

Regional Workforce Alliance Meeting

CA Endowment Center, April 22, 2024

Partners in attendance:

- Michael Owh, Chief Deputy Director, County of Los Angeles ISD
- Kelly LoBianco, Director, County of Los Angeles DEO
- JJ Lee, Director Master of Science in Social Entrepreneurship (MSSE) Program, USC Marshall School of Business
- Dr. Christopher Bresnahan, Associate Professor, Marshall School of Business
- Mika Jain, MS E.D., Assistant Vice President, USC Net Impact
- Florence Rivkin, USC MSSE Graduate Student
- Anabel Barragan, Workforce Development, Inclusivity, and Community Impact, Los Angeles World Airports
- Veronica Soto, Special Assistant to the Chief Development Officer, Los Angeles World Airports
- Monique Palmera, Institute Coordinator & Media Director, Cal State University Long Beach
- Judith Ruiz, President, Hub Cities Consortium
- Carla Barrera-Ortiz, Grants Director, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
- Kauleen Menard, Director of Regional Green Jobs, Los Angeles Clean Tech Incubator (LACI)
- Robert Zardeneta, Director of Workforce Development, USGBC-California
- Ben Stapleton, Executive Director, USGBC-California
- Makeeta Birdsong, Training Coordinator, USGBC-California
- Lizzeth Rosales, Director of Environmental Justice, Office of Mayor Karen Bass
- Gary D. Johnson, Sr. Energy Programs Advisor, Southern California Gas Company
- Rebecca Evans, Executive Director, Ventura County Workforce & Economic Development Board
- Chito Cajayon, Dean, Los Angeles Trade Tech
- Tyresa Jackson, Program Analyst, South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone (SLATE-Z)
- Nicole Landers, Director of Communications & Strategic Partnerships, Green Wealth Energy
- Charlynn Moyer, Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance
- Amber Robles, Specialist, HUB Cities Consortium
- Tanya Pineda, Program Manager, Office of Mayor Karen Bass
- Caroline Torosis, Senior Deputy Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity, LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell
- Brandy Lara, Southeast LA AJCC
- Walter Tucker, Administrative Services Manager, County of Los Angeles ISD

LA County ISD, EES, SoCalREN Staff and Implementers in attendance:

- Minh Le, General Manager, County of Los Angeles ISD Environmental & Energy Services
- Lujana Medina, Division Manager, County of Los Angeles ISD Environmental & Energy Services
- Tessa Charnofsky, Special Assistant, County of Los Angeles ISD Environmental & Energy Services
- Wendy Angel, Southern CA Regional Director, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Shanette Anderson, Southern California Senior Program Manager, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Raygena Smith - Winfrey, Youth Workforce Development Manager, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Anthony Borunda, Senior Program Coordinator, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Joseph Warner, Program Coordinator, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Sarah Reyes, Intern, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Noah Reyes, Intern, Emerald Cities Collaborative
- Ann D'Amato, President, 3D Networks
- Kristi Villegas, Outreach Director, 3D Networks
- Vivian Soto, Outreach Coordinator, 3D Networks

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome

- a. Minh Le, Energy and Environmental Services General Manager, County of Los Angeles ISD
 1. Emphasized the importance of the Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA).
 2. Acknowledged upcoming funding opportunities.
 3. Mentioned efforts to secure additional funding for the County of LA.

II. Department of Economic Opportunity

- a. Kelly LoBianco, Director, County of Los Angeles DEO
 1. Shared updates on workforce development initiatives and partnerships with various organizations.
 2. Highlighted efforts to centralize workforce development.
 3. Discussed the Environmental Health Initiatives of LA County.
 4. Mentioned collaboration among 18 America's Job Centers, Office of Small Business, and federal contracting initiatives.
 5. Collaborating with ISD for County Sustainability Plan.
 - A. Noted the importance of a productive workforce and diverse suppliers.
 - B. Releasing applications for funding training programs.
 6. Discussed Infrastructure LA and plans for an additional alliance centered around LA County and beyond
 7. Emphasized the importance of LA County receiving their fair share of dollars to benefit our valued communities.

III. The Intersection of Sustainability + Social Entrepreneurship

- a. JJ Lee, Director of the Master of Science in Social Entrepreneurship (MSSE) Program, USC Marshall School of Business
 1. Shared a brief overview of USC Marshall School of Business MSSE Program
 - A. Discussed program flexibility and social impact initiatives.
 - B. Mentioned waiving application fee for MSSE program.¹
- b. Tessa Charnofsky, Energy and Environmental Services Special Assistant, SoCalREN
 1. Opened Panel Discussion and Questions
 - A. Panelists:
 - a. Dr. Christopher Bresnahan, Associate Professor, Marshall School of Business
 - b. Mika Jain, MS E.D., Assistant Vice President, USC Net Impact
 - c. Florence Rivkin, USC MSSE Graduate Student
 2. Question 1. What are some innovative ways that diverse businesses can promote sustainability and engage with employees, customers, and communities on this important issue?
 - A. Professor Bresnahan, Discussed the domino effect of positive change in sustainability.

¹ For more information and to apply please contact JJ Lee, Director of the Master of Science in Social Entrepreneurship (MSSE) Program, USC Marshall School of Business janettel@marshall.usc.edu

- B. Florence, Shared the need of organizations to embrace mission with passion and to report funding outcomes.
 - C. Mika, Discussed organizational responsibility to meet employees where they are and develop competencies on verbiage.
- 3. Question 2. What are some key challenges businesses and entrepreneurs face when trying to incorporate sustainability practices into their workforce and operations? How do we combat these challenges?
 - A. Professor Bresnahan, Emphasized the importance of having the right tools to understand the language of sustainability, such as green technology and green finance. Professor Bresnahan noted that sometimes, the terminology and concepts related to sustainability can be complex and unfamiliar to businesses and entrepreneurs. Therefore, providing them with accessible resources and educational materials can help bridge this gap and facilitate smoother integration of sustainability practices into their operations.
 - B. Mika, focused on synchronization among entities. By working together and fostering synergy among stakeholders, businesses and entrepreneurs can effectively combat the challenges associated with integrating sustainability into workforce and operations.
- 4. Question 3. What do you find to be some of the greater challenges when recruiting prospective workers in underserved communities and appropriately tailoring workforce pathways in the sustainability field to these workers? What resources and support might they benefit from?
 - A. Florence, Emphasized the importance of encouraging individuals to enter the industry due to lucrative nature, financial opportunities, and potential for substantial growth. Florence noted diverse opportunities for career advancement, high demand for skilled professionals, and potential for long-term success.
- 5. Question 4. Looking towards the future, what are some predictions for how policy related to sustainability will evolve and how it will shape the business landscape?
 - A. Professor Bresnahan, Discussed the significance of observing sustainability initiatives from an executive-level perspective, considering financially viable, leading to positive cash flows and a favorable return on investment. When financial benefits are highlighted, executives can be more inclined to support and allocate resources to sustainability projects.
 - a. Governments can incentivize businesses to adopt sustainable practices by offering tax credits and other financial incentives.
- 6. Attendee Questions and Comments
 - A. Lujana Medina, Division Manager, SoCalREN
 - Q: Inquired about how-to help students follow through with programs.
 - A: Mika, Delved into the crucial role of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in workforce development initiatives. She emphasized that facilitators and educators involved in training programs need to be highly aware and attuned to SEL principles and practices.
 - B. Veronica Soto, Special Assistant to the Chief Development Officer, Los Angeles World Airports

Q. Requested the Panel's participation in upcoming LAWA Girls Camp (sponsored by Mayor Karen Bass) aimed at involving youth in Architecture, Engineering, and Construction career pathways.

C. Minh Le, Highlighted the transition from coal miners to Green Jobs as an example of the shifting landscape and opportunities within the workforce. Le emphasized the importance of visualizing these changes across the entire County to inspire and inform future workforce initiatives.

D. Dean Chito Cajayon, Los Angeles Trade Tech, Discussed the strategic theme of collaboration and alignment with DEO in the development and implement of effective strategies to support workforce development and economic growth in the region.

IV. Advancing Digital Equity and Inclusion

a. Rebecca F. Kauma, Director of Digital Equity, County of Los Angeles ISD

1. Kauma, as the First Director of Digital Equity for the County of LA, shed light on the critical issue of limited access to Wi-Fi and computers, emphasizing the necessity of partnerships with key leaders to bridge this digital gap.
2. Digital Equity stands as the ultimate objective.
3. She outlined the activities and focus areas of her department, such as the IBCC initiative, with notable contributions from Caroline Torosis, Senior Deputy, Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity from LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell's Office. Allocated funding aims to tackle the digital divide.
4. The co-development process entails specific duties and scopes of work, coordinated through working groups like Asset Mapping, as detailed in the provided presentation materials.

V. E-Contractor Program Updates

a. Wendy Angel, Southern CA Regional Director, SoCalREN WE&T

1. E-Contractor Program and Building Decarbonization Pilot Academy
 - A. The academy operates in collaboration with SoCal Edison and SoCal Gas to ensure comprehensive training and support for contractors.
2. Discussed initiatives, partnerships, and upcoming projects
 - A. Contractors will receive in-depth training on the latest green building technologies, focusing on sustainable construction practices.
 - B. These comprehensive training modules are tailored to empower contractors with the expertise needed to actively contribute to California's sustainability efforts.
3. **Request for Public Access:** Consent to make RWA meeting materials accessible to the public via the SoCalREN website.
 - A. Aligns with the RWA's commitment to openness, collaboration, and information sharing within the community and beyond.

VI. Closing Remarks

a. Wendy Angel, Southern CA Regional Director, Emerald Cities Collaborative

1. Acknowledgements to partners and staff for continued support