



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: November 18, 2025

02

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE GRANT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has been awarded a grant by the Health Career Connection (HCC) Regional Health Workforce Initiative, funded by The California Endowment, for the project called “San Diego Regional Health and Human Services Workforce Initiative.” HCC is a national nonprofit organization leading health and human services workforce development and is dedicated to inspiring and empowering the next generation of health leaders. HCC is known for supporting undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds to become health leaders and professionals. This initiative, overseen by the Department of Strategy and Community Engagement (DSCE) and in partnership with San Diego State University and California State University San Marcos, will facilitate collaboration between the County HHSA and partnering organizations to support a coordinated, regional approach for health and human services workforce development in San Diego County.

The San Diego Regional Health and Human Services Workforce Initiative will help build public awareness and support for the health and human services workforce by highlighting its importance and advocating for its needs; aligning public and private resources to address workforce shortages and development gaps; and creating greater opportunities for students, graduates, and current professionals. These efforts will also strengthen collaboration between academia and employers to effectively prepare students and workers to meet or exceed industry standards, while establishing baseline metrics and formalized systems to track and report progress on health and human services workforce priorities.

Today’s action requests the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to authorize the acceptance of \$900,000 over a three-year period for the HCC Regional Workforce Initiative Grant, and the pursuit of future funding opportunities to address health and human services workforce shortages and development gaps, and promote economic inclusion.

Today's action supports the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE GRANT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by fostering countywide leadership and collaboration to strengthen the health and human services workforce.

RECOMMENDATION(S) CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Authorize the acceptance of \$900,000 in allocation funds from Health Career Connection (HCC) for the time period of October 15, 2025 to December 31, 2028 and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer or designee, to accept and execute the workforce initiative grant funds from Health Career Connection and any subsequent amendments or funding changes.
2. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to pursue future funding opportunities to address health and human services workforce shortages and development gaps, and promote economic inclusion.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Health Career Connection (HCC) Regional Health Workforce Initiative grant seeks to advance equity and opportunity for college students by reducing barriers to accessing internships within the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). Through the HHSA Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership (LWCIL)-supported Academic Internship Program Pilot, the initiative will create a more streamlined and coordinated process that expands equitable access to work-based learning and County career pathways. The County of San Diego HHSA LWCIL is an Academic/Practice partnership based on the national Academic Health Department model. It was pioneered by HHSA and San Diego State University, with the mission of strengthening the partnership between academia and health and human services practice through integrated education, research, workforce development, and service. The regional focus of LWCIL is to provide ongoing opportunities for countywide leadership and collaboration to develop the health and human services workforce throughout San Diego County.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's proposed action supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #1 to engage the community; Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access; and Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region. This will be accomplished by addressing health and human services workforce shortages and enhancing diversity through the Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership (LWCIL) and the Health Career Connection Regional Workforce Initiative, strengthening collaboration among education, healthcare, and community partners to expand equitable career pathways and build a skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce that meets the region's evolving health and human services needs. Through data-driven collaboration, shared learning, and coordinated systems change, the County and its partners will increase access to education, training, and employment opportunities for underrepresented and vulnerable populations, enhancing cultural responsiveness, advancing equity, and supporting the health and well-being of all San Diego County residents.

FISCAL IMPACT

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE GRANT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-27 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in costs and revenue of approximately \$225,000 in FY 2025-26 and \$300,000 in FY 2026-27 for total costs and revenue of \$900,000 through FY 2028-29. The funding source is The California Endowment, through Health Career Connection. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) received notice of award on October 15, 2025, for the Health Career Connection (HCC) Regional Health Workforce Initiative, funded by The California Endowment, for the project called “San Diego Regional Health and Human Services Workforce Initiative.” HCC is a national nonprofit organization leading health and human services workforce development and is dedicated to inspiring and empowering the next generation of health leaders. HCC is known for supporting undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds to become health leaders and professionals. This initiative, overseen by the Department of Strategy and Community Engagement (DSCE) and in partnership with San Diego State University and California State University San Marcos, will facilitate collaboration between the County HHSA and partnering organizations to support a coordinated, regional approach for health and human services workforce development in San Diego County.

Expand Workforce and Grow Workforce Pipeline

There is a need in San Diego County to expand the health and human services workforce and grow the workforce pipeline. Projections highlight a critical shortage across numerous fields, reinforcing the need for hiring, ongoing workforce development, and considerable retention efforts.

Beyond the concern for shortages in these identified professions, per the California Health Care Foundation there are currently more than 500,000 residents in California living in areas with a shortage of primary health care professionals, which limits access to essential services. Together, these gaps reflect a system-wide issue of workforce supply, retention, and equitable access to quality care and services. To address these gaps, HHSA will work with university, healthcare, employer, and community-based partners to expand and diversify workforce pipelines and strengthen retention.

The Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE GRANT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

As a major health workforce employer, contractor, and partner in San Diego County, HHSA is committed to strengthening the health workforce for our region. The Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership (LWCIL) is the County's Academic/Practice partnership, adapted from the national Academic Health Department model. LWCIL's mission is to strengthen the partnership between academia and health and human services practice through integrated education, research, workforce development, and service that advances equity in San Diego County.

In October 2022, LWCIL was established as a formal partnership between HHSA and San Diego State University (SDSU) as a pilot of the academic/practice model, with the goal of expanding to other universities and community colleges in the region as priorities were identified and foundational structures were in place. This current project, funded through this grant from HCC, presents the opportunity to expand and formally engage California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM), and additional academic partners under LWCIL as part of a collaborative regional health and human services workforce strategy. SDSU and CSUSM are the two universities within San Diego County with colleges that address full scope health and human services professions, including nursing, social work, and public health. Their comprehensive schools of health and human services enhance the knowledge base, insights, and collaboration needed for building and retaining a highly skilled workforce.

Addressing Systemic Barriers and Leading Transformative Efforts

There are currently a variety of diverse organizations and initiatives providing health and human services education, training, and workplace experience across San Diego County. Building on these existing efforts, there is an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, share information, and align strategies to better prepare for evolving workforce needs and projected shortages in health and human services roles. By increasing collaboration across government, education, academic, community-based, and health care providers, this project will lead to the following transformative efforts:

- Creating a shared understanding of the regional health and human services workforce needs and projections, and a unified voice for advocacy. This will occur by gathering the most current disparate workforce data and employer perspectives and synthesizing the information and data to be usable and shareable for improved data-informed decision-making by all regional workforce players. The resulting updated advocacy agenda will promote the social and economic importance of the health and human services workforce and provide critical action items for the public, policymakers, academia and practice. It will also encourage funding alignment and position the region for additional funding opportunities.
- Aligning education and training programs to better address current and emergent regional health and human services workforce needs. This will occur through various convenings and ongoing collaboration-building across K-12 education, local community colleges and universities, and workforce training programs, leading to more articulated pathways to

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE GRANT (DISTRICTS: ALL)

health and human services careers. The formalized academic-practice partnership is also intended to inform curriculum, expand career-connected internships, and facilitate innovation in career preparation.

- Cultivate a regional culture of shared learning, collaboration, and action. Leading by example, HHSA, SDSU, and CSUSM will convene critical education (K-12, community college, and university), career technical training, and employer partners to deepen collective understanding of regional needs and current activity, identify opportunities to align efforts, reimagine and innovate, support excellence, and incentivize collective action.
- Facilitate equitable and increased access to career pathways and quality health and human services. This will occur as part of our collective efforts to increase the diversity of our health and human services workforce by promoting career opportunities and addressing barriers to equitable access to education, training, and work-based learning among underrepresented populations. This diversification will lead to a broader understanding of systemic barriers to education, service, and access to care. Furthermore, by building upon existing efforts, we will strive to strengthen articulated career pathways between K-12, community colleges, and universities in the region.

Today's action requests the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to authorize the acceptance of \$900,000 over a three-year period for the HCC Regional Workforce Initiative Grant, and the pursuit of future funding opportunities to address health and human services workforce shortages and development gaps, and promote economic inclusion.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Sustainability (Resiliency), Equity (Economic Opportunity), Empower (Innovation), and Community (Engagement, Quality of Life, Communications, and Partnership) Initiatives in the County of San Diego 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, as well as our commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by identifying and addressing barriers to equitable access to education, training, and work-based learning among underrepresented populations.

Respectfully submitted,



FOR

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A