

The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, a coalition of more than 30 top U.S. companies including FedEx, Nordstrom, Papa John's, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, Sprinkles, Taco Bell, Target, TOMS, Walmart and more, kicked off a long-term effort to connect Los Angeles County's more than 200,000 Youth ages 16-24, who are disconnected from school and employment, to meaningful job opportunities and resources. The employer coalition partnered with more than 30 government and community-based organizations, including Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, the Alliance for Children's Rights & Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, UNITE-LA, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Leaders Up, to bring this one-of-a-kind Opportunity Fair and Forum to the Los Angeles Convention Center on February 11.

Since launching in August 2015, the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative has partnered with local government and community-based organizations to develop similar events in Chicago and Phoenix. The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative plans to hire at least 100,000 Opportunity Youth nationwide by 2018.

The Los Angeles Opportunity Fair and Forum brought together nearly 4,000 youth to interview with more than 30 leading employers, practice their interview skills, learn to build a compelling resume, connect with a range of social services, obtain information on furthering their education, and receive coaching on their job applications. Companies made over 1,000 job offers on the spot, which was almost as many as the events in Chicago and Phoenix combined.

"The 100K Opportunities Fair and Forum on February 11 was a huge success. It is extremely rewarding to see our County's future leaders take advantage of the myriad resources presented to them at the event. This event has created relationships with dozens of employers and has increased our momentum towards upcoming programs and events that will provide even more job opportunities for youth," stated Cynthia Banks, Director of the Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS).

The event also reflected a robust collaboration among multiple County Departments. CSS was joined by the Department of Human Resources, Department of Children and Family Services, L.A. County Registrar-

Recorder/County Clerk, Department of Public Social Services and the Office of the L.A. County Public Defender in providing information, resources and services for the youth in attendance. Over 200 participants registered to vote.

Supervisor Don Knabe commended the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative and participating L.A. County Departments at the February 9 Board of Supervisors meeting, where he presented Starbucks and LeadersUp with 5-signature scrolls. The Board of Supervisors approved a motion on February 9 introduced by Supervisor Knabe declaring February 2016 as LeadersUp Month and launching the First 100 Initiative, which will utilize existing federal and local youth jobs resources to subsidize the first 100 work hours for youth internships.

CSS will implement the First 100 Initiative as part of its L.A. County Youth Jobs Program, which is on track to provide employment opportunities for 12,000 youth this year, through a collaboration between the Board of Supervisors, diverse County Departments, the City of Los Angeles, 7 L.A. County Workforce Development Boards and countless public and private sector employers.

Supervisor Knabe attended the 100K Opportunity Fair and Forum, where he met with attendees and conducted mock interviews with youth. “From mock interviews and on-site job training to free make-overs and dress clothes, and the on-the-spot hiring, the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative’s youth job fair was one of the most incredible events I have ever attended,” said Supervisor Don Knabe. “Helping our youth find employment is one of my top priorities, and I was proud to meet so many kids walking out of their interviews with multiple job offers.”

The Opportunity Fair and Forum initiated positive relationships with dozens of employers that will allow CSS to coordinate similar events moving forward. CSS will build on the momentum generated by this event to provide additional employment, training and support services to L.A. County’s opportunity youth, in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, diverse County Departments and numerous external partners.