

SILICON VALLEY APPRENTICESHIP CONSORTIUM, DEVOTED TO FILLING TECH EQUITY GAP, RECEIVES MAJOR FUNDING FROM JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

PALO ALTO, CA (18 September 2019) — Providing real opportunities for workers from diverse social and education backgrounds is the mission of an energetic organization which has just been recognized with significant funding by **The James Irvine Foundation**. The **Silicon Valley Apprenticeship Consortium (SVAC)**, working in partnership with the **Bay Area Council**—a non-profit public-policy advocacy organization with a membership of over 330 of the largest employers in the region—has been awarded a \$300,000 grant by The James Irvine Foundation to support its efforts in creating opportunities and bridging the equity gap. This grant will fund the Consortium’s programs piloting and growing technology apprenticeships in the Bay Area for low-income workers without a four-year college degree, and scale best practices across California by providing a vision for further growth of technology apprenticeships. “We are excited and honored to have the support of The James Irvine Foundation as we work towards shifting the narrative around employment, where employees from diverse backgrounds can become apprentices with the goal of receiving a full-time position. Giving everyone, regardless of background or education level, an opportunity to learn on the job and prove capability is work democratization—and the future of work,” says Jenny Dearborn, co-founder of the Silicon Valley Apprenticeship Consortium.

About Silicon Valley Apprenticeship Consortium

Silicon Valley Apprenticeship Consortium was co-founded by Jenny Dearborn, Actionable Analytics Group CEO and former Executive Vice President, Human Resources at SAP, and Lauren Fernandez, Silicon Valley HR leader. SVAC is composed of San Francisco Bay Area thought leaders and organizations representing a cross section of major industry sectors, dedicated to the belief that there are many ways to develop and recruit talent. Major companies already partnering with SVAC include firms such as Dropbox, Lyft, Pandora, Airbnb, Adobe,

Facebook, and many others. SVAC has identified a widespread trend of companies eliminating eminently suitable job candidates simply because they lack an appropriate four-year degree. With education costs astronomically high in the U.S., many willing, eager, and appropriate candidates cannot afford a traditional degree and are shut out of jobs even though organizations across tech are struggling to fill open positions. Hiring data shows that the need for technical workers continues to grow exponentially, outstripping by far graduates with computer science and other technical degrees, causing an ever-widening gap between open positions and skilled workers to fill them. In addition, industry reports show a marked lack of diversity in technical roles, with companies scrambling to recruit a balanced workforce.

To cite specifics: in 2017 there were over 546,000 open computing positions while less than 50,000 computer science graduates joined the U.S. workforce. The growing IT skills gap in Silicon Valley is further magnified by California's lack of K-12 computer science education and the tech sector's difficult-to-predict future skills needs. Many roles in the tech sector require more training or education than high school but less than college, yet companies often require a degree in order to be interviewed for any position. This counter-productivity affects the tech sector through hidden costs such as extended time-to-fill, fewer applicants, higher salary expectations, less diversity, and the higher likelihood of employees leaving for a competitor. At the same time, while only 42 percent of Americans say that a college degree is necessary for success, U.S. high school graduates are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than those with four-year degrees, contributing to labor underutilization. Finally, college education has never been more expensive, with student loan debt now totaling more than \$1.5 trillion.

The convergence of these industry challenges determined the Consortium's mission to create additional on-ramps into organizations, looking beyond the traditional four-year university pathway. Apprenticeship programs devised as work-and-learn models help organizations develop talents with the right skills and competencies as needed, help to democratize work, and make high paying jobs more accessible to diverse pools of talent. As Lauren Fernandez notes, "There is no education level or financial barrier to participate in an apprenticeship."

About Bay Area Council

Bay Area Council has been at the intersection of business and civic leadership, shaping the future of the Bay Area since 1945. Today, it is focused on ensuring the Bay Area is the best place to live and work. The Council welcomes business leaders committed to working with public and community leaders to keep the Bay Area the most innovative, globally competitive, inclusive, and sustainable region in the world. It works to connect local diverse talent, including low-income workers without a four-year degree to livable wage careers in the Bay Area. The Council has two offices in California, located in San Francisco and Sacramento. The Council will work in partnership with Silicon Valley Apprenticeship Consortium (SVAC) to grow technology apprenticeship programs throughout the Bay Area.

Organizations interested in establishing an apprenticeship program, or those who already have a robust program underway, are welcomed to join SVAC to share wisdom, best practices, and support with others. For more information, contact info@svapprenticeship.com or visit www.svapprenticeship.com.

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