



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Selected as Client Agency for Sunstone Economic Development Challenge at USC Price

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside is proud to announce its selection as a client agency for the 2025/26 Sunstone Economic Development Challenge, a prestigious program hosted by the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy that pairs teams of graduate students with local governments to tackle pressing economic development issues.

Through this partnership, student teams from USC Price will work directly with Riverside city officials to research, analyze, and develop strategies to address opportunities in the workforce and economic development ecosystem.

The scope of the project will focus broadly on enhancing Riverside's capacity for economic growth and equitable opportunity. This includes a deep dive into existing workforce development programs, identifying gaps in local industry needs, and formulating innovative policy recommendations to attract and retain high-growth businesses and talent within the city. The goal is to produce concrete, actionable strategies that the City of Riverside can begin implementing immediately to strengthen its long-term economic resilience.

“We are pleased to partner with the bright minds at the USC Price School of Public Policy through the Sunstone Challenge,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “This collaboration represents a unique opportunity to infuse fresh, research-driven perspectives into our workforce and economic development efforts and to pioneer new strategies that will benefit every member of our community.”

The Sunstone Economic Development Challenge is a cornerstone of experiential learning at USC Price, providing students with real-world experience in public policy and urban planning. The program is designed to deliver actionable solutions that cities can implement to create a more prosperous and equitable economic future.

The year-long challenge will culminate in a formal presentation where student teams will present their comprehensive strategies to a panel of judges and city stakeholders.

For more information about the Sunstone Economic Development Challenge, visit <https://sites.usc.edu/sunstone-price-challenge/>.