

SAN DIEGO OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH SUCCESS

For San Diego to thrive as a city, it needs to be a place where every child, youth, and family is safe, healthy, and empowered.

But there are troubling signs that the city has become less family friendly over the past two decades:

- Families are choosing not to raise children in the city of San Diego—the birth rate plummeted 36% from 18.0 to 11.6 in central San Diego from 2000 to 2019, as compared to a 27% decline in the county as a whole;
- San Diego Unified enrollment (regular & charter) declined 14% from 2000 to 2019—decreasing local education funding—while the San Diego County public school enrollment increased 3% over the same time;
- San Diego’s female labor force participation, 61% according to the most recent U.S. Census surveys, lags most other major cities in the US, such as San Francisco and Boston (67%), Seattle (70%) and Chicago (63%), signaling difficulty for families trying to balance work and family.

Furthermore, San Diego’s children, youth and families are suffering terribly during the pandemic, perhaps more than any other demographic, with schools, socialization and play opportunities limited; parents stressed by job losses or juggling work and distance learning; youth struggling to stay engaged and on-track via zoom school; youth suicides and [overdoses spiking](#); and child care capacity limited by closures.

By establishing an Office of Child and Youth Success, the City of San Diego can leverage its leadership and its assets to make San Diego a great place to grow up and raise a family.

The San Diego City government provides many services and supports for children, youth, and their families across its multiple departments. The new office will provide linkages across those functions, establish a vision and plan, and facilitate connections with school districts and community-based organizations to launch initiatives and win philanthropic and federal/state funding.

Objectives

The objectives for the office should be set in consultation with community advisors, and should include numeric targets. Objectives could include the following:

1. Increase access to affordable, quality child care;
2. Increase the number of San Diego employers offering family friendly benefits and improve the City’s family friendly benefits;
3. Increase female labor force participation;
4. Reduce family and youth housing insecurity;
5. Reduce family and youth food insecurity;
6. Decrease opportunity youth and increase education attainment of young adults;
7. Reduce racial/ethnic and geographic disparities in child, youth and family outcomes;
8. Improve family physical and mental health status.

Potential Goals

The goals for the office should be set in consultation with community advisors. They could include the following:

- Integrate child-, youth- and family-friendly planning practices in alignment with UNICEF's [Child Friendly Cities](#) standards and in collaboration with San Diego's Age Friendly City initiative, including in the Parks Master Plan.
- Center the voices of children, youth, and their families in city budgeting and in operations where they are directly impacted.
- 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.
- Expedite city support for school districts' and community colleges' priorities and leverage joint use of taxpayer resources and assets managed by these entities.
- Draw down significant state and federal funding for infrastructure and expansion of direct services to children, youth, and their families.
- Facilitate changes in policies and benefits to make San Diego an exemplar family-friendly employer, and promote adoption of such practices among all employers
- Work in tandem with the Office of Race and Equity in helping 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 as it relates to children, youth, and families.

Accountability

The Office should be advised by a Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families, which will include youth members, parents of young children, and child and youth-serving businesses and nonprofit organizations, including child care providers. There should be intentional recruitment from historically under-resourced neighborhoods, and Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Office of Child and Youth Success Budget

Description	Amount
Director (1 FTE)	\$165,000
Coordinator (1 FTE)	\$100,000
Paid Youth Intern	\$25,000
Master Planning Process	\$60,000
Total Expenditures	\$350,000

This office exists in various forms in most major cities across the nation.

Examples:

[Baltimore, Maryland](#)
[Denver, Colorado](#)
[Los Angeles, California](#) (NEW!)
[Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)
[Providence, Rhode Island](#)
[San Francisco, California](#)
[New Orleans, Louisiana](#)

For the original [Concept Paper](#) or more information, please contact Warsan Artan (warsan@youthwill.org); Courtney Baltiyskyy (cbaltiyskyy@ymcasd.org); or Erin Hogeboom (erin@sandiegoforeverychild.org).