

LEAPS

CHILD CARE DISCOVERY REPORT



LEAPS Community Action Group Outcomes & Resources

February 2025



Table of Contents

Introduction

San Diego Call to Action

Strong Community Response: LEAPS San Diego

Key partners in development and implementation

Discovery and Outcomes

Blueprint Goal 1: The child care workforce is well-trained, supported, valued as a profession, and paid competitive wages.

Objectives

Strategies

Strategy 1.1 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Existing models

Strategy 1.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Provider needs & how to meet them

Strategy 1.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Incentivizing license expansion requires creative effort

Strategy 1.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Support existing funding providers

Blueprint Goal 2: Safe and quality facilities are developed and renovated to expand child care programs, particularly in geographic areas where child care is scarce or family demand outpaces supply.

Objectives

Strategies

Strategy 2.5 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Suggestions for new locations

Blueprint Goal 3: All families have access to child care that meets their needs and preferences and supports their children’s learning, physical and mental health, and social-emotional development.

Objectives

Strategies

Strategy 3.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Existing models can support expansion

Strategy 3.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Barriers to accessibility

Strategy 3.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: SDCOE is doing groundwork

Strategy 3.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: A new portal vision can address multiple Blueprint strategies

Strategy 3.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Employers lack interest in providing employee child care

Strategy 3.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Smaller businesses need creative solutions

Strategy 3.5 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Gathering data on workers’ actual child care needs is critical

Strategy 3.8 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Expanding TK needs to support a robust mixed delivery system

Additional LEAPS CAG-CC Recommendations

LEAPS CAG-CC Members

Introduction

The issue of delivering accessible and quality child care for families in the workforce has challenged generation after generation, but has been elevated to greater public prominence over the last five years. Driven greatly by the impact of COVID-19—and the subsequent disproportionate number of women leaving the workforce partially or completely—child care is now just as much an issue around board tables as it is around kitchen tables.

Because of this, multiple public and private entities at every level—local, state, and national—are creating space to tackle the child care crisis, and multiple parallel efforts are arising. In fact, as San Diego County’s Child Care Blueprint Action Team began meeting in December 2022, the Kim Center for Social Balance was also organizing leaders around the business and social implications for child care as part of a larger initiative called LEAPS (Leadership in Ecosystems, Advancement, Policies, Supervisors—these are the top four areas that regions and employers need to focus on to develop thriving workplaces.)

By February 2023, these two efforts connected, and the Kim Center’s LEAPS Child Care Community Action Group (CAG-CC) decided to align their efforts with the County’s Child Care Blueprint. The goal for the LEAPS CAG-CC was to augment and support—not duplicate—the work of the Blueprint, which was contiguous to the work of the San Diego County Child Care Local Planning Council. This ensured that all efforts would be pulling in the same direction to drive more meaningful and lasting impact for the local child care sector. The Local Planning Council has adopted the San Diego County Child Care Blueprint as the current local child care plan for the region to ensure alignment.

Because the CAG-CC had aligned but different perspectives than were present in the Blueprint Action Team, our goal has been to provide a robust thought document providing helpful insights from both within and beyond the child care sector. It represents our work from December 2023 - October 2024, and outlines both research and expertise organized in the same framework as the Child Care Blueprint.

One example is our exploration into creating an automated and centralized portal of employer-offered child care benefits, publicly accessible so that, in particular, small and medium-sized businesses could learn from one another. The CAG-CC investigated multiple avenues for including this information into a business’ regular operations, for example through their regular interactions with the City. The findings from explorations like these are included in the thought document to help identify both obstacles and opportunities for the Child Care Blueprint Implementation Team. The Blueprint Implementation Team is able to use the LEAPS CAG-CC recommendations and findings to enhance and complement the Blueprint Implementation Plan, which is in development and expected to be completed in the Summer of 2025.

The LEAPS CAG-CC is honored to offer this research, and looks forward to further engagement and activation as the San Diego County Child Care Blueprint comes to life.

San Diego Call to Action

The New York Times reports that about 39% of women with children younger than five have quit their jobs or reduced their hours by more than 33% between February 2021 and February 2022 since the pandemic began. These glaring statistics and other studies compel us to ensure that the ongoing uphill battle of obtaining affordable and accessible child care meets a resolution. Families should have an array of options that work for their individual

needs and desires. San Diego has a known high cost of living and many families require two incomes to meet their basic needs, but are often not able to meet them as well as the cost of child care.

Strong Community Response: LEAPS San Diego

In 2023, the Kim Center convened leaders from over 50 diverse stakeholder organizations in five workshops to design San Diego's LEAPS Playbook, a targeted action plan to address our region's top three barriers to fair workforce and economic participation. Their decisions were based on the Kim Center's findings from [San Diego's LEAPS Assessment 2022](#), one of the nation's first efforts to generate measurable data points identifying a region's ability to attract and retain diverse workers in quality jobs.

LEAPS findings regarding workers and child care revealed that 30% of all workers and 34% of women workers are considering leaving their employers due to insufficient organizational support for their role as caregivers.

LEAPS Playbook designers agreed that a regionally cohesive strategy with centralized management is critical to San Diego's ability to transform itself from a child care desert to a child care oasis. They identified that this exists in the new [San Diego County Child Care Blueprint](#) and voted to focus their efforts on supporting that effort, with the vision to help develop a regional culture where employers offer child care benefits as naturally as they offer healthcare benefits.

This Discovery Report consolidates expert input and recommendations from various leaders across San Diego in the child care space. The structure and substance of this report's findings echo that of the County Blueprint in order to highlight the CAG-CC's contributions and content.

Key partners in development and implementation

1. City Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC)
2. County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency - Child and Family Well-Being Department Office of Child and Family Strengthening
3. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
4. Kim Center for Social Balance (Kim Center)
5. Rescue Agency
6. San Diego & Imperial Women's Business Center (WBC)
7. San Diego Black Worker Center
8. San Diego for Every Child
9. Southern California Rental Housing Association (SCRHA)
10. The Chicano Federation
11. United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME Local 3930 (UDW)
12. YMCA of San Diego County (YMCA)

Discovery and Outcomes



Blueprint Goal 1: The child care workforce is well-trained, supported, valued as a profession, and paid competitive wages.

Objectives

1. The child care workforce in San Diego County participates in more hours of training each year, across all provider types and ages served.
2. The average local child care workforce salary increases every year and meets the wages of the TK-12 sector in San Diego County, across all provider types and ages served.
3. The child care workforce in San Diego County has experienced a decrease in staff turnover from the prior year, across all provider types and ages served.
4. The child care workforce in San Diego County has grown in numbers from the prior year, across all provider types and ages served.

Strategies

1.1. Advocate for child care workforce rate reform at the State level.

- (Action Steps) Include in the County of San Diego Legislative Program advocacy to support the State's [Rate and Quality Workgroup Report](#) recommendations, as well as the accompanying modeling of an alternative methodology rate structure—[Understanding the True Cost of Child Care in California: Building A Cost Model to Inform Policy Change](#).
- Investigate steps taken by the counties of San Francisco and Alameda to increase provider pay to \$28/hour and craft an action plan to take a similar approach in San Diego County and the municipalities in the region.

Strategy 1.1 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Existing models

We researched other communities' models of providing compensation to child care providers.

- [Massachusetts pilot program to provide immediate access to child care financial assistance \(known as "vouchers" and "contracted slots"\) to income eligible staff working in licensed and funded early education and care programs](#)
- [Kentucky enacted the Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\). Any employee working 20 hours or more per week in a licensed child care center or certified family child care \(FCC\) home is eligible for a child care subsidy, regardless of their household income.](#)
 - [Kentucky also made all child care employees eligible for free child care, regardless of household income.](#)
- [Stanislaus County developed a technology-forward approach that assists entrepreneurs through child care licensing, start-up, and expansion phases.](#)
- [Home Grown](#) in Colorado has a program to provide guaranteed income to child care providers.
- The [City of Washington, DC has implemented an Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund](#) through a tax on residents earning more than \$250,000/year, which had a 23% return on investment in the local economy.

Considerations about venture capital (VC) child care businesses

- These business models charge providers to be included or parents to access publicly available information - this creates concerns for unions like UDW, who prefer to direct their members toward public invested child care search platforms
- The ultimate goal should be to maximize benefits to child care providers and families. The need of VC businesses to generate profit for investors could conflict with these values. Conversely, to be fair, they could also lead to innovation. Striking and maintaining the right balance will be key.
- Federally funded programs like Women's Business Center cannot refer businesses to services where payment is required to be listed.
- The National Women's Law Center and Open Markets have produced '[Children Before Profits: Constraining Private Equity Profiteering to Advance Child Care as a Public Good](#)'
 - Watch '[Children Before Profits: Addressing Risks of Private Equity in the Child Care Industry](#)'

1.2 Eliminate barriers to, incentivize, and provide compensation for child care provider participation in continuous learning and advanced training.

- (Action Steps) Facilitate a collaborative, sustainable effort across all child care education and training partners (e.g., community colleges, community college districts, public four-year universities, and child care associations and training providers) to **streamline access to free and low-cost education and training opportunities**. Conduct an assessment to understand the full array of education and training opportunities across San Diego County, as well as existing local and State funding streams which can reduce or eliminate any out-of-pocket costs to child care providers. Prioritize education and training programs specifically focused on caring for infants and toddlers.

Strategy 1.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Provider needs & how to meet them

The most vulnerable period for child care business owners is the period between starting the business and generating income. Common obstacles are:

- The 6-month wait to get necessary licenses
- Startup costs (as much as \$800)
- Lack of knowledge about how to prepare their home
- Rental housing providers who prevent homes from being used for child care businesses
 - Cities are not enforcing SB234 in earnest
 - Housing providers are misinformed about laws related to running child care businesses out of homes and won't approve the registration. We have been helping to improve communication and collaboration between housing providers and in-home child care businesses through the Southern CA Rental Housing Association. They are helping to make the [business case](#) to housing providers and sharing out the [Fair Housing Law Protects Child Care Providers Fact Sheet](#). They also partnered on a webinar with the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) on how to bridge the gap between renters and child care providers.
- Lack of access to technology essential to obtaining proper licenses
- Language barriers
- Challenges navigating legal requirements (e.g., State license, local business tax ID and/or costs)
- Knowledge of effective marketing practices
- Taxes - providers need better education and 1:1 support from business centers and the IRS. The IRS provides tax classes in Spanish - local support entities can supplement these programs.
- Barriers for immigrant and refugee women seeking to start child care businesses include: language, internet access, access to critical info/resources for starting a business like online registrations, etc

Key support should include:

- Help new providers build credit
- Mediate with government regarding licensing challenges and inequities
- Provide education about essential business AND child care principles
- Help people get business licenses and registrations
- Provide startup funding and logistical support, including finding providers and securing locations

Ongoing support that existing businesses need include:

- Technology
- Language barriers
- Marketing

Philanthropy needs to get aligned too.

- Need more funding for capacity building within support organizations.
- Need to standardize application processes specifically for this industry (i.e., questions, requirements) because grants currently have metrics and reporting requirements these organizations cannot meet - the effort stretches them thin instead of helping build capacity.

Suggested priority solutions include:

- Standardize the quality of provider training across all regions
- Engage housing providers: Educate them on regulations regarding in-home child care businesses. Advocate for fair rent that aligns with actual income expectations.

- Increase education and support for finances, marketing, business development, technological literacy, capacity-building, language barriers, efficient management strategies, navigating regulations and policies (especially people with no credit)
- Target unions that want to provide child care to their members
 - Connect them with providers via [Carina](#), a resource to locate home-based small group child care - lists location, hours, languages and type of care
 - Have unions negotiate child care service subsidies in their collective bargaining agreements
 - Limitation: Unions in industrial work are still male-dominated with a workplace culture usually quite different from nonprofit, business, and government sectors. Need to invite them into the brainstorming process about winning subsidized child care.
- Miramar College includes entrepreneurship classes in their curriculum – can this be replicated across all other Community Colleges?

- Create a public/private **fund to incentivize** continuing education in child care, which is flexible enough to cover income loss experienced from taking time away from work for training activities.
- Create and sustain a clearinghouse service where child care providers can receive **individual counsel and guidance** to pursue and enroll in higher education, training, and supportive funding.

1.3 Support targeted long-term and ongoing investments in the sustainability of existing child care settings, including enhancement of child care business resilience.

- (Action Steps) Build on the County of San Diego’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) **Shared Services Alliance** investments and leverage existing statewide programs, like Child Care Providers United and the California Department of Social Services California Early Childhood Online, to support child care business owners. Establish and support a child care provider-led design team to outline the primary needs of child care business owners in San Diego County. Elements of support may include child care business efficiency, such as using local data to manage rates, business planning, expense management, strategies for growth, marketing, economies of scale services, and using tax incentives all through the support from business counselors and cultural navigators
- Assist in funding and incentivizing the expansion of existing family child care services from **small to large licenses** and community-based center expansions in serving more ages or opening new classrooms.

Strategy 1.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Incentivizing license expansion requires creative effort

San Diego & Imperial Women’s Business Center (WBC) has programs to help small licenses become large.

- This is not as straightforward as it would seem. Many small license owners are reluctant to grow because they lack confidence that they can manage a larger business. They also fear the unknown, despite assurances that expanding would improve their sustainability and success.

1.4 Create a program to assist in funding new family child care and community-based center start-up costs.

- (Action Steps) Consider supplemental funding to increase support for new family child care and community-based center **start-up costs**.

Strategy 1.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Support existing funding providers

San Diego & Imperial Women’s Business Center (WBC) provides many of these services.

- There is even overlap between WBC and County services. The County’s Child and Family Well-Being Office is keen to explore creating an ongoing symbiotic relationship of support.

- Establish a process to host a registry of providers considering closing and then determine support needed. In the case of a **provider closing**, the process will also include a referral opportunity to other providers interested in taking on the child care business, or at least ensure other providers may have an opportunity to access furniture, materials, etc. (This action also supports strategy 1.3).

1.5 Increase access to innovative, culturally responsive approaches to expand access to affordable mental and behavioral health services and supports for child care providers.

- (Action Steps) Promote existing resources to support child care **provider mental health**, such as Child Care Provider Cafes, a low-barrier emotional support group designed for authentic sharing and peer-to-peer learning through culturally responsive approaches.
- Leverage existing programs for child care providers, like coaching and apprenticeships, to disseminate information about the value of and tangible supports for **self-care**, respite, and emotional support. Inform child care program operators about how to access mental health and wellbeing resources and provide a warm hand off to ensure providers can find and access programs. Utilize the Community Information Exchange when applicable.



Blueprint Goal 2: Safe and quality facilities are developed and renovated to expand child care programs, particularly in geographic areas where child care is scarce or family demand outpaces supply.

Objectives

1. **State legislation**, including funding, is passed that supports facilities-child care centers and family child care homes-improvement and expansion.
2. At least 50 properties are identified as strong candidates for facilities **expansion**.
3. Child care facilities are included in 10% of **new development** plans.

Strategies

2.1 Simplify the experience of entities seeking to secure, improve or develop child care facilities by making expertise and resources user-friendly and readily available.

- (Action Steps) Conduct a comprehensive study of child care **supply, demand, and facilities** (both number and quality and both commercial and residential), to be updated annually. Include an assessment of current facilities, discussion of facility expansion opportunities, and identification of possible public funding mechanisms to bring to the San Diego region.
- Establish and sustain a peer-based **navigation hub** that offers end-to-end assistance to any public or private entity (e.g., child care providers, employers, developers, economic development corporations, housing advocates, government agencies, foundations) looking to increase the number of licensed child care slots in San Diego County through facility improvement or development. Topics addressed may include securing funding (grants, loans, tax benefits), identifying candidate properties, zoning, and permitting, designing indoor and outdoor learning environments, working with Community Care Licensing and the fire department, among others.
- Maintain a **list of vetted** vendors, contractors, land use attorneys, and child care designers/architects. Implement a system for referrals.
- Host a regular **series of facilities workshops** to share knowledge, stoke enthusiasm, and deepen networks by welcoming supportive partners, economic development councils, chambers of commerce, government, and other stakeholders.
- City/County offices focused on child care lead a regularly scheduled **convening on facilities expansion**, bringing together child care licensing, permitting officials, fire marshal, and child care

facilities technical assistants to review upcoming projects, create strategic relationships, and help navigate and expedite necessary processes.

- Host a regular **meeting** for the two regional Community Care Licensing managers and all the fire marshals to align on process, timing, requirements, and expectations; provide visibility on the pipeline of upcoming licensing applications linked to the dashboard in Strategy 2.2; and build lines of communication among the entities with the common goal of expanding child care and improving child care facilities quality in the region.
- Create a clearinghouse for providers **vacating** licensed child care facilities so that other providers may purchase or lease the property and keep it in the child care supply.

2.2 **Advocate for changes to local policies and State Title 22 Community Care Licensing regulations and practices that will remove obstacles to improving existing child care facilities and developing new facilities.**

- (Action Steps) Create and implement a local **advocacy campaign** to effect the following changes: • zoning and permitting reforms that facilitate the addition or expansion of child care facilities; • inclusion of child care and child- and family-friendly design in community development plans; and • using innovations such as acting as master leaseholders, creating community land trusts, etc
- Advocate for **administrative changes** that would: • streamline State licensing regulations, requirements, and process for opening, renewing, and maintaining child care licenses; • continually allocate new rounds of State facilities funding; • create a public-facing dashboard to increase transparency and accountability around the Community Care Licensing process; • provide licensing information and documentation in threshold languages to increase access to all expanding and aspiring providers; and • provide technical assistance to providers that is culturally and linguistically responsive.

2.3 **Advocate for cities to include innovative financing investment mechanisms in their redevelopment plans to expand facilities.**

- (Action Steps) Assess possibility of utilizing development **tax dollars** for child care facility expansion.
- Include child care in school and higher education bond initiatives.

2.4 **Identify existing public land or buildings that can be repurposed for child care.**

- (Action Steps) **Identify** where buildings or land owned by County of San Diego, city, and local education agencies could incorporate or be repurposed to include early care and education at little or no cost to the child care providers through long-term lease agreements. Use the City of San Diego DREAM report as a reference for the process.
- Create a coordinated approach to promote Request for Proposals (RFPs) and provide technical assistance to support successful **proposals**. (Link with Strategy 2.1 actions related to peer collaboration and partner coordination).
- Estimate costs for tenant improvements to align with Title 22 requirements and seek **funding** to support needed renovations.

2.5 **Embed child care centers into new developments based on early recommendations from the regional co-location report, co-authored by the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) and Children First Collective San Diego (CFC).**

- (Action Steps) Work with Housing and Community Development Services to include incentive points on local Notice of Funding Availability for **developments** that integrate early learning and care spaces,

- both centers and family child care homes, including surplus land planning and affordable housing developments, which may include mixed-use developments and transit-oriented developments (as funding sources permit).
- Work with the County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group to consider streamlined or **expedited permitting** allowances and processes for co-located projects.
 - Include child care as a component in **community planning** for city and County of San Diego planning commissions, regional planning, land use development, etc.
 - Increase awareness of innovative public-private child care financing models and launch **new joint funding initiatives** with community development financial institutions. Reap the learning and understanding of Mission Driven Finance CARE San Diego.

Strategy 2.5 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Suggestions for new locations

Create more facilities where low-income families need them.

- Co-locate child care with schools. Child care facilities used to be attached to school districts - reattach and guarantee spots like with elementary school.
- Use the number of schools in a community to guide how many total child care centers are needed.
- Also utilize the [YMCA Child Care Supply map](#)
- Co-locate child care with elder care facilities.



Blueprint Goal 3: All families have access to child care that meets their needs and preferences and supports their children’s learning, physical and mental health, and social-emotional development.

Objectives

1. Licensed infant and toddler child care **slots** have increased from the prior year.
2. **Subsidies** are expanded to families earning 110% of Area Median Income (AMI).
3. Full-day, full-year child care is being piloted at three additional **school sites**.

Strategies

- 3.1 **To address the subsidy gap, create a program to provide financial assistance, through a phased approach, to families who earn an increasingly higher percentage of Area Median Income (AMI) (e.g., Phase I-110% AMI, Phase II-150% AMI, etc.).**
 - (Action Steps) Build on local efforts to identify successful **community funding models**, including reviewing Build Back Better Plan, San Francisco Implemented Plan, and Innovative Financing Report. Incorporate a system-level evaluation of publicly funded programs including: Alternative Payment, CalWORKs Stage 1, State Preschool, Local Education Agency programs including After School Education and Safety (ASES) and Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) Century 21.
 - **Recommend** a funding model for San Diego County
 - **Pilot** model to demonstrate proof of concept.
- 3.2 **Establish a program to support vulnerable families with child care.**
 - (Action Step) Design a program to assist **unhoused** families and families re-entering the workforce with child care. Operations can parallel the Foster Care Bridge program, and include scholarship funding for emergency support, used to bridge cost of care for families while they connect to sustainable child care financing.

Strategy 3.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Existing models can support expansion

Existing successful models that can support expansion include:

- International Rescue Committee (IRC)

- San Diego Community College District (SDCCD)
- San Diego College of Continuing Education (SDCCE), the adult non-credit division of SDCCD, is piloting a program to offer free child care to all employees and students. Their first site is the Cesar Chavez campus. They want to partner with a private child care provider that will get licensed and operate the program. Services they hope to offer include:
 - Reserve a certain number of spots for students with children aged toddler and up
 - Infant care
 - Flexible drop-off/drop-in policies
- San Diego State University CEED Program
- Shared Service Alliance
- The Chicano Federation
- United Domestic Workers of America (UDW)

Strategy 3.2 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Barriers to accessibility

Affordability

- Inflexible fee structure: e.g., infant care requires payment for a full-time slot, and families still have to pay for sick children even when they're kept at home.
- Assistance programs exclude families whose income levels are too high for subsidy but too low for paid child care.
- Government subsidized facilities are in insufficient supply.
- Only a few employers provide child care benefits to their employees.

Location

- Facilities are not located where parents need them most, particularly low-income families.
- Some families have limited or no access to transportation.

Limited hours and service plans

- Families need options for weekends, early mornings, evenings, 24/7, summer, holidays, before/after school.
- Families need backup when providers become unexpectedly unavailable.

Cultural competence

- To offer fully inclusive opportunities for child care, considerations must include disseminating key information in languages other than English
- How accessibly information is shared is also a key consideration. For example, lack of internet or technology savvy can cause families to miss critical information.

3.3 Design and launch a targeted public education campaign to increase awareness and understanding of the early learning and child care system for children from birth to age 12.

- (Action Steps) Target **communications campaigns**, one for parents and one for decision makers, to increase understanding of the child care system and available resources.

Strategy 3.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: SDCOE is doing groundwork

San Diego Department of Education (SDCOE) plans, advises, and collaborates to strengthen child care and development services.

- Stakeholder groups convened monthly (February - September 2023) and included: parents, providers, community reps, public agency reps, and various child care/advocacy organizations.

- Partner to revise and enhance **YMCA CRS Child Care Resource and Referral** “Choosing child care” guide and promote to community.

Strategy 3.3 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: A new portal vision can address multiple Blueprint strategies

The portal vision we created would greatly amplify the YMCA website’s functionality and also support the Blueprint Action Item for Strategy 1.2 (Create and sustain a clearinghouse service).

- Our ultimate goal was an easily navigable database of all entities related to child care so that:
 - Child care and ancillary service providers can easily find new opportunities to collaborate with each other (networking, increased impact and bandwidth, collective fundraising with an eye toward sustainability after current funding streams end).
 - Providers have a robust clearinghouse of resources for needs like startup help and funding, addressing challenges like restrictive housing providers, business tools, expansion, etc.
 - Employers have a full understanding of what providers exist and what partnerships could look like. They can also share solutions that work for them with other employers of similar size, conditions, etc.

This kind of portal currently does not exist anywhere. Structural suggestions:

- Google Drive/Sheet: We started by mapping out what services CAG members offer and to whom, where they serve, what they charge, and their progress metrics. This helped us identify key information that should be included.

Table 1

Organization name	Organization type	Whom do you serve?	What services do you provide in general?	What services do you provide related to child care?	What demographics do your child care-related programs serve?
Chicano Federation	Nonprofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children ● Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Small businesses: resource center, basic digital skills classes, digital solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family child care business startup support ● Family child care entrepreneur support: education network and nutrition program where we reimburse providers for the nutritious meals served to the children in their home. ● Infant Toddler Program ● Barrio Logan Child Development Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● San Diego County ● Children and families based on income eligibility ● Soccer camp: youth that attend San Diego Unified Elementary School District

Chicano Federation (cont'd)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Head Home-Based Program • Soccer camp 	
City Heights Community Development Corporation	Nonprofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families/individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Resident services • Economic development • Eviction prevention • Transportation • Planning advocacy and infrastructure improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in our City Heights affordable housing complexes only • LMI
County of San Diego Child and Family Well-Being Department	Government agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children/youth • Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Care Services • State Mandated Foster Care Programming • Child Abuse Prevention Efforts • Child Care System Efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Blueprint implementation • Access to child care for youth in foster care • Child care system coordination at County level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Diego County • Foster youth • Department employees with children living in their homes • Relative care providers • Foster families
San Diego & Imperial Women's Business Center	Technical assistance program (federal nonprofit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startup business owners • Small business entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & 1:1 business counseling • Access to capital & startup funding • Help navigating permit/license process for startups • Help with business plan, financial projections, pricing, marketing, strategies, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a family child care business (8-week program with Chicano Federation) • Financial fitness for child care providers (6-week program) • Expanding a family child care business from a small license/8 spots to a large license/14 spots (6-week program & 14-week program with Chicano Federation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary audiences: 86%+ are women of color, low-income, Spanish-only speakers • ~ 5% men • LMI (Low to Moderate Income) • All industries
San Diego for Every Child	Nonprofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child care providers • Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-lead the Children First Collective San Diego, a local child care advocacy group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Diego County - most activated providers tend to be in central, South, and East County • Providers • Families • Predominantly women, and a significant portion are also women who identify as Black, Latina/x, and/or Asian
Southern California Rental Housing Association	Trade association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing providers (owners & managers) and small businesses that provide them essential services (e.g., plumbers, landscapers, emergency svcs, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key resources (e.g., education, operational advice, forms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal advice, forms, education, etc. related to child care operations in the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern CA [San Diego & Imperial Counties, portions of Southern Riverside County] - rental prop owners, property managers, companies or fee managers, independent

Southern California Rental Housing Association (cont'd)					property owners, or suppliers (service providers)
United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME Local 3930	Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family child care providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate & help access rights & benefits under their union contract Support negotiations with State of CA re subsidy rates & other benefits Advocate for state policies that benefit providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with family child care providers and the UDW Resource Center, a nonprofit that is the sponsor of a registered apprenticeship program "Family Child Care Educator Apprenticeship" that will train apprentices to start their own family child care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Diego County
YMCA of San Diego County	Nonprofit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Child care providers Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countywide programs and services that support youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care planning & subsidization Resources & referral portals (https://www.ymcasandiego.org/family-resources/child-care-referrals) Child care business/marketing support & provider training Employer child care programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Diego County Families Licensed (e.g., family child care homes and centers) and some license-exempt providers (e.g., after-school programs, family members receiving subsidies)

Table 2

Organization name	What child age groups do you serve?	When are your child care services available?	Employers: what child care benefits do you provide and to whom?	Do you use an outside provider?	What are the costs of these benefits to you to employees?
Chicano Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infant Toddler Program: 0-3 Early Head Start Home-Based Program: 0-5 Barrio Logan Child Development Center: 3-5 Soccer camp: 4-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infant Toddler Program varies by provider Early Head Start Home-Based Program 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday Barrio Child Development Center 6:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday Soccer camp: full day, summer 			
City Heights Community Development Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M-F from 2pm-5pm or 3pm-4:15 pm at three locations 			
County of San Diego Child and Family Well-Being Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA 	<p>All County employees receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flex daycare account benefits 3 days paid leave when an employee can't access child care for their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YMCA 	

San Diego & Imperial Women's Business Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 			
San Diego for Every Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 			
Southern California Rental Housing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 			
United Domestic Workers of America UDW/AFSCME Local 3930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NA 			
YMCA of San Diego County	All ages, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infants (0-2) ● Toddler (3-5) ● School age (6-17) 	All versions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All day ● After school ● Drop-in/Flex ● Summer 			

We explored various options for housing the Portal

- YMCA: With additional support and resources, they may be able to house it on the new landing page for their employer supported child care initiative.
- State: There are no efforts to centralize this information.
 - However, the CA Early Care & Education Workforce Registry, CA Department of Education’s Early Education Division, and the CA Resource and Referral Network could potentially serve as a model.
- County: Since the website is being revamped for increased usability, can this project be worked into the project scope of the Blueprint?
 - LiveWell San Diego: Much County-level discussion would be needed on how to make child care fit into the existing structure as an indicator of County residents’ well-being
 - San Diego Regional EDC may have an opportunity to incorporate this portal into their [Inclusive Growth mapping](#) - Teddy Martinez, Senior Manager of Research, may be an appropriate contact
 - UC San Diego has a [quality of life index](#) (Equinox) but child care is not included yet

Data collection

- The process must be automated to ensure sustainability and continuity. Suggestions include:
 - Add a feature to state/federal business registration forms that requires owners to register on the portal by filling out a questionnaire. This would allow us to publicize what kinds of child care-related resources they offer without trying to manually update the info every year. Participants would include:
 - Employers sharing their child care solutions
 - Organizations promoting services that support providers (e.g., WBC, Chicano Federation)
 - Entities that providers need good relationships with (e.g., SCRHA/rental housing providers, banks)
- Further exploration is required to answer:
 - Who will manage the questionnaire data?
 - How do we capture businesses that don’t have annual reporting/registering requirements like nonprofits and associations?
 - How do we update anyone that went out of business?

Explorations with City of San Diego

- It's challenging to find an existing touch point for small-midsize businesses to double as an opportunity to talk about child care and get them resources.
- The City business tax certificate (Treasurer's Office) is a legacy system that is becoming increasingly dated. There's very little funding to add even more communication to the email that goes out, and multiple offices on board would still need to agree to participate.
- The annual letter that goes out with every certificate letter is not very effective communication. Even just trying to add \$1 to the business certificate for a program to help businesses with child care would require partnering with the Treasurer's Office, which is a large bureaucracy.
- To engage the approximately 100K businesses, City partners with 15K Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and nonprofits that have built trust that the City lacks. They could be an additional resource for expanding capacity but it is the more expensive option because it's a lot of labor to pay for going door to door with messaging.
 - A technical collaboration will require City staff time, necessitating collaboration with the Office of Child and Youth Success and the Economic Development Department (EDD). The EDD is more likely to fund a partner effort than to spend time crafting something new.
 - Resource language could be added to the EDD website, which could be especially easy if this kind of info is already included on another City page/site. This would necessitate working with the tech teams. Their reach may not be super effective right now, but it might help establish what City should be including as content. They could extend the conversation to business walks and do a push as part of a communications plan.

Costs to consider at minimum

- User experience (UX/UI) research
- Data collection and ongoing management staff
- Portal design, build, and ongoing maintenance

3.4 Provide education about the tax benefits for businesses providing family-friendly employer regional initiative of Live Well San Diego. Family friendly policies include schedules that meet the needs of parents (e.g., predictable or flexible work schedules), generous paid-time-off or sick leave benefits, child care benefits for ages 0-12 (including on-site or nearby discounted center-based and family child care), and dependent care assistance plans or flexible spending accounts so parents can use pre-tax dollars to pay for child care.

- (Action Steps) **Research** and assess existing tax benefits to offer financial incentives.
- Advise on language for a **policy proposal** to strengthen federal corporate tax benefits and to create a state corporate tax benefit for employers supporting child care for employees.
- Create **template policies** that employers may operationalize.
- Build upon the **Live Well @ Work Healthy Workplace Accelerator Program** to include the family-friendly employer policies and resources and provide technical assistance for adoption.
- Create a **network of employers** to adopt family-friendly policies and learn from one another through collaboration of chambers.
- Create a specific **public acknowledgment for family-friendly employers** through receiving a Live Well @ Work Accelerator Program decal and employer highlights.
- Pursue and advocate for **funding opportunities** that align federal and state incentives.

Strategy 3.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Employers lack interest in providing employee child care

Employers are not even utilizing the tax write-off for providing employee child care (25% of \$150,000).

- Further discovery is called for to understand this disinterest in sponsoring or subsidizing before committing time and resources to any solutions.

Strategy 3.4 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Smaller businesses need creative solutions

Small-midsize organizations with limited bandwidth and budget need creative new pathways to offer child care benefits.

- 98% of San Diego’s businesses are small businesses and they hire 60% of the region’s workers (San Diego Economic Development Corporation).

3.5 Build on the existing network of care to expand collaboration and understand referral pathways, availability of developmental screenings, services, and protective factors for all children across child care settings.

- (Action Steps) Review analysis of what already exists in behavioral and developmental screenings, assessments, and services. **Identify gaps** and strategize around meeting family and child needs, focusing on expanding support for children birth to five.
- Explore what data is currently being gathered regarding the number and percentage of **children birth to three** who are screened and whether they received referral and services.
- Cultivate local data on population demographics for **children birth to five**. Deepen understanding of service delays and saturation. Understand waiting list duplicity and best referral pathways for families to have their needs met timely, efficiently, and effectively.
- Based on evidence, consider expansion or enhancement of **Healthy Development Services** currently within First 5 San Diego operations.
- Expand **collaboration** across social services providers and enhance network of care coordination beyond the Partners in Prevention grant.

Strategy 3.5 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Gathering data on workers’ actual child care needs is critical

Understanding exactly what workers are seeking will help target efforts and maximize results.

- The LEAPS CAG-CC has been helping recruit participants for the BEACON [Child Care Needs Survey](#). This project is spearheaded by Say San Diego, UC San Diego, and the YMCA to collaborate with San Diego employers in surveying their workers’ about real-life child care needs. This data will represent a critical piece in understanding how best to spend resources.

3.6 Expand the capacity of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) services for greater access to child care providers, families, and children.

- Integrate an assessment of current capacity, referral pathways, and impact of existing ECMHC programs into Strategy 3.5, action step a.
- Building on best practice research, develop a county-wide, sustainable ECMHC model for San Diego County.

- Provide technical assistance, learning communities, and transparent data sharing to ensure that ECMHC programs are culturally responsive, aligned with best practices, and contributing to national research efforts.

3.7 Expand and sustain child care slots for infants and toddlers.

- (Action Steps) **Assess the need** for infant (up to age 11 months) and toddler (12 to 36 months) slots, including those that need subsidy and related workforce issues (how many additional slots needed).
- Make **policy recommendations** based on findings from the assessment
- Utilize data from the pending County of San Diego Cost Estimation Model for child care to **identify the cost of supplementing** existing child care slots for infants and toddlers.
- Create a **scaled funding projection** to include new slots for infants and toddlers with a more fiscally sound model.
- Implement a supplemental, local **revenue source** to incentivize and support San Diego County providers to obtain infant/toddler licenses and retain infant/toddler slots.

3.8 Build bridges among community-based child care and the early grades of elementary schools and out-of-school time child care programs to improve access and navigation for families and to improve outcomes for children

- (Action Steps) Build intentional relationships with **schools** engaged in continuous universal TK or community schools planning and implementation to include a continuum of child care in communities and at schools.

Strategy 3.8 – LEAPS CAG-CC Insights: Expanding TK needs to support a robust mixed delivery system

Expansion of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is undermining enrollment in child care facilities and increasing the cost burden on those facilities.

- TK also presents a missed opportunity to honor the early education happening across a mixed delivery system (i.e., family child care providers, child care centers, etc).
- [Working families aren't able to use the program because of a lack of aftercare spots. TK is also hiring teachers away from traditional preschools and making an already dire staffing shortage worse. And some are going out of business because they no longer have 4-year-olds, whose care is cheapest to provide.](#)
- [There is a need to fully explore whether TK classes and other elementary school systems are being designed for the attention spans and emotional needs of 4-year-olds, as well as the advantages of fully building out a mixed delivery system.](#)
- Awareness and funding need to be raised to elevate the visibility/profile/importance of Family Child Care (FCC).
- Reference: [An Inclusive Framework – Designing & Implementing UPK](#)

- Create and promote **accessible information** about child care access, family needs, and partnership opportunities.
- Implement a **pilot** based on exemplary models in local districts that have child care on sites. Ensure programs are full day, full year.

Additional LEAPS CAG-CC Recommendations

Data & Accountability

1. Regularly generate or ensure the generation of regionally relevant data with consistent metrics to create consistent, long-term accountability. The BEACON project is a good resource.

Collaboration & Partnerships

2. Build a network to unify and amplify existing efforts/organizations already working on improving regional child care that also build/solidify relationships between facilities, providers, employers, and the workforce. The LEAPS CAG-CC has built a solid foundation that can be capitalized on.
3. Tap unconventional partners who have expressed interest in partnering and/or serving as a resource, such as:
 - a. Episcopal Community Services
 - b. Child Care Law Center of San Diego

Financial Incentives & Tax Benefits

4. Advocate for employees to use pre-tax benefits for child care (e.g., x% for retirement and y% to child care). [Federal Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account \(DCFSA\)](#): Employees can contribute up to \$5,000 a year filing as individuals or with a joint tax return, or, \$2,500 for married couples filing separately.
 - a. Limitations: These amounts are unrealistically small for child care.
5. Permit tax deductions for child care expenditures.
6. Allow employees access to CA State Paid Leave benefits.

Policy & Regulatory Approaches

7. Chilean government example: Law enforces child care for employer teams of 20+ women. Funding comes from the employer and social security contributions. If the employer can't pay, the government helps.
 - a. Limitations: Only women have the right to child care.
 - b. Unintended consequences: Companies are disincentivized from hiring more than 19 women, which could unbalance the talent pool and cultural attitudes toward women.
8. Increase/improve employer paid family leave: Very low cost, very large benefit for both parents and babies. More family leave means less need for scarce and expensive infant child care.
 - a. History of failure: California State paid leave is 70% of salary but that is still too little and not long enough. The California Paid Leave Program is available to all government offices (they are the largest employers) across the state, but it's not mandatory so governments can opt out. Most do not offer it to their employees.
 - b. Employers could supplement the state benefit to provide 100% salary replacement and consider stretching the leave time to add another month at least. Give all state and city employees CA Paid Leave. Insist on gender-neutral paid leave programs.
 - Examples of companies that successfully offer onsite child care include Bitchin Sauce, Qualcomm, Home Depot.

Equity & Effectiveness in Implementation

9. Be sure to explore potential unintended consequences
 - a. For example, not all demographic groups prefer the same kinds of benefits - some employers discover that onsite child care is less or not utilized by white women, while vouchers or subsidies are less utilized by women of color. Identifying the appropriate measures will prevent unnecessary costs, build employee trust, and improve child care benefit success rates.

LEAPS CAG-CC Members

We thank you for this opportunity to share our work, and welcome your thoughts, questions, and comments. Below is contact information for key members of the LEAPS Child Care Community Action Group (CAG-CC).

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