UNLOCKING LA'S POTENTIAL:

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO SERVICES FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

OCCIDENTAL SDG TASK FORCE SPRING 2020
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OXY
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LOS ANGELES
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

YOUNG
INITIATIVE on the
GLOBAL ECONOMY

Sustainable Development Goal 16
Mapping and Analysis of YouthSource Centers in the Context of Los Angeles City Transit

Occidental Task Force Cohort of Spring '20,
in Partnership with the LA City Mayor's Office

Abstract

Tasked with investigating inequalities in Los Angeles through the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our Task Force sought to understand the barriers which Opportunity Youth encounter while receiving services from the city's YouthSource Centers. The study spanned approximately three months and used a mixed-method research approach. Our project includes an extensive literature review, a service index, and a ArcGIS mapping of analysis of services, population, and transportation. Due to COVID-19, our project was completed remotely. The Task Force proposes three final policy recommendations: free transit for youth and young adults, piloted by YouthSource Centers; new and revised indicators for the City's localized SDGs; and an updated and centralized YouthSource Center website. Multiple recommendations for ongoing research are also shared for future groups interested in continuing the work of this Task Force. This report outlines necessary investments in Opportunity Youth and YouthSource Centers, a population and service system which are paramount to the Mayor's pursuit of a rights-based, upwardly-mobile city.

Introduction

The City of Los Angeles defines Opportunity Youth as youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not enrolled in school and who are not currently employed. This population is often in need of multiple, overlapping services -- including housing, education, job training, and college assistance. There are 14 city-funded YouthSource Centers across Los Angeles. Each center is dedicated to providing resources and support to Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles. Each center has a varying amount of services -- ranging from college tutoring, job training, free bus tokens, and counseling.

YouthSource Centers are one of the main access points for Opportunity Youth to receive wraparound services and essential resources. Our project will include data analysis of YouthSource Centers' (YSCs) available services. This will lead to greater visibility of the services available to Opportunity Youth. We seek to identify the strengths and gaps in services provided at YouthSource Centers. This project will also highlight the geographic distribution of resources at YouthSource Centers. By mapping public transportation and driving time, we seek to understand the varied accessibility of Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles to the wide-ranging services at individual YouthSource Centers. Our final policy recommendation seeks to increase transportation access for Opportunity Youth based on the geographic distribution of YouthSource Centers and their services. It also includes modified and new indicators to the existing SDG targets. We believe that our data analysis provides key insights on where to target City funding in order to more equitably support Opportunity Youth.

Literature Review

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IN LOS ANGELES

Data collected in the article "Opportunity Youth in the City of Los Angeles" shows that the highest concentrations of Opportunity Youth live in South LA, Downtown, and San Fernando Valley, with Black and Hispanic youth making up 80% of Opportunity Youth in the City.[1] This research found that most Opportunity Youth live in under-resourced neighborhoods with high levels of poverty.[2] Systemic discrimination and bias in Los Angeles leads to further barriers for Opportunity Youth as they navigate school and work. Opportunity Youth face many challenges not only related to employment or education, but based on intersecting issues related to race, class, gender and geographic location in Los Angeles. This is extremely important to recognize in the scope of our project -- Opportunity Youth face compounding levels of inequalities due to factors of identity and place.

Our research on YouthSource Centers discovered a compelling relationship between Opportunity Youth and access to transit in certain areas of Los Angeles. Data shows that those between the ages of 16-24 are the most likely to use public transport when they commute to work.[3] Mapping also indicates that in areas with a high concentration of Opportunity Youth, public transport is especially important for employment access. The disconnect between Opportunity Youth and the services provided by YouthSource Centers can be addressed, at least in part, by better accessibility to transportation for Opportunity Youth in the vicinity of YouthSource Centers.

INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL

The development of human capital is directly linked to future success in the workforce, according to findings from Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington (2016).[4] Human capital is defined by the economic value of one's ability, knowledge, and skills; it is developed through informal education, school, and job training. Fogg and Harrington look specifically at youth between the

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[1] Painter, Gary, Jung Hyun Choi, Jovanna Rosen, Jacob Denney, Melissa Faigeles Levitt, and Saumya Lathia. "Opportunity Youth in the City of Los Angeles." Price Center for Social Innovation. University of Southern California. Accessed April 9, 2020.

[2] "Many studies have shown that place affects the long-term socioeconomic outcomes of youth, especially if they have lived in that place for a long portion of their life (Chetty & Hendren, 2016; Sharkey, 2014; Granovetter, 1973). Without sufficient resources to provide access to external opportunities, many opportunity youth may be unable to overcome the resource deprivation of their neighborhoods, and therefore have little hope of gaining access to additional education or quality jobs" (Painter, Gary, Jung Hyun Choi, Jovanna Rosen, Jacob Denney, Melissa Faigeles Levitt, and Saumya Lathia).

[3] Painter, Gary, Jung Hyun Choi, Jovanna Rosen, Jacob Denney, Melissa Faigeles Levitt, and Saumya Lathia.

[4] Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington. "The Human Capital Investment Gap: Understanding the Diminished Prospects of Disconnected Youth in Los Angeles." *Drexel University Center for Labor Markets and Policy*, July 2016.

ages of 18 and 24. Human capital manifests in wages and jobs. A city's investment in human capital is similar to its investment in physical capital; there is an incentive for cities to invest in human capital because it will increase the levels of youth employment. Disconnected Youth, in our project defined as Opportunity Youth, stop developing their human capital when they are out of work or school. While our project focuses on youth between 16 and 24, Fogg and Harrington's research is still important to understand the effects of education and on-job training on a young person's prospects for future employment.

Fogg and Harrington reviewed data from 2012 to 2015 in the context of Los Angeles. They found that the more schooling someone has, the more likely they are to have work: only 42% of those who did not complete high school are employed, while 82% of college graduates are employed. Wages are also projected to increase in relation to the amount of school someone has completed. Of all 18-24 year olds in LA, ⅙ are considered disconnected, either from school or from employment. The article examined human capital in Disconnected and Connected Youth through data on formal education attainment, current labor force status, and prior work experience. The study investigated the impact of education and early career training on the productive ability of Disconnected Youth, and their eventual chances of success within the LA labor market.

Fogg and Harrington found that 28% of Disconnected Youth did not graduate high school, 58% had quit the labor force and were not looking for a job, and 57% had last worked 5 years ago. The study also found that Disconnected Youth work an average 23 weeks per year, in comparison to the LA average of 38 weeks per year. This article is important in grounding our research because it shows the necessity of school and work in attaining later employment opportunities. Given their findings, Fogg and Harrington advised that schools have early career opportunities and recognize that employment is path-dependent on one's education and job training. This policy recommendation is relevant to our project because it points to the importance of tutoring, job training, and career exploration services provided at YouthSource Centers. Finally, looking at early career opportunities at high schools across Los Angeles can assist in journey mapping of Opportunity Youth.

YOUTHSOURCE CENTERS

YouthSource Centers focus on providing resources to youth who are no longer enrolled in school and do not yet have a job. Across the country, cities operate these centers differently. For example, in Minneapolis, Minnesota all services are centralized in a single robust center that provides youth with an effective support system through the non-profit Youthlink.[5] Through their "Integrated Services Delivery" model, multiple agencies come together to form the Youth Opportunity Center (YOC), YouthLink staff and YOC partners work to streamline "collaborative

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[5] "Our Story." *Youthlink Minneapolis,* https://www.youthlinkmn.org/about-us/our-story/

efforts to increase effective supportive services and interventions for youth." [6] Partnerships include both corporate and non-profit organizations. The YOC sources funding from the City of Minneapolis as well as Federal grants, however, most funding comes from Hennepin County, Corporate/non-profit contributions and the State of Minnesota.[7] While many considerations and factors go into the success and funding of youth centers, the Youthlink model can provide an example of a robust youth-centered approach. In Los Angeles, this most likely would not be feasible or helpful due to the geographic spread of the city and its surrounding counties where youth are also in need of resources. YouthSource Centers (YSC) were created throughout Los Angeles County as a way of connecting youth with necessary resources to meet an array of needs, such as education, housing, and employment training.

In Los Angeles, YSCs operate through a partnership between the City of Los Angeles in the Economic and Workforce Development Department and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). This partnership began in 2009, prior to its creation, YSCs operated without capacity to provide outreach to youth who dropped out of school or were otherwise seeking employment. Additionally, LAUSD identified students in need of such services, but could not provide services on the same scale as the YSCs. Now, YSCs and LAUSD work together to conduct community-based outreach to identify youth most in need, co-locate LAUSD Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) counselors at YSCs, and implement a youth-centered approach to assessment of needed services.[8]

The target group is Opportunity Youth who have dropped out of high school and are not yet employed.[9] Outreach is an important aspect of the work of YSC in order to better serve Opportunity Youth and provide services specifically to Black and Hispanic youth who are disproportionately affected by layered inequalities.[10] This outreach is conducted by each YSC independently and is an important aspect of their work. The youth-centered approach[11] entails a full assessment of educational and psychosocial factors that may have impeded their ability to finish schooling or find employment. After the assessment, youth are then referred to education programs, workforce training, or other services.

The YSCs receive federal funding through the Federal Workforce Investment Act as well as from a $12 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation Fund. Federal funding is determined by a formula which designates the amount of money the

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[6] "Our Approach." *Youthlink Minneapolis*, https://www.youthlinkmn.org/about-us/our-approach/
[7] "Report to the Community: Youthlink Highlights 2018." *Youthlink, Minneapolis,*
https://www.youthlinkmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/YL_2018AR_FullReport_FNLr1_MedRes.pdf
[8] "About the EWDD." *Home - Economic & Workforce Development Department, City of Los Angeles*,
www.ewddlacity.com/index.php/about-ewdd.
[9] "Overview." *Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs*
https://youth.gov/collaboration-profiles/los-angeles-youthsource-centers
[10] See Appendix: "Layered Inequality"
[11] See Appendix: "Youth-centered approach"

City must deliver to the Federal government.[12] Federal funding accounts for the resources available for the Centers to utilize. Additionally, this federal funding dictates a baseline of services that must be offered as well as requiring specific documentation, such as Social Security Number and proof of address, in order to access these services. Many of the services are determined by what is required by Federal funding. For example, the prevalence of job placement and training services are an indicator of success for YSCs to continue receiving federal funding. While a baseline of services that must be provided is helpful to focus on target issues of education, employment and housing, the Federal requirements could limit centers in expansion of services. The resources offered at each YSC vary based on capacity, funding, and mission, as these YSCs operate autonomously for the most part. There is a need for a more coherent approach to connect these essential services to youth in need.

YouthSource Center	Organization	LA Region: Central and East LA, South and West LA, the Harbor Region, or San Fernando Valley
Central Los Angeles, Westlake	Para Los Niños	CENTRAL and EAST LOS ANGELES
Central Los Angeles, Downtown	Archdiocesan Youth Employment (AYE) Catholic Charities, Inc (CCLA)	CENTRAL and EAST LOS ANGELES
Northeast Los Angeles	Para Los Niños	CENTRAL and EAST LOS ANGELES
Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center	LA Youth Opportunity Movement, City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department	CENTRAL and EAST LOS ANGELES
Crenshaw	Brotherhood Crusade	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES
South Los Angeles, LA Southwest College	Archdiocesan Youth Employment (AYE) Catholic Charities, Inc (CCLA	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES

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[12] Conversation with Zita Davis, Executive Officer, Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity.

South Los Angeles	Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES
Watts	Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC)	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES
Southeast Los Angeles, Watts	LA Youth Opportunity Movement, City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES
West Los Angeles	UCLA Community Based Learning Program (CBL)	SOUTH and WEST LOS ANGELES
San Pedro, Harbor Area	Pacific-Gateway	HARBOR
Panorama City, South Valley	Goodwill Industries of Southern California	SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
Sun Valley, North Valley	El Proyecto del Barrio	SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
San Fernando, North Valley	El Proyecto del Barrio	SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Figure 1

CURRENT LOS ANGELES STRUCTURE

The Advanced Placement Youth Development Report highlights that there is little communication between departments that focus on youth development in the local Los Angeles government. There is no official department between all three sectors of the Los Angeles government -- LAUSD, City, and County -- that focuses on youth specifically. The Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), focuses on economic development in the Los Angeles area by helping businesses, creating employment opportunities, and offering job training.[13] Within the broader framework of the EWDD, there are several departments focusing on youth development specifically. These include YouthSource Centers, but also other programs such as Find your Future LA and LA Youth at Work. These programs, though, are only subsections of the broader EWDD department, which is focused on economic growth and job training in the population at large, rather than young people specifically. This means that although EWDD recognizes the importance of training young people, and especially Opportunity

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[13]"About the EWDD."

Youth, they may have less resources and ability to focus specifically on this population due to their overall mandate and mission.

In our literature review, we found that youth in LA get less overall funding than in other major cities, according to the AP Youth Development Report "... LA spends $75 per youth, while San Francisco and New York are spending $1,909 and $541 apiece on their young people." [14] In our research, we seek to understand how resources are made accessible through funding, as well as identify actionable spaces for future development of YouthSource Centers.

CITY AGENCY	PROGRAM	FY 2017-18
Mayor's Office	Gang Reduction & Youth Development	$26.1 million
Recreation and Parks	Summer Night Lights	$1.6 million
Economic Workforce Dev Dept.	YouthSource Centers	$14.1 million
Economic Workforce Dev Dept.	Los Angeles County Youth Jobs	$6 million
Economic Workforce Dev Dept.	Youth Workforce Development	$9.1 million
Board of Public Works	Clean and Green Jobs	$1 million
NA	LA's Best	$1.4 million
Housing + Community Investment Dept.*	FamilySource funding for LAUSD	$1 million
TOTAL YOUTH INVESTMENT		**$60.3 MILLION**

Figure 2

The AP Youth Report underscores a much larger change that is needed in current governing structures — a lack of a bureaucratic structure focused on LA youth development is reflected in an overall lack of federal funding. This report explains that "poor reporting of services make it impossible to calculate a true investment total." [15] Without coordinated reporting of youth development it is difficult to collect accurate and up-to-date data on YouthSource Centers. Due to the decentralized nature of YouthSource Centers, our Task Force conducted individual outreach and research on each of the 14 centers in LA.We believe that the creation of a designated department for youth development would strengthen Los Angeles' ability to support youth and YouthSource Centers. While recommendations for reform in county and city governance are beyond the scope of this project, we believe it is still important to recognize current LA structures that may impede the success of YouthSource Centers. While most YouthSource Centers are led by grassroots and non-profit organizations, increased city funding and support through a centralized structure would greatly assist Opportunity Youth in critical (i.e., most impacted) areas in the city of Los Angeles.

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[14] *AP-Youth-Development-Report-Los-Angeles-8.5-x-11-DIGITAL.pdf*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 14, 2020, 7. https://www.advancementprojectca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AP-Youth-Development-Report-Los-Angeles-8.5-x-11-DIGITAL.pdf
[15] *AP-Youth-Development-Report-Los-Angeles-8.5-x-11-DIGITAL.pdf*.

TRANSIT EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN LOS ANGELES

At the heart of YouthSource Centers is the aspiration for upward economic mobility of young people in LA. While the Advanced Placement Youth Development Report details youth disenfranchisement and marginalization across Los Angeles, our Task Force chose to investigate the interlocking layers of poverty that have made LA one of the least upwardly mobile major cities for low-income students in the United States [16]

Research shows that LA's sprawling, car-centric design and limited non-car options are one of the leading factors for its comparative social immobility. Among American cities, "in a large, continuing study of upward mobility based at Harvard, commuting time has emerged as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty." [17] [18] Researchers were not even initially focused on transit, but the connection was shockingly clear: the "...relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community." Improving one's *physical* mobility throughout the city, then, is a key factor in improving *economic* mobility.

Research also shows that expanding roads would only cause more harm, meaning that non-car modes of transportation -- transit, biking, and walking -- must be prioritized as an equity measure. Road expansion is widely-known to result in "induced demand," in which road expansion leads to a net increase in total vehicle miles traveled and, within a few years, equal congestion on the affected roads. [19] [20] Moreover, the environmental impact of car use in Los Angeles is drastic and unsustainable, most directly harming the health of low-income Angelenos [21]. Mayor Eric Garcetti is aware of all of this, stating in 2018 that "...widening freeways, we should be past that time unless we are putting vehicles that don't emit into those lanes. Period." [22]

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[16] The Equality of Opportunity Project. (n.d.). How do neighborhoods affect economic opportunity? Retrieved from http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/neighborhoods/

[17] Bouchard, Mikayla. "Transportation Emerges as Crucial to Escaping Poverty." *The New York Times*, May 7, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/07/upshot/transportation-emerges-as-crucial-to-escaping-poverty.html.

[18] Chetty, Raj, and Nathaniel Hendren. "Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility II: County-Level Estimates* | The Quarterly Journal of Economics | Oxford Academic," August 2018. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjy006.

[19] Handy, Susan. "Increasing Highway Capacity Unlikely to Relieve Traffic Congestion," October 1, 2015. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/58x8436d.

[20] Jaffe, Eric. "California's DOT Makes a Rare Admission: More Roads Mean More Traffic." CityLab, May 3, 2020. http://www.citylab.com/commute/2015/11/californias-dot-admits-that-more-roads-mean-more-traffic/415245/.

[21] López, Jasmin Mara. "Los Angeles Neighborhood Bears the Brunt of Air Pollution." Center for Health Journalism, May 3, 2020. https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/fellowships/projects/los-angeles-neighborhood-bears-brunt-air-pollution.

[22] Wick, Julia. "Widen the Freeway? This Time, L.A. Says No." CityLab, May 3, 2020. https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/03/la-says-no-to-freeway-expansion/555353/.

Through our research, we conclude that investment and promotion of non-car transportation is critical to improving upward economic mobility for youth in Los Angeles. Investment in transit, though, is not inherently equitable. According to the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, few transit agencies "publicly identify serving the poor or minorities as a goal, instead focusing on objectives that appeal to more affluent riders and voters as a whole" in order to pass budgets.[23] Transit equity requires an understanding of transit as an essential social service that, when focused on reducing inequalities in travel times and dependency on private vehicles, can be transformative for the upward mobility of Opportunity Youth.

Map 1, Regions in Los Angeles

[23] Taylor, Brian D., and Eric A. Morris. "Public Transportation Objectives and Rider Demographics: Are Transit's Priorities Poor Public Policy?" *Transportation* 42, no. 2 (March 1, 2015): 347–67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-014-9547-0.

Research Question and Methodology

Our research looks at youth accessibility through the lens of sustainable development. Youth development is important now and for the future of Los Angeles. The AP Youth Development Report explains that, "In the City of Los Angeles, the population expected to replace this generation will be communities of color. In fact, of the 800,000 youth ages 10 to 24, 81% are either Latino, African American, Asian, or other non-white races." Of the 800,000 youth in the Los Angeles area, 68,000 are currently unemployed and/or not enrolled in school -- defined as Opportunity Youth.[24] We believe that the most direct approach to understanding the barriers for Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles is by examining the commuting and transportation disconnect to school or work. This study seeks to understand, among the many other challenges that Opportunity Youth may be facing, the direct difficulties in accessing a mode of affordable public transit.[25] Specifically, if there are direct challenges in accessing resources at YouthSource Centers. We raise the following research question for our project:

How can the SDG framework improve the city's support of Opportunity Youth in their access to information and services, and therefore disrupt related inequities?

We further developed the main research question along two guiding reflections:

1. **Specifically, what barriers to accessibility have not previously been explored in youth development plans?**
2. **How does transportation act as a barrier to Opportunity Youth accessing YSCs services?**

We employed a mixed-method research approach by streamlining and analyzing existing data regarding Opportunity Youth. Data obtained from the University of Southern California helped to establish our understanding of what barriers exist for Opportunity Youth in accessing relevant services. We found, though, that data from USC lacks a direct connection to YouthSource Centers and transportation. Our subsequent research involved analyzing existing data to understand the connection between Opportunity Youth and transportation access.

Our Task Force created a dataset that identifies the services offered at each of the 14 YouthSource Centers in Los Angeles. We began with a map that overlays high concentrations of Opportunity Youth and LA public transportation. This ArcGIS map has grown throughout our project to show where specific youth services are located, and the ease with which Opportunity

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[24] *AP-Youth-Development-Report-Los-Angeles-8.5-x-11-DIGITAL.pdf.*
[25] The "relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community" (Bouchard).

Youth can access these services using public transportation, based on driving ranges. The various overlays allow for a comprehensive understanding of accessibility in Los Angeles. Our mode of visualization shows the gaps in the current transportation system based on where YouthSource Centers are located and what services they offer.

SDG Relevance

The strength of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is in their holistic approach. It is important to localize the SDGs to the context and realities of communities in Los Angeles. In working to implement the SDGs in Los Angeles, research and policy must identify the cross-cutting nature of all 17 goals. Sustainable change seeks to improve social, political, and/or economic structures through an intersectional approach. In terms of the SDG framework, one goal cannot be achieved without progress in another goal.

Our study was conducted within the scope of SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. "Strong Institutions" was a specific focus in our research, helping us to frame what structures in Los Angeles can be improved to better support Opportunity Youth. On a global scale, SDG 16 states that "many regions of the world continue to suffer untold horrors as a result of armed conflict or other forms of violence that occur within societies and at the domestic level. Advances in promoting the rule of law and access to justice are uneven." On a developmental level, Los Angeles does not confront the harsh realities of institutionalized violence or armed conflict in the same way described above. Although Los Angeles' institutions have not been destabilized by armed conflict, the promotion of an inclusive system of governance in Los Angeles is still necessary. The accountability of a government to its people, outlined in SDG 16, can always be improved. Furthermore, the ongoing persistence of issues such as gun violence, domestic abuse, and hostilities to immigrants in Los Angeles and the United States, more broadly, demonstrates that US institutions have yet to adequately promote a peaceful, just, and inclusive society. In this report, we use SDG 16, as a lens, to highlight specific barriers to a more peaceful, just, and inclusive society at the local level.

During our research we found additional targets and indicators outside of SDG 16 that enhance the connections between Opportunity Youth and transit accessibility. The specific targets and indicators that concern this study are listed below with definitions from the formal LA website, "City of Los Angeles Data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators," created by a previous Task Force.[26]

SDG Relevance		Target	Indicator

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[26] *City of Los Angeles Indicators For The Sustainable Development Goals*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2020, from https://sdgdata.lamayor.org/

SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"	**4.3**	"By 2030, ensure equal access for all youth and adults to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university"	"Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex"
	4.4	"By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship"	"Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill"
SDG 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"	**8.6**	"By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training"	"Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training"
SDG 10: "Reduce inequality within and among countries"	**10.2**	"By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status"	"Proportion of people living below 50 percent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities"
SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"	**11.2**	"By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons"	"Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities"

SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"	16.6	"Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels"	"Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)" "Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services"

Figure 3

Summary of Spring 2020 Projects

DIRECT SERVICE INDEX

Our project analyzed the current and publicly available online data regarding services provided directly via the websites of YouthSource Centers (YSCs). The Economic and Workforce Development (EWDD) website provided the names of all 14 YSCs.[27] Using the information accessed through the EWDD website as a starting point, we then looked at each YSCs website to gather data on services offered. We compared YouthSource Centers across four geographic regions in Los Angeles to understand the frequency and accessibility of services. We identified 23 distinct types of services, and listed and organized these into ten different categories. For instance, the broad category of 'Academic Programs' includes services such as College Preparation, Mentoring, Academic Assistance, and Teaching Gardens. Services were organized into these categories based on their relevance within the overarching theme.

The ten service categories in the index are separated into color-coded sections. Service types are highlighted based on the color of their respective category. For example, services that fall under Academic Programs are highlighted in light blue. Services that fall under Career Programs are assigned the color orange. Our service index features several organizational structures: 1) The data by service frequency, noting which and how many YSCs offer a particular service, 2) The data by YSC, listing all the services offered by each, 3) The data by region in Los Angeles. By grouping YSCs geographically, we are able to see the diverse range of services available across centers within close proximity to each other. This way, if an Opportunity Youth is seeking a specific service type that is not available at one YSC, they may be able to visit another nearby.

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[27] "YouthSource Centers." *Economic & Workforce Development Department, City of Los Angeles*, https://ewddlacity.com/index.php/employment-services/youth-age-16-24/youthsource-centers

In our index, we identified gaps in services offered per region as well as in particular YSCs based on the information provided by YSC websites. This is important to recognize because youth may have limited access to YSCs depending on where they live in Los Angeles. Compounding this, if websites are not up to date, it may be difficult for Opportunity Youth to know if a center offers the specific kind of service they are looking for. Figure 4, *Service Index of Youth Source Centers by Region*, helps us visually gauge the accessibility and size of service categories by region. On the y-axis, we have noted the four Los Angeles geographic regions that contain YSCs: Central and East LA, South and West LA, the Harbor Region, and San Fernando Valley. The x-axis pertains to the ten service categories.

There are two key takeaways when examining Figure 4 (see below). Regions that have more colorful and larger stacked bar graphs indicate that 1) a region may offer a greater number of services across multiple categories, or 2) that the websites of YSCs in that region are more up to date than in other regions. For example, our data collection found that the South and West LA region features the greatest range and size of service types, with the majority of services falling under Academic Programs (light blue) and Career Programs (orange). The Harbor region, however, appears to offer two categories of services: Academic Programs (light blue) and General Support Programs (pink). While the Harbor Region may in fact boast more services than indicated by online public information, we argue that it is important to update these websites in order to increase public knowledge of these services and increase accessibility for Opportunity Youth.

If it is the case that YSCs in the Harbor and San Fernando region do not offer as many services, this indicates that centers in these regions may require additional support and funding from LA City. Because Opportunity Youth live all throughout Los Angeles in varying concentrations, it is important that these services are accessible within a reasonable distance and travel time. If discrepancies lie between online public information and what is offered at the site of the YSC, this may prevent Opportunity Youth from taking full advantage of these important resources. With the onset of the current pandemic, Opportunity Youth require accessibility to these services now more than ever. Noting that YSCs may not have the capacity to offer specific resources during these difficult times, we additionally recommend that YSCs increase their visible communication across centers by providing links to the websites of other YSCs across LA that do offer said services. This proposal is expanded on in the policy recommendation section of this report.
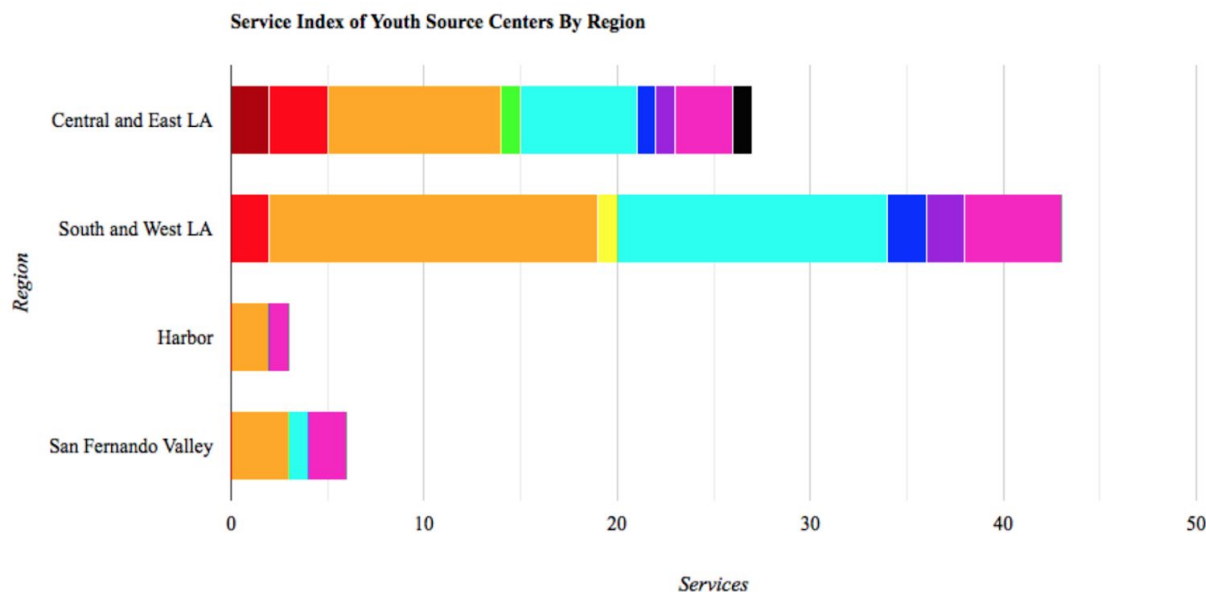
Figure 4.

Key to Figure 4: Services categories and service types

Reimbursent Programs	Gas Reimbursement	Nutrition Programs	Health & Nutrition Education	
	Tuition & Book Reimbursement		Food Vouchers	
Mental Health Programs	Counseling	Violence Prevention Programs	Gang Reduction	
	Mental Health Referals	General Support Programs	Housing	
Career Programs	Job Placement and Training*		Childcare Referrals	
	Career Exploration		Clothing Vouchers	
	Subsidized Internships		Financial Literacy Programs	
	Leadership Development		Technology Access Programs	
Atheletic Programs	Sports Programs	Transportation Programs	Bus Tokens	
Legal Programs	Legal Support			
Academic Programs	College Preperation			
	Teaching Gardens			
	Mentoring			
	Academic Assistance			

Figure 5 [28]

MAPPING[29]

Using the ten service categories derived from the Direct Service Index, our project utilized ArcGIS to represent the geographic availability of different YouthSource Center services in Los Angeles. This approach allows us to identify geographic gaps in service provision more

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[28] For the full data bank, see
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AoRyunSA2gVVCdGrb_tcT_25Yivthz9f23LS3NZAJOw/edit#gid=1367118370
[29] All GIS data used in this section can be found at: http://arcg.is/1qr81n

broadly. We overlaid the American Community Survey data of youth ages 16-19. This representation allows our project to highlight the geographic gaps in services for Opportunity Youth across each service category. Given that academic and career services form the core of city efforts to assist Opportunity Youth, our analysis will utilize these categories as starting points for a discussion of the geographic availability of services for Opportunity Youth.
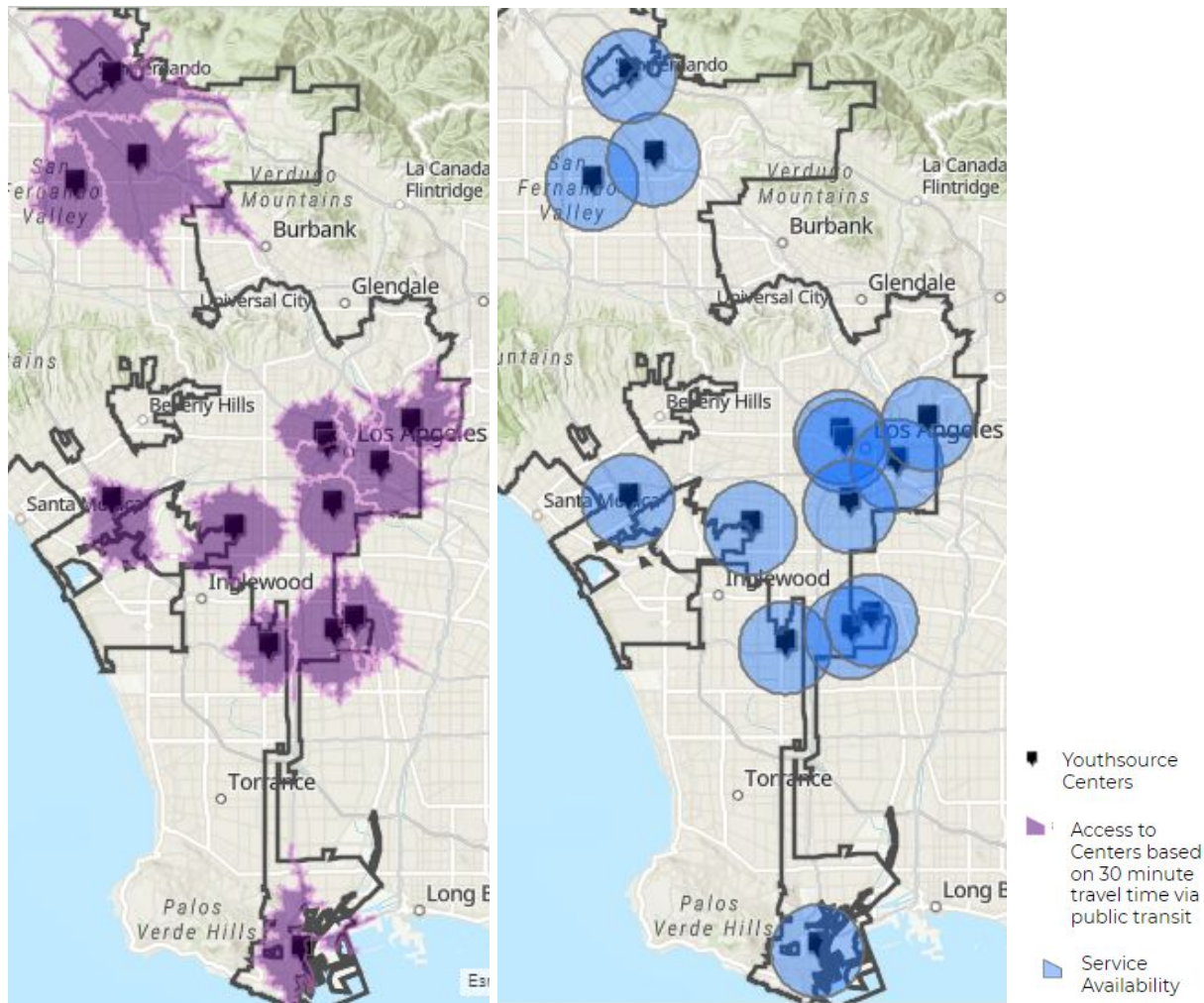

Map 2 - Opportunity Youth (Age 16-19)

The location and concentrations of Opportunity Youth throughout Los Angeles is the starting point of our analysis. Additionally, it is important to remember that geography is often correlated with poverty and race in Los Angeles. Map 2 is based on the American Community Survey (ACS)[30] which maps Opportunity Youth (ages 16-19) by census tract. Although we had originally hoped to map the full age spectrum of Opportunity Youth, this was not possible due to data compatibility issues with ArcGIS Online following our transition to working remotely in early March 2020. To calculate the total number of Opportunity Youth in LA, our project

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[30] The ACS is operating off of some data from the 2010 census. After the 2020 census is completed, the city will be able to more accurately map opportunity youth.

considered census tracts within 5 miles of LA city limits (many YSCs are located near the edge of LA city limits). Using that criteria, the total Opportunity Youth population (age 16-19) within the LA area is 19,974.

Map 3 - Areas in which OY can reach a YSC in   Map 4 - Two mile radius of services accessibility and
under 8 minutes driving   concentration

Map 3 (seen above) is a visual representation of the YouthSource Centers across LA. The purple buffers in Map 3 represent the areas in which Opportunity Youth can reach a YouthSource Center in under **eight minutes by driving without traffic.** Given the limited capabilities of ArcGIS Online, we were unable to use public transit commuting time as the basis for the range. However, we used an eight minute driving time as the threshold for an approximation of a 30 minute public transit commute to a YouthSource Center. This is because
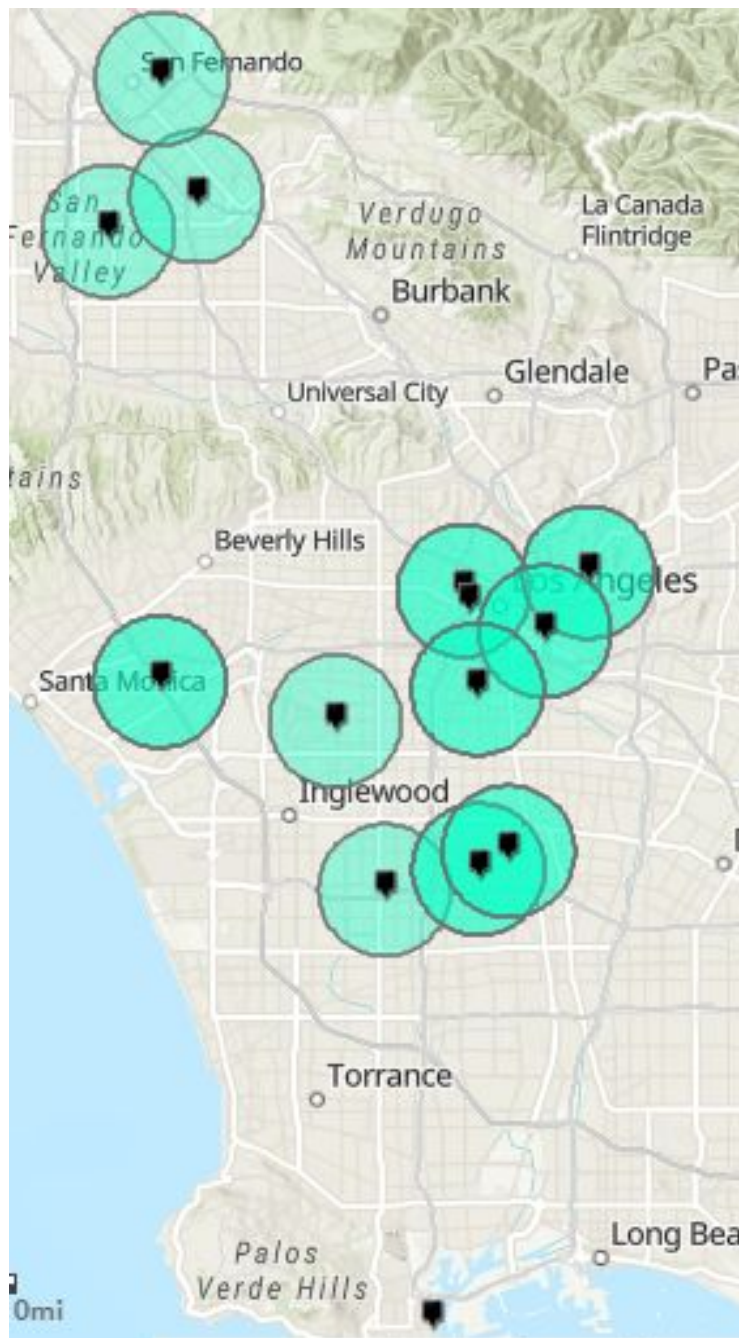
commuting via public transportation in LA takes on average 22 minutes longer than driving.[31] Although this method of estimating Center coverage is imperfect, we believe it is a sufficient metric with which to assess larger gaps in service availability. Combining the American Community Survey's data (seen in Map 2) and the travel time buffer, we calculated that YSCs are accessible to roughly 30% of Opportunity Youth (ages 16-19) who live within five miles of LA city limits. In Map 4, each center is surrounded by a blue circular buffer with a two mile radius that is indicative of the prescribed travel time range. When our report analyzes the different service categories, we have opted to use the two mile radius. Overlaying the different services causes the circular buffer to darken when more services are present. The table below shows the exact number of Opportunity Youth (age 16-19) within a reasonable distance from each YouthSource Center as well as the percentage of Opportunity Youth out of the whole youth population.

Center Location	Total OY (Age 16-19) within Travel Buffer	Percentage of OY within Travel Buffer
West LA	160	17.96%
Boyle Heights	525	18.45%
San Pedro, Harbor Area	158	12.75%
Crenshaw	504	13.20%
South Los Angeles, LA Southwest College	247	10.27%
Watts	1002	10.62%
Southeast Los Angeles, Watts	443	8.78%
South Los Angeles	717	9.15%
Central Los Angeles, Downtown	205	12.17%
Central Los Angeles, Westlake	295	13.88%
Panorama City, South Valley	616	8.95%

[31] Maciag, M. (April 2017.). Riding Transit Takes Almost Twice as Long as Driving. Retrieved from http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-transit-driving-times.html

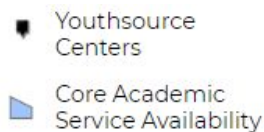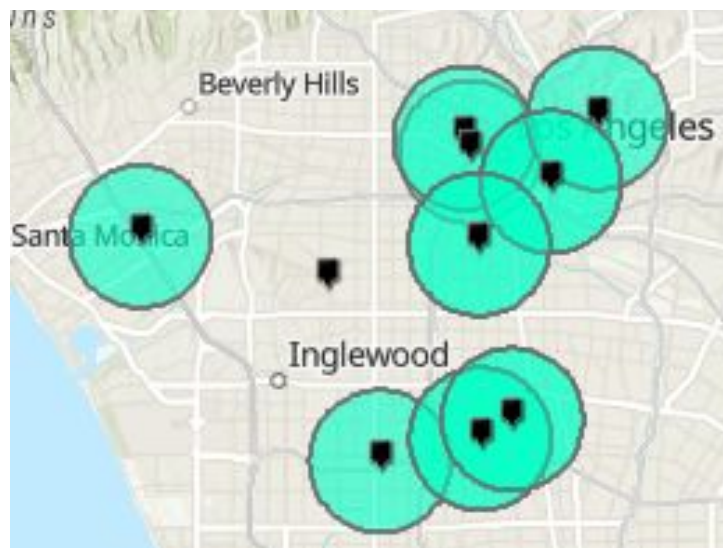|		
Sun Valley, North Valley	736	10.02%
Northeast Los Angeles	290	8.31%
San Fernando, North Valley	397	7.67%

Figure 6

Youthsource Centers

Academic Service Availability

Map 5 - All Academic Programs

Keeping youth in Los Angeles engaged in school has never been more important. Thousands of young people are currently taking classes from home due to COVID-19 -- many are likely struggling with the transition to online learning. Furthermore, many students may lack reliable internet coverage or the technology to fully participate in virtual learning. In the coming year, LA's institutional capacity to ensure educational opportunities for young people will be tested. YouthSource Centers will be an important avenue to allocate resources for all young people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with existing Opportunity Youth. This emphasizes that the gaps in service distribution must be taken into consideration when allocating city funds to assist in education for youth in Los Angeles. Map 5 shows that every center except

Pacific-Gaterway advertised online that they offer some form of Academic Services for Opportunity Youth.

■ Youthsource Centers

▭ Core Academic Service Availability

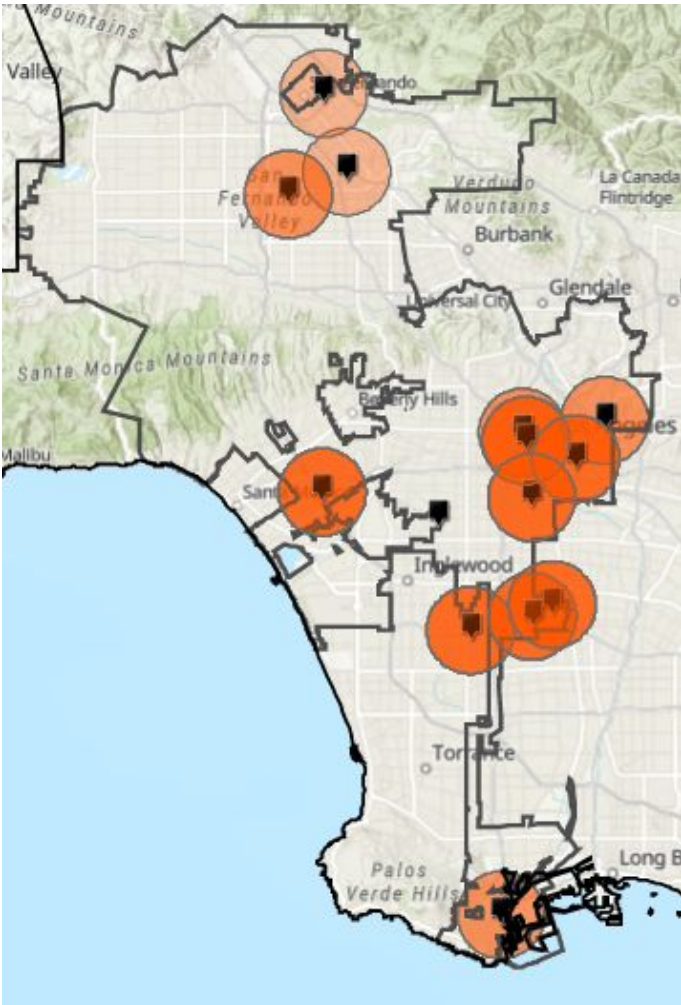Map 6- College Preparation, Mentoring, and Academic Assistance

Noting the importance of Academic Services, we decided to narrow our focus to a set of core Academic Services which most directly benefit Opportunity Youth. Specifically, the bundle of core Academic Services includes: college reparation, mentoring, and academic assistance services. Looking only at these core services in Map 6, it is apparent that the Brotherhood Crusade YouthSource Center in Crenshaw does not appear to offer any of the core Academic Services identified in our research. Furthermore, referring back to the travel time buffer depicted in Map 3, distance would discourage Opportunity Youth in Crenshaw from traveling to other centers that do offer these academic services.
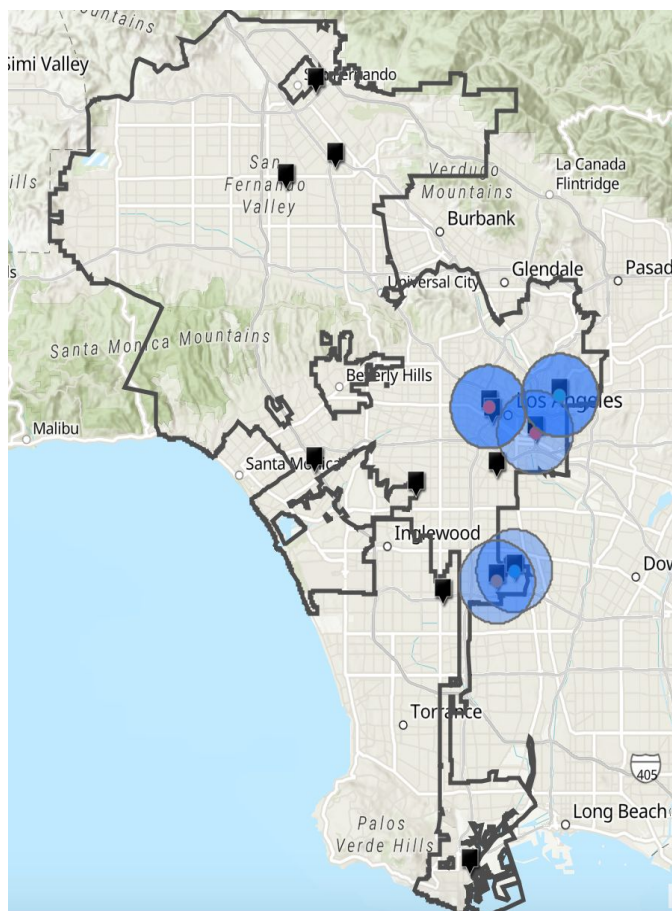
In addition to academic services, career services at YSCs are a central concern. Federal funding for YouthSource Centers are allocated by the Department of Labor and the Federal Workforce Investment Act. Our research identified four services in the category of Career Services: (1) subsidized internships, (2) job training and placement, (3) career exploration, and (4) leadership development. While LA recovers from COVID-19, these career services will be crucial for many young people, especially vulnerable youth, who will likely struggle to maintain or find employment. Looking at Map 7 (below), the widespread presence of career services is clear. Every center, except the Brotherhood Crusade center in Crenshaw, listed at least one set of career services online. The differing shades of orange around each center, though, demonstrate that the YouthSource Centers in the north of LA offer less career services.

In comparing job placement and training with other career services, we came to realize that this service likely functions as the primary career service across centers. Of all the types of career services, job placement and training is most concerned with finding immediate employment for Opportunity Youth. We suspect that job placement and training is the most

widespread due to the success criteria for YSCs to continue receiving federal funding, as outlined in the YouthSource Center Literature Review. However, other career services, such as subsidized internship or career exploration, may be more beneficial to the long term career success of Opportunity Youth. Future research ought to compare the budget allocations for job placement and training with career services that are more likely to enable Opportunity Youth to become eligible for better paying and more stable careers.
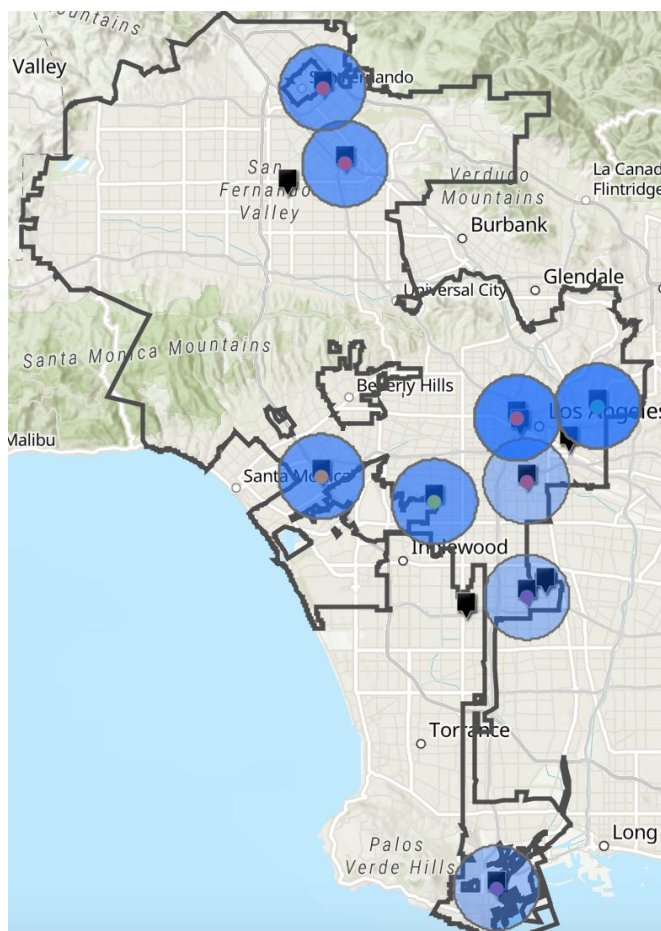

Map 7 - Career Services

Map 8 - Mental Health Programs

Map 8 visualizes the availability of services that fall under the broad category of Mental Health Programs. Mental Health Programs include two distinct types of services: counseling and mental health referrals. We located four centers that offer some form of mental health services based on the information provided by their websites. In Central and East LA, two Para los Niños centers offer both counseling and mental health referral services. The EWDD center in Boyle Heights, also considered part of the Central and East LA region, offers counseling. As for the South and West LA region, a second EWDD center and the WLAC center offer counseling services to Opportunity Youth.

With the onset of COVID-19, Mental Health Programs may be especially important to Opportunity Youth who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. As indicated by the map, four out of fourteen YSCs boast Mental Health Programs based on the information provided by their websites. We note that the websites of YSCs may not accurately reflect what is actually offered at the site of the center. We emphasize the importance of revising these websites in order to increase public knowledge and accessibility of these services. If it is the case that only four YSCs offer Mental Health Programs, this signals a significant gap in accessibility. It may be
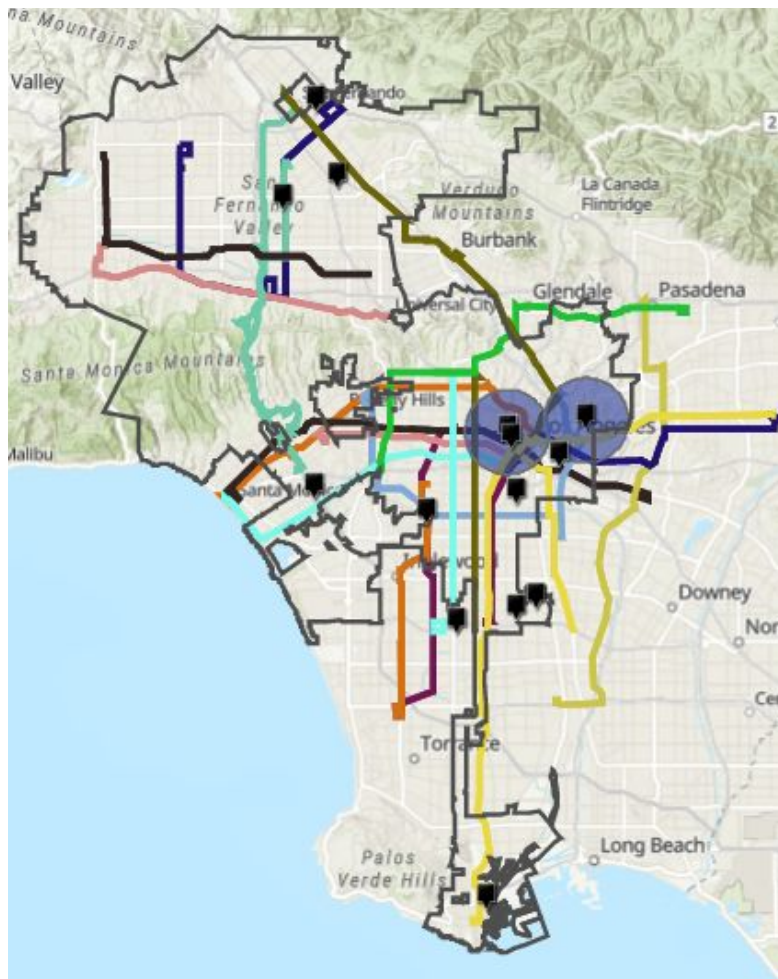
difficult for Opportunity Youth residing in the Harbor and San Fernando Valley regions to access services of this type if they are not within reasonable distance and travel time.

Map 9 - General Support Programs

Map 9 depicts the availability of services that comprise General Support Programs. These services consist of housing, clothing vouchers, childcare referrals, financial literacy programs, and technology access programs. After collecting service data from YSC websites, we found that some sort of general support program is found in all four regions of LA, with variations in the type of service offered. For example, the Central and East LA region and the South and West LA region appear to offer the greatest range and size of services falling under this category. In the Harbor and San Fernando Region, while services such as financial literacy or technology access are offered, there is a shortage of services offering support in the form of housing, clothing vouchers, or child care referrals. This implies that Opportunity Youth residing in those regions would potentially have to travel long distances to access these services. It is important that services of this kind are uniform across all regions of LA in order to ensure that Opportunity Youth can take full advantage of them.

Map 10 - Bus Tokens, Gas Reimbursement and Rapid Bus Routes

In our collection of information for the Direct Service Index, we found that only Para Los Niños YSCs advertised offering transportation services (bus tokens and gas reimbursement). In 1999, Stoll found that African Americans and Latinos in Los Angeles faced worse economic outcomes due to spatial limitations on their job search.[32] These impacts are not limited to adults; Opportunity Youth likely face similar limitations in their job search. The gas reimbursement and bus tokens available at YSCs (seen above, in Map 10) enable Opportunity Youth to overcome a significant barrier in accessibility. However, bus tokens and gas reimbursements are not enough for Opportunity Youth -- tokens are currently being phased out in LA and previously only provided one free bus ride. The limited provision of transportation services depicted in Map 10 is concerning due to the combined gaps in other services which our project has identified. Furthermore, looking at the rapid bus routes available throughout Los Angeles in Map 10, it seems that only seven centers are in proximity to these routes. We were unable to further test this

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[32] Stoll, Michael A. "Spatial Job Search, Spatial Mismatch, and the Employment and Wages of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Los Angeles." *Journal of Urban Economics*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1999, pp. 129–155., doi:10.1006/juec.1998.2116.

hypothesis regarding bus stops and non-rapid route connections due to our project's limitations using ArcGis Online.

The reasonable travel distance from each center that is calculated in Map 3 is only an approximation of travel time. The transportation services offered by the Para Los Niños Centers are aimed at reducing the financial barrier in accessing YSCs, jobs, and school. Although students ride for free on LA city DASH bus lines, Opportunity Youth are, by definition, not students and, therefore, ineligible for the free rides on DASH buses.[33] Furthermore, Opportunity Youth are not able to benefit from the Universal College Student Transit Pass, another major program for subsidizing youth usage of LA public transportation. In focusing on the geographic barriers to YSC services, the importance of equitable public transportation access is clear. Seventy percent of Opportunity Youth in the LA area are not within a reasonable distance of a YSC and likely rely on public transportation. A policy recommendation regarding increased transit accessibility for Opportunity Youth is outlined in the policy section below.

Policy Recommendation

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will continue to pose challenges for disenfranchised families and individuals in Los Angeles. The long-term vulnerabilities that COVID-19 will create for Opportunity Youth will be significant. Continued support from the City and increased accessibility to support services are essential for Opportunity Youth now and in the coming months. Although YouthSource Centers are not normally viewed as 'emergency services,' they are an essential city program for those who will be most affected by this crisis.[34] Discussions with LA City further affirm the key role that YouthSource Centers have played in the City's initial emergency response to the pandemic. National predictions reflect continued economic downturns as the global pandemic persists. Unemployment in the United States is at a historic height. On the local level, the projected economic downturns do not impact all Angelenos equally. Those who are already facing marginalization, like Opportunity Youth, will inevitably face higher consequences during and after the pandemic.

Our policy recommendations consider the past and current vulnerabilities of Opportunity Youth -- this population cannot be forgotten in sustainable development policy. Below, our Task Force proposes several recommendations in light of our research findings. These recommendations include specific changes to the localization of the SDGs, as well as ideas to increase transit accessibility and centralize YouthSource Center websites for improved information access.

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[33] Students Ride Free on LADOT DASH Buses Starting This August. (2019, June 3). *Streetsblog Los Angeles*. https://la.streetsblog.org/2019/06/03/students-ride-free-on-ladot-dash-buses-starting-this-august/
[34] Discussed during client meetings with the City.

ADDITION AND REVISION OF SDG INDICATORS

      Ideally, the Sustainable Development Goals provide a framework which guides preventative action. Our study began with a goal to contextualize the global relevance of SDG 16 to a local level. After our review of the localized SDG framework in Los Angeles, we found that Opportunity Youth are not mentioned or named within SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Although our project was initially focused on SDG 16, it is important that we broaden our revisions and add indicators to other goals as well. SDGs are intersectional, especially when discussing Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles. We propose that Opportunity Youth, and their related barriers to accessibility be directly included in the indicators pertaining to each goal. To implement this, it is important that there is communication between current youth development organizations, both public and private, and an agency within the Los Angeles City government focusing on youth.

New Indicators:

Goal	Target	Indicator (Original, Revised, New)
SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"	**4.3:** "By 2030, ensure equal access for all youth and adults to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" **4.4:** "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship"	**Original 4.3.1:** "Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex" **REVISED 4.3.1:** Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race/ethnicity, citizenship, religion, socio-economic and other statues **NEW 4.4.2:** Number of Opportunity Youth served by

		YouthSource Centers as a percentage of the larger Opportunity Youth population in the city
SDG 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"	**8.B:** "By 2020, develop and operationalize a local strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization"	**Original 8.b.1:** "Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national employment strategy" **REVISED 8.b.1:** Existence of a developed and operationalized local strategy for youth employment that supports YouthSource Centers and adjacent organizations connected to youth development **NEW 8.b.2:** Amount of overall funding for youth development in Los Angeles in comparison to other U.S. cities
SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"	**11.2:** "By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons"	**NEW 11.2.2:** Proportion of population that has access to jobs by sustainable transport (transit, bike, or walking) in 30 minutes or less

SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"	16.6: "Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels"	**NEW 16.6.3:** Proportion of city service websites that are regularly updated to be user friendly and accurate

Figure 7

REVISED 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race/ethnicity, citizenship, religion, socio-economic and other statues

This revised indicator is important because it changes sex to gender and adds "sexual orientation, age, disability, race/ethnicity, citizenship, religion, socio-economic and other statues" as essential identities to track when looking at formal and informal education and training. Opportunity Youth experience layered inequality, along with most young people in Los Angeles. This revised indicator will assist the city in gauging where there are gaps in educational attainment beyond "sex." By replacing "sex" with "gender" there is acknowledgement of the marginalization that occurs when biological "sex" characteristics are privledged over gender identity, especially to those in the transgender community. Furthermore, the addition of indicators that more completely address the identities and lived experiences of youth will lead to better data that can be used to serve communities in Los Angeles.

NEW 4.4.2: Number of Opportunity Youth served by YouthSource Centers as a percentage of the larger Opportunity Youth population in the city

It is essential that an indicator for SDG 4 solely focus on Opportunity Youth. The system of measuring we propose is the proportion of Opportunity Youth utilizing YouthSource Centers, as a proportion of all Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles. This figure could serve as an indicator as to whether YouthSource Centers are successfully being accessed by their intended population. The marks of progress would be an increase in Opportunity Youth utilizing available services and a long-term gradual reduction of Opportunity Youth in the City.

REVISED 8.b.1: Existence of a developed and operationalized local strategy for youth employment that supports YouthSource Centers and adjacent organizations connected to youth development

This revised indicator localizes the previous language that referred to a national strategy of youth development. This new indicator recognizes YouthSource Centers as essential partners and

advocates for youth development. Localized strategies work to implement broader goals that serve the communities.

NEW 8.b.2: Amount of overall funding for youth development in Los Angeles in comparison to other U.S. cities

In our review of existing literature, the Task Force found that LA spends "$75 per youth, while San Francisco and New York are spending $1,909 and $541 apiece on their young people." [35] We believe that measuring spending against other major cities will assist Los Angeles in supporting youth development and track its progress. This will also ensure that Los Angeles can stay abreast of new developments in city responses to Opportunity Youth, and update its policies and practices accordingly.

NEW 11.2.2: Proportion of population that has access to jobs by sustainable transport (transit, bike, or walking) in 30 minutes or less

An emphasis on walking, transit, and biking allows for Los Angeles to move away from a car-centric society, which reflects sustainable accessibility. Our data and analysis of the maps reflected that, in many areas of Los Angeles, sustainable transport in 30 minutes or less is inaccessible. Thirty minutes or less via public transit is the relational equivalent to eight minutes driving (see Map 2 in the analysis section of mapping). Currently, fewer than 1% of jobs are accessible to residents in 30 minutes or less by transit[36]. While that number is affected by the geographic sprawl of the city, it provides a basis for understanding the need for the expansion of frequent, rapid transit. This indicator assists Opportunity Youth, in addition to the broader transition to sustainable transport within Los Angeles as a whole.

This proposed indicator can be supported by data already collected in LA's Green New Deal. The deal outlines that "from light rail to subway to new bus projects, we are building a comprehensive and integrated transit network. And we will not stop this progress in its tracks: by 2035, half of all trips will happen somewhere other than a single occupancy vehicle." [37] LA's Green New Deal is tracking the reduction of individual vehicle use, and working towards creating an atmosphere of public transit through SDGs 3, 9, and 11.[38] It is our hope that the existing methods used in the Green New Deal to track ridership and climate-friendly solutions to accessibility can ultimately be expanded to encompass a youth-centric approach within indicator 11.2.2.

NEW 16.6.3: Proportion of city service websites that are regularly updated to be user friendly

[35] *AP-Youth-Development-Report-Los-Angeles-8.5-x-11-DIGITAL.pdf.*
[36] *Indicators for Sustainable Mobility,* Los Angeles tab, from https://naindicators.itdp.org/explore/
[37] *PLAn | L.A.'s Green New Deal | Sustainability pLAn 2019.* (2019). PLAn. 70, from http://plan.lamayor.org/node
[38] *L.A.'s Green New Deal,* 70.

This indicator relates to our findings on YouthSource Centers' websites. A major barrier we discerned in accessing services is knowing what services are available, and where the service is located. All city service websites should be updated and user-friendly so that young Angelenos can better access available resources.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AT YOUTHSOURCE CENTERS AND BEYOND

In our literature review, we found that transportation access was widely left out of past reports on Opportunity Youth, yet strongly correlates to the aspirations of economic mobility for Opportunity Youth. Because of this, we propose a citywide (and eventually countywide) free transit pass program for all people residing in Los Angeles under 24 year of age. A 2017 meta-analysis study found that "exposure to transit during young adulthood in particular is associated with an auto-light lifestyle and greater transit usage later in life. This research suggests a long-term benefit for encouraging transit at younger ages to foster a 'transit habit'." In addition to the clear equity benefits of providing free transit to young people, such a policy would also promote transit use by families and young people, making bus and trains feel safer for all.

Our recommendations for TAP Cards provide further incentive for youth to use transit. We recommend that the LA Mayor's Office begins by providing funding for a pilot program in YouthSource Centers to administer free TAP Cards to Opportunity Youth. Currently, only the Para Los Niños YouthSource Center provides bus tokens to Opportunity Youth. We have identified a lack of public transit subsidization as one of the largest gaps in services across YouthSource Centers. Although bus tokens were phased out at the county-level in November 2019, the Para Los Niños website has most likely not been updated to display current ridership programs for LA Metro. **We propose that each of the 14 YouthSource Centers provide unlimited TAP Cards to Opportunity Youth during their initial intake process.** An essential piece of this proposal is that TAP Cards do not expire until Opportunity Youth are 24, even if they cease using or needing the services at YouthSource Centers. This helps create a culture of transit -- one that is so important in Los Angeles -- and is a continued method of support for Opportunity Youth as they access school and work. City funding for TAP Cards provides incentives for Opportunity Youth to access services at YouthSource Centers and increases the interconnections between YouthSource Centers. Through these connections, service providers can better direct Opportunity Youth in accessing services at other YSCs if they can provide transportation support.

At Occidental College, students are given a TAP Card from the U-Pass program that allows for free, unlimited ridership. Rides on LA Metro are given at half price, 75 cents, for students at Occidental, which is then paid for by the Associated Students of Occidental College. The U-Pass program at Occidental could be replicated at YouthSource Centers. Every

Opportunity Youth that comes to a center is given a TAP Card. Their ridership is half price, and paid for by funding given to YouthSource Centers by the Economic & Workforce Development Department of the City of Los Angeles.

In the near future, a multi-agency collaboration would be pivotal in advancing this proposed policy. With Mayor Garcetti as the incoming Chair of the LA Metro board, it is an ideal time to support universal transit passes for young people in Los Angeles. Mayor Garcetti's administration has been a tireless advocate of human rights at a city level -- seen in our current collaboration on the SDGs -- and a fierce proponent of long-term, forward looking legislation. In the current pandemic, we risk a further reduction of Metro ridership coinciding with recession-level unemployment and loss of income in the most vulnerable communities. Extending free transit to all young residents of Los Angeles supports equitable outcomes, supports transit use, supports climate goals, and supports the Mayor in his transformative "Vision for LA's Future."

CENTRALIZED YOUTHSOURCE CENTER WEBSITE

The strength of the YouthSource Centers is in their youth-centered and holistic approach to service provision. In collecting information on available services at each of the YSCs, and in a brief review of the WIN app, it appears that there is conflicting or at least incomplete information on the YSC websites of services. Some of the YSCs do not even have websites of their own. To remedy this, and for the YSCs to be made more effective, an organized website for all of the YSCs would make services clearer and more accessible. **Our final recommendation is that the YouthSource Centers have a newly updated website that serves to centralize and facilitate support for each center.** This calls for a concerted effort on the part of the City of LA to bring together the YouthSource Centers. An organized website would not replace the type of community outreach YSCs conduct, it would be the start of the city facilitating support between YSCs.

A new YSC website, separate from the EWDD website, provides a single location from which links to other related websites would take users to the respective websites of each center. Similar in a way to the Youthlink[39] model of compiling all services for Opportunity Youth in a single center, a comprehensive website would serve to direct services more efficiently to those in need. Although it does not make sense for a number of reasons, including the geographical spread of the city, to consolidate all available YSC services in one location, information on the services provided should be consolidated and made more widely available to Opportunity Youth. The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs is composed of 21 Federal agencies that support youth-centered services and programs. The website created by the Interagency Working Group, youth.gov, acts as a central location for youth programs to provide feedback, access

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[39] "Our Approach." *Youthlink Minneapolis*, https://www.youthlinkmn.org/about-us/our-approach/.

funding and increase communication.[40] This is an example of a website that includes multiple centers and organizations to increase accessibility.

In early stages of research we reached out to all fourteen YSCs. Among those we were able to get in contact with was El Proyecto del Barrio. At their organization, case managers work with youth to address specific areas of need.[41] For this reason El Proyecto del Barrio does not keep a comprehensive list of available services. Instead, the case managers decide, based on discussion with the youth being served, what resources can be provided. The areas include educational achievement services, employment services, other youth services, such as leadership development and library cards, and supportive services, which include housing and medical services.[42] Still we see a need for there to be lists of and explanations of these services and processes wherever possible in order to increase transparency to youth accessing services. Where information is lacking, it creates additional barriers to youth looking for services. Links should be included to each YSC website, and for those without websites one should be created. This would signal visible communication between the City and YSCs regarding service availability and increase knowledge of services.

As our research indicated a need for transportation to be more accessible, the website should provide specifics of access to each center through transportation available with information on tap cards or necessary reimbursements. All fourteen of the official YSCs should be listed with updated phone numbers, emails, addresses. Additionally, listed by YSC, the website should include necessary documentation to access services, this typically includes Social Security Number and proof of address. The process of intake at each of the centers is important for the experience to be youth-centered, for example orientation and at what point they are assigned a caseworker. Furthermore, an updated and comprehensive list of services offered at each center should be a highlighted item on the website. Connected to the listing of services, a feature to search by type of service should be included so that a youth may be specifically looking for programs in the areas of education, housing, and job training.

Finally, the inclusion of an Adjacent Services Index should be included on the website. Opportunity Youth may not qualify for the services provided directly by YSCs if they do not have the documentation required to access them; however, a central location of all services available to Opportunity Youth would show them what else is available. This would prevent youth from being turned away or discouraged from accessing services. Adjacent services would allow Opportunity Youth access to similar services without the limitations of documentation, which would uplift undocumented and houseless communities, and create better lives for many Angelenos. This recommendation reflects the goal of our new proposed SDG indicator 16.6.3 (*proportion of city service websites that are regularly updated to be user friendly and accurate*).

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[40] "About Us" *Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs*, https://youth.gov/about-us

[41] Email correspondence with Administrative Assistant Laura Alba at El Proyecto del Barrio regarding a list of services.

[42] Information from a blank form provided by El Proyecto del Barrio entitled "Participant File Checklist."

Regularly updating city websites to be user-friendly is a broader measure to increase equitable access to City resources.

Recommendations for Future Research

Below we have outlined four potential avenues for future research. At the beginning of our project, the Task Force was especially focused on the importance of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. We believe in the importance of soft data and in-person focus groups with YouthSource Centers and Opportunity Youth. Due to COVID-19, our research aspirations were altered significantly. We encourage future Task Forces who take up this project to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research in the scope of the projects listed below.

EXPANDING DIRECT SERVICE INDEX

In our project, we focus on services at YouthSource Centers that were specifically outlined on each of the 14 Centers' websites. If our academic year had not been cut short due to COVID-19, we planned on visiting each Center and learning if they offer other services than listed on their website. Because YouthSource Centers are often inundated with clients and are generally overworked, it is likely that websites are not updated regularly and may not reflect current programming. After we began remote learning and research, we attempted to call each Center and interview employees about the services offered. We realized, though, that it was more important for YouthSource Centers to focus on Opportunity Youth who are especially affected by the pandemic. With this transition, we focused solely on public data about services offered.

An important piece of future research will be to expand the direct service index by finding out what specific services are available at each Center. This can be achieved by collecting informational pamphlets, conducting in-person interviews, and reviewing all data collected at Centers about the services used by Opportunity Youth. While our current service index focuses on what Opportunity Youth would see if they were to research services at YouthSource Centers, it is important to tabulate all available services. By finding other available services that are not listed on Centers' websites, a future Task Force can help promote and operationalize these services and further visualize where there are gaps in services throughout Los Angeles.

ADJACENT SERVICES INDEX

Throughout our project we discussed creating a service index of adjacent services. We define adjacent services as organizations and nonprofits outside of the YouthSource Centers, and without city funding. A service index helps to identify the available services for a certain population among organizations. In this project, we focus on the services offered in 14

YouthSource Centers across Los Angeles. An adjacent service index can identify potential partnerships for YouthSource Centers and find organizations in need of city funding that are doing work with Opportunity Youth. The scope of resource centers for young people in Los Angeles expands far beyond officially recognized YouthSource Centers; to only focus on such centers would be an inherently limited approach in assessing the available services for Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles. An adjacent service index has the potential to provide insight into an organization that could be incorporated into the YouthSource Center program. An adjacent service index would be a large undertaking. However, after the COVID-19 city shutdown, the importance of resources for youth in Los Angeles was explicit. YouthSource Centers have been overwhelmed during the Coronavirus pandemic. In discussion with Angela Kim from the Mayors' Office, Los Angeles officials have made incredible progress in identifying resources for youth outside of YouthSource Centers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that this body of work does not disappear when the pandemic is less of an immediate threat. A future Task Force could look to adapt what was created in an emergency situation for general use. It is essential that the City continues to identify potential partners for adjacent services and develop a plan to connect youth with these services.

In a survey of adjacent services in Los Angeles, a future Task Force should consider the WIN App. In the course of our research, we began analyzing a mobile application called the 'What I Need' app, developed by *Our Children LA*. This app is designed specifically for LA's homeless population. It seeks to connect homeless individuals with essential services throughout Los Angeles. Before the global pandemic began, we had planned to conduct a thorough analysis of the services listed on this application in order to add to our own adjacent services index. While the time and resources were not available to finish this aspect of our project during virtual learning, it is still important for future researchers to analyze this app. Some guiding questions may include, how can the WIN App be operationalized for Opportunity Youth? How do those needing services access this app if they do not have a phone or computer? The WIN App may assist in an initial scan of adjacent services and as a potential mode to operationalize adjacent and direct YouthSource Center services.

BUILDING ON MAPPING

Our mapping provides an important base for future Task Forces. Above, we have outlined a policy recommendation regarding funding for bus tokens at all YouthSource Centers. There is a second layer to this, though, and that is that even with monetary support for transportation, there may not be accessible transportation to a YouthSource Center. There are fourteen centers across Los Angeles. Our research shows that, based on geographic region, some areas of Los Angeles lack easy access to centers, or that centers in a region may be deficient in support resources. This creates a discrepancy in the services Opportunity Youth are able to access based on where they live in Los Angeles.

An essential project for a future Task Force will be to identify where there could be new YouthSource Centers. This task will bring together all aspects of the adjacent service index, journey map, and direct service index listed above. YouthSource Centers are funded by the City, but run by independent organizations. A Center can be identified by locating where there is a lack of Centers and services on our maps, and overlaying this with an adjacent service index. In doing this, future researchers can propose funding to transform a current independent organization into a YouthSource Center.

Other recommendations for future mapping include a more detailed analysis of Opportunity Youth throughout LA across the full age spectrum (16-24) because currently our maps only represent ages 16-19. Another important aspect of expanding mapping analysis will be an in-depth ArcGIS analysis of public transit options that expand beyond LA Metro to other types of public transit, such as the rapid bus routes, rail systems, and the proposed transit expansion by LA Metro. It will also be important to research and analyze estimated travel times and costs. Finally, using all the information on public transit, a future Task Force should work to identify potential new bus stops in Los Angeles that will increase sustainable access to YouthSource Centers.

JOURNEY MAPPING

An important project for a future Task Force is the creation of a journey map in the scope of YouthSource Centers. Journey maps act as a basis for further research. Journey mapping is based on actual client experience, not the expected client experience by an organization. This distinguishing idea can help a research group to depict the current gaps and successes when accessing an organization's resources. A visual journey map also functions to humanize quantitative data and GIS mapping.

In the initial iteration of our project, we sought to create a journey map that showed the experience of Opportunity Youth from the point when they first research/or attempt to access a YouthSource Center, to accessing and actually using services provided by the Centers. At the beginning of our project we did not have enough quantitative data to construct a visualization of a client's journey when accessing services at YSCs.

In April, we gained access to data from the Para Los Niños YouthSource Center. This data acts as a preliminary exploratory dataset to think about constructing a journey map. There are approximately 25 responses from different youth, outlining how they first found Para Los Niños, what their initial goals were in high school, college attainment, or careers, what services they used at the YouthSource Center, and, finally, whether they achieved their goals, and what services could be improved. This data can act as a model for collecting the stories of Opportunity Youth at other YouthSource Centers and a beginning place for the creation of a journey map. A journey map is important because it will show how Opportunity Youth are accessing services,

which may be different than expected by YouthSource Centers, and the general experience of youth in Los Angeles seeking assistance.

Conclusion

The Coronavirus pandemic has reshaped each of our lives -- and the path of this project. But we must not be misled: this crisis is most directly harming low income Angelenos, both today, and in the coming months. As we prepare for what may be the most difficult time in recent history to be working service jobs or trying to go to school as a low-income young person, it is all the more important that we support our Opportunity Youth, the 16-24 year olds who are both jobless and not in school.

What rights does Los Angeles afford its citizens? Human rights are not a lofty, universal ideal, but a constantly-contested framework to fight for the current needs of the most vulnerable among us. The UN Sustainable Development Goals, through a partnership between the Mayor's Office and Occidental College forged in 2018, have been localized to be our pragmatic framework of rights. "Los Angeles can, should, and will lead in building the healthier and more prosperous world that we dream of for our children and grandchildren," Mayor Garcetti told our Oxy task force predecessors.

This is a step in the right direction for a city which, in the 20th century, yielded to the dreams of the rich and powerful. Writes LA historian Phillip Ethington, "Los Angeles has two parallel traditions, the earliest being diversity and the most dominant being segregation." Mass evictions, red-lining, and racial covenants were a political decision; bulldozing neighborhoods for freeways was a political decision. The aftermath of these harms persist: Out of the 100 most populous counties in the US, LA ranks 84th in upward mobility for low-income youth.[43] As a Task Force, we sought to explore how intergenerational, interlocking layers of inequality continue to impact young Angelenos today, and what we could propose to unlock a future of opportunity.

Young Angelenos have a right to a safe, upwardly mobile city, and if the Goliathan problems we face were created by mere humans of the past, then the right questions, the right solutions, and the political will to match can certainly build a more prosperous world for our next generation of Angelenos. In recognizing this importance, reinforcing structures of social mobility gives youth access to a more equitable world. Our Task Force found that, in a world which is growing rapidly, access to widespread equity for youth relies greatly on transportation access. It is our hope that we have provided a holistic approach to research using the Sustainable Development Goals.

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[43] "The Geography of Upward Mobility in America." *The Equality of Opportunity Project*, www.equality-of-opportunity.org/neighborhoods/.

Our initial goals for this project included quantitative research that would have generated further findings, as well as more human-oriented, qualitative research. The nature of our project, however, was greatly shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the recommendations for continuation of this research and future projects are of the utmost significance. The recommendations for future research are, in part, what we had hoped to accomplish in the remainder of our tenure on the Task Force. It is our hope, in continuing to develop the maps we engineered, in addition to a general overview of services, that we have given future cohorts solid ground to launch from.

Acknowledgements

List of Figures

List of Maps

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Appendix

1. Opportunity Youth — "Opportunity Youth (also referred to as disconnected youth) are defined as individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school (Belfield et al., 2012). These years can be a critical time in an individual's life, as decisions made at these ages can have a long-term impact on one's future career and life trajectory. Not only do Opportunity Youth themselves face individual disadvantages from being relatively isolated from society, but a high presence of Opportunity Youth can also contribute to broader social problems, as these youth are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as criminal activities (Belfield et al, 2006)." [48]

2. YouthSource Centers — *(taken from LA Opportunity Youth Collaborative)* "YouthSource is a city-wide program open to young people ages 16-24. All of our services are free. Some of the opportunities our centers offer include:Work Readiness - preparing you to get a job in the real world, Career Exploration - find out what kind of job you want and how to land your dream job, Job Skills Training - get the tools you need to get that first job, Tutoring and Computer Training - learn how to write a resume, how the right cover letter can land an interview, and the skills to land the job, College Preparation - is college right for you? find out what schools are out there and what a degree can do for your future, Mentoring and Counseling - find someone you can really talk to, learn from our experienced staff what next steps you should take to prepare for tomorrow."[49]

3. LA Transit — In the context of this study, referring to Los Angeles Metro Rail and buses. In general, referring to public transportation broadly.

4. Transportation Access — Being able to get to a YouthSource Center using only public transit in under 30 minutes.

5. Social Mobility — In the context of this study, social mobility is defined as the access opportunity youth have to tools that promote higher rates of education and economic standing.

6. Equity — In the context of this study, equity is referring to a future aspiration of equal access to social, political, economic, and cultural opportunities – regardless of race, class, or gender. Equity recognizes that layered inequality is systemic and institutional.

7. Adjacent Service Index -- A term coined by the 2020 Task Force, refers to organizations and nonprofits outside of the YouthSource Centers, and without city funding that are currently working with Opportunity Youth and other vulnerable populations in Los Angeles

8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) — A global framework developed by the United Nations, building on the Millenium Development Goals, aspiring to promote sustainable global solutions to sixteen large overall aspirations using a widely applicable system of targets and qualitative indicators.

9. SDG 16 — "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."[50]

10. SDG 4 — "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."[51]

11. SDG 8 — "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."[52]

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[51] *UN SDGs*.

[52] *UN SDGs*.

12. SDG 10 — "Reduce inequality within and among countries." [53]
13. SDG 11 — "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." [54]
14. Los Angeles — In referring to Los Angeles, we are specifically referring to LA City.

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[53] *UN SDGs.*
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