

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2025**

**JANUARY  
2026**

Prepared by

**SOUTH DALLAS  
EMPLOYMENT PROJECT**

Prepared for

**OUR STAKEHOLDERS**

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# LETTER FROM THE SDEP MANAGING PARTNER & CO-FOUNDER



**WES JUREY**

Managing Partner &  
Co-Founder

## **To our Stakeholders & Communities We Serve,**

It's with a grateful heart and appreciation that I provide our Annual Report to our Stakeholders and the Communities we serve.

2025 was extraordinary, in terms of the extensive changes we experienced within our community, our region, the state of Texas, and our nation.

We faced challenges, yet the strength of our stakeholders, the relationships and partnerships that have evolved, and our commitment to service, has enabled us to invest our collective time, talent, treasure, and influence to continue to achieve our goals.

We are serving some of the most disadvantaged and underserved communities in Texas. By all measures, we are making significant progress. The number of individuals and families whose lives we have touched has dramatically increased from last year. The number of organizations who have become stakeholders has increased, providing additional capacity to serve those individuals. And the economic growth and health of our targeted communities is improving.

We still have far to go and much to do to reach our Vision of seeing these communities evolve from generational poverty to generational prosperity; but the progress made to date is both tangible and encouraging. All due to the commitment and perseverance of you - our SDEP Stakeholder Community.

What started as a concept; a premise and approach to systematic change, shared by 15 founding organizations, has become the largest collaborative governance and collective impact model in the state.

It bodes well for our future!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wes Jurey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW



## VISION

Our Vision is to move the residents of South Dallas from generational poverty to generational prosperity.

## MISSION

Our Mission is to build “Collaborative Community Capacity” bringing business, government, education, workforce development, and nonprofit social enterprises together to align and integrate resources, thereby increasing the capacity of all stakeholders through systemic change.

# ABOUT SDEP

Our overarching Objective is the development and implementation of a holistic model that is sustainable, scalable, and replicable, to support opportunity populations living in or returning to Dallas.

Essentially, we serve (1) **individuals** needing assistance to lead sustainable lives; (2) our **organizational stakeholders**, providing them resources and technical assistance; (3) our **employer stakeholders**, assisting them in meeting their unmet demand for skilled workers; and (4) the **community**, through initiatives that create jobs and economic growth.

Initially focused on five identified contiguous ZIP Codes in south and southern Dallas, we have progressed from our initial Incubation phase, demonstrating that our model works, into the Replicable phase, expanding into West Dallas, and will ultimately move to Scalability, expanding throughout Dallas.

With varied experiences, educational and income levels, all have something to bring to the community. We want those we serve to be aware of available resources, so we can help them establish a deeper connection to their neighborhoods as a place that has reinvested in them.



# ABOUT SDEP

The SDEP is currently comprised of 253 organizational, government, and employer stakeholders who have signed Memorandums of Agreement to work within the collaborative framework we have established. It is operated as a "DBA" of Redemption Bridge, led by Wes Jurey, CEO, and Past Chair of the Texas Workforce Investment Council. Redemption Bridge serves as an intermediary; essentially a "backbone organization," convening participating organizations; guiding the integration and alignment of their organizational resources; working within a collaborative framework; sharing a common, overarching goal. Through systemic change, we are transforming some of the most underserved and disadvantaged communities in Texas, into sustainable and economically viable communities.

The SDEP provides direct access to training, services, and support through SDEP Service Centers, located in apartment complexes that serve 40,000 apartment units in South Dallas, meeting the needs of individuals where they live. We also have centers in 2 of our Organizational Stakeholders, and a City of Dallas Service Center.



# THE STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

## The SDEP Serves Four Fundamental Stakeholder Communities

- 1 **INDIVIDUALS** who live in some of the most disadvantaged and underserved communities in Texas
- 2 **ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS**, both public and private sector, that serve these individuals



- 3 **EMPLOYERS** that represent opportunities for living wage employment for those we serve, effectively meeting their unmet demand for skilled workers
- 4 The **COMMUNITIES** themselves, where we focus on improving their economic viability



# SERVING INDIVIDUALS

Since inception, the SDEP has focused on eight strategic objectives, established through a consensual process of all stakeholders, following an extensive review of the demographics and challenges faced by residents of south, southern and west Dallas.

The eight selected were consensually deemed most critical to enabling what we call “opportunity populations” to ultimately lead sustainable lives.

-  **LIVING WAGE EMPLOYMENT**
-  **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
-  **COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY**
-  **TRANSPORTATION**

-  **HEALTH, WELLNESS & RECOVERY**
-  **DIGITAL & FINANCIAL LITERACY**
-  **PUBLIC POLICY**
-  **JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY**

# 8 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 LIVING WAGE EMPLOYMENT:** Utilizing nationally recognized industry certifications, we provide training leading to employability in Industry sectors that offer a living wage and established career ladders. Securing employment in jobs that provide discretionary income is the first step toward building family sustainability.
- 2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Access to affordable housing is the second step towards sustainability, as home equity is the first wealth families moving from poverty to sustainability achieve. Through our network, we provide access to emergency housing, sheltered living, and rental and home ownership assistance, while supporting the development of affordable housing within the communities we serve.
- 3 COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY:** The Department of Justice identifies effective reintegration into a community as one of the three most vital elements in reducing recidivism, coupled with living wage employment and adequate safe housing. Working within the Faith Based community, we support the reintegration of all we serve.
- 4 TRANSPORTATION:** Access to transportation is critical to move from home to job to childcare to medical treatment to groceries. We provide a variety of options, including character based lending to acquire autos.





- 5 HEALTH, WELLNESS & RECOVERY:** We provide access to mental, behavioral and health related care, addressing the underlying social determinants of health, in partnership with public and private healthcare providers.
- 6 DIGITAL & FINANCIAL LITERACY:** We ensure everyone we serve receives access to training, leading to digital and financial literacy.
- 7 PUBLIC POLICY:** We educate and advocate for public policy that enables opportunity populations, and work to change public policy that inhibits these populations, at City, County, Regional, State and Federal levels.
- 8 JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY:** We have integrated the issues of racial equity, justice, and trauma informed care, into everything we do, working with our stakeholders, to conduct racial equity audits, offering training to support their understanding, and implementation of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

**We want those we serve to become contributors to their community. By providing available resources, we can help them establish a deeper connection to their neighborhoods as a place that has reinvested in them.**



# SERVING OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The SDEP works directly with our organizational stakeholders, both public and private sector, assisting them to more effectively meet their own goals, through integrating and aligning resources within our network, to achieve common objectives.

We offer the following assistance and direct support, in six areas identified by our organizational stakeholders as most critical to their success.

-  **SDEP SERVICE CENTERS**
-  **NETWORK DEVELOPMENT**
-  **DIRECT SUPPORT**

-  **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
-  **FORUMS AND SEMINARS**
-  **FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

# 6 KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT

- 1 SDEP SERVICE CENTERS:** We operate 10 “Service Centers” throughout the communities we serve, in partnership with apartment complexes, nonprofits in our network, and local governments. Our organizational stakeholders also have access to these Centers to offer both their resources & services, as well as those of the SDEP where people live.
- 2 NETWORK DEVELOPMENT:** We host monthly luncheons for all stakeholders, providing relevant information and updates, and enabling them to develop their own supportive networks.
- 3 DIRECT SUPPORT:** We provide direct access to capacity building, making a variety of support services available to our organizational stakeholders at no cost to them or those they serve. As two examples, (1) we offer our stakeholders use of the Metrix Learning System, which provides over 7,000 training modules, certificates and certifications they can make available to their own clients at no cost; and (2) through our partnership with VoteRiders, a national nonprofit, we provide our organizational stakeholders the support needed to assist their clients in obtaining government IDs, including drivers licenses, birth certificates, and Social Security cards.
- 4 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** We provide no cost technical assistance to our stakeholders at their request.
- 5 FORUMS & SEMINARS:** In collaboration with many of our educational and governmental stakeholders, we provide a variety of training cohorts, training programs and academies, and other types of training assistance to help our organizational stakeholders grow their capacity.
- 6 FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT:** We provide financial development and support, through introductions to Banks and philanthropic organizations; through training; and as subcontractors to the SDEP.





# SERVING OUR EMPLOYER STAKEHOLDERS

The SDEP works directly with our employer stakeholders to help them meet their unmet demand for skilled, trained workers.

## EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

We work directly with employers to understand the jobs and job skills they need to fill; then work with our organizational stakeholders, governmental entities, and the Dallas Workforce Board to both identify, and then refer individuals who qualify, directly to those employers.

## JOB FAIRS

We work with employers to conduct job fairs, to create awareness of the opportunities each employer has available.

## EMPLOY SDEP

Launched in 2024, “Employ SDEP” works directly with corporate talent acquisition officers and their teams to design an employee acquisition strategy, directly aligned with their corporate needs. This enables our stakeholders to refer individuals directly to the SDEP.

## CORPORATE CULTURE

We work directly with Vistra Corporation, who has developed a playbook to assist employers in establishing a “corporate culture” that supports hiring opportunity populations.

## FEDERAL BENEFITS

We advise our employer stakeholders on federal benefits available to them, when they hire certain opportunity populations. These benefits include federal tax credits, federal bonding of individuals, and in certain cases, government grant opportunities.

# SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

## FOCUS

- TEAM SDEP
- URBAN AGRICULTURE
- VOTERIDERS
- FOCUSED DETERRENCE
- METRIX LEARNING SYSTEM
- HEALTHCARE ADVISORY COUNCIL



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We directly support the economic growth and well-being of the communities we serve, through initiatives that create jobs, address transit needs, increase access to healthcare & affordable housing, and strengthen public policy that supports vulnerable populations.

# 6 KEY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- 1 TEAM SDEP:** Team SDEP is a “Community of Practice,” inclusive of all interested stakeholders, collectively leading Annual Delegations to both Austin and Washington, DC to meet with state and federal agencies and state and federal elected and appointed officials. Our Delegations are focused on securing resources and advocating to change policies that inhibit, and propose policies that enable the populations we serve.
- 2 URBAN AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVE:** The SDEP established our Urban Agriculture Initiative in partnership with the US Department of Agriculture, and the Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership (ATIP) Foundation. We are focused on addressing environmental justice, food insecurity, and the creation of living wage employment opportunities, recruiting companies into South Dallas, that utilize significant sources of biomass, converting it to energy, chemicals, and products. Since our launch in January 2025, we have recruited seven companies to South Dallas. As a result, we have been invited to produce a one-day forum at  - an International Forum in April 2026.
- 3 VOTERIDERS:** We have a formal partnership with VoteRiders, a national organization that assists individuals in securing government IDs, to include birth certificates, Social Security cards, and drivers licenses. They also reimburse the cost of procuring these documents. Through our agreement, we have been able to establish sub-agreements with a significant number of our nonprofit stakeholders, so they can utilize VoteRiders services, expanding the ability for individuals in Dallas to secure government IDs at no cost to them or our nonprofit stakeholders. We have now become the largest provider of VoteRiders Services in the United States.



**It is important that we provide support for success and the opportunity for positive integration into the community. With varied experiences, educational and income levels, ALL have something to bring to the community.**

**4 FOCUSED DETERRENCE:** In partnership with the Dallas Police Department, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and 14 other law-enforcement agencies, we support a model that targets violent offenders, providing direct support through the SDEP to offenders and their families as a deterrent to their continued violent behavior.

**5 METRIX LEARNING SYSTEM:** The SDEP, through a partnership with the Metrix Learning System (MLS) is able to provide the MLS to our partners to train clients they serve. The system has more than 7,000 training modules, including industry recognized certificates and certifications.

**6 HEALTHCARE ADVISORY COUNCIL:** In 2024, we announced the establishment of the SDEP Healthcare Advisory Council, launched in 2025, led by Dr. John Burrell, MD, CEO of MetroCare, the largest behavioral healthcare system in the County; Ruben Esquivel, VP, Community & Corporate Relations, UT Southwestern Medical Center; and Steve Love, President & CEO, Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council.

The Council serves as a “Community of Practice,” focused on improving access to healthcare in our targeted communities. We have launched three initial pilot projects: One focused on writing prescriptions to individuals to the SDEP to deal with the social determinants of health; one determining an approach to train opportunity populations for jobs within the healthcare industry; and one establishing an approach to healthcare public policy, focused on the needs of opportunity populations.



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## EMPLOY SDEP

Launched this year, we have established partnerships with 37 nonprofit training providers, as well as HBCUs, Dallas College, and the City of Dallas, to provide training, utilizing nationally recognized industry certifications, to enable our clients to develop the skills and competencies necessary to become employable.

We then work with National and local employers to define the skill sets they are looking for, to provide an employment pathway to our clients.

## TEAM SDEP - AUSTIN DELEGATION

Team SDEP led our Biennial Delegation to Austin in January for 3 days of meetings with 5 state senators, 18 state representatives and 12 state agencies, advocating for policies that enable those we serve, and for changing policies that inhibit the populations we serve. We also met with state agencies to discuss resources and technical assistance they could provide to support the SDEP.

## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The SDEP, through our contracts with the City of Dallas and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, serves approximately 2,000 non-duplicated individuals annually. We work with and through the TDCJ Community Partnership Council to serve those returning to Dallas from State Facilities. In 2025, we sponsored the “TDCJ Success Celebration,” providing resources for their ongoing community events.

## DALLAS COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT



Through our partnership with the Dallas County Juvenile Department, we serve all residents within the DCJD facilities. In 2025 we launched a mentorship program with selected residents; provided resources to establish a computer learning lab, with support from the Murrell Foundation; and have aligned identified resources for the DCJD, to include employment pathways.

# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## DISC MINISTRIES

In 2025 the SDEP opened an additional SDEP Service Center at DISC Ministries, aligning additional stakeholders to provide services and resources to the community. We also collaborated with Faith in Action to provide office furniture for the newly built office space, to serve residents in the neighborhood, as well as our stakeholders.



## HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs)

In 2025 we formed partnerships with Jarvis Christian University; Paul Quinn College; and Prairie View A&M.

## HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HMIS)

In 2025 we received formal approval to become a contributing HMIS organization, enabling the SDEP to place individuals needing housing directly into the HUD funded system.

Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) are community wide software solutions, funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development through “continuum of care” across the country.

In Dallas and Collin counties, Housing Forward is the designated Continuum of Care Board.

## FAITH IN ACTION

We also worked with Faith in Action to provide Medical Supplies into the community, including Parkland Hospital, the Doctor Spot, and Inspired Vision Compassion Center.



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## ELEGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS (ETP)

The SDEP provides direct assistance to nonprofit training providers to complete the application process to become an “Eligible Training Provider” with the Texas Workforce Commission.

This makes them eligible to apply to the Dallas Workforce Board for reimbursement for training programs they operate.

## VOTERIDERS

The SDEP, through our partnership with VoteRiders, has established 29 sites within our organizational stakeholders. We have become the largest VoteRiders program in the United States, creating the capacity to help our community residents obtain critical government documents, and made aware of their voting rights.



## URBAN AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE

In 2025, we launched an Urban Agriculture Initiative, in partnership with the US Department of Agriculture, the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and the USDA Urban Agricultural Office, one of only 17 in the United States and the only one in Texas. The Initiative is focused on developing the “bioeconomy” as a sustainable, viable industry cluster, creating jobs and economic growth in South Dallas.

Launched with 42 of our organizational stakeholders, we are recruiting companies who will convert all forms of biological matter, including food waste and municipal sledge, etc., into energy (inc. electricity and natural gas).

We are also recruiting companies who will remediate Brownfields in Dallas by planting genetically engineered crops that remove the contaminants from the soil, and are then harvested to create energy.

Both of these approaches improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gases, and convert Brownfields to Greenfields for commercial use and economic development opportunities.

# FUTURE OUTLOOK - 2026 EXPANSION

## DALLAS COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

We have been serving the 750 individuals housed in Dallas County juvenile facilities, on a pre-release basis, providing government IDs and documents; training leading to industry recognized certificates and certifications; and assistance to the individuals' families.

In 2026, we will begin the development of a model to also serve approximately 2,000 individuals under the jurisdiction of the County, on probation or aging out of the program, and their families.

## COMMIT PARTNERSHIP

The Commit Partnership was established by Dr. Michael Hinojosa and Todd Williams, bringing together the Dallas Independent School District, Dallas College, and UNT Dallas, into a collaborative partnership to integrate information, data and statistics documenting the successes and the challenges public and higher education face in serving individuals in Dallas County.

The SDEP has now become the fourth primary partner in the Commit Partnership, which will enable us to share and integrate data with the data from the other three partners, to more rapidly intake individuals identified by all three educational institutions that need assistance beyond their capability to provide.

## DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our previously established partnership agreement with DISD includes serving the families of children utilizing the District's first Family Services Center, located in South Dallas. In 2026, we will begin the development of a "Proof of Concept" Model that could serve (1) students dropping out; (2) students in the DISD Career Institutes; (3) homeless students' families and (4) students and their families as the district expands the number of family services centers they offer.



## TRANSIT

In order to meet the transit needs of our stakeholders and clients, we have partnered with non-profit stakeholders CleanUp USA & Goodwill, and 'Employ SDEP' organizations, to establish a transit system that will serve our targeted communities, providing transit from primary housing centers to employment centers. The system launched limited operations in 2025, and will expand in 2026.

# 2026 EXPANSION

## FIRST STEP STAFFING

**In 2026 we are launching a partnership with First Step Staffing, a nonprofit Employment Agency, that will place our Clients into direct employment with First Step, to fill jobs with employers they serve. We will also accept referrals from First Step of clients they serve, who are in need of our services.**

## COUNTY HHS

The Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services has an expansive array of services and support they can provide Dallas County residents.

In 2026 we will launch a new partnership with the Department, to ensure those services are all available to the individuals we serve. This will include onsite services offered at our 10 “SDEP Service Centers” scattered throughout south & west Dallas; Seminars & Workshops provided to residents; and informal briefings to all of our organizational stakeholders, to ensure they are aware of these services.

## COUNTY JAIL

In 2026 we will begin the development of a model to serve individuals in the county jail, representing approximately 8,000 individuals annually.

This will include both pre-release support, to include training opportunities, and post-release support, to integrate them into our system as clients eligible for all of our services and support.

## DALLAS COLLEGE

**In 2026, we will launch a model for the SDEP to register individuals directly with Dallas College, with an emphasis on underserved adult population. These registrations are for the College’s industry certification programs, which provide the skills and competencies necessary to become eligible for employment in a number of industry clusters in Dallas, to include IT; Logistics; Manufacturing; and Construction, Building & Trades.**

**We anticipate the model will include the use of Dallas ISD Career Centers during the evening hours.**

# 2026 EXPANSION



EarthX is an international forum, focused on building a sustainable world. Launched by Trammel Crow, it has become the largest such event of its kind, annually attracting an international audience. Given the initial success of our Urban Agriculture initiative, we have been invited to produce day two of the three days of EarthX in April 2026.

## GREENLIGHT

GreenLight, one of our newest Organizational Stakeholders, has committed to a Partnership with the SDEP, to ensure all of our Clients have the technology to carry their training credentials with them on their iPhones or other devices, such as certificates, certifications, and degrees, to assist them in securing employment opportunities.

## PODCAST SERIES

After our first podcast release in 2025, the SDEP will launch a monthly podcast series in 2026, produced in cooperation with Dallas College's Venture Club, to expand our communications network and to reach a larger audience. The series is expected to expand awareness of the opportunities the SDEP provides, as well as educate and cultivate Employer participation in our expanding network.



John Benson, Director of Operations, SDEP; Deric Durden, Life Coach, former SDEP Client

# INVESTORS

Child Poverty Action Lab  
City of Dallas  
Commit Partnership  
Communities Foundation of Texas  
Eagle Build  
JP Morgan Chase  
Murrell Foundation  
Muse Family Foundation  
State Fair of Texas  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
Todd Williams  
Vistra Corporation

## LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

### **Wes Jurey**

SDEP Managing Partner & Co-Founder  
Former Chair, TX Workforce Investment Council

### **Dr. Michael Hinojosa**

Chair, SDEP Leadership Council  
Former Superintendent, Dallas ISD

### **Dr. Froswa' Booker-Drew**

SDEP Co-Founder; Chair, Advisory Council  
Former VP, State Fair of Texas

### **The Honorable Michael Williams**

Chair, SDEP State Public Policy  
Former Commissioner, Texas Education Agency

### **Casey Thomas**

Chair, SDEP Municipal & County Public Policy  
Former Mayor Pro Temp, Dallas City Council

### **Annette Underwood**

Chair, SDEP Employer Advisory Council  
Chief Diversity Officer, VISTRA

### **Tawnia Wise**

SDEP Sustainability Advisor  
CEO, Wise Resource Development

### **Dr. John Burruss**

Co-Chair, SDEP Healthcare Council  
CEO, Metrocare

### **Alacia Edwards**

Member, SDEP Leadership Council  
Board Relations, Dallas College

### **Oswaldo Alvarenga**

Member, SDEP Leadership Council  
Asst/Assoc/Deputy Superintendent, DISD

### **Tom Leppert**

Member, SDEP Leadership Council  
Former Mayor, City of Dallas

# CONTACT US



We trust this report provides you with a heightened sense of the depth, breadth and scope of our work. It is our pleasure to serve you.

## SOUTH DALLAS EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

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