12, community college, and other training institutions) and various social services. For reference, see the purposes of work2future WDB as laid out in the bylaws:

“ARTICLE II: PURPOSES

2.1 Purpose: WORK2FUTURE BOARD was formed for the following purposes:

- A. As a strategic convener, promote and broker effective partnerships among businesses, educators, organizations and local elected officials, and develop a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training and education programs to promote economic growth.
- B. Provide public policy guidance for, and exercise oversight with respect to, WIOA activities within the workforce region, financed in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with the elected officials of the local workforce development area.”

Other solution ideas presented under the “System-Level Ideas” header may not be actionable as defined above or may fall outside the purview of work2future, but they are critical to forging a coherent and effective youth and young adult serving “opportunity ecosystem.” These could be adopted by other groups or further explored through subsequent work.

ACTIONABLE SOLUTIONS

1. Build an earn & learn system.

Short description: Create a more coherent earn-and-learn pathways system and create more earn-and-learn slots.

Potential form: Double the number of current earn-and-learn slots that target low-income and system-impacted youth, and identify sequenced participation opportunities (i.e., participate in Intern & Earn and then flow into WIOA work experience) and formally link these opportunities to education by December 31, 2024.

Current conditions that can be leveraged: There is already a wide array of subsidized developmental employment opportunities deployed across our community, but they are siloed. For example, via the San Jose Works and the WIOA programs, both administered by the City of San Jose's work2future department, there are over 600 paid work experience placements available. An additional 500 placements are available through the County of Santa Clara's Department of Employment and Benefit Services Intern & Earn program. All 1,100+ work experience placements target low-income youth facing additional barriers.

Supporting resource opportunities:

- The Golden State Pathways program will deliver \$500M for work-based learning for high school students in CA.
- The Learning Aligned Employment Program has already delivered \$500M primarily to CA community colleges to create work-based learning opportunities with priority for students who are first-generation college students, current/former foster youth, homeless, or at risk of being homeless. So, in addition to our local city and county investments, more money will flow to K12 districts and community colleges to offer subsidized employment opportunities.

2. Prepare for a robust youth apprenticeship system.

Short description: Do the necessary groundwork to be ready to create a robust apprenticeship environment (including pre-apprenticeships), ensuring they can be offered at a reasonable scale and beyond the traditional trades.

Potential form: Convene a task force that identifies necessary activities to successfully apply for funding and launch three innovative youth apprenticeships and a broad-based pre-apprenticeship program by January 1, 2025, including identifying a lead agency/applicant and required partnerships with labor.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- The California Workforce Development Board's 2020-2023 State Plan encourages local workforce development boards (like work2future) to expand apprenticeships.

- Governor Newsome aims to increase the number of apprenticeships in California by over 5x by 2029.
- The Biden Administration is similarly focused on apprenticeships and launched the Apprenticeship Ambassador Initiative, “a national network of more than 200 employers and industry organizations, labor organizations, educators, workforce intermediaries, and community-based organizations who are committed to strengthening and diversifying Registered Apprenticeship. Registered Apprenticeship is a high-quality, debt-free, equitable ‘earn and learn’ model with a nationally recognized credential system...”
- This would require planning and coordination with government institutions like local community colleges, the CA Department of Industrial Relations – Division of Apprenticeship Standards, and others. Each of these groups is actively seeking to grow youth apprenticeships across California.

Supporting resource opportunities:

- California will soon release \$65M for the development of youth apprenticeships (these will often mean pre-apprenticeships in the early phases). Apprenticeships are the most robust form of earn & learn, and now fully registered apprenticeship programs exist in white-collar careers including in the healthcare and technology sector, and even education.
- The High Road Collaborative Roundtables are in the midst of an 18-month planning process for CERF resources that could be creatively considered to seed youth apprenticeships.

3. Connect school and work for Opportunity Youth and system-impacted youth.

Short description: Connect reengagement education providers (Opportunity Youth Academy, San Jose Conservation Corps & Charter School, etc) and WIOA work experience and on-the-job training dollars to ensure young folks furthest from opportunity can access an integrated school and employment experience.

Potential form: Align 100% of WIOA Title I Youth Services work experience and “on-the-job” training dollars to schools dedicated to serving Opportunity Youth and to the educational journey of system-impacted youth.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- WIOA names “Adult Education, YouthBuild, Job Corps, high school equivalency programs, or dropout re-engagement programs” as school placements that allow youth to still qualify as “out-of-school” for the purposes of WIOA eligibility.
- California Education Code section 47612.1 requires/allows partnerships between reengagement high schools and WIOA. Specifically, it states that in order for the school to generate Average Daily Attendance (ADA) payments, a charter school serving Opportunity Youth must provide instruction exclusively in partnership with any of the following: (1) The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. Sec. 3101 et seq.). (2) Federally affiliated Youth Build programs. (3)

Federal job corps training or instruction provided pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the federal provider. (4) The California Conservation Corps or local conservation corps certified by the California Conservation Corps.

- The California Workforce Development Board has secured a federal WIOA waiver, which work2future has adopted, that allows more WIOA money to be spent on “in-school youth” if they are system-impacted (foster youth, justice-involved, or experiencing homelessness).

Supporting resource opportunities:

- Per pupil ADA payments to high schools serving the most vulnerable young people are approximately \$15,000 per student per year.
- Local WIOA per client investment for “out-of-school” is approximately \$7,000 per client per year.
- This means a potential investment of up to \$22,000 per young person when combined. This amount begins to tackle the resource equity issue and the experience gap for marginalized young people.

4. Connect the ecosystem of programs and supports.

Short description: Build a system and/or tool that facilitates connections and collaboration among the ecosystem of services, supports, and providers by making the whole “system” visible with the intent to support cross referrals, interagency connections, and, ultimately, better-coordinated services.

Potential form: An online portal where partners agree to a minimum standard of participation, including routine updating, through which other partners can view the totality of available services and eligibility criteria, and make direct referrals.

Current conditions that can be leveraged: N/A: No such service or tool exists in Santa Clara County.

Supporting resource opportunities: This would require securing philanthropic investment to begin, and public funding to sustain.

5. Plan and launch a radical economic mobility demonstration project.

Short description: Bring together all necessary services to achieve economic mobility in a single location, including secondary and postsecondary education, workforce development, public benefits, supportive resources, and case management/coaching.

Potential form: Design a three-year test site with fully integrated, stacked supports at a single location (perhaps the existing WIOA-funded and mandated Americas Jobs Center of California) that can radically advance a young person’s economic earning power in a service period of three years or less.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- California Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 was passed in this legislative session, and the City of San Jose signed on in support. ACR16 states: “the Legislature hereby declares the importance of creating pathways to success for California’s opportunity youth and the need to develop a statewide comprehensive plan that will reduce persistent economic inequities, and prioritize: (1) funding for education and workforce training programs that center opportunity youth and create pathways to good jobs; (2) expansion of innovative “earn and learn” opportunities, including apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities; (3) advancement of dual enrollment implementation, which will allow opportunity youth to earn college credit while earning their high school equivalency; (4) ensure inclusivity of opportunity youth in the California Cradle-to-Career Data System; and (5) protection and expansion of social safety net investments for opportunity youth that support basic needs such as food, housing, internet access, transportation, childcare, health and mental health care, enabling them to complete their education and training goals, including removing barriers to access student financial aid programs”
- WIOA directs the workforce development board to form MOUs with mandatory partners, which include the following groups related to youth and young adults:
 - The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program
 - The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program authorized under title II of WIOA;
 - The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program
 - Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level
 - Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant;
 - Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
 - Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law);
 - Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007; and
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Supporting resource opportunities: All resources are currently available (but not connected in this fashion).

SYSTEM-LEVEL IDEAS

6. Establish a common college, career, and wellbeing framework across the County.

Short description: A clear, universal, and high-level framework that augments the known educational milestones with other important developmental milestones that make visible what we must deliver to every young person in Silicon Valley to ensure equitable conditions for success.

Potential form: A working group convened across institutions charged with developing a “Silicon Valley College, Career, and Wellbeing Framework” to be completed and ready for adoption and implementation by the end of the 2025 school year.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- The newly codified “core science” of adolescent development is widely available and defines the key development requirements of adolescents (ages 10-25).
- Early work by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the San Jose Public Library to explore shared ideas of readiness, which has included young leaders in the design.
- Groups like Anaheim Unified School District have created, implemented, and iterated on high-quality frameworks.

Supporting resource opportunities: This would require securing philanthropic investment to begin, and public funding to sustain

7. Develop a near-peer coaching corps.

Short description: A cadre of college students trained and equipped to provide college and career exploration and coaching to middle and high school students in low-resource school districts.

Potential form: Using a work-study model, create a cadre of 100 near-peer education and career navigators that could be deployed as small teams to each Title 1 high school and middle school to provide college and career exploration and support activities.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- The City of San Jose is implementing the CaliforniansforAll Youth Job Corps in the form of the Resilience Corps, which is designed to address learning loss.
- AmeriCorps, the program for national and community service, is engaging in innovative work, including a California-wide pilot of transition-aged foster youth (who traditionally were excluded from national service programs due to strict requirements) serving as peer navigators.
- The Federal Work-Study program allows recipients to be employed off campus by federal, state, or local public agencies or certain private nonprofit or for-profit organization

Supporting resource opportunities:

- Governor's CaliforniansforAll Youth Job Corps received \$78.1M in the 2023-24 budget year. This is what funds the current City of San Jose's Resilience Corps model. Priority is given to applicants who are in or transitioning from foster care, are or were justice-involved, are engaged with the mental health or substance abuse systems, are low-income, may have difficulty finding employment, are unemployed and/or out of school, and have not participated in an AmeriCorps program.
- Changes to CalAIMs are being leveraged to invest in community-based preventative services via new provider classes, and new power support specialist provider classes have been created.

8. Launch workforce development intermediary.

Short description: Workforce intermediaries and collaboratives are organizations that bring together partners in the workforce system to identify workforce needs; plan, develop, and implement strategies; and raise funds to support these strategies.

Potential form: Design, bless, and launch a single intermediary that can engage the business community, and can help enact innovative solutions like apprenticeships, by January 1, 2024.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- Essentially, every educational entity from high school to higher education, along with career technical education providers, and workforce development agencies are actively engaging employers continuously across the county.
- Collaboration in employer engagement is incentivized through multiple public funding streams including the Strong Workforce Program, K16 Collaboratives, the Community Economic Resilience Funds, and many more.

Supporting resource opportunities: This would require securing philanthropic investment to begin and could be sustained with employer investment.

9. Utilize P3 flexibility.

Short description: The federal Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) program offers communities a chance to redesign systems for young people. P3 offers the flexibility for States, localities, and Tribes to pool funds and obtain waivers of certain programmatic requirements to help them overcome some of the significant hurdles they may face in improving outcomes for disconnected youth. The Federal agencies participating in P3 include the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Corporation for National and Community Services, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Office of Management and Budget.

Potential form: Launch a task force to study and identify interagency sticking points, whether program requirements or funding constraints, that could be addressed with federal waiver authority to accelerate the academic and employment development of Opportunity Youth by July 30, 2024, such that the County could apply for the 2024 application cycle.

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- Through attention to initiatives like Guaranteed Basic Income pilots, and as a result of COVID, there is energy around opportunities to think much more flexibly about how communities are supported with public resources.

Supporting resource opportunities:

- This would benefit from philanthropic support in the planning phase but it appears possible that it could be launched and implemented with existing resources.

10. Create a career-education collaborative.

Short description: An interagency group that builds, stewards, and curates shared resources and creates a continuum of career exposure and development opportunities and access points.

Potential form: The short description says it all ;)

Current conditions that can be leveraged:

- Early work by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the San Jose Public Library to explore shared ideas of readiness, which has included young leaders in the design.
- The work of The Tech STEM Pathways exploratory work and listening process.

Supporting resource opportunities:

- There are a wide array of resources available including RoadTrip Nation, Career One Stop by the federal Department of Labor, Big Future by the College Board, and many others.
- This would benefit from philanthropic support in the planning phase but it appears possible that it could be launched and implemented with existing resources.

11. Formalize processes like this Youth Forum.

Short description: Invest public resources in a process and structure that brings the voices of young people into the conversation in an authentic way reliably over time, in ways that are mutually beneficial to systems and to the young people participating.

Potential form: Create a local, stable public funding stream that mirrors the Elevate Youth California to invest in youth and young adult leadership and organizing; AND

encourage public agencies to utilize Youth Forums, or similar processes, in regular processes of design, review, and renewal.

Current conditions that can be leveraged: This youth forum and the broad-based movement to increase lived experience perspectives in public processes and decision-making.

Supporting resource opportunities:

- There are many small-scale investments in various youth and young adult leadership groups including the allcove Youth Advisory Council, the Bill Wilson Youth Impact Partnership, the Office of Supportive Housing Youth Action Board, the Probation Department Youth Advisory Council, and many city youth commissions and nonprofit youth advisory groups.
- Groups like the Youth Liberation Movement, Californians for Justice, and South Bay Youth Changemakers have independently organized and are seeking to make specific changes within the County.
- The Elevate Youth California grant program was created and is funded by cannabis tax to prioritize youth leadership in under-resourced communities harmed by the War on Drugs. Through the Department of Health Care Services, \$205,923,000 has been invested to date from 2020-2025.

12. Focus on Mental health

Short description: This could get really interesting and into topics like Medicaid expansion to fund preventative school-based services. But the idea needs time and energy to truly understand in such a complex environment.



Dear Youth Forum participants and partners,

We are the voice of the youth of Santa Clara County. We want this County to be a place where young people don't have to struggle so hard just to scrape by. We write to you as young leaders from marginalized and historically excluded identities and communities. We are young parents, people exposed to systems, non-binary, and people taking non-traditional paths; AND we are powerful advocates, college students, working professionals, artists and poets, and leaders in our communities.

We want our County to be somewhere where all youth can see themselves thriving, not just surviving. Our survey data tell us that for our most marginalized, least-resourced/supported young people, more than half do not see their future in this county. It is time to take action; we must begin to think and act differently, to solve the issues affecting so many of our youth today. We believe the first step is to start listening to the youth. Nothing about us, without us.

In Santa Clara County anything less than a meaningful postsecondary credential is an economic death sentence. It's very hard to be a young person right now, and it is all that much harder when facing daunting barriers. Sadly, it often seems the "adults" aren't ready or able to really deal with what young people facing. We've been gathering data through surveys and focus groups for three years, and our data tells us that young people who are furthest from opportunity (often called Opportunity Youth):

- value their education and see educational success as their only chance to get ahead
- are working a lot in order to survive, often working in low-wage jobs with no career pathway, which limits the amount of time they can dedicate to their education
- find accessing supports and resources that support continuing their education to be neither obvious nor simple, and it can be exhausting trying to get the resources one needs, and in fact, the difficulty can actually cause further challenges by straining mental health

We invite all recipients of this letter to join us in building a movement for equitable education and career pathways. We know housing, access to public benefits, and student financial aid are big issues that need to be addressed. And we will get there. That said, with this letter, our focus is on opportunities to strengthen education and employment outcomes for young people because the education system is the one system we want young people to be in for as long as possible. We arrive at three broad solutions to improve the education-to-career environment:

- 1) Create educational pathways that include paid work-based learning for high school students and living wage employment for postsecondary students, so young people don't have to choose between school and work.
- 2) Prepare young people for the real world with practical skills and social-emotional skills.
- 3) Ensure every student in Santa Clara County has access to high-quality personalized support on campus.

These as pillars for a vibrant youth and young adult education-to-career environment designed for those furthest from opportunity. We urge you to join us in thinking differently and to design equitable programs, services, and systems that turn equity from an idea into how we "do business." We look forward to partnering with you to bring about a more just and equitable Santa Clara County.

With humility and respect,
The Youth Liberation Movement

1. The Youth Liberation Movement

The Youth Liberation Movement (YLM) is a youth-led organization in Santa Clara County. It is made up of twelve inspiring and outstanding youth leaders who are experts in their own lived experience. Our *mission* is to liberate young people from the cycles of generational trauma and oppression by translating their lived experience into actionable solutions. Some ways that the youth leaders accomplish that mission is by conducting/collecting their own surveys, facilitating their own focus groups and conducting participatory research, organizing events, connecting and collaborating with other organizations, and ultimately advocating for policy changes that will enact true change for the next generation of youth in their community.

2. Immediate Context for this Letter // the Youth Forum 2.0

The Youth Forum 2.0 (YF2) is a community table that brings together over 100 individuals representing dozens of agencies from across the broad youth and young adult workforce development space, including city and county agencies, reengagement education, traditional high schools, community colleges, career technical education providers, and nonprofit service providers. Importantly, young people are not only present but leading - YLM co-convenes the YF2 with the San Jose Public Library. At its heart, the YF2 is a group of young leaders joining those who lead, manage, or work for agencies that offer services to young adults in order to find solutions that actually work for youth and young adults in Santa Clara County. In service of that, the YF2 is focused on promoting workforce development partnerships, programs, and employment expansion that focuses on implementing best practices defined by young people with lived experience.

The YF2s immediate goal is to provide the newly formed Youth Committee of the work2future Workforce Development Board with 1-3 actionable recommendations to strengthen the youth workforce development system. We define actionable as within local control, able to be implemented within one year, and able to be measured with existing data. Though this is our immediate focus, we expect a broad array of work to result from these unique conversations occurring at the YF2. Central to this letter are two elements of work conducted by YLM for the YF2 that create new data to inform solutions.

- During January and February 2023, YLM led a participatory action research process that included a survey that captured responses from 247 young people in Santa Clara County and conducted 8 focus groups with over 50 young people. Most respondents to the survey and participants in the focus groups were from high-poverty zip codes in east San Jose.
- On April 8th, YLM hosted a human-centered design day with 25 young leaders from youth and young adult leadership groups (including the Allcove Youth Advisory Committee, the Bill Wilson Center Youth Impact Partnership, Office of Supportive Housing Youth Action Board, the Probation Youth Advisory Committee, and others), which generated priority solutions that directly inform solution provided in this letter.

3. Our Vision

San Jose's streets, where dreams come alive,
Youth Liberation Movement, ready to strive.
From school to careers, we break the chains,
Opportunity youth, no limits remain.

Access unlocked, experiences unfold,
Skills perfected, shining bright and bold.
By 25, living wage jobs they'll embrace,
Empowered futures, thriving in this space.

Urban rhythm, beats of empowerment ignite,
San Jose's youth, soaring to new heights.
Opportunity for all, the city's vibrant creed,
A future where success is guaranteed.

4. Data Driving Our Urgency and Our Solutions

In Santa Clara County, anything less than a meaningful postsecondary credential is an economic death sentence. The data is clear. We believe that every young person in our community must have a pathway to a meaningful postsecondary credential. This is particularly important for young people navigating high school right now. Education and training after high school is the only path to self-sufficiency in Santa Clara County. Below we provided data that tells the story of young people from their perspective and data that tells the big picture story of structural inequity in San Jose and Santa Clara County.

YLM'S RESEARCH HISTORY AND OUR DATA

Over the past three years, YLM has conducted several participatory action research initiatives to create our own data and to lift up the perspectives of young people furthest from opportunity. Several themes resonate across these efforts:

- Young people value their education, even those furthest from opportunity.
- Young people are working a lot to survive, almost exclusively in low-wage jobs with no career pathway, and this limits the amount of time they can dedicate to their education.
- Accessing support and resources is neither obvious nor simple, and it can be exhausting trying to get the resources one needs, and in fact, it causes further challenges by straining mental health.

In 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, YLM (under a previous name and structure) conducted a survey of 95 young adults between the ages of 16-25, and also conducted 39 one-on-one surveys and interviews with young adults ages 18 to 25, for a total of 134 respondents. The common themes were:

- 77% said they would like to continue their education beyond high school but do not know how to get started.
- 58% of respondents said it is difficult to find employment that pays enough to get by.
- 49% stated they are not connected to a program or resource.
- 35% said needing to earn money is what gets in the way of school.

In the summer of 2021, YLM conducted six focus groups with young people to get a better sense of their education and employment experiences. Three themes emerged:

- *Housing* was mentioned in all six focus groups.
 - Cost of housing or lack of appropriate housing options was mentioned as the number one thing that impacts the ability to achieve goals
 - Lack of stable housing was seen as causing mental health challenges while having stable housing allows young people to invest in themselves
- *Mental Health* was mentioned in 5 of the 6 focus groups and frequently connected to housing
 - There were frequent discussions of the prevalence of multiple childhood traumas and trauma of homelessness, as well as discussions of therapy as being crucial in overcoming this barrier.
 - Importantly, there was a resonant theme of a preference for peer groups/support groups as spaces for healing.
- *Lack of access* to high-quality and reliable information, resources, and/or support was mentioned in 5 of the 6 focus groups
 - It is hard to find the right resources at the right time when a young person needs it. Often when looking for resources it can feel like too much information to absorb with too many things to track. It is exhausting to search for resources when in the middle of difficulty.
 - Hard to find people you can rely on to help you, and even when you connect to a service there is lack of trust in staff knowledge.

In the summer of 2022, YLM conducted a small survey of 25 young people to better understand how they think about their educational goals and future.

- Of this group, only one person did not have an educational goal, and three-quarters had aspirations for higher education or other postsecondary training (the remaining respondents were focused on completing high school).
- When asked about barriers to education about half said they have to work too much to focus on their education, while about 40% said they weren't sure how to pay for school and had a lack of knowledge about educational options.

In January and February of 2023 YLM conducted a large survey and associated focus groups. 247 young people responded to the survey and more than 50 also participated in focus groups. The survey respondents reflect a broad array of experiences: about two-thirds identified as low income, about half struggle with mental health, 29% experienced homelessness, 22% experienced the foster system, and one in five was born outside the United States. Some of our topline findings are:

- More than 93% of respondents were in school with more than half in postsecondary. And the statement most strongly agreed with was “I believe education is important to my future.”
- On average respondents are working 30 hours per week with more than a quarter working full-time or more. Unfortunately, two-thirds of said it was difficult or very difficult to find a job that pays enough to support themselves or their family.
- Just 37% of respondents said they have a detailed plan that they regularly review for the current stage of their education journey. While 64% have a dream job.
- The most commonly identified barriers were: “lack of time”, “not enough support/lack of the specific support or resources I need”, and “hard to find resources or know where to start”
- 50% said it feels “impossible/unrealistic” or “unlikely” that they will be able to earn enough money to live in Santa Clara County long-term.

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

In Santa Clara County, the extraordinarily high cost of living combines with the educational requirements of the Silicon Valley economy to form a high bar for achieving self-sufficiency. The runway to successful adulthood has become longer and the educational requirements for good jobs are growing ever greater. Unfortunately, our education and employment training system has not proven equal to the task. This is all the more true for young people who have adult responsibilities, are self-supporting, or are navigating life with fewer resources. The current state of things is not for lack of wonderful people and good programs, rather it is the result of programs being built in a way that does not reflect the lives of young people in 2023. Additionally, what does exist is not well connected leaving students who are furthest from opportunity to navigate the most complex requirements and themselves having to act as the glue between systems and programs.

It is incredibly expensive to live here.

According to an October 20, 2022 report in the San Jose Spotlight, San Jose is the most expensive place to live in the United States when accounting for ten primary recurring bills including mortgages and rent payments along with bills for utilities, car loans, health insurance, and cell phone plans. “In San Jose, the average resident is paying \$3,248 each month for these recurring bills, a whopping 62% above the national average of about \$2,000, according to the report. High housing costs are the major contributor, as most San Jose renters can attest. For example, rents in San Jose average about \$2,112, while in New York City—the second most expensive place on the list—rent payments average \$1,832, the report said.” This is echoed by additional research from Consumer Affairs published on January 19, 2023, which notes that San Jose has the “nation’s highest median gross rent (\$2,328) and highest median monthly housing costs (\$2,463 per unit of housing).”

United Way Bay Area has created the Real Cost Measure (RCM) to help us understand what it costs to survive in the Bay Area. The RCM reflects the necessary income to survive, not to thrive. For 2023, the RCM is \$52,706 for a single adult. Additionally, the City of San Jose’s living wage of \$27 per hour, which is \$56,160 per year for a full-time 40-hour-per-week job. It is important to acknowledge that the RCM of \$52,706 is survival income for a single individual only. The RCM for one parent and one child is \$84,744, for two parents and two children it is \$128,176.

One’s ability to survive is almost solely dependent on your level of education after high school.

All of this is to say, the annual income necessary to survive for a single adult in Santa Clara County is about \$56,000. Yet, according to census.gov 2021 data, earnings by education level for people over 25 in Santa Clara County are as follows:

- Less than a high school diploma \$33,842
- A high school diploma \$40,892
- Some college or an associate’s degree \$50,236
- Bachelor’s degree \$102,550

A high school diploma alone is a recipe for lifelong poverty. Some level of postsecondary education at least allows one to survive, and there is a very clear jump to thriving with a bachelor’s degree. While many communities in Santa Clara County are thriving in the knowledge economy, there is concentrated disadvantage that requires thoughtful action, increased investment, and new solutions. More of the same won’t solve longstanding problems.

The vast majority of jobs that pay at least a living wage require education beyond high school and young people have to compete for such jobs with a global workforce.

1. According to the California Employment Development Department's local employment projections for the San Jose metro area, only two of the 10 occupations with the most openings from 2018-2028 pay wages above \$50K. Both are in tech.
 - a. Those two highest-paid jobs earn, on average, 3.5 times more per year than the other eight. That is, most employment growth will be in jobs that do not pay enough to survive in this community.
2. According to the California Employment Development Department's local employment projections for the San Jose metro area, seven of the 10 occupations with a fast growth rate from 2018-2028 pay above \$50K; three are in healthcare, two are in tech, one is in math/data science, and one is business services, and all require education or training after high school.
 - a. Most high growth well-paying jobs require at least a bachelors degree and often more.
3. Young people growing up in San Jose and Santa Clara County have to compete with folks from across the country and the globe for jobs in their communities. According to the 2021 Joint Venture Silicon Valley Silicon Valley Index, the last year for which it was provided, 73% of newcomers to Silicon Valley have at least a bachelor's degree (this includes people moving from within the United States and from across the world). Our global companies are seeking the talent they need wherever they can find it, but our local education and workforce ecosystem has been unable to provide it.

Young people do not have time to navigate multiple complex systems and connect the supports and resources that are meant to serve them, while also battling to complete their education.

1. Our participatory action research survey tells us that young our least resourced young adults are going to school and working on average 30 hours per week, with more than a quarter working full-time or even more.
 - a. Two-thirds of respondents said it was difficult or very difficult to find a job that pays enough to support themselves or their families.
 - b. Two-thirds of respondents also said they have a dream job and almost all believe education is critical to their futures, more than half do not have a detailed plan to get there.
2. Our data also shows that lack of time was the biggest and most common barrier to their education journey experienced by respondents, this was followed by a lack of support and specific resources, and it being hard to find resources and/or know where to start. More than half of the respondents identified these as primary barriers.
 - a. This is supported by two studies commissioned by work2future in 2017 & 2018, the Silicon Valley Dichotomy Part I & Part II, in which lack of time to pursue education and training were key barriers to young adults getting ahead. The following quote highlights this “..it takes more education and training to make a living wage in Silicon Valley, but young adults do not have the time and resources to obtain that education and training, especially since they need to keep working to afford to live in Santa Clara County. This makes it nearly impossible for many in financial distress to work toward the jobs that would get them out of financial distress.”

We live in one of the wealthiest places on the planet, yet there are extreme disparities in terms of access, resources, and outcomes between members of this community that manifest in race-based and place-based ways. Below are Santa Clara County data that highlight these disparities.

1. High School Graduation
 - a. According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, in Santa Clara County one in three Latino/a/x community members lack a high school diploma, while this is true for just 3% of White and 9% of Asian and Pacific Islanders.
 - b. According to the California Department of Education, in Santa Clara County in 2021, of the 1,497 students not completing high school, 1,203 identified as Latino/a/x.
 - c. According to Census.gov American Communities Survey 5-year estimates, in Santa Clara County there are 11,480 18-24-year-olds without a diploma, of which the majority are Latino/a/x and live in East and Central San Jose zip codes.
- a. College Readiness
 - i. According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, about 41% of Latino/a/x high school graduates in Santa Clara County were college ready in 2020, versus 83% of Asian or Pacific Islander and 74% of white high school graduates.
- b. Four-year Degree Attainment
 - i. According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, in Santa Clara County just 18% of Latino/a/x community members have a bachelor's degree or higher, while 60% of White and 65% of Asian and Pacific Islander community members possess a bachelor's or higher.
- c. Neighborhood Opportunity and Stability
 - i. According to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, in Santa Clara County 44% of Latino/a/x residents were growing up in low resources neighborhoods, while just 9% of White and 17% of Asian and Pacific Islander community members live in similar conditions.
 - ii. The Measure of America Human Development Index – a measure of a geography's developmental opportunity by combining life expectancy at birth, education attainment, school enrollment, and median earnings into a score between 1-10 – highlights the disparities right next to each other in Santa Clara County. The East Central San Jose & Alum Rock neighborhood cluster has a score of 4.86, similar to sections of low-resource communities like Stockton and Madera County and parts of Fresno. At the same time, the Cambrian Park & South Central San Jose, West Central San Jose & Campbell, Southwest San Jose & Alamaden Valley, and Northwest San Jose & Santa Clara neighborhood clusters have scores of 7.96, 8.36, 8.46, and 8.66 respectively, which are some of the highest scores in California.
 - iii. According to Census.gov American Communities Survey 5-year estimates, five zip codes in San Jose account for nearly 50% of San Jose residents living below 200% of the federal poverty line (in 2023, 200% of the federal poverty limit is \$27,180, about half of the RCM for San Jose). Those zip codes are 95111, 95112, 95116, 95112, and 95127.
- d. Opportunity Youth (young people furthest from opportunity)
 - i. According to the California Department of Education, in Santa Clara County nearly one in every three foster and one out of every two young people experiencing homelessness will leave high school without a diploma. Importantly, this is different from more generally “socioeconomically disadvantaged” young people, for whom 12.7% do not graduate on time.

5. Solutions

With this data in mind, we propose three pillars for solutions. Our solutions require this community to move from talking about “centering” youth to actually doing it. If “adults” knew what to do, they’d have done it by now. This means professionals, leaders, systems, and agencies will have to reimagine how to partner with young people as co-creators with vital knowledge and important expertise, and it will require hard choices among adult professionals - do we center the convenience and well-being of those operating programs and services, or do we center the success and wellbeing of the young people growing up here and upon who all of our futures depend?

While we offer specific solutions below focused on the education-to-career experience of young people, for many of us public resources and student financial aid are our lifelines of stability that let us pursue our educational dreams, and the cost of housing is at the root of everything. So, while this letter focuses more narrowly, we feel compelled to name these items that we know require deeper action.

Housing. In this community, the cost of housing affects everything. Quite simply, there is not enough affordable housing and almost no housing focused on young people. And housing stability enables every other step in the journey of educational and career progress.

Public Benefits Access. We must get resources to the people. We need to move from a public benefits culture of gatekeeping to one focused on maximum resource distribution to our fellow community members. Period. The eligibility game for services is exhausting and leaves people and families at the mercy of individual decisions of those that compose the system, to do the work of scraping together resources in lieu of a true social safety net.

Student Financial Aid. Student financial aid is designed for young people living with their families. It is not designed to work for self-supporting young adults. Nor is it designed to support immigrant youth.

Our suggested solutions are as follows:

(1) Create educational pathways that include paid work-based learning for high school students and living wage employment for postsecondary students, so young people don't have to choose between school and work.

- Create Earn & Learn programs with at least 1,000 slots that pay a living wage.
- Ensure that every youth who wants an internship in high school has access to a paid internship and that young people from low-resource communities have access to two internships to close the experience gap.
- Allow all students at alternative or reengagement high schools to complete courses at Silicon Valley Career Technical Education or Adult Education programs for free, so they graduate with more than just a diploma.

(2) Prepare young people for the real world with practical skills and social-emotional skills.

- Ensure every high school student has access to a credit-bearing course that occurs during the school day where they can learn practical life skills and social-emotional skills and will not be stigmatized for attending.
- Create a program where each month students can join things like campus tours, financial aid workshops, visits to jobs sites, listen to talks by professionals from the community, have opportunities to complete career exploration activities and receive one-on-one coaching and guidance, etc.
- Similar to the bullet point above, we envision a program in which inspirational and interesting speakers with relevant cultural and life experiences routinely come to campus to motivate and engage students through talks or workshops.
- Integration of culturally responsive education and examples in school (e.g. opportunities to learn about cultural history).

(3) Ensure every student in Santa Clara County has access to high-quality personalized support on campus.

- More advocates, and in particular advocates that are representative of youth identities, who are accessible where youth are, primarily school-based drop-in centers (this can include via digital mediums youth use).
- Have staff available to assist with the application for resources who are good at taking the confusion out of the process and at making the process very clear to young people (and their families), while protecting the young people's dignity; at a minimum, this means following up on referrals, or ensuring that the resources an agency or school has are actually accurate, available, and accessible so that youth don't carry the burden of navigating resource access.
- Ensure staff are trained in cultural competence, trauma-responsive approaches, and creating safe and nurturing environments for vulnerable students.
- Elimination of arbitrary eligibility criteria, and creation of a culture of resource delivery rather than gatekeeping.
- Co-create programs and services with young people rather than based on funding streams or the convenience of a professional's job.

6. A Moment of Momentum

Across the state, there is a movement toward better serving Opportunity Youth and other young people who are furthest from opportunity. Currently, Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 (ACR16) is before the state legislature and is expected to pass. The City of San Jose has signed on in support. ACR16 creates priorities for investment for Opportunity Youth, several of which align well with our recommended solutions. ACR16 identifies the following priorities:

1. funding for education and workforce training programs that center opportunity youth and create pathways to good jobs;
2. expansion of innovative “earn and learn” opportunities, including apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities;
3. advancement of dual enrollment implementation, which will allow opportunity youth to earn college credit while earning their high school equivalency;
4. ensure inclusivity of opportunity youth in the California Cradle-to-Career Data System; and
5. protection and expansion of social safety net investments for opportunity youth that support basic needs such as food, housing, internet access, transportation, childcare, health and mental health care, enabling them to complete their education and training goals, including removing barriers to access student financial aid programs; and be it further

7. Conclusion

We thank you for your time and consideration. We hope you will join us in our movement to lift up the voices of young people, particularly young people furthest from opportunity. We want San Jose and Santa Clara County to be a great place for every young person to grow up. More the same won't fix things, we invite all every reader of this letter to find ways to join us, or other young leaders, in co-creating solutions that change the game for young people. We know that when young people and older people come together in intergenerational partnership that together we can create wisdom. The world is changing fast, and our education-to-career environment must be a place where every young person can see themselves succeeding. We hope to work together to bring that to life.

With humility and respect,
The Youth Liberation Movement



YOUTH FORUM 2.0 STATUS REPORT

Prepared by:

Joe Herrity - Principal, Groundwork Social Impact Consulting

Amanda Otte - College & Career Pathways Coordinator, San José Public Library

Introduction

This status report describes the work to date, new understanding generated, and next steps for the [Youth Forum 2.0](#) (YF2). YF2 has concluded the first phase - the first three meetings in this six-meeting series. The purpose of Phase 1 was to engage in reflection and listening to better understand the current state of the broad workforce development ecosystem and to center the lived experiences of youth and young adults.

The most immediate objective of the YF2 is to identify 1-3 actionable recommendations to the newly formed work2future Youth Committee. For us, actionable will be defined as something we have local authority to decide, can be implemented within one year, and can be measured through clear data collection methods.

Recognizing that economic and social mobility in Santa Clara County have clear race-based and place-based disparities, which are most acute for system-impacted young people, the idea is to employ Targeted Universalism to find solutions in support of our least-resourced young people that will pave the way for solutions that can scale equitably to ensure every young person has a shot at economic success.

The purpose of the Youth Forum 2.0 is to support the youth- and young-adult-serving ecosystem in Santa Clara County in establishing a common vision for an Opportunity Ecosystem capable of reliably helping young people to achieve the education and employment milestones necessary to succeed in the Silicon Valley economy.

The Youth Forum is intended to promote workforce development partnerships, programs, and employment expansion that focuses on the implementation of best practices defined by young people with lived experience.

Context: How We Started

The YF2 builds on the success of the first Youth Forum (YF1), which ran from February 2021 to March 2022. YF1 culminated in three recommendations to the work2future Workforce Development Board. Those recommendations were to (A) form a formal youth committee, (B) ensure that two young people with lived experience were full members of that committee, and (C) to provide training and support to

those young people to ensure their effective participation. Those recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Workforce Development Board in June 2022.

The importance of a well-functioning workforce system in a broader youth-serving ecosystem cannot be overstated. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates, funds, and guides the Workforce Development Board (WDB) system. WIOA directs local WDBs in SEC 107 subsection (d) parts (3), (5), and (6) to act as a convener and broker, to facilitate comprehensive career pathways (as codified under WIOA), and to identify and disseminate proven and promising practices, including highlight such practices from other communities. Importantly, local WDBs are positioned as key nodes in the larger system of K-12 education and community college, as well as the broader career technical education environment.

Thus, the creation of the Youth Committee offers an important opportunity for our community to think and build at a systems level. The Youth Committee is a youth-focused policy-level body embedded at the intersection of high school, community college, career technical education, and a variety of social services.

YF1 represented an important advance in our community in how we engage with lived experience to strengthen our collective understanding. Learning to incorporate the voices of young people closest to the issues allowed us to broaden our perspective and strengthen our collective understanding. YF1 built upon nearly a decade of work by the Opportunity Youth Partnership (OYP) to move San Jose and Santa Clara County toward an integrated system of services anchored on educational advancement and career attainment for young people furthest from opportunity.

The [Final Report](#) from OYP, which reflects engagement and data with more than 800 youth and multiple sources of learning, identified three key conclusions and made four recommendations. This created a foundation on which the first Youth Forum and now YF2 can continue to build.

Summary of the OYP Final Report

The report concludes that Opportunity Youth in Santa Clara County:

- ➔ Experience an unmanageable tension between school and work
- ➔ Complete secondary education with academic and social emotional skills deficits that make it difficult to equitably participate in the very postsecondary education necessary for economic mobility
- ➔ Want to work with peers to a much greater degree than programs currently allow, both in areas of practical support and in mental health and healing work

This report formulates four recommendations to improve systems and services for Opportunity Youth:

- 1 Shift to flexible and accelerated educational models built around earn and learn approaches
- 2 Adopt a data-driven, single system of support that aligns employment, housing, and other stabilization supports to educational progress and growth in income
- 3 Increase opportunities for peer learning and peer support among young adults
- 4 Encourage public systems to invest in feedback loops from young leaders that meaningfully incorporate lived experience as a core input to systems and programs

Phase 1 Complete: What We've Done So Far

We have completed Phase 1 of YF2. The first three meetings were focused on listening, reflecting, and growing our understanding beyond the usual sources of information. All meeting artifacts are stored in the [Youth Forum 2.0 Public Archive](#).

MEETING 1 focused on better understanding the workforce development ecosystem in San Jose and Santa Clara County as it currently exists. Using the WIOA Title I Youth Services required 14 program elements as a framework, the pre-work for the meeting consisted of a workforce development ecosystem landscape mapping effort that included a survey and interviews with more than 30 partners.

MEETING 2 focused on creating new data to illuminate the perspectives and experiences of youth and young adults. Importantly, this pre-work was led by the Youth Liberation Movement. Young leaders used participatory action research to collect 247 survey responses and convened eight focus groups with over 50 participants.

MEETING 3 focused on understanding the human experience of opportunity youth in our community. The pre-work for this meeting was again led by the Youth Liberation Movement. They convened a full-day human-centered design event with 25 young leaders from youth leadership groups across Santa Clara County, including the Allcove Youth Advisory Council, the Bill Wilson Youth Impact Partnership, the Office of Supportive Housing Youth Action Board, the Probation Youth Advisory Council, and others. Together, participating youth began to identify possible solutions to common challenges young people face as they navigate educational and workforce systems. They will bring forward these ideas in an advocacy letter that will help us pivot to the second phase of the work. In fireside chats during meeting 3, small groups of young leaders shared their lived experiences and their priorities for a more just and equitable community.

Reflection: What We've Learned

Ecosystem-Level Observations

- Though in our infancy, we are learning to meaningfully incorporate the expertise of lived experience into community processes, and there is a broad eagerness to do so.
- We are less familiar than one might expect or assume with our peers and colleagues, and their organizations and agencies, operating in the same or immediately adjacent spaces.
- There is not yet a clear collaborative infrastructure that binds us together in a coherent youth-serving ecosystem.

Phase One Observations

- Workforce Development Ecosystem Survey

- There are a vast array of services and service-oriented organizations in SCC, but there isn't a clear inventory process to enable strong cross-agency collaboration on a scale/with a strategy that would be meaningful for providers or youth.
 - There seems to be a gap in youth and young adult services related to mentorship, the creation of personalized comprehensive plans, and leadership development.
 - No organizations interviewed had an explicit, written framework for how they support youth on pathways to college and career.
- YLM Participatory Action Research
 - Young people are struggling to balance school and work - and education and workforce systems are not set up well for this reality.
 - Young people need a way to achieve baseline stability in order to make progress toward their goals.
 - Less than half of survey respondents indicated that they see living in Santa Clara County as a long-term viable option.
 - Respondents have hope for their future and value education. Two items with the highest average responses were to the statements "I believe education is important to my future" and "I believe I will be successful in my life."
 - YLM Human-Centered Design Experience
 - Young people envision more coordinated school and work systems with more advocates (not just teachers/professors or guidance counselors) to mentor, guide, and check in with students.
 - Young people want to see embedded support services in places where youth are, i.e., school. Caseworkers or other personalized support personnel who are consistently on-campus and reachable, and who conduct outreach via methods young people use, like text.
 - Young people want to see more real-world learning experiences to help them achieve self-sufficiency, explicit education to build life skills, and deliberate preparation for adulthood.

Where We Go From Here: Moving into Phase 2

Moving forward we will pivot to Phase 2 of the work. The next set of meetings in June, August, and October will aim to identify solutions at the local policy and program level. First, we need to align on a vision for how we will approach this work, taking cues from the young people who have been engaged in this work with us and who will take on greater leadership in meeting design and facilitation moving forward. In June we will aim to identify where there are opportunities for action, and in August and October, we will examine bright spots in our community, as well as in other places where they have achieved strong results.



In the last meeting of Youth Forum 2.0, youth and adult participants reviewed a set of [Solution Ideas](#), which were built upon recommendations in the [YLM Advocacy Letter](#). Every person had \$100 (play money) to invest in the solution idea(s) that they were most excited about/that they felt would have the greatest positive impact for young people moving forward. The “investment portfolio” of this collective effort is outlined below.

Solution Idea	Dollars Invested
Connect the ecosystem of programs and supports (4)	\$860
Build and earn & learn pathway system (1)	\$760
Connect school and work for opportunity youth and system-impacted youth (3)	\$480
Establish a common college, career, and wellbeing framework across the county (6)	\$400
Plan and launch a radical economic mobility demonstration project (5)	\$360
Focus on mental health (12)	\$320
Launch workforce development intermediary (8)	\$280
Prepare for a robust apprenticeship system (2)	\$260
Develop a near-peer coaching corps (7)	\$260
Formalize processes like this youth forum (11)	\$80
Create a career-education collaborative (10)	\$40
Utilize P3 flexibility (9)	\$0

Note: Solution Ideas 1-5 were identified as “actionable solutions” and 6-12 were identified as “system-level ideas.” See page 1 of the [Solution Ideas](#) document for more information about these definitions.

Disclaimer: participants acknowledged that the amount of dollars invested is not necessarily a direct measure of the strength and substance of the solution ideas. Some ideas that received comparably fewer investment dollars would be worth our time and consideration, but there was less clarity about how we might move forward with those ideas as a collective.

ILD

**WIOA Youth Program
Update PY2023-24**

{INFORMATION}

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM UPDATE PY 2023-24

Equus Workforce Solutions Project Director Rick Robles will provide a year-to-date report on enrollments and other metrics for out-of-school youth in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program for Program Year 2023, which began July 1, 2023.

International Rescue Committee Youth Programs Manager Kayla Nicholls will provide a year-to-date report on enrollments and other metrics for in-school youth in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program for Program Year 2023.

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II.E

**Report on CWA
Youth Summit**

{INFORMATION}

CWA YOUTH SUMMIT

Youth Committee members Sofia Jaquez and Maria Vans attended the California Workforce Association's 2024 Annual Youth Summit in Long Beach on February 7–8, 2024. They will report on the experience.

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**Discussion of 2024
Youth Committee Goals**

{INFORMATION}

2024 YOUTH COMMITTEE GOALS

Committee Chair Jack Estill will engage Youth Committee members in a discussion of goals for the year.

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III

Open Forum

IV

Other

V

Adjournment