



Strong Workforce Program Four-Year Plan

DRAFT



December 2020

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SDICCCA Region

San Diego and Imperial Counties span the southern border of California. With more than 3.4 million people, our diverse population includes people from all walks of life. Urban and rural communities offer a wide range of occupations and opportunities. San Diego County includes a few of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the country and both counties have neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The median family income in San Diego is \$74,800 a year with 11.5% of the population living in poverty. In Imperial, the median family income is \$45,800 a year and more than 21% of the population lives in poverty.



The ten community colleges in San Diego and Imperial offer a unique opportunity for people to access social mobility.

- More than 208,000 residents attend community college in the region and our students are much more diverse than the general community.
- While around 45% of the population in the region is white (not Hispanic), more than 69% of our student population are students of color.
- More than 60% of our student population is low income.
- With 49% of our students over 25 years old, community college provides unique opportunities for students to change their lives.



With the support of the Strong Workforce program, San Diego and Imperial Community Colleges are collaborating to lock in opportunity for more of our promising students to transform their lives through education.

SDICCCA Region

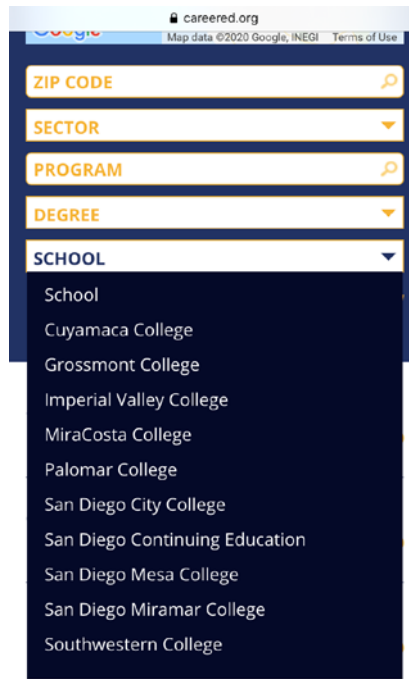
Collectively, the ten SDICCCA Community Colleges offer courses, certificates and degrees in hundreds of program areas that lead to high-wage, high-demand careers.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES



Our Ten Community Colleges & Continuing Education Institutions

- Cuyamaca College
- Grossmont College
- Imperial Valley College
- MiraCosta College
- Palomar College
- San Diego City College
- San Diego Continuing Education
- San Diego Mesa College
- San Diego Miramar College
- Southwestern College



Our website, CareerEd.org, features a program finder tool for students to explore career education opportunities from a variety of perspectives.

Regional Strong Workforce Participation and Governance

The Regional Consortium for Workforce Development for San Diego-Imperial Counties Community Colleges is the regional entity working with the ten community colleges to implement the Strong Workforce Program (SWP). The San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Association (SDICCCA) represented by the region's CEOs sets the policy for Strong Workforce.

The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) represented by a wide range of constituencies on the campuses provides oversight for SWP implementation and approval on funding and guidance on other issues presented for consideration. All SDICCCA colleges have representation on ROC.

The Workforce Development Council (WDC) examines issues, addresses challenges and shares information with deans, regional directors, staff and partners.

The Strong Workforce Implementation Committee is comprised of all of the SWP workgroup leads who meet to discuss and resolve implementation issues. The committee is chaired by a Career Education Dean.

Nine workgroups implement the day-to-day operations of Strong Workforce. WDC and the workgroups have representation from all colleges, K-12, Adult Education and the workforce systems.

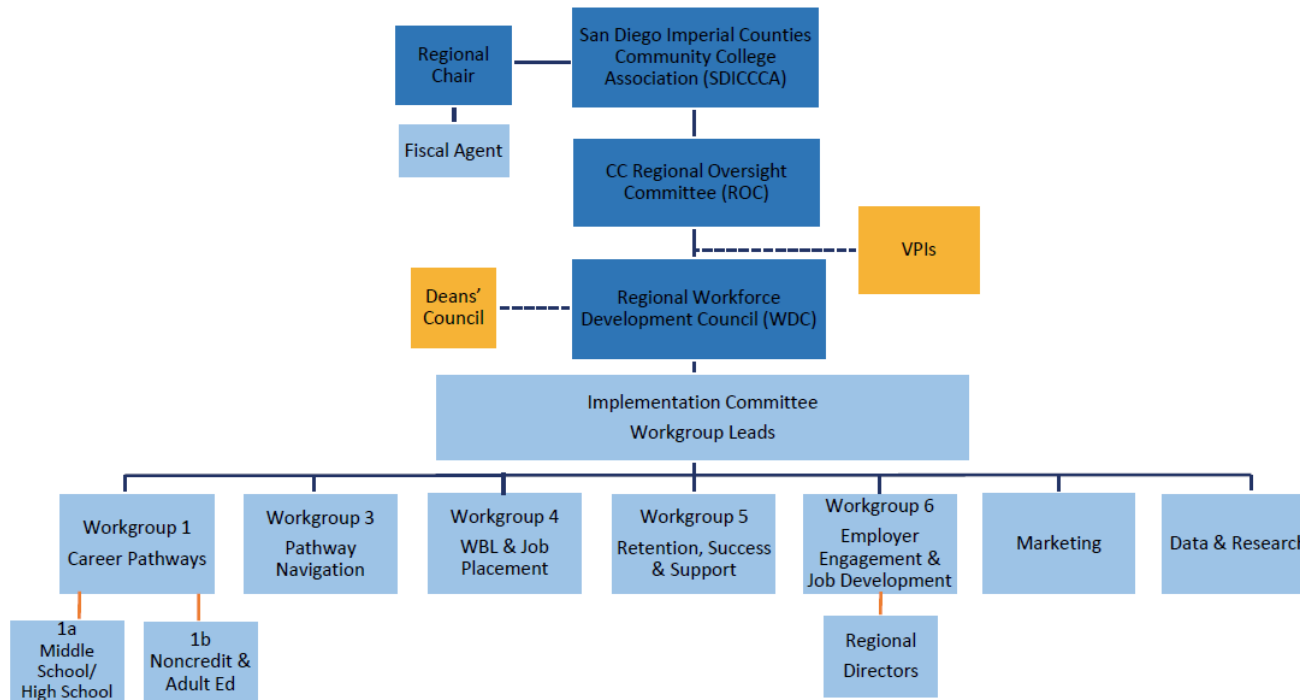
The fiscal agent for the San Diego Imperial Counties Regional Consortium is the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.





Strong Workforce Program Implementation

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES
CAREER EDUCATION



Rev. 10/5/20

San Diego and Imperial Counties Strong Workforce Approach

As Strong Workforce was launched, the leaders in San Diego and Imperial Counties determined to invest regional funds in comprehensive systems improvements. We have made a commitment to using research to understand problems and identify evidenced-based solutions. Our efforts aim to build the capacity of the colleges and improve our ability to increase access to high-wage, high-demand careers and social mobility.



Through our partnerships with the San Diego Regional Economic Development Agency, the Imperial County Workforce Development Board and the San Diego Workforce Partnership, we are collaborating with industry to be part of Inclusive Economic Development for our region. Our goal is for community college students to be the engine of economic growth for our community. This happens through a stronger alignment of curriculum and instruction to the knowledge, skills and abilities needed by employers. Strong Workforce better prepares our colleges to connect our talented students to industry's need for a skilled workforce. This will result in increased social mobility for our students.

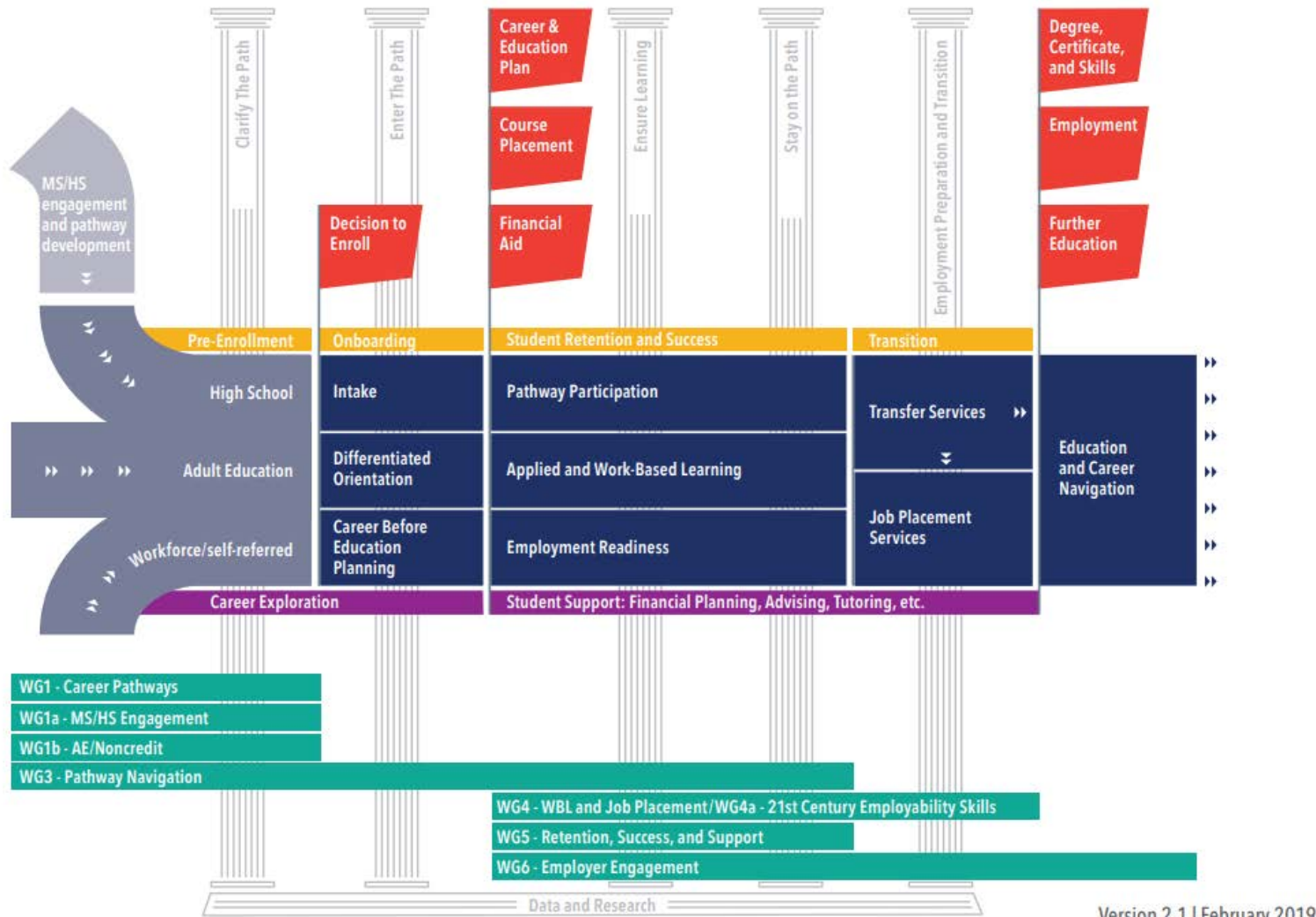
San Diego and Imperial colleges chose to spend the first year of Strong Workforce researching best practices and using evidence to identify strategies to improve student outcomes. With that research completed, we selected priorities for Regional Strong Workforce reflecting the call to serve **more** students and with **better** outcomes. As Strong Workforce metrics are aligned with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) each project supports WIOA metrics.

These priorities are and will continue to be:

- ✓ **Pre-College Outreach and Career Pathways**—to better prepare our prospective students for college
- ✓ **Guided Career Pathways**—to support students in their education, preparing them for the workforce and the launch of their careers
- ✓ **Marketing**—to increase awareness of community college Career Education
- ✓ **Labor Market Research**—to ensure that the colleges have the resources they needed to make informed programmatic decisions that benefit students and create opportunity

The region's approach to Strong Workforce is represented by the diagram on the next page entitled the Student Roadmap to Success.

A Community College Student's Road to Success



Regional Impact of Strong Workforce

The California Community College Chancellor’s Office designed the outcome metrics for Strong Workforce. The statewide data system, LaunchBoard collects these measure of student success, employment, and earnings.

Outcome data for 2012- 2019 indicate the region demonstrate positive improvement in the following Strong Workforce Outcomes:

<p>Career Education Student Enrollments - Students who took at least 0.5 units in any single credit course or who had at least 12 positive attendance hours in any single noncredit course on a TOP code that is assigned to a vocational industry sector</p>	<p>Students Earning 9+ Units – Students who successfully completed nine or more career education semester units in the selected year within a single district</p>	<p>Students Who Attained a Noncredit Workforce Milestone - Students enrolled in a noncredit CTE TOP code or a noncredit workforce preparation course, or had 48 or more contact hours in a noncredit CTE or workforce preparation course in the selected year</p>
<p>2% increase in Career Ed Students</p>	<p>13% increase 9+ Career Ed Units Completed</p>	<p>15% increase in Noncredit Milestones Achieved</p>
<p>Unduplicated SWP students earning a noncredit certificate, CCCC certificate, associate degree, CCC baccalaureate degree on a vocational TOP or who attained apprenticeship journey status</p>	<p>Number of SWP students who earned 12 or more units at any time and at any college and who enrolled in a four-year institution in the academic year after they exited the California community college system</p>	<p>Among students who responded to the CTE Outcomes Survey and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who reported that they are working in a job very closely or closely related to their field of study</p>
<p>42% increase in Degrees, Certificates Earned</p>	<p>24% increase in Transfer to a 4-Year Institution</p>	<p>2% increase in Employment Related to Career</p>
<p>Among students who exited the community college system and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median earnings following the academic year of exit</p>	<p>Among Strong Workforce Program students who exited and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median change in earnings between the second quarter prior to the beginning of the academic year of entry and the second quarter after exit from college</p>	<p>Among students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who attained the district county living wage for a single adult measured immediately following academic year of exit</p>
<p>11% increase in Median Earnings</p>	<p>7% increase in Median Change in Earnings</p>	<p>4% increase in Attaining a Living Wage</p>

K12 Strong Workforce

Accomplishments

In summer 2018, the California legislature introduced the K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP) as an ongoing statewide funding opportunity. It is designed to support essential collaboration across education systems between the K–12 sector and community colleges, or intersegmental partnerships, with involvement from industry businesses and organizations in strengthening CTE programs and pathways aligned with regional workforce needs. The K-12 Strong Workforce Program bridges CTE course sequences, programs, and pathways in secondary schools to existing career and education course sequences, programs, and pathways in community colleges, forming coherent K–14 CTE pathways that lead to social and economic mobility in the region. Funded applications for K-12 SWP are responsive to the regional priorities, labor market needs, and consortium goals as identified in the Regional Plan.



Participation

For each grant cycle, the San Diego Imperial Regional Consortium convenes a K-12 SWP Selection Committee, whose responsibility is to collectively identify finalists and recommend awards to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and California Department of Education. The Selection Committee is made up of up of individuals with expertise in K12 career technical education and workforce development.

The region has six K-12 Pathway Coordinators, who support LEAs to implement career technical education courses, programs and pathways, as well as a K-14 Technical Assistance Provider,

who serves as the liaison between the Regional Consortium, K-12 Pathway Coordinators, K-14 CTE stakeholders.

Next Steps

K12 Strong Workforce projects will continue to strengthen the region's Career Education programs to prepare students for community college and high-wage, high-demand careers.



2020-2021 Awarded Applications
TBA

2019-2020 Awarded Applications

Lead Agency	Application Details Pathway Improvement Title	Funding Amount
Cajon Valley Union	Cajon Valley USD: Middle School Career Development	\$529,505
Escondido Union High	Strong Workforce Program K-12 Escondido Union High School District, 2019-20	\$401,230
Grossmont Union High	Career Exploration and Work Based Learning Development	\$529,505
Grossmont Union High	Career Pathway Improvement and Alignment in Priority Sectors	\$794,257
Health Sciences High	Health Science and Medical Technology	\$264,752
Helix High	EDGE - (Explore, Develop, Gain, Earn) Addressing the Industry Needs through Career Pathways	\$385,341
Imperial Co. Office of Education	Middle School Career Awareness and Exploration	\$997,855
Imperial Valley ROP	Imperial Valley CTE STEM Pathway Improvement Project	\$1,995,710
Mueller Charter	Manufacturing	\$209,889
North County Trade Tech	North County Priority Sector Engagement	\$181,461
Oceanside Unified	High School Engagement	\$99,680
Poway Unified	Poway USD Career Development and Pathway Improvement	\$1,345,202
Ramona City Unified	High School Career Development	\$104,842
SD Office of Education	SDCOE K-8 and Small District Career Pathway Development and Middle School Engagement Initiative	\$997,831
SD Office of Education	SDCOE Lindsay and Victoria Community School JCCS CTE	\$214,828
San Diego Unified	Middle School STEAM Career Development	\$1,759,716
San Dieguito Union High	Software & Systems Development, Engineering Design, Advanced Manufacturing & Digital Media Pathway!	\$553,778
San Marcos Unified	Improving Access and Engagement in CTE programming for MS, HS and Alternative Ed. Students	\$105,901
Steele Canyon High	Improving CTE Partnerships	\$105,214
Sweetwater Union High	Linking The Roadmap to College and Career	\$1,372,570
Valley Center-Pauma Unified	Early Career Exploration and Development	\$55,668
Vista Unified	Career Development and Pathway Improvement	\$434,935
Total		\$13,439,670



2018-2019 Awarded Applications

Lead Agency	Application Details Pathway Improvement Title	Funding Amount
Carlsbad Unified	CUSD Career Pathway Continuum Project	\$956,203
Coronado Unified	Middle and High School Career Development and Pathway Improvement	\$123,171
Escondido Union High	Strong Workforce Program K-12 Escondido Union High School District	\$809,527
Grossmont Union High	Career Development Support, Pathway Expansion and Improvement in Priority Sectors	\$1,135,301
Imperial Co. Office of Education	Middle School Career Development	\$351,617
Imperial Valley ROP	Imperial Valley Health and Public Services Consortium (\$3,823,683
North County Trade Tech High	Expanded Career Pathways and Increased Engagement with middle school, high school and local industry	\$152,000
Oceanside Unified	High School Engagement	\$252,280
Poway Unified	Poway Unified School District: Pathway Development and Improvement	\$1,204,597
Ramona City Unified	High School Career Development	\$150,000
SD Office of Education	Regional Health Science and Medical Technology (HSMT) Career Pathway Expansion	\$3,286
SD Office of Education	SDCOE JCCS CTE Pathway Enhancement	\$22,274
SD Office of Education	SDCOE JCCS CTE Pathway Planning	\$140,000
SD Office of Education	Secondary Pathways Regional Support, WBL, Capacity Building and Engagement	\$620,931
San Diego Unified	Programs and Certifications in Transportation, Biotechnology and Cybersecurity	\$258,954
San Diego Unified	Student Engagement Continuum Pilot Project	\$846,286
San Diego Unified	Health Care and Life Sciences WBL and Certification Initiative	\$1,406,355
San Dieguito Union High	Career Exploration & Pathway Improvement for Software Systems Development, Auto, and Business Mgmt	\$647,987
San Marcos Unified	Developing and Enhancing Career Education Pathways and Transitions for SMUSD MS and HS Students	\$210,000
Sweetwater Union High	Linking the Roadmap to College and Career	\$1,008,011
Vista Unified	Middle and High School Career Exploration	\$503,737
Warner Unified	Pathway Development and Improvement	\$75,000
Total		\$14,701,200



Inventory of Previous & On-Going Projects

The chart below lists each of the regional investments with the type, amount, and timing of the investment. Each of these projects were selected with the specific goal of closing labor market and employment gaps in San Diego and Imperial Counties. A work plan, spending plan, and budget of each project is detailed in NOVA, the Chancellor’s Office Strong Workforce reporting system.

Project	Target	Total Investment (Rounds 1-5)	Round					
			1	2	3	4	5	6*
Pre-College Outreach and Guided Career Pathways Implementation	Region-wide Support	\$8,016,923	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pathway Navigation	Colleges	\$1,932,592		x	x	x		
Accelerating Resilient Short-Term Career Programming	Colleges	\$1,250,000					x	x
Retention & Success/Faculty Institute	Colleges	\$3,914,797			x	x	x	x
Sector Strategies and Equity Outcomes	Colleges	\$3,695,471		x	x	x	x	x
Job Placement Case Management	Colleges	\$6,844,351	x	x	x	x	x	x
Work-Based Learning Assessment	Colleges	\$165,378		x				
Work-Based Learning Coordination	Colleges	\$2,508,819		x	x	x		
Retention & Success Acceleration Projects	Colleges	\$900,000			x			
Innovative Collaborative Projects	Colleges	\$383,260	x					
Tutoring Pilot Project	Colleges	\$48,032		x				
21 st Century Employability Skills Pilot	Colleges	\$132,659		x				
JobSpeaker Pilot Study	Colleges	\$27,000		x				
Marketing of Career Education Programs	Region-wide Support	\$3,972,214	x	x	x	x	x	x
College-Based Marketing of Career Education Programs	Colleges	\$960,572	x		x	x		
Improving the Student Enrollment Process	Colleges	\$1,598,615		x	x	x		
Labor Market Research	Region-wide Support	\$2,000,000	x	x	x	x	x	x

*Round 6 funding has not been appropriated, this is a projected investment.

Pre-College Outreach and Career Pathways

Participation

The San Diego Imperial Regional Consortium convenes middle school, high school, and Adult Education partners to plan, implement and evaluate career pathways within the region. Regional committees include equal representation from middle school, high school and Adult Education organizations.

Accomplishments

The region established monthly collaborative K-12, Community College, Adult Education & noncredit collaborative meetings to plan and implement regional goals. The middle and high school collaboration developed Career Development Continuums to define and promote the regional career pathways system. The collaboration established and the need and support for a K-12 to community college public facing program finder tool and are in the process of adoption.

Next Steps

The collaboration is developing a matrix for outcome reporting. The region is launching a K-12 to community college public facing program finder tool to assist prospective students and families in identifying community college programs that align with their interests and experience. The K-12 and community college partnership are establishing a community of practice to disseminate promising practices within the region.



Guided Career Pathways

The Road to Success model on page # illustrates the regional investments, aligned with Guided Pathways that are transforming our colleges on behalf of students. Each of these investments were created based on evidence by practitioners through the Strong Workforce workgroups. These investments are aligned to Guided Pathways and are strategically focused on increase student equity outcomes. The Pathway Navigation and Work-Based Learning project will complete in 2021. The Student Retention and Success and the Sector Profiles will continue throughout the next four years. The Job Placement Case Management project is an on-going commitment in the region.

Pathway Navigation

Accomplishments

The Pathway Navigation workgroup created an action plan to strengthen practices related to student onboarding and navigation into programs of study. Grounded on research and evidenced-based practices, this project has supported colleges in developing intake processes, differentiated orientation, and career exploration and planning before education planning. This investment in the colleges is in alignment with Completion by Design (2016) and Guided Pathways activities already underway at the colleges.



Participation

Representatives from all ten colleges are participating in the project. Teams of Career Education practitioners, college deans and counselors collaborate at each college to improve the student onboarding experience. The Pathway Navigation investment at each college is embedded in the Guided Pathways effort at the colleges.



Next Steps

The Pathway Navigation project is a three-year effort at the colleges to include a planning year, an implementation year, and a formal integration or sustainability year. The colleges are just completing year two of implementation and have the opportunity to apply for a third year of funding to fully implement the new practices and sustain the efforts.

Student Retention & Success and the Faculty Institute

Accomplishments

This project launched the region's first Strong Workforce Faculty Institute with a kickoff event for 245 faculty members and 61 researchers, deans, and staff in February 2020. The Institute is a professional learning program for faculty with the following goals:

- Fostering strong collaboration and engagement among faculty, researchers, and deans
- Encouraging self-reflection, inquiry, and research-based decision-making
- Inspiring teaching and learning from a culturally inclusive perspective

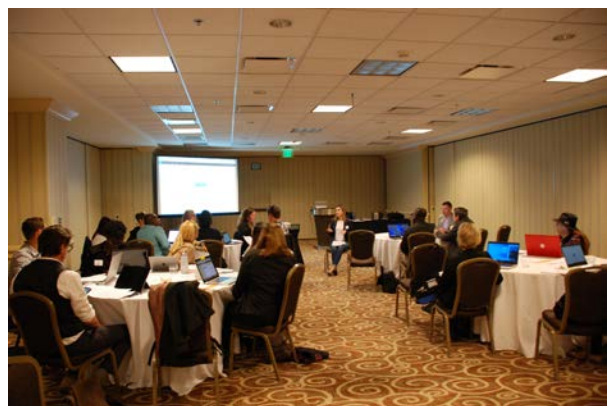
While faculty are experienced in program evaluation, this investment created a structured environment of collaboration among faculty, researchers, and deans at the colleges to focus on student outcomes. The project expanded research capacity at each college and provided funding for faculty to devote time to look at the data for their course. As a result of the 223 submitted their classroom action plans with a focus on student retention, persistence and completion.

Participation

Institute participants met monthly with their college-assigned institutional researchers and deans, and completed activities to develop skills related to inquiry and cultural proficiency. The activities utilized course-level data provided by institutional researchers as well as faculty's first-hand knowledge of their students. Faculty from Career Education and general education participated in the project.

Next Steps

Due to the success of the Institute, the Regional Consortium is adding a second track, focuses on labor market information and career counseling. This second version of the Institute will have similar components such as collaboration, reflection, action and is scheduled to start in mid-2021. The first, inaugural cohort can participate in the second version as data coaches for a second cohort or as participants who analyze not only course-level data, but also labor market information.



Work-Based Learning

Accomplishments

The Work Based Learning and Job Placement workgroup collaborated to strengthen work-based learning functions at each college to provide students with a continuum of critical experiences and support to deepen classroom learning. To facilitate this, the region:

- Funded Work-Based Learning Coordinators at each college.
- Formed a Community of Practice to disseminate practices and facilitate continual process improvement
- Coordinated with colleges to establish campus based goals and processes for WBL
- Began the process to create professional development for faculty to expand implementation of WBL.
- Piloted a WBL tool to provide a single point of contact for employers and facilitate placements

Participation

The Work Based Learning and Job Placement workgroup has representation from all ten San Diego Imperial Colleges. Participants include college deans, associate deans, career services representatives, Work-Based Learning Coordinators, Job Placement Case Mangers, internship coordinators, and regional staff.

Next Steps

The region will support the colleges to prepare to report work-based learning experiences to state through the MIS system. In addition, the workgroups will collaborate to develop and implement professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to facilitate embedding



work-based learning into individual courses and programs, and track the experiences for reporting purposes.

Case Managed Job Placement



Accomplishments

Strong Workforce established Job Placement Case Manager positions at each college. The Work Based Learning and Job Placement workgroup collaborated to support those activities at each college. Job Placement Case Managers provide students with the support needed to identify occupations in their field of study and ultimately, become gainfully employed. To facilitate this, the Region:

- Funded Job Placement Case Managers at each college.
- Formed a Community of Practice to facilitate continual process improvement and collaboration
- Coordinated with colleges to establish campus based goals and processes for supporting students
- Piloted implementation of Career Engagement tool to provide a single point of contact for employers and facilitate placements

Participation

All ten colleges are participating with the Work Based Learning and Job Placement workgroup to strengthen processes at their colleges. Participants include college deans, associate deans, career services -representatives, Work-Based Learning Coordinators, Job Placement Case Managers, Internship Coordinators, and regional staff.

Next Steps

Colleges will collaborate with the regional directors and regional staff to further develop the employer engagement model and strengthen relationships between stakeholders like local employers and economic development corporations. The workgroup will collaborate to develop and implement professional development opportunities by establishing a community of practice where employer opportunities, contacts and best practices will be shared to improve the experience for employers and students.

Sector Strategies and Equity Outcomes

Accomplishments

Aligning curriculum and instruction to industry need is at the core of Strong Workforce. To support colleges the process, the region established this project to research the needs of employers and create easy to understand analysis of the current needs of industry. Regional Directors for Employer Engagement, the Center of Excellence, and the Director of Strategic Partnerships collaborated to develop a continuous improvement process for developing sector profiles and strategies. The strategies provide college specific recommendations and regional recommendations to align to the knowledge, skills and abilities identified by employers through the engagement process. Further, the Regional Consortium has then connected these recommendations to a sector RFA to assist colleges with identified interventions for improvement.

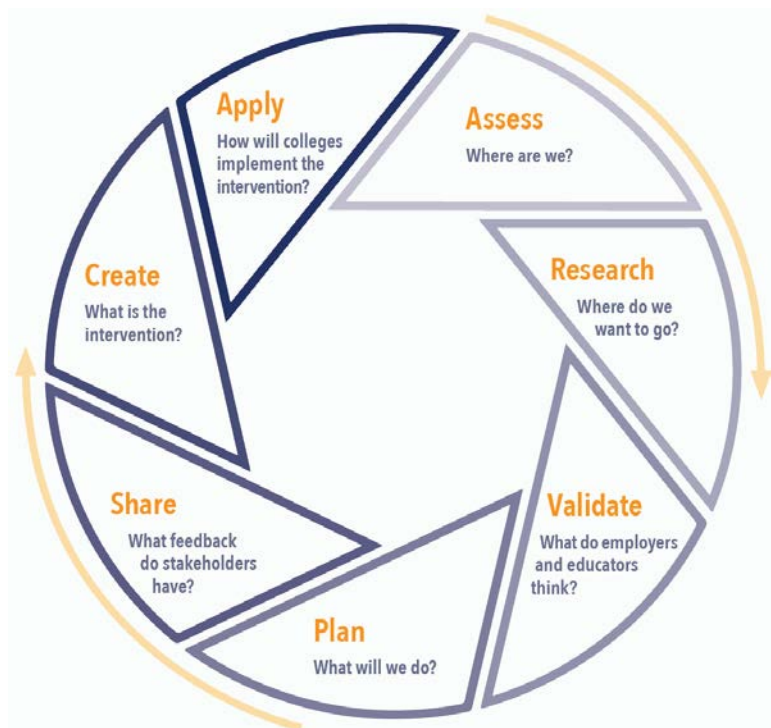
Participation

Regional Directors for Employer Engagement, the Center of Excellence, and the Director of Strategic Partnerships participated to develop Sector Profiles and Strategies for the San Diego and Imperial Region.

The Region released sector specific RFAs for colleges to design targeted interventions to improve college performance and reduce the labor market gap in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Next Steps

The region will continue to work with employers to further develop sector profiles and strategies. Additionally, these parties will provide guidance and support to colleges as they apply interventions based on the research findings. The target of this work will continue to be high wage, high demand occupations.



Marketing

Accomplishments

- Creation and implementation of a three-year marketing plan for Career Education
- Design and deployment of a regional brand campaign for Career Education
- Development of careered.org, a regional website for Career Education
- Direct support to colleges for marketing to new and current students



Career Education - San Diego & Imperial Counties
@mycareered

Achieving your dream career doesn't require an expensive education. Chong Mi went from various jobs to owning her own business. Quality, affordable education is available at @sdce.

See what programs are available here:
careered.org/college-progra...

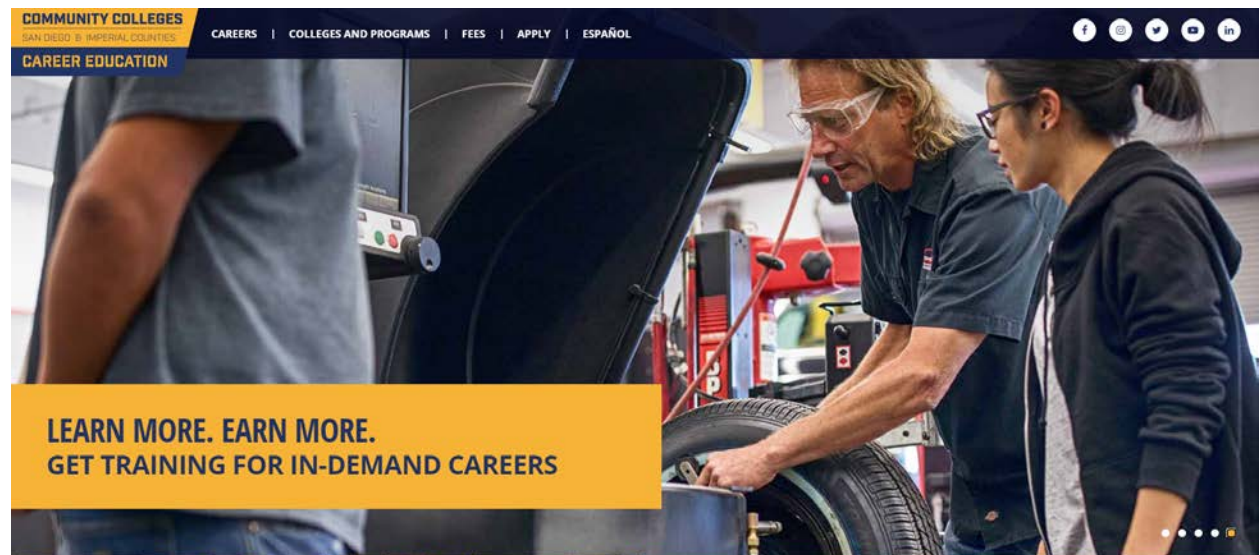


Participation

The regional team and the marketing consultant, Civilian, have worked closely with and relied upon the expertise of a group of Public Information Officers from each institution and members of the regional marketing committee. This group has met regularly for three years to help foster an understanding of Career Education resources and needs while facilitating access to students, campuses, and program information.

Next Steps

The coming year (2020-21) will focus on continuous improvement for existing campaign tactics, re-aligning media and outreach strategies, and refining assets to promote Career Education programs and reduce the region's middle-skills jobs gap.



Improving the Student Enrollment Experience



Accomplishments

The region dedicated funds to help colleges update their websites into a more “student focused” design. The region recognized that most of the college websites were the product of many years of collaborative development, not necessarily focused on student use. This project aimed to simplify the process for students to navigate through a site, learn about the particular school’s offerings, and

successfully apply. The effort focused on content strategy, Content Management System (CMS) selection and implementation, site design, website coding, and even content migration of 1000s of individual pages.

Participation

Civilian and the regional team worked with several of the region’s colleges which included MiraCosta, Cuyamaca, Grossmont, Palomar, and IVC. City, Continuing Education, Mesa, Miramar and Southwestern worked with website consultants to accomplish this work.

Next Steps

Individual colleges will continue to evaluate and revise their websites in order to meet the needs of students.



Labor Market Research

Accomplishments

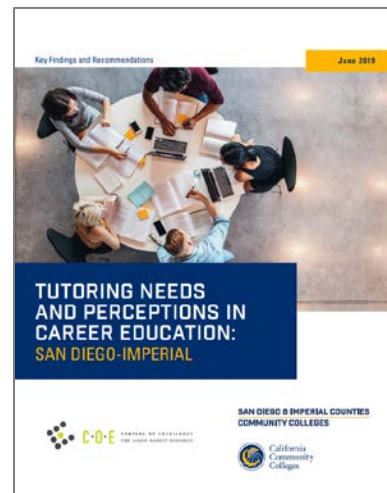
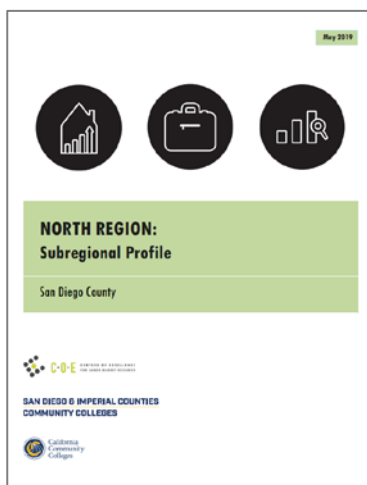
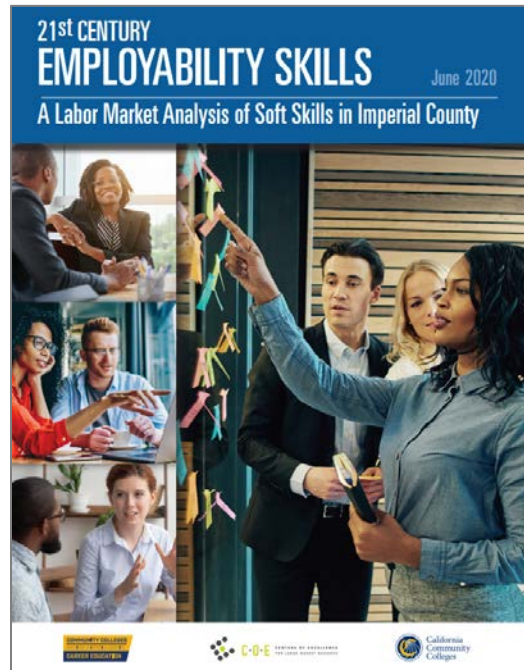
By expanding the capacity of the San Diego-Imperial Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) with Strong Workforce funds, the COE team produced 15 special reports and 178 labor market briefs for the Regional Program Recommendation Process in the past four years. These reports are located on the COE website, coecc.net and constitute a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the labor market for middle skills jobs in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The COE co-chairs the Data and Research Committee, which meets monthly to discuss common research needs across the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges.

Participation

The regional Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research is based at MiraCosta College. The Data and Research Committee has representation from each college including Career Education Deans and/or institutional researchers. Other community college administrators, faculty and staff also attend committee meetings whenever a related research project is up for discussion. Similarly, external partners and researchers also participate when necessary.

Next Steps

In collaboration with the colleges, the COE will develop customized program fact sheets, which contain labor market information and program data, for each of the colleges. These program fact sheets can be used for the Regional Program Recommendation Process, program review, and the second phase of the Strong Workforce Faculty Institute (see Retention and Success).



Advancing Cities



Accomplishments

San Diego was selected as one of five cities to receive a \$3 million investment as part of JP Morgan Chase's Advancing Cities Challenge, an initiative to drive inclusive growth and create greater economic opportunity across the U.S. The initiative has created three employer working groups to provide training institutions with essential feedback regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by employers to perform in demand jobs. The working groups are Software Development, Engineering, Business Operations and Engagement, and Manufacturing. Additional occupation groups may be added in the future. Two San Diego and Imperial Counties Region colleges selected as preferred providers for each of occupations, which provides paid internship opportunities with small employers. Additionally, collaboration on this grant has helped to solidify relationships with many of our external partners and employers.

Participation

Participants in Advancing Cities includes regional colleges, regional staff, the Center of Excellence. External partners, include the San Diego Regional EDC, City of San Diego, United Way, Manpower, and the San Diego Workforce Partnership.

Next Steps

Regional staff will continue to partner with the Advancing Cities team to engage employer working groups for evaluation of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for internships and employment for identified occupations. Regional staff will collaborate with the colleges to support preferred provider applications and convey their questions and feedback to the grant team. Advancing Cities still has three occupations to research and regional staff will continue to support all of the future initiatives.

Next Steps for the Region

In San Diego and Imperial Counties our regional investments are focused on comprehensive systems improvements identified through research. Our efforts aim to build the capacity of the colleges to better serve students and improving our institutions with the goal of increasing access to high-wage, high demand careers and social mobility. We align these investments with labor market research to close the middle-skill job gap.

Over the next four years, these priorities will continue to be:

- ✓ **Pre-College Outreach and Career Pathways**—to better prepare our prospective students for college
- ✓ **Guided Career Pathways**—to support students in their education, preparing them for the workforce and the launch of their careers
- ✓ **Marketing**—to increase awareness of community college Career Education
- ✓ **Labor Market Research**—to ensure that the colleges have the resources they needed to make informed programmatic decisions that benefit students and create opportunity

While we have established our next investments for regional Strong Workforce in San Diego and Imperial Counties, 2020 has made clear that priorities may need to shift unexpectedly. As this plan is written, our focus for 2021-2025 are:

Invest in Faculty

Strengthen and expand the Faculty Institute by supporting faculty in their equity-focused research projects and adding the Counselor Institute. Continue to support research resources to support faculty in understanding how their course design and instructional approaches can be improved to increase equitable student outcomes

Invest in Sectors

Strengthen and expand our Sector Strategies and Equity Outcomes work supporting colleges in aligning curriculum to employer needs and labor market research. Investments can include curriculum and program development, research into industry needs, modernizing equipment and beginning in-demand programs. Other work can include identifying inequities in program outcomes and supporting interventions to ensure that all students have access to high-wage, high-demand careers.

Invest in Resilient Short-Term Career Programs

Support colleges in increasing short-term Career Education programs for students who need to access to in-demand jobs. With a current economic downturn, community colleges can be a place for unemployed individuals to quickly gain skills. This investment will help colleges to re-package current coursework into stackable, short-term credentials that lead to in-demand jobs. The investment can also be used to establish new short-term programs with a clear labor market demand.