News from the City of San Diego

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City Asks Local Companies to Support Youth Jobs Program

Business participation key to program's success

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Mayor Bob Filner and the San Diego City Council today issued a friendly challenge to the local business community asking them to participate in the upcoming summer employment program for young adults called CONNECT2Careers.

CONNECT2Careers, formerly known as Hire-A-Youth, has been redesigned to help address San Diego's ongoing jobs skills gap and provide meaningful work experiences to prepare San Diego's young adults for 21st century jobs. The program is focused on placing San Diego youth ages 16 to 21 in summer jobs in the region's most important industry clusters: tourism, defense, and innovation. It also will provide job-readiness training, résumé writing assistance and interview preparation for all program applicants.

The City of San Diego last year made a $200,000 commitment so that the San Diego Workforce Partnership could rebuild the summer jobs program, which was facing extinction because of a lack of funding.

Despite the importance of growing a local workforce, a recent U.S. Conference of Mayors/Zogby Analytics Survey found that two-thirds of America's businesses did not hire any youth or young adults for the summer of 2012 and 84.3 percent said that they didn't make a financial contribution to a summer jobs program.

Mayor Bob Filner asked San Diego's business community to invest in our future by participating in the CONNECT2Careers program.

"We need to work together to ensure that we are preparing our youth for the jobs of tomorrow today," Filner said. "We need to grow our own workforce, and with the support of our local businesses, we can make CONNECT2Careers into a national model for summer job programs."

Because support of the business community is key to the success of CONNECT2Careers, Council President Pro Tem Sherri Lightner introduced a resolution asking her Council colleagues to reach out to businesses in their respective Council districts and educate them on the benefits of supporting the summer employment program either by donating funds or hiring at least one youth. The City Council today unanimously approved that resolution.

"CONNECT2Careers provides a way for businesses to give back while helping to train our emerging workforce, which is critical to growing our local economy," Lightner said. "You simply can't compete in the global economy if you don't have a world-class workforce."

To help gain recognition for its innovative summer program, the City of San Diego has entered CONNECT2Careers in the U.S. Conference of Mayor's 2013 National Summer Jobs Challenge, which is designed to encourage mayors to create innovative partnerships with businesses and non-profits. Part of the Summer Jobs Challenge application requires a description of the planned outreach to businesses and non-profits.

In order to lead by example, Council President Todd Gloria asked that the Mayor and each Councilmember hire one young adult to help launch the CONNECT2Careers program.

"A program like CONNECT2Careers helped me secure my first job and provided me solid experience and guided me to a career in public service," Gloria said.

"In November of 2012, we came together as a city with a commitment to fund our Hire-A-Youth program. Today, we continue this commitment by supporting the CONNECT2Careers program aimed at decreasing joblessness among our young people. But we can't do it alone," said Councilmember Marti Emerald. "It is crucial for businesses, big and small, and government to work together in our underserved communities to help offer pathways for our young people so they can learn the skills needed to obtain a good-paying job and a future full of possibilities."

"By issuing this challenge to San Diego's vibrant and diverse business community, we can set up San Diego's next generation for success," said Councilmember Kevin Faulconer. "Young San Diegans need opportunities to find local jobs so they can enjoy our fantastic quality of life and contribute to San Diego's economy."

"As a region, our No. 1 priority is job creation," said Mark Cafferty, CEO of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation. "By providing our emerging workforce with this

opportunity, not only are we giving them the chance to hone their professional skills but also feeding a talent pipeline that ensures San Diego remains competitive in the global economy."

To help with outreach to the business community, Phil Blair, president and CEO of Manpower has been named honorary chair of CONNECT2Careers. In his role, Blair will help raise awareness about the program and how it benefits both young adults and local companies.

"Work-based internships are essential to prepare students for the realities of the job market. CONNECT2Careers will help our young adults make good choices as well as prepare them to join the world of work," Blair said.

Peter Callstrom, CEO of the San Diego Workforce Partnership, which runs CONNECT2Careers, emphasized that the program is designed to benefit local businesses by providing motivated young adults who also will receive career counseling as well as ongoing training and mentoring during their summer internship. The CONNECT2Careers program will vet applicants and ensure that they have the background and qualifications to meet a company's specified operational needs.

"We are thankful to the Mayor and City Council for their investment, and we are excited to partner with employers to create life-changing opportunities for our region's young adults," Callstrom said. "A successful career starts with the skills learned from these great experiences."

The deadline for young adults to apply for the program is April 15, 2013. To find out more about the program and the application process, go to http://workforce.org/news/connect2careers.

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