

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Economic and Workforce Development Committee

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**Tuesday, March 22, 2022**

**2:00 PM**

**City Hall Building**

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**Members Present:** Manny Pelaez, *Chair*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

#### Approval of Minutes

- 1. Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on February 22, 2022.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on February 22, 2022. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Pelaez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Courage

**Absent:** Castillo

#### Public Comments

There was no written or public comment.

#### Briefing and Possible Action on the following items

- 2. Briefing on the status of the ongoing Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Disparity and Causation Analysis Study.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Michael Sindon, Economic Development Administrator, provided an update on the upcoming Disparity Study approved by the City Council in March 2021 and noted that the purpose of the Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Program was to promote the use of small, minority and women owned businesses on City contracts valued at over \$50,000. Sindon reviewed utilization in percentage of contracts and in dollars of minority and women owned businesses since the previous disparity study was completed and of previous years.

Sindon stated that the Disparity Study was a legal requirement to compile and evaluate evidence to set minority and woman owned SBEDA tools on City Contracts and was required to be conducted every 3-5 years. Sindon noted that the Study purpose was to recommend suspension, continuation or expansion of the SBEDA Program and reviewed goals of the Study. He stated that the study would evaluate COSA contracting data from 2014 through 2020, the evaluation of different industry categories and the Study timeline and possible SBEDA Ordinance revisions. Sindon introduced Collett Holt of Collette Holt and Associates who would be conducting the Study and noted that a Disparity Study website and survey would be released and that an extensive marketing outreach campaign would be performed to gain more feedback for the Study.

Councilmember Viagran noted that she felt that the SBEDA Program was not working in the categories of small women owned businesses and that the poverty level in the City of San Antonio was still very high. She acknowledged the past success of SBEDA but felt that more work needed to be done.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the engagement to the current stage was conducted with current business owners in the City's procurement system. Sindon confirmed that current registered City vendors were contacted and that other outreach was also conducted to include more businesses. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the Study survey had been released. Holt stated that the survey would be released in June 2022 and that a marketing campaign would be developed to reach as many businesses as possible. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested that a paper version of the survey be available for businesses who were not able to complete the survey electronically. Holt noted that the Study would gather all data and then analyze data to divide between relevant categories.

Councilmember Castillo asked if delegate agencies would be considered to assist with data collection. Sindon stated that City staff would look into working with delegate agencies to assist in survey completion.

Councilmember Courage supported the Study being conducted and asked if the Study followed Federal identifiers for small and minority businesses. Holt stated that the City would follow the Federal standards but would be able to determine if there were additional variations that could be used but would need to be legally defensible to change the standard. Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the difference of size categories for small, medium, and large businesses. Holt and Sindon provided clarification of different categories and what was considered a small business.

Chair Pelaez stated that it was important to conduct a Disparity Study in order to achieve equity for all businesses and that he was confident in the Study gathering the needed data.

No action was required for Item 2.

**3. Briefing on the San Antonio Small Business Ecosystem Assessment and the status of ongoing related initiatives.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez introduced the Item and Leilah Powell, Executive Director of the Local Initiatives Support Group (LISC) San Antonio Local Office. Powell provided an overview of the San Antonio/Bexar County small business Ecosystem and reviewed the current Ecosystem assessment and the status of ongoing related initiatives. Powell provided an overview of the systemic barriers and recent impacts to small businesses especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic which heavily impacted small, minority and women owned businesses. She noted that the San Antonio Area Foundation had conducted a study that showed a large negative impact to African American businesses during the pandemic.

Powell provided an overview of identifying and overcoming barriers to these business entities and stated that the support of community based groups was key to providing collaboration and assistance to these businesses. Powell noted that developing a small business ecosystem coalition required many steps to include outreach, fiscal resources, and transparency with community partners to include non-profits, delegate agencies and larger organizations.

Councilmember Courage stated that the largest barrier to small businesses was funding and that he hoped that there were other ways to assist small businesses so to have them succeed.

Councilmember Castillo noted her support of coalition building in the community to assist all businesses.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that flexible capital was a large barrier to businesses and was grateful for still considering it in the study. She stressed the importance of small business resource centers for businesses not just in the central City but in all areas of the City. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a list of entities participating in the coalitions by Council District and noted her concern of businesses stating that they failed due to lack of communication of available assistance/programs.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how Community Navigators were being utilized in aiding the public. Powell stated that LISC continuously worked with agencies that provided assistance but did not currently work with a Community Navigator. Ana Bradshaw, Economic Development Assistant Director, stated that the City of San Antonio had not been selected by the Federal Government to be a Community Navigator but was hopeful that the Federal Government would reopen the application process in order to apply.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the City and LISC utilized the Playbook for Economic Development developed at NIL. Economic Development Director Brenda Hicks-Sorenson stated that City staff were closely monitoring the usage of the Playbook with the development of the Economic Development Plan.

Councilmember Viagran asked how the coalition model would be fiscally supported. Powell stated LISC and partners were seeking grant opportunities to continue to fund the coalition and LISC would not seek funding from the City. Powell stated that the challenge of support was to reach out to small businesses for their participation in the coalition but that these businesses did not have the time to support.

Chair Pelaez stated that he often spoke with businesses owners and non-profits that did not have the necessary components to succeed in their endeavors and it was important to discuss realities to these entities. Councilmember Pelaez expressed his support of the study and work being conducted by the collaborative and spoke of the challenges of small businesses not obtaining information on available programs.

No action was required for Item 3.

**4. Briefing on workforce development programs Train for Jobs SA and SA: Ready to Work.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development]

Michael Ramsey, Executive Director of Workforce Development, provided a briefing on workforce development programs Train for Jobs SA (TfJSA) and SA Ready to Work (RTW). Ramsey reviewed the TfJSA program context to include participant demographics, funding categories, program partners and participant pipeline. Ramsey discussed the various training programs and industries and noted that the medical industry was the most utilized training program. Ramsey reviewed the Top 10 employers utilizing graduates of TfJSA program and compared the budget to actual results.

Ramsey provided an overview of the RTW Program and was in the process of obtaining a program evaluation by the University of Texas – San Antonio (UTSA) Urban education Institute and introduced Michael Villarreal who would lead the evaluation team. Villarreal reviewed the approach of services to be provided to the RTW Program. Ramsey further discussed the program evaluation services to be conducted by UTSA and other evaluation partners.

Ramsey discussed the RTW contract for High School Equivalency Services and stated that the services would be provided by the Alamo Community Colleges District. Ramsey provided an overview of the RTW Central Data Platform and the data the platform would collect and evaluate.

Chair Pelaez asked how much of the RTW Platform would be conducted by City Staff. Ramsey

stated that the work would be conducted by the contracted vendor.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on the Equity Matrix Atlas utilized with TfJSA demographics. Ramsey provided clarification of the data.

Councilmember Castillo noted her excitement of the Top 10 participants that utilized the TfJSA programs for hiring workforce program graduates and her support of the workforce programs.

Councilmember Courage asked when training and education would begin. Ramsey stated that training and education would begin in June 2022. Councilmember Courage noted the importance of performance metrics to gauge the success of the workforce programs and to assure the funding provided for the programs was useful and viable. Ramsey reported that 16,000 individuals were anticipated to be placed in jobs at the end of the five-year period.

Councilmember Viagran noted her support for the workforce programs and asked that a “big picture” approach be incorporated, and that childcare and food deserts be considered in addressing workforce needs.

Chair Pelaez stated that it was important to have businesses continue to support these programs and asked if there were any lessons learned in the past rollout of the workforce programs. Ramsey stated that it was important to have early buy in from local businesses which was difficult to do in the past due to the pandemic’s impact on all businesses. Ramsey noted that the City did address the issues confronted by many businesses during the pandemic to include financial assistance, program support and education. Chair Pelaez asked to what extent had Bexar County played in the programs. Ramsey stated that Bexar County had taken the program oath to hire individuals from the workforce programs and that City staff worked with Bexar County to work to expand their developed programs.

No action was required for Item 4.

**5. Briefing and possible action on Department of Human Services (DHS) Head Start Program Model and Program Governance Structure.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Development Services Director Melody Woosley provided an overview of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Head Start Program model and Program Governance Structure which was comprised of the City Council Governing Body and the Head Start Policy Council. She reviewed the advisory committees providing support to the City Council and strategies of the structure. Woosley discussed Head Start Program highlights.

Councilmember Viagran expressed her support of the Head Start Program.

Councilmember Courage noted that there were nine outside partners other than City facilities that

delivered the Head Start Program and asked if the partners had equitable programs to those of the City. Woosley stated that the programs were equitable and Federally regulated to assure equity in all the programs. Councilmember Courage asked if data was available to compare success of Head Start participants compared to children not participating in Head Start programs. Woosley stated that there was no data available for the San Antonio Area but that there were studies conducted nationally which she would share with the Committee.

No action was required for Item 5.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:59 PM.

**Approved**

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*Manny Pelaez, Chairwoman*

**Respectfully Submitted**

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk*