

## **Annual Plan Public Forums**

The Economic and Workforce Development Department hosted six community forums to discuss issues related to the strategic initiatives expressed in the Annual Plan:

1. The Role of Adult Education
2. Services for Disconnected Youth
3. Opportunities in the Tech Sector
4. Homeless and Reentry Services
5. Supporting Small Business
6. Meeting Employer Needs for Skilled Workers

Attendees included community members and representatives from the following:

- City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board
- LAUSD Division of Adult and Career Education
- ResCare Human Services
- Los Angeles LGBT Center
- Friends Outside LA
- Los Angeles City Council
- Coalition for Responsible Community Development
- Alliance for Children’s Rights
- Guardian Scholar
- El Proyecto del Barrio
- County of Los Angeles Probation
- Step Up On Second
- JVS SoCal
- Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment
- California Employment Development Department
- New Earth
- Homeboy Industries
- My Friend’s Place
- Amity Foundation
- REDF (Roberts Enterprise Development Fund)
- Youth Policy Institute
- Asian American Drug Abuse Program
- Barrio Action
- Pacific Gateway
- San Pedro Chamber of Commerce
- Managed Career Solutions
- Build Rehabilitation Industries
- Los Angeles Valley College
- Goodwill Industries of Southern California
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services
- Marriott Bridges Program

Notes from these forums are on the following pages. A recurring theme is the need for increased coordination of multiple partner (existing and future partnerships) programs to attain common outcome goals.

## **ANNUAL PLAN FORUM PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**  
**Boyle Heights Tech. Center**  
**April 11, 2019, 5:30pm – 7:30p.m.**

### **Job Seeker Needs**

1. “PAID” Apprenticeships / Training
2. Childcare → “Support Services”
3. “On-going” coaching post-job to support job retention
4. Stronger links to private sector for permanent job placement
5. ITA (education) → OJT links (work experience)
6. Digital divide → “online” support
7. Short-term certifications (“modules”) to connect faster to job / career path
8. “Stackable Credentials”, incremental leading to job

### **Types of Training Needed**

1. “Accessible” for working individuals online, nontraditional hours
2. Many unaware of existing “free” programs
3. Flexible → “navigator” support  
→ text/e-mail assignments
4. Partnerships → points of touch
5. Supports → childcare, stipends, etc.

### **Getting the Word Out**

1. Linking Practitioners to promote coordination, collaboration, knowledge of existing programs → avoid/minimize duplication
2. “Targeted” partnerships – ex. LAUSD Adult / WSC links. “Systematized” → move away from one-time partnerships,
3. “CRM” – customer relationship management system
4. Employer forums

### **Service Delivery “Gaps”**

1. Branding / Marketing → online → google maps / yelp → via social media (customer shopping)
2. Definition of leverage? (perception of added value) – affordability
3. Grass-root (gate keepers)
4. “Paths” for everyone

5. Integrated “ESL” training – Language proficiency incentives and supports (GED, job training programs)

**What’s missing? What don’t we know?**

1. Employer feedback / engagement
2. What’s working? If we don’t know; that should be priority
3. What should we prioritize?
  - Success / partnerships / programs – outcome driven → ex. LAUSD
  - Sector specific, customized needs of employers
  - Job driven → matching curriculum to jobs available
  - Employer forums (link WSC / LAUSD) – employer engagement

**SERVICES FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH**

LA Trade Tech.

April 16, 2019, 10:00am – 12:00p.m.

**Youth Services Needs**

1. Employment TA / user-friendly package
2. Linking to “existing” resources (LAUSD, WSC / YSC, “free” services) to help navigate services
3. Barrier assessment tools (best programs to link / serve) and goal setting tools (for job readiness)
4. Flexibility in program design / funding; need to first address “barriers” before enrolling in WIOA or special programs / before reaching outcome (longer service / contract term) → ex. 2 year terms
5. “Financial incentives” → paid orientation / on-boarding – need job/income “now” → quicker links to jobs
6. Address learning / skill building while work experience
7. Role of YSC needs to be clearly defined / set realistic outcome expectations
8. Disconnected youth-navigators; best practices / cross-sharing vs individual [program] outcomes → more collaboration opportunities
9. Messaging to appeal to all needs (to connect all youth to at least one type of service); “we are not a temp agency”; education to employment

**Most Needed Training / Services**

1. “Independent living” → navigate reality of the world; moving from “Group Home” – transition
2. WIOA support for transitioned youth – college student, working private sector
3. Indicators of performance vs actual “outcomes” / success stories
4. P3 (Program Partnership Pilot [P3] coordinates the efforts of multiple youth service programs)– important program that should be expanded to link other parts of the city / collaborations
5. Training – Department of Mental Health model for hardest to serve – pilot? (expensive but effective and better links to mental health, housing)
6. “Regional” training approach to offset cost / example: cohort – from all YSCs (target high growth sectors)
7. Customized, youth-focused outreach (flyers and social media)
8. “System-wide” approaches to quality, performance numbers (more wrap-around and links probation DMH, etc...)
9. Co-case management → probation camps, housing, for warm hand-off →links to all systems of care

**Gaps in Services**

1. Resource database – services provided by each YSC and partners
2. Collocated services (ex. LAUSD, DMH, YSC) → collaborations / facilitate referrals

**What don't we know?**

1. WSC / YSC at P3 (to network / collaboration opportunities – all partners)
2. Youth vs adult case managers → “passion” / transformation support
3. Many agencies focused on disconnected youth. Youth don't know how to work with YSC system / city programs (or are aware of them)

**OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TECH SECTOR**

West LA WorkSource Center

April 18, 2019, 11:00am – 1:00p.m.

**Job Seeker Needs**

1. Many are unaware of free resources and support → where to go
2. Not familiar with career path in Tech → confusion → opportunities / requirements
3. “Coaches” to help navigate (“Is it for me?”)
4. Opportunities for exposure / access and expectations
5. Networking / matching (employer / employee)
6. Mentors (someone who looks like me / ex. like me)
7. Digital divide / older workers (“thinking not for me”)
8. “Guest speakers” → employers
9. Understanding transferrable skills
10. Opportunities to gain tech skills → internships / work exp. / apprenticeships

**Types of Training Needed**

1. Basic coding → design → IT
2. Basic computer literacy
3. Entrepreneur / start-ups classes / business
4. Soft-skills
5. Workshops → stackable, leading to specific pathway
6. Career path assessments (tech paths)

**Service Gaps**

1. Industry sector specific assessments
2. Linking partners → workforce and tech; employers
3. Alignment in communication and tapping into what already exists

**Service Gaps / Bridging the Gaps “Tech Sector”**

1. “Tech navigators” / coaches → raise expectations of what can be achieved
2. Integrate “competencies” needed to compete and be attractive to employers – resources → having the “basics”

**Tech Employers and Workforce System**

1. Understanding employer needs / demands → skills matching → understanding tech needs

2. Marketing to employers more effectively (“Tech speak”) → intermediaries
3. Host employer forums / networking

**How Better Structure Programs to Meet Need of Employers / Participant**

1. Direct employer feedback
2. Tech-up WSCs → apps to refer / link participants and services / employment and better prepare / skill up

**HOMELESS / RE-ENTRY SERVICES**  
**Central City Neighborhood Partners**  
**April 22, 2019, 10:00am – 12:00p.m.**

**What services and support do individuals experiencing homelessness and the reentry population need to help prepare for and find work?**

1. Better access to housing including for “functionally homeless” (someone who can’t maintain secure housing on their own, but doesn’t end up on the street).
2. Education
3. Address limited funding for rehabilitation services (“waiting lists”)
4. Drug/medical needs should be addressed
5. Barriers to employment
6. Lack of knowledge – how to get resources
7. Access to quick opportunities for employment
8. Facing trauma
9. Case management “to stabilize”
10. Assessment
11. Avoid service silos. Programs should be coordinated
12. Bridge between different resources
13. LA community leader – engage and invest
14. Get the word out (about available services). Example I-heart media
15. Promotion / awareness campaign

**Most Needed Services**

1. Collocation (needed)
2. Expansion (of services)
3. Partnerships (getting together)
4. Recruitment
5. One location for all services
6. Connections
7. Project impact model – collocation
8. Response (timely manner)
9. Have resources available (be ready – linkage)
10. More funding



11. [Address] Hitting brick walls (timing, funding, criteria / rules to get in program; qualifications)
12. Transportation
13. Online database for resources (connection online); for all services; chatter
14. Timing
15. Resource center in prison / outside
16. Resource center in skid row (be where homeless/reentry are)
17. Hear from the people going through difficult times
18. Advocates of certain programs
19. Gap – undocumented population
20. [Dealing with] Restrictions and qualifications
21. Addressing affordable housing
22. Phases
23. Workforce / social services issues
24. Housing (getting worse)
25. Everyone in [Programs coordinated] example: United Way – collaboration
26. [Monitor] Status / visual – see change

### **Getting the Word Out**

1. [Provider] Trainings (quarterly)
2. Employers getting word out (understand the workers they are receiving)
3. Six months to one year support after employed
4. Better understanding [of programs available]
5. Collaboration / connections
6. Hotline / online FAQs [for providers]
7. Relationship building
8. Peer to peer connections – example: DHS funded – Just in Reach (JIR)
9. H-PACT (Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams) meetings
10. Volunteers / updating – have city and county set-up and maintain
11. Crossroad conferences – cross sharing
12. All services come together (quarterly / 2 time a year) regionally
13. Consistency [in messaging]
14. Connections with [surrounding] counties
15. California Department of Housing and Community Development.
16. Tech company to build it out
17. State mandating (legislation)
18. Realistic

19. Stipends
20. Incentives for providing housing
21. Homelessness Prevention – linking and providers looking for linkages
22. Starting partnerships with organizations
23. Private sector playing a role – to generate revenue
24. Measure HHH (County funds to address homelessness)
25. [Address] Lack of info. On existing programs/organizations (for example FlyawayHomes)
26. Linkage
27. Getting info. out is difficult
28. Partnership with parole and probation to streamline [program entry]
29. Replicate P3 model
30. Communication with participant (one size does not fit all)
31. Target those that are about to be released
32. Long process (to be cleared to get word out in the prison system)
33. Difficulties on both sides
34. Consistent training for WorkSource staff

**SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS**

MCS BusinessSource Center

April 23, 2019, 5:30pm – 7:30p.m.

**Small Business Needs**

1. Space to test out / trial and error (example: government subsidized “pop-up” space, minimum of 6 months)
2. Resources (example: sublet-trial period)
3. Time to assess the opportunities (what’s working for growth)
4. Community Awareness for “innovation” to grow / start
5. Lack of knowledge of “free” resources → “cultural” links / mentors / trust → to allow people to “dream” → building grass-root efforts
6. Targeted “topics” – social media to boost awareness / attendance – example: [using] Facebook
7. TA: Business plan
8. Chamber / BusinessSource – partner cost sharing?
9. Understanding the “added value” → [address the feeling of] what’s the catch?
10. Demystify “government” program / support available
11. Networking opportunities (ex. “breakfast club” – 1 week) – “creating community” – speakers
12. Two-minute “commercial”
13. “Risk-free” small loans (“loan loss preserve”)
14. Opportunities to “upgrade” skills – owner and employees – ex. computer skills → digital upgrade / social media platform
15. Training – understanding the law / city code → decrease violations / consumerism
16. Matching → WIOA and employer / eligible / access to government programs → understanding requirements
17. Entrepreneur 101 → informal → economy – “immigrant integration” opportunities
18. LA MAS: “Façade” improvement – ex. “lift the block” (Wells Fargo)
19. DASH vs parking meters / parking

**Bridging the Gaps: Small Businesses**

1. “Customer Service” Training for staff / employees
2. Local hiring → barriers to employment (drug check; credit) – ex. inability to pass background checks / going outside area to hire

3. Basic skills (reading, writing, math, office etiquette → “on-boarding” training and retention support
4. Employee certificate programs
5. Employer → Training / education → “expectations” of employees / work place → for understanding generational gaps → working with diverse groups that already exist

### **Building Partnerships**

1. Supporting collaborations (ex. Chamber, corporate partners; government)
2. Removing “step-child” syndrome (Harbor) → one size does not fit all (ex. procurement)
3. Trusted medium – ex. radio, community org. to promote “free” services” → testimonials → employers saying “it worked for me!”
4. Speaking their language – “business speak” (workforce and business linkage)

**MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS FOR SKILLED WORKERS**

LA Valley College

April 25, 2019, 11:00am – 1:00p.m.

**Employer Needs: Training**

1. Soft skills
2. Counseling (reentry pop.)
3. Financial Literacy
4. Adult Work Experience (paid)
5. OJT
6. MS Office
7. Customer Service (tied into soft skills)

**Bridging Service Gaps**

1. Gaps – participant self-perception
  - pre-testing
  - professional training (train the trainer)
2. Bridges
  - I-train – doesn't align with WIOA timeline (issues)
  - Apprenticeships
  - models in various sectors
  - promote first hire opportunities
  - bring employers into conversation (mixers, quarterly meetings)
  - neighborhood councils
  - Employer Advisory Board (LAUSD)
  - recognition to employers
3. Determine Needs
  - One-on-One meetings
  - 50/50 hard / soft skills
  - Research – trends, Labor Market Information
  - Marketing
  - Partnerships (WSC, Colleges, Employers)
4. Programs
  - Evening classes
  - Innovation in training – incentives, etc....

5. Services / Support

- Demand industries – Mfg., health, aerospace, defense
- Barriers – language, soft skills, gap in ability to learn tech (age)
- Paid training / support
- Incentivize participants – soft skills



# ACHIEVING EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE

**Tell everyone you know! - The City of Los Angeles has 14 YouthSource, 16 WorkSource and 9 BusinessSource Centers with the resources for youth, job seekers and entrepreneurs to find success.**

**Come join the conversation!**

**We will be hosting a series of meetings throughout the City of LA on the topics below.**

**We want to hear what you think. Come help shape your future.**

## **ADULT EDUCATION**

### **EASTSIDE**

Boyle Heights YouthSource  
Technology Center  
1600 E. 4th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90003  
**DATE: April 11, 2019**  
**TIME: 5:30PM-7:30PM**

## **YOUTH SERVICES**

### **SOUTH LA**

Los Angeles Technical Trade  
College (LATTC)  
400 W. Washington Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90015  
**DATE: April 16, 2019**  
**TIME: 10AM-12N**

## **TECH SECTOR**

### **WEST LA**

JVS  
5446 Sepulveda Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90230  
**DATE: April 18, 2019**  
**TIME: 11AM-1PM**

## **HOMELESS/RE-ENTRY**

### **CENTRAL**

Central City Neighborhood  
Partners  
501 S. Bixel St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
**DATE: April 22, 2019**  
**TIME: 10AM-12N**

## **SMALL BUSINESS**

### **Harbor Area**

MCS BusinessSource Center  
222 W. 6th Street, Ste. 320  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
**DATE: April 23, 2019**  
**TIME: 5:30PM-7:30PM**

## **EMPLOYER SERVICES**

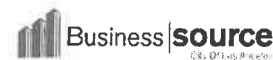
### **Valley**

Los Angeles Valley College  
5800 Fulton Ave.  
Van Nuys, CA 91401  
**DATE: April 25, 2019**  
**TIME: 11AM-1PM**

**For more information on City's workforce programs and priorities for Program Year 2019-20, please visit:**

<http://ewddlacity.com/index.php/workforce-development-board-year-twenty-annual-plan>

**Comments will also be accepted at [EWDD.planning@lacity.org](mailto:EWDD.planning@lacity.org)**



**For more information on the community forums please contact Cecy Gómez at (213) 744-7193**



**RESPECTABILITY**

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To: Charles Woo, Chair, City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board

From: Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President and CEO, RespectAbility

Re: Public Comments on City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board  
ANNUAL PLAN YEAR 20 / 2019-20

Date: May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

RespectAbility wants to congratulate the City of Los Angeles for the clear hard work and commitment to create a more equitable economy for all Angelenos as demonstrated in the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board's (WDB) draft Year 20/2019-2020 Annual Plan. We were especially excited to see that the Plan specifically identified the annual number of job seekers with disabilities served by LA-area workforce programs. From the 2,728 Angelenos with disabilities served in PY17-18 to the 3,476 served this past year represents a major period of growth. As such, RespectAbility is making the following public comments with our recommendation on how to capitalize on that growth.

Our organization is a national, non-partisan, non-profit dedicated to fighting stigmas and advancing opportunities for Americans living with disabilities. While our organization is based in Washington, D.C., we have done extensive work in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area since 2017. We have extensive connections throughout the entertainment industry as part of our work to fight the stigma against disability by promoting authentic and accurate portrayals of disability in the media. On the advancing opportunities side of our mission, we have been intimately involved with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), documenting best practices and advocating for policies to empower youth with disabilities. We are now the recipients of a state Workforce Accelerator Grant, allowing us to establish a permanent presence in Los Angeles and launch new partnerships. With our credentials established, we now turn to our specific recommendations:

- **USE THE RIGHT DATA:** Given the priority placed on populations with barriers to employment under WIOA, leaders in the workforce development system need to have clear data points driving their decision making. As such, we begin our public comments by reviewing several critical pieces of data on the size, scope and challenges facing the disability community in Los Angeles. In California itself, there are 1,980,677 working-age (ages 18-64) people living with a disclosed disability. Out of that total number, 721,536 have jobs. Locally, in Los Angeles city itself, there are 185,973 working-age people with disabilities. When you take a step back and look at Los Angeles County, the total number of working-age people with disabilities is 452,879. Overall, that means there are well over half a million working-age Angelenos with disabilities. That is a significant pool of potential employees.



- USE THE RIGHT DATA (Continued):** However, according to the latest data from the American Community Survey (ACS) collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, only 22.8 percent of Angelenos with disabilities have jobs. Meanwhile, Angelenos without disabilities have a labor force participation rate of 63.1 percent. Comparing those two numbers shows that there is a 40.3 percentage point gap in outcomes. Reducing that gap should be a critical goal for your workforce development efforts moving forward. Finding a good job, especially for youth with barriers to employment, is critically linked to educational attainment. As such, looking at local data on high school graduation rates is important. As noted in the draft plan “Educational attainment remains a significant barrier to accessing middle-skill employment for many Angelenos” and that “nearly 24 percent of working age adults lack a basic High School education, nearly double the national average.” Overall, looking at data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, we see that overall, LAUSD students have an 81.3 percent high school graduation rate. However, when you look closer at outcomes for students with disabilities, you see that serious gaps exist. Los Angeles students with disabilities have a high school graduation rate of 63.7 percent. Further, there are 65,886 students with disabilities enrolled in Los Angeles public schools. That also means that L.A. schools serve fully one quarter of all students with disabilities in California. That is a pipeline of talented youth who may need supports and services to successfully transition into the workforce. The Year Twenty Plan as written does much to align priorities, services and programs around supporting educational attainment among Angelenos with some of the biggest barriers to success. Addressing those barriers provides the clearest path for changing the “pervasive income inequality contributes to the high concentration of poverty among communities of color.” As noted in the Plan, in Los Angeles: “24.5 percent of African Americans and 23.7 percent of Latinos living in poverty.” Similarly, 21 percent of Angelenos with disabilities live in poverty. Guided by these and many other data points, we know that the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board’s efforts will have a major impact.
- VISIT PROVEN MODELS:** An important step that leaders in a workforce development system can take to make disability employment a high priority is to visit programs successfully getting people with disabilities into the workforce. As such, we highly recommend that members of the City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board take the opportunity to visit local school-to-work transition programs that are transforming the lives of youth with disabilities. The models worth your attention are Project SEARCH and Bridges from School to Work. Project SEARCH is a proven business-led program where students with disabilities get hands on real-world job skills in their final year of high school. Bridges prepares youth with disabilities to be employment ready, provides businesses with qualified job candidates and strengthens communities through inclusive workforce development strategies. Since 2015, SEARCH has served over 3,000 young adults with disabilities and 78 percent of them found jobs. Likewise, through Bridges, over 15,000 youth with disabilities have been placed with over 4,500 employers. Both models offer proven strategies for businesses to incorporate the talents of the students with disabilities into the workforce. Locally, there are SEARCH sites worth visiting at the Kaiser Permanente LA Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente West LA Medical Center, and the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Currently, the Los Angeles office of Bridges coordinates with LAUSD, the Compton Unified School District and L.A. County Office of Education - LA South Bay District.

- **NO NEED TO REINVENT THE WHEEL:** It is easy to talk about WIOA being a paradigm shift in how the nation's entire workforce system does business. The law introduced many requirements on workforce system programs and established new reporting requirements all without the additional investments sometimes necessary to make systematic change. One of our critical recommendations when it comes to ensuring the workforce system has the capacity and readiness to serve job seekers with disabilities is to ensure that workforce professionals make good use of resources such as the [Job Accommodation Network](#) and [Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion](#). From time management to the other productivity tools, simple assistive technology, matched to a person's needs can drive workplace inclusion and success.
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES:** [The Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) shows that 40 percent of the prison population has a disability. Further, 95 percent of incarcerated people will be released and returned home. To prevent recidivism and ensure success, re-entry services, and training programs need to be prepared to assess returning citizens for disability and then address disability issues as they arise. These programs need to understand reasonable accommodations and have access to assistive technology including mental health support or other phone-based applications. As such, we want to commend the Board for making the reentry population the focus of both strategic initiatives and new investments. Congratulations for the multi-million-dollar investment you and your colleagues have secured through the Prison to Employment (P2E) grant. We would challenge the Board and your regional partners to consider the disability elements of this critical work. Do your programs serving the reentry population have the capacity to track if a returning citizen has a disclosed disability? Can arrangements be made to coordinate with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Rehabilitation to provide disability assets before citizens leave the correctional system? If someone does disclose a disability issues, how do program professionals react? Have they received training on disability employment best practices? If not, can connections be made to disability organization or can self-advocates be recruited to provide trainings? As a starting point, we would recommend that you consider RespectAbility's 2016 report [Disability and Criminal Justice Reform: Keys to Success](#). The report contains a series of recommendations to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline for people with disabilities, to enable incarcerated individuals with disabilities to receive the skills they need to succeed, and best practices on how to help returning citizens integrate back home.
- **SHOWCASE SUCCESS:** As we discuss in our annual [Best and Worst States](#) report, disability employment outcomes vary widely between different states. People with disabilities in North Dakota are twice as likely to have jobs as West Virginians with disabilities. It is worth noting that the employment rates for people with disabilities in Los Angeles is even lower than West Virginia, the bottom state in the United States.

One factor that makes a tremendous difference expanding opportunities for people with disabilities is have a sustained public awareness campaign focused on promoting the business benefits of hiring employees with disabilities. The model we would encourage the City and the Board to follow is the [Ability For Hire Campaign](#) from South Dakota. Sponsored by the state's Department of Human Services, Ability for Hire provides information to businesses, job seekers with disabilities and professionals in the workforce

system about how to recruit, hire and retain job seekers with disabilities. The integration of public awareness activities and practical resources for businesses can make a major difference in outcomes for populations with serious barriers to employment. Further, the City of Los Angeles is uniquely positioned to integrate the power and leverage of the entertainment industry towards this goal. Showcasing the success of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment in television and film will not only have a local impact but also a global impact.

- **SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND START UPS:** In reviewing the Census Bureau data for Los Angeles, it is worth noting the number of Angelenos with disabilities who either entrepreneurs or self-employed. Among Angelenos with disabilities who are employed, 15 percent of workers with disabilities are self-employed and 5.6 percent of workers with disabilities are self-employed in their own incorporated business. Encouraging entrepreneurship or self-employment offers a tremendous opportunity for the City to empower more and more people with disabilities to enter the workforce. Setting specific goals to expand entrepreneurship/self-employment funding, training, and programs could be a tremendous chance to address inequality directly. We would encourage the Board to explore ways in which workforce development/disability agencies (such as vocational rehabilitation, SNAP, TANF, developmental disability and mental health) could incorporate entrepreneurship and self-employment training as an option for job seekers with disabilities. Another strategy to support business entrepreneurs with disabilities would be to identify Disability-Owned Business Enterprises, or DOBEs, in city procurement contracts. Likewise, ensuring that disability is included under existing Minority Enterprise categories could be another strategy.
- **FEDERAL CONTRACTORS:** RespectAbility also recommends that the City's Workforce Development Board include federal contractors as an important category of business in your future planning. We mention this both because of how widely spread federal contractors are but also because of the unique goals set by the Section 503 regulations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 503, for those who are unfamiliar, explicitly prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities. Further, the regulations implementing Section 503 specifically direct such employers to take positive steps towards recruiting, hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. Among the critical elements of these regulations are a utilization goal for contractors to have 7 percent of their workforce, in all job categories, be qualified individuals with disabilities. As the Board is looking for employer partners eager for talented individuals with barriers to employment, we encourage you to consider some of the businesses with the largest federal contracts in the city of Los Angeles.

Collected from the website FedSpending.org, the follow companies held the largest federal contracts as of Fiscal Year 2015:

<b>Top 10 Federal Contractors in the city of Los Angeles – FY 2015</b>	
<b>Source: <a href="http://FedSpending.org">FedSpending.org</a></b>	
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOC. OF GREATER L.A.	\$31,912,987
METROPOLITAN INTERPRETERS & TRANSLATORS, INC.	\$28,432,256
SECURITAS AB	\$28,408,129
INTER-CON SECURITY SYSTEMS, INC.	\$17,382,544
SAFEGUARD SERVICES LLC	\$13,690,233
CLARK ENTERPRISES, INC.	\$10,931,327
VANCE CORPORATION	\$7,293,327
G4S PLC	\$7,162,092
TYCO INTEGRATED SECURITY LLC	\$6,267,919
AECOM	\$4,948,739

- L.A. TALENT CHALLENGE AND SUMMER JOBS:** Summer employment opportunities are a critical chance for all youth to develop their skills, increase their knowledge and gain valuable work experience. Such experiences can be the crucial difference between success or failure for youth with serious barriers to employment such as justice involvement or disability issues. This year, our partners at the [Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce](#) have set the ambitious goal of having 500 or more employers sponsor or hire an intern this summer. The L.A. Talent Challenge represents a systematic effort to build a future workforce and expose business across L.A. to the incredible talents of young Angelenos. There are [documented practices](#) and [recommendations](#) to ensure that summer experience translate into valuable learning experiences, especially for youth with disabilities. From reviewing the Revised Policies draft section of the Year Twenty Annual Plan, we know that policies are in place to support job seekers with disabilities around non-discrimination, universal access and other key elements. However, we wonder how far policies are translating into practical action. It is encouraging that the policies require “Each WorkSource and YouthSource Center” to “designate a Disability Coordinator”, but how often do such Coordinators meet or collaborate? Is there a mechanism for lessons learned in terms of serving youth with disabilities being shared with system partners such as the Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services responsible for Summer Youth Employment? We raise these questions to ensure the ultimate success of summer jobs programs.
- RESOURCE FAIRS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDES:** Because Los Angeles is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the entire world, it can be challenging for job seekers, family members and others to know where to go or where to find resources that can help them with their needs. As RespectAbility has found time and again, people don’t know what they don’t know and don’t know what they need to know. Back in 2017, RespectAbility was the recipient of a small community grant for collaborative work in Long Beach, California. Gathering together local partners, agencies and self-advocates, we found a critical need for a free community resource guide that touched on everything

from employment services to education supports and a host of other topics. Our Guide was well received by local leaders who spoke about the challenges of trying to find a single source to guide towards available resources. Having this type of comprehensive guide could be a valuable service provided by the City's Workforce Development Board to the job seekers, systems partners and employers that you serve.

- PARENT ENGAGEMENT:** An underexplored challenge related to youth employment and ensuring the success of people with barriers to work is the issue of family engagement. Getting families involved with the development, learning, health and wellness of their children has long been a part of localized health strategies and federal policy. As documented by the federal Dept. of Health and Humans Services: "Studies indicate that warm, responsive and sensitive parenting promotes socialemotional competence and academic success." However, engaging the whole family should be thought of as part of supporting youth employment. In practical terms that will mean training for workforce leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and others on best practices in parental and family engagement. As well as hosting events at physically accessible locations, preparing accessible marketing materials and connecting parents to parent resource centers or other sources of information. The best practice is to combine parent resource training seminars with community fairs that showcase organizations and resources that parents can utilize. These types of events should be hosted in accessible schools where both translation services and child care can be provided. One of the best examples in the country for this is Montgomery County, Maryland. In that county the employment outcomes for people with disabilities is twice that of Los Angeles' disability employment rate. Montgomery County public schools offer resource portals that are multilingual and integrated across the community:  
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/parent-resources/>. This is an example of one of their vital programs that is coordinated with the schools, parents and vocational services:  
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/events/>.
- HOLLYWOOD AS A SECTOR STRATEGY:** When people think about Southern California, it is only natural that they about Hollywood and the multi-billion industry that feeds Americans continuing demand for content. Entertainment professionals across all platforms are working to become more inclusive of minorities. While people with disabilities are the largest minority in America (roughly 20 percent of the population), the disability community often is forgotten in conversations about inclusion and diversity. According to GLAAD, fewer than two percent of scripted television characters (16) had disabilities in 2017. The amount of regular primetime broadcast characters counted who have a disability has slightly increased to 1.8 percent, but that number still vastly underrepresents the actual number of Americans with disabilities. Furthermore, actors *without* disabilities play more than 95 percent of all characters with disabilities on television. According to a recent report by The Media, Diversity, & Social Change (MDSC) Initiative at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, only 2.7 percent of all speaking or named characters in film were shown to have a disability in 2016 (up from 2.4 percent in 2015). None of the leading characters were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group or the LGBTQ community.

The representation that does exist is misleading. Almost all portrayals of people with disabilities in media are white, but disability impacts all. Anyone can join the disability community at any point and people with disabilities come from all communities – including African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, LGBTQ and other communities. It is our view that everyone who works on any aspect of diversity in Hollywood will be able to help ALL – as a rising tide lifts all ships. Television programming and films that represent the talents, innovation and inclusion of ALL of us simply are better. Opening the inclusion umbrella is the *right* thing and is economically *smart* given that the overall disability market is valued at more than \$1 trillion. According to [Nielsen Research](#), consumers with disabilities represent a \$1 billion market segment. When you include their families, friends and associates, that total expands to more than \$1 trillion. Americans with disabilities represent the third largest market behind Baby Boomers and the mature market.

As such, we would challenge the City’s Workforce Development Board to seriously consider the ways in which it interfaces with the entertainment industry and where it might leverage those connections to advance inclusion for people with disabilities. RespectAbility is working to help Hollywood ensure accurate and positive media portrayals of people with disabilities.. We partner with leaders in the entertainment industry for the full inclusion of people with disabilities – both in front of and behind the camera. Now, we are inviting new partners to help move the needle on three core issues: 1) diversity, equity and equality inclusion and diversity in Hollywood; 2) more positive and accurate portrayals of people with disabilities; and 3) the employment of people with disabilities.

Given the omission of the entertainment industry from the sector strategies identified in the Year Twenty Annual Plan, we invite the City’s Board to think about the interconnections between their work and the industry itself. RespectAbility is well positioned to assist with that effort and we would be delighted to work with you on it.

- **THE NONPROFIT SECTOR AS A STRATEGY:** This past year more than 30 percent of all new jobs for people with disabilities were in the nonprofit sector. RespectAbility recently completed a major study that showed that more than 80 percent of nonprofits are not accessible to at least some sectors of the disability community. As the Board coordinates and collaborates with various non-profit sector partners, we encourage you to make use of the resources and ideas collected into our [Disability in Philanthropy & Nonprofits](#) study. While many non-profits are physically or programmatically inaccessible to people with disabilities, we can report that California philanthropic leaders are stepping up to become industry leaders on disability issues. RespectAbility is actively collaborating with Southern California Grantmakers, California Endowment, California Wellness and the Weingart Foundation to make improvements across the sector and Los Angeles metropolitan area. We are ready to help all groups on this front. Indeed, it is vital for nonprofits that work on disability issues to have people with disabilities work inside them and on their boards as they know best the solutions that really work for our population. Not only does our study document where the non-profit sector stands, it also includes very specific suggestions on how to make dramatic improvements quickly and without much money.

IN CONCLUSION: Our organization is motivated by the fundamental fact that if we find the right jobs for the right people with disabilities, it can and will benefit the bottom line of companies. In closing, we want to reiterate several critical facts that underpin our work:

- Out of the 22 million working-age Americans with disabilities, there are 15 million ready and eager to enter the workforce. Currently approximately half of them are employed, though many of them are underemployed and/or working part time. The other half are sitting on the sidelines – eager for appropriate opportunities.
- Over 340,000 people with disabilities joined the American workforce in 2017. As noted by the White House Council of Economic Advisors, “no group has felt the benefits of accelerated economic growth more than Americans with a disability.”
- Companies including JP Morgan Chase, Coca-Cola, UPS, EY, IBM, Walgreens, Starbucks, and SAP are case studies that show people with disabilities can succeed.
- Accenture recently completed a major study that shows that such companies have seen “28 percent higher revenue, double the net income, and 30 percent higher economic profit margins” over a four-year period.
- The cost-benefit value of employees with disabilities is clear. From lower rates of absenteeism and turnover to improved training processes, there are clear business benefits to hiring people with disabilities.

As this work moves forward, it is important that we leverage our mutual resources in the City of Los Angeles. As such, we look forward to working with you.