

The San Diego Workforce Funders Collaborative



*Partnering in New Ways to Build
San Diego County's Healthcare and
Biotech Workforce*



Annual Evaluation Report
October 2008 - December 2009

Prepared by Harder+Company Community Research
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Introduction

“Part of the value of philanthropy is nudging and pushing and pulling the system to change. I think there are different roles for philanthropy to play and since we are doing it as a collaborative, it’s much more powerful; it’s not just one foundation’s agenda.”
~ SDWFC Funder/Member



Founded in 2006, the San Diego Workforce Funders Collaborative (SDWFC) is a public-private partnership of philanthropic foundations, employers, and the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD). It is designed to strengthen and expand sectoral workforce development efforts and partnerships in the San Diego region. SDWFC is a coalition working to identify the region’s workforce needs, create well-coordinated and well-financed solutions, and monitor regional progress.

The SDWFC is one of four funder collaboratives in California and part of a national network of over 20 funder collaboratives that receive support from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS). The NFWS “aims to link national and local foundations, businesses, and public funders to build the capacity and spread the adaptation of the evolving workforce partnership model. The goal of these efforts is to improve employment, training and labor market outcomes for low-income individuals and their employers.”

In 2009, Harder+Company Community Research (Harder+Co) was contracted by the SDWFC to conduct an evaluation of its first year of grant-making as well as the collaborative’s evolution and ongoing efforts to identify and finance workforce solutions in the region. This report summarizes the 2009 evaluation findings. It begins with an overview of the evaluation approach and methods and includes an initial baseline assessment of the following components:

- + Workforce Funders Collaborative
- + Workforce Partnership Profiles
- + Participant Characteristics

Evaluation Overview

Using a collaborative approach, the evaluation seeks to gather baseline data for the first year of grant-making as well as document the challenges, milestones, and success factors of the SDWFC during the initial years of planning and implementation. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the SDWFC’s progress in meeting its articulated goals and collect meaningful information that can be used for planning and decision-making. It is part of an ongoing effort to

Participating Foundations and Funders in 2008-09

- + The California Endowment
- + San Diego Workforce Partnership
- + State of California Employment Development Department
- + San Diego Grantmakers
- + The Gary and Mary West Foundation
- + Life Technologies Corporation
- + The United Way of San Diego
- + Kaiser Permanente
- + Alliance Healthcare Foundation
- + WebMD Health Foundation
- + The Girard Foundation
- + San Diego Women’s Foundation

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continue to track and document short, medium and long-term workforce outcomes over-time and at multiple levels.

The evaluation seeks to assess how SDWFC efforts impact (1) the overall workforce development system, (2) workforce partnerships funded by the SDFWC, and (3) individual employees and/or students who participate in SDWFC-funded programs.

A variety of data collection methods were used as part of the 2009 evaluation to assess progress and impact at multiple levels. The table below highlights the primary data collection activities and how they align with short and long-term outcomes at the funder level, workforce partnership level and the individual participant level.

Evaluation Methods & Sources		
Levels of Impact	Short & Long-Term Outcomes	Data Collection Source
Funders Collaborative & Workforce Systems	Enhance collaboration to increase public-private funding for workforce development	
	Enhance access to education and training for underserved populations	+ Document review and alignment with NFWS evaluation
	Employ continuous learning to support systems change	+ Interviews w/ funders and collaborative members
	Promote cohesion between education and industry to create industry-responsive and demand-driven curriculum and employment services	+ Capacity Building Survey
Workforce Partnership (grantees)	To promote greater coherence and coordination in programs and policies addressing education and workforce development needs	+ Interviews with workforce partnerships including site coordinators, partner agencies
Program Participants (individuals)	To help prepare individuals for jobs that offer livable wages and upward mobility	+ Demographic participant data + Survey of program participants
	To improve access to career preparation and development services, particularly for populations that have been under-represented in the target careers	

Section One: The San Diego Workforce Funders Collaborative

The SDWFC is a public/private coalition of philanthropic foundations, employers and public entities. It was formed in 2008 with the goal of expanding and coordinating funding for career education and workforce development efforts in San Diego County. It is run under the auspices of San Diego Grantmakers, a regional association of local foundations and corporations. For 2009, the SDWFC established a variety of operational objectives including:

- + Clarifying its governance and management structure
- + Recruiting new funders and partners
- + Developing the first round of grants and planning for the addition of new workforce projects to its portfolio
- + Developing a capacity building plan

The following section highlights progress, accomplishments, and lessons learned during the planning and implementation phase (2008 through 2009). It is organized around the operational objectives mentioned above and includes a discussion of the SDWFC longer range goals of fundraising and recruitment, continuous learning and quality improvement, and public policy and regional planning. It is based on a review of documents as well as individual interviews with 12 funders and 2 staff of the SDWFC. In these interviews, members shared their perspectives about the challenges and major milestones as well as their priorities and suggestions for future work together.

Goals of the SDWFC

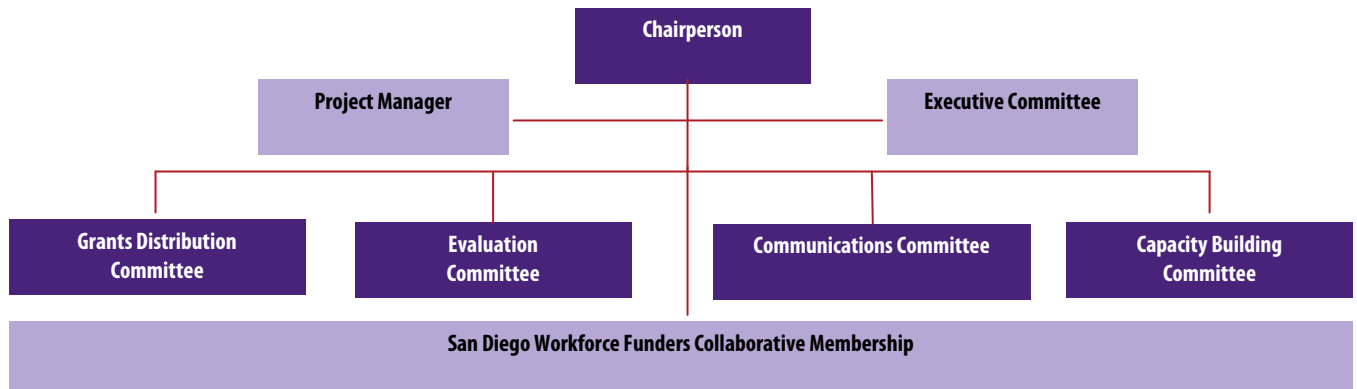
- + Enhance collaboration to increase public-private funding for workforce development
- + Target key sectors (health, biotech, etc)
- + Enhance access to education and training for underserved populations
- + Employ continuous learning to support systems change
- + Promote cohesion between education and industry to create industry-responsive and demand-driven curriculum and employment services

Governance & Management Structure

Building a Solid Foundation

The SDWFC uses a consensus process for making key decisions regarding direction, objectives and implementation strategies. Each member organization has one vote in all decisions, except for grant funding decisions. Grant funding decisions are made by the Grants Distribution Committee which is comprised of members who have committed or aligned funds with the SDWFC. The Executive Committee is made up of the Chair, two Vice-Chairs, and a representative of San Diego Grantmakers. It is empowered to act on behalf of the SDWFC on issues that forward the collaboratives objectives, particularly in the area of policy and grant-making. The organizational chart below illustrates the overall governance structure and work group.

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Ensuring Effective and Collaborative Decision-Making

Interviews with staff and funders revealed that the current governance structure has provided a solid foundation for effective decision-making. The addition of an executive committee with the authority to make key decisions helped to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-making process while still allowing for substantial input from the full group. One funder described the structure as “flexible, open and fair” and others described it as collaborative and consensus driven. Most felt that the number and frequency of meetings was good, as well as the level of communication. However, at least two funders expressed the need for more reflection and re-visiting goals and lessons learned on a regular basis. One funder stated “we need to talk about what we’ve learned more frequently and more thoroughly to direct the group in a better way.”

“When you have a number of diverse funders at the table, some want to move faster than others ... they bring the different cultures of the organizations they represent.”

~ Member of SDWFC

Ensuring Adequate Staffing and Support

In addition to the refinement of the governance structure, another improvement in 2009 was the augmentation of program staffing. In interviews with staff and funders, the lack of sufficient staffing was an issue in the earlier phase of program planning and implementation. However during 2009, an additional full-time Program Specialist was added to the team and there are plans to further expand staff capacity in 2010.

New Funders & Partners

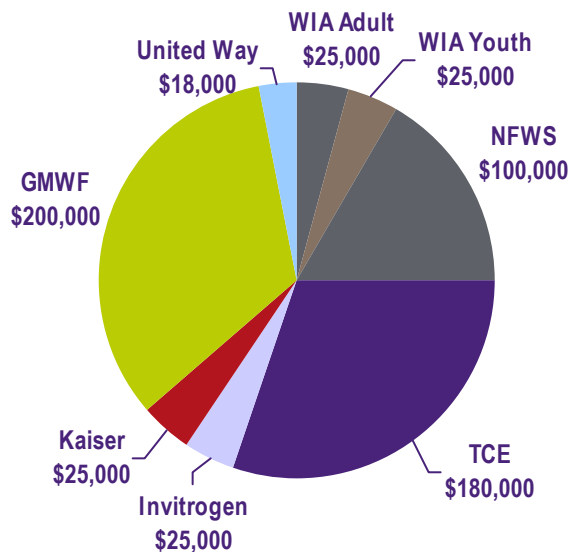
Bringing new funders and partners to the table is an ongoing challenge particularly given the difficult economic environment and extraordinary demand for resources at all levels. Nonetheless, the SDWFC has made considerable strides in its first year of funding and has been successful in raising awareness about broad implications of workforce development. One funder recognized that the collaborative started with the right group of people but “we just need to increase the number.”

Leveraging Funds from Multiple Sources

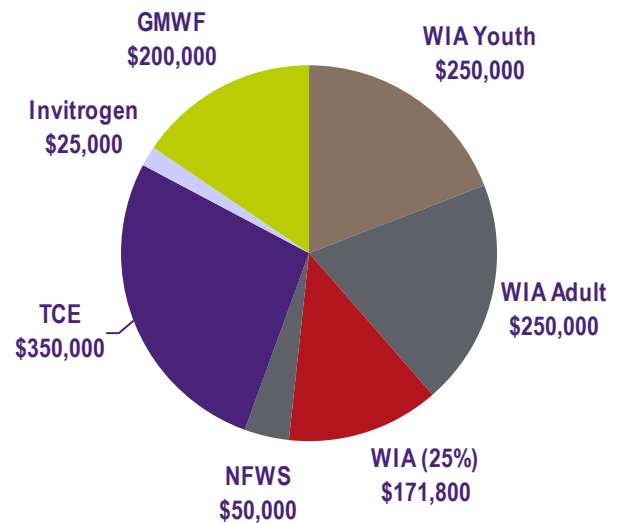
In 2008-2009, the SDWFC aligned and pooled a total of \$598,000 from eight funders with the largest contributors being the Gary and Mary West Foundation (GMWF), The California Endowment (TCE) and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS). For the second round of funding, a total of \$1,296,800 was raised from seven funders, including \$671,800 in Work Investment Act (WIA) funds, \$350,000 from The California Endowment and \$200,000 from the Gary and Mary West Foundation.

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1st Round of Funding (2008-09)



2nd Round of Funding (2009-10)



Coordinating with the Public Workforce System

Another significant milestone in 2009 was the receipt of \$500,000 (\$250,000 from WIA ARRA Adult Dislocated Worker Formula and \$250,000 WIA Youth Formula Funding) for re-granting from the San Diego Workforce Investment Board (WIB). These funds will be used for the second round of funding in 2010 and will be matched by private funders from the SDWFC. The SDWFC is one of very few regional collaboratives that has secured WIB funding, affording them a unique opportunity to expand the workforce partnership model and be part of the larger conversation about how federal dollars are spent in the region. Throughout the course of 2009, the SDWFC staff and members have worked to improve coordination with the local WIB, which despite being co-located at the WIB site, has required consistent and fluid communication. In addition to looking for opportunities to align funding, the SDWFC is also seeking opportunities to work with the WIB on a shared policy agenda.

"I was able to think about access to health insurance...sustainable jobs, wages and access to healthcare services. It was a very important discussion for foundation staff to have; where we were and where to invest based on evidence and data."

~ Member of SDWFC

Influencing the Funding Approaches and Practices of Local Foundations

Another notable achievement was the SDWFC's role in influencing various community and family foundations that had not previously funded workforce development projects. "We started funding in 2001," one funder reflected, "and we basically funded homeless, hard to employ groups. This time we wanted to do a bigger picture of the economy and [understand] where the jobs really are ... to fund in a different way." At least four of the funders interviewed stated they had never invested in workforce development programs before and their experience with the SDWFC had broadened their perspective and understanding of workforce development. One funder said she was able to start a workforce development conversation with her foundation's program committee and "now we think beyond primary education."

As the SDWFC has matured and evolved, it has started to better articulate its purpose to potential funders and partners by emphasizing the direct implications of workforce development on issues such as poverty, homelessness, housing, healthcare and financial stability. In addition to promoting coordination, integration and "systems-level thinking" among funders, the SDWFC also influenced some of the day-to-day practices of program officers and members in a positive way. During interviews, the majority of funders expressed their

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respect and appreciation for their colleagues and the opportunity to learn and network. This is a great group," noted one funder, "I use them as a model; as an example in what works in doing funders collaboratives."

Future Fundraising and Recruiting Other Funders

Looking ahead, members of the collaborative were asked about the challenges and strategies for bringing new funders to the table. Unlike other major metropolitan areas, the San Diego region has a relatively limited base of private and community funders, many of which are smaller family foundations. The combined assets of San Diego's private and community foundations are approximately \$2.29 billion compared to \$34.7 billion in Los Angeles and \$31.3 billion in San Francisco. In addition to the challenging landscape, other challenges mentioned by members of the collaborative include foundation staff turnover and the collaborative's relatively nascent stage of development. The Outreach Committee was just starting in early 2009, and materials and strategies were still in the development stage. One funder commented, "it's hard to bring someone in without something to show them." Another mentioned the lack of tools such as a website, but most agreed that the recruitment approach was really about cultivating relationships and one-on-one meetings. Specific strategies included:

"We need to set-up a website but mainly it's funder to funder; colleague to colleague and the funders themselves talking to each other. We need more of that."

- + Develop Recruitment Materials and Tools:** While there was some disagreement about the usefulness of brochures and materials, several funders felt it would be helpful to have a website and professional written materials to share with potential partners. This might also include a media strategy to publish stories in business newspapers and magazines. At least one funder mentioned the importance of highlighting outcomes.
- + Identify and Invite Individual Funders:** Most collaborative members emphasized a very personal approach to recruitment including breakfast meetings with other funders and colleagues. In terms of the identification of other funders, suggestions ranged from county and city government (specifically the Health and Human Services Agency) and mayors and city managers), industry (science, health, technology, life sciences, and biotech) to regional and national funders.

Grant-making in 2008-09

In 2008, the SDWFC released its first RFP and ultimately funded two implementation grants and two planning grants (discussed in greater detail later in this report). In interviews with members of the funders collaborative, the development and release of the first RFP was hailed as both a major challenge and accomplishment, requiring a common understanding and agreement among funders with different practices, priorities and organizational cultures.

Developing the First Request for Proposals

As one funder noted, "in today's day and age, to agree on a RFP was great as well as to be able to fund within the first year." In addition to the development and release of the RFP, funders expressed satisfaction with the overall RFP process. In particular, the "things that worked well" included the scoring system, and the articulation of funding priorities and guidelines. There was some disagreement among funders regarding how focused or broad the request for proposals should be. Some thought it was better to cast a wide net, while others felt the solicitation should be focused on a smaller pool of potential applicants.

"Different foundations and people take different paths and all have busy schedules. Having diversity is a big challenge, and is well worth it."

~ Member of SDWFC



Managing the First Round of Contracts

As previously mentioned, the SDWFC launched the first round of funding in late 2008 which required the implementation of new procedures and infrastructure such as a data system and reporting forms. The implementation of the data system took more time than expected and was not fully operational at the end of 2009. Consequently, there were gaps in data collection and grantees required re-training.

Capacity Building, Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement

In an effort to strengthen and support workforce partnerships, the SDWFC has prioritized technical assistance and capacity building for grantees as well as potential partnerships that may apply for future rounds of funding. At a systems level, the SDWFC hopes to help strengthen and expand high quality career advancement services to employers and lower-skilled adults through workforce partnerships. Capacity building themes include ways to improve collaboration and cross-sector partnerships as well as better coordination and leveraging of resources. At an organizational level, the SDWFC hopes to help employer partners strengthen their practices for hiring, training, retaining and advancing their entry-level workforce.

Another inter-rated goal of the SDWFC is to promote and “employ continuous learning and improvement to support system change.” During the initial start-up phase, continuous learning and improvement has been an expressed value rather than an explicit practice or standard. While members of the SDWFC agreed about its importance, many grappled with the role funders should play and how it should be implemented. This section highlights major milestones, lessons learned, and future considerations for capacity building, learning and program improvement.

Creating Forums for Learning and Networking

In June 2009, the SDWFC launched its first convening of grantees, funders, and partners from industry and educational sectors. The convening “Breaking Down Silos: Partnering in New Ways to Build San Diego’s Workforce,” brought together approximately 50 individuals to discuss challenges and solutions for workforce development. Objectives for the convening were to raise awareness about the SDWFC, engage in cross-sector dialogue about workforce challenges and opportunities, and create a forum for networking and peer learning.

As part of an online follow-up survey, 14 individuals (response rate of 29%) provided feedback on the quality and usefulness of the convening. The vast majority (93%) agreed the information shared at the convening was useful to them and/or their organizations. All except one participant (93%) agreed they have a better understanding of SDWFC and the work it does. Most felt they had the opportunity to connect with new organizations and said they would attend similar convenings in the future. The majority of survey respondents said the most valuable aspect of the convening was the opportunity to learn from different perspectives and network with other organizations. A few spoke specifically about the diversity of the speakers and agencies in attendance. One participant particularly liked the breakout session for identifying SDWFC priorities, while another enjoyed the level of interaction at the convening. When asked how future convenings can be improved, respondents recommended more time to network, smaller breakout groups, a summary of breakout group discussions along with next steps, more involvement from different sectors (e.g., businesses and community providers), and more engaging speakers.

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Defining and Implementing Quality Improvement Standards

Several SDWFC members indicated that the role funders play in quality improvement poses dilemmas and some felt they didn't have enough information yet to pose meaningful standards. One funder commented that "it's an ongoing challenge for funders as well as grantees to agree to work as partners in that arena. We need to increase our own standards at the foundations of what we do and don't fund; of what we expect from grantees. Funders talk about outcomes, but they don't want to put money into evaluation." Another funder expressed reservations about interfering stating "part of me thinks that's not what we should focus on. We need to focus on successful programs; not tell them how to run their business."



Strategies for Promoting Capacity Building, Continuous Learning, and Quality Improvement

Despite the inherent challenge posed by the relationship between funders and grantees, SDWFC members expressed a variety of ways the collaborative could facilitate learning and promote quality improvement. Participants of the first SDWFC convening were also asked to share their ideas and suggestions for future capacity building efforts.

- + **Grantee Meetings and Peer Learning:** Hold quarterly meetings for grantees to engage in peer learning, information sharing, and capacity building activities.
- + **Trainings Series:** Sponsor a series of trainings (or participate in existing trainings/conferences) to help build the capacity of grantee and non-grantee organizations. Suggested topics for SDWFC-sponsored trainings include partnering with educational institutions, understanding and responding to industry needs, linking employer needs with educational resources, and finding employment opportunities for challenged clients.
- + **Best Practice & Networking Forums:** Implement forums for sharing best practices and strategies. This could be part of a quarterly speaker series, a virtual space for information sharing and/or a component of peer learning events.
- + **Evaluation:** Evaluate and track client and organization-level outcomes. Engage grantees and funders in discussion about evaluation and how to use data to inform planning, program improvement, continuous learning and strategic decision-making.
- + **Technical Assistance (TA):** Identify and assess technical assistance needs and tailor trainings and TA accordingly.
- + **Feedback to all RFP applicants:** Help build capacity of potential applicants by providing feedback on proposals and opportunities for improvement.

Public Policy and Regional Planning

The SDWFC is involved in a variety of collaborative efforts to influence policy and systems change at both the state and local level. At the state level, the SDWFC has partnered with three other funders collaboratives in California to explore opportunities for a shared policy and advocacy agenda (see text box). At the local level, the SDWFC has focused its efforts on promoting the workforce partnership model and pursuing a cross-sector systems-level approach. Interviews with members of the collaborative explored how the SDWFC can and

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should engage the public sector and contribute to regional planning. Funders were also asked what they would like to see in terms of policy and systems change.

Identifying policy issues and opportunities

As some members pointed out, identifying which policy and system issues to tackle can be daunting. "Ultimately a lot of policies need to change around the state and federal programs. The regulations around how poor you need to be in order to access these programs are shocking." Another funder mentioned the need to change the fundamental dynamics and disconnect of the system. "Currently the system is a push system; we train them with public dollars. So then what? Is it a placement issue? You want to get employers to the table to say 'these are the 5 jobs we need to fill.' Then it's a 'pull' instead of a 'push'."

Promoting partnership and a holistic approach

Several SDWFC members noted that policy and systems change requires strong and diverse partnerships. During the first two years, much of the collaborative's time and effort has been focused on building relationships and raising awareness about the workforce partnership model. Looking ahead, staff and funders agreed that institutional partners and policy experts need to be brought to the table to help tackle policy and systems issues.

Increasing Educational Access and Institutional Capacity

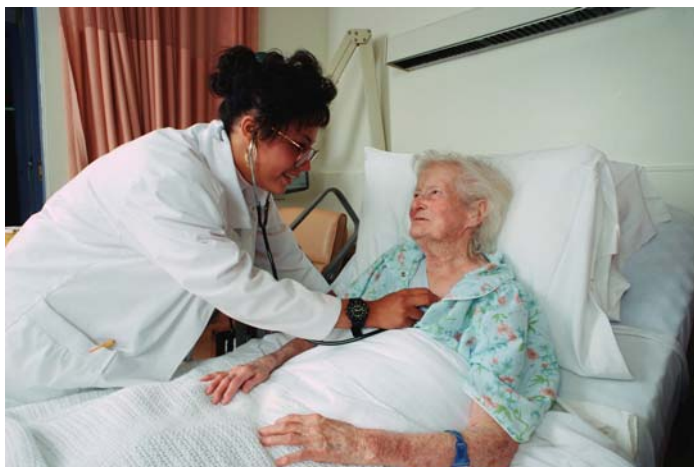
The need for more training facilities, clinical sites, internships and externships is a challenge the echoed by many throughout the County. Several funders mentioned the desire to focus on increasing the capacity at nursing schools, improving high school curriculum, helping students navigate the community college and university system, and investing in biotech training at local colleges. These goals and objectives necessitate strong partnerships with community colleges and educational partners.

Policy Goals and the California Consortium of Workforce Funder Collaboratives

With organizational support from the National Network of Sector Partners, the SDWFC met with the Los Angeles, Bay Area and Central Valley collaboratives in 2009 to discuss how they can inform policy debates regarding workforce development at the state and national level. In 2010, the consortium will seek to develop shared advocacy and policy goals and strategies.

"I think this is such a golden opportunity - with the economy and stimulus package - for people to go to Sacramento and communicate that workforce development is more than kids jobs in the summer and seniors back working. It's more about people being laid off ... changing professions."

~ Member of SDWFC



Concluding Remarks and Recommendations for Funders Collaborative

The 2009 program year was clearly a formative period for the funders collaborative with several significant milestones. A review of documents and interviews with funders revealed the key accomplishments and challenges highlighted below.

Collaborative Achievements & Milestones

- + **Leveraging Funds:** The collaborative was successful in leveraging \$598,000 from private and public funders for the first round of funding and nearly \$1.3 million for the second round of funding, thanks in part to the alignment of federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds.
- + **Development & Release of First RFP:** The joint development of the RFP was a painstaking process but was also hailed as being one of the greatest achievements. In particular, the scoring process and the development of priorities and guidelines were viewed favorably by both staff and funders.
- + **Building Relationships:** Nearly all funders mentioned the importance and value of the relationships that had been fostered during the planning and implementation phases, both within the group and with grantees and other partners and funders.

Collaborative Challenges & Lessons Learned

- + **Insufficient Staffing:** As previously mentioned, insufficient staffing was noted as an implementation challenge during the early phase, but a challenge that has been subsequently addressed with the addition of new staff.
- + **Development & Release of First RFP:** While also considered a major accomplishment, members of the collaborative acknowledged struggling with different priorities, organizational cultures, and approaches. Ultimately, the process ended in a product that nearly all funders considered a great success.
- + **Decisions about Funding Allocations:** Like the RFP process, discussions about funding allocations were also infused with diverging priorities and approaches. The development of clear decision-making guidelines helped to clarify which decisions would be made by consensus and which decisions would be made by invested vs non-invested members. While the group's diversity sometime posed challenges, most agreed that it was also part of the collaborative's strength.
- + **Communication:** Most collaborative members felt that communication was fluid and timely, however some said there was still a need for more of it. More in-person meetings during planning and critical decision-making junctures have helped to address this issue.

Recommendations

The data collected as part of the 2009 evaluation suggests the following considerations and recommendations as the collaborative looks toward the future:

- + **Regularly Review Plans & Strategic Priorities:** Several funders mentioned the importance of continually assessing and reviewing priorities and progress towards strategic outcomes. This might include reviewing and updated the logic model/theory of change as well as instituting a certain time every year to a strategic planning of review session. With many competing demands and opportunities, this may help keep collaborative members focused and engaged.

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- + **Capacity Building:** The SDWFC recognizes the key role funders can play in helping to build organizational and systems-level capacity. This may include continuing to organize and facilitate forums for partners and stakeholders to share best practices, network, and explore partnership opportunities. They may also support “operational” capacity by bringing grantees together on a periodic basis (“peer learning”) to share implementation challenges and strategies as well as discuss reporting and evaluation issues. In an effort to be more responsive and better focus capacity building efforts, the collaborative may wish to consider an assessment of capacity building needs among workforce partnerships and other potential partners. This will help funders tailor and prioritize their capacity building goals and objectives in the coming years.
- + **Systems and Infrastructure:** As the funder collaborative continues to evolve and expand, members should continually assess their needs for staffing, infrastructure, and resources. This would also include implementation challenges with the data system used to track participants overtime, as well as staffing, technology, resources and expertise necessary to accomplish the SDWFC’s operational and programmatic goals.

Section Two: Investing in Workforce Partnerships



In 2008, the SDWFC funded a total of four workforce partnerships in San Diego County. Two partnerships received funding to engage in a planning process and two received funding for program implementation. This report primarily focuses on the implementation grants to the STEP UP Biotech program at San Diego City College and the North County Partnership for Healthcare Workforce Development based at North County Health Services. It is important to reiterate that 2009 was the first year of program implementation and serves as a baseline. While it is still too early to report partnership and participant outcomes, this chapter provides useful information about the successes and challenges grantees have encountered and how that information is being used to refine and improve their efforts. It is based on interviews conducted with grantees and grantee partners as well as survey data collected from program participants. In an effort to capture the impact of SDWFC grants on workforce partnerships, this section highlights the following components of the evaluation:

- + **Partnerships profiles** describe how each funded programs was developed and implemented as well as milestones and challenges along the way;
- + **Participant characteristics** provides a brief overview of who has been served by these workforce training initiatives;
- + **Systems change** examines how the partnership are working together to change organizational policies, practices, and systems related to workforce development and career advancement.

Workforce Partnership Implementation Grants		
Program Partner Description	Education Partners	Industry Partners
<p>San Diego City College (SDCC) - The Students Trained for Exciting Positions and Unlimited Potential in Biotech (STEP UP Biotech) Program – A gateway program to careers in biotechnology. High school students as well as community college students enroll in a preparatory biotechnology course (BIO 109) followed by an advanced biotechnology course (BIO 206). After BIO 206, students will receive a certification of performance and access to possible employment positions in the biotechnology industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + SDCC + San Diego High School Complex + Garfield High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Agilent Technologies + Gen Probe + Amylin + Life Technologies + Molecular Diagnostic + Dow Chemical <p><i>May contain additional industry employers</i></p>
<p>North County Health Services (NCHS) - North County Partnership for Healthcare Workforce Development - Linking Educational Institutions and Community Clinics (North County Partnership) – Medical Assistant Training Program (MATP) provided to incumbent workers at three North County community clinics with the goal of improving access to education and increasing the pool of qualified, bilingual, bicultural medical assistants. The second cohort expands the number and type of participants to include eligible community members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Oceanside Unified School District Regional Occupational Program (ROP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + NCHS + Neighborhood Healthcare + Vista Community Clinic

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Workforce Partnership Planning Grants

Two workforce partnerships received funding to develop implementation plans including the Southeast San Diego Community Health Initiative led by the Coalition of Neighborhood Councils (\$30,000) and the Health Career's Initiative led by MAAC Project (\$50,000). Both initially focused their attention on strengthening their partnerships and gathering information about health care labor trends and gaps. As of December 2009, the Coalition of Neighborhood Councils (CNC) had successfully completed their plan and received an implementation grant from SDWFC.¹ The MAAC partnership was still finalizing their implementation plan with an expected delivery date of February 2010. Conversations with representatives from these partnerships revealed the following challenges and accomplishments.

Challenges, Accomplishments and Findings for Planning Grants

- Developing the Partnership:** Both partnerships experienced the inherent challenges of developing cross sector partnerships. One representative mentioned that it took time to understand the diversity of partners, find a common language, and get beyond the "survival preservation" mentality. Building an effective partnership took more time than expected as did finding the "right fit between the populations we work with and the employer's needs."
- Priorities and Focus:** Not surprising, the planning processes included discussion about a broad range of needs and issues, from individual barriers to systemic constraints. It took discipline to stay focused on what was most needed and feasible. Both groups recognized the need to start small with pilot projects that could be refined and expanded over time.
- Lack of Timely Data:** As part of the planning process, both groups struggled with the lack of timely data about local market needs. While there were several sources that suggest labor market trends at a macro level, there was virtually no data that indicated which employers would be hiring data from the employers involved in their group or in the immediate vicinity.

Workforce Partnership Implementation Grants		
Program Partner Description	Education & Community Partners	Industry Partners & Associations
Coalition of Neighborhood Councils (CNC) – Southeastern San Diego Community Health Initiative received a six month planning grant for a community-based and collaborative effort to train local community members for careers in the allied health field. Their plans include the implementation of an on-site Medical Assistant program with a range of support services to help ensure participant completion and job placement.	+ San Diego Community College District Continuing Education + Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation	+ Family Health Centers of San Diego + SEIU United Healthcare Workers West + Careview Medical Group + California Nurses Association
MAAC Project – MAAC Project Health Careers Initiative – This planning grant has focused on establishing health career opportunities for lower income and predominately Latino adults and youth. Their plans include the development of a pipeline program for youth at a local charter school as well as career training for incumbent health workers.	+ RAHSI (Regional Allied Health & Science Initiative) + Southwestern Community College + Palomar Community College + Sweetwater Union School District	+ Kaiser Permanente + Scripps Mercy Hospital + San Ysidro Health Clinics + SEIU-YHW West + San Diego Chapter, National Assoc. of Hispanic Nurses

¹ The CNC implementation grant will be part of the 2010 evaluation and a more extensive overview will be included in the 2010 annual report.

Partnership Profiles

San Diego City College: The Students Trained for Exciting Positions and Unlimited Potential in Biotech (STEP UP Biotech) Program

"...my goal is to really create that real pipeline, placing students in the work place."
- SDCC Program Coordinator

About San Diego City College (SDCC)

SDCC is a public, two-year community college administered by the San Diego Community College District. It serves as an inner city community college and a major educational institution in the downtown San Diego area. SDCC defines its mission as "a multicultural institution committed to providing open access to all who can benefit from instruction and to meeting the diverse and ever-changing educational, cultural, and economic needs of the urban core and surrounding communities of San Diego." Since 1994, an advanced course in biotechnology has been offered at SDCC; however, it was found to serve individuals that already had advanced degrees. In 2006 an introductory biotechnology class was proposed to target more "typical community college students," and over the next year the curriculum for this class was developed.

STEP UP Biotech Program

With San Diego's burgeoning biotechnology industry, the need for skilled workers in the biotech field is growing. The STEP UP Biotech Program proposes to respond to this need by creating a workforce pipeline from high school to industry of skilled biotech technicians that can be hired at entry level positions in this field. The STEP UP Program builds upon the already existing advanced biotech course offered at SDCC by introducing a prerequisite course offered to community college students as well as high school students. This new course offering provides a portal for community college and high school students with limited math and science skills to eventually enroll into the advanced biotech course. Once enrolled into the introductory biotech course (BIO 109), students then move onto the advanced biotech course (BIO 206) which is taught by industry professionals and allows students to network with potential employers.

Highlights of High School Model

- + **Target Population Recruitment:** Identify students that will be successful in the program. This will include consultations with guidance counselors.
- + **Curriculum Development:** High school teachers are responsible to shadow SDCC professors. They shall schedule regular "teaching team" meetings with SDCC and develop preparatory work for students.
- + **Promote Interest:** Plan field trips and incorporate guest lecturers for students in program.

"It is an especially quick program to receive certification in such a challenging field."
~ STEP UP participant

to align the high school science standards with the goals of BIO 109. This preparatory course will be offered to juniors and seniors.

To best prepare high school students for the college-level BIO 109 course, high school teachers worked with SDCC professors to develop a curriculum to be implemented by high school teachers. One of the goals of the curriculum is

Students that complete both of these courses over two semesters, will have the necessary skills to obtain an entry level position in the biotech field within 1.5 years from the time they enroll into the STEP UP Biotech Program.

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Identifying the Community

SDCC is located in a central area with convenient access to downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to developing the high school model to reach the younger community, the program increases the recruitment and outreach efforts to students already at SDCC and the communities the college serves.

+ **Connecting neighboring high schools to SDCC by promoting student interests in the biotechnology field:**

With the STEP UP Program's expansion to the San Diego Unified School District, SDCC has developed strong partnerships with high schools in the region including San Diego High School Complex and Garfield High School. This has resulted in the design of preparatory coursework for students feeding into SDCC's BIO 109 course. Qualities desired in of the STEP UP Biotech Program participants include high grades in math or science, high attendance, leadership skills, expressed interest in science, likelihood of attending a community college, and interest in a post-secondary vocational program. SDCC's decision to bring biotech to high school students within its region broadens the possibility of career opportunities to young students that may not have had other alternatives



+ **Providing opportunities to the low income and underserved communities surrounding SDCC.**

SDCC is committed to outreaching to students within SDCC and its neighboring communities which are served by the college. Both SDCC's location and the student make-up at partnering high schools consist of low income, underserved students. Therefore by default, the students that enter the STEP UP Biotech Program are of this same disposition. The characteristics that represent this population profile as well as the students being recruited into the program include, but are not limited to:

- Students who work while in school
- First generation college students
- Students who represent the diversity of the college and communities it serves
- Students of color
- Students that face economic challenges

Preparing a Competitive Workforce

The rigor of the biotechnology industry demands students be well prepared to succeed in such a competitive field. The STEP UP program enrolls students in challenging classes, offers additional support services, and allows students to take advantage of all community college resources.

+ **Educating students with classes dedicated to the biotechnology field:** Students that enter SDCC to study biotechnology will enroll in the BIO 109 introductory course. It is a comprehensive course offered three times per week for a total of 9 hours of class time per week. Each class is taught by the same professor.

Upon completing the BIO 109 course, students have the opportunity to enroll into the more advanced Biotechnology Instrumentation course, BIO 206. The class meets three times per week and is very intense with class time ranging widely. Up to 20 different industry instructors are brought in to teach this class throughout the semester.

+ **Providing dedicated/expanded educational assistance resources:** For the BIO 109 course, the professor has office hours available for students. Additionally, SDCC offers tutoring sessions focused primarily on the high school students two times per week for two hours each day. Additionally, students can access tutoring sessions at their respective high schools.

- + **Access to college resources:** Students enrolled into the program have access to all of the other services at SDCC. Students are introduced to the services available to them on campus; this includes accessing a SDCC tutor available to them when they are not in class. Moreover, they get the full benefits of being a community college student and may utilize all the resources at SDCC. Students have benefited from a program known as *New Horizon* that provides students with transportation and allows students to borrow the course book. If transportation is an issue, arrangements can be made to commute students to class or an internship they may be enrolled in.

North County Partnership for Healthcare Workforce Development: Linking Educational Institutions and Community Clinics (North County Partnership)

"We have to remain committed to making the program the best that it could be."
~ NCHS Program Coordinator

About the North County Partnership

Developed out of a partnership among three North County San Diego community clinics, the North County Partnership serves the medical needs of approximately 178,000 community residents. The three partner clinics, North County Health Services (NCHS), Vista Community Clinic (VCC), and Neighborhood Healthcare provide services at 27 clinics and health centers as well as through a mobile van. With a commitment to increase the pool of qualified medical assistants in North County, the North County Partnership began implementing a Medical Assistant Training Program (MATP) for incumbent employees. The partnership hopes that by providing this opportunity to existing employees, they are not only increasing the skill level of employees but also providing opportunities to employees who have demonstrated a commitment to the health care field.

As indicated in the *Allied Health Workforce Analysis* conducted by the Center for the Health Professions, many of positions in the allied health field (diagnostic, technical and/or therapeutic support services) are rapidly growing occupations that require a culturally competent workforce. It is projected that from 2005-2030 Latinos and Asians will represent 95% of the population increase in San Diego.² To address these trends, the North County Partnership aims to train students interested in pursuing careers in the allied health field and provide career advancement for community clinic staff. Their goals are to both increase allied health education capacity in North County and strengthen bridges between middle schools, high schools, colleges, and community clinics by educating students and staff about transfer agreements and career initiative and advancement opportunities in allied health.

Program participants have the opportunity to graduate from a newly established medical assistant training program (MATP) that is provided by Oceanside Unified School District (OUSD) ROP at NCHS. While OUSD ROP already provides a medical assistant program in North County, this program provides classes at a convenient time and location in an attempt to eliminate barriers and help employees balance employment, education, and other family commitments. It also provides incumbent employees the opportunity to advance their career and move up in the allied health field. Additionally, medical assistant, licensed vocational nursing, and

North County Partnership

- + **Increase Allied Health Educational Capacity:** Offer on-site Medical Assistant Training Program (MATP) and externships at participating partner community clinics
- + **Strengthen Bridges with Schools:** Establish agreements for MA, LVN, and RN programs, offer job shadowing opportunities, and facilitate clinic tours for allied healthcare students

² Bates, T., Chapman, S. *Allied Health Workforce Analysis San Diego Region*.

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registered nursing students from area colleges will have the opportunity to participate in externships at community clinics to gain real-world exposure to the needs of low income and uninsured patients. School districts will be linked with colleges and community clinic employers to develop a seamless education system for students interested in the allied health field. High school students will have the opportunity to job shadow community clinic staff and/or receive tours. Finally, outreach staff from colleges will connect with middle schools, high schools, and community clinics to describe allied health opportunities.

"It was an opportunity and because I want to be an RN and this is my first step to getting there".
~ MATP participant

Identifying the Community

The MATP classes offered by the North County Partnership program are based at NCHS, a central site in North County as well as one of the participating community clinics. Basing the program at NCHS serves as a strategic method to outreach to clinical staff as well as neighboring schools. The program caters to the North County community, whether

they are individuals who have been employed in the healthcare industry for years, young students at neighboring middle or high schools, or college students enrolled in programs associated with the allied health profession.

- + **Targeting staff at existing community clinics to advance their career:** By recruiting participants from local community clinics, the program targets staff who can not only improve their level of education but who can also continue to work within the North County community clinics. For the first cohort, employees were encouraged to take advantage of the training program. With classes located at or near their place of employment, the site is accessible to individuals already employed at community clinics. Staff participating in the program may include administrative medical assistants who might be interested in training as a clinical medical assistant or other staff such as medical records staff, outreach workers, or health educators.

The second cohort of participants will include clinic employees as well as community members. Again, by providing the classes in North County, the program hopes to address barriers to education faced by many working adults.



- + **Linking students to an allied health career:** Connecting Oceanside Unified School District and San Marcos Unified District high school health academies with participating two- and four-year colleges and community clinic employers to streamline an educational system for students interested in the allied health field. Existing health academies in North County school districts present a population of students who may benefit from the opportunity to explore careers in allied health. By partnering with these sites and providing job shadowing opportunities, the program hopes to help students make informed decisions about pursuing a career in allied health.

Preparing a Competitive Workforce

- + **Training participants through the Medical Assistant Training Program:** Participants that enter the MATP taught by Oceanside ROP at NCHS will be trained for careers as MAs. For the first cohort of participants, classes were administered three times per week and one day on the weekend per month, resulting in 10 hours of class time per week over 26 weeks from March to September 2009. Each class is taught by the same instructor. Participants also complete 120 hours of an externship in order to complete the requirements for the MA certification.

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A second cohort of participants is expected to enroll in the MATP program from November 2009—June 2010. The curriculum is the same with the addition of 5 extra weeks of class time to help address concerns about the intense pace of the class.

- + **Providing additional support services:** Participants in the MATP are provided with food during class time since they are arriving from work. MATP staff also checks in regularly with the participants to provide any additional support. Funds for transportation and child care are available as needed; books and course materials are provided for participants. Finally, providers or other MAs are required to be available to participants during the exam period.

Participant Characteristics

At the start of the STEP UP program 24 students were initially enrolled in the BIO 109 course, while the MATP consisted of 30 participants. By November 2009, only 11 students remained enrolled in the STEP UP program while 27 successfully completed the classroom component of the MATP. These 38 participants were administered a survey to evaluate demographics, career goals, and their perspectives of the program. All STEP UP students enrolled in BIO 109 completed a paper version of the survey during class in November 2009, while MATP participants completed a paper or electronic version of the survey during November – December, 2009. A total of 34 surveys were completed. The following highlights the population characteristics, perspectives on career assistance, and program perspectives for the 34 individuals who participated in the survey³.

Population Characteristics

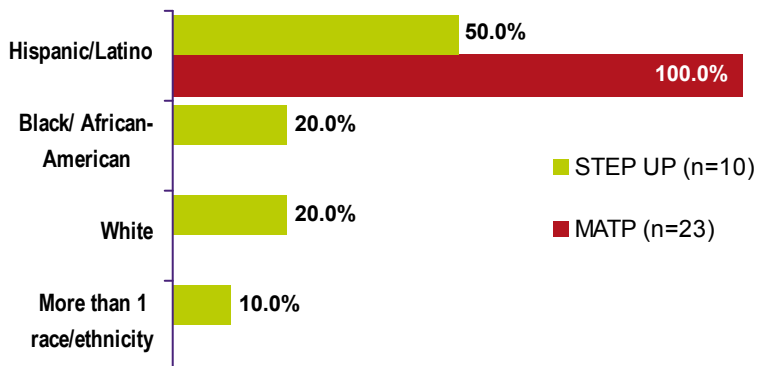
Participants exhibited the following demographic characteristics:

- **Predominately Hispanic/Latino:** All MATP respondents and half of the STEP UP participants were Hispanic/Latino.
- **Most Participants Under 30 Years of Age:** The majority of participants in the STEP UP program (77.8%) were in the youngest age group – between 17-21 years of age. While half of the participants in the MATP were between 17-26 years of age.
- **Mostly English as Primary Language:** Over 70.0% of participants in the STEP UP program and about half (52.2%) in MATP noted English as their primary language. 21.7% of MATP respondents and 9.1% of STEP UP participants noted that they were bilingual with English and Spanish languages.
- **Predominately Female:** Over half of STEP UP participants (66.7%) were female while almost all MATP participants (95.5%) were female.
- **Mixed Experience in Higher Education:** Over half of STEP UP participants (54.5%) had some college while over half of MATP participants (52.2%) completed high school/GED.

³ This demographic “snap shot” does not include participants who may have dropped out of the program prior to November 2009 nor the second cohort of participants in the MATP which started in November 2009.

Ethnicity/Race

All MATP participants and half of the STEP UP participants identified as Hispanic/Latino. Of the remaining respondents in the STEP UP program 20.0% were Black/African-American and White. One respondent (10.0%) identified as more than one race/ethnicity.



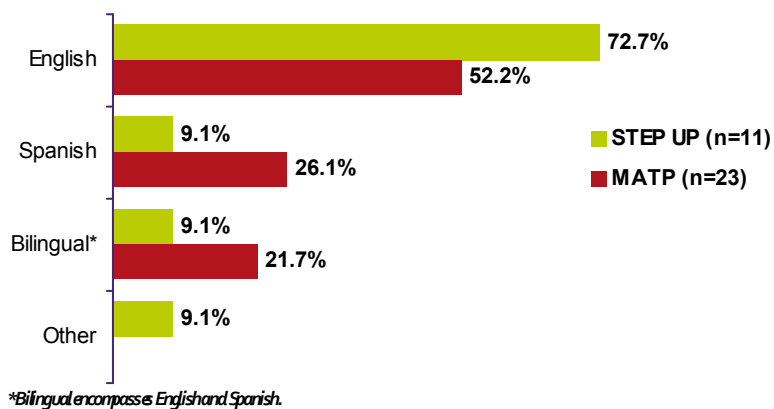
Age

The majority of participants in the STEP UP program (77.8%) were in the youngest age group – between 17-21 years of age. While half of the participants in the MATP were between 17-26 years of age. The remaining half of the MATP participants were above 26 years of age.

Age Group	STEP UP	MATP
17-21	77.8%	22.7%
22-26	11.1%	27.3%
27-31	0.0%	18.2%
32-36	0.0%	4.5%
37-41	11.1%	9.1%
42-46	0.0%	18.2%

Language

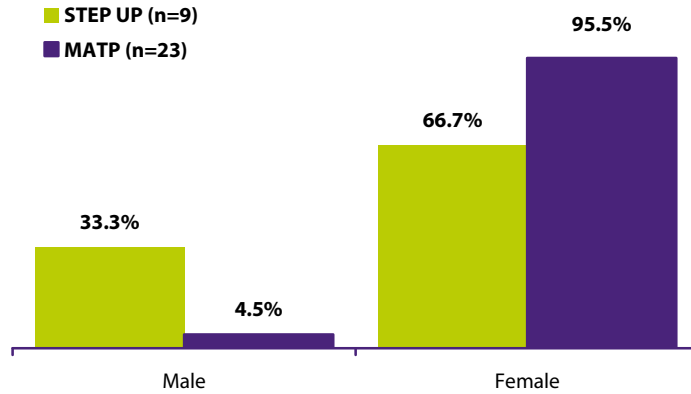
The majority of STEP UP participants (72.7%) and about half of MATP participants (52.2%) spoke English as their primary language. There were more Spanish-speaking MATP participants (26.1%) compared to participants in the STEP UP program. However, 9.1% of STEP UP participants and 21.7% of MATP participants were bilingual in Spanish and English.



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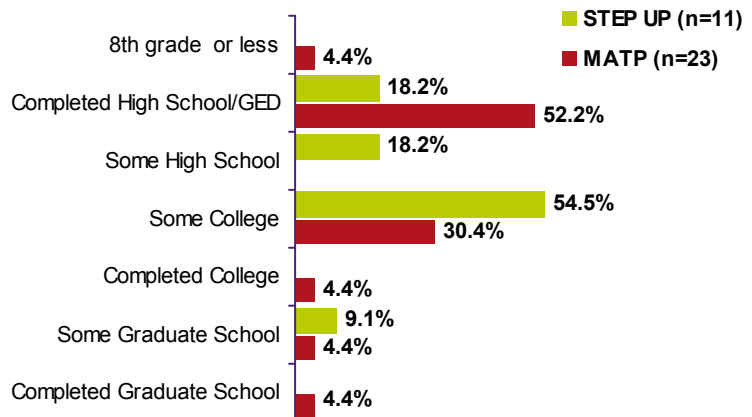
Gender

Over half of the participants in the STEP UP program (66.7%) were female where almost all MATP participants (95.5%) were female



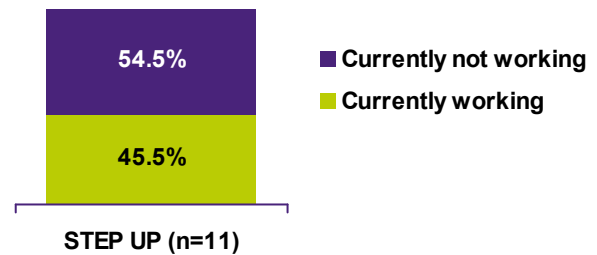
Highest Level of Education

Over half of STEP UP participants (54.5%) had some college while over half of MATP participants (52.2%) completed high school/GED. However, 27.3% of MATP participants noted that they had either completed college or had some/completed graduate school.



Employment Status

While all participants in MATP are employed at one of the three community clinics, about half the participants in the STEP UP program were currently working (45.5%) and the other half were not working (54.5%).



Career

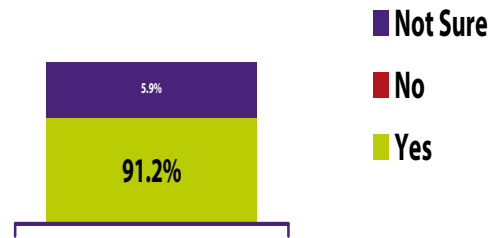
Responses from participants in the STEP UP program and MATP were aggregated to evaluate overall participant outcomes. Respondents provided their perspectives on the program's ability to assist them in finding a job and supporting their career goals. The following highlights key outcomes:

- Almost all participants (93.1%) felt that their program informs them of potential career opportunities.
- Respondents most commonly noted that they did not know the type of assistance available by the program for securing a job. The second most commonly selected type of assistance noted for obtaining a job was that the programs conduct interview trainings.
- Over half of respondents (53.1%) felt that they would complete the entire program in 1 year while 40.6% felt that they could complete their program in 6 months.
- Half of respondents (60.7%) felt that they did not know when they would secure a job upon completion of the program.

Career Opportunities

Almost all respondents (93.1%) felt that the program informs them of potential career opportunities.

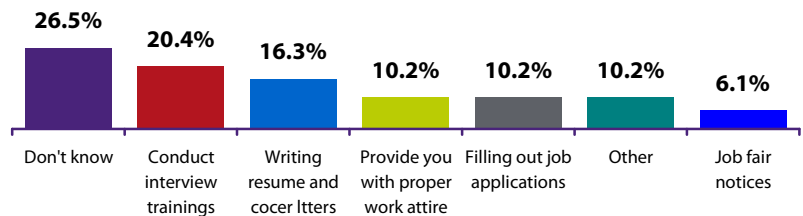
Does the program inform you about potential career opportunities? (n=34)



Job Assistance

Respondents most commonly noted that they did not know (26.5%) the type of assistance the program provided for securing a job. The second most commonly selected type of assistance provided for obtaining a job was that the programs conduct interview trainings (20.4%).

What types of assistance does the program provide you for securing a job? (n=49)*

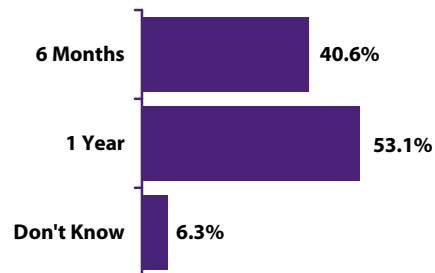


*Responses are not mutually exclusive.

Program Completion

Over half of respondents (53.1%) felt that they would complete the entire program in 1 year while 40.6% felt that they could complete their program in 6 months. However, it is important to note that the STEP UP program coordinator stated that participants should be able to complete the program in 1 year while the MATP program coordinator estimated participants to complete the program in less than 1 year.

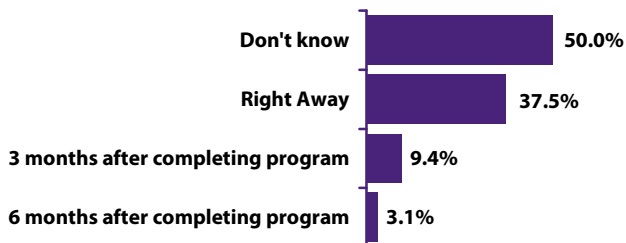
Overall, how long do you anticipate it will take you to complete the entire program? (n=38)



Securing a Job

Half of respondents (60.7%) felt that they did not know when they would secure a job upon completion of the program. However, over a quarter (37.5%) felt that they would obtain a job right away.

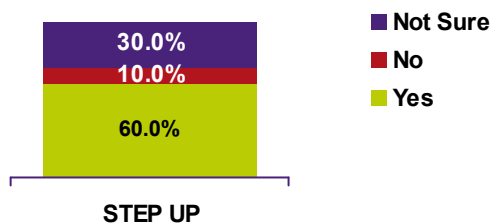
Upon completion of this training/course, how long do you anticipate it taking you to find a job? (n=32)



Program Continuation

Participants enrolled in the STEP UP program have the opportunity to continue to an advanced course in biotechnology to complete the program. This question was asked only to these participants. 60.0% noted that they did plan to continue to the advanced course while 30.0% felt that they would not continue. One individual (10.0%) was unsure on continuing.

Upon completion of this course, do you plan to take another course in the program? (n=18)

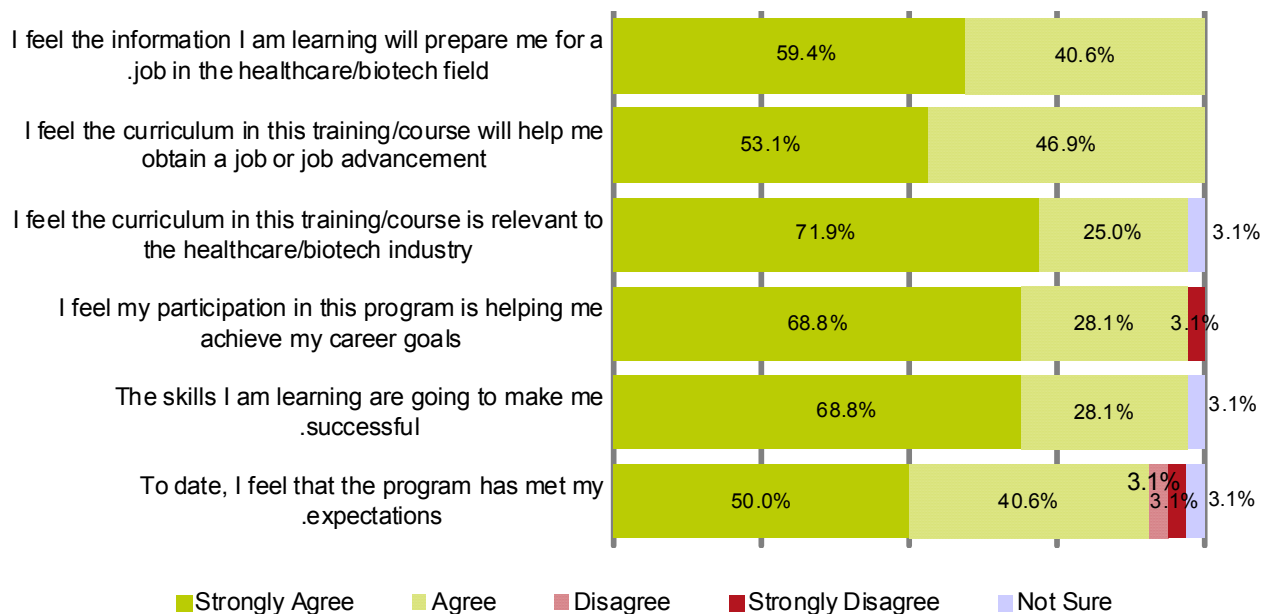


Participant Perspectives

Participants enrolled in the STEP UP program and MATP submitted feedback on their respective program's ability to prepare them for a career. Overall, participants expressed agreement (strongly agreed or agreed) that their program was preparing them for a job in the field. The greatest disagreement occurred with the program meeting the participants expectations with 6.2% stated they strongly disagree or disagreed and 3.1% stating they were not sure.



Participant Perspectives on Program (n=32)



System Change: Partnerships at Work

San Diego County’s high demand for skilled biotechnology and allied health workers serves as a strong impetus for building partnerships and developing collaborations in each sector. One of the core strategies of the SDWFC is to fund workforce programs that reflect collaboration and partnerships between industry, education, non-profit and public sector entities. This strategy serves as the backbone for promoting workforce development and establishing a system that moves program participants from training/instruction to employment and career advancement opportunities. The following section describes the nature and role of partners, program implementation of the SDWFC grant, and future programmatic changes and considerations.

Building on Existing Program Elements

Prior to the implementation of both training programs, some components were already in place and served as the foundation for the STEP UP and MATP programs at each site. At SDCC, a Biotechnology Instrumentation (BIO 206) course was already being offered. However given the advanced rigor of the course, individuals that enrolled did not represent the typical student profile and often already had advanced degrees. With this course already in place, a model was developed to create a more accessible pipeline for high school and community college students to gain entry into the biotech field. By comparison, the North County Partnership did not have a

“Our mission is can we actually do this, educate the high school students bring them over and then find them jobs. ... I think that’s really implementation of the work force grant because you can show, you can document... a position for these students.”

~ SDCC Program Coordinator

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training program in place at the start of the grant. However one of the key partners, Oceanside Unified School District ROP, already had an established Medical Assistant (MA) program. The ROP's Medical Assistant program served as the basis for an on-site career advancement program for employees of three of the region's largest community clinics. The SDWFC funding allowed for the expansion of both of these workforce training programs, enabling them to develop and strengthen partnerships as well as implement training programs and support services that benefit new and incumbent workers from ethnically diverse and predominately low-income communities.

The Role of Partners in Program Planning and Implementing

In both of the workforce partnerships, all partners played a role in the development and planning of the program. Partners of the STEP UP Biotech program contribute to the planning and development of the biotech pipeline through curriculum development, student recruitment efforts, and opportunities to connect with industry employers. The partners meet on a monthly basis to discuss the curriculum, student progress and barriers, and potential solutions and program enhancements. Specific examples for the STEP UP program include:

- + **Curriculum Development:** High school teachers incorporate curriculum into their biology classes with the oversight of San Diego City College. This helps ensure academic readiness and smooth transitions from high school biology to the college level course.

- + **Outreach and Recruitment:** Each educational partner plays a role in recruiting and showcasing the STEP UP Biotech program to potential students. The high school teachers focus on identifying students in their classes that may excel or benefit from the program. SDCC also visits the high schools for additional recruitment efforts. All partners expressed the importance of a teacher-student relationship with the students in their class.

- + **Industry Connections:** Employers are incorporated into the program by a SDCC professor and are featured lecturers in the BIO 206 course.

Program Organization and Staffing

Program coordinators from NCHS and SDCC identified their program staffing as consisting of the following individuals.

- + STEP UP Biotech Program meets on a monthly basis with partners. Staffing includes:

- Program Coordination, SDCC
- Administrative Assistant
- Coordinator for BIO 206
- High school teachers

- + North County Partnership meets on a quarterly basis with partners. Staffing includes:

- Program Coordination, NCHS
- MA Instructor
- Student Advisors

The partners of the North County Partnership focus on increasing both educational opportunities for incumbent employees and the pool of qualified Medical Assistants in North County. In interviews, all of the clinic partners noted that this required an increased level of commitment from both the employers and participants. Like STEP UP, partners contributed to various aspects of the program design and implementation including the following:

- + **Development of the Application Process:** Since this was the first time a program of this nature had been implemented, all the partner clinics were involved in the development of the application form with each clinic adding their own questions as necessary. Staff from each clinic was involved in interviewing and selecting the participants among their respective employees. This allowed the clinics to work collaboratively while at the same time meeting the needs of their own employees and organizations.

- + **Recruitment and Retention:** As the program moved to implementation, there were several steps involved in the recruitment and retention of the first cohort. Interviewees reported that the student advisor and often the Directors of Human Resources and/or Nursing (for each community clinic) would “hit the road” and visits the various clinic sites. Overall, this represents site visits to over 20+ clinic locations in North County. In several cases, participants responded to posted flyers or information distributed at the clinics. In another more specific case, the community clinic targeted recruitment to its most entry level employees and those involved in medical records due to the coming shift to electronic records. Retention was also the shared responsibility of partners via student advisor assigned to each clinic. These student advisors maintained the most regular interaction with participants including problem-solving and assistance with resources.
- + **Program Instruction:** All partners reported feeling informed and involved in the decision making regarding program instruction. They also expressed positive feedback about regular updates from the Program Coordinator and felt included in the academic instruction through frequent communication with the Student Advisors.

Partnership Strategies

These workforce partnerships have developed collaborative and innovative operational methods that have led to improved access to training programs and career advancement in the allied health and biotech fields. Moreover, the partnerships have propelled community organizations with similar objectives to partner and contribute to the common goal of educating, training, and employing individuals in careers that they may not have had the opportunity to pursue. To implement these programs, partners collaborated to develop strategies to effectively carry out their program objectives and goals.

Partnering to Serve the Target Population

SDCC is an inner city Community College working with inner city high schools, where many of the students are low income and members of underrepresented groups. Therefore, by default this is the population that the STEP UP Biotech program serves. For this reason the two high schools – San Diego High School and Garfield High School (a continuation or alternative high school where most students are credit deficient) were targeted. One partner added that “I also see this as a glimpse into a major in biology [for high school students].” Partners recognized the potential career opportunities and skills this program brings to this population that would not have the opportunity to be served anywhere else.

Future Directions Learning from Implementation

STEP UP Biotech Program: With the completion of the first semester of BIO 109, students have the opportunity to enroll in the BIO 206 course commencing in January 2010. This course will provide students with the opportunity to interact and establish a rapport with employers. Partners discussed their challenges in identifying high school students that will be successful in the BIO 109 course and able to move forward to the advanced BIO 206 course. Moreover, after completing this first semester of BIO 109 partners discussed the possibility of reevaluating the selection process for identifying potential high school students for the STEP UP Biotech program.

North County Partnership: Participants in the first cohort have completed the classroom instruction component portion of the program and are enrolled in externships to fully complete the program requirements. The second cohort will include community members in addition to existing staff from community clinics, as well as add on five additional weeks of instruction. Each community clinic partner will be responsible for a certain number of community members that enroll into the program. Concern communicated over this new addition was that “people off the street could disappear but employees will come back”. The employee/employer relationship plays a vital role for any follow up that may be needed with participants; however, maintaining this level of oversight may present a challenge with community members who are not employees of any of the partner clinics.

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As noted by the NCHS Program Coordinator, the North County Partnership’s principal goal is to make the program and all services as accessible as possible to employees (and community members in future cohorts). Interviewees noted that the goal of targeting employees in entry level jobs not only provided a great

“The hours that the classes are offered fits with my work schedule.”

~ MATP Participant

opportunity to employees interested in pursuing more education but also helped the community clinics retain good employees. Although the program works to eliminate any potential barriers participants may face, it is the responsibility of the student to make a proactive effort to complete the necessary

requirements of the training. As the NCHS Program Coordinator noted, “We want to be a support, not a crutch.” Recognizing that participants that enroll in the training come from lower skill level positions and often cannot afford existing training programs, this program provides participants with the opportunity to obtain a certificate for a Medical Assistant for free while remaining employed.

Strategies to Reach Participant Goals

To assist participants in their class/training, additional services were offered by lead agencies or partners. Partners mentioned the following services that were available to participants to assist them with any barriers they may face and/or to assist participants in successfully completing the program.

STEP UP Biotech Program*	North County Partnership - MATP
▪ Office hours	▪ Student advisors
▪ Tutoring	▪ Food during class
▪ Boot camp week in the summer	▪ Financial assistance for transportation needs
▪ College orientation	▪ Financial assistance for child care needs
▪ College resources	▪ Course books
▪ Transportation assistance	▪ Course materials (medical equipment such as blood pressure cuffs)
▪ Course book assistance	

*Some of the services are provided by SDCC and not the STEP UP Biotech program, however, students may still benefit from these services based on their enrollment in the program.



To provide support to participants for long term career advancement, programs established strategies that would promote opportunities for employment. The STEP UP Biotech program maintains contact with previous students that are employed with biotechnology companies; this has served as a critical benefit to the STEP UP Biotech program with these previous students returning to teach the BIO 206 course. Evaluations completed by industry instructors are completed for each student in the BIO 206 course. This was established to provide students with an opportunity to receive input from potential employers and make any necessary improvements.

Strategies for employment and long term career advancement are somewhat different for the North County Partnership since industry is involved as employers of participants. With this model in place, both grant partners and participants share the expectation of continued employment with the current clinic. Through training, participants can increase career options and salary and employers can retain employees. Specifically, employees at NCHS are aware of the Medical Assistant ladder that exists within their organization and are encouraged to pursue it. This program provides the opportunity to advance their career; however, participants influence their own progress up the ladder.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations for Workforce Partnerships

Both the STEP UP Biotech program and the North County Partnership completed the class/training for their first group of participants in 2009. For the STEP UP Biotech program, the students who completed BIO 109 and choose to move on will enroll in BIO 206 in January 2010. With the completion of classroom instruction for the first cohort of participants enrolled in the North County Partnership MATP, participants are currently completing the externship hours required for successful program completion. The second cohort is set to have begun classroom instruction in November 2009 with completion targeted for June 2010. With these transitional phases simultaneously occurring, both programs have the opportunity to reflect on programmatic challenges and address them with the second session of participants.

Key Accomplishments and Challenges

The following highlights the successes and challenges identified by partners from both programs. As specified below, some of the success and challenges are on the program level while others speak to the participant level.

Partnership Success	
STEP UP Biotech Program	North County Partnership - MATP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students finding positions ▪ Providing high school students/new graduates with a look into the area of biology ▪ Improving study skills ▪ Connecting high school course with college courses and industry partners ▪ Students participating in labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uniting “competing” community clinics ▪ Appreciative students ▪ Ability to serve patients better ▪ Participants learning more about community clinics
Partnership Challenges	
STEP UP Biotech Program	North County Partnership - MATP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timely reimbursements to partners ▪ Teachers not compensated for their time ▪ Copious program paperwork ▪ Challenging course content for students ▪ Lack of agreement on the purpose of the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting the course at NCHS rather than the other community clinics ▪ Program partners investing their time ▪ Longer process than expected to start program

Recommendations

Interviews with grantees and their partners provided additional insight into the intricacies encountered during the implementation process of both programs. While both programs have successfully completed their first training/course with participants, the following recommendations are intended to strengthen the program structure or address concerns mentioned by interviewees.

- + Revise the participant selection criterion to identify high school students that exhibit the characteristics to succeed in the STEP UP Biotech program.** Although the STEP UP Biotech program strives to enroll high school students into the introductory BIO 109 course, the rigor and academic intensity of this introductory course presents a challenge among students. Students still enrolled in high school that enter into the STEP UP Biotech program must also maintain their high school workload.

San Diego Workforce Funders Collaborative Annual Evaluation Report (2009)

Partners have found that students that participate in this program must be academically studious and advanced as well as possess a passion for the biotechnology field. High school students best equipped for this program should exhibit these attributes and qualities' moreover, selecting these students may increase the probability of them remaining and succeeding in the program.

- + **Assign advisors to community members that enroll in MATP to facilitate participation.** With the second cohort consisting of more community member participants, a process to oversee these students needs to be developed. Student advisors are assigned to participants from the different community clinics to follow up and offer support for any needs they may have. Since community members having no connection to the community clinics for accountability, assigning an advisor to meet with them regularly may assist in their participation in the training program.