

Moving the County Workforce System Forward **2022 Stakeholder Forum Series**

**A Presentation to the
Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board**

March 18, 2022

Securing Community Input on the County Workforce System

- Over a three-week period in February and March, WDACS held a series of **five stakeholder forums** to gather input from job seekers, workers, business owners, workforce system practitioners, educators, community advocates, and others regarding ways to improve, enhance, modify, and otherwise develop the system.
- Notices regarding the sessions were sent directly to more than 75,000 individuals and organizations. The sessions were heavily promoted through social media, County agencies, and system partners.
- The series included the following sessions:
 - ❖ February 17, 3:00 – 5:00 PM: **Equity and Access**
 - ❖ February 18, 1:00 – 3:00 PM: **Goals for Efficiency/Effectiveness/Community Impact**
 - ❖ February 23, 5:00 -7:00 PM: **Key Sectorial Partnerships and Career Pathways**
 - ❖ March 1, 9:00 – 11:00 AM: **Hybrid Service Delivery**
 - ❖ March 2, 9:00 – 11:00 AM: **Opportunity Populations**

There Was Ample Opportunity to Provide Input

- Forums were scheduled for 2 hours
- Registrants were permitted to sign-up in advanced to speak at the forums
- 3 minutes were allotted per commenter, enabling 33 or more comments per session
- Microsoft forms were created to enable written comments for each session
- The comment period opened on February 17 and closed on March 4.

There was significant interest in the forums!

Session	Participants Registered	Verbal Comments Made	Written Comments Received
1 – Equity and Access	334	29	19
2 – Community Impact	214	25	5
3 – Sectorial Partnerships	249	26	14
4 – Hybrid Services	256	28	9
5 – Opportunity Populations	293	28	9

Goals of the Workforce Development Stakeholder Forums

The following was shared with forum participants:

The Economic and Workforce Development Branch of Los Angeles County Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) would like to gather input around central themes about the future direction of the County's workforce development system, including the operation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and priorities for the Los Angeles County America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs).

Basis for Topics Selected for the Stakeholder Forums

Forum participants were informed of the following:

As a result of priorities expressed by the County Board of Supervisors, guiding principles established by the Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (WDB), independent evaluations of the workforce development system commissioned by the County, plans being enacted to accelerate economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic, and requirements to procure providers for the WIOA system, a series of workforce system priorities have been identified.

These “priorities” became the topics or themes for the forums.

Sample Comments/Recommendations

Session 1 – Equity and Access

- ❖ Prioritize services to individuals whose jobs and careers have been impacted by COVID-19.
- ❖ Consider opportunities to make available space at the AJCCs for small businesses and entrepreneurs to recruit, meet with customers, and conduct business.
- ❖ Make more services and documents available in languages other than English.
- ❖ Simplify document requirements and processes.
- ❖ Collaborate with mental health services organizations.
- ❖ Make funding opportunities available to organizations that are closely connected to communities of color.
- ❖ Leverage resources across all County departments to address workforce needs of residents.
- ❖ Coordinate with organizations serving homeless and housing insecure individuals.

Sample Comments/Recommendations

Session 2 – Efficiency, Effectiveness and Community Impact

- ❖ Invest in modernizing the technology infrastructure of AJCCs.
- ❖ Implement strategies that bring services directly into communities.
- ❖ More effectively connect the workforce system and AJCCs to community coalitions.
- ❖ Utilize the AJCCs to recruit for County jobs.
- ❖ WDACS should coordinate relationships with “bigger partners” (i.e., public agencies), relieving providers of this task and minimizing duplication of effort.
- ❖ Implement strategies that recognize unique needs of vulnerable populations.
- ❖ Invest in training and professional development for system staff.
- ❖ Establish stronger connections to the secondary education system.

Sample Comments/Recommendations

Session 3 – Key Sectorial Partnerships and Career Pathways

- ❖ Provide greater access to distance learning and online education.
- ❖ Identify and allocate funding for stipends, which will enable vulnerable and underserved individuals the ability to participate in more intensive training.
- ❖ Identify and prepare job seekers for entry paths to high-wage careers.
- ❖ Strengthen linkages with union partners and leverage their knowledge of high growth sectors and jobs.
- ❖ Target careers in “green” jobs, healthcare, and the creative arts.
- ❖ Recruit business representatives and entrepreneurs as mentors.
- ❖ To enable acquisition of skills that qualify participants for higher paying jobs, fund multi-year projects.

Sample Comments/Recommendations

Session 4 – Hybrid Service Delivery

- ❖ Make greater use of community access points to supplement brick-and-mortar AJCC locations and online services.
- ❖ Implement mobile apps that connect job seekers to workforce services.
- ❖ To improve virtual services, engage technology/e-commerce experts.
- ❖ As virtual services become more prevalent, consider the barriers faced by homeless individuals, low-income job seekers, and English language learners.
- ❖ Make greater use of system navigators, coaches, and promotores.
- ❖ Invest in the digital fluency of job seekers using workforce system services.
- ❖ Identify strategies to offer more on-demand services to meet critical needs.

Sample Comments/Recommendations

Session 5 – Opportunity Populations

- ❖ A youth-centered system requires dedicated staff with specialized training.
- ❖ Create more opportunities for youth leaving the justice system.
- ❖ Address the employment and training needs of seniors.
- ❖ Address opportunities gaps for BIPOC adults ages 18 through 29.
- ❖ Identify strategies to assist individuals in recovery to prepare for employment.
- ❖ Prioritize services to communities and populations most impacted by COVID.
- ❖ Better connect to small businesses, including immigrant-owned businesses.
- ❖ Make greater use of “earn and learn” approaches to address income needs of participants while they acquire skills.

Acting on Stakeholder Input

- WDACS's Workforce and Economic Development team is reviewing all stakeholder input to determine how these recommendations can be aligned with other critical guidance (e.g., Board motions, WDB Guiding Principles, consultant reviews).
- Input will be used to strengthen current and future operations and strategic initiatives and will inform the focus and content of the upcoming solicitation for operation of the County's America's Job Centers of California.