



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3.

Agenda Date: 3/7/2017

In Control: Economic and Human Development Committee

DEPARTMENTS: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEADS: Rene Dominguez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

The Economic and Human Development Committee (EHDC) will hear a briefing and request an authorization for funding of \$82,000 for Upgrade, a program housed at Café College that is a regional collaboration to assist adults who have completed some college credits or training, obtain degrees and certificates that are needed for high-demand jobs in the San Antonio-area labor market.

SUMMARY:

Upgrade will market and outreach to adults who have completed some college with foundational college credits or training but who have not completed a degree or credential. A project director and a small team of trained advisors will help Upgrade adults assemble credits, connect to career pathways, and accelerate toward a degree or certificate. Higher education partners will identify ways to make degree completion more flexible and affordable for working adults as part of the Upgrade stakeholder network.

Staff requests authorization to invest \$82,000 in Upgrade through the San Antonio Education Partnership of which \$40,000 will be utilized towards administrative expenses and \$42,000 for an additional staff position to focus specifically on City of San Antonio employees as a pilot demonstration to identify opportunities and develop career pathways to provide a model to other potential Upgrade business partners.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The 2015 SA2020 Talent Pipeline Report highlighted the shortage of trained individuals to fill the open middle skill jobs and identified a solution by focusing on two populations: opportunity youth and adults who have completed some college. Upgrade is a specific strategy that targets this population and is based on a national model called the "Graduate Network." It is a demand-driven model that matches adults to career pathways and to employers who have committed to job interviews. Upgrade is done in collaboration with SA Works, housed

within Café College and operated by the San Antonio Education Partnership.

In Bexar County, there are nearly 300,000 adults that have some college but no degree. Alamo Colleges has identified over 10,000 students who have left in the last two years without completing their degree. The majority of this adult population is employed and has already secured a number of credit hours that could put them on a path to qualify for higher skill, higher wage jobs. SA2020 estimated that just a one percent increase in the number of bachelor's degrees would represent an estimated \$1.38 billion increase in personal income for the San Antonio region. This example shows the importance and potential of certification and degree attainment.

Momentum for the initiative began in 2016 when Mayor Taylor and Judge Wolff hosted a business forum to engage local employers to partner with Upgrade. The City of San Antonio seeks model stakeholder engagement to demonstrate the program for local employers considering participation in Upgrade. EDD staff has been working with the City of San Antonio Human Resources department to identify ways Upgrade can benefit City employees.

The Human Resources department has found that nearly 1,700 City employees have some college but no degree. With such a large pool of potential adults that could benefit from additional training, staff is requesting authorization to fund an additional staff person with Upgrade that would focus solely on the City pilot program. This staff person will oversee the pilot with City employees that will include: onsite career counseling, career pathway development within the City, maximization of tuition reimbursement program outcomes, and assistance with college enrollment.

Specific metrics and outcomes will be determined after City employees are surveyed to further define potential obstacles to degree/credential completion and to gauge overall interest in participating in Upgrade.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends endorsing the program for full City Council consideration to invest \$82,000 in the Upgrade program.