

Los Angeles Believes in Opportunities & Recidivism Reduction (LABOR²)

a. Statement of the Problem

Though Los Angeles is ranked among the three largest economies in the country - with a forecasted 2014 gross metropolitan product of \$827.6 billion for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana metropolitan area (Insight)¹ - in 2011 nearly 18.4% of the population lived under the poverty level. The City of Los Angeles (LA) is the most populous city in California, with a population of **3,863,839**² in more than 1.3 million households accounting, for 39% of the Los Angeles County population.³

The total South LA population is 548,691, comprising 14% of LA; 59% of the population is without a high school diploma; 72% of the population live below the federal poverty level. The total East LA population is 321,799, comprising 8% of LA. Boyle Heights and Northeast LA comprise the East LA communities. In Boyle Heights 55% of the population is without a high school diploma, 66% of the population lives below the federal poverty line. In Northeast LA 33% of the population is without a high school diploma, 43% of the population lives below the federal poverty line. Poverty rates are more severe within the South LA and East/Northeast LA communities; these, are targeted to be served by this proposal. These percentages reflect the percent of the population that is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level by Community Plan area in 2010. In 2010, two hundred percent of the FPL for a family of four was \$44,100 in 2010.⁴

¹ IHS Global Insight, 2013. *U.S. Metro Economies – Including International and State Comparisons*

² California Department of Finance, May 1, 2013. *Press Release E-1*

³ Economic & Policy Analysis Group, Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, May, 2013. *Industry and Labor Market Intelligence for the City of Los Angeles*

⁴ LA City Planning Department, 2014. *Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, Health and Wellness Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan*

Over one-third of the city's population is below 24 years of age, with high school dropouts accounting for one-third of these youth. Equally troubling, as the "One-Out-of-Five" report⁵ on out-of-school and out-of-work youth shows, youth and young adults in these communities, ages 16 to 19 lack early work experience at a greater rate than their peers in the state and the nation. The social-economic conditions of severe poverty, large concentrations of youth in poverty and low-educational attainment, create an environment that promotes gang activity and recruitment. Many high school dropouts operate on the fringes of the legitimate labor market; hence, their involvement in illegal activities is much higher than high school graduates. However, there is a marked decrease in the incidence or involvement in illegal activities among those with postsecondary education and college degrees. As a result, a higher involvement in illegitimate activities among high school dropouts leads to a higher rate of incarceration among them."⁶ In fact, the Los Angeles Police Department reports that there are nearly 400 active gangs in LA. The high rate of gang participation among LA youth has also led to high rates of youth incarceration. According to the County of Los Angeles Probation Department (Probation)—the nation's largest youth incarceration agency—over 3,900 juvenile probationers, ranging in ages from 13-18 years old return to the Los Angeles County area.⁷ Youth released in 2007-2008 had a 53.8% arrest rate at the end of three years. Almost one quarter were sentenced within one year of release. The trend for recidivism showed there were few differences (10% or less) in most of the age categories. Youth incarcerated at older ages returned at lower rates than their younger counterparts.⁸

⁵ Professor Paul E. Harrington, Center for Labor Market Studies, 2005. *One Out of Five Report*.

⁶ Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, 2010. *The Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of Five in the Los Angeles Metro Area*.

⁷ Harvard Kennedy School of Government, December, 2010. *Juvenile Reentry in Los Angeles County: An Exploration of Strengths, Barriers and Policy Options*

⁸ Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation-2012. *Juvenile Justice Outcome Evaluation Report*

Upon reentry, juvenile offenders in the Probation system have minimal educational attainment, minimal to no work readiness preparation and significant barriers to employment. Exacerbating the issue, youth adjudicated as delinquents face challenging futures upon release from residential juvenile programs. They frequently return to environments characterized by family dysfunction, poverty, and peer pressure to continue a delinquent lifestyle. Many of these juvenile offenders have psychological, emotional, and substance abuse problems. Mental health issues are factors that contribute to a higher rate of recidivism. A shortage of wrap-around youth, family and community supports in these communities makes it difficult to address the issues of the large numbers of youth reentering society.

In order to provide career pathways to incarcerated youth and young adults in technology-related fields, it is imperative to engage these youth with basic skills remediation to prepare them for advanced training opportunities, employability skills to enter the workforce, and provide wrap-around social services to address behavioral barriers to employment. These barriers will be addressed effectively through the program design and subsequently, the LA Metropolitan Area will afford plenty of employment opportunities in green technology sectors for youth upon reentry. To this end, LA has invested more than \$10 billion to drive the green economy and the cleantech industries since 2008. As a result, the number of cleantech businesses and green work spaces expanded by 60% from 2009. In 2010, LA County led the state in green technology sector growth, with 490 businesses and work places that specialize in five sectors of cleantech industry: low-carbon energy, energy efficiency, transportation, green buildings and carbon markets.

Currently, the LA YouthSource Center (YSC) system has a network of agency partnerships in place to provide a pipeline for green automotive technology and green construction

technologies training made available to incarcerated youth returning from Probation Detention Centers (PDCs) as well as those in Probation Residential Placements. The PDCs have an average daily population of 95 to 108 incarcerated youth. The goal of the proposed Los Angeles Believes in Opportunities and Recidivism Reduction (LABOR²) program is to move youth into post-secondary educational/occupational opportunities and reduce recidivism rates by providing education, training, mentoring/case management, leadership development, work-study, supportive services, and intensive transition support prior to and following youth being released from the PDCs.

The LABOR² program will enroll participants at Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC), which prepares incarcerated youth for a career pathway in the fields of green automotive technology and green construction technologies by providing training leading to a state and industry recognized curriculum.⁹ LATTC courses provide youth with earned college credits that are transferable toward a high school diploma. The goal of the LABOR² program is to reintegrate youth into the community through education and training that leads to employment, and assists the youth in achieving a productive, crime-free life.

b. Program Design and Implementation

The proposed LABOR² program will incorporate the proven elements of the evidence-based LAYOM program model,¹⁰ which includes intensive case-management, mental health/substance abuse counseling and treatment and job readiness training to enhance the employability of youth ex-offenders ages 16 to 24 through an introduction to career pathways in technology-based careers. Access to the internet by incarcerated youth will be restricted to

⁹Credential is the Home Builders Institute - Pre Apprenticeship Certificate Training (HBI-PACT) <http://www.hbi.org/Programs/PreApprenticeship/HBIPACT.aspx> and <http://www.sp2.org/site/>

¹⁰ Citywide Gang Activity Reduction Strategy: Phase III Report The Advancement Project, pg. 37. http://www.advanceproj.com/index.php?q=/c/resource/sc/up_call_to_action

ensure public safety for the duration of the program. Data will be collected on a quarterly basis and reported online via the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT)¹¹

The LABOR² program will incorporate a robust in-camp education curriculum component that is designed to provide youth 1) contextualized-basic skills training focused on providing participants with the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to succeed in a post-secondary education; 2) a short-term hands-on vocational training that will expose participants to technology-based careers in the “green automotive” and “green construction” industries; 3) provide industry recognized certificates in the aforementioned fields, and 4) encourage youth to continue toward an advanced degree or certificate training program upon release. This program model utilizes employment technology-based careers and incorporates Probation’s reentry planning as a means to a seamless transition into release, and thereby reducing recidivism among the target population.

Pre-release Phase

Participant Identification: Participants will be identified by the YSC’s (Boyle Heights Technology Center, Watts Center, and the Coalition for Responsible Community Development) via their existing partnerships with the PDCs. YSCs will work with detention camp counselors to identify youth that are: 1) scheduled to return to the target areas of South and East LA upon release; 2) identify youth and young adults ages 16-24, 3) within six to nine months of scheduled release; and 4) meet the eligibility requirements for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – Youth funding stream.¹²

¹¹www.bjaperformancetools.org/help/scatechnologycareersquestionnaire.pdf.

¹² <http://www.doleta.gov/performance/quickview/WIAPMeasures.cfm>

Upon selection, participants will be co-enrolled into the LABOR² and the YSC – WIA-funded programs. Co-enrollment into WIA will allow YSCs to leverage resources to augment and continue services for participants. Participants will be assigned a “Career Coach” who will assist participants from program enrollment through post-program follow up; coordinate with collaborative partners to conduct a Personal Needs Assessment (PNA) for the participants to ensure that all barriers to successful employment retention are identified early in the process, and that will also serve as the participant’s primary “advocate” throughout their participation in the program as well as coordinate services and activities with collaborative partners to ensure successful completion of the PNA. The PNA will include educational and vocational assessments, and will be the basis for developing a participant’s Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Prior to release, a Career Coach will also assess participants for their interest and work readiness as it applies to specific vocational training programs. The Career Coach will connect juveniles directly to the most appropriate program and act as a supportive mentor throughout their training.

Education: LAUSD Camp Returnee Pupil Service and Attendance (PSA) Counselors, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), will be responsible for conducting an educational assessment for 100 youth prior to release. Assessments include identifying appropriate educational setting, gathering information on school history, transcripts, and barriers to academic achievement. PSA Counselors provide referrals to community agencies based on needs, advocacy, facilitate enrollment into school, as well as case management services.

Using a cohort-based learning community, the program includes broad outreach to disconnected and under-prepared youth and intensive support services, including case management.

The program is the result of the work of an industry-driven collaborative that includes faculty, major employers, labor unions and workforce agencies. Upon completion, students are ready to move into employment, as well as to continue in educational programs to obtain certificates or degrees in either field.

Post-Release

Assessment: Upon release, all participants will receive a battery of assessments through the Chicago School of Professional Psychology (CSPP), including educational; career interest and psycho/social assessments. Post-release assessments will be used to update the ISS and identify barriers to academic, technology training and employment success.

Transitional/Life Skills: Upon release, participants will be undergoing Cognitive-Based Therapies (CBT) to address crimineogenic needs and redirect criminal thinking as dictated by the psycho/social assessments. The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (CSPP), a nonprofit, accredited, graduate school – the nation’s oldest and largest devoted exclusively to psychology and related behavioral science -- will serve as a vendor to provide assessments, cognitive behavioral therapy, and other mental health services as appropriate. CSPP student practicums will provide drug abuse and alcohol abuse counseling; anger management; post-traumatic stress counseling and other trainings as necessary. Youth will also be exposed to leadership and civic engagement activities with the objective of providing participants with the life-skills necessary to overcome the social stigma associated with incarceration and to build reinforcing positive leadership qualities. These activities will run concurrently with vocational training and work-experience phases of the program.

Legal Services: Public Counsel, the largest pro bono nonprofit law firm in the nation, will serve as a vendor to provide civil legal services to 50 youth over 12 months at the three aforementioned YSC sites. Legal services are necessary to promote successful reentry to the community and the workforce, such as educational rights advocacy, transition planning to college & career, government benefits eligibility, housing access, immigration status, and reducing other barriers such as sealing juvenile records.

Work Readiness Training: Participants will receive a Work-Readiness Certificate (WRC) that will include 20 hours of soft-employment skills - for youth lacking skills necessary to succeed in a professional work environment. Upon completion of WRC training, participants will be provided professional work attire, transportation subsidies and other supportive services required for subsidized work-experience.

Earning a High School Diploma: Participants who still need to complete their high school diploma will be provided with GED and credit recovery classes to help prepare and complete their secondary educational goals through services provided by the YSCs or through enrollment at LATTC—taking courses that will earn them college credit and be transferable towards their high school diploma.

Enrollment into Post-Secondary Education: At the time of enrollment into LABOR², all participants will be enrolled into LATTC and will complete a minimum of six college units prior to release from detention. However, due to the importance of a post-secondary education to economic and professional success, upon release from detention, participants will be ushered toward continued educational opportunities including enrollment into an advanced industry-recognized certificated training program or a community college degree. YSCs will continue to serve partic-

ipants beyond the duration of the LABOR² program through our WIA system to ensure long-term success, which will incorporate the required follow-up services.

Job Search and Placement: Upon completion of work-experience, YSC job developers will assist participants with employment needs. Employment will either consist of full-time employment for those participants that do not continue with post-secondary training or part-time employment for those continuing with advanced training. The LABOR² program collaborative has secured commitments on an ongoing basis, via LATTC, from notable industry employers in green related technology fields that are intricately involved in the training curriculum certification process. These employers are willing to provide opportunities for potential employment to successful program participants (please refer to letters of support in the attachments). Those participants with a high school diploma will benefit from on-the-job training in energy efficiency, solar photovoltaic installation, and environmental remediation. Training for energy efficiency will include residential energy assessments and retrofits, preparing participants to be hired for positions with the local contractors with whom we partner, as well as with the California Public Utilities Commission Low-Income Energy Efficiency Program and the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program. Along with equipping participants to become junior solar installers, the LATTC will also provide them with training in solar assessment and sizing, OSHA certification, and NEC electrical basics.

The LABOR² program meets multiple “priority considerations” identified in the solicitation. The program has developed a strong collaborative partnership between industry-related trainers and employers to bring an unmatched level of expertise to the program. The collaborative consists of three YouthSource Centers, LA’s premier youth-workforce program for the at-risk and disconnected youth, the LATTC, a nationally recognized technology-based training pro-

vider, LAUSD/LACOE, LA County Probation, the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Public Counsel, and employers in the green technologies industry fields in the Los Angeles County Region.

c. Capabilities and Competencies

The City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) is the lead applicant. EWDD will administer the grant through its direct-service providers in the YSC system. LA's YSCs bring to bear a great deal of expertise in working with at-risk youth, ages 16 to 24, who are disconnected from employment and education. Under LA's WIA program, the YSCs work exclusively with out-of-school youth. The YSC system reports directly to the Program Operations Division (OPS) of EWDD - the lead administrator of the city's Workforce Development System. The OPS division will provide program and fiscal oversight during program implementation, ensuring that program guidelines and performance will be met.

A program manager (PM) from the YSC program will be assigned to coordinate the LABOR² partnership and its program elements. The PM will be responsible for convening monthly meetings with key partners, including LA County Probation, LATTC, LAUSD, and LACOE. The PM has over five years of experience managing the YSCs and a resume is provided in the attachments. The PM will work to identify and ensure continued funding and system-wide coordination of the program, including strategies on building system-wide capacity to deliver employment services to ex-offenders, as well as regional and city-wide direction of re-entry strategies.

Since 2000, the Los Angeles Workforce Investment system and its community partners have been "among the country's leaders in developing comprehensive and collaborative strategies to serve the disconnected youth population (Communities Collaborating to Reconnect

Youth: www.ccrynetwork.org). YSCs, in partnership with LATTC have been a key factor in making LA one of the most innovative and high performing youth systems in the nation. The EWDD organization consistently exhibits performance excellence, innovative approaches, robust and enduring community collaborations. The EWDD houses productive staff dedicated to the community and the youth that they serve. YSCs, formerly known as the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM), has operated multiple workforce development programs serving youth (including those incarcerated youth) ages 14 to 21 for over a decade. In April 2000, the CDD Community Development Department (predecessor agency of the Economic and Workforce Development Department), was awarded a \$44 million U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) - Youth Opportunity Movement demonstration grant to design and operationalize an integrated workforce development model for in-school and out-of school youth in the Los Angeles Empowerment Zone communities of East Los Angeles (Boyle Heights), South Los Angeles (Watts), and Pacoima. Over 3,500 participants were served, evenly divided between in-school and out-of-school youth.

Serving as external validation of the program's effectiveness, the National Youth Employment Coalition recognized LAYOM as a PEPNet *Promising Program*. This award represented independent certification of a program design that "works" and LAYOM's demonstrated commitment to quality programming and continuous improvement. In 2004, DOL honored LAYOM with an Innovation Award for Outstanding Youth Programs at its annual national workforce development conference.

In 2005, DOL awarded CDD and LAYOM a President's High Wage, High Growth Job Training Initiative grant to attract a previously untapped pipeline of minority youth to healthcare careers. Known as *Stand and Deliver*, the program targeted youth ages 18-24 who were out-of-

work, out-of-school, minority and disadvantaged because of the multiple barriers they faced. The initiative introduced the youth to healthcare careers and provided them the foundational skills and work readiness tools to help them successfully access high wage, high demand training. The program also assisted them in gaining entry level career ladder jobs in the industry and/or or enroll in higher education. Of the 256 youth enrolled in the program: 229 (89%) completed an in-depth psychometric assessment; 205 or 80% increased their math and reading scores by 1.9 and 2.2 grade levels; and 142 (56%) went into healthcare training, higher education, or were employed in healthcare after work experience. DOL invited CDD to publish the program model and outreach and marketing program as a promising approach on *Workforce3One*. Stand and Deliver was the pilot and model for the \$2 million Reconnections Academy sector-based youth training programs that CDD funded using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds in Program Year 2009-2010.

At the program level, the project will be coordinated by the YSC PM, who will: 1) coordinate YSC “Career Coaches,” 2) collaborate with partners to ensure that performance numbers are met and that the program is being implemented under grant guidelines. Additionally, YSCs will assign two Career Coaches to coordinate services for program participants. Career Coaches will be responsible for developing an ISS and synchronizing efforts with the LABOR² collaborators to provide clients with wrap-around services and access to the wide variety of programs available to support their successful entry or re-entry into the workforce. The Career Coach and LABOR² collaborative work together to connect individuals to resources to assure that each individual is receiving the level of services needed throughout program. The collaboration by these three partners ensures that each client is prepared to proceed to the job readiness phase of the program. In addition, the Career Coaches will maintain meticulous documentation

of client needs and progress through the ISS which includes the following: client background, mental health/substance abuse history, criminal background, educational attainment, medical history, referrals and/or service-provision from outside agencies, employment experience, right-to-work documents and supportive services.

The Mental Health Technicians (MHTs) will report to the Director of Clinical Training at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology (CSPP), who will be sub-contracted by the CRCD YSC. Two to three MHTs will conduct mental health/substance abuse, vocational and cognitive assessments for each client. Based on the results of the assessments, which will be kept in the aforementioned client file, the MHTs will coordinate with the LABOR² Coordinators and Career Coaches to determine the appropriate level of services, agency referrals and supportive services to meet the needs of the clients to ensure that they are job ready. CSPP will also provide life skills, Cognitive Behavior Therapy and other life-skills counseling to program participants.

LATTC will provide pre-vocational training programs to 100 youth participants. Each participant will participate in a 12 to 14 week training program that consists of contextualized basic skills remediation and an intensive short-term vocational training focused on “green automotive” and “green construction” technology training.

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is a committed partner and is responsible for developing proven career pathway programs, which includes LATTC. Through the Career Advancement Academy and sector initiatives, LACCD campuses provide Work Readiness Certificate (WRC) training to program participants consisting of a 36-hour introduction to the world of work highlights the fundamentals of employment preparation including resume prep, diverse job search techniques, interview strategies, and work ethics. One hundred

percent of youth who complete the WRC are then enrolled in the LACCD system, thereby providing a direct pathway to a post secondary degree.

d. Impact/Outcomes, Evaluation, and Sustainment, and Plan for Collecting Data for this Solicitation's Performance Measures

Since 2000, the Los Angeles Workforce Investment System administered by the EWDD has served out of school youth. Most recently (in program year 2012-13), our 13 YSC system service providers exceeded performance goals while serving over 70% out of school youth – particularly dropout youth, who are among the hardest to serve. The LABOR² program operates under highly rigorous annual performance evaluation requirements administered by the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Each year, the WIB publishes an annual system-wide performance evaluation of its WIA program contractors commonly known as the SOFA Report. This Balanced Scorecard measures contractor performance in the areas of Customer Satisfaction, Performance Outcomes, Customer Flow, and Aministrative Capability. Due to the annual evaluation requirements, YSCs have therefore developed sophisticated processes for measuring program effectiveness and reporting accomplishments effectively.

With respect to the LABOR² program, the ultimate goal is to provide youth ex-offenders with evidence-based programming and services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Client data is collected throughout the LABOR² program process by the YSC Career Coach and becomes part of the client file. A detailed ISS - developed upon enrollment into the program – forms the basis for services rendered to participants throughout the program and is used by the Career Coach to track progress and to document services rendered during program participation and the follow-up period. The ISS also used to track program outcomes including: attainment of numeracy/literacy gains; completion of short-term vocational training; completion of certificated job

readiness training, completion of a high school diploma or GED, enrollment into advanced training, and potential placement into full-time employment.

YSC Career Coaches will also track recidivism among program participants by conducting weekly telephone calls with participants and probation officers. Data will be reported via the PMT on a quarterly basis. If program participants become unresponsive or fail to maintain contact, the YSC Career Coach and LAUSD PSA will conduct home visits.

Independent evaluations are conducted annually to determine success of the program, best practices and future programmatic enhancements. As discussed before, capacity building has been and continues to be a crucial element, concurrent to program implementation, to sustain re-entry efforts in the event no future funding exists. EWDD and LABOR² staff will continue to build capacity on effectively serving ex-offenders by leveraging existing resources and funding through the YSCs and the extended network of partners. In addition, as Countywide efforts are enhanced through coordinated Task Forces, resource-leveraging and referral networks will be enhanced to ensure that ex-offenders will have the resources to succeed in reintegration on a long-term basis.