



DATE: April 16, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: John R. Gillison, City Manager

INITIATED BY: Rick Snawder, Battalion Chief
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SUBJECT: PathwaysRC – A Plan to Develop Pathways to Public Service. (CITY)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive and file a presentation on PathwaysRC, a plan to develop pathways to public service.

BACKGROUND:

California's local governments are facing a workforce crisis, with 70% of the state's cities, counties, and special districts struggling with recruitment and retention. This issue can lead to significant vacancies in essential positions and ultimately disrupt services for local community members and hinder effective planning for the future of many cities. (ILG, 2024)

The City of Rancho Cucamonga is committed to fostering a strong, engaged community by cultivating local talent and encouraging civic involvement. PathwaysRC is a plan designed to introduce and inform Rancho Cucamonga residents and others, particularly students from elementary school through college, about career opportunities within the city and local government. In September of 2024, a group of city employees began working on PathwaysRC as part of the Lincoln Vibrant Communities Team Program. This program brings together the forces of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Claremont Lincoln University in a powerful program for leaders and teams engaged in addressing public sector challenges. They partner with organizations to support municipalities in addressing common and complex issues, creating thriving communities. Participants were tasked with creating a plan to address an issue that, if resolved, would significantly improve the community. (Claremont Lincoln University, 2024)

The Rancho Cucamonga team selected workforce development as its issue to address and developed PathwaysRC. Understanding this issue is complex and includes many different components, the group chose to focus on developing a plan that will help to create pathways to public service. By choosing a career in public service, people can directly contribute to the growth and well-being of the local communities they call home, creating a legacy of service and civic pride. PathwaysRC serves as a starting point for greater workforce development efforts.

ANALYSIS:

In the past decade, Rancho Cucamonga has experienced remarkable growth due to its unique approach to city building, resulting in an increase in population, employment opportunities, and business investment. However, approximately 85% of the working population in Rancho Cucamonga commutes outside the city for employment. Plus, only 33% of the people who work for the city, are residents of the community. To address the workforce development challenges faced by local government agencies, including those in Rancho Cucamonga, it is essential to create new pathways to public service for future generations of local leaders and city builders. This will help ensure opportunities for local economic development, education, local hiring, internships, and employment from cradle to career. Over time this will help to increase resident retention, preserve educational resources and human capital, and promote equitable opportunities for everyone to thrive.

The City's General Plan, known as PlanRC, is the vessel for the community's forward-thinking approach to city building. PlanRC puts people at the forefront of the city building process and includes policies addressing issues such as current and future workforce development needs. One such policy is known as LC-3.7 and states the following:

Develop our Economy. *Actively promote and encourage opportunities for local economic development, education, housing, locally hiring, internships and employment from cradle to career so as to increase resident retention, improve and grow a strong local economy, achieve a positive jobs-housing match; retain critical educational resources and human capital, reduce regional commuting, gas consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and ensure equitable opportunities for all residents of the City and region to thrive.*

The City's Economic Development Strategy (EDS), adopted in October 2023, builds on the framework laid out by PlanRC and fortifies linkages to its goals, including fostering growth of local businesses and workforce. General Plan Policy LC-3.7 heavily influenced workforce development related goals and action items in the EDS. Included in the EDS are strategies intended to foster growth of the local workforce by expanding higher education opportunities, cultivating local innovation, and connecting students, job seekers, and employers with workforce development opportunities. Just as the EDS was built from the foundation laid by PlanRC, PathwaysRC continues to build off the workforce development goals, policies, and strategies set forth in PlanRC and the EDS.

PathwaysRC aims to tackle both the industry wide challenge of public sector workforce shortages and the local challenge of the perceived limited amount of employment opportunities within the city. It is intended to build awareness of the diverse career opportunities within local government and public service. The plan is focused on the following key priorities:

- Provide opportunities for all residents to thrive.
- Provide opportunities for engagement and learning at multiple levels of education.
- Increase resident retention and human capital through workforce development efforts.
- Create opportunities for community members from cradle to career.
- Actively promote and encourage opportunities for greater education and local hiring.

PathwaysRC Programming

PathwaysRC was structured to engage students and young professionals at multiple educational levels, focusing on developing an ongoing and sustainable community engagement program to educate future workforce participants, ensuring early exposure to municipal careers and fostering a deep sense of local commitment. Per the plan, engagement would occur at three different stages. These stages, along with ideas for initial program elements are displayed below:

1. Elementary & Middle School Program
2. High School Program
3. Early Career Program

Elementary & Middle School Program

Aimed at early engagement to educate children about various careers in public service and local government. Programming at this level could include the following components:

- **School Career Days to share public service careers** – coordinate with school districts within the city to attend (or to continue to attend) career days and share work experiences.
 - Cadence – 4 events/year
- **Community Service Events** – attend Community events with a booth and interactive activities to educate and inspire children about careers in public service and local government.
 - Cadence – 2 events/year
- **Day in the Life Videos** – Produce a series of videos interviewing City Staff about their jobs including day-to-day responsibilities, their pathway to this type of career, and why they love public service. Videos could be shown at library events, on social media, and in other places.
 - Cadence – 1 program/year
- **Healthy RC Youth Leaders** – Middle school students are assigned a capstone project to solve over the course of the year focusing on different community issues. City staff and nonprofit individuals lead each team's capstone project and provide guidance.
 - Cadence – 1 event/year

High School Program

Focuses on outlining career paths, offering course credits, and providing guidance on college or other training opportunities available for students to prepare themselves for careers in the public sector.

- **Pathways to Public Service Day** – Students come to City Hall and meet with department directors and others to learn about their personal pathway into public service. Allow students the opportunity to meet employees in a smaller group setting and ask questions.
 - Cadence – 1 event/year
- **Civic Spark Opportunity** – Partner with High Schools to offer course credit for Civic Spark program where students work at City Hall in the afternoon for a semester. Students would rotate shadowing different departments for a two-week period.
 - Cadence – 2 events/year
- **Career Fairs** – City staff to attend High School Career Fairs to educate students about different opportunities within the Public Sector and the benefits of public service.
 - Cadence – 4 events/year
- **Healthy RC Youth Leaders** – High school students are assigned a capstone project to solve over the course of the year focusing on different community issues. City staff and nonprofit individuals lead each team’s capstone project and provide guidance.
 - Cadence – 1 event/year

Early College and Young Professional Development

Focuses on forming one-on-one connections with City staff and people early in their careers to help paint a picture of careers in the public sector.

- **Internships** – Offer paid internship programs across various City departments to attract staff. Internships should be paid where possible to attract quality applicants. Explore potential grant opportunities to fund program.
 - Cadence – Ongoing
- **Apprenticeship Network** – Partner with community colleges and technical institutes to offer a one-on-one apprenticeship program. Students are paired with a city employee for a six-month period to meet and discuss their career path and answer questions.
 - Cadence – 1 offering/year
- **RC Hiring Fair** – City staff to continue to offer and expand annual RC Hiring Fair which includes over 200+ participants and discuss various job opening opportunities at the city.
 - Cadence – Ongoing, 1 event/year
- **Community College Connections** – Develop & deepen connections with Community Colleges within the City to participate in their ongoing programs including multiple career fairs annually, employee training events, and mentorship programs for minorities or first-generation college students.
 - Cadence – Ongoing

Digging Into the Data

The development of PathwaysRC was informed by different surveys conducted as part of other plans or initiatives, as well as a survey of existing workforce development initiatives. First, data was analyzed from the city's Quality of Life Survey conducted between July and December 2023. That survey was to serve as a catalyst for the creation of innovative programs and targeted strategies to address health issues and gaps in access to resources within the community. Then, the development of PlanRC included an extensive community engagement program which aimed to be inclusive, intentional and equitable. Efforts prioritized determining values and ideas for the future of the city. Finally, an internal survey was conducted by the team who developed PathwaysRC. Identifying the available and existing resources provided by the city was deemed a necessity. There was no specific and comprehensive database regarding workforce development prior to the work on PathwaysRC. So, the team gathered representatives from various city departments to gain an inventory of any related existing programs, activities and events. Thirty-four initiatives were identified, and a Workforce Development Inventory Database document was developed.

PathwaysRC Is and Is Not

Since its beginning, the City of Rancho Cucamonga has committed to creating a world-class community. With each decade and each generation, the idea of what makes a world-class community has evolved, but it remains grounded in the concepts of excellence, opportunity, and high quality of live. Like the City, PathwaysRC is a plan that will also evolve over time and adapt to different conditions and challenges. It is a start to a greater workforce development effort.

PathwaysRC Is:

- A **vision** and **guide** for the development of future local government leaders.
- A **start to and piece** of a larger, long-term citywide workforce development program.
- **Aligned** with the City's goals as outlined in the City's General Plan, known as PlanRC and the Economic Development Strategy.
- **Routinely evolving**, as it will need to be further researched, developed, and updated regularly to remain relevant and provide the greatest impact.

PathwaysRC Is Not:

- A **Plan to Overrule All Plans**. This plan builds off other plans and initiatives within the city. It is designed to be collaborative in nature and supportive of previous and future efforts.
- **Complete**. Like many of the City's plans, this plan will continue to constantly evolve and be responsive to change.
- **Perfect**. This plan builds off of other City efforts and is a starting point for greater workforce development efforts citywide.
- A **Quick Fix**. This work will not happen overnight, but there is a strong commitment to systemic change.

Next Steps

To begin moving forward with implementation of PathwaysRC, the following next steps were developed:

- **Pathways RC Subcommittee:** Develop a workforce development subcommittee consisting of members of multiple city departments at various levels within the organization to make the Vision & Goals outlined in PathwaysRC a reality.
- **Research:** Investigate workforce development programs in other local government agencies to develop an understanding of best practices to assist with future programming. Potentially send members from the PathwaysRC Subcommittee to these agencies to learn more about their programs. This will include cities such as Fort Lauderdale, St. Louis, Lewisburg, Tempe, and many more.
- **Workforce Development Hub Publication:** Generate a comprehensive list of existing and available PathwaysRC programs that community members can register to participate in, allowing for activity cross promotion, improved accessibility, and resource identification.

CONCLUSION:

"Pathways RC" represents a strategic investment in the future of Rancho Cucamonga by inspiring the next generation of public service professionals. By emphasizing the personal and community-wide benefits of serving one's hometown, this initiative seeks to instill a profound sense of purpose and pride in local government careers. Through "Pathways RC," the city can cultivate homegrown talent, enhance civic engagement, and build a more resilient workforce dedicated to making Rancho Cucamonga an even greater place to live, work and play. Staff looks forward to Council's feedback and support in advancing this important initiative.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is not fiscal impact at this time. As work on implementing PathwaysRC moves forward, any related budget request will be made as part of the city's formal budget process.

COUNCIL MISSION / VISION / VALUES /GOAL(S) ADDRESSED:

- Providing and nurturing a high quality of life for all
- Building and preserving a family-oriented atmosphere
- Intentionally embracing and anticipating our future
- Equitable and prosperity for all

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - PathwaysRC