



News from the City of San Diego

Mayor-Elect Bob Filner
Council President Tony Young
Councilmember Sherri Lightner
Councilmember Marti Emerald

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City Helps Relaunch Youth Hiring Program

New funds aimed at tackling joblessness among young adults

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Elected officials, business leaders and workforce advocates joined together today to highlight the city’s financial commitment to the Hire-A-Youth program as well as a renewed focus on workforce training designed to grow the local economy and prepare workers for the most in-demand jobs.

The San Diego City Council today approved the final portion of its \$200,000 commitment to expand the Hire-A-Youth program. The local jobs campaign, which the San Diego Workforce Partnership oversees, gives young adults ages 16 to 21 access to job and internship opportunities as well as provides help with job-readiness training, résumé writing and interview skills. The program is being revamped to focus on providing jobs in San Diego’s most important industry sectors – tourism, defense and innovation.

Mayor-Elect Bob Filner said developing San Diego’s workforce of the future is a critical component in growing the local economy. Filner called on the business community to provide support and investment in the Hire-A-Youth program.

“We need to work together to ensure that we are preparing our youth for the jobs of tomorrow today,” Filner said. “I look forward to working with our local businesses to reinvigorate and expand this program and other workforce development initiatives.”

Councilmember Sherri Lightner, who chairs the Council’s Economic Development and Strategies Committee, said the city needs to redouble its efforts on workforce training because San Diego continues to struggle with a skills gap. Lightner said the constant refrain she hears from the business community is how hard it is to find workers with the right skills for the right jobs.

“This really is an investment in our future,” Lightner said. “We need to grow our Hire-A-Youth program so all of our teens and young adults have the job skills they need to be a productive part of our local workforce.”

Council President Young, who first championed the local Hire-A-Youth effort in 2009, said it is imperative for businesses, nonprofits and government to work in underserved communities to provide pathways to employment – especially for low-income and disconnected youth.

“We need to offer our most vulnerable teens and young adults access to jobs and training opportunities so they can be a vital part of our city’s economic future,” Young said.

In 2009, the San Diego Workforce Partnership received \$10.9 million from the federal government and was able to find summer jobs for more than 3,000 teens and young adults. Since then, funding has dwindled and the local Hire-A-Youth program was facing possible extinction.

To help relaunch the program, the City of San Diego committed \$100,000 as part of the budget process and seven councilmembers contributed an additional \$100,000 from their office budgets. Lightner provided \$30,000; Council President Young contributed \$25,000; Councilmember Marti Emerald contributed \$20,000; Council President Pro Tem Kevin Faulconer provided \$10,000; and Councilmembers David Alvarez, Todd Gloria and Lorie Zapf each contributed \$5,000.

Emerald said her decision to invest in the program was a no-brainer.

“This program exposes our kids to the world of work,” she said. “It’s about educating our kids, and it’s about helping improve our local economy. It’s a small investment that will pay big dividends going forward.”

Mark Cafferty, CEO of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp., applauded the City of San Diego for its commitment to workforce training and development because it is the cornerstone to retaining, growing and attracting businesses to the area.

“In today’s economy, you can’t compete if you don’t have a world-class workforce,” Cafferty said. “Programs like Hire-A-Youth demonstrate San Diego’s commitment to building a globally competitive workforce from the ground up.”

Peter Callstrom, CEO of the San Diego Workforce Partnership, emphasized that it is critical all stakeholders work together – local government, employers and our training providers. “We need to involve our employment community in hiring young people and in giving them opportunities to become skilled early in life. By investing in our youth through this amazing program, we all win. Hire-A-Youth leads to skilled and motivated workers who strengthen our economy and help businesses thrive.”

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