2023 IMPACT REPORT
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We’ve been saying it for years: We can build what we can envision.

Connect has been at the center of transforming San Diego into a leading innovation hub. With years of hard, focused work - we are now a top five venture capital region. And while the results are exceptional, there is more to do. The goal has always been to create “better,” not simply bigger.

As you will see in this report, Connect does a crazy amount of work. We’re a small nonprofit, just twelve people who “do.” We’re all innovation instigators. We do things that have never been done before. Not just in San Diego, but anywhere. I’ve traveled to many regions - Bay Area, Austin, Seattle, the mid-Atlantic - and there’s no group that does as much, or makes a bigger impact than Connect.

It’s monumentally important to note: we know very well we aren’t doing it alone. We have an amazing village. And with your continued help, there’s no limit to what we can achieve together.

So how about we just go build the best damn inclusive innovation ecosystem on the planet.

All the pieces are here and trending with positive momentum. Every single vertical is well-represented: therapeutics, genomics, healthtech, AI, cleantech, cyber, software, hardware... it is ALL here. Five incredibly stellar universities. A strong infrastructure and a talented workforce. A ridiculously beautiful waterfront and downtown, with an airport just blocks away. There’s nearshoring in Mexico and a second international airport with access to all of LATAM. Our proximity to Silicon Valley is a powerful leverage point.

Attracting capital to our region remains foundational. But to be great, we need to stretch. Together, we need to execute and build thoughtfully for the next generation, for all of our community. Five. Ten. Thirty years.

To be the best, we must never be arrogant. Leaders, all of us, need to get out of our bubbles more often. We need to lift up those behind and around us. We need inclusion to be more than just a nice slogan. Equitable opportunity should be widespread, such that any family can have a genuine shot at high-quality jobs. Does it happen overnight - of course not. Can we build toward that vision starting yesterday - damn straight.

Together, we can not only achieve the vision, we can accelerate it. So let’s do this. This village ain’t done yet.
Integrating near-term execution with a visionary year-over-year approach enhances efficiency and multiplies results.

The fiscal impact underscores years of dedicated effort, with over $20 billion in local investment in the past four years—seven times the figures from 2013 to 2016.

But more than just dollars, it is the breadth and depth across all sectors — we are building a resilient macro-economy. The innovation economy is a cornerstone for the future economy and generations to come.
Recent data from Pitchbook depicts an incredible story.

Connect’s core efforts have enabled San Diego to surpass cities like Seattle (3x VCs, 10x resident capital), Austin (4x VCs, 7x resident capital), and Washington DC (5x VCs, 11x resident capital).

Despite fewer venture capital firms and far less regional capital, San Diego continuously punches above its weight and outraises them all.

### Leading U.S. Locations

by Venture Capital Funding Amounts (in $B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>Resident Fund Value</th>
<th>Fund Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>$6.40</td>
<td>$23.30</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>San Diego</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington DC</td>
<td>$3.20</td>
<td>$14.30</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>$2.70</td>
<td>$8.70</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>$2.60</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>$2.10</td>
<td>$3.80</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2023 in Review
We increased prosperity by driving economic growth in life science, consumer, and tech sectors across the region, together.

- **80+ Speakers**
  - Fostered a dynamic exchange of ideas and insights by igniting meaningful conversations between 6,500+ attendees.

- **300+ Direct Investor Introductions**
  - Empowered local startups to scale with efficiency.

- **1000+ New Jobs Created**
  - By companies that leveraged our expansive network and strategic programmatic support.

- **15% Diverse Leaders Promoted**
  - To leadership positions within 45 corporations after graduating from our XEO program.
WE HELP COMPANIES RAISE CAPITAL

to drive economic growth and create quality jobs

Connect Companies
raised $603.68 million in 2023 alone.

Matching the most exciting startups ready to raise early-stage funding with quality venture capital.

**2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

40 startups (21 tech / 19 LS)
20% Female-led
50% Diverse Founders

Read More

Bringing Venture Capitalists to the region to meet and fund San Diego’s coolest later-stage startups.

**2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

250+ Investors
34 startups (13 tech / 21 LS)
80 Venture Backed CEOs

Read More

Attracting investors to the region, both directly and indirectly, significantly enhances the overall ecosystem, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities for sustained development.
Connect has been working hard, with focus and vision, for over 35 years. See the **400+ venture capital firms** with whom Connect has built relationships over the years.

**A few of the VC firms we know...**

In addition to programming and events, we provide open-source tools to help teams unleash their full potential.

*No other market has anything like this.*
WE ATTRACT CAPITAL TO ELEVATE THE ECOSYSTEM

Large SD Venture Investments of 2023

San Diego Funding tracks companies that have raised funding.

**2023 SAN DIEGO VENTURE FUNDING BY INDUSTRY ($B)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Funding Title</th>
<th>Company Funded</th>
<th>Connect Program (from)</th>
<th>Industry (from Company)</th>
<th>Sub Industry</th>
<th>Amount Funded (MM)</th>
<th>Date Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>PETDESK (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>PETDESK</td>
<td>Cool Companies</td>
<td>Venture</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>11/14/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>ARISMAID (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>ARISMAID</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>HealthTech</td>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>$16.50</td>
<td>11/14/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>CERTIS (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>CERTIS</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>$3.05</td>
<td>11/17/2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>THIRTY THREE THREADS (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>THIRTY THREE THREADS</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>11/20/2023</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ASCENTX MEDICAL (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>ASCENTX MEDICAL</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>HealthTech</td>
<td>$1.09</td>
<td>11/20/2023</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>MBRACE DIAGNOSTICS (Seed) Q4-2023</td>
<td>MBRACE DIAGNOSTICS</td>
<td>Company Scrub</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Diagnostics</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>11/28/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>PERSPERION DIAGNOSTICS (Seed) Q4-2023</td>
<td>PERSPERION DIAGNOSTICS</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Energy/Env</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>12/1/2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>INNOVATION LABS RNC (Seed) Q4-2023</td>
<td>INNOVATION LABS RNC</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>$13.88</td>
<td>12/1/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>CYTONUS THERAPEUTICS (Growth) Q4-2023</td>
<td>CYTONUS THERAPEUTICS</td>
<td>Cool Companies</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Therapeutics</td>
<td>$11.70</td>
<td>12/4/2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>INNOVO THERAPEUTICS (Series A) Q4-2023</td>
<td>INNOVO THERAPEUTICS</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>$300M</td>
<td>Series F Round</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>SOCI</td>
<td>SOCI</td>
<td>Cool Companies</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Therapeutics</td>
<td>$150M</td>
<td>Series A Round</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rapport therapeutics</td>
<td>Rapport therapeutics</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>HealthTech</td>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>$200M</td>
<td>Series C Round</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Shield AI</td>
<td>Shield AI</td>
<td>Cool Companies</td>
<td>Venture</td>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>$300M</td>
<td>Series F Round</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No other market has anything like this.
SPRINGBOARD

Propels the growth and scalability of tech and life science companies through tailored sessions with industry experts.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

200+ Advising Hours with 50 Unique Companies (22 tech/ 28 LS)

“...Connect armed us with access to a network of experienced executives that launched DTx to early success with fundraising and execution of the business plan.”

Arthur Suckow, Ph.D, CEO & Founder DTx Pharma (Acq. by Novartis 2023)

DTX PHARMA JOURNEY THROUGH SPRINGBOARD

- Connect still pairs DTx with an expert advisor
- Starts Fundraising
- Becomes a Cool Company
- Completes Springboard
- Re-applies & is accepted
- 2017
- 2018
- DTx applies & is turned down

WE DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH by leveraging our neutral position to elevate and advise innovation entrepreneurs.
Curated connections drive meaningful relationships, targeted collaboration, and valuable insights across innovation communities.

Through a partnership with the Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR), Connect is raising awareness of the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Program by providing various educational resources to our community. This program, focused on research and development, offers non-dilutive funding for innovations that address government needs.

Our strategic approach ensures purposeful interactions, shared learning, and a stronger, cohesive community with accessible resources available for everyone to thrive.

Connect partners with Cleantech San Diego to enhance the Southern California Energy Innovation Network (SCEIN), supporting startups in creating solutions for California's energy goals.
Diverse Innovation Leaders are essential at all levels, especially where decisions have systemic impacts.

Boost bottom lines by strengthening individual talent through the expansion of cross-functional expertise and professional networks.

"XEO’s leadership development program cultivates the potential of high performers and... acts as a catalyst for dismantling barriers and fostering a business culture where all voices can thrive."

-Co-founder & CFO, Shadowbox

We're using [XEO] as a clear example of investment in our people to drive engagement and retention.

-General Manager, Catalent

Alumni networks change the world through giving back to the next generation of innovation leaders. A participant’s network grows by 40X on day one and continues to grow exponentially over time. XEO alumni are forever connected.
Free educational resources and affordable networking events ensure equitable access to opportunities for the whole village.

**FRAMEWORKS**

Workshops and webinars led by industry experts and C-suite executives - free educational resources for the community.

**OFFICE HOURS**

One on one sessions with industry experts across various business verticals like legal, accounting, and insurance - complimentary.

**2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

30+ Subject Matter Expert Discussions
100+ Companies
1000+ Registrants

Brings the entirety of the community together to meet San Diego’s fastest growing startups. 600+ local investors, entrepreneurs, advisors, and team leaders gather annually to expand their networks and meet potential partners.

(858) 964-1300   team@connect.org   www.connect.org
Innovation Day 2023 was bigger and better than ever! Shoutout to the Connect team for bringing thousands of people in the startup community to PETCO Park. Trust & Will was proud to be an inclusion sponsor, as we exist because of the SD startup community.

San Diego is a hub for global thought leaders and a key player on the international scene. Emphasizing our presence as a global innovation powerhouse, helps companies easily attract and retain top talent.

San Diego's 2nd annual premier gathering, Innovation Day, brought people from across the nation together to experience the breadth of the San Diego Tijuana innovation ecosystem.

The energy was off the hook and the conversations were next level. Thank you all for collaborating and multiplying our impact together. There is a major shift happening and we are pushing it faster.

— David Favela, Director Talent Foundry, UCSD

Innovation Day 2023 was bigger and better than ever! Shoutout to the Connect team for bringing thousands of people in the startup community to PETCO Park. Trust & Will was proud to be an inclusion sponsor, as we exist because of the SD startup community.

— Cody Barbo, CEO Trust and Will
Connect elevates diverse talent, leadership, and founders, so the future of innovation - 5, 10, and 30 years from now - is as diverse and rich as our bi-national region.

Fostering genuine diversity in our regional innovation economy requires representation in our organizational staff and board leadership. 84% of our 12-person team comprises BIPOC and/or female members.

We are proactively cultivating a diverse pipeline for board representation and expanding our outreach with longstanding supporters to nurture the next generation of advocates and connectors.

Together, we are building the best inclusive innovation ecosystem on the planet.
Thanks to the Supporters Driving our Impact.

GRANTORS

CORPORATES

ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

INVESTORS

INDUSTRY EXPERTS

One Network United for a Better San Diego.
$1 Billion in Economic Impact
We Help Businesses Start, Grow & Get Financing

234 New Businesses
1,318 Jobs Created
$822MM Loans/Equity Financing
$182MM Sales / Contracts
5,400 Clients Served

OUR RESULTS 2023

San Diego & Imperial Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network
SDIVSBDC.org

Request Services

What We Do & Who We Are

Free One-On-One Business Advising
Highly experienced advisors provide no-cost consulting in every business aspect including marketing, finances, starting a business, and accessing capital.

Workshops & Training
Our no- or low-cost classes educate in business launching, obtaining financing, sales and marketing, credit repair, government contracting, exporting, and much more.
Innovation Day 2024
San Diego, CA
September 24, 2024
Petco Park

3,600+ Attendees
150+ Companies
100+ VC's

Watch Recap

Save the Date
2024 PREVIEW

JAN
XEO COHORT 3 LAUNCH

COOL COMPANIES ANNOUNCED

MAR
SUMMER SOCIAL
MEET THE COOL COS

JUN

XEO COHORT 4 LAUNCH

AUG
INNOVATION DAY
PETCO PARK TAKEOVER

SEPT 24

For more info visit www.connect.org