



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 2/12/2019

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Rene Dominguez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT: EWDC Briefing on City Initiatives for SXSW 2019

SUMMARY:

Since 2016, the Economic Development Department (EDD) has partnered with various economic development, government, and nonprofit organizations to present San Antonio-themed programming at SXSW in Austin. In 2019, EDD is supporting a Tech Bloc-led presence through its Chief Talent Recruitment Officer (CTRO) at the SXSW Job Market to attract skilled workers for hard-to-fill technology positions. Additionally, EDD will be developing a full day of programming for international startups that will visit San Antonio before attending SXSW aimed at showcasing San Antonio as a soft landing spot.

BACKGROUND:

The annual SXSW Music, Film, and Interactive Festival in Austin, TX attracts an audience with an interest in innovation, entrepreneurship, technology, arts, and culture. With 75,000 registered trade show visitors in 2018, the festival is a prime opportunity to showcase the many ways in which San Antonio is thriving.

From 2016-2018, the City supported different community organizations to facilitate a meaningful San Antonio-themed presence at SXSW with varying outcomes. Therefore, in preparation for SXSW 2018, EDD facilitated stakeholder meetings with representation from Tech Bloc, SAEDF, Visit SA, Bexar County, Geekdom, SA Chamber, and the Office of Innovation to gather feedback on past and future SXSW activations. The committee determined that a phased-in approach to a San Antonio presence at SXSW would be most effective.

In 2018, based on community feedback, the San Antonio initiative consisted of a booth at the SXSW Job Market, organized by Tech Bloc and supported by the City with \$19,113. During the 3-day job fair, Tech Bloc used numerous San Antonio ambassadors to meet with job seekers and convey San Antonio's unique culture, growing and dynamic economy and great quality of life. In addition, Tech Bloc collected resumes from attendees who expressed a willingness to move to San Antonio for the right job opportunity. 92% of these individuals had at least an undergraduate degree, and 69% were seeking web development positions which are considered hard-to-fill in San Antonio. The information of these individuals was shared with San Antonio companies looking to fill such positions.

In 2019, from March 10 to 13, Tech Bloc's CTRO will again spearhead the presence at the SXSW Job Market to recruit highly-skilled tech workers to San Antonio. EDD is supporting the effort with \$27,500 to cover Tech Bloc's expenses associated with an improved booth experience and meaningful post-event follow-up with identified candidates. The investment in the physical booth infrastructure is meant to help create a booth backdrop that can be used at other San Antonio centric events.

EDD's second initiative targets international startups visiting SXSW 2019. As the conference has steadily increased its global reputation and influence, many foreign trade and investment organizations now promote their countries' latest technologies and innovations at the SXSW Trade Show. In 2018, 27 countries had such presences, many of which included founders of high-potential startups.

As part of EDD's international relations, diplomatic engagement, and foreign direct investment (FDI) efforts, staff approached these international trade and investment organizations and pitched a one-day program in San Antonio March 8, tailored to international startups attending SXSW 2019. Staff is working with various community partners to organize a tailored program that showcases San Antonio as a soft landing spot for international technology companies where partners, mentors, partners, clients, and capital are more accessible than in other places. Approximately 30 international technology startups are expected to participate.

ISSUE:

EDD is supporting Tech Bloc's 2019 SXSW Job Market Initiative with \$27,500 from the Economic Development Incentive Fund (EDIF), in line with the EDIF Guidelines which allow for the allocation of EDIF dollars for efforts that promote growth in the targeted industries, as well as targeted projects in support of entrepreneurial and workforce development.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item for briefing purposes only. No Council action is required.