



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **San Diego launches new initiative to look inward to address regional talent shortages**

*First Advancing SD report finds need for 7,200 software related positions in SD; initiative to address*

**SAN DIEGO** – In an effort to provide residents with increased access to high-demand jobs, [San Diego Regional EDC](#) launched [Advancing San Diego](#), a \$3 million local investment initiative underwritten by [JPMorgan Chase](#) that will align industries with economic development, workforce development and education systems.

“Talented and skilled workers are integral for a strong economy,” **said Mark Cafferty, president & CEO at San Diego Regional EDC.** “With and through our program partners and stakeholders, we are establishing a first-of-its-kind, employer-led initiative that will measure and aggregate workforce needs while also indentifying solutions that align and strengthen our local education systems. We need to ensure that the benefits of our region’s growing innovation economy are reaching all San Diegans.

Advancing San Diego will establish nine working groups that are designed to give employers a collective voice about talent needs in priority industries, ranging from software and technology to marketing, healthcare and more. In the first report, **17 participating employers** expressed a projected need for **more than 7,200 additional software-related positions over the next three years.**

#### **The Advancing San Diego initiative**

In April 2019, San Diego was one of five cities to receive a \$3 million investment as part of JPMorgan Chase’s [AdvancingCities Challenge](#), an initiative to drive inclusive growth and create greater economic opportunity across the U.S. Advancing San Diego is a collaborative program by San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, the [City of San Diego](#), [San Diego Workforce Partnership](#), [United Way of San Diego](#), and [San Diego & Imperial Counties Community College Association \(SDICCCA\)](#).

As San Diego’s economy continues to expand, employers are seeing an increased demand for skilled workers. While San Diego strives to attract and retain talent, it must also look inward to build a workforce that meets demands for current and future jobs. EDC and its Inclusive Growth Steering Committee of 40 employers have endorsed a regional goal to [double the number of skilled workers produced in San Diego County to 20,000 per year by 2030](#). This requires strong, effective learning programs offered by community colleges and other education institutions.

The goals of Advancing San Diego are to:

- Engage employers in a structured process to collectively communicate talent needs
- Identify education programs that are aligned with industry needs
- Increase the pool of diverse, skilled talent in San Diego
- Expand access to talent pipelines for small companies

“By 2020, nearly two of every three jobs in the U.S. will require a credential or degree, and currently, 90 percent of our students remain in San Diego after graduation,” **said Dr. Sunita "Sunny" Cooke, superintendent & president at MiraCosta Community College District.** “Community colleges play a critical role in creating a diverse talent pipeline for the region. The Advancing San Diego program will



help connect the work occurring within local community colleges to ensure we offer innovative curricula that support employer needs and include opportunities for students to apply their learning in workplace settings so graduates are ready for employment.”

Education systems that align themselves with results set forth by the working groups will be listed as ‘preferred providers’ by Advancing San Diego. This designation rewards higher education students with priority access to work-based learning and engagement opportunities via networking events, career and internship fairs, and local company tours. To learn more and become a ‘preferred provider,’ educators are encouraged to apply at [advancingSD.org](http://advancingSD.org).

Additionally, businesses with fewer than 100 employees make up 98 percent of San Diego firms, and on average, are challenged to compete with larger employer wages. As part of [EDC’s inclusive growth strategy](#), more than 35 employers (and counting) have [endorsed a regional goal to create 50,000 new quality jobs within small businesses by 2030](#). To further engage small businesses, nearly half of the funding for Advancing San Diego will be used to subsidize internships within small businesses and offer additional services that support student success in the workplace.

“Start-ups like LunaPBC are rich with mission, purpose, and the opportunity for personal and professional growth,” **said Dawn Barry, co-founder & president at LunaPBC.** “Unlike large employers, startups are often lower on salary, but offer exciting equity and the opportunity to experience first-hand what it’s like to build an enterprise. When large employers work together with smaller employers, and pursue partnerships with incubators and accelerators, higher education and regional development teams, we strengthen our collective visibility as a region for career development.”

#### **Report: Demand for Software Talent and Criteria for ‘Preferred Providers’**

Working group members were asked to provide hiring projections along with skills and competency requirements for critical jobs, in order to identify programs that align with industry needs. Collectively, these results were compiled into the [Demand for Software Talent Report](#) and will create a criteria for ‘preferred providers’ of software – a designation by employers that demonstrates an education program is providing adequate training for software engineers.

Companies that contributed to this report represent industries with the highest proportion of software talent in San Diego, including tech, life sciences, healthcare and defense. Based on the participation of 17 employers who collectively **employ approximately 53,000 people** and share a need for software talent, this report indicates the working group is projected to hire more than **7,220 additional software professionals** over three years.

Additional [key findings](#) include:

- Software engineers accounted for the highest future hiring demand among all software occupations in working group companies, making up **53 percent of total projections**
- **Entry-level software engineers** represent the highest hiring need of any position at any level
- Collectively, the working group projects they will hire **more than 1,700 entry-level software engineers** over the next three years
- Approximately **44 percent of working group employers** require a bachelors degree for entry-level software engineers



Through the Advancing San Diego collaboration, San Diego strives to cultivate a more inclusive economy, as this initiative will look inward to address regional talent shortages and strengthen the relationship between employers and education systems.

For more information about the new Advancing San Diego initiative, future working groups, or to be listed as a 'preferred provider, visit [advancingSD.org](https://advancingSD.org). Follow along and join the conversation at [#advancingSD](https://twitter.com/advancingSD).

View the full interactive web report—"[San Diego's Demand for Software Talent Report](#)"—here.

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**About San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation**

San Diego Regional EDC mobilizes business, government and civic leaders around an inclusive economic development strategy in order to connect data to decision making, maximize regional prosperity, enhance global competitiveness, and position San Diego effectively for investment and talent. [sandiegobusiness.org](https://sandiegobusiness.org)