



An Office of Child and Youth Success in San Diego

San Diego is a member and contributing partner of Funding the Next Generation*

PRIORITIZE THE WELL-BEING AND SUCCESS OF SAN DIEGO'S CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

A Concept for San Diego to Consider in 2021

It is with great enthusiasm and urgency that youth residing in San Diego alongside partners in advocacy including child care providers, parents, and affiliated agencies write to offer partnership in establishing a critical resource for the City of San Diego: an **executive Office of Child and Youth Success**. This new office, which exists in various forms in most major cities across the nation, would enable the new city administration to marshal city resources and leverage intergovernmental and community partnerships to make sure that those who are born, grow up, come of age and choose to raise a family in San Diego can thrive.

Such an office is especially important now. Our community must come together intentionally in support of children, youth, and their families if we are to have a resilient, equitable, and racially just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why is it Needed?

The San Diego City government provides many services and support for children, youth, and their families across its multiple departments. This occurs most notably through Parks and Recreation and Libraries, but support is also offered through homeless services, various economic development programs, and youth workforce development. But these efforts are uncoordinated. A dedicated office would:

1. Elevate the priority and focus on making San Diego a driver of economic mobility through investments in the conditions and opportunities for children, youth, and their families;
2. Center the voices of children, youth, and their families in city budgeting and in operations where they are directly impacted;
3. Build authentic partnerships and impactful initiatives with community-based organizations and philanthropy to improve the ecosystem of supports and services for children, youth, and their families;
4. Establish a node for collaboration among the San Diego Unified School District, San Diego Community College District, San Diego Public Library, and San Diego Parks and Recreation to expedite city support for school district priorities and leverage joint use of taxpayer resources managed by the city and school district;

5. Ensure that the City is competitive for federal and state funding opportunities for children, youth, and their families with entities such as the National League of Cities;
6. Facilitate changes in policies and benefits to make San Diego an exemplar family-friendly employer; and
7. Drive changes in long-term bottom-line metrics of child, youth, and family success, such as increased child care availability, quality, and affordability; reduced family housing insecurity; reduced child poverty; increased food security; increased youth employment; increased college matriculation and graduation; and increased female labor force participation.
8. Help shape the City's response to COVID-19's disproportionately negative health and economic impacts on San Diego's Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color.

What It Could Look Like?

San Diego will be supported in the establishment of this office by technical assistance from the National League of Cities and other national organizations, but our version of the Office must reflect our community and our priorities. We anticipate the following features of the Office of Child and Youth Success:

1. **Functions:** The Office will be a node for planning, coordination, and community participation. The planning function will be the emphasis for the first year, as the Office would lead four major planning efforts: (1) a community design process that engages diverse voices, including and especially black, brown and indigenous community members, to build a vision for the Office; (2) a catalog of existing City functions, programs and supports for children, youth, and their families; (3) a Child and Youth Success Plan for San Diego; and (4) a partnership plan with San Diego unified, including roles, mutual responsibilities and metrics of success.

The Office will become a node of coordination. It will facilitate cross-departmental initiatives, community partnerships and collaborative funding proposals for state, federal and foundation grants. With challenging fiscal years ahead, the efficiencies driven by this office will improve conditions for children, youth, and their families despite financial restraints.

The Office will also ensure that city decisions that impact children, youth, and their families will be made with their participation in both planning and execution.

2. **Accountability:** The Office will be advised by a commission of community members, who will be compensated for their time, including youth members, parents of young children, and child- and youth-serving businesses and nonprofit organizations, including child care. There should be intentional recruitment from historically under resourced neighborhoods, and Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and People of Color. The Office will also produce an annual impact report for the City Council and the public. The impact report should demonstrate tangible benefits for San Diego's children, youth, and their families to warrant continuation.

3. **Organization in the Mayor's Office:** It is critical that the Office is part of the Mayor's Office and that its director is part of the cabinet. This positioning ensures that child and youth success will be represented in the overall City budget and strategy and that the Office has authority to coordinate across departments and in its relationship with the school district and other key community partners.
4. **Evolution of Office:** Over time, investment in this capacity will generate (1) understanding of the actual cost of supporting young people and families to succeed; (2) realization of innovative models, such as Community Schools; inclusive leadership for change and for our city's future; and deeper relationships among child, youth, and family supporting entities in San Diego. This will position the City to secure new funding, not just in grants but also through potential new public funding dedicated to children, youth, and their families.

Next Steps Together, Creating the Office

1. The City of San Diego allocates \$350,000 to hire an Executive Director and facilitate the community design process for the first year of the office.
2. Office conducts a Community Design Survey to gain comprehensive feedback about the priorities of the Office from San Diego communities, with intention to work with underrepresented neighborhoods and community members who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
3. Office facilitates Community Design Sessions to help determine structure and success metrics of office, youth roles, and processes for engaging the community.
4. In 2021, San Diego's Office of Child and Youth Success officially opens with community celebration

For further information or inquiry please reach out to Funding the Next Generation Advisor, Lara Kohn. laura@laurakohn.org

Funding the Next Generation Funding the Next Generation, founded in 2015, is the nation's first initiative to promote and fight for local public funding measures and systems-level change for services to children, youth, and their families.