
Urban Resource Mapping to Analyze Needs and Gaps in Youth Services

Youth Council: San Diego School-to-Career Youth Council

Element: Comprehensive Approach

Functions: Coordinating Youth Services, Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts, Promoting Policies to Sustain Effective Practices, and Convening Local Leadership to Take Action

The Subject: Resource Mapping, Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts

The Challenge: San Diego School-to-Career Youth Council’s vision is to “maximize the opportunities for youth to develop and achieve their potential.” Their mission is “advocating and sustaining an integrated regional youth development system.” In order to achieve their mission, Council members needed to know what educational and employment services were available and what additional services were needed. Furthermore, they needed to understand the employment, population, and education trends for the region. However, since San Diego County is the 6th most populous county in the nation, with 2.8 million people living in eighteen municipalities, the task of analyzing employment trends, youth services, needs, and gaps was huge.

The Practice and Evidence: The Workforce Partnership conducted the Youth Mapping Project. Because the project was so large, the Youth Council decided to hire third parties to conduct the work. New Ways to Work was hired to lead the project, with Public Works, Inc., CSU San Diego’s Social Behavioral Research Institute, and the San Diego Futures Foundation providing consultation.

The mapping project had five express purposes:

- Improve the responsiveness of workforce preparation programs in order to better serve youth
- Build towards a comprehensive system that is responsive to needs identified by the community
- Educate the community about the value of youth workforce preparation services
- Increase the availability and access of youth workforce preparation services
- Increase community and youth participation in the design of youth workforce preparation programs

The Project produced four products:

- *Mapping San Diego’s Future: A Snapshot of Youth Resources and Needs*
- *Voices from the Field: Education and Employment Services for San Diego Youth*
- *Youth Mapping Resources including a demographic analysis and an inventory of funding*
- *Youth Connections Locator*

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The *Snapshot* provides an analysis of the needs of the region’s youth and a strategy for building a more comprehensive and responsive youth workforce preparation system. *Voices* offers a summary of youth, parent, employer, educator, and community organization perspectives on the youth workforce preparation system. The *Youth Mapping Resources* brings together a vast array of information that policy makers and service providers can use to improve the quality of their workforce preparation systems, including an analysis of the County’s youth population and the region’s economic future and an inventory of funding resources that support youth workforce preparation services. *The Youth Connections Locator* is a user-friendly database of organizations that provide youth services in the San Diego region.

The project and the four products that emerged have helped the Youth Council in their work. The Council members used the assembled data see where to shift their attention regarding the priorities in strategic planning and resource allocation. Furthermore, the products have helped them work towards an integrated youth development system by educating all the stakeholders on the importance of preparing the region’s workforce for the evolving economy.

The Details: The entire process took one and a half years to complete. They drew upon preexisting economic, demographic, educational, and programmatic data, and gathered new information through provider surveys and focus groups for San Diego youth, parents, employers, educators, and community organizations.

According to Kelly Henwood, Director of Youth Programs for the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the biggest challenges came when determining how to summarize the information they gathered. “We were involved with so many pieces--demographics, funding, quality labor market information, so many other different components--that what I wanted to see happen was a summary. It was very difficult to get to. With the labor market information [we had to ask] ‘How do you pull it together so that it’s meaningful and digestible?’. There was no way they were going to be able to give people a four inch thick report and expect them to read and be engaged by it. So we spent a lot of time trying to boil the information down into something that was clear, concise that people could react to. We had some creative and smart people working with us. [Even so], it was very challenging.”

Henwood explained that they arrived at the solution by asking some very tough questions: “What makes this information different from any other data source? What does this data mean for young people? Why does this matter for young people?” The answers guided the structure of the summary. Each of the summary sections includes the question “What does this mean for youth?” and supplies the findings in succinct, reader-friendly prose. For example, in the section on the economy, the answer to the question of what do the economic trends mean to youth is “Youth need to be prepared for entry-level employment and career advancement,” with a short paragraph highlighting the employment sector most likely to have jobs in the coming five years.

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Breakthrough Moment: Henwood reports that the “What does this mean for youth?” sections of the summary were very much appreciated. “[They turned out to be] one of the best things we did that we didn’t necessarily know we needed.”

What’s Next for this YCidea? They will continue to use the information to inform strategic planning and community outreach.

Where to Go for More Information

San Diego School-to-Career Youth Council

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Tools

[Main web page link to mapping information](#)

(<http://www.SanDiegoAtWork.com/youthmapping>)

Summary Report

([http://www.sandiegoatwork.com/pdf/youth/Youth percent20Page/ymp_summary_BW.pdf](http://www.sandiegoatwork.com/pdf/youth/Youth%20percent20Page/ymp_summary_BW.pdf))