

San José Works Evaluation Framework

San José Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services



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Overview

About San José Works

San José Works (SJ Works) is a youth employment initiative launched in 2015 by the City of San José Mayor Sam Liccardo with the goal of increasing youth employment and expanding access to job training. SJ Works complemented a similar youth employment initiative launched at the same time by the County Board of Supervisors that focused on youth employment and career development for foster youth. SJ Works is run in partnership between the City of San José and the work2future (W2F) Foundation. Given that unemployed minority youth from low-income neighborhoods are more likely to experience criminal involvement, substance use, unplanned pregnancy, and unstable housing¹, the program serves youth and young adults from at-risk neighborhoods, as identified by the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force.

In June 2016, the program was relaunched, expanding its capacity to identifying, recruiting, and placing 1,000 youth and young adults (ages 14 to 29) from at-risk neighborhoods into jobs from April 2016 through April 2017. The program includes two branches of services: 1) job placement for young adults ages 18–29; and 2) job readiness training, placement, and mentorship/case management for youth ages 14–17, including financial literacy training from the San José Financial Empowerment Initiative² which partnered with SJ Works, the City, W2F, MyPath, and the Alliance Credit Union to provide youth with bank accounts and savings guidance. Funding for programming for youth ages 14–17 is subsidized by the City through the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force and includes a concentrated six-week summer employment component in addition to placement and programming for an additional 150 youth throughout the school year.

The Case for Youth Employment Services

While youth employment rates have been rising steadily since the 2008 economic recession, subgroups of Black males and Latino youth are still experiencing declining employment opportunities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of July 2016 unemployment rates across the country showed high rates of unemployment among youth and young adults:

- 12% among young men
- 11% among young women
- 10% among young White individuals
- 10% among young Asian individuals
- 11% among young Hispanic/Latino individuals
- 21% among young African-American individuals

¹ Jobs for the Future (2016). Youth workforce development. U.S. Department of Education.

² According to W2F, the majority of the 340 youth enrolled in the San Jose Financial Empowerment Initiative in 2016 opened bank accounts and saved an average 20% of their total paycheck, while attending three financial literacy courses on saving, credit, budgeting, payday lending, and basic banking. They were also given access to the MyPath Savings App to track their spending and budget. The youth who elected to save a portion of their paycheck collectively saved \$67,731.

This trend has led some researchers to contend that the youth who most need work experience are receiving the fewest opportunities.³ SJ Works staff and City officials' experiences support this as well, indicating that there are few opportunities for youth in the program's target population to develop professionalism, personal work ethics, and the essential skills required to obtain and retain jobs. They stated that the neighborhoods in which many of these youth live create an uneven playing field that impacts the ability of youth and young adults to find and keep jobs. Further, they indicated that many youth attend schools that are unable to provide them with adequate support, and that there are few systems in place to provide youth with holistic, wraparound services. These local experiences are also reflected in the national research.

About This Project

In May 2016, the City of San José Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to develop an evaluation framework for San José Works (SJ Works). This framework would enable SJ Works to strategize about program design and evaluation should the City decide to continue its implementation. The framework will guide the City in designing and implementing following iterations of SJ Works in a manner that is aligned with clearly articulated goals, and will identify opportunities for continuous program evaluation and improvement, thereby allowing the City to understand SJ Works' impact on San José's workforce development efforts and make data-driven decisions around targeted and impactful employment services to youth and young adults.

In order to generate a clear and useful framework, RDA conducted a review of best practices for implementation and evaluation of youth workforce development programs. Next, using what was gleaned from the best practices review as well as findings from a short-term evaluation of SJ Works' summer youth employment branch⁴, RDA engaged in several planning activities with SJ Works staff and City officials to generate a theory of change (TOC) and program logic model to guide long term program evaluation planning and implementation. This framework report is the product of those activities.

Best Practices in Evaluation of Workforce Development Programs

To prepare SJ Works for evaluation planning, RDA conducted a review of existing youth workforce development research to identify common trends and promising practices in youth employment program development and evaluation throughout the U.S. The following section summarizes findings from this review that can be replicated in SJ Works' program design and evaluation.

Evaluation Practices

While it is clear that early work experiences can be critical for youth⁵, the best practices review yielded few consistent practices for evaluating youth workforce development programs. This suggests that

³ McLaughlin, J. & Sum, A. (2011). The steep decline in teen summer employment in the U.S., 2000-2010 and the bleak outlook for the 2011 summer teen job market. Center for Labor Market Studies.

⁴ RDA. (2016). San José Works 2.0 Short-Term Evaluation Report. Resource Development Associates: Oakland, CA.

⁵ Jobs for the Future (2016). Youth Workforce Development. U.S. Department of Education.

evaluating youth employment programs is an emerging area of practice to which SJ Works may contribute through its own evaluation planning and implementation efforts. Results from evaluations of youth programs using randomized controlled trials (RCT) were mixed; some studies showed no impact on youth outcomes, while others showed strong impacts on outcomes like education.⁶ Additionally, existing research is limited because the majority of programs that feature work experience pair paid or unpaid job placement with other strategies, such as academic training, counseling, or behavioral training. As such, it is challenging for evaluators to determine what outcomes are associated with job placement and work experience as compared to other program components.⁷

Despite the limitations to existing research, some clear promising practices for the evaluation of youth workforce development programs have emerged:

- ❖ **Develop a clear theory of change:** A research- and data-informed theory of change allows program leads to articulate their long-term goals, the short-term steps to get there, and any key assumptions along the way. During program implementation, the theory of change serves as a decision-making guide as program leads look to make adjustments to services. In addition, they may refer to the theory of change to assess the adjustments and determine if they help the program meet its desired outcomes.
- ❖ **Measure program outcomes for all stakeholders:** In addition to measuring outcomes for youth, programs should explore the outcomes for participating employers and program staff. Including employers and staff in the evaluation process respects their contributions to the program, increases their buy-in for improving the program, and promotes their continued dedication to reducing the youth employment gap.
- ❖ **Conduct impact and process evaluations:** While impact evaluations provide valuable information on program outcomes, process evaluations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how outcomes may or may not be achieved.
- ❖ **Measure program quality throughout implementation:** Practicing continuous quality improvement provides the opportunity for data-driven decision-making and change management throughout program implementation.

Program Development Practices

In addition to establishing best practices for program evaluation, the growing evidence base for youth workforce development programs indicates that there are several promising program components that should be considered:

- ❖ **Job readiness skill building.** Nearly all programs provided youth with some degree of job readiness skill building, including tips and trainings on how to search for jobs, how to apply for jobs, how to create a resume, and how to prepare for job interviews.

⁶ U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, and Health and Human Services. (2014). What works in job training: A synthesis of the evidence.

⁷ Sattar, S. (2010). Evidence scan of work experience programs. *Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.*

- ❖ **Attitudes toward employment.** Many programs focused on improving youth's attitudes toward employment, positing summer employment as a desirable alternative to activities that might "get me in trouble."
- ❖ **Professionalism.** In addition to building youth's job readiness skills, many programs also provided youth with ongoing mentorship and/or job coaching to develop on-the-job professionalism. Areas of focus included communication skills, interpersonal skills, punctuality, and appropriate attire and appearance.
- ❖ **Positive relationship with adults.** Given that many of the summer youth employment programs serve at-risk youth who may not have had a positive history interacting with adults and figures of authority, many of the programs also focused on developing positive relationships with adults, posing mentors, job coaches, and employers as adults who want to help youth succeed.
- ❖ **Integration of academic and vocational training.** Youth work experience programs that feature both academic and job training can have positive impacts on youth educational outcomes.⁷
- ❖ **Linking paid or unpaid work experience with occupational learning that emphasizes employability.** Work experience programs are most successful when youth are given the opportunity to practice essential skills such as communication, working with others, continuous learning, and decision-making.⁵
- ❖ **Additional support services beyond job placement and training.** Successful programs include comprehensive social services, such as housing support, behavioral therapy, mentorship, and counseling.^{5,6}
- ❖ **Positive employer engagement with program.** Work placement programs are most successful when employers remain consistent and engaged with the program.⁵
- ❖ **Maintain consistent implementation of program models.** Given that a program model is based in best practices and a sound theory of change, consistent program implementation is key to executing a successful and impactful program.⁷

Approach to Evaluation

While longitudinal randomized controlled trials are widely recognized as gold standards in evaluation research, there are several limitations to use of that design in community-based evaluation settings. In these research designs, a cohort of participants is tracked from their time of program enrollment, through years beyond program completion to measure how participants' program experience has impacted their outcomes later in life. Longitudinal studies that track one cohort over time are costly, time consuming, and require large sample sizes to account for attrition. Therefore, this design is uncommon in real-world applications. A repeated cross-sectional design provides a more feasible and affordable alternative wherein data are collected from successive cohorts and findings are compared over time, as opposed to a longitudinal design in which one cohort is followed for an extended period of time. A repeated cross-sectional design lends itself to continuous program improvement wherein data are collected from one cohort to improve programming for the successive cohort and so on. Though both approaches have limitations, public health and social science research have identified repeated cross-sectional designs as

an effective way to account for attrition and capture the changing dynamics of a community while measuring change over time at the aggregate level.⁸

Based on these industry standards, RDA proposes a repeated cross-sectional design for evaluation of SJ Works in order to track trends in outcomes over time and promote continuous quality improvement. This design will also allow SJ Works to be more responsive to changing community dynamics that may impact program implementation. For example, the repeated cross-sectional design will allow SJ Works to adjust program elements such as their youth recruitment strategy or placement opportunities following any potential shifts in population or economics, which would be reflected in evaluation results.

To this end, RDA has worked with SJ Works, work2future, and City leadership to develop a theory of change and logic model based on a repeated cross-sectional evaluation design. This theory of change and logic model are presented in the following sections, and will lay the foundation for a continuous program improvement evaluation.

Theory of Change

Overview

A theory of change (TOC) models the links between a program's activities and its intended outcomes, while articulating the assumptions that underlie those connections. In other words, a TOC connects outcomes and activities to explain both how and why a change is expected to occur and can be used to understand what short- and intermediate-term outcomes must occur to lead to long-term impact. A well-articulated TOC serves as the foundation for program evaluation by identifying both program-wide and activity-specific objectives as well as their respective indicators and measurable outcomes.

In addition, developing and consistently using a TOC promotes success by making a program more strategic. Having a TOC allows stakeholders to consider the best strategy to achieve desired outcomes, to identify the resources and activities necessary for success, to articulate their assumptions about how change will occur, and to transition their thinking from current activities to what they want to achieve and then work backwards. When program outcomes are not met as intended, an effectively designed and implemented TOC can help stakeholders identify reasons for not meeting outcomes (e.g., assumptions that were inaccurate).⁹ Thus, the TOC is also an important tool for continuous quality improvement of a program.

To develop a comprehensive TOC for SJ Works, RDA presented the above best practices review to a group of SJ Works leadership, work2future leadership, and City officials, and led them through a collaborative work session to flesh out the essential ideas and assumptions behind SJ Works' TOC. RDA then refined the outcomes of the discussion to develop a comprehensive TOC that is presented in the following sections.

⁸ Rafferty, A., Walthery, P., & King-Hele, S. (2015). Analyzing change over time: Repeated cross sectional and longitudinal survey data. UK Data Service, University of Essex and University of Manchester.

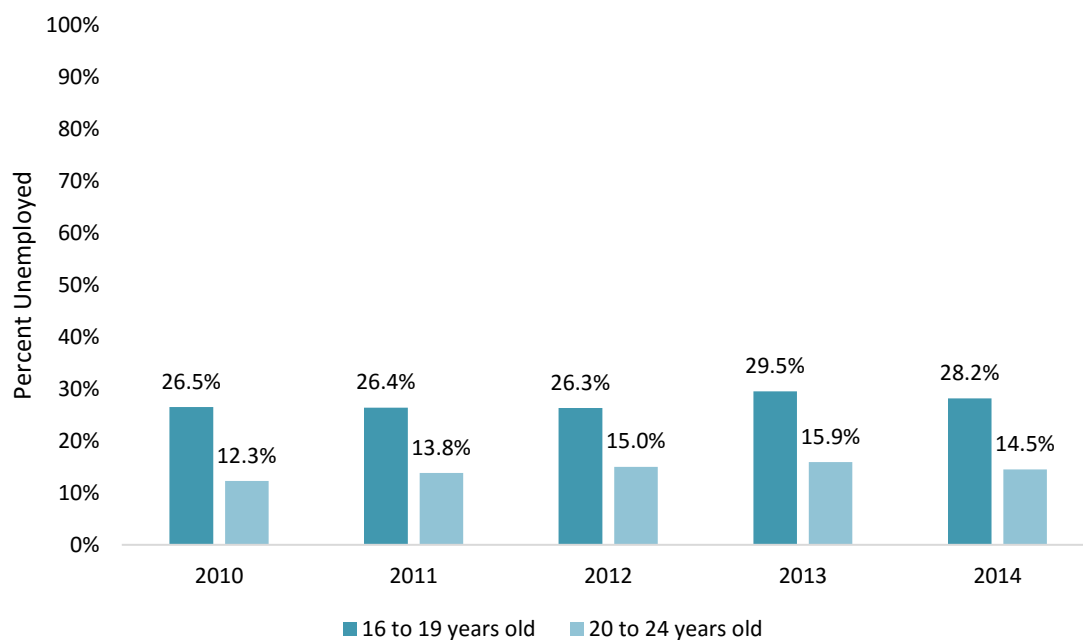
⁹ Farmelo, M. (2014). Suggested guidelines for creating a theory of change. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

What Problems Does SJ Works Attempt to Solve?

Determining the long-term outcome of SJ Works requires first identifying the problem the program is trying to solve. Articulating the problem allows all stakeholders to verify that they have a shared understanding of the issue the program is designed to address. SJ Works stakeholders expressed that the disproportionate prevalence of unemployment among low-income youth and youth of color in San José is the key problem that SJ Works seeks to solve. As shown in Figure 1, unemployment among youth ages 16-19 has remained steadily above 20% since 2010 and reached close to 30% in 2013 and 2014. Young adults ages 20-24 experience lower rates of unemployment, but are still higher than the average for adults above the age of 25.

SJ Works strives to reduce unemployment among low-income, youth of color in San José.

Figure 1. Unemployment Rates among Youth and Young Adults in San José, 2010–2014



SJ Works staff and city officials identified several causes of low employment rates among low income and minority youth in San José, including the lack of opportunity for work experience, the absence of familial support and consistent professional role models, and the lack of support from schools and other community institutions.

What are the Long-Term Outcomes SJ Works Seeks to Achieve?

Stakeholders must also articulate the desired long-term outcomes of a program, which is often a solution to the identified problem that can be achieved in three to five years. Clearly articulating the desired long-term impact of SJ Works early in its implementation will allow staff and stakeholders to choose activities and strategies that are in line with the long-term goal of the program. SJ Works staff and City officials identified these four key long-term outcomes for SJ Works to help solve the problem of youth unemployment in San José:

- ❖ **Outcome 1:** Reduce unemployment rates for youth as a percentage of overall rate of unemployment
- ❖ **Outcome 2:** Improve career pathways and job pipelines
- ❖ **Outcome 3:** Improve youths' financial literacy and readiness
- ❖ **Outcome 4:** Integrate SJ Works into larger continuum of services for youth in San José to promote a holistic approach to supporting youth
- ❖ **Outcome 5:** Reduce stigma regarding the employability of at-risk youth in the public and private sectors

These long-term goals are systems-level and focus on changes to institutions, community systems, and perspectives.

Who is the Target Audience for SJ Works?

Defining the target audience is key to understanding how the problem SJ Works is trying to solve impacts those it seeks to serve, and to understanding the types of change activities that will be more impactful and/or better received. Additionally, identifying each SJ Works stakeholder group is an important foundational step for ensuring that program activities reach not only the youth who can benefit from participation, but also engage the necessary program providers and community stakeholders whose knowledge and resources can be leveraged to execute and improve the program. The following table presents the various SJ Works stakeholders, including the target audience, program providers, and community-level stakeholders. The table provides descriptions of each stakeholder group, and explains how SJ Works conducts outreach to engage each group in programming.

Table 1. SJ Works Stakeholder Profiles and Program Engagement

Stakeholder Group	Typical Descriptors	Outreach and Engagement Methods
Program Participants (target audience)		
Subsidized Youth <i>Collectively called "youth" through remainder of report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 14–17 • Typically from socio-economically disadvantaged families • May include at-risk youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred to SJ Works by school administrators and local community-based organizations (e.g., BEST programs). • SJ Works (via PRNS) subsidizes payment of the youth's wages

Stakeholder Group	Typical Descriptors	Outreach and Engagement Methods
Unsubsidized Young Adults <i>Collectively called “youth” through remainder of report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 16–29 • Typically from socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods • May include at-risk young adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited through active community outreach, targeted community college and high school recruitment, and the work2future (W2F) youth center • W2F places young adults in non-subsidized positions at local places of employment
Program Providers		
Hosts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City departments (e.g., PRNS, library) • Local agencies (e.g., food bank) • Community centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited through presentations and direct outreach • Hosts provide job placement opportunities for youth while SJ Works subsidizes the payment of youth wages
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses (e.g., Adobe, Target, Home Depot) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited through presentations and tabling at job fairs, as well as via direct outreach • Employers provide private employment for SJ Works participants age 18 and over
Job Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-qualified Recreation Leaders (i.e., applied and passed background checks) and W2F job coaches • Typically entry-level employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited by via the City job website and job fairs and placed in a qualified pool for selection by City departments and initiatives, including SJ Works • Once hired by SJ Works, Recreation Leaders work with SJ Works youth to provide mentorship and guidance throughout the youth’s enrollment. • Moving forward, SJ Works would like to W2F to serve as the hiring entity to allow for more hiring flexibility
Program teachers and instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers/instructors lead trainings for youth during orientation and throughout the program
Community-Level Stakeholders		
Policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor’s Office • Various City departments working with youth and/or in workforce development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged by SJ Works and W2F leadership via presentations at relevant forums and meetings, as well as through word of mouth communication
Schools and Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district superintendents • School principals • School counselors • School-based work permit officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High schools/districted are recruited via presentations • SJ Works asks superintendents to commit to identifying students for participation • School principals, counselors, and/or work permit officers collaborate to identify and prepare youth for participation

Stakeholder Group	Typical Descriptors	Outreach and Engagement Methods
Program Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating programs, agencies, and community-based organizations, especially organizations and entities working with/for youth • May include potential funders and in-kind contributors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited via specific marketing campaigns and presentations • Program partners are engaged to help recruit youth and employers, and/or serve as hosts/employers • Leveraged existing W2F relationships
Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San José community members at large 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJ Works engages community members through marketing materials and program reports, made available online and in-person, with the goal of informing the community about the program's purpose and goals

What Activities are Necessary for SJ Works to Bring about Change?

In order to understand how change can occur, stakeholders must identify the necessary activities and steps to reach their final outcomes. These activities and steps then serve as the base for program development. Stakeholders must also articulate the assumptions they are making when determining how certain activities will facilitate change. In other words, stakeholders should ask themselves why they believe different activities lead to long-term change. SJ Works staff and City officials identified five major activities that are necessary for facilitating change:

- ❖ **Activity 1:** SJ Works to Recruit All Stakeholders
- ❖ **Activity 2:** SJ Works to Develop Orientation and Provide Ongoing Support for All Stakeholders
- ❖ **Activity 3:** SJ Works to Facilitate Youth Placement and Coordinate Ongoing Training Activities
- ❖ **Activity 4:** SJ Works to Facilitate Additional Stakeholder Engagement Activities
- ❖ **Activity 5:** SJ Works to Implement Ongoing Program Evaluation

Table 2 describes the activities needed to promote change by stakeholder group (e.g., youth, job coaches, hosts/employers) and the assumptions underlying each activity.

Table 2. Program Activities and Corresponding Assumptions

Activity Stakeholders	Description of Activity	Assumptions of Activity
Activity 1: SJ Works to Recruit All Stakeholders		
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide program materials to schools and community-based organizations that introduce the program, with details on the requirements and application process for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes buy-in from school districts and leadership
Job Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post job coach job description on foundation job sites and other recruitment sites Modify collaboration with W2F to hire quality job coaches through W2F, rather than PRNS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes that this method will result in more qualified and informed candidates
Hosts/Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify job placement sites through PRNS and W2F professional networks Recruit job placement sites through city job fairs and the Mayor's campaign to employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes diverse placement opportunities will be available to meet the interests of youth Assumes quality networks between PRNS, W2F, and potential sites
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and recruit teachers from existing PRNS and W2F staff based on their subject matter expertise (e.g., financial literacy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes PRNS and W2F networks have appropriate subject matter experts
Activity 2: SJ Works to Develop Orientation & Provide Ongoing Support for All Stakeholders		
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an engaging and standardized orientation that introduces program logistics, human resources content, expectations of youth, what youth can expect from the program, and key training topics Provide continuous follow-up and feedback throughout program implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes staff have the resources and skills to provide engaging and interactive orientation Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and adherence
Job Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a standardized orientation that introduces the program TOC, program logistics, expectations of job coaches, what job coaches can expect from the program, and recommendations for engaging youth Provide continuous, scheduled follow-up and feedback throughout program implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes staff are skilled in working with at-risk youth so that programming can be culturally competent and responsive to youth needs Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and commitment to a shared vision

Activity Stakeholders	Description of Activity	Assumptions of Activity
Hosts/Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a standardized orientation that introduces the program TOC, program logistics, expectations of employers/host sites, what employers/host sites can expect from the program (including a clear schedule of events), and recommendations for engaging youth Provide continuous follow-up and feedback throughout program implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes staff are skilled in working with at-risk youth so that programming can be culturally competent and responsive to youth needs Assumes that establishing expectations for employers and what employers should expect from the program will help establish relationships with employers Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and commitment to a shared vision
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a standardized orientation that introduces the program TOC, program logistics, expectations of teachers, what teachers can expect from the program, and recommendations for engaging youth Provide continuous follow-up and feedback throughout program implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes staff are skilled in working with at-risk youth so that programming can be culturally competent and responsive to youth needs Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and commitment to a shared vision
Activity 3: SJ Works to Facilitate Youth Placement and Coordinate Ongoing Training Activities		
Youth and Hosts/Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit job site and type preferences from youth Collaborate with employer/host sites to place youth in jobs Support employers so they can provide job-specific training and coaching as needed to youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes youth and employer/host preferences are taken into consideration
Youth and SJ Works Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a standardized, evidence-based curriculum and engaging trainings that target job readiness and include the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview and resume preparation Essential job skills development Service skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes staff have the resources and skills to provide engaging and interactive orientation Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and adherence

Activity Stakeholders	Description of Activity	Assumptions of Activity
Youth and Job Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing job coaching for youth throughout program implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes job coaches will regularly provide youth the opportunity to discuss their job experience Assumes job coaches will support youth and work with employers to problem-solve any employment issues
Youth and Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with instructors from the San José Financial Empowerment Initiative who have expertise in financial management to create a standardized curriculum and engaging training that teaches youth about financial management and builds financial literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes teachers have the resources and skills to provide engaging and interactive orientation Assumes that effective orientation and ongoing support will promote motivation and adherence
All Stakeholder Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunity for employers/host site and job coaches to provide a progress report of youth job performance, while also giving youth the opportunity to provide feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes employers/hosts have the time and capacity to provide progress reports
Activity 4: SJ Works to Facilitate Additional Stakeholder Engagement Activities		
All Stakeholder Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all stakeholders have meaningful experiences by soliciting their feedback and responding to it appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes SJ Works staff are using strong and consistent communication structures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an end-of-program celebration that includes all stakeholders so that everyone's accomplishments can be celebrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes that recognizing the good work of each stakeholder serves as positive reinforcement to encourage continued employability trajectory among youth and continued enthusiasm and engagement among providers
San José Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clear communication strategy and implement marketing efforts to engage community members and ensure accurate information about the program is disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes that providing clear and consistent information about SJ Works programming and progress will increase community support for SJ Works
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hosts and past participants with opportunities to share their experiences in order to educate the community about the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes that providing accessible messaging will help the community engage with and understand SJ Works

Activity Stakeholders	Description of Activity	Assumptions of Activity
Activity 5: SJ Works to Implement Ongoing Program Evaluation		
All Stakeholder Groups and RDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue ongoing program evaluation and expand the scope to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveying sites that did not employ youth to learn reasons and troubleshoot obstacles/barriers Surveying employers in addition to conducting key informant interviews with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes that evaluation and CQI will allow SJ Works to grow, expand its reach, report on outcomes and impacts to stakeholders, and increase community buy-in

What are the Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes of SJ Works?

An important element of TOC development is linking program activities and assumptions (see Table 2) with the intended short- and medium-term program outcomes. Making this connection allows stakeholders to 1) establish specific and measurable short- and medium-term goals that serve as steps toward long-term change, and 2) determine how activities connect to each short- and medium-term outcome. This is a critical step in developing a TOC as it acknowledges that change takes time—while program implementation will garner small immediate changes, it will take time to impact larger, long-term changes. Because long-term changes take a while to manifest in trends over time, it is important to identify short- and medium-term outcomes that can be used to track program progression.

SJ Works staff and City officials collaborated to identify specific, measurable outcomes that will lead to the program's long-term outcomes of reducing youth unemployment, improving career pathways and job pipelines, integrating SJ Works into a larger, holistic continuum of services for youth, and reducing stigma regarding the employability of at-risk youth in San José. The identified outcomes occur at either an individual level (i.e., outcomes that are related to individual youth progress, such as increased job skill development) or a program level (i.e., outcomes that are related to the operations of SJ Works, such as increased stakeholder satisfaction). Table 3 presents each outcome by program activity and connects each set of outcomes to the long-term program outcomes (see above).

Table 3. Measurable Outcomes for Activities for Change and Potential Impact of Each Outcome

Level	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Activity 1: SJ Works to Recruit All Stakeholders			
Program & Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat participation from stakeholder groups Increase in youth participation numbers Increase in applications from qualified job coach applicants Increase in opportunities for job placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase program capacity to serve more youth Increase ability to role model behaviors for siblings and other family members 	Outcome 1
Activity 2: SJ Works to Develop Orientation and Provide Ongoing Support for All Stakeholders			
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved stakeholder understanding of program Positive stakeholder perceptions of orientation quality and effectiveness Positive stakeholder perceptions of youth engagement and understanding in orientation Positive youth perceptions of support from other stakeholders Positive job coach perceptions of support from their supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous program improvement Increased willingness among employers to hire youth 	Outcome 1

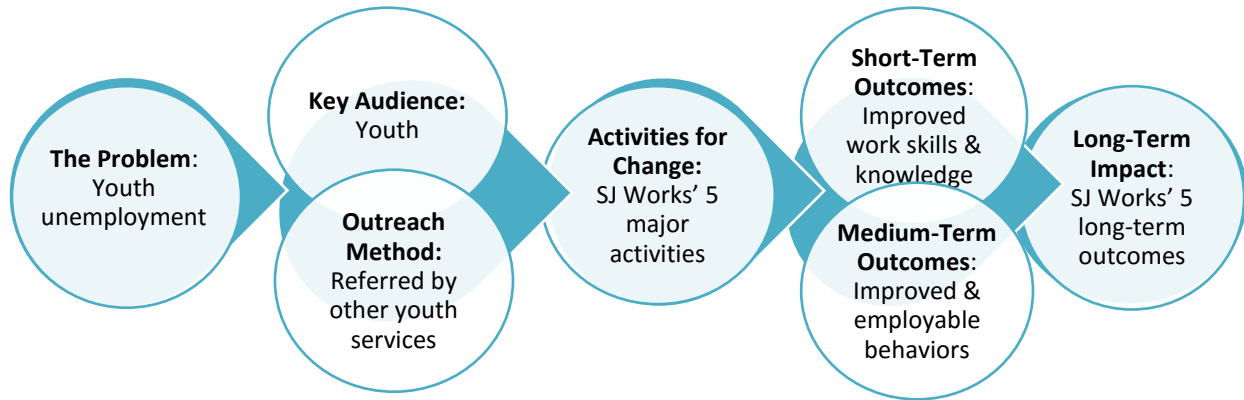
Level	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Activity 3: SJ Works to Facilitate Youth Placement and Coordinate Ongoing Training Activities			
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased job skill development (e.g., professionalism, punctuality, interpersonal skills, positive attitudes and behavior toward work) Increased wages and hours worked Increased job retention Permanent job placements and promotions Increased financial literacy and skills (asset building and solvency) Increased understanding of public service opportunities Consistent work attendance of youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase earning potential Improve financial literacy Improve essential job skills Reduce disciplinary actions at school Increase academic performance Improve graduation rates Increase admission to college and career/technical schools Increase civic engagement Increase ability to role model behaviors for community members Reduce involvement with criminal justice system Reduce gang involvement 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Outcome 5</p>
Activity 4: SJ Works to Facilitate Additional Stakeholder Engagement Activities			
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased stakeholder satisfaction Increased program publicity Increased placement opportunities with job fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase parental involvement Improve family support Establish funding source to ensure program is a permanent resource Expanded network of hosts/employers 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Outcome 5</p>
Activity 5: SJ Works to Implement Ongoing Program Evaluation			
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful program implementation Continuous improvement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data and outcome tracking ability Improve ability to document and measure collective impact Continuous program improvement 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Outcome 5</p>

SJ Works Theory of Change and Logic Model

The SJ Works TOC is intended to help SJ Works staff connect the program's activities to its intended outcomes, while identifying specific steps needed to bring about that change, and corresponding measurable short- and medium-term outcomes that should be met along the way. While developing a

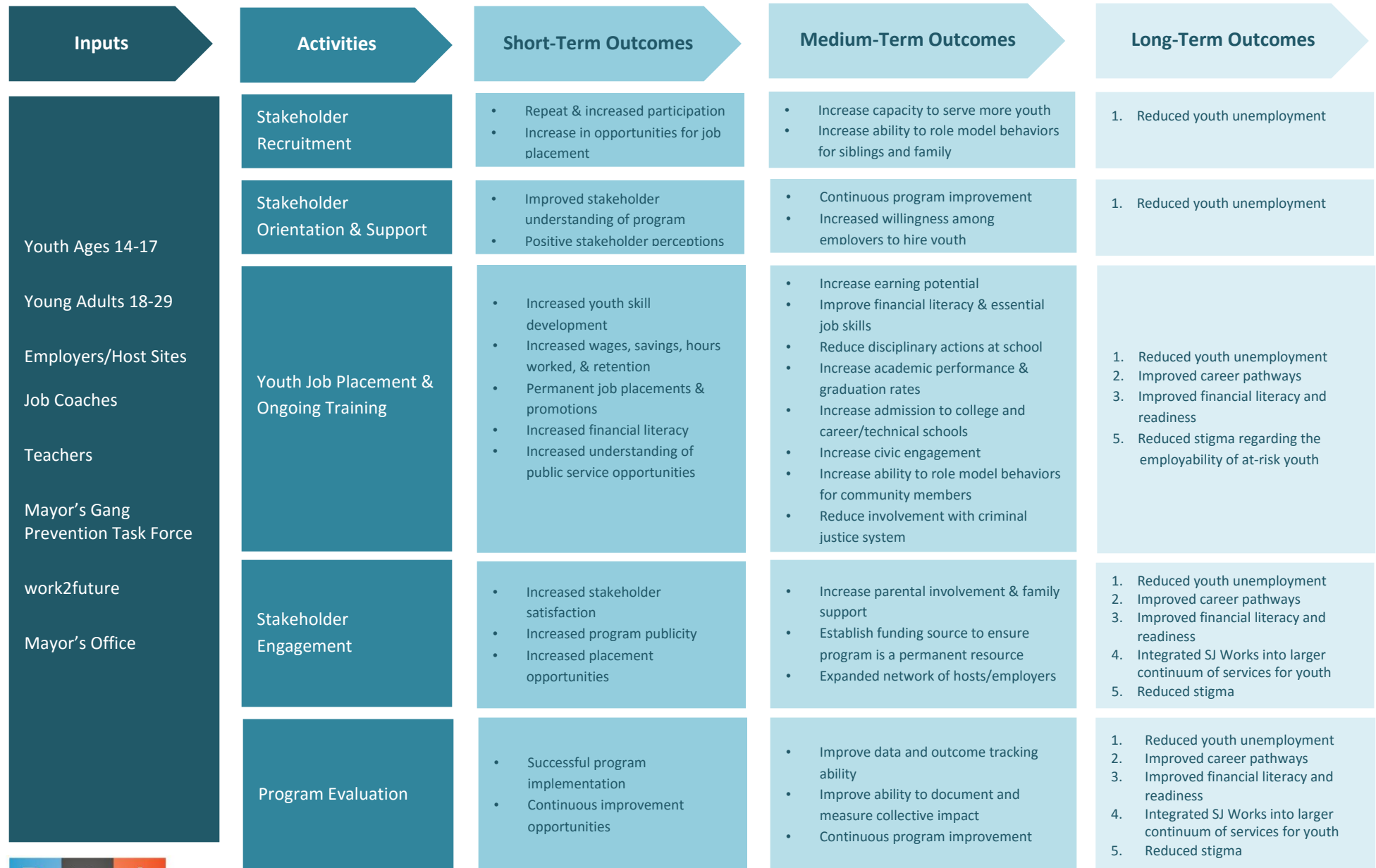
TOC requires identifying the beginning and end point (i.e., the immediate problem and desired long-term outcomes) before filling in the steps of how to reach the end point, the implementation of a TOC in program development occurs in a more linear chronology. Figure 2 provides a brief summary of the above TOC components and presents this process in chronological order.

Figure 2. Theory of Change Map



In order to guide the implementation of the SJ Works TOC, RDA also developed a logic model (see Figure 3). While developing a TOC is a vital process for linking program activities to program outcomes to explain both the *how* and *why* of program change, a logic model can be a useful and practical tool to identify *what* needs to be implemented and *how* the activities link to desired change. Logic models serve as both road maps and useful reference tools to guide daily implementation, illustrating program components and identifying the inputs and activities that lead to outcomes.

Figure 3. SJ Works 2.0 Logic Model



Recommendations

The following section outlines RDA's recommendations for both evaluation implementation and program development.

Recommendations for Evaluation Implementation

Based on a review of best practices in the evaluation of youth workforce development programs and a work session with SJ Works staff and City officials, RDA developed several recommendations for the evaluation of SJ Works.

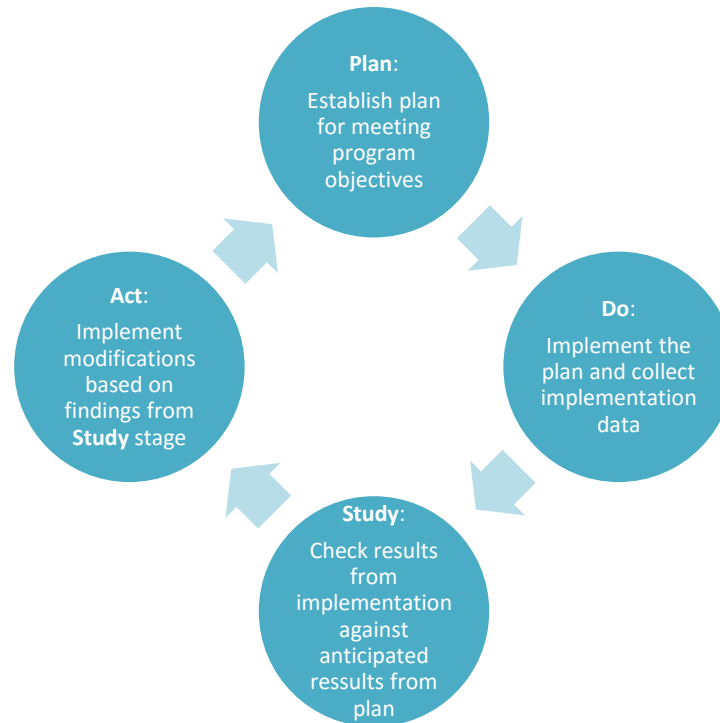
Plan and Execute a Multi-Year Repeated Cross-Sectional Evaluation Design

In order to start monitoring program outcomes, the next step is to develop an evaluation plan that includes specific indicators and tools for measuring short-term and medium-term outcomes. This will require identifying specific data sources and resources needed to acquire necessary data, as well as creating a timeline for data collection and analysis. SJ Works should collaborate with an external and objective evaluator to develop an evaluation plan that is grounded in the best practice recommendations discussed previously in this report and which employs a repeated cross-sectional design over several years. Data should be collected using consistent instruments (e.g., the same survey questions should be repeated for each cohort) to allow for comparisons over time. RDA recommends that data be collected for each cohort of SJ Works participants at the beginning and conclusion of their respective program sessions. RDA also recommends a mixed-methods approach in which both qualitative (e.g., focus groups and interviews) and quantitative (e.g., surveys and demographic data) are collected. A mixed-methods approach will allow the evaluation to integrate stakeholder perspectives with quantitative rigor as a way of maximizing validity.

Develop and Implement a Continuous Quality Improvement Schedule

In addition to a long-term evaluation plan, RDA recommends that SJ Works develop and implement a continuous quality improvement schedule. RDA recommends following the "Plan-Do-Study-Act" model depicted in Figure 4. A continuous quality improvement schedule of this type will allow SJ Works to continuously "check in" to ensure that program implementation aligns with the TOC, and to hold staff accountable for program improvements.

Figure 4. Plan-Do-Study-Act Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle



Ensure all Program Stakeholders Have a Voice

It is important that all members of the SJ Works target audience have an opportunity to be heard in the evaluation planning and implementation process. For example, RDA recommends that SJ Works engage youth participants from the onset of program evaluation by including them in the planning process and evaluation implementation. This will not only allow youth to engage with and feel ownership of the program, but can also improve the quality of the evaluation by ensuring that their perspectives are included. Potential options for youth engagement include attending planning meetings; helping with data collection, entry, and analysis; promoting the evaluation to their peers; and helping to present findings.

Recommendations for Program Growth

In September 2016, RDA conducted a short-term evaluation of SJ Works, which highlighted strengths of the program as well as some areas that could be improved. By integrating findings from that initial evaluation and the work session with SJ Works staff and city officials, RDA identified several recommendations for program growth.

Engage in a Strategic Planning Process

Developing a strategic plan and program manual that aligns program roles and responsibilities would allow for consistent implementation; help SJ Works develop strategies for leveraging and engaging stakeholders (i.e., youth, staff, community, partners, and employers); and provide a roadmap for long-term program implementation.

Be Intentional with Stakeholder Engagement

SJ Works should strive to treat each stakeholder as a partner in program execution. For example, employers should be involved throughout the implementation of the program and their feedback should be encouraged and acknowledged.

Implement Activities and Structures Aimed at Improving Program Operation

As previously mentioned, RDA conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of one six-week SJ Works session, which resulted in the following specific activities that would improve program function:

- ❖ *Provide a more formal and systematic introduction between job coaches, hosts/employers, and youth prior to the first day of the program:* Many hosts/employers and job coaches expressed interest in either attending an introductory meeting or being introduced to each other via email in order to feel better grounded and informed at the beginning of program implementation.
- ❖ *Establish a clear schedule for program start/end dates, internal meetings, and important deadlines to streamline communication and reduce last-minute changes:* Stakeholders expressed interest in having a clear schedule with all important deadlines and events so they know what is expected of them and can plan accordingly.
- ❖ *Improve adherence to employer and youth requests for number of participants and site placement:* Youth were given the opportunity to express their preference for job placements, while hosts/employers were given the opportunity to request the number and ages of youth placed at their site. However, few youth or hosts/employers had their requests met.
- ❖ *Introduce timecards early in the youth orientation with instructions on how to complete them, and provide templates of both timecards and evaluations to employers at the beginning of the program:* Many youth struggled with how to fill out their timecards or did not know that it was a requirement, so the hosts/employers had to provide support. Providing structure and guidance around timecards for both youth and hosts/employers can reduce this confusion and streamline the process so timecards are submitted on time.

While collaborating to develop the TOC, SJ Works staff and City officials generated several ideas for additional program activities that would improve program implementation moving forward:

- ❖ *Improve the pre-implementation planning process:* Pre-implementation planning improvements may include allowing for more time to recruit and prepare hosts/employers, and including more stakeholders in the planning process. Improvements may also include developing a clear program implementation schedule that is shared with all relevant stakeholders and adhered to consistently.
- ❖ *Improve placement opportunities:* City officials and SJ Works staff recommended establishing mandates for job placements at City agencies as a way to ensure opportunities for youth and to engage more employers.
- ❖ *Build capacity to engage external experts:* SJ Works staff and City officials spoke about the need for identifying and recruiting more subject matter experts to facilitate trainings for youth and staff. This would require a more targeted and systematic recruitment plan.