Workforce Development in Stockton’s ‘Collective Impact’ Ecosystem

Setting the Stage: Mapping the Workforce Ecosystem
In 2016, as South Stockton sought a Promise Zone designation from the federal government, the issue of workforce development was identified by community residents and institutional stakeholders alike as a key parameter that required further attention and collaboration.

In 2017 and 2018, the Mayor’s Office identified a need to better understand the opportunities and challenges in the workforce ecosystem. In 2018, the Workforce Development Action Plan: The Need for Transformation was released -- in partnership with Valley Vision and the University of the Pacific, and funded by JPMorgan Chase. Over the course of 2018 and 2019, the Skills Taskforce convened workforce stakeholders from across the city and county to discuss how to creatively implement some of the report’s findings - organized around the report’s Skills PACT framework. A number of participants proposed and piloted new solutions to long-standing challenges, with the support of their organization’s existing staff.

Following the release of the Workforce Development Action Plan, community partners cited the need for additional data to inform future decision-making. It became clear that there was a further need for data and rigorous analysis of career pathways in Stockton. To close this information gap, the Mayor’s Office partnered with University of the Pacific’s Center for Business and Policy Research. In December 2020, the Middle-Skilled Jobs Analysis: Building Ladders to the Futures was released, and funded by the James Irvine Foundation.

Understanding the Data: Illuminating Viable Career Pathways
The report aims to bring together two key perspectives, including: workforce (skills) and economic development (living-wage work) in Stockton by taking inventory of the assets that already exist, then articulating those into coherent career pathways in high-opportunity job sectors in the city. These sectors included healthcare, transportation, construction, and education. For each one, the report identifies the existing jobs for low-income workers, available living- and high-wage jobs, and Stockton’s pool of skill-building activities and services.

In aggregate, these items are represented in a “job-skills relationship map” (JSRM). Importantly, this tool captures two things: the career ladders that support a worker’s linear progression from low-wage to living-wage work, and the lived reality of a career “lattice” in which workers also move between industries or job functions. The Middle-Skilled Jobs Analysis concludes with a set of insights and recommendations - designed as a strategic decision-making tool to support Stockton’s workers, businesses and outside partners.

Laying the Groundwork to Support Capacity and New Capabilities
With this context and analysis complete, participants in the Workforce Roundtable (residents and organizations) are engaging to understand how to collaborate, and direct investments of time and resources that will yield meaningful outcomes on workforce development in Stockton.
Case Studies: How We've Supported Local Workforce Stakeholders

Below are several initiatives that drive connection and alignment in Stockton's workforce ecosystem, hosted or implemented by local nonprofit organizations and public agencies.

Program Name: Jobs Plus (offered by HUD)

Workforce Stakeholder: Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin (HACSJ)
Population Served: Public housing residents
Description of Project: In Fall 2019, HACSJ began implementation on a $2.3M Jobs Plus grant. The program addresses employment barriers for public housing residents through:
1. Freezing of rental rates -- Typically, a resident's rent equals 30% of their income. Under Jobs Plus, additional income does not increase the resident's rent.
2. Employment services -- Supported by the expertise and programming of local partners, Jobs Plus addresses employment barriers through services including childcare, transportation, financial literacy, interview training, professional clothing, among others.
Outcomes: As of May 2021, the Jobs Plus Grant enrolled 290 participants, saved residents $239K in rent, and helped 69 of them find employment. Additionally, early extensive outreach to HACSJ residents indicated transportation as a central barrier to employment -- this has directly led to the planning and funding of a $2.4M electric vehicle carshare demonstration, which will result in 63 chargers and a fleet of 33 vehicles across several HACSJ sites.

Program Name: Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)

Workforce Stakeholders: City of Stockton and Rising Sun Center for Opportunity
Population Served: Environmental justice communities in South Stockton
Description of Project: In July of 2020, the Strategic Growth Council awarded the City of Stockton $10.8M. The workforce development component of that funding amounts to about $542k and supports 96 trainees across electric vehicle bus mechanic apprenticeship; a youth program for energy & water efficiency retrofits; bridge program connecting reentry populations to green jobs, and solar installation training.
Outcomes: Over 30 months, TCC projects are placing 47 individuals into existing projects or programs and creating 68 altogether new jobs, 59 of which are seasonal. More information on jobs placed/created by TCC (and several other public investments) may be found here.

Program Name: California Climate Action Corps (CCAC)

Workforce Stakeholders: Little Manila Rising, San Joaquin County Office of Education, Third City Coalition, and Stockton Service Corps
Population Served: Early career job-seekers
Description of Project: From Jan-Aug 2021, Stockton was selected to host eight fellows in the first climate action service program in the state. Leveraging Stockton’s strong landscape of service opportunities, CCAC supports young job-seekers pursuing low-barrier workforce pathways toward climate careers.
Outcomes: Half of the initial cohort of fellows continue to serve Stockton in some capacity, and Stockton was chosen to receive another 5 fellows across 3 organizations in 2021.