



Economic Recovery Roundtable

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Meeting Information

Focus Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting Back to Work: New Models for Quality Jobs and Workforce Development
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roundtable Overview and Progress• National Workforce Trends• Lived Experience Panel• New Workforce Framework• Feedback

Welcome and Introductions

Sup. Dave Pine, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

- Supervisor Dave Pine welcomed the group to the second of four San Mateo County Economic Recovery roundtables. At the first roundtable, the group heard from small businesses and economists concerning the impact of the pandemic on businesses and workers. That session helped to establish a baseline of information in which a long-term recovery plan can be built. In this meeting, the group will be exposed to new models for quality jobs and workforce development. We understand, after seeing the last recession, how hard it can be to recover equitably. While this pandemic has been challenging, there is a great opportunity present. Together, we can achieve a recovery that puts people first, helps improve the quality of life for workers, and fuels a strong economy. We can look at past challenges with new eyes and build back better. That's why we have invited you to join today's roundtable, as well as the following two roundtables, to share thoughts and receive recommendations on long-term economic recovery.
- In this session, the group will hear from workforce leaders about workforce trends and impacts nationally and locally, while learning about new models for quality jobs and workforce development that could be implemented in San Mateo County. The session will close with insights from two individuals who have undertaken career journeys.

Agenda and Overview

Peggy Jensen, San Mateo County

- Peggy Jensen provided an overview of the agenda for the session. This session is broken into four parts: Roundtable Overview and Progress, National Workforce Trends, Lived Experience Panel, and New Workforce Framework, and finally ending with feedback.
- The goal of these roundtables is to bring together a group of people to share information about new ideas, new approaches, and new ways to do things. With the help of participant feedback,

plans can be made to help build back San Mateo County better. She reminded the group that the next two roundtables are scheduled for September 15 and 29, both from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

- In April 2020, a group formed based on interested participants (anyone could join) to help figure out what the recovery approach should be for San Mateo County. That group helped to address and identify important factors, with the most important being to stop the spread of COVID-19. The eight other factors identify how to build a better future for everyone in San Mateo County. These eight factors are: (1) food, housing, and basic needs, (2) business and nonprofit support, (3) childcare, (4) out-of-school care, (5) public and active transportation, (6) mental health, (7) the digital divide, and (8) workforce development. Today's discussion will focus on workforce development specifically.
- Much has been accomplished over the past 18 months. San Mateo County has received nearly \$200 million in relief funding. More than 1,000 grants have been distributed to small businesses within the County, and more than 5,000 businesses have been assisted with permit relief. Over \$5 million was allocated by the board of supervisors to pay for the environmental health permits for those 5,000 businesses.
- While there are many considerations for the economic future of San Mateo County, today the discussion will be focused on the workforce. In the coming roundtable discussions, other factors will be discussed as they relate to San Mateo's economic future.

Review of Last Session

Peggy Jensen, San Mateo County

- The first presenter from last session was Patrick Kallerman, Vice President of Research at the Bay Area Council Economic Institute. He gathered business intelligence from some of the largest business organizations in the County. He also spoke with several funders that work with entrepreneurs and gained their insights on the San Mateo County economy.
 - Key takeaways
 - Businesses plan to stay in the County, as they believe that the talent is here.
 - Leading higher education institutions will continue to draw in talent from across the country and the globe.
 - Venture capital will continue to thrive in the County and be a driver of investments.
 - Quality of life is key to sustaining a vibrant economy. Housing and transportation concerns were already present before the pandemic and will need to be addressed continuously to better meet the needs of citizens.
 - In conclusion, he stated that life science, which has seen strong growth through the pandemic, should continue to grow in the future.
- The second presenter from the last roundtable was Chris Brenner, Ph.D., professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology at UC Santa Cruz. He shared his research from both before and during the pandemic concerning economic data.
 - Key takeaways
 - Inequality is the most striking characteristic of the labor market, especially in a pandemic.
 - There has been inequality by industry: tech is thriving, while low-wage sectors are really hurting.
 - There is also inequality by demography, including race, immigration status, and gender.

- Some career ladder and growth opportunities exist in all industries but vary greatly.
 - For example, opportunities are limited in the accommodation and food service industries but are more available in the tech industry with higher education degrees.
- The final portion of the previous roundtable included a panel of two small business owners and was moderated by Rosanne Foust. These business owners discussed challenges and hardships that they faced while trying to keep their businesses afloat and successful throughout the pandemic.

NOVAworks Overview and Introduction

Kris Stadelman, Director of NOVAworks

Annelies Goger, David Rubenstein Fellow at the Brookings Institution

Luther Jackson, Program Manager at NOVAworks

- NOVAworks is the federally chartered workforce board for northern Santa Clara County and all of San Mateo County. While talent is everywhere, opportunities are not. In this session, Kris Stadelman will discuss the work that NOVAworks have been doing on behalf of San Mateo County to better connect talent with opportunity. Work needs to be done on both sides of the labor market equation. Workers need barriers removed to scale acquisition, and employers need to open opportunities to workers based on skills and abilities rather than just on credentials. In this session, the group will hear from a national researcher, listen to the personal stories of workers who have been unemployed during the pandemic, and the NOVAworks staff and their consultant will talk more about the work that has been done today. They will close with what work is left to be done.
- On September 9, 2020, Brookings published a blog post co-authored by Annelies and Luther. It was titled *The Labor Market Doesn't Have a Skills Gap, It Has an Opportunity Gap*. In it, they criticized the narrative of the labor market framing through a deficit lens. While unemployed workers are seen as being at fault for not having enough or the right skills, the authors argue that the skills gap narrative treats the labor market as if it is transactional and assumes that hiring practices are objective.

National Best Practices for Equity and Sustained Workforce Recovery and Resilience

Annelies Goger, David Rubenstein Fellow at Brookings Institution

- Annelies Goger discussed the notion of framing the conversation about talent in terms of an opportunity gap and not a skills gap. Creating pathways into the middle class must go beyond more than the traditional college degree.
 - The three topics being discussed in this session:
 - What the opportunity gap means in the Silicon Valley context
 - Systemic challenges that prevent opportunity
 - Local examples and ways that local citizens can participate in order to boost opportunity
- At Brookings, researchers publish the *Metro Monitor*, a series of indicators that looks at the top 53 metropolitan areas in the country. This information provides a barometer to see how people are doing on different measures. The San Jose/Sunnyvale/Santa Clara region ranked second out of 53

in growth, first out of 53 in prosperity, and fiftieth out of 53 in racial inclusion. So, the opportunity is there; however, not all demographics are being included or have these opportunities available to them.

- In this region, the future of talent (populations under age 15) is majority Latino or Hispanic (36%) and Asian (34%). It is important to think about who the future talent is and how to best invest in them and their futures.
 - However, there are many pain points for those workers looking for opportunities. It was found that often workers do not have equal access to information and professional networks. They also often hear about outright discrimination in the hiring process, along with blanket exclusions (i.e., excluding everyone with criminal convictions from job consideration). There is also a lack of ongoing learning and career-mobility opportunities, meaning that, often, there is not a clear way to advance. There is also an overuse of degree requirements, when often they may not be necessary. This also touches upon the notion of degrees not being accessible nor affordable for many. And even degree holders may not have the skills or experience needed to be successful in the workplace.
- By taking a closer look at California's public higher education system, it is noted that Latino and black students are severely underrepresented in the system. This means that, because few individuals are represented from these groups in higher education, employers have a small pool from which to choose and therefore find it difficult to diversify their companies. On the national level, the tech industry has not made much progress on diversity and inclusion (83% White, 9% Asian, 7% Latino, and 1% Black). Unless employers change how they hire and how they recruit, we will not see much progress in this area.
- When looking at data concerning supervisors of production workers, an interesting piece of information was found. Workers that were already employed (mostly Baby Boomers) often did not have a degree (only 16%). However today, 67% of job postings for the same exact job require a bachelor's degree or higher. This brings about the idea that employers must rethink if degrees are necessary.
- Diversifying a company also yields greater benefits. Companies with below-average diversity scores have only 26% average innovation revenue, while companies with above-average diversity scores have 45% average innovation revenue.
- It is important to think about the ways in which we can help improve diversity and inclusion within businesses. We can make these strides within talent but also in supplier diversity and community wealth building.
 - There are also talent-focused ways to target inclusion
 - The first way is through career navigation by helping to de-mystify the job search and make it as easy as possible. This aspect helps to break down the information barrier.
 - The second way is through the fair chance hiring initiative, as seen with the company, Next Chapter. Next Chapter provides apprenticeships for people leaving incarceration. This initiative helps to provide resources and opportunities to those who are just getting back on their feet.
 - The third way is through guaranteed income, as seen through the Seed project, where they gave families \$500 each. This greatly lessened the everyday stresses of worrying about paying for different bills and everyday necessities.
 - It is also important to note the things that businesses can do on their end
 - The first is executive commitments, where top management comes together and agrees to hire talent that is diverse.

- The second is skills-based hiring that aims to shift the narrative from companies hiring heavily based on degrees to hiring based on skill set.
- The third is apprenticeships, which allows for an individual to learn while being paid. They will work part of their week on the job and part of their week in the classroom to build their skillset and allow them to earn a high-paying job upon completion.

Q&A

- What information are you providing to the community and San Mateo County, and what plans do they have in supporting these companies that may not have the resources to put these in place?
 - There is a lot of funding out there (state, county, nonprofit, etc.) to allocate service coordination to ensure that everyone is moving in the right direction. It is important to set goals and a common vision to ensure that everyone is working toward the same outcome.
- How do these companies obtain information and resources to accomplish this?
 - The best practice is to organize by sector. When you make it easy for an employer to engage in an organized effort, not only can that group then pass along that information, but it helps the employers share information and ask questions to other companies to find the best solutions.
- From a national standpoint, could you provide some examples of places that have done this kind of coordinating especially well?
 - One of the places to look for examples of coordinating on racial equity specifically would be Seattle. There, a lot of CEOs agreed on common goals for achieving racial equity and racial inclusion. Minneapolis is also another great example to look at.
- With the pandemic stalled by the delta variant, how do we keep the momentum for change alive?
 - It is important to recognize that labor markets are not automatic, and it can take a while to bounce back and find a new job. A lot of people underestimate how many things someone, especially now, may be thinking about and weighing before going back to work or choosing a new job. It is important for employers to be more transparent and offer more stability throughout this.
- Does Brookings see a potential for the labor movement to open new opportunities for workers and apprenticeships?
 - Yes. A lot of apprenticeships, especially outside the United States, are in nontraditional occupations. There is a lot of opportunity and a lot of funding going into expansion in that area, and often they are intermediated by nonprofits and community colleges. Within the Infrastructure Bill and the Green Jobs Agenda, there is a lot of focus on apprenticeship and on labor movements. We have about 200,000 apprentices in the United States, but we must go beyond that moving forward. People also need to be aware of these apprenticeship opportunities, and labor unions are going to play a strong role in the outreach to workers.
- How can this information get to the high schools? How is this information being used to increase high school opportunities?
 - Because of the information gap, you have to go back even into the grammar schools and practice something called "sniffing." This involves having students learn about a new job every week, and later it develops into shadowing basically. Guidance counselors could also become more involved in explaining different career paths to students with or without degree paths.

- Can we talk more about the pipeline? What kind of youth programs create strong skilled pipelines for candidates of color? If our kids of color are graduating (51%) but not ready for jobs or connected to jobs what responsibility do schools have for addressing that gap?
 - In the United States, we simply do not have a system whereby someone in high school can opt to choose a more work-based approach to getting into a career like an apprenticeship or something where they get more exposure to an actual job. There is also often a perception among employers that young talent is a risk and not an asset. So, there is going to be a need for a mindset shift where you invite talent in and give them a chance to develop their skills (especially soft skills). However, systems need to be built to offer avenues into apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning to create those pipelines.

Local Worker Journey

Luther Jackson, Program Manager at NOVAworks

Gisele Darden, Project Manager and Educator (NOVAworks Customer)

Shanise Perry, Software Engineer (Npower Student)

- Luther Jackson facilitated the local worker journey panel with Gisele Darden and Shanise Perry. Luther began by asking both panelists to provide background on their career journeys.
 - Gisele
 - Gisele shared how she has extensive experience for more than 10 years through working with the technology and pharmaceutical industries and in education. Her strong talents are streamlining business processes and training teams on ever-changing requirements. Most recently after her layoff, she entered education, working as a special needs aide. Her greatest passion is being an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise shared how she has worked closely with state legislators to improve the foster care system while also working within her community to put on different events. In her professional career, she has held mainly client-facing roles to support herself and fund her education and everyday life expenses.
- Luther then asked both panelists to describe what unique talents they have to offer employers in San Mateo County.
 - Gisele
 - Gisele stated that she believes that her greatest talent is building relationships. She stated that we cannot get things done without teams, and that, through her work, she learns more and more about ways to work better as a group. She also believes that she is strong at conflict resolution. She stressed that conflict is not a bad thing, and that it can help to bring people together to try and come to a resolution and mutual understanding. She is also comfortable with ambiguity, is extremely self-motivated, and is a natural leader.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise stated that her technical and professional skills, strong interpersonal communication skills, practice in both crisis and general management, and her willingness to see opportunity all set her apart as an excellent and unique candidate.
- Luther then asked the panelists to elaborate more on some of the challenges that they have faced while navigating to a fulfilling career.

- Gisele
 - Gisele shared that her biggest challenge is spending multiple cycles on trying to get things done; trying to work through agencies and other support systems out there. However, these groups do not speak to one another and end up failing her. For example, she is dealing with many different appeals just to support herself and her family when she could be using that time networking, upscaling, going out there and finding new opportunities, etc. Just trying to navigate that process has been a huge challenge for her. Another challenge is that, when working with housing, healthcare, and other organizations, these folks do not always have all the information that they need to help her. So, it is very important that the people in these organizations that want to help folks such as Gisele have all of the information that they need to do so.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise shared that a big challenge was not being able to explore her interests in career paths as in-depth as she wished to. She also could not prioritize her education due to the need to work and earn a livable wage. There was also a lack of examples of women in tech. At first, she thought technology was boring, but she now sees how creative and fun it can be. She credits Npower with showing her how much fun learning can be in this field.
- Luther then asked Shanise to elaborate more on her experience at Npower and how what she is learning there will affect her career journey.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise shared how she not only has access to free education but also to important resources, networks, and career opportunities to help her achieve her career goals. She has obtained her ITF certificate, Google Professional IT Certificate, and is currently working on other certifications. She also learned how to network, better communicate, and how to best present herself. Now she has all of the skills she needs to enter into a tech career and succeed.
- Luther then asked Gisele to elaborate more on her experience with NOVAworks and how what she is learning there will affect her career journey.
 - Gisele
 - Gisele shared how the workshops through NOVAworks have been excellent for both her and the people that she volunteers to mentor. She also noted how these workshops have helped her to better understand LinkedIn, networking, and writing a resume. Mock interviews have also been extremely helpful as well.
- Luther then asked the panelists to share what else they may need to reach her career goals and what may be next.
 - Gisele
 - Gisele stated that it is not just one thing that she needs, but she must be a continuous and ongoing learner. What she needs the most to advance, however, is opportunity. She knows that she can go out there and learn and develop all the skills that she needs, but they are of no benefit to her if she does not have the opportunity.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise stated that her next steps are to continue her education and continue to earn different certifications, along with getting the job experience. She also wishes to have a mentor within the tech industry that can help guide her.

- Luther then asked both panelists what their dream job is and what they think this resourceful community should be doing to help them achieve their dream job.
 - Gisele
 - Gisele shared that her dream job has less to do with the actual title and more about using her strengths and experience within an organization and bring value to them. What is most important to her is that the organization’s vision and mission aligns with her values. What that means to her is that the company not only “talks the talk” but also “walks the walk,” cares about increasing diversity and inclusion, and actually implements change over time.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise shared that her dream job is one with good people and provides a healthy challenge so that she can continue to grow. She also wishes to work in an environment where she is happy to show up in the role she plays in the organization, while also offering her flexibility.

Q&A

- From your perspective, if you were an employer (e.g., the CEO), what would you tell your staff or HR to do to reach talent and make them feel welcome?
 - Gisele
 - Gisele stressed that it must start from the top, and senior executives need to buy into it. If they do not care about diversity and inclusion or do not see how they bring value, nothing will change. Everyone in the company must understand the great benefits of increasing diversity by including folks with different backgrounds and experiences. Then they must teach, educate, and implement changes.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise would encourage diversity training and encourage Human Resources teams to hire a diverse workforce—not just college graduates, but also reach out to different programs and other alternative programs to connect with those candidates.
 - Gisele added onto Shanise’s answer. She explained the importance of offering mentorship programs as they bring someone new into the company.
- How can we reach out to Gisele and Shanise if we have something that might be of interest to them career wise?
 - They can contact NOVAworks and Npower and be directly connected to Gisele and Shanise.
- What was the most harmful barrier that you have faced so far?
 - Gisele
 - Gisele shared that the most harmful barrier has been the biases from other people based on age and race. Some people have made subtle and even blatant remarks about her race, and that has been extremely difficult for her.
 - Shanise
 - Shanise shared that the most harmful barrier has not only been age, but the fact that most companies will require you to have some form of a degree. So even though you could have all of these great skills and experience, some companies will not even consider you without a degree.

New Workforce Framework: Our Process and Partners

Robert Bell, Managing Partner Robert Bell & Associates

Kris Stadelman, Director of NOVAworks

- Robert Bell explained how his company, through the help of the County and NOVAworks, met across sector with different institutions and community-based centers to work both as a design team and as a community resource group. The design team developed a workforce framework, and the community resource group worked to gain reactions to that framework (and to ensure that it covered everything that it needed).
 - With regard to the framework; initially, when the groups were brought together, the charge was to look at interventions to bring back workers into the workforce post-pandemic. The group began by finding a host of interventions, but then they took a step back. They asked themselves what exactly they were trying to accomplish and how they could accomplish their goals with equity at the forefront.
- The individuals who make up both the design team and community resource group were shared. The design team had two meetings over the course of the last 2 months to flesh out interventions and create the framework. The community resource group came together and then provided feedback to the design team.
 - These groups want an ongoing role in workforce development initiatives—this is not a one-and-done thing for them. They want to participate and bring their organizational assets to this process.
- Important information regarding the design team:
 - Mission
 - Getting diverse talent on the field to benefit individuals, communities, and the regional economy
 - Vision
 - Economic recovery with strengthened and coordinated systems that are built to last
 - Group's Interests
 - Equitable and inclusive programs that support all workers
 - Support the "whole" person
 - Quality jobs with good pay and benefits
 - Shared intelligence, connection, and leveraged resources
 - Segment degrees of needs
 - Provide *choice* and career paths
 - Experiment, evaluate, and adjust
- The community group feedback to the framework:
 - Expand on how the framework will be used
 - The equity imperative needs to be woven into each phase
 - Consistent with human-centered design, need to get workers' stories and input
 - Explore developing an employer's journey
 - Identify best workforce development practices of leading companies
 - Bring the group back together for updates and feedback on the process
- The Framework: The Worker's Journey
 - These are the four phases that were created to support the whole individual throughout their career journey.
 - Phase 1
 - Infrastructure Needs

- Childcare
 - Financial Assistance
 - Phase 2
 - Skill Development and Enhancement
 - Phase 3
 - Career Search and Path
 - Phase 4
 - Ongoing Support
- This framework achieves three distinct things that are somewhat different than what a typical workforce program would achieve.
 - Connectivity
 - Creates and connects NOVAworks to a number of services throughout San Mateo County. Creates new partnerships, relationships, and network of services.
 - Emphasis on Equity
 - Looking at interventions through this lens; and this is the first and foremost approach.
 - A Multigenerational Approach
 - Implementing multigenerational programs is what changes the quality of life for a family and will sustain them economically. This can be seen through helping to facilitate childcare while simultaneously providing training and apprentice programs for the adults in the home.
- Robert then asked the group to participate through menti.com. They asked the question, *“What other barriers may a worker face in entering or re-entering the workforce?”*
 - Some of the answers received:
 - Childcare, language, age, transportation, COVID concerns, affordable housing, discrimination, access, racism
- Design team and community group input
 - How to measure success of workforce interventions and programs
 - Indicators that are informative, not punitive
 - Earnings and benefits of customers
 - Mapping career growth paths and patterns
 - Develop longitudinal observations that measure the progress of the ecosystem
 - Evaluation tools that measure multi-generational impacts
- Next Steps
 - Incorporate feedback and ideas from today’s session
 - Report back to the design team and community group
 - Analyze future interventions in relation to the framework
 - Present to County Board of Supervisors
 - Develop *Road Show* to raise awareness and increase participation
 - Design process for an “Employer Journey”
 - Continue to work with design team and community resource group on new and equitable workforce development programs
 - They also plan on promoting a “Hire Local” strategy, where they meet with entire families in the community to educate them about possible opportunities and the skillset that they can develop to succeed in those careers.
- What do the next steps look like at the ground or grassroots level?

- Hope to build a network of different organizations to help support the worker on his or her journey while also successfully sharing information with the entire community.
 - This was shown in a compass format, involving the following institutions
 - Nonprofit organizations
 - Dependent care
 - Government agencies
 - Financial assistance
 - Educational partners
 - Career development and navigation
 - Faith and community-based organizations
 - Housing
 - The compass symbolizes all of the information being in one place but being pushed out through each end (i.e., each organization) to the community.
 - If you are part of an organization listed above or feel that you can help, please contact Kris and provide her your information.
- Kris then asked the group to participate through menti.com. They asked the question, *“What other services may a worker need on their journey?”*.
 - Some of the answers received:
 - Mentors, housing, networking, training, childcare, transportation, healthcare

Closing

Danielle Lee

- Danielle Lee offered closing remarks and thanked each presenter for their time, and also thanked the participants for sharing their ideas. As a reminder, all of the meeting materials are posted at smcrecovery.org.
- The next Economic Roundtable meetings will be held this month and will feature the following topics:
 - September 15: Supporting Vibrant Downtowns
 - September 29: Fostering Economic Resilience
 - ◆ Both meetings are from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.