

# The San Diego Union-Tribune.

## FUNDS TO BOOST MANUFACTURING

### Partnership designation gives region priority access to \$1.3 billion

By [Mike Freeman](#)

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A group of four Southern California counties, including San Diego, were selected by the U.S. Department of Commerce to receive the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership designation to boost manufacturing jobs.

The designation gives the region priority access to \$1.3 billion in funds from 11 federal agencies, including Commerce, Labor, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection and the Small Business Administration.

“Anybody can apply for this money,” said Theresa Andrews, director of public policy at Connect, which led the local effort to win the designation. “The purpose of this designation is now we, with the other Southern California counties, get preferential treatment. So our applications will be basically put on the top of the pile.”

In all, 12 regions received the designation, ranging from Puget Sound in Washington state to Northwest Georgia to the Tennessee Valley. More than 70 regions nationwide sought the designation.

Four Southern California counties banded together and applied under the name Advanced Manufacturing Partnership Southern California, or AMP So Cal. It was led by University of Southern California, with Connect coordinating the local effort. Other counties include Orange, Los Angeles and Ventura.

Besides Connect, the city of San Diego, Biocom, the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp., the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Sapphire Energy, UC San Diego, and Unified Port of San Diego also participated.

The San Diego part of AMP So Cal will focus on workforce development and training, creating a supplier network, helping new manufacturing firms and transferring defense technologies to commercial markets.

The designation marks an attempt by the Obama administration to lift the U.S. manufacturing industry, which has suffered as the U.S. economy has shifted away from manufacturing and companies have moved many of these jobs to countries with cheaper labor costs.

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