

# WARD 5 WORKS

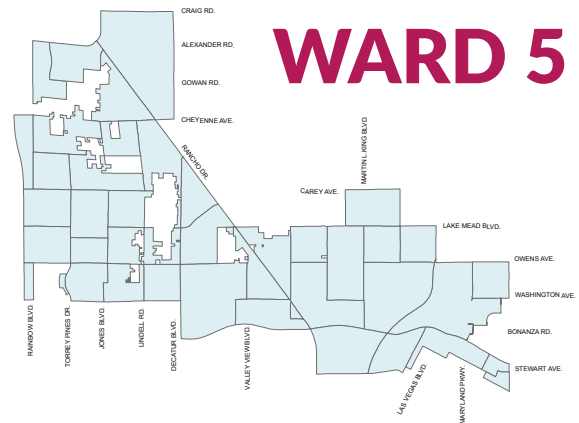
Increasing economic mobility through employer partnerships and career pathways



## Overview

Located in the heart of the city of Las Vegas, Ward 5 has 103,204 residents. Ward 5 is home to many iconic areas such as the historic West Las Vegas neighborhood, Moulin Rouge site, Lorenzi Park and the renovated Historic Westside School. Ward 5 also has experienced tremendous economic redevelopment in downtown Las Vegas with the development of Symphony Park, The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, World Market Center, Enterprise Park, Ahern Rentals Headquarters, McDonalds Headquarters and several other projects as the economy rebounds.

The unemployment rate in Nevada is below 4.6 percent, the lowest rate since August 2007. While the city is experiencing remarkable growth in the area, portions of Ward 5 remain virtually the same. Within certain zip codes, unemployment tops 15 percent, nearly 400 percent higher than the State rate. Residents dependent on public assistance are two times higher in Ward 5, than the overall city of Las Vegas. The distribution of wealth and opportunity are disproportionate within the community.



## Goal

The goal of Ward 5 Works is to increase economic mobility for low-income and/or less educated workers through employer partnerships and career pathways within targeted high demand sectors. Residents should be afforded access to good jobs that pay family-sustaining wages, including healthcare and retirement benefits and offer opportunities for advancement.

## Ward 5 Works Strategic Actions

### Serve as a Workforce Intermediary

Ward 5 Works is focusing on three primary sectors: Building and Trades/Construction, Healthcare and Technology. In each of these areas, businesses and contractors are seeking individuals that are work ready. Ward 5 Works will serve as a workforce intermediary, making strategic connections between employers and WIOA training/service providers, to ensure that Ward 5 residents have greater access to the resources needed for employment success. As a workforce intermediary, Ward 5 Works will:

- Improve workforce development opportunities by focusing on sector specific strategies and working closely with various stakeholders
- Work with employers/contractors to discuss local workforce needs and identify the skills necessary to be considered work ready
- Connect businesses with a work ready pipeline by assisting employers/contractors with hosting hiring events and project showcases
- Coordinate with WIOA services providers to ensure potential applicants are pre-screened for hiring events
- Increase awareness of training and employment opportunities and conduct outreach using community navigators
- Conduct research on local workforce needs and barriers to employment
- Increase economic mobility for workers through family-wage, entry-level jobs



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## Build a Talent Pipeline

### Using Community Navigators: Making Connections and Building Relationships

Ward 5 Works will use community navigators to help unemployed, low-income or less educated individuals access training opportunities that will lead to gainful employment. Using the housing and employment navigator model, established by Building Changes and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor/ Workforce Innovation Fund, community navigators will work one-on-one with participants to identify employment barriers and other circumstances that interfere with their economic mobility. Navigators serve as a coach and develop cross-system partnerships that include, but not limited to, the Department of Health & Human Services, Workforce Connections and Affordable Housing agencies. Community navigators often have backgrounds in social work or human services, and are skilled motivators and problem solvers.

### Analyzing Talent Flow

As part of Ward 5 Works, Applied Analysis is assisting the city to gain further insight into employment barriers and challenges resulting from protracted rates of unemployment in the Ward 5. The city will assemble a group of experts and service providers, identifying the obstacles faced by the participant and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the services available to assist them. The end goal is to find a job for the participant and learn from the details of their experience relative to changes that need to be made to the assistance network to improve its effectiveness.

Notably, the city also intends to follow each of the participants post placement to determine the extent to which any assistance resulted in sustained improvement. The ultimate outcome is to make modifications to workforce development services, in conjunction with community-based partners that are effective in reducing unemployment and underemployment and stemming the tide of the very real social consequences that stem there from.

### Expand Education and Training Center Opportunities

The Nevada workforce system includes a series of agencies working together to provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of support that eliminate barriers such as loss of subsidy benefits, access to affordable housing, childcare and transportation. While many job-seeking individuals benefit greatly, some individuals require more personalized assistance and encouragement to help them overcome barriers to employment.

Working with the city of Las Vegas Departments of Economic and Urban Development and Youth Development and Social Innovation, additional training programs related to the demand sectors will be courted to utilize the remaining office suites at the Historic Westside School. The Historic Westside School, which dates back to 1923 and was renovated in 2016, provides office suites that average 800 square-feet. Currently, at the Historic Westside School, Tech Impact, a nonprofit whose mission is to empower communities and nonprofits to use technology to better serve our world, offers training in CXWorks, Punchcode and ITWorks. The program focuses on young adults ages 18-26 and provides them with the skills necessary to obtain entry-level employment. Additionally, by cultivating a partnership with a culinary school and a local chef, the plan is to open an eatery in the Westside School Café that also provides work experience for the residents.



The long-term plan is to develop a true one-stop education and training center within historic West Las Vegas to offer sector specific, work-based learning in high demand occupations. A full range of services from community navigator coaches to childcare and other supportive services are expected to be provided onsite. The goal is to prepare Ward 5 residents for high demand, family wage employment.

## Building Our Future Workforce Today

In Nevada, unemployment rates as of June 2018 was 8.4 percent among ages 16-24. Data collected by the Economic Alliance suggests that there is a huge skills gap and a downturn in company investments in workforce development. Seventy percent of survey participants in the Workforce Readiness Report Card cite deficiencies among high school graduates in such skills as professionalism, teamwork, critical thinking, communication and work ethic. Essentially, the report identified demonstrating personal accountability and effective work habits, such as punctuality and time management as needs improvement areas. The emerging workforce is unprepared to fill the minimal skill requirements for entry-level jobs. Ward 5 Works is committed to ensuring youth and young adults have access to the training needed to compete for entry-level employment.

### Strong Future Tech Studio

The Strong Future Tech Studio, slated to be located in the Westside School, will provide ages 16-24 with the opportunity to gain skills in technology to prepare them for in demand tech careers. Through work-based training, youth participants will be able to get certificates or stackable credentials in the five technology areas listed below along with job placement assistance:

- Coding
- App Development
- E-Sports
- Video Game Production (including music technology and design)
- Cybersecurity

### Strong Future Youth Employment Program

The Strong Future Youth Employment Program is a city-wide program to address workforce readiness and to help the emerging workforce here in Las Vegas learn the valuable soft skills needed to become effective employees in the 21st century workforce. Research shows that youth employment programs help our future workforce build new and valuable skills. One study of youth jobs programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families found that nearly 75 percent of youth who participated in these programs improved their work readiness skills.

Youth, ages 16-19, gain hands on work experience and receive training from area leaders and community partners. Youth participate in employability training and gain skills in public speaking, initiative and enterprise, effective communication, social media responsibility, effective time management, conflict resolution, interviewing techniques/strategies, resume writing, technology, planning and organizing and teamwork.

For more information call the Department of Youth Development and Social Innovation at 702.229.5437

