



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Executive Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
2799 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
11:00 A.M.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST ADVISEMENT

WDB members please be advised: If an item on the meeting agenda relates to the provision of services by you, your immediate family, the entity you represent, or any person who has made \$250 in campaign contributions to you during the last 12 months, or if approval or disapproval of an agenda item would have a foreseeable material affect on an economic interest of you, your immediate family, or the entity you represent, then please follow these procedures: When the agenda item is first introduced, please immediately announce that you are recusing yourself from participating in the agenda item, and then refrain from discussing, voting on, or otherwise influencing the **WDB's** consideration of the agenda item. Supporting documentation is available for public review at the Imperial County Workforce Development Board Office.

- 1. Call to Order
 - a. Conflict of Interest forms
- 2. Discussion of Agenda
 - a. Items to be pulled from Agenda
 - b. Approval of Meeting Agenda
- 3. Approval of Minutes for February 22, 2023 pg. 2-3

ACTION AGENDA

- 4. Discussion/Action to approve Two-Year modification to the PY 21-24 Local Workforce Development Plan pg. 4-54
- 5. Discussion/Action to approve Two-Year modification to the PY 21-24 Southern Border Regional Plan pg. 55-97
- 6. Discussion/Action to approve the revisions to the Supportive Services Policy pg. 98-104

INFORMATIONAL AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS: *This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Executive Committee on any subject matter within the Executive Committee's jurisdiction, but not an item on the agenda. Each speaker should complete and submit a "Public Comment Request to Speak" form to the ICWDB Chair. When addressing the Executive Committee, state your name for the record prior to providing your comments. Individuals will be given three (3) minutes to address the Executive committee.*

- 7. Meeting adjournment



**Next ICWD Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.**

This WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

February 22, 2023
11:00 A.M.

Hybrid Meeting
In-Person: 2799 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243
Via Zoom Location: 2799 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243
& CET – Coachella 49-111 CA-111 # 5, Coachella, CA 92236

MEMBERS PRESENT: Erik Freeman, Elvira Anaya and Timothy Kelley

ABSENT: Jason Jackson

STAFF: Lilliana Sandoval, Sabrina Rubin, Tim Druihet, Francisca German, Allison Duran, Camilo Garcia and Priscilla Lopez.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Call to order:** ICWDEC Vice Chair Kelley, called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. with a quorum present.
 - a. Conflict of Interest Forms: None
2. **Discussion of Agenda:**
 - a. Items to be pulled from Agenda: None
 - b. Approval of Meeting Agenda: **MOTION** by Mr. Freeman, Second by Ms. Anaya, to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried.
3. **Approval of Minutes for October 26, 2022:** **MOTION** by Mr. Freeman, Second by Ms. Anaya, to approve minutes for October 26, 2022. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

ACTION AGENDA

4. Discussion/Action to approve the Imperial County Workforce Board and Leadership Development Training with TAD Grants on May 2, 2023.

Ms. Lopez discussed and recommended the approval to the Imperial County Workforce Board and Leadership Development Training with TAD Grants on May 2, 2023.

MOTION by Mr. Freeman, Second by Mr. Anaya, to approve the fiscal impact amount from \$15,000 to not exceed the amount of \$20,000 and look into other proposed date. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

5. Discussion/Action to approve ICWDB members and staff to attend CWA's WORKCON 2023.

Ms. Lopez discussed and recommended the ICWDB members and staff to attend CWA's WORKCON 2023.

MOTION by Mr. Freeman, Second by Ms. Anaya, to approve ICWDB members and staff to attend CWA's WORKCON 2023. Opposed: None. Abstained: None. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL AGENDA

Public Comment:

Mr. Freeman recommended purchasing tablets for meeting purposes. To gather signatures on sign-in sheets and conflict of interest forms and possibly voting tool.

ADJOURNMENT

10. The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting date for March 22, 2023.

**Imperial County Workforce Development Board
Action Agenda Item 4**

MEETING DATE: March 22, 2023

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: Discussion/Action to approve Two-Year Modification to the
PY21-24 Local Workforce Development Plan

BACKGROUND:

On April 21, 2021, the ICWDB approved the PY2021-2024 Local Workforce Development Plan. As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a two-year modification to the Local Plan must be completed. Following guidance of the planning process of EDD Workforce Services Directive 22-05, Regional and Local Planning Guidance for PY 21-24 Two-Year Modifications, staff coordinated two Community Forums that were facilitated by Idea/Max Solutions in order to identify ways to better strategize on serving and engaging today's job seekers and employers post-pandemic, and to identify ways to strengthen current partnerships.

Imperial County Local Workforce Development Plan Community Forums:

- January 26, 2023 – Economic Recovery and the Role of the Workforce System (In-Person)
- February 2, 2023 – Strengthening Community Based Partnerships (Virtual)

The valuable input received at the forums helped to identify topics and themes as priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement for the implementation of the Local Plan. Additionally, updates included a review of partnerships, services, and systems, along with an assessment of where improvements can be made.

On February 22, 2023, a draft Biennial Modification to the PY21-24 Local Plan was made available online to begin the 30-Day Public Comment period, which concludes on March 23, 2023.

Per the state directive, Plan Modifications must be submitted by USB flash drive to the California Workforce Development Board no later than Friday, March 31, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

**2023 Biennial Modification
to the
Program Year 2021- 2024
Local Workforce Development Plan**

**Imperial County
Workforce Development Board**



Contact:	Priscilla Lopez, Executive Director
Phone:	(442) 265-4985
E-Mail	priscillalopez@co.imperial.ca.us

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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and guidance published by California Workforce Development Board and Employment Development Department, the Imperial County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has developed a four-year Local Plan covering program years (PYs) 2021-2024. Following approval by state officials representing the Governor, the plan became effective from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2025. This update to the PY 21-24 Local Plan constitutes its WIOA-required biennial modification. Following the approval of this modification by state representatives, it will become the official, active version of the Plan beginning on July 1, 2023 and remaining in effect through June 30, 2025

For reference, it should be noted that the Imperial County WDB, the Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office (ICWEDO), and America’s Job Centers of California (AJCCs) are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this Plan to describe the entity operating workforce development services under Title I of WIOA.

Vision for the PY 21-24 Local Plan

During the process of developing the original PY 21-24 Local Plan, members of the Workforce Development Board and system stakeholders participated in discussions regarding system priorities. As a result of these discussions, the WDB has identified the following broad themes around which they will mobilize efforts during the course of this four-year Plan.

Training for Emerging Industries: The workforce system partners, secondary and postsecondary education agencies, economic development and business services organizations, and community stakeholders should work together to identify needs, opportunities, and strategies around employment and training for industries that are either establishing a footprint or considering locating operations in Imperial County. These sectors may include manufacturing, information and communications technology, logistics and transportation, and lithium and other mineral extraction, which are likely to find the County’s affordable land and the young and growing workforce desirable resources for business operations.

Strategies to Increase Digital Access and Equity: Individually, the workforce system partners will not be able to solve the substantial digital divide that exists in the County. However, working together, the stakeholders will be better equipped to develop recommendations for state, county and municipal leaders that include ways in which workforce and education partners could address the growing need for technology and digital skills training among Imperial County residents.

Consolidated Planning: Stakeholders report that there are dozens of distinct and varied public and private sector plans in Imperial County that concern economic development, business services, infrastructure, education, workforce development, and human

services. The WDB, working with a wide range of partners, should support an effort to examine the benefits of consolidating information from these plans into a unified strategy to support businesses and workers throughout the County.

Increased Resource Sharing among Partners: The workforce system partners have made great strides in recent years to more closely and effectively coordinate service delivery across multiple programs and funding streams. The partners should develop a plan to examine where sharing of resources and elimination of possible redundancies could further strengthen program alignment.

Progress has been made on various initiatives suggested by these broad themes, including efforts to bring services and technology resources to individuals living in remote areas of the county through the deployment of two mobile one-stop units, the purchase of which have been approved by state officials and the Board of Supervisors. Another example of progress on the priorities established during the development of this Plan are quarterly workforce system partner meetings, which are now occurring with regularity and are focusing on systemwide coordination.

As this Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan was being developed, the WDB again invited partners, community members, and other system stakeholders to provide input on the workforce development system and areas where improvements can be implemented. Section V of this Plan summarizes input obtained during development of both the original PY 21-24 Plan and its biennial update, covering issues, strategies, approaches, and key considerations that the Imperial County WDB and the system partners will examine over the course of this plan.

Developing Imperial County WDB's PY 2021-24 Four-Year Plan

Imperial County WDB management held a series of discussions and community and stakeholder forums to secure input on key issues concerning the content and focus of the Local Plan. A similar process was implemented in preparing the biennial modification. These sessions are described in Attachment 1 to this Plan. Plan development also entailed a review of partnerships, services, and systems, along with an assessment of where improvements can be made. Completing the both the original Plan and the 2023 update each took approximately three months, after which they were made available for public review and comment, prior to being forwarded to the California Workforce Development Board for approval.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Original PY 2021-24 Local Plan and the 2023 Modification

Imperial County experienced greater COVID impacts per capita than any other county in California. Every aspect of developing the PY 2021-24 Local Plan was influenced by the onset on COVID-19, the ensuing public health crisis, and the myriad effects of the pandemic on businesses, schools, government operations, and the local workforce development delivery system. While the stakeholders met, discussions were held,

priorities were identified, and a new four-year plan was developed, the influence of the pandemic on the planning process is undeniable, as it shaped stakeholders' views about the economy, the workforce, training and, virtually every aspect of the workforce system.

While the content of this plan frequently references the pandemic, most descriptions of activities and services are described in a “non-pandemic” context. Imperial County WDB leaders and system stakeholders recognize that the effects of COVID-19 will likely shape our work over the next several years, particularly during the first half of the period covered by this plan.

By the time Imperial County WDB leaders began the development of the 2023 modification to the Local Plan, much had changed in Imperial County and across the globe. Wide availability of vaccines brought greater resistance to the virus, enabling businesses and communities to reopen. During this new endemic phase of COVID, partners were are to come together to conduct planning and efforts now focused on how to assist both businesses and workers in adjusting to a labor market characterized by in-person, online, and hybrid work.

II. WIOA CORE AND REQUIRED PARTNER COORDINATION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act includes requirements for Local Boards to establish a framework for collaboration among state and local programs that are financially supported by nineteen distinct federal fund sources. Six of these programs constitute the four “core partners:” the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs; the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program; the WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Program; and the WIOA Title IV State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The core partners, together with thirteen other federally supported programs, make-up the WIOA-mandated one-stop partners. The Imperial County WDB has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the organizations managing each federal program at the local level. The narrative that follows describes coordination with the WIOA core and other required program partners as prescribed by the Act.

Coordination with AJCC Partners and WIOA Memorandum of Understanding

Imperial County WDB has built strong and effective relationships with state and local agencies that represent the one-stop partner programs. Over the next four years, the WDB looks forward to further enhancing coordination with each of the workforce system partners.

Overview of Local One-Stop System Partners

Following is a summary of the local/regional organizations representing the federal one-stop partner programs, with which the Imperial County WDB has entered into an MOU.

Federal Partner Programs	MOU Partner
Title I Adult Title I Dislocated Worker Title I Youth	Imperial County Workforce Development Board
Title II Adult Education and Literacy	Central Union High School District
Title III Wagner-Peyser	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
Carl Perkins Career Technical Education	Imperial Valley College
Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	Public Administrator’s Area Agency on Aging
Job Corps	San Diego Job Corps Center
Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166)	California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)	Center for Employment Training
Jobs for Veterans State Grants	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Youth Build	Not applicable. There is no Youth Build program in Imperial County.
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Community Services Block Grant	Campeños Unidos
Housing and Urban Development E&T	Imperial Valley Housing Authority
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Employment Development Department (EDD)
Second Chance	Not applicable. There is no Second Chance-funded program in Imperial County.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs	Imperial County Department of Social Services

Memorandum of Understanding with System Partners

The Imperial County WDB has entered into an MOU with the AJCC partners outlining their joint planning and system coordination efforts. The MOU describes the following priorities:

- Continuous relationship building among all partners
- Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements
- Responsiveness to local and regional economic conditions, including employer needs
- Adherence to common data collection and reporting, needs, including modification and changes, as required
- Making the appropriate service(s) and applicable partner programs, available to customers through the one-stop delivery system
- Participating in the operation and development of the one-stop system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorized laws
- Coordinating the workforce services of the AJCCs that the partners provide, either on-site or through electronic connections including those described in WIOA. These include basic career services; individualized career services; training services; follow-up services; and employer/business services
- Participating in cross-training to ensure staff develops the knowledge, capacity and ability to advocate for their customers’ needs.

AJCC partners have agreed to share costs to operate within three comprehensive AJCCs, which are located in El Centro, Calexico, and Brawley. Contributions are shared for both infrastructure costs and other costs, including WIOA career services. Costs for the one-

stop delivery system have been agreed upon through an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and budget that identify partner payment methods as cash, non-cash (in-kind), and or third party contributions.

The roles of the partners are constantly evolving and, as continuous partnership building and collaboration occur, refinement of roles and responsibilities are likely. Expansion or changes in roles will be reflected in the future updates and amendments to the MOU.

Coordination with AJCC Partner Programs

The following information summarizes the ways in which the Imperial County WDB and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated one-stop partner programs.

WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs: The three formula-funded programs are administered by the Imperial County WDB. Services are delivered at three comprehensive and three satellite AJCCs. Concurrent with the implementation of the 2023 update to the Plan, two “mobile AJCCs” will begin operations, taking Title I and partner services to remote locations throughout Imperial County.

WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy: Referrals are regularly made between the Title I and Title II programs and many participants are co-enrolled. When the California Department of Education requests applications for Adult Education Title II Education and Literacy Activities, Imperial County WDB staff reviews applications to determine how they complement the Local Workforce Development Plan. Central Union High School is the WIOA Title II adult education and literacy grant recipient partner. Other educational agencies and programs in the county also receive WIOA Title II funding. These include: Holtville Unified School District, Imperial Unified School District, Brawley Unified School District, Calexico Unified School District, and Imperial County Sheriff’s Office.

WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser: Wagner-Peyser staff is co-located in the comprehensive AJCCs, where staff works with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services. EDD and AJCC staff also collaborate on Rapid Response orientations and services for laid off workers. As of the development of the Biennial Modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan, Wagner-Peyser staff have returned to the AJCCs on a modified schedule.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: DOR assists individuals with disabilities with employment and related services. DOR provides job readiness services, workshops, and vocational training, resulting in employment in an integrated work setting. Technology assistance is also provided as required to support participation in training and work. DOR staff are co-located at the comprehensive AJCCs on a part-time basis. The WDB has applied for a grant from DOR to fund a position to work specifically with job seekers with disabilities.

Carl Perkins Career Technical Education: The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is a principal source of federal funding to states and discretionary grantees for the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs across the nation. The purpose of the Act is to develop the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. Imperial Valley College is the local recipient of Perkins funding.

Title V Older Americans Act: The Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) offers short-term pre-vocational services to eligible seniors who are 55+, low income, and have barriers to employment; and provides part-time, temporary on the job training through community service assignments at local nonprofits and government agencies.

Job Corps: San Diego Job Corps Center serves individuals ages 16-24. As part of this residential program, participants receive academic instruction, vocational training, and job readiness training. Job Corps also provides job placement assistance and follow-up services. Imperial County youth are referred to Job Corps by the AJCCs.

Native American Programs (WIOA Section 166): Imperial County WDB collaborates with California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities for Indian and Native American job seekers, along with access to all WIOA and partner services offered through the AJCC.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program (WIOA Section 167): The Center for Employment Training (CET) is the migrant and seasonal farmworker program grantee for Imperial County. CET provides training for a variety of occupations at its El Centro campus. Following training, clients receive job placement assistance and follow-up services. CET also offers ESL training and assists clients in preparing for the GED exam. The relationship between WIOA Title I programs and CET are strengthened by the fact that CET has vocational programs on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), the organization is represented on the workforce development board, and WDB staff regularly participate in farmworker program meetings.

Veterans: EDD administers this program and designated Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) Specialists are available at the El Centro comprehensive AJCC to assist veterans seeking employment.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: TAA is a federal program that provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced because of increased imports. Workers may be eligible for training, job search and other reemployment services. Coordination with TAA often includes co-enrollment into WIOA, which provides multiple benefits, including TAA funds being used to cover all training costs. The availability of TAA services is generally a part of the information provided to displaced workers as part of rapid response services provided by the WDB.

Community Services Block Grant: Campesinos Unidos, Inc. offers a variety of community services programs. Information and services are communicated through the organization's website and by outreach advocates.

Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training Program: The Imperial Valley Housing Authority (IVHA) offers affordable housing through public units with rent based on income, section 8, non-elderly disabled section 8, senior/disabled housing, and housing for farmworkers. IVHA is committed to working with workforce system partners participating in the MOU.

Unemployment Compensation: The Unemployment Insurance program is generally represented at the AJCCs by EDD's Wagner-Peyser staff. AJCC staff works with EDD to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs: The Imperial County Department of Social Services (ICDSS) provides essential basic needs assistance to individuals by connecting them to critical benefits including General Relief, referrals to Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and other social service programs. WDB and DSS staff collaborate on various programs, initiatives, and cross-referrals. Co-enrollment between the agencies is common.

Partners' Efforts to Collaborate on Co-Enrollment and Case Management

The Imperial County workforce development system partners have collaborated on a number of strategies to strengthen program alignment, leverage resources, and coordinate service delivery for job seekers who are eligible across multiple programs and may benefit from services offered by two or more partners.

Collaborative Recruitment and Cross Referral Process

System partners co-located at the AJCCs have agreed to:

- A standard initial intake process;
- Use of CalJOBS; and
- A common process for cross-referring applicants and participants across partners and programs.

These processes promote consistency when gathering and recording customer information and matching job seekers to resources that may meet their needs. A common referral form authorizes the release of basic information, which facilitates the co-enrollment of participants and co-case management by system partners.

Imperial County WDB has joined the Unite Us network and its staff is currently being trained in the use of the innovative and effective referral and information sharing resource.

Unite Us functions as a virtual “community engagement manager.” It is an intuitive technology platform that will facilitate trackable social referrals, generate real-time service delivery metrics, and integrate with Imperial County WDB’s partners’ existing tools and workflows. Use of the platform will allow workforce programs to help provide connections to social services for the people in the community and enable the WDB us to track and measure results. The Unite Us Network makes it possible to remotely connect individuals with health and social care providers with access to referrals for people struggling with housing, food insecurity, employment, and more. The WDB will use the Unite Us platform to provide a venue for information sharing among partners who join the network.

Co-Enrollment of Job Seekers

Assessment of WIOA Title I program participants (and individuals being served by other programs) is the first step in determining the services an individual needs to prepare for employment. This process, which includes the development of an individual employment plan, reveals a participant’s basic skill levels, past education attainment, job-specific skills, work history, special skills and abilities, life circumstances, and potential barriers to employment. To address job/career goals and barriers, staff may suggest services that are available through WIOA and from other programs, which are operated by system partners. A referral is made to the partner(s) identified as capable of providing the required service(s), thereby triggering a co-enrollment. If the partner utilizes CalJOBS, the co-enrollment status is recorded in the system. If not, the partners share information, as permissible and practicable. Use of Unite Us will supplement coordination.

While WDB management and direct services staff are familiar with recently published state guidance on strategic co-enrollment of WIOA participants in other programs, many of the local partners have been collaborating for decades on providing services to job seekers. A few examples of these efforts with one-stop partners and local stakeholders include the following:

- Veterans seeking WIOA services often have a wide range of needs, including various health-related matters. Therefore, they may be referred to services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ Imperial Valley Clinic, Imperial County Behavioral Health Services, or DOR. AJCC representatives participate in the EDD-led Veterans Employment Committee.
- Job seekers who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency are commonly co-enrolled in programs offered by the Central Union High School District and other adult education providers.
- Job Seekers with disabilities regularly apply for employment services provided by the AJCCs. When a customer requires support in terms of assistive technology or other accommodations to be able to participate in training or to qualify for employment, he or she will be referred to DOR, which frequently co-enrolls such individuals to provide necessary supportive services.

- Youth and young adults who are seeking skills training, employment services, assistance in completing high school and other services, are provided information on WIOA and other local programs geared towards younger individuals. Many clients between the ages of 16-24 are referred to the San Diego Job Corps center, where they participate in multiple services and activities that will help them complete their secondary education and prepare for a career. As they are completing Job Corps services, individuals returning to Imperial County may be co-enrolled in WIOA services for assistance in finding employment related to the skills they have acquired in Job Corps.

Case Management

Partners that have access to CalJOBS can share data and intake information after securing the informed consent of a common customer. This allows staff from two or more programs to track progress that has been recorded in CalJOBS. Not all partners use CalJOBS. In these cases, the partners agree to a process (and often a schedule) for communicating about a client's progress by phone, email, and a selective sharing of records. The implementation of Unite Us will improve these processes.

Cross-Training of System Partners and Coordination of Partner-Led Events

The more that partner staff knows about other programs, the greater the chance that effective referrals will be made, including those leading to co-enrollment. Cross training sessions are conducted as part of regularly scheduled meetings with the AJCC Operator. These discussions ensure that all WIOA staff and partners remain up to date on programs and services. Partner meetings also provide a venue for agencies to work together to plan coordinated job fairs, workshops, and business outreach, along with other multi-agency strategies.

One-Stop System's Use of Technology and Other Remote Strategies
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Imperial County is home to approximately 180,000 residents, who primarily live and work within its seven geographically dispersed incorporated cities (Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial and Westmorland) and eight widespread unincorporated communities (Bombay Beach, Heber, Niland, Ocotillo, Palo Verde, Salton City, Seeley, and Winterhaven), along with various colonias. The county is the ninth largest in California, encompassing 4,284 square miles. Due to the size of the county and its scattered population centers, many individuals living in remote communities regularly travel an hour or more to access public services. Compounding this hardship is that fact that many people living in these areas are low-income and have limited access to transportation. The WDB and the workforce system partners continue to work to make employment, education, training, and related services accessible to remote communities.

Remote Service Delivery Sites

There are currently two satellite AJCC locations serving remote areas: Winterhaven in the far eastern part of the county, and Calipatria, in the north-central region of the county. At these locations, individuals have access to computers in order to conduct job search using CalJOBS, work on resumes, and access resources to prepare for interviews. Because of its proximity to the Arizona border, individuals in Winterhaven also frequently access workforce development and other services in Yuma. To support residents of several small communities that dot the western shoreline of the Salton Sea, the WDB periodically conducts job fairs in Salton City.

Mobile Service Delivery

As described, the WDB will implement the use of “mobile AJCCs” to better serve remote communities throughout the county. The mobile units represent a cutting-edge workforce development service delivery strategy to meet the needs of job seekers and businesses lacking easy access to services. Two turnkey, 38 foot long coach units are being equipped to offer a wide range of workforce services. The mobile units will enable the WDB to reach residents of Niland, Salton City, Palo Verde and other distant locations and to provide one-stop services through the units’ computer labs, which feature internet access. The units will also host various workshops on job search techniques, resume development, and interviewing skills, and orientations to systemwide services and vocational training opportunities. In addition, the units will serve local employers by supporting recruitment, interviewing, and training for new employees. The WDB expects that the mobile units will be fully operational and begin providing service no later than October 2023.

Technology Resources to Communicate with Remote Customers

Over the last several years, the WDB has worked to enhance virtual services, in part, to increase access for individuals who live beyond a reasonable commuting distance to an AJCC. Given the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, workforce staff accelerated efforts to bring more information and services online.

Various methods for providing and enabling services other than in-person, include the following:

Telephone: Appointments with AJCC staff can be conducted via telephone. If an individual does not have access to a telephone, referrals can be made to local community service agencies to obtain one.

The WDB Website: The WDB has updated its website. Because of this update, businesses are able to post jobs online more easily, thereby making these listings more accessible to job seekers. In addition, new features enable participants to submit applications online. The WDB is procuring workshops and webinars that will further expand online offerings, such as sessions on resume building and interviewing skills.

Zoom: System partners and AJCC staff use Zoom and other videoconferencing platforms to conduct meetings and facilitate one-on-one conversations.

Social Media: The Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office has an active Facebook page in order to keep the public up to date on services available to the public.

Electronic signatures: The AJCCs accept electronic signatures on some documentation in order to avoid face-to-face contact.

Technology Access: The WDB and workforce system partners have assisted job seekers who lack hardware and/or internet access in obtaining laptop computers and hot spots. In addition, some organizations providing instruction through individual training accounts (ITAs) are providing students with technology tools. Again, the mobile units will feature state of the hardware technology.

System Partners' Efforts to Serve Customers in Remote Communities

Driven by the circumstances of the pandemic, many AJCC partners have increased their reliance on technology and are delivering most services online. This has increased the availability of services in remote areas. As some services are better suited to in-person service delivery, some partner agencies are providing such services on a by appointment basis. Examples of approaches that partners are using to increase web-based and other remote services include the following:

- CET, the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program grantee, can provide shuttle service to its El Centro campus.
- EDD staff generally makes bi-weekly visits to the Winterhaven AJCC, and makes scheduled visits to CBO locations, partner offices, and employer sites in remote communities. Zoom or Adobe Connect workshops and one-on-one sessions with staff are now available to customers. As the biennial update to the Plan was being prepared, EDD continued to provide many services, including RESEA workshops, online.
- The Public Administrator's Area Agency on Aging, which operates the SCSEP program, serves seniors throughout all of Imperial County. It clients, who are 55+, prefer phone, email, and FaceTime for remote communications.
- Imperial County Department of Social Services supports a multi-access system with regional offices. It also outstations staff at Family Resource Centers in remote communities and reaches outlying rural areas through a mobile unit. In addition, the department's transitional services can be accessed in-person, by phone, and online.
- DOR uses a variety of technological strategies to deliver services to individuals in remote areas. These include the use of Zoom, FaceTime, DUO, MS Teams, and email

to provide virtual services including: orientation; intake and assessment; eligibility determination; developing Individual Plans of Employment (IPEs); and other Vocational Rehabilitation services. As COVID restrictions have abated, DOR representatives are present at the comprehensive AJCCs on a part-time basis.

Coordination of Workforce Activities and Support Services

Supportive services are made available to eligible individuals enrolled in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Supportive services are provided to address a participant's needs and barriers as identified during initial and on-going individual assessment processes. Services are provided to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I. To qualify for WIOA-funded support, all efforts to secure supportive services from other sources must first be exhausted and documented in the participant's case file.

Determining the Need for WIOA-Funded Supportive Services

WIOA Title I supportive services are only provided when they are determined to be necessary, reasonable, and allowable. The need for supportive services must be based on an objective assessment and must be described and justified in an Individual Employment Plan for adults or an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for youth. To receive services:

- An individual must be participating in a program with activities authorized under WIOA. Priority of service is established at the time of eligibility determination.
- An individual is unable to obtain supportive services through other programs.
- A Supportive Services Request Form has been completed.

Participants can receive a lifetime maximum of \$2,000 in WIOA-funded supportive services. The limit may be exceeded only following a documented needs assessment and approval by the WDB Director. Childcare and mileage expenses are not included in the lifetime limit and are calculated separately. For individuals enrolled in ITA-funded training, up to an additional \$500 may be provided for employment-related expenses.

Services Available to WIOA Participants

A wide range of supportive services is available to participants, including:

Transportation assistance is available for individuals participating in training and job search. Transportation expenses for eligible WIOA participants, including round trip expenses to and from a childcare provider, are authorized, but limited to usual and customary public/community transportation, such as bus lines, or on a mileage reimbursement basis. Supportive services for transportation may continue to assist a participant in retaining employment no longer than the point of exit from the program.

Housing Assistance: Only under extraordinary circumstances may supportive services be used to pay for housing. Such circumstances may include a notice of eviction or a complaint filed in a local court of law. Funds may only be used to pay monthly rental costs.

Ancillary Expenses: These include costs necessary to participate in services, such as books, tools, clothing, background checks, testing fees, application fees, drug tests and other costs. An ancillary expense may also include those costs directly related to obtaining employment, including clothing, an employment-related physical or eye exam, or eyeglasses.

Child Care Assistance: Participants with children 12 years of age or younger are eligible for childcare when it is determined other funding sources are not available to pay for such services.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

Imperial County WDB ensures contracts, cooperative agreements, job training plans, policies, and procedures are ADA compliant and fully meet the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA. The WDB has a designated Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer, who is responsible for coordinating its obligations under these regulations.

The EO Officer's responsibilities include the following:

- Serving as the liaison with the EDD EEO Office.
- Investigating and monitoring the Local Area's and its sub-recipients' WIOA Title I funded activities and programs.
- Reviewing the Local Area's organizations' and its sub-recipients' written policies.
- Developing, publishing, and enforcing the Local Area's discrimination complaint procedures.
- Conducting outreach and education about equal opportunity and nondiscrimination requirements and how an individual may file a complaint.
- Participating in continuing training and education.
- Informing participants, employees, and program beneficiaries of their equal opportunity rights and responsibilities, and how the discrimination complaint process works.
- Establishing a logging system to record discrimination complaints.
- Providing a copy of the complaint log annually to the EDD EEO Office.
- Developing and publishing procedures (including alternative dispute resolution) for resolving allegations for noncompliance with applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.
- Developing and publishing procedures for resolving allegations against service providers for noncompliance with applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

All clients are notified of the "Equal Opportunity Law" along with the right to file a complaint under "What to do If You Believe You Have Experienced Discrimination." The

Discrimination Complaint Form is readily available to customers. This information is shared with clients during initial meetings, as well as during new participant and new employer orientations, whether they be conducted in person, via telephone, or through teleconference. The WDB ensures that, during presentations, individuals are notified of their rights and responsibilities under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA, including a right to file a complaint with the WDB or the Director of the DOL's Civil Rights Center. Contact information is provided to clients.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

All AJCC buildings are ADA compliant. The WDB ensures that all new facilities or alterations will comply with the applicable federal accessibility standards, such as the *ADA Standards for Accessible Design* (1991 or 2010) or the *Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards*. No qualified individual with a disability is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of a recipient's service, program, or activity or is subjected to discrimination because the facilities are inaccessible or unusable by individuals with disabilities. The WDB permits individuals with mobility disabilities to use wheelchairs and manually powered mobility aids, such as walkers, crutches, canes, braces, or other similar devices designed for use by individuals with mobility disabilities, in any areas open to pedestrian use.

The WDB ensures that all WIOA-funded programs and activities are programmatically accessible. This includes providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate, communicating with persons with disabilities as effectively as with others, and providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services, including assistive technology devices and services, when necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of programs or activities.

Assistive Technology and Accessible Materials

The WDB informs customers that auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities are available upon request. Language assistance (oral or written) is available at all AJCC locations. Interpretation services (in person and via phone) and Braille services are also available.

Computer workstations can be adjusted to larger fonts when needed. Printed materials indicate that AJCCs and the WDB may be reached by voice telephone and provide the TTY number. Additionally, the WDB ensures that all publications in the news media, on the county website, or social media pages are ADA compliant. For example, when a picture or PDF is published online, the WDB provides a detailed description following the image.

Imperial County has identified the need for more assistive technology devices for individuals with disabilities. Priorities include touch screen monitors, more adjustable

workstations, speech recognition software, narrators on computers, and Braille Sense Plus and translator.

Staff Training

Staff participate in yearly training on the Equal Opportunity Law, nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policy, and the LEP Plan. The WDB is in the process of updating the training program regarding Equal Opportunity Procedures and the Limited English Proficiency Plan, as these policies were recently updated in accordance to state mandates. Annual training includes disability awareness and etiquette, effective communication strategies, access to technology, access to employment, racial equity, dealing with individuals who are LEP, and reinforcing the LEP Plan. These training sessions are vital for staff to effectively work with customers and connect them with the best services available. DOR has provided training for WDB and AJCC staff on the needs of customers with disabilities, various categories of disabilities, and assistive technology. Prior to the completion of the current four-year planning period, DOR will provide WDB and direct services staff with an orientation to DOR services and offer its well regarded Windmills training.

III. STATE STRATEGIC PARTNER COORDINATION

In 2018, the State completed and published a biennial modification to California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan for Program Years 2016-19. Within this modification, the California Workforce Development Board identified several new strategic partnerships with state-level agencies and initiatives. Guidance issued by the State Board in 2018 to Local Boards regarding two-year modifications to their PY 17-20 Plans required that WDBs pursue these partnerships within their jurisdictions. In our 2019 modification to the Local Plan, Imperial County WDB described these local level relationships, some of which were in an early stage of development. Following is a summary of the evolution of these strategic partnerships as well as approaches under consideration to further strengthen collaboration with local providers and programs.

Coordination with County Human Services Agency and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Accessing CalFresh Employment and Training Services

The Imperial County Department of Social Services (DSS) is responsible for CalWORKS and other public welfare programs, including: Medi-Cal, Welfare to Work, General Assistance, and CalFresh. DSS is a one-stop partner and, therefore, is part of the network of agencies that comprise the local workforce development delivery system. CalFresh participants are diverse. They include families, some led by single parents, and individuals. Many are unemployed, while others are low wage earners. In Imperial County, many CalFresh participants live in poverty and rely on other forms of public assistance and social support services. Because the group consists of individuals with many distinct needs, participants are served by all types of educational resources, social services, and support organizations in the county, including the AJCCs.

Engagement with DSS during the planning process for Imperial County WDB's development of the 2019 Modification to our PY 2017-20 Local Plan revealed that DSS had not yet implemented a CalFresh E&T program. DSS representatives indicated that, at that point, the department had developed only a basic blueprint for what the program might look like in Imperial County. DSS had engaged with State CalFresh E&T program leadership to discuss options and had formulated some ideas for the program design. It was based on the benefits that such a program would provide to CalFresh recipients and the opportunities it would create to access the 50% reimbursement for the use of non-federal funds for allowable activities provided to eligible individuals. DSS identified opportunities for a partnership with various programs operated by Imperial Valley College that looked to be well suited to the target population. DSS representatives stated that, in 2019, the agency intended to expand upon its basic concept and develop plans for a fully functional program design that could include either department-administered services or a model using a third-party provider, such as the college.

Progress on the CalFresh E&T Program and Plans Moving Forward

At this time, Imperial County DSS has yet to implement a CalFresh E&T program. At the start of 2019, the WDB was working with the local community college to administer this

program. However, the college expressed some hesitation about the program and decided not to move forward. DSS is continuing to explore options for implementing the program, and the WDB remains supportive of these efforts. Due to the pandemic, efforts to develop and implement the program have slowed. However, with the expectation that reopening will ramp up in the coming months, it is likely that these plans will accelerate in the new Program Year.

The WDB and DSS continue to work together successfully on various projects. In 2019, the CalWORKs staff collaborated with the AJCCs to offer “Project Future” Expanded Subsidized Employment Services to CalWORKs customers. Project Future services provide employment, training and career building opportunities. This contract benefitted clients by providing Medical Administrative Assistant vocational training to seven customers, who all received national certification as Certified Medical Administrative Assistant. Fourteen customers secured unsubsidized employment. Twelve of these customers transitioned off the CalWORKs Program. In sum, 82% of the customers enrolled in Project Future experienced positive economic benefits to their households, built a career pathway, and obtained unsubsidized employment.

Coordination with Local Child Support Agency and Other Local Partners Serving Individuals That Are Non-Custodial Parents

During the 2019 development of the biennial Modification to the Local Plan, the WDB and Imperial County Child Support Services (CSS) agreed to formalize and further structure their existing relationship. This enhancement to the workforce system’s partnership with CSS represented an extension of an existing relationship among the WDB, the AJCCs, and Child Support. For many years, referrals had been made from Child Support to the AJCCs pursuant to court orders requiring non-custodial parents (NCPs) to participate in job search in exchange for credit in meeting specified obligations and the reinstatement of revoked licenses. While this approach had yielded some success, CSS and the WDB agreed to develop an MOU outlining a structured relationship for cross-referrals. The WDB, CSS, and the entire network of one-stop partners expressed their full commitment to using the MOU to build a stronger partnership to improve employment outcomes for NCPs with child support orders.

Progress on Development of the MOU between the WDB and CSS

Due to the global pandemic, the MOU was not executed as planned. A goal for this MOU would have been to have a designated staff liaison at the AJCC locations to communicate with child support clients. A draft agreement describes a process for serving CSS clients. Like all AJCC clients, they would be provided information regarding available services and an assessment would be conducted in order to determine what supportive services are needed for the non-custodial parent. Child support clients would need to sign a *Release of Information* to allow information sharing between organizations.

Current Collaboration between the WDB and Child Support and Plan Going Forward

The WDB and CSS are currently making cross referrals and are working together on a regular basis. CSS refers clients to the AJCCs for workforce services. Child Support clients are tracked by WDB staff and information is shared with the CSS case manager. AJCC staff work with clients to develop short-, mid- and long-range employment goals. As the client is participating in services, the case manager follows-up with service providers (e.g., schools, support agencies) to track progress. Staff from both agencies regularly follow-up with clients through their completion of services.

The relationship with CSS has been very successful, with many child support clients completing training and obtaining employment, moving them toward a living wage. Leaders at CSS and the WDB believe that the formalization of the relationship should move forward. An MOU is currently pending execution.

Coordination with Local Partnership Agreement Partners Established in Alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

As the Imperial County WDB convened local stakeholders to support the development of the 2019 Modification to our Local Plan, WDB leadership and staff first became aware of the state-level blueprint for competitive integrated employment (CIE) that was crafted by and led to the formalization of a partnership among DOR, the California Department of Development Services (DDS) and the California Department of Education (CDE). An agreement among the partners makes employment in an integrated setting at a competitive wage for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) its highest priority. We also learned of the requirement that local agencies representing the state level partners develop agreements to meet CIE goals. State Workforce Board guidance indicated that local boards must connect to these partnerships to support CIE objectives. The following information summarizes the WDB's plans for moving the collaboration with the LPA partners forward.

Imperial County Local Partnership Agreement

An LPA has been implemented in Imperial County. The purpose of the Imperial County Local Partnership Agreement (ICLPA) is to enhance and strengthen partnerships that promote career preparation and successful placement of youth and adults with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment. This primarily includes youth and adults identified as having an intellectual and/or developmental disability and may include others whose disability creates similar barriers to employment. The participating core partners are:

- El Centro Branch of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)
- San Diego Regional Center (SDRC)
- Imperial County SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area), which is a consortium formed by 17 school districts: Brawley Elementary School District, Brawley Union High

School District, Calexico Unified School District, Calipatria Unified School District, Central Union High School District, El Centro Elementary School District, Heber School District, Holtville Unified School District, Imperial County Office of Education, Imperial Unified School District, Magnolia Union School District, McCabe Union School District, Meadows Union School District, Mulberry School District, San Pasqual Valley Unified School District, Seeley Union School District, and Westmorland Union School District.

The ICLPA also identifies community partners, which are defined as local entities whose mission, goals, and primary purpose are aligned with that of the ICLPA, thereby increasing opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities to be successfully employed in an integrated setting while earning a competitive wage, and in a career or job that meets their vocational desires or goals. Among the community partners listed in the LPA is the *America's Job & Career Center System*.

Current Collaboration with the LPA Partners

Imperial County WDB and AJCC representatives currently collaborate with DOR to serve customers with disabilities. Supporting DOR's and the LPA's business outreach efforts to expand the use of CIE would be a natural extension of our current, productive working relationship. WDB staff has envisioned being able to support DOR's efforts in several ways. These include:

- Identifying businesses within the County that employ individuals in jobs that would be suitable for CIE, ensuring that opportunities are identified that complement the various capabilities of individuals in the ID/DD target group;
- Developing a CIE-specific business outreach plan for the County;
- Establishing a unified strategy for promoting CIE candidates to local businesses, again taking into consideration individual capabilities and needs;
- Making direct contact with business representatives on behalf of LPA customers; and
- Orienting employers to CIE, developing a work-based learning agreement and ensuring the necessary services and supports are in place to promote successful job placement.

Moving Forward

Imperial County WDB staff and managers and staff representing the system partners have expressed interest in training from the LPA partners about the workforce-related needs and barriers of individuals with ID and DD, as the workforce system, overall, has limited experience working with this target group. The local board and its partners have significant experience serving individuals with disabilities, but many providers acknowledge the need for CIE-specific training. The partners identified several topics for training. These include navigating the workforce system on behalf of individuals with disabilities; primer in disabilities resources for employment and related services; understanding reasonable accommodations; managing family dynamics; working with clients through adult transition; and understanding social security benefits and the effect

of employment on these benefits. DOR representatives have indicated that the agency's Work Incentive Planner can provide training on working with individuals receiving SSI or SSA to understand the impact of employment on these benefits.

At the time that the biennial modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan was being developed, the WDB had recently submitted a proposal to the state to expand on services, partnerships and engagement to support the CIE initiative and meet the goals of the Imperial County Local Partnership Agreement. The WDB proposed creation of a new position that would rotate among the county's AJCCs to provide services onsite. The Workforce Development Career Specialist would deliver tailored services to individuals with disabilities, including those with ID/DD, to support their preparation for employment through services such as career exploration, job search assistance, job placement, and coaching.

<p>Coordination with Community-Based Organizations and Other Local Partners That Serve Individuals Who are English Language Learners, Foreign Born, and/or Refugees</p>
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In Imperial County, more than eighty-five percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino, with nearly a third being foreign born. Imperial County offers extensive services to individuals who are English language learners (ELL) to ensure they have equal access to programs. All staff is trained on the WDB's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan in order to ensure identified ELL individuals receive necessary language skills training along with other workforce services.

Based on the demographic composition of Imperial County, Spanish is the only language other than English spoken by a significant portion of residents. Several bilingual staff members are available at the AJCCs at all times and all written documents are available in Spanish. While our staff is sensitive to the needs of ELLs, we also understand the importance of providing training in order to improve English language skills. Acquisition of English fluency is critical to workers' opportunities for better jobs and higher wages that will lead to self-sufficiency. Our local workforce development strategy emphasizes the importance of studying English concurrent with training for and securing employment.

Collaboration with Public and Private Partners to Serve ELLs and Immigrants

Because such a large percentage of the population is made up of immigrants, many of whom are ELLs, serving this population is central to the work of the WDB, the AJCCs, and local workforce system partners. AJCC staff works closely with many local agencies to secure support services for customers.

Public agencies are critical partners in providing support services to job seekers served by the AJCCs and other organizations that make up the local workforce development system. Among these are the county's Department of Social Services; Public Health Department; Behavioral Health Department; Imperial Valley Transit; and the Imperial Valley Housing Authority. Supplementing these services is a network of non-profit

organizations including: Imperial Valley Food Bank; the LGBT Center; SER-Jobs for Progress; United Way; Calexico Neighborhood House; and the Sister Evelyn Mourey Center, which provide a wide range of support services, such as emergency shelter, food and clothing. Faith-based organizations are also crucial partners. Justice for Our Neighbors, a project of the United Methodist Immigration Ministry, provides services, such as legal assistance to the asylum-seekers and undocumented children. An increase in the need for services is anticipated with the lifting of Title 42.

Some examples of the critical forms of services and support provided to ELLs and immigrants by system partners include the following:

Center for Employment Training: CET, which administers the WIOA Section 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker grant program, offers ESL services and assistance to clients earning a GED. CET has also had great success in securing employment for participants in jobs that lead to self-sufficiency wages. While many participants may not have a high school education, CET works with those who have a high school degree from Mexico, accepting a *Certificado de Preparatoria* as a substitute for a high school diploma. CET is very active within the AJCCs, with representatives constantly communicating with our AJCC staff so they remain aware of the programs CET offers.

Office of Education: The Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE) is the leader of the adult education consortium consisting of Brawley Union High School District, Calexico Unified School District, Calipatria Unified School District, Central Union High School District, Holtville Union School District, Imperial Unified School District, Imperial Valley College District, ICOE Alternative Education/Imperial County Jail and San Pasqual Unified School District. Services offered by the Consortium are ESL, Career Technical Education Courses, Bus Driver Courses, Medical Classes and Welding Classes. Consortium agencies assist individuals in obtaining a High School Diploma or GED. Staff also provides students with career and education counseling. The WDB works closely with Central Union High School District, as it is an MOU partner. However, WDB staff also works with other education partners across the county. This collaboration with all adult education providers enables AJCC staff to refer clients to services in and around their communities.

Sister Evelyn Mourey Center: The non-profit Sister Evelyn Mourey Center (SEMC) places an emphasis on serving individuals and immigrant families with language barriers. Imperial County is home to many individuals who were born in Mexico and only speak Spanish. The AJCCs refer individuals to the Evelyn Mourey Center when clients are in need of daily translation services. SEMC assists families and individuals with various applications. These can include job applications or applications for services, such as electricity or prescriptions for eyeglasses.

SEMC staff makes daily presentations to customers, which are offered in both English and Spanish, to make participants aware of current issues and services in the community. Topics have included women's health, diabetes, family nutrition, financial literacy, and community resources available through local providers.

The SEMC is a partner with Central Union High School District's Adult Education and offers access to ESL classes. These classes assist with reading, writing and conversational skills to help students qualify for better job opportunities. Each individual is evaluated and placed in an appropriate level of instruction from beginning, intermediate, to advanced. SEMC hosts English Conversational Groups to assist individuals in practicing their speaking skills. SEMC also collaborates with Imperial Valley College to provide access to Computer Literacy Classes. The goal of these classes is to provide fundamental computer skills that increase participants' access to job opportunities and higher education.

As many in this population are non-citizens, the SEMC offers a citizenship class. SEMC stresses that obtaining U.S. citizenship is critical for many low-income populations in order to receive benefits and obtain better jobs. SEMC classes assist individuals to prepare and pass the citizenship test.

The Center for Family Solutions (aka Woman Haven): Woman Haven has a very close relationship with the WDB, as well as other agencies in the community. Many Woman Haven clients have little or no work experience and do not speak English. Some clients may have left an abusive relationship in Mexico and are looking to start a new life for themselves and their families. Woman Haven will often make referrals for clients to attend ESL or citizenship classes. The agency aims to assist their clients with skill building for day-to-day life and to obtain jobs to care for their families. Woman Haven offers computer skills programs, which helps clients prepare for employment. Many clients also receive services from local agencies such as County Behavioral Health, legal services, and the AJCCs.

Justice for our Neighbors: The organization provides low cost immigration and legal services to low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Staff assists clients with obtaining authorization to work. Once authorized, these individuals can receive services from many other local agencies. The AJCCs can refer them to obtain their GED, attend ESL classes, and participate in programs to obtain their citizenship.

An Evolving Partnership

Since the WDB's development of the 2019 Modification to the Local Plan, the relationships among the WDB, AJCCs, one-stop system partners, and local community agencies have grown stronger. System partners and local stakeholders collaborate more effectively than ever before in assisting ELLs and immigrants in meeting their education and employment goals.

IV. WIOA TITLE I COORDINATION

The following narrative addresses services, activities, and administrative requirements of the Imperial County WDB under the WIOA Title I formula programs, along with strategies for staff preparation, training, and ongoing professional development to effectively respond to participant needs.

Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Digital Technology Skills

Most WDB and AJCC staff currently demonstrate moderate to high competency levels in the use of digital technology in their daily performance of job duties, which include assisting job seekers in understanding and using hardware, software, and web-based applications and platforms. In response to the pandemic and subsequent workplace adjustments, training on the following technology-related topics has been provided:

- Using Zoom for meetings and one-on-one interactions;
- CalJOBS uses and functionalities; and
- Retrieving and storing files while engaged in remote work.

To ensure that AJCC staff members are fully prepared to not only meet the requirements of their own jobs, but also support customers who will be increasingly reliant on the use of digital skills in the workplace, Imperial County WDB will create opportunities for staff members to improve and/or remain up-to-date with their work-related digital/technology skills. The WDB offers staff access to LinkedIn Learning, which has a catalog of hundreds of courses that could meet the technological needs of our staff.

Since the publication of the original PY 21- 24 Local Plan, WDB and AJCC staff have participated in additional technology training. This includes, but is not limited to, training that occurs as part of EDD's MIS Administrators meeting. In addition, staff participated in the 2022 GeoSolutions conference, where topics related to the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) and assistive technology were discussed.

Frontline Staff Training and Professional Development to Increase Cultural Competency and Effectiveness in Working with Individuals and Groups that Have Been Exposed to Trauma

Imperial County WDB encourages and supports staff development. Training is frequently made available to staff to increase their awareness and knowledge on matters related to service delivery and compliance. However, training is also provided on topics that increase staff's effectiveness in serving key customers, including job seekers and businesses. Training of this type is especially important for frontline team members who work directly with customers.

Topics dealing with cultural competency and trauma-exposed populations that would likely be beneficial to frontline staff may include:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Cultural Bias
- Cultural Humility
- Understanding Trauma
- Signs of Depression
- Recognizing Post-Traumatic Stress
- Justice Informed Employment Retention
- Serving the LGBTQ Community
- Building Resiliency in Communities
- Mental Health Awareness
- Sexual Harassment
- Domestic Violence & Immigration
- Gender and Sexual Identity

Following implementation of the current four-year Local Plan, staff have participated in additional training related to cultural competency and trauma-informed approaches. This has included mental health awareness and justice-involved employment retention training. The WDB's Executive Director is also a members of the California Workforce Association's Equity Workgroup.

Coordination of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities

Imperial County WDB has been providing Rapid Response services to displaced workers for more than 30 years. Staff participate in the Southern California Rapid Response Roundtable meetings, and attend related training provided by organizations such as the California Labor Federation.

Working with state and local partners, AJCC Business Services staff provides the following Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion services.

Layoff Aversion Services

The Rapid Response Coordinator works closely with state and local agencies (such as the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Small Business Development Center, and the local Chamber of Commerce) to monitor the health of businesses and leverage relationships to support continued business operations. Upon receipt of a WARN notice or other information indicating a company is experiencing hardship, the Coordinator makes immediate contact with the company to propose Layoff Aversion assistance.

Business Services staff has established ongoing relationships with local employers, creating an environment that enables them to provide services to business in order to prevent or reduce layoffs. Layoff aversion tools and strategies that are used to support businesses in distress include economic analysis, incumbent worker training, Trade

Adjustment Assistance programs, EDD's Work Share Program, and various forms of work-based training.

Rapid Response Services

When the Business Services Coordinator receives a WARN notice or similar communication regarding a business closure or significant layoff, the business is contacted to verify the information provided in the notice. If this notice is active, our staff will start coordinating a Response Orientation for affected employees. Typically, these orientations are held at the business site (if the business is still operating). Once a date and time for the orientation is confirmed, members of the Rapid Response Team are contacted, which is led by staff from the AJCCs and EDD. During the orientation, the team disseminates information about the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and Unemployment Insurance benefits. Depending on the nature of the layoff, dislocated workers may be eligible for a wide range of other services. If the dislocation is a result of foreign competition or foreign relocations, workers may be eligible for assistance, including income support, job search assistance/relocation, and/or training under the TAA Program.

The Imperial County WDB collaborates with various agencies to bring as many services as possible to workers that have been laid off. Such agencies include the Department of Social Services, Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board, the Imperial Valley Food Bank, Center for Employment Training, Imperial County Behavioral Health, Imperial County Child Support Services, and DOR. When specialized services are needed, the WDB may contract with organizations that have unique expertise, such as California Manufacturing Technology Consulting.

At times, WARN notices are received late and business are no longer operating. When this occurs, Business Services staff work with EDD to locate affected workers through their RESEA activities.

Response to COVID-Related Worker Displacement

The WDB expanded Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion activities through a Small Business COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Grant fund for local businesses that experienced economic hardships because of the pandemic and the health orders that required certain businesses to close. The grant fund reimbursed companies for the cost of PPE and telework equipment and offered other creative approaches that enabled businesses to adjust operations in a way that resulted in employee retention.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs
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Imperial County WDB provides an extensive set of services for job seekers enrolled under the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Services meet the needs of individuals with varying levels of education and work experience, including job seekers

from vulnerable populations who may have one or more barriers to employment. Services are designed to prepare participants for entry-level and higher positions with businesses in Imperial County, including those in priority sectors that are identified in the Southern Border Regional Planning Unit's PY 2021-24 Regional Plan and its 2023 Biennial Modification.

Service Delivery through the AJCCs

The delivery of career services at Imperial County WDB's six AJCCs takes place alongside a wide range of training and services provided by the one-stop partners. Customers may participate exclusively in basic career services, or may need additional assistance and be subsequently enrolled in individualized career services.

The WDB's AJCC system includes three comprehensive AJCCs (Brawley, Calexico and El Centro) and three satellite centers (Calipatria, Winterhaven, and El Centro). As indicated, beginning in 2023, the brick and mortar centers will be supplemented by two mobile units.

Registration and Enrollment in Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Adults and dislocated workers who receive services funded under WIOA Title I are registered following a certification of eligibility and are classified as participants. For individuals to be registered into a WIOA program, the following must occur:

- Individuals must complete an application/eligibility determination process;
- Individuals must provide the documentation required to substantiate eligibility; and
- An appropriate activity code for the individual must be entered into the CalJOBS system.

Career Services for Adult and Dislocated Worker Participants

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program basic and career services are available to job seekers using any of the WDB's six AJCCs or mobile services.

Basic Career Services: WIOA basic career services include the following:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system of unemployment insurance claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency (using TABE), as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs. The WDB is considering the use of Career Scope to assess participants' interests and attitudes.

- Labor exchange services, including the following: job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling; provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; provision of information on nontraditional employment; and provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including the following: job vacancy listings in labor market areas; information on the job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
- Provision of information about how Imperial County is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system.
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the SNAP program; assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and assistance under the CalWORKS program along with supportive services and transportation provided through that program.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

Individualized Career Services: WIOA individualized career services consist of the following:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels (such as typing) and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include the following: diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers.
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring.
- Career planning (e.g., case management).
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services.

- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services. The WDB is considering the implementation of a curriculum published by the FDIC.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- Transitional jobs.

To supplement the full range of basic and career services outlined above, the AJCC system utilizes Career Edge, which is a learning management system allowing WIOA services to be more accessible online to all residents of Imperial County. Users do not need to be a WIOA client in order to access this platform. The platform offers career services, professional development and online training options. The Career Edge platform is interactive and focuses on teaching users how to become job ready through easy to understand instructions and videos. Users can complete sample job applications, resumes, cover letters, and mock interviews with assistance from modules that visually walk a user through the process.

Training Services

Participants who require training to qualify for employment can take advantage of several options. WIOA training services include the following:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment.
- On-the-job training.
- Incumbent worker training.
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skill upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Job readiness training provided in combination with another training service.
- Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with another training service.
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

The WDB has been working to expand its Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for commercially available, off-the-shelf training programs. Eligible job seekers that enroll in

a training program provided by those on the ETPL are able to have their services paid for by the WDB through the use of an individual training account (ITA) for program costs up to \$12,500. If program costs exceed \$12,500, the participant must find additional sources of funding to cover the remaining costs. Training currently available through ITAs includes:

- Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP) Certified Medical Assistant
- IVROP Certified Nursing Assistant
- IVROP Security Guard (No Fire Arm)
- IVROP Security Guard with Fire Arm
- IVROP Truck Driving Class A
- Learning Institute of Southern California Barber
- CET Truck Driver
- American Beauty Academy (ABA) Aesthetics
- ABA Barber
- ABA Cosmetology
- ABA Manicurist
- San Diego State University (SDSU) Medical Administrative Assistant
- SDSU Basic ESL and Computer Literacy

Contract and Specialized Training

Of the various work-based learning programs indicated above, on-the-job training is the most commonly used. Other contract training includes specialized programs, such as the RN and LVN Mentorship Program. This has been one of the Imperial County WDB's most successful training programs with an average of 90% to 100% overall job placement across the last several years. It caters to fourth semester nursing students that are completing their RN certification and are in need of supportive assistance. The program serves approximately 55-35 nursing students with mentoring services to assist them in finishing their last semester successfully. The services include assistance with the purchase of medical instruments, books, and the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Additionally, the students will receive preparation for entering the workforce, job search tools, training for interviews, other soft skills guidance, and follow-up services for up to 12 months.

Priority of Service

Priority of service must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient. Basic career services are not subject to the priority of service requirement. However, individualized career services and training services are subject to the requirement. Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Priority does not apply to the dislocated worker population. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service among all eligible individuals; however, they must meet the WIOA adult program eligibility criteria and other applicable criteria under WIOA.

Priority must be provided in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient;
2. Individuals who are the recipient of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient;
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups;
4. Other individuals not included in WIOA's priority groups. Individuals included in this group are older worker (55 and older), former foster youth, individuals with disabilities, school dropouts, and offenders who are not economically disadvantaged (i.e., not recipients of public assistance or not low-income individuals).
5. Underemployed workers who do not fall under numbers 1 to 4 and are in need of WIOA individualized services. Individuals who are underemployed may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Individuals whose family income does not exceed the self-sufficiency guidelines.
 - b. Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;
 - c. Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;
 - d. Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual described in WIOA;
 - e. Individuals who are employed, but their current job earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous earnings from their previous employment.

Basic skills deficient status is determined at time of eligibility as stated above. An individual who is basic skills deficient is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. Criteria used to determine whether an individual is basic skills deficient includes the following:

- Lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in postsecondary education.
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program.
- English, reading, writing, or computing skills at an 8.9 or below grade level.
- Determined to be Limited English Skills deficient through staff-documented observations.

Services and Activities Available under WIOA Title I Youth Program

Imperial County WDB provides a broad array of workforce development and training services to youth and young adults, ages 14 to 24. Services are delivered under a contract with the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP). In late 2022, a competitive procurement was conducted with the objective of expanding services to youth. Services under this award will begin in March 2023.

Imperial County WDB's Youth Committee is responsible for planning and other issues relating to the provision of workforce services to youth. In addition, the committee is responsible for the oversight of the WIOA Youth Program. Goals of the committee include increasing awareness of the importance of youth issues; leveraging funds for youth programs; and motivating communities to improve the quality and effectiveness of youth services.

WIOA Youth Programs and Services

IVROP's Project Connect annually serves more than 250 of Imperial County's WIOA-eligible youth between 14 and 24 years of age. The year-round program serves both in- and out-of-school youth and focuses on educational attainment, career planning, job readiness, and development of leadership skills. Participants also receive intensive guidance and counseling and may receive supportive services to enable their participation in the program. Project Connect provides all 14 mandatory WIOA Youth Program elements including the following:

1. Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion or attainment of an equivalency credential
2. Alternative education
3. Paid work experience
4. Occupational skills training
5. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation
6. Leadership development opportunities
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring
9. Follow-up services
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Services that provide labor market information
14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

Youth participate in work-based learning and work toward attainment of industry-recognized degrees or certificates. They also increase their literacy and numeracy skills, and improve their long-term labor market skills. Interested youth and young adults may apply for the program at IVROP or through any of the WDB's AJCCs.

Services to Increase the Digital Skills of Youth

Digital literacy and fluency have been critical needs for WIOA youth participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. During workshops and tutoring activities, staff delivers lessons in effective methods for using video conference technology. This includes assisting participants with navigating technology devices and software, such as computers and smartphone devices; the Zoom videoconferencing platform; Google Meet and Google docs; Microsoft office; and email. Staff also assists and guides participants through the process of downloading digital apps to use for program activities. Staff provides participants with video tutorials and resources to expand their digital literacy and fluency skills. The WDB is considering the implementation of a structured basic computer skills courses for all youth participants.

This year, IVROP Project Connect has put participants' digital skills to work through English and math skills tutoring utilizing digital platforms. Additionally, the program has provided educational workshops (financial literacy, labor market information, developmental assets, thrive leadership, and work readiness) by utilizing digital platforms.

Services for Youth with Disabilities

Project Connect participants with disabilities who require accommodations are provided supportive services and linkages to resources that will support their successful completion of the program. For example, if a youth participant requires an English or Spanish sign language interpreter, IVROP will hire or recruit a volunteer to provide interpreter services to assist the participant with program activities (e.g., educational workshops, community service, tutoring, work experience). If specialized equipment is required for a participant with disabilities, the program will utilize WIOA funds to purchase specialized equipment. Project Connect abides by all equal opportunity program requirements.

Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds and the Competitive Process Used to Award Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities
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Imperial County WDB has policies and procedures in place for disbursement of grant funds and the competitive award of sub-grants and contracts.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

The entity responsible for the disbursement of WIOA grant funds is the Imperial County Board of Supervisors (ICBOS) through administration of the Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office (ICWEDO), which houses the Workforce Development Board staff. The ICWEDO Director is authorized to review and approve payment transactions. Imperial County WDB administers WIOA grant funds within the local workforce development area in compliance with the requirements of the statute and applicable federal regulations and state requirements.

Award of Sub-Grants and Contracts

The WDB uses a competitive process for the award of all sub-grants and contracts for employment and training services. The process adheres to the procurement requirements specified in the OMB Circulars, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) policies and procedures, EDD Procurement Directives, and the Procurement Policy developed by the WDB. Under the approved process, a Request for Proposals (RFP) document is approved by the ICWDB's Executive Committee and recommended to the full board. The document is then forwarded for formal approval to the Board of Supervisors. Once approved, a public notice advertising the RFP is posted in various newspapers and periodicals in Imperial, Riverside, and San Diego counties for a minimum of 30 days. Generally, at least four weeks is provided for the receipt of proposals. Typically, a workshop is held to provide technical assistance and guidance to eligible applicants. To ensure transparency, all questions that arise as a result of these sessions are documented in a "question and answer" format and are posted on the WDB's website. After the submission deadline closes, proposals are reviewed by the Fiscal and Program Compliance Departments to ensure that all mandated documentation has been submitted. ICWDB's administrative analysts ensure compliance with RFP instructions. Proposals are scored by a review panel, which consists of individuals from public and private organizations, who have subject matter expertise. Each reviewer is provided a Request for Proposal Evaluator Guide and Scoring Rubric document before the formal reading and scoring of proposals occurs. Final scores are tallied and the most qualified proposal is recommended to the WDB Executive Committee and the full board for funding. After WDB approval, a formal recommendation for funding is presented to the Board of Supervisors by the Director.

The two main procurements conducted by the Imperial County WDB are Adult Training Services and Youth Services. Contracts awarded for Adult Training services are for a period of one year. Contract awards for Youth services are generally for a period of three years. All contracts are eligible for a two-year extension contingent on available funding and the successful completion of established performance outcomes. AJCC/One-Stop Operator services are also competitively procured. For procurement of specialized services, the WDB utilizes a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) format. The review process is similar to that utilized for RFPs.

How the Local Board Fulfills the Duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider or Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers
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The responsibilities of the AJCC/One-Stop Operator (OSO) are met by a competitively procured contractor, while Imperial County WDB fulfills the role of the career services provider for the Title I WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

AJCC/One-Stop Operator

The Imperial County WDB has competitively procured and selected ProPath, Inc. as the OSO. ProPath, Inc. has forty years of experience managing and operating workforce development programs and now functions as the OSO for several of California's local workforce development areas. The role of the AJCC Operator is to:

- Convene to one-stop partners in regular meetings;
- Coordinate the service delivery of required AJCC partners and service providers;
- Ensure the implementation of partner responsibilities and contributions agreed upon in the MOU;
- Provide reports regarding operations, performance, and continuous improvement recommendations;
- Assist with the implementation of policies established by the WDB; and
- Adhere to all applicable federal and state guidance.

Career Services Provider

With state approval, the Imperial County WDB directly provides career services for the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The WDB has functioned in this capacity for more than twenty years throughout the operation of local workforce programs under the Workforce Investment Act and, subsequently, WIOA. In 2021, the WDB submitted an application to the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) requesting approval to continue to operate as the career services provider, which was officially approved in March 2022. The application highlights unique experience and qualifications of the WDB, including staff skills and abilities; resources as a county agency; and a broad spectrum of partnerships that include dozens of public, private, and non-profit organizations throughout Imperial County.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2021 - 2024

Based on discussions held throughout the process used to develop the original PY 21-24 Local Plan, the following topics were identified as priorities for further exploration, development, and/or enhancement as the Imperial County WDB and the partners implement the Local Plan.

Major themes, as discussed in the Introduction to this Plan, are those with a broad scope. The WDB and stakeholders identified the following major themes in connection with the implementation of this Plan:

- Develop and offer training for emerging industries, including manufacturing, information and communications technology, logistics and transportation, and lithium and other rare mineral extraction.
- Identify strategies to increase digital access and equity for thousands of County residents who lack hardware, internet access, and technology skills.
- Support consolidated planning in an effort to increase economic and workforce opportunities throughout Imperial County
- Identify opportunities for increased resource sharing and reduction in duplication of effort among workforce system partners and stakeholders.

Other workforce strategies and issues that stakeholders have suggested the WDB and partners examine and evaluate include the following:

- Develop strategies that directly target the needs of small businesses. These should address support for hiring, onboarding, and training of new staff, along with the upskilling needs of current employees.
- Consider the likelihood that the global adoption of work-at-home strategies may create opportunities for Imperial County residents to secure employment with companies based in the Bay Area, on the east coast, or across the Pacific. Given the types of jobs most likely to create these opportunities for local workers, developing a plan to train job seekers in skills that would make them desirable candidates for these positions is a top priority.
- Expand the availability of “soft skills” training for workers and develop a unified strategy for teaching job applicants how to market their “work appropriate” attitudes and behaviors to businesses seeking qualified candidates for employment.
- Examine the various efforts being used throughout the valley to market employment, hiring, and skills development-related services to businesses. Consider opportunities to connect these efforts and possibilities to share in customer outreach.

- Through joint efforts of workforce system partners and community stakeholders, identify realistic and achievable approaches to increase engagement with underserved and vulnerable populations.
- Examine various alternative approaches to English language skills instruction, such as contextualizing instruction within vocational training programs and offering employment-focused, stackable training.
- Create a plan for maintaining current virtual service strategies and offering them in tandem with traditional in-person services as part of a sustained hybrid service delivery system.
- Working with system partners and community stakeholders, develop a comprehensive online directory of services that would address the information needs of providers, businesses, and job seekers throughout the county.

Progress has been made on several of the foregoing priorities. All remain relevant and will continue to be a focus of the local workforce development system during the remainder of the PY 21-24 planning period.

During the development of the 2023 Modification to the PY 21-24 Local Plan, the WDB again engaged the community and stakeholders in discussions on workforce system priorities. Many individuals provided input that priorities identified when the original PY 21-24 Local Plan was developed. The engagement process implemented to support the Plan's biennial update revealed the following additional workforce priorities.

- To increase the focus of the workforce system on growth industries and other promising the sectors, the WDB and the workforce system partners should consider establishing business-led sector partnerships to guide the development of strategies to train and recruit candidates.
- Utilizing information from sector partnerships and other forms of engagement with business leaders, the WDB should establish a structured process for communicating information to the community college, adult education, and community-based training providers on the skills needs of employers.
- The workforce system partners should develop a plan to collaborate with equity-focused community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure the county's most vulnerable populations have access to career services, training, and a wide range of support.
- The WDB, AJCCs, and the system partners should collaborate with school-based family resource centers to expand outreach efforts.

- The WDB should formalize partnerships with public and private mental health organizations to ensure that customers have access to support they need to succeed in workforce preparation, job search, and in the workplace.
- Given the extensive impact of the pandemic on workers and job seekers, the WDB should lead an effort to provide training for AJCC staff and the workforce system partners in trauma-informed services and strategies.
- The WDB should implement a process to provide training on workforce development programs and services to CBOs so that they can better serve as “community on-ramps” to WIOA and the full range of one-stop partner services.
- The WDB is in a unique position to gather and broadcast information on jobs and should consider developing a specialized website to communicate job opportunities available throughout the valley.
- The workforce system partners should examine opportunities to streamline access to and application for all workforce programs.
- Given the range of business development opportunities that are emerging in the wake of the pandemic, the WDB should work with system partners to develop services that support entrepreneurship.
- The WDB’s business services staff should develop information and training for businesses on strategies for effectively managing a multi-generational workforce.
- The workforce system partners should collaborate on the development of uniform messaging regarding the workplace abilities of person with disabilities.

The following Items are included as part of the Local Plan.

Attachment 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

Attachment 2: Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Local Plan

Attachment 3: Signature Page

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

To facilitate the engagement of stakeholders in planning for the local workforce development delivery system and in the development of the original PY 2021-24 Local Plan, the Imperial County WDB hosted two community and stakeholder forums focused on topics affecting strategies and services across the system. These forums included:

Vision for the Local Workforce System: How can workforce system partners and other stakeholders create a system that is more equitable, accessible, and effective?

This forum was held via Zoom on February 3, 2021.

Improving Workforce System Services: How can workforce system services be made more effective and relevant for all customers, including vulnerable populations that have been underserved by traditional programs?

This forum was held via Zoom on February 17, 2021.

In addition, a planning discussion centered on “vision” was held with the members of the Workforce Development Board during their meeting on January 20, 2021.

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	EDD	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Department of Rehabilitation	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Central Union High School	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process
Email	Imperial Valley College	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Public Administrators Area on Aging	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Center for Employment Training	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Housing Authority	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Department of Social Services	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.

Email	Campeños Unidos, Inc.	-Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Food Bank	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Office of Education	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Probation	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	El Centro Chamber of Commerce	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Sister Evelyn Mourey Center	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Woman Haven (A Center for Family Solutions)	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	San Diego State University	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Child Support Services	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Catholic Charities	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Consulado de Mexico	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Behavioral Health Services	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Towards Maximum Independence	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP)	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	San Diego Regional Center	-Attended forums -Participated in 1-to-1 discussions with WDB	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Access to Independence	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Servpro	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.

During the development of the biennial update to the Local Plan, Imperial County WDB hosted a community and stakeholder forum on “Economic Recovery and the Role of the Workforce System.” This forum was held in-person on January 26, 2023 in El Centro.

A second forum, conducted online via Zoom, was held on February 2, 2023. This session focused on “Strengthening Community Partnerships.”

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	EDD	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Department of Rehabilitation	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Central Union High School	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley College	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
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Email	Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP)	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	San Diego Regional Center	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.

Email	Access to Independence	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	San Diego State University Imperial Valley Campus	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Veteran Services	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Learning Institute of Southern California	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	American Beauty Academy	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Imperial County Public Health Department	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	Options for All	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	IBEW Local 569	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.
Email	CalEnergy	-Attended forums	Engaged in planning process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT DISAGREE WITH THE 2023 BIENNIAL MODIFICATION TO THE PY 21-24 LOCAL PLAN
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1.	<i>From:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Comment:</i>		

2.	<i>From:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Comment:</i>		

SIGNATURE PAGE

The signatures on the following pages represent approval of the Local Plan by Imperial County Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Official for the Imperial County Local Workforce Area.

For the **Imperial County Workforce Development Board**:

Jason Jackson, Chair

For the **Imperial County Workforce Development Area**:

Ryan E. Kelley, Chair



Imperial County Local Plan

The Imperial County Workforce Development Board approves the Imperial County plan for submission to the state.

Signature

Jason Jackson

Workforce Development Board Chair

Name

Role

Date



Imperial County Local Plan

The Imperial County Board of Supervisors approves the Imperial County plan for submission to the state.

Signature

Ryan E. Kelley Imperial County Board of Supervisors Chair

Name

Role

Date

**Imperial County Workforce Development Board
Action Agenda Item 5**

MEETING DATE: March 22, 2023

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Discussion/Action to approve Two-Year Modification to the
PY21-24 Southern Border Regional Plan

BACKGROUND:

On April 21, 2021, the ICWDB approved the PY2021-2024 Regional Workforce Development Plan, which consists of Imperial (Imperial County Workforce Development Board) and San Diego Counties (San Diego Workforce Partnership). As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a two-year modification to the Regional Plan must be completed. The Local and Regional Plans are designed to support the State Plan. The Regional Plan follows the outline provided by the State.

Regional Plan Content

The Regional Plan addresses:

- How the Workforce Partnership communicates industry workforce needs to training partners is a major section of the Regional Plan.
- The Regional Plan delineates what policies are in place to support equity and improve job quality.
- How San Diego and Imperial work together for shared target populations such as veterans, youth, immigrants and refugees, and justice involved is provided.
- It considers what methods can be employed to collect and analyze metrics and the issues surrounding that activity.
- It addresses how the Region communicates shared sector pathways and priority sectors to regional employers.
- Identifying High Road Workforce system pieces such as an agreed on definition of job quality and how the Counties work together to think about targeted service strategies is also covered in the Plan.
- Finally, how the Region can align the workforce system and consider equity and economic justice within the context of each very disparate County is discussed.

Per the state directive, Plan Modifications must be submitted by USB flash drive to the California Workforce Development Board no later than Friday, March 31, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

Imperial County Workforce Development Board and San Diego Workforce Partnership

Southern Border Region Plan

Contact: Melanie Hitchcock, 619-228-2944
melaniehitchcock@workforce.org

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Background

The Southern Border Region (SBR) is a large and diverse geographic area located at the border with Mexico. Many diverse subregions comprise the Region providing myriad economic opportunities as well as unique challenges for the workforce system to support the disparate needs both of businesses and residents. Our regional plan was established in 2016 in conjunction with our partners and developed three strategic priorities that addressed engaging businesses, career pathway development and human-centered service design. Since then, the SBR has been doing extensive work to better understand the evolving needs of our community. The forces of technical innovation, automation and globalization have generated historical levels of wealth and prosperity, while at the same time leaving behind many of our workers, particularly the justice-involved, and their families in low-wage, low-skill jobs that do not pay family-sustaining wages. Now, as we look to the end of the economic closures due to the pandemic, the short and long-term impact to our Region will be unfolding for some time to come. What is clear is that the impact to businesses and workers has been severe in some of the largest sectors, particularly in sectors that had more traditionally low-paying jobs, such as tourism, hitting workers hard who were already struggling.

Strategy – Our Pillars

The SBR has established clarity around its goals and lasting partnerships, built out infrastructure that supports equity and jump starts the re-building process in our region. While our pillars provide a strong foundation, we must also acknowledge the reality of the current environment. Our work to date under the regional plan has provided a foundational understanding of the labor market and the equity gaps which exist through research, clear definitions of quality jobs, tested innovative strategies for true partnerships with high road employers, incorporating worker voice, and piloted person-centric service delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of marginalized populations. Additionally, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic must be considered throughout all our work. The SBR has Five Strategic Pillars. They provide structure and guidance for our work to help San Diego and Imperial County residents out of poverty to self-sustaining careers and help businesses thrive while growing the economies.

Job Quality is about simultaneously producing outstanding outcomes for businesses and their frontline workers. It recognizes that businesses thrive with a stable highly qualified workforce.

Outcome-Focused Funding centers on the efficient and effective use of resources to solve intractable social and economic problems. Understanding opportunities to braid funding and find complementary funding sources to address the needs of the whole person and their families.

Inclusive Business Growth focuses on equipping small and mid-sized businesses to compete by meeting their needs for a diverse, skilled workforce.

Population-Specific Interventions concentrates on deepening our programming which is truly differentiated and standardizing common functions in order to better respond to the needs of the community. This pillar considers how to connect programs, services, and organizations to best serve participants as a whole person.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is at the core of our work. This pillar keeps focus on policies, practices and actions for fair treatment and equitable impact and outcomes for ALL

customers, staff and stakeholders. It includes creating safe spaces and fostering a welcoming culture for people to feel valued and empowered to fully participate.

Regional Economic Analysis

The SBR recognized early on that up-to-date research was critical to the long-term success of the work. To that end, the Workforce Partnership Research Department has always included regional research as part of its mandate. The SBR has the expertise of an economist who leads his team to understand the nuances and unique identities of the individual Counties. This serves to inform the broader work of the Region while not overshadowing one or the other Counties when considering the differences between them.

Economic Overview of the Southern Border Region

When we analyze the Southern Border Region, it's important to recognize that San Diego and Imperial Counties have two vastly different economies with different needs. San Diego is the fifth most populous county in America, with 3,324,000 people; Imperial's population is 1/18th the size, with 180,580 people. San Diego has a \$267.7 billion economy; Imperial has a \$7.5 billion economy.¹ 16% of Imperial County jobs are in agriculture; 0.6% of San Diego jobs are. And while San Diego and Imperial share a border, their populations are quite distant; the closest two population centers are 90 minutes away along Highway 8.

There is wisdom in combining San Diego and Imperial Counties for the sake of regional planning, as the San Diego Workforce Partnership's research resources facilitate planning activities that serve Imperial County, but these counties do not form a unified economy, and if we aggregate labor market information across both counties together (as EDD's LMID does on its regional planning unit page), we simply won't get an accurate picture of either economy. (Insights on Imperial County especially would be lost in the aggregation process, since San Diego's larger numbers will always dominate sums and means.)

¹ Lightcast analysis based on 2022 Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis data.

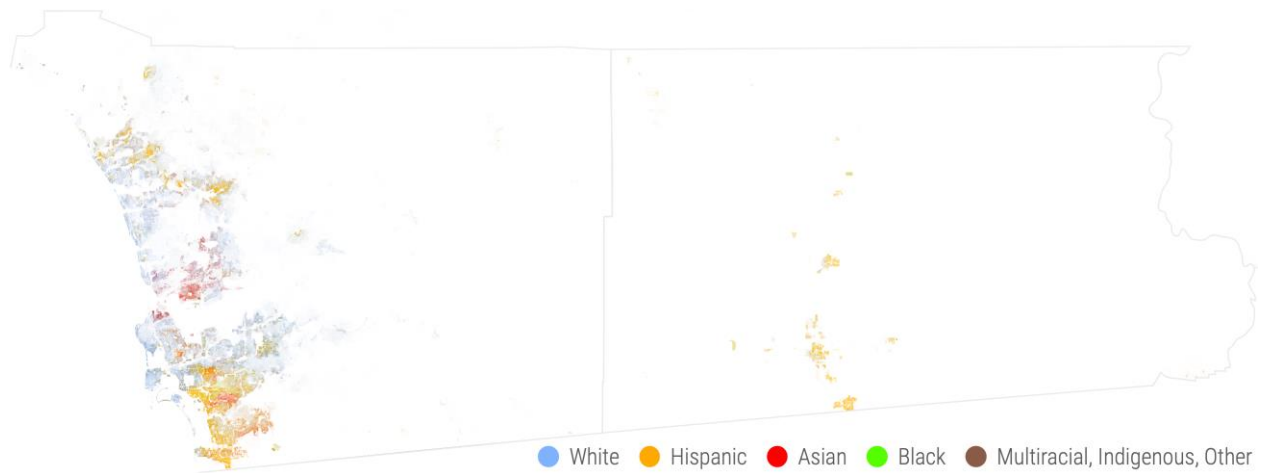


Figure 1. Map of population by race and ethnicity in the Southern Border Region as of 2010²

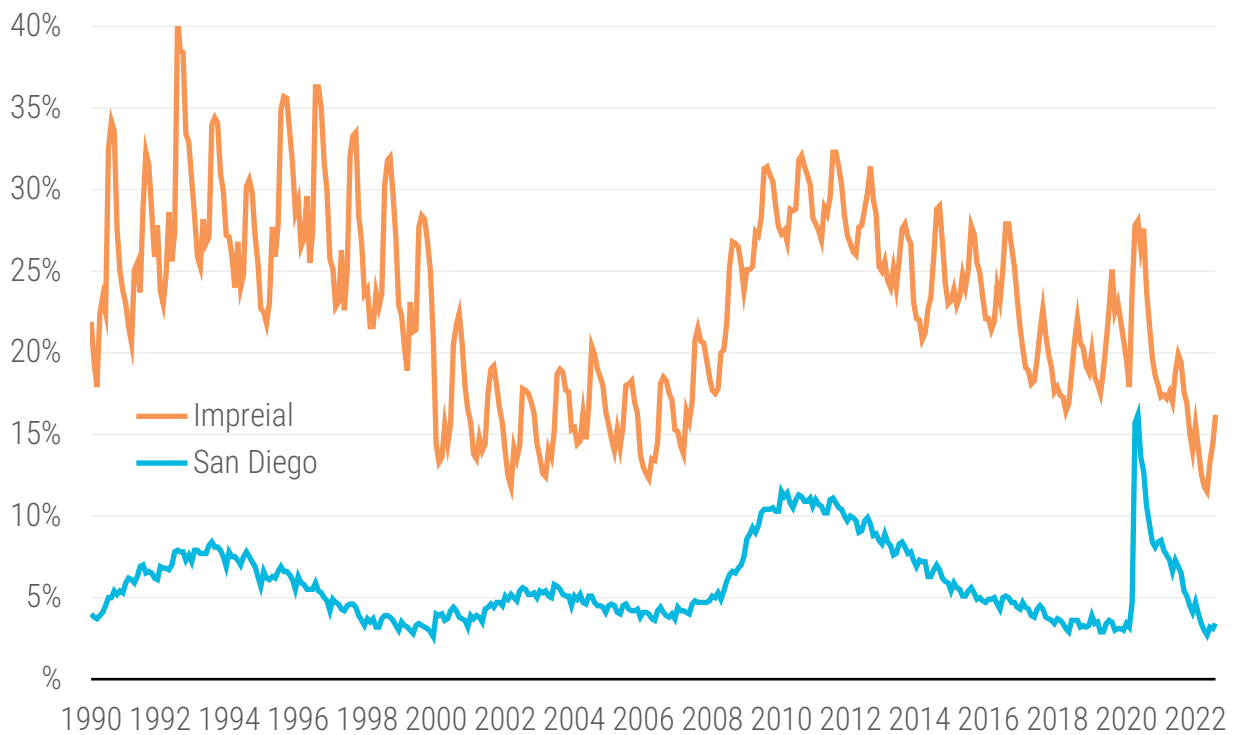
² Cable, Dustin. (2013). The Racial Dot Map. Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia. Available at <https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap>. An updated map based on 2020 Decennial Census is not yet available.

Employment Analysis

Imperial County has by far the highest rate of unemployment in California—at 16% in September, it was over twice the next highest county rate in California. Imperial also has a highly seasonal economy, with unemployment typically peaking in August. Since 1990, in a typical year the unemployment rate varies by 6.6 percentage points, with the highest rate 42% above the lowest.

By contrast San Diego's rate is below the state and national average, at 3.1% in September 2022. And San Diego's economy is significantly less seasonal, with rates varying by just 1.3 percentage points in a typical year and the highest rate being only 29% above the lowest.

Figure 2. Unemployment Rate in Imperial and San Diego Counties



San Diego's unemployment rate follows the US rate extremely closely; the rate can be very accurately predicted by multiplying the US rate by 1.4 and subtracting 1.7 points. This linear model explains over 95% of the variance in San Diego rates. By contrast the best linear model for predicting unemployment in Imperial (multiply the US rate by 1.4 and add 13.9 points) explains less than a third of the variance in local rates. In other words, employment in San Diego is a bit more pro-cyclical than in the national economy, but fundamentally it follows national trends very closely. Employment in Imperial does not follow these trends.

Figure 3. Relationship between US unemployment and local rates in Imperial and San Diego Counties over the past decade (Sep 2012–Aug 2022), excluding Apr & May 2020. Each circle represents one month.



Imperial County residents are also much more likely to experience poverty; 24% of residents live in families at or below 100% of the federal poverty line, while just 10% of San Diego County residents live at or below that level. Of course, because there are more than 18 times as many people in San Diego, there are more residents at every level of poverty.

Figure 4. 24% of Imperial residents live at or below the poverty line; 10% in San Diego do.

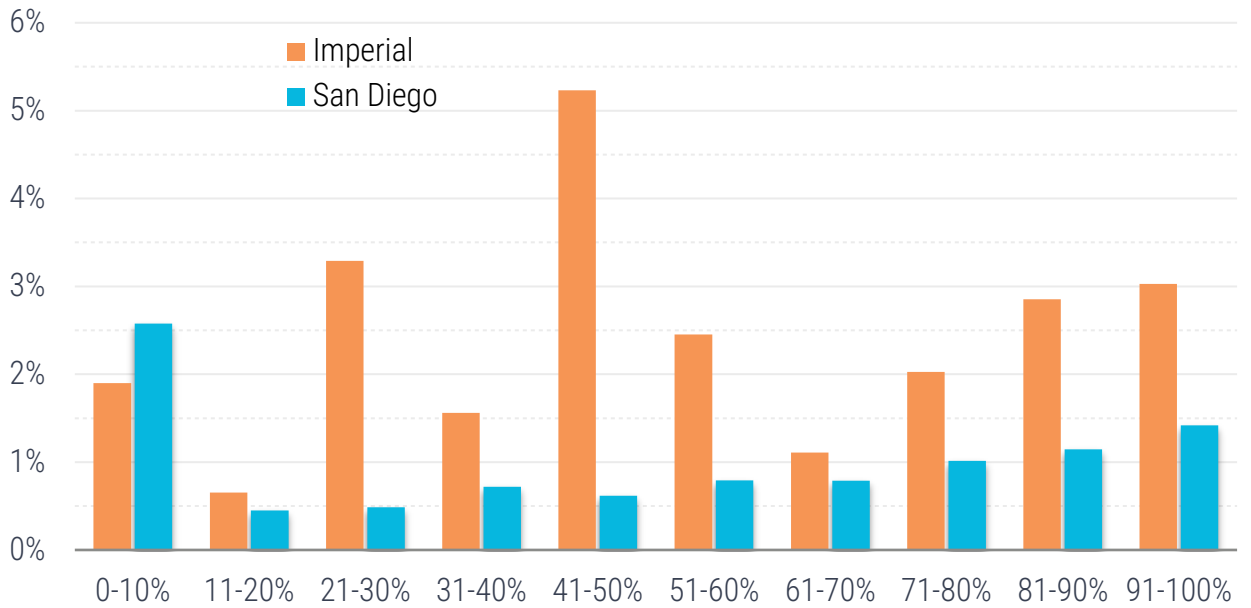
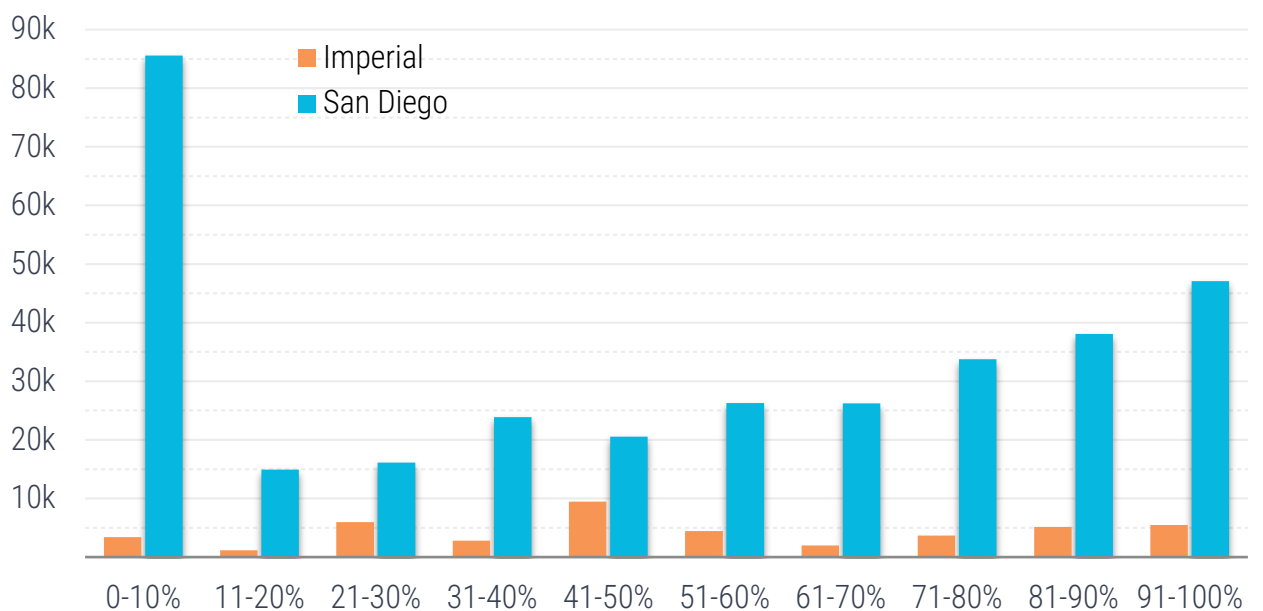


Figure 5. 44,000 Imperial residents live at or below the poverty line; 333,000 in San Diego do.



Workforce needs

The most basic need of a job seeker is employment in a quality job. The most important element of job quality we address is pay, and we focus on the “self-sufficient wage.” To identify these levels in Imperial and San Diego, we took the University of Washington’s 2021 [Self-Sufficiency standard](#) in each county for a single adult earner with no dependents, and inflated it to July 2022 levels using the local Consumer Price Index for the San Diego region. This represents the wage required for a worker to meet their own basic needs at a minimally adequate level without government assistance. The self-sufficient wage in Imperial County is \$12.96; in San Diego it is \$20.82.

Employer needs

We define employer needs simply—by the wages they are willing to pay workers. The stronger the employer’s need for labor, the more they will be willing to pay. Thus “in-demand jobs” are those that pay well.

We find that projections for future employer needs are unreliable at the moment for a number of reasons:

1. Most projections (like those of Emsi/Burning Glass) are linear extrapolations of the last few years of growth, and our recovery from the Pandemic Recession leads to exaggerated estimates of future growth.
2. Most economists believe that the Fed’s efforts to decrease inflation will result in a recession, but it is impossible to predict when that recession will come, how deep it will be, or how long it will last.
3. Most analyses fail to account for technological, political, economic, and social influences on demand for labor. Here are some examples:
 - (1) Technological advances that enable automation are improving rapidly. For example, image generation models have improved more in the past year than the previous 5 years as computational power, research attention, industry funding, and open source code have fueled development. It’s very difficult to predict which domains will experience this kind of growth, when that growth will happen, and which jobs or job tasks those technologies could change. Examples of occupations that may be disrupted by this kind of technological innovation include graphic designers (by image generation algorithms), customer service agents (by chatbots), delivery drivers (by drones or self-driving cars), and copyeditors or proofreaders (by improved grammar models).
 - (2) Political demand for climate action is likely to lead the County of San Diego and/or the state of California to mandate that all new construction uses electric rather than gas-powered appliances. A recent regional analysis by the University of California at San Diego identified pipe-fitters as an occupation likely to grow over the next five years, but the move away from natural gas in construction will likely result in shrinking demand for this occupation.
 - (3) AB257 will enable sectoral bargaining in the fast food industry, paving the way for a minimum wage in fast food jobs as high as \$22 per hour. This represents a substantial change in worker power in fast food, and will have unknown impacts on low-wage jobs across the state. Will fast food become a much more desirable and competitive industry? Will other low wage jobs raise their wages to meet the fast food minimum wage? Because sectoral bargaining is so uncommon in the US, it is extremely difficult to predict the impact of AB257.
 - (4) Reduction in stigma around mental health and substance use treatment, changes to health insurance, trends toward Telehealth, or changes in drug use patterns

(like the opioid crisis) could increase the demand on our already-stressed behavioral healthcare system.

- (5) A natural disaster, public health crisis, political upheaval, or other unexpected national, state, or local event could alter the job market. For example, mRNA innovations, medical testing infrastructure, and remote work and learning shifts catalyzed by COVID-19 altered jobs across industries.
- (6) New companies often seek explosive growth by disrupting an industry, and in doing so, can radically alter the job market within that industry. For example, ridesharing apps disrupted taxi driving—a highly regulated industry—ushering many of those workers into a more precarious employment arrangement. Of course, such disruptions are not telegraphed ahead of time and companies seeking this kind of disruption tend to be secretive about their plans to delay having to compete with other players.
- (7) Globalization has made our national economy increasingly interconnected with the economies of other nations. International actions and events (especially by big economies, like the European Union or China, or changes in conflicts, like the war in Ukraine) can have ripple effects in our economy and job market.

Education of the Workforce and Skills Gaps

It is very difficult to match employer demand for education with worker supply, for three reasons:

1. The best available data on education comes from the American Community Survey. ACS microdata, which allows us to answer complex questions like “how many unemployed individuals have a high school diploma,” is typically released at the end of the year following collection, so in a normal year we would use 2020 data in 2022. Unfortunately, data collection for the 2020 ACS was compromised by the pandemic, so the most recent reliable data is from 2019—three years ago. The ACS does not collect data on certificates earned; anything less than associate degree is likely recorded as some college but no degree—though it could also be recorded as just a high school diploma, if the respondent doesn’t think of the certificate as college coursework.
2. It is unclear how to count employer demand. Is the demand the projected number of openings over the next year? The active job postings at some given time? If the latter what time should job postings be measured? Much of employer demand, especially in Imperial County, is seasonal.
3. It is also unclear how to count worker supply. Again, are we considering all workers who experience unemployment in a year, or just the number unemployed at any given time? And if the latter, when? Unemployment has varied dramatically over the last year. Should we consider the whole population, as does Lightcast? Or just unemployed workers? What about workers who are out of the labor force?
4. If there are enough workers with an associate degree to meet employer demand, does that really mean there aren’t skill gaps? A hospital looking for a radiological technologist with an associate degree can’t hire a worker if their associate degree is in French literature. We are not aware of any data that would give us an estimate of the number of people in a region with specific degrees that match the education requirements of employers.

We chose to define employer demand as the number of projected annual openings in a year. We defined worker supply as the number of people with a given level of education who were unemployed while responding to the 2019 ACS (which was collected throughout the 2019 calendar year). We combined employers’ “certificate” and “some college” education requirements.

This is a good-faith attempt to understand the skills gap. While it's difficult to interpret the results, perhaps they can shed some light via comparison within counties. Figure 13 shows that among unemployed workers in Imperial, there are twice as many individuals without a high school diploma as there are with one. And while there are more openings in priority occupations requiring no formal education than in those requiring a high school diploma, there is a comparative shortage of high-school-educated workers. Figure 14 shows that in San Diego there are almost as many unemployed individuals without a high school diploma as with one, but there are less than one ninth as many openings for individuals without a high school diploma.

Figure 6. Demand and supply for workers by education in Imperial County

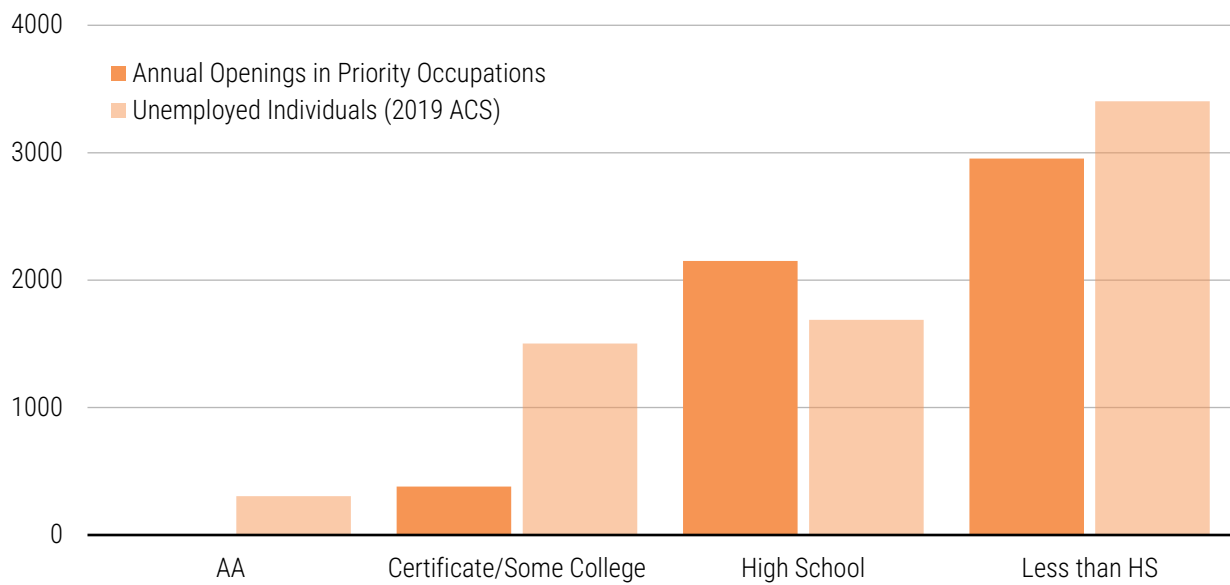
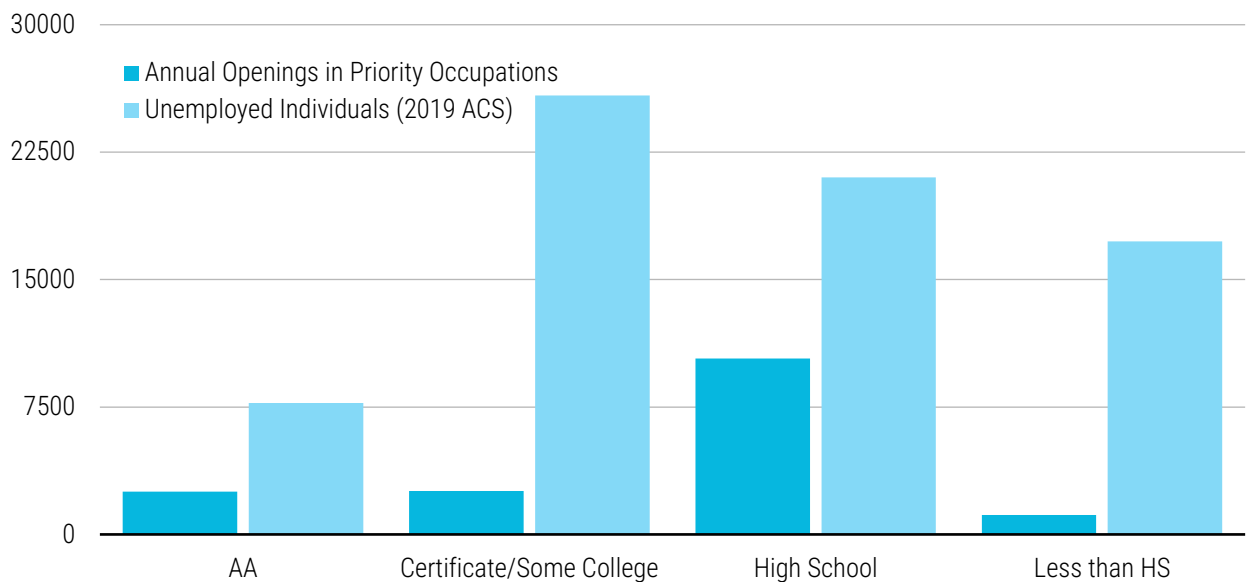


Figure 7. Demand and supply for workers by education in San Diego County



Regional Indicators

The SBR leadership has determined that the indicators: 1) Communicate Workforce Needs to Supply-side Partners; 2) Region Has Policies Supporting Equity and Strives to Improve Job Quality; and, 3) Region Has Shared Target Populations of Emphasis made the most sense for the Region. While it is unrealistic to consider sharing participants other than virtual training in light of the geographic distance, the SBR does employ numerous online tools for frontline staff and participants to use in both Counties. The SBR has however invested a great deal of research and infrastructure development that the Counties can share to advantage their participants and employers. With respect to the fourth Indicator: Region Deploys Shared/Pooled Resources to Provide Services, Training, and Education to Meet the Target Population's Needs, it is unrealistic for the Region to integrate career center services across Counties considering the distance between the population centers. However, understanding the nuances of job quality, engaging new employers and bringing new partners into the network continue to be a regional priority, to enhance the systems within each County.

Process to Communicate Industry Workforce Needs to Supply-side Partners

The work through the regional grants such as High Roads Construction Careers and the various healthcare and information and communication technology sector programming engages both employers, service delivery partners and training providers. This work includes partners like the San Diego and Imperial County Community College District (SDICCCA) and the San Diego and Imperial Labor Council bringing the value outcomes to the entire Region. This programming is designed to address skilled talent shortages in high-demand occupations within priority sectors. By engaging employers at the start of the process up front, vetted opportunities are created for job seekers that align with the needs of the employers. Communication and programming are also made more sustainable by braiding private/public funding. Additionally, the focused work with Community Colleges in San Diego County provides additional engagement with their employer partners bringing career center and mobile career service options to their students as well as increasing the connection to a broader swath of employers. Finally, through the Talent

Pipeline Management (TPM) framework discussed later, employers engage in various initiatives that include supply-side and other workforce partners.

Policies Supporting Equity and Strives to Improve Job Quality

To reach equality of opportunity those practices, systems and policies that have enabled, perpetuated or failed to reverse the trend of growing inequality of opportunity must give way to a new way of thinking about workforce and economic development. As a region, we continue to make changes to our systems and partnerships so that education and training become a lifelong practice and access to networks, resources and knowledge is available to all. Our five pillars keep focus on our work around quality jobs, worker voice, guiding workers and employers toward sustainable career pathways, and expanding our work with specific populations. To further enhance the system, the boards in the Southern Border Region have adopted the core values of Equity and Inclusion:

- Equity – The proactive assessment and implementation of policies, practices, behaviors, and actions that result in access to opportunities, fair treatment and equitable impact and outcomes for ALL customers, staff, and stakeholders
- Inclusion – To create safe spaces that foster a culture where everyone feels welcomed, seen, respected, supported, valued, and empowered to fully participate

Furthermore, the Region has adopted the Listen Learn Act framework to continue improving the equity work. The Listen Learn Act framework centers BIPOC voices and enables all three focus areas to receive appropriate attention. The internal staff, community and especially program participants, as well as our partners in business, will have input through this framework to create a holistic approach to equity and inclusion. While each Board will approach the framework in a way that best serves their County, the commitment to the process will spotlight strategy and policy toward improvements.

Region's Shared Target Populations

From a service delivery perspective, we continue to focus on population specific interventions, as outlined in our strategic pillars. We have even more experience and believe the best way to support special populations is through adapted versions of the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model. The success of the IPS model with individuals dealing with mental health issues has been widely documented. What is even more promising is that the model is showing to be effective with other population groups such as homeless, at-risk of homelessness, CalWORKs recipients, justice-involved individuals and individuals with physical or mental challenges that result in long term unemployment and SSI stipends.

Adult education programs also align their programming with the IPS model. As targeted populations often suffer from trauma and have experience with multiple barriers (i.e.: justice-involved & homelessness), we continue to believe that by incorporating a model that focusses on mental health supports, we will address deep and systemic barriers to ensure long-term engagement of services. The IPS Model is a Team Based approach that targets competitive employment opportunities. In order to achieve success, the employment specialist works in tandem with the community stakeholders which are assisting in housing, mental health, food and clothing. The team comes together at set times to discuss each case in order to eliminate barriers, provide support and achieve rapid movements to stability. Bringing together the right combination of support is key. The IPS Model allows participants to receive services based on

their current need and provides help in an environment of their choice. Specialists meet with the participant in a location and at a time that is convenient for the participant.

During the pandemic, we have been able to meet the need for frequent virtual touch points. The IPS Model can have far reaching effects when executed properly. Stability for participants is key and the Model takes into account the other factors that may be barriers to stability.

One of the key employment elements of the Model ensures that there is not an assumption that the first job a person receives will be the last job. This relieves the stress and sense of hopelessness and failure that may arise from a wrong fit in employment. The specialist works with the employee and employer to provide a bridge and advocate for both. Implementation of the IPS Model: the SBR can use the IPS Model for all targeted population individuals who have indicated their desire to work. As a rapid employment model, the IPS Model has a goal of getting an individual to a face to face (this can be virtual) meeting with an employer within 30 days of the time that they identify as willing to work.

Once the participant is interested in employment, specialists engage in the following:

- Work one on one with the participant to determine suitable types of work based on current skills, interests, barriers and strengths to develop an individualized employment plan
- Offer counseling with regard to public benefits, since the potential loss of benefits upon getting a job can sometimes serve as a disincentive to seeking employment
- Support the participant's rapid job search and placement in a competitive paid position they desire
- Offer ongoing vocational supports such as one-on-one job coaching, and on-the-job training and credentialing
- Integrate employment assistance with other supportive services to better help the individual work through employment barriers
- Continually reassess the client and provide additional support or re-placement as new barriers emerge

The IPS Employment Specialists will identify employers within the appropriate sectors and facilitate interviews. The first job may not be the right fit, so a participant may go through several jobs before stabilizing with permanent work.

The evidence based IPS Model has been used for over 25 years within clinical settings for those with mental health challenges and has high rates of success. The SBR commissioned a fidelity scale model consisting of criteria specifically designed for nonmental health settings to ensure that the program is structured and operating within evidence-based practices for the IPS Model.

We are currently focusing on five core populations: veterans, mature workers, youth, immigrant/refugees and justice-involved, as well as exploring opportunities to support immigrants and individuals with disabilities. Some highlights of current efforts are offered below:

Veterans

The Healthcare sector is engaging with veteran organizations to increase and better serve veterans in our healthcare career programming. The workforce.org/MyNextMove tool will also include a veteran-specific resource page that connects our tools and strategies to their unique experience. We hope to release the updates including these resources in 2023.

Youth

Guiding young adults ages 16–24 on a path to success through skill building, education, social capital, and job-based experiences is a key part of our work. The Southern Border’s goal is to reduce the rate of disconnection in San Diego and Imperial Counties, especially in those neighborhoods where the gap is the greatest. Last year there were 42,000 16 to 24-year-olds in the SBR who were neither in school nor employed. Our Region's research on Opportunity Youth is crucial to guiding interventions that prioritize development of the young workforce, creating opportunities for those who are disconnected to correct course early in their working life. We have refined our focus each year of this research, focusing on different segments of disconnected youth to address the most pronounced inequities. For example, while we have observed the overall youth disconnection rate declining over the past three years, the rate in certain sub-regions has increased. The COVID-19 Pandemic has also increased youth disconnection rates for many reasons. This signals to us and our community partners that more focused effort should be placed on youth in these areas. While we will replicate our prior analyses, the data only provides a point-in-time count. We know anecdotally that non-chronic-youth may experience weeks or months of disconnection, interspersed with periods of school or work.

Immigrants and Refugees

Immigrants and refugee populations are a vital part of the Southern Border community, representing 25% of the population in San Diego and 34% in Imperial—with an additional 22% being second-generation Americans born to immigrant parents. Immigrants contribute 25% of all tax revenue in San Diego and 41% in Imperial. The Southern Border frequently tops all other California counties in refugee arrivals, with San Diego welcoming more than 40,000 refugees since 1995. The immigrant populations in the community are diverse, with large numbers of individuals coming from Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, China and Iraq. Most recently, San Diego County east county communities have experienced a significant increase in newly arrival of immigrants and refugees from eastern Europe, middle East and Afghanistan.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership participates in the Workforce Services for Refugees and Immigrants Working Group – a statewide network to support local workforce boards with best practices for refugees, strategies, planned efforts and removing barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Immigrants currently make up a significant portion of the workforce in several key industries such as agriculture, general services and manufacturing. Retail is also one of the top eight industries that these individuals are placed in shortly after arrival and hospitality is among the top three. Nationally, immigrants make up nearly 1 in 3 hotel workers and a quarter of food service workers; rates are even higher in California. Many skilled immigrants—those with credentials and degrees from their home country—are often placed in low wage jobs within these industries due to either delays in or lack of support to convert a credential from a home country to the US equivalent. Lack of a quality job places a great strain on the immigrant and their family and often requires newcomers to leverage social services despite their years of knowledge and experience. In a dynamic American economy where more than 70% of jobs require some type of post-secondary credential, the SBR believes it is not only critical to help foreign-born workers strengthen their English skills and earn industry-recognized credentials but more importantly, to help those who already have credentials understand how to navigate US system to set

immigrant families on a path to economic mobility through quality jobs connections to high road employers.

As we continue to refine our online delivery mechanisms, the system will also be able to collect robust data on specific areas such as English language acquisition, digital skills and digital literacy through identification of online engagement with the curriculum and follow-on case manager connections for those who choose to do so. This will help us expand our programming for these particularly important areas to better serve our immigrant customers region wide and do so in a way that is relevant for each County individually.

Mature Workers

Many Americans are working well past the traditional retirement age of 65, into their 70s and 80s. Over the coming decade, workers 55 years and older will be the fastest growing segment of the workforce, gifting our communities with the opportunity to learn and grow from their years of professional experience. In the Southern Border Region, we know that everyone deserves an opportunity to achieve meaningful employment, regardless of age, zip code, background or anything else. By leaving a key talent pool behind we leave valuable skills on the table, which hurts businesses and the economy. The San Diego Workforce Partnership piloted a program for Mature Workers that produced valuable learning such as mature workers bring experience they want to use not start as an intern. The SBR has identified that a multi-pronged approach is required to pilot employment assistance to mature workers to reduce the gap and barriers for them to thrive in the workforce.

Justice-Involved

The SBR, San Diego County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's), San Diego County Probation (Probation), and Imperial County WDB are the primary partners that aim to expand our impact on reducing recidivism and improve education and employment outcomes among justice-involved youth and adults. The Prison2Employment (P2E) Initiative has greatly contributed to our ability to serve this targeted population through *Reentry Works*. Reentry Works is not just a singular program, but our overall strategy to invest and innovate in, evidence-based solutions to best serve the justice-involved population. To achieve the Prison to Employment performance outcomes, Employment Specialists provide intensive services via the IPS model. The IPS Model is a team-based approach that targets competitive employment opportunities. To achieve success, the Employment Specialists work in tandem with the community stakeholders which are assisting in housing, mental health, food, and clothing. The Employment Specialist's provide both pre-release case management and work readiness services, and post-release transition and job placement services. This is a unique aspect of our program design in that our pre-release and post-release staff serving participants in jail-based and community-based settings are the same, offering consistency and continuity for our clients. It eliminates the challenging handoff process of different case managers from before to after release. More importantly, the time invested in building quality relationships between staff and participants leads to strong connections to support the challenges of reentry participants in the employment process. It also serves to transition participants from learning about career services to discussing their barriers to employment, leveraging the bond with staff to ease into an often difficult and sensitive subject area. *We know that change is driven by trusting relationships. Employment Specialists staff build relationships with participants based on mutual respect, creating safe, comfortable environments to prepare for/succeed in reentry.*

Since 2015, Reentry Works has:

- Provided employment services to 1,700+ participants
- Facilitated 250 Job-Readiness Workshops
- 50% Employment Placement Rate
- 18%³ recidivism rate compared to State of CA average of 50%

Reentry Works Guiding Principles

1. Change is driven by trusting relationships. This includes partnerships across supporting organizations and justice-involved individuals.
2. If organizations seek to support justice-involved individuals, the best time to reach them is before they are released from custody.
3. A job is not always the first step toward self-sufficiency.
4. If justice-involved individuals believe that all an organization cares about are achieving employment placements, they will not communicate challenges that are relevant to their path toward self-sufficiency.
5. Organizations that want to support this population need to agree on a model of service that provides justice-involved individuals experience over the organizations' operational preferences.

Program Design

The program design has been developed through evidenced based models and partner requirements. Through identifying what works best for the justice involved population in the context of the partner, Sheriff, Probation, Parole, environment and expectations provides the best opportunity for success.

Pre-Release Career Exploration & Work Readiness

Pre-release services involve training and workshops integrating employment and education planning, career discovery, resume building, interview coaching, and segment and employer targeted job fairs that integrate the cognitive behavioral approaches currently conducted by the Sheriff Counselors in the facilities. Prior to release, the specialist, Sheriff, and Probation staff will meet with the participant and set an appointment to begin post release services based on individual choice and need. This team holds meetings throughout the participants last 90 days of custody to discuss participants choices and progress which all contribute to the post-release plan. All of the following wrap-around services will be made available to participants through 1:1's with Employment Specialists via the IPS Model: job preparation, comprehensive case management, identification of barriers to employment, needs assessment, development of Participant Plan's, career exploration and planning, assistance with obtaining state identification, legal assistance (e.g., modification of child support orders, expungement proceedings, securing participant licenses, child custody assistance, and protective and restraining order assistance),

³ Recidivism Definition: defined as the percentage of participants who were re-arrested for a new crime or re-incarcerated for revocation of the parole or probation order within one year of their release from jail. If a participant is re-arrested and subsequently released without being convicted of a new crime, he/she may be taken out of the recidivism rate.

counseling, and referrals to the legal and social services required to help them transition back to their communities.

Post Release Services: Reintegration, Wrap-around Services and Rapid Employment

Upon release, the same specialist that supported the individual pre-release makes the first contact post-release. This first meeting is best within the first 48 hours of release. The post-release plan guides the meeting agenda and priority of services. Employment is not the first action step in this meeting, but rather stabilization of basic needs is prioritized. The intensive supportive services provided through P2E allows for connection to housing supports, purchase of hygiene products, and distribution of computers with hot spot accounts to remain in contact with the team of support staff. All of the subsequent meetings include some discussion of basic need supports to ensure there is continued revisiting of goals and needs to increase security.

Once the participant has been supported to address needs such as housing, sobriety counseling, probation requirements, etc., the focus of post-release meetings will shift to rapid employment. Initial employment assessment and first face to face employer contact by client or employment specialist for a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after post-release period beings. Support for the participant's rapid job search and placement in paid positions they desire.

Post Release Services: Education, Training & Employment

Participants choosing education are assessed to determine options for high school completion or equivalency, college readiness, apprenticeship and other school options. Participants receive financial coaching on how to provide for basic needs during hours of school operation. Employment tends to be more applicable and reasonable due to the need to make money, when compared to education for this target population. Participants are coached that the first placement may not be the best fit, but rather a part of the roadmap to find a better job, and then a career. Supportive services continue to be a part of the discussion during follow-ups to ensure that participants can be supported through to the first paycheck, and subsequent paychecks.

Outcomes from the previous Prison to Employment program

Supportive Services and Earn and Learn:

Enrolled - 185

Training - 22

Entered Employment - 134

Retention - 101

Implementation and Direct Services:

Enrollment - 251

Training - 23

Entered Employment - 170

Retention – 101

Additional Needs for Imperial County Justice-Involved

The highest pandemic unemployment rate recorded in San Diego was 15.2%. Imperial County's rate has been higher than that every month for the last 13 years. Moreover, Imperial's unemployment has high (and consistent) seasonal variation due to the large portion of the economy that depends on agriculture. While Imperials County's incarcerated population is much less than San Diego's, their recidivism rate is double San Diego's. Due to this need to provide employment and training services as an intervention to prevent recidivism, we will work to

establish jail-based AJCC's in Imperial County through the P2E 2.0 opportunity. Program staff, correctional staff, Imperial Workforce Board staff, CBO's and stakeholders will regularly meet to ensure the project's successful launch and positive trajectory of services through creation of a job center timeline and roadmap. We anticipate that the first 2 years of P2E 2.0 will support the planning and development of the jail based AJCC's, and 1 year of participant services.

Additional Needs for Youth Justice-Involved

In early 2023, SBR will open its third jail-based AJCC at the East Mesa Juvenile detention Facility. Cohorts of 6 Youth will receive a workshop series to identify the six essential skills-- Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Creative & Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Dependability and Resourcefulness—that apply across all sectors and are relevant at every phase of a career; and yet, employers share that they are some of the most difficult competencies to find in prospective employees. Reflecting on, setting goals around, and practicing these skills can support career readiness and growth, and can make a candidate stand out in a job interview. Justice-involved participants will be introduced to the six essential skills, identify where they excel, and start building language to speak confidently about their abilities.

Areas of Exploration

Every person's unique interests and strengths to offer the world of work. Decades of research have shown that when a person's work aligns with their interests, they experience greater career satisfaction, better job performance, and higher wages. Justice-involved Youth participants will engage with activities to get to know the six RIASEC interest themes, claim the themes that represent them, and learn to apply their themes to a job search.

Like the adult jail based AJCC's, the Employment Specialists provide both pre-release case management and work readiness services, and post-release transition and job placement services. This is a unique aspect of our program design has been shown to increase likelihood of engagement in workforce and workforce services. We plan to serve a minimum of 75 justice-involved youth with pre-and post-release services offered through co-enrollment of WIOA Youth services, and P2E 2.0.

Employer Attitudes Matter: Advocacy for Economic Equity

The SBR believes that an important part in our work to connect justice-involved individuals with employment and training opportunities is also to advocate on the interrelationship of racism in the justice system. We released an article on the Nexus of systemic racism and found linkages between criminal justice involvement and economic opportunity. The article reviews the disparities between incarceration and economic mobility, and a call to action to hire justice-involved jobseekers. In addition to our advocacy work, the SBR released a report on employers' attitudes toward hiring justice-involved workers that established the following facts:

- Most employers do hire applicants with criminal histories
- A criminal history does not predict a prospective employee's likelihood of committing crime at work
- Employees with criminal histories make significant contributions to their organizations
- Having a criminal history is not unusual among American workers
- Criminal records are biased reports of criminal behavior
- Widely used criminal background checks are unreliable

Employers cited in the report included John Hopkins University Medicine in which 20% of entry-level hires have a criminal record. A five-year study of 500 individuals found lower turnover and zero problematic terminations. In their words, hiring these workers is “not a charitable endeavor but a strategic part of the way we conduct our business.” The report has been disseminated to numerous community-based organizations and other stakeholders that are involved in working with justice-involved. The report was constructed into a presentation that included local research on racial equity gaps in San Diego conducted by our senior economist. These presentations have been widely popular with our Workforce Development meetings, County Council meetings and open to the public webinars.

The SBR is now involved in the next phase of funding to further develop the programming to include a more robust involvement from Probation on both sides of the County line. Through this expanded programming, the SBR hopes to reach more justice involved residents and support them through the transition from incarceration to career success.

Region Deploys Shared/Pooled Resources for Target Populations

The SBR employs multiple processes to ensure there are available participant resources that can be shared by staff and partner staff. One important resource is the Career Coach online tool that aids the exploration and understanding of LMI, career pathways and in-demand occupations for both Imperial and San Diego Counties. The data in this tool is supplied by Lightcast, a labor market information firm, while the regional economist and director of learning facilitate the deployment and understanding of the information. It is through the shared technology that the SBR most supports its residents. However, as the State funding has grown to include key mandated partners in regional work, the larger employer systems that provide services in both Counties is a developing means to engage target populations in the work such as justice involved and low-income families looking for career paths to self-sufficiency. To that end, the SBR is targeting healthcare and construction career programming to create a sustainable regional application of programming that will reach many target populations such as women in construction trades.

Indicators for which SBR Has Identified Metrics

The Region focused on the Indicator *Policies supporting equity that strives to improve job quality*. The Region adopted the values of Inclusion: Taking responsibility for creating a culture where everyone is welcomed, heard, valued and empowered to fully participate and reach their full potential; and Equity: Prioritizing those who have been systemically denied opportunity through policies, priorities, practices and behaviors that result in access to opportunity for ALL colleagues, customers and communities. Inevitably, focus on quality wages will encourage partner employers to continue to model quality in their staffing models. It may also serve to engage more partners with both their participants and their employer partners increasing the network and opportunities for residents of both Counties

For example, the job may not pay a quality wage, but it does offer flexible hours or family friendly benefits that make it quality for that individual. The end goal is to understand the variety and volume of quality jobs and quality employers in each County to better measure percentage of job seekers who are placed in what they consider a quality job as well as employers across the sectors recognizing the value in providing quality to their workforce.

At this time, the Performance Measures required by the Title I WIOA funding and negotiated with the California Employment Development Department, are the primary source of data and

measurement. As many have discovered throughout the state of California, collecting meaningful data outside of those required measures relevant to quality can be very challenging.

Identified Impact

The Region anticipates that focus on quality wages will encourage partner employers to continue to model quality in their staffing models. It is important however to recognize that quality varies by individual. While wage is the data that is presently collected, continuing to develop broader data collection methods to understand the intersection of individual job seeker quality definition and the job in which they are placed, will produce a more complete understanding of the percentages of quality jobs in which job seekers are placed. For example, the job may not pay a quality wage, but it does offer flexible hours or family friendly benefits that make it quality for that individual.

In San Diego, as described in the Prioritizing Employers Providing Quality Jobs Section, there is focus on high road employers to support their efforts and help them create a culture of trust and engagement. Additionally, there has been success with the Workforce Partnership business department focusing funding and other supports on businesses that pay the County's living wage or otherwise offer substantial benefits and wrap-around services to barriered communities entering the workforce. This has also moved toward a stronger negotiating position for higher salaries for job seekers served to land higher wage jobs. Moving forward, the Region will continue to study and test opportunities to engage employers around quality and develop techniques to capture actionable data.

It is important to note that the cost of living in Imperial County is much less than in San Diego County. Housing, which is a great challenge for residents to buy and rent in both areas, is much more affordable in Imperial County than in San Diego, which can be a commuting option for San Diego workforce.

In Imperial County there is a focus on upskilling and incumbent worker training that will promote upward job mobility to established employees. Additionally, there is a focus on establishing and developing new industries within the County that will provide great economic growth, not just locally but for the entire Region. This movement includes support from government, academia, and industry, which provides a strong foundation for economic growth and development of the local workforce. With this push, partnerships have been established to support local business needs as well as labor force needs, so that we can create a clear pathway to sustainable employment for the community.

Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

The SBR supports workers to move into family sustaining jobs and in turn those workers help businesses thrive and the economy grow. We recognize that families come in all different shapes and sizes and that families define themselves in many different ways. Specific focus is on 1. Postsecondary education and employment pathways, 2. Early childhood education and development, 3. Economic asset development, 4. Health and well-being, and, 5. Social Capital Throughout the Region, multiple programming and partner engagements support these efforts.

Regional Sector Pathways

Two very diverse local workforce boards comprise the SBR. However, research has shown that they share some very important sectors. Understanding those shared sectors and how residents

of both Counties can enter them and grow their careers to reach family sustaining employment has been an on-going effort in the Region.

In-demand SBR Industry Sectors or Occupations

The three sectors in common between the Imperial and San Diego Counties are Healthcare & Social Assistance, Public Administration and Administrative Support & Waste Management. In the economic analysis above, a total of 129 in-demand occupations were reported. However, there are only four priority occupations shared between the two counties, supplying 29,000 jobs (15% of all priority-occupation jobs in the region). They are Correctional Officers & Jailers, Detectives & Criminal Investigators, Sales Reps of Services (except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, & Travel) and finally Wholesale & Manufacturing (except Technical & Scientific Products). This shows how very diverse the Region is.

Combining Worker and Employer Needs to Identify Priority Occupations

To identify priority occupations where workforce development clients are likely to find quality jobs and where employers have demonstrated need, we identify those that meet all five of the following criteria:

1. There are at least 30 annual openings projected over the next five years. (Openings are calculated as net new jobs plus exits, and this number represents opportunities for workers not previously employed in an occupation to enter it.)
2. 75% of workers earn a self-sufficient wage. (The subset of occupations paying 90% of workers a self-sufficiency wage are identified as the highest-tier priority.)
3. The typical entry-level education requirement is less than a four-year degree.
4. Less than five years of work experience are required. (The government provides only three categories of work experience requirements—zero, less than five, or more than five years. While a requirement for some job experience is acceptable, five years is clearly beyond the scope of most workforce development interventions.)
5. The job description does not include any reference to supervision. (Supervisors are typically selected from among existing entry-level workers, so these careers are not viewed as accessible to our clients.)

These criteria identify 42 priority occupations in Imperial County and 87 in San Diego County. Priority occupations in Imperial County supply 35,000 jobs (54% of the county's 66,000 jobs). Priority occupations in San Diego County provide 163,000 (10% of the county's 1.6 million jobs).

Figure 8. There are 42 priority occupations in Imperial County and 87 in San Diego. Only four occupations are priorities in both counties.



Figure 9. Priority Occupations in Imperial County

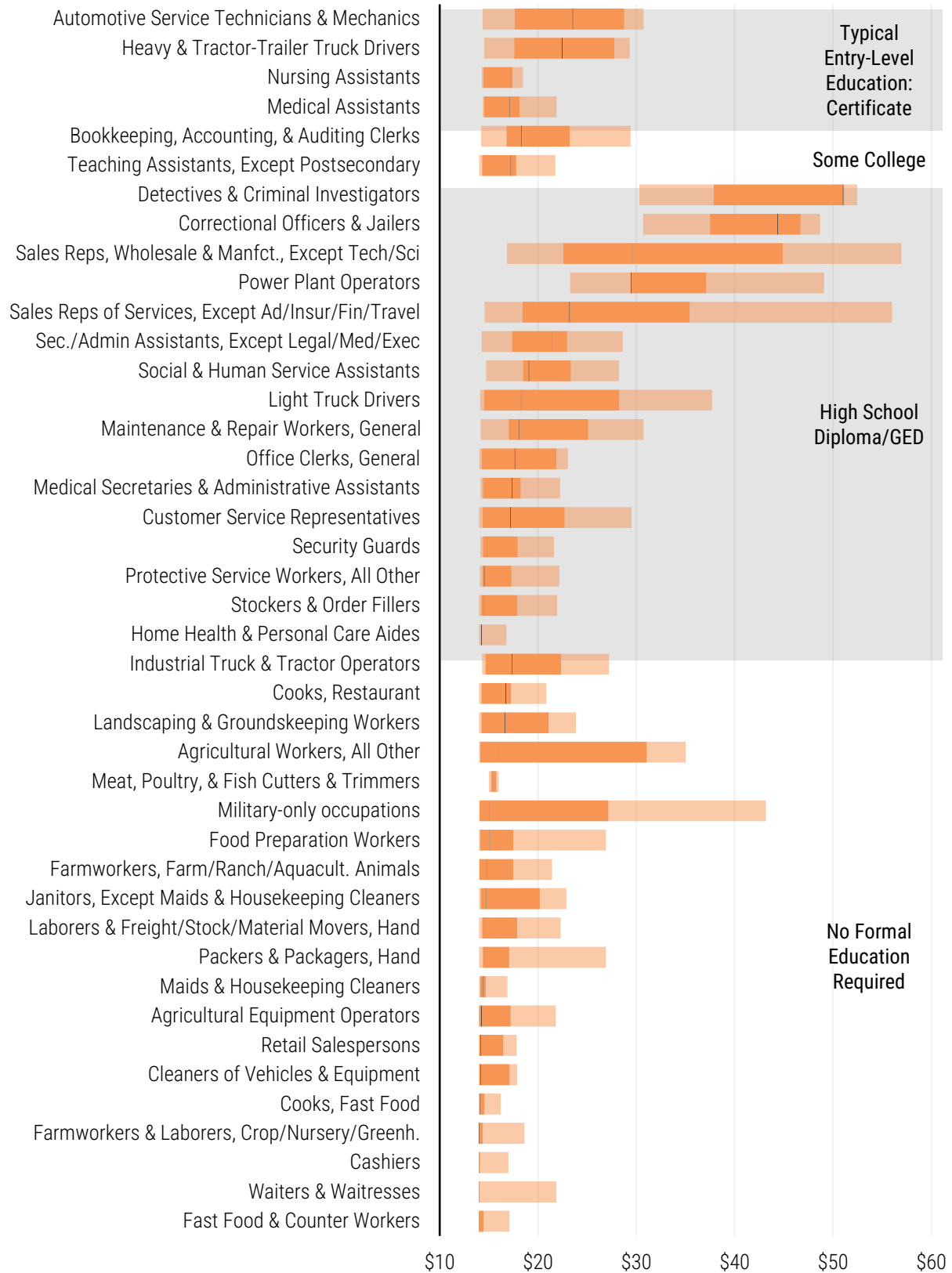


Figure 10. San Diego Priority Occupations

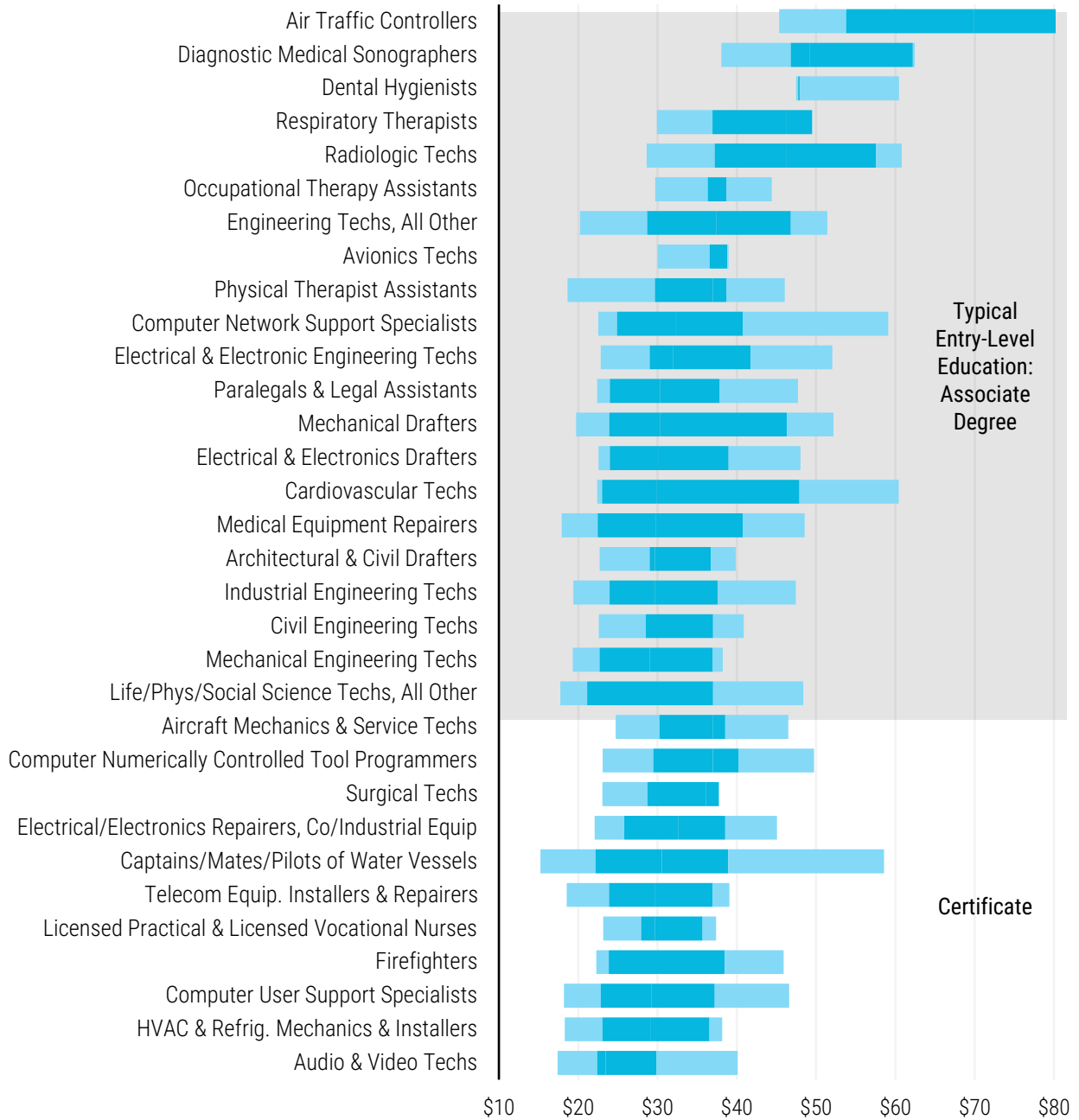


Figure 11. San Diego Priority Occupations (continued)

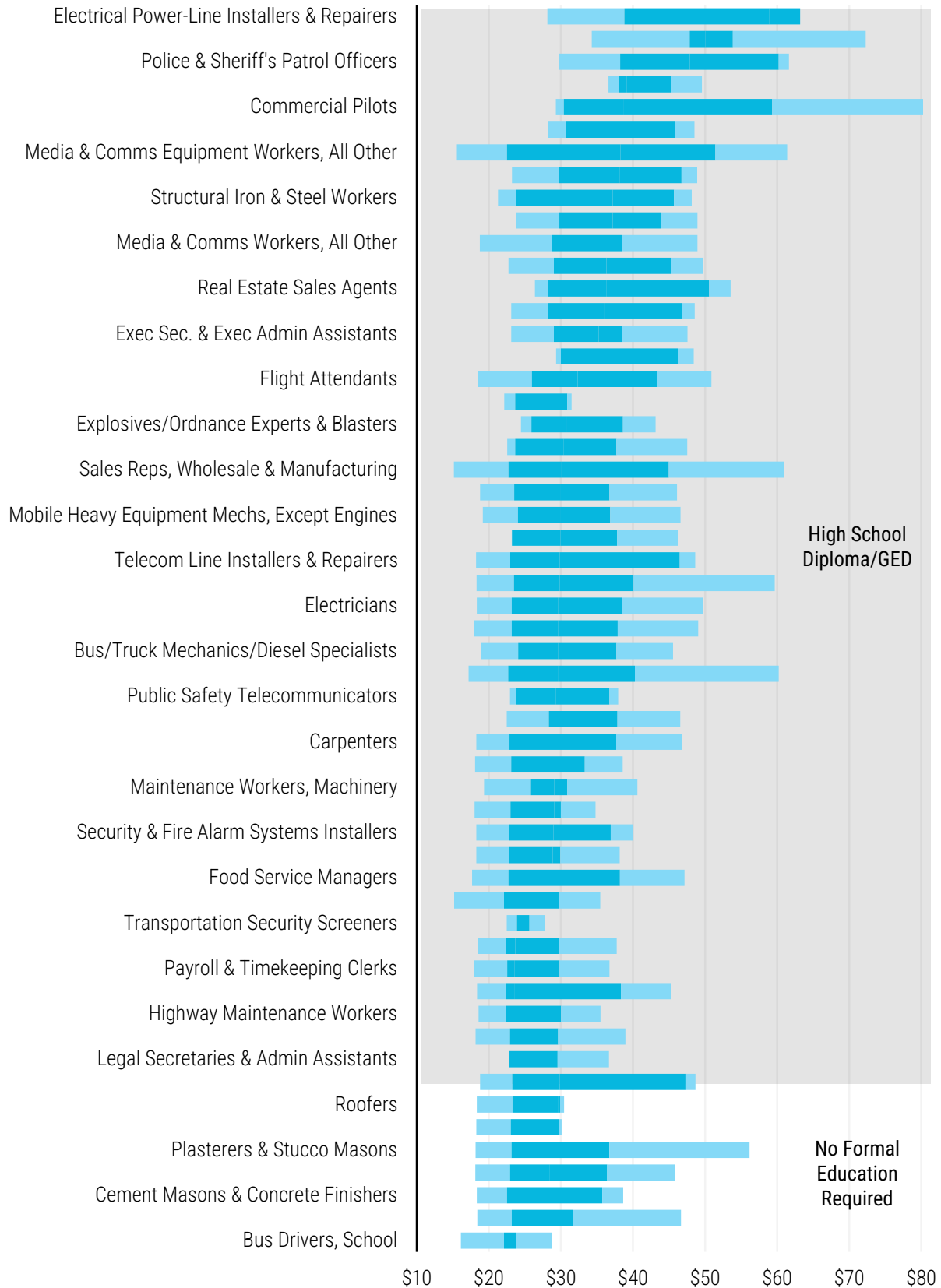


Figure 12. Imperial County Priority Jobs by Sector

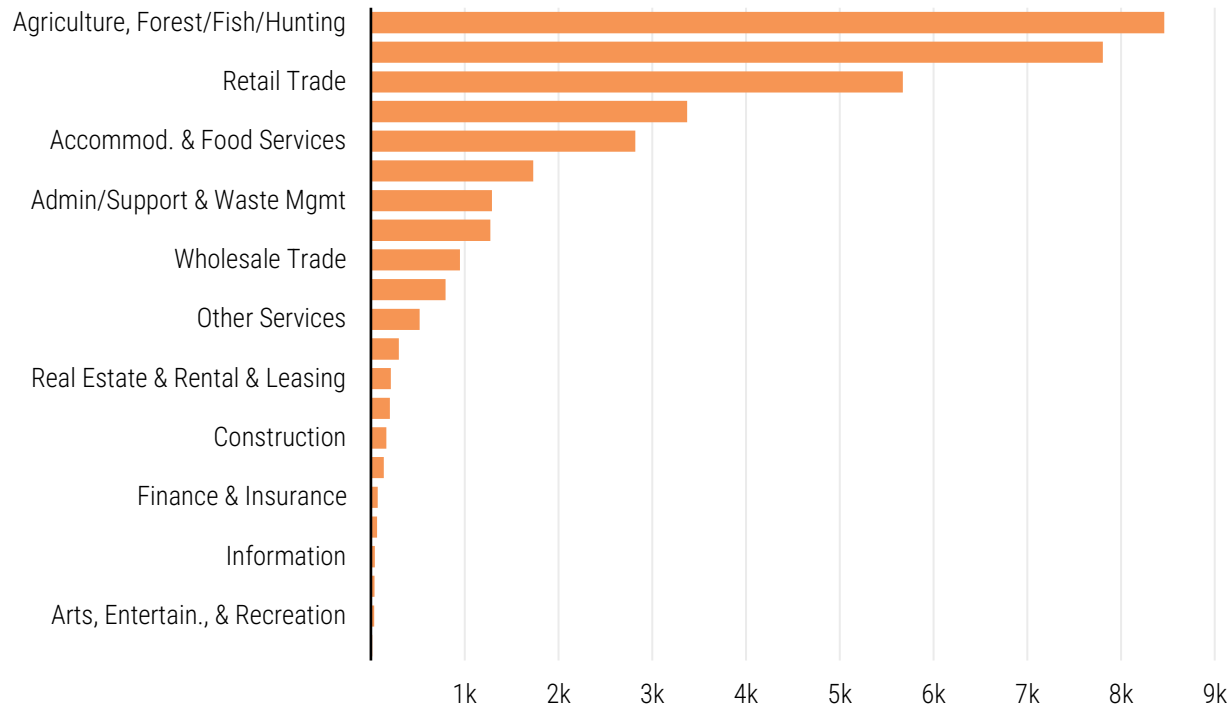
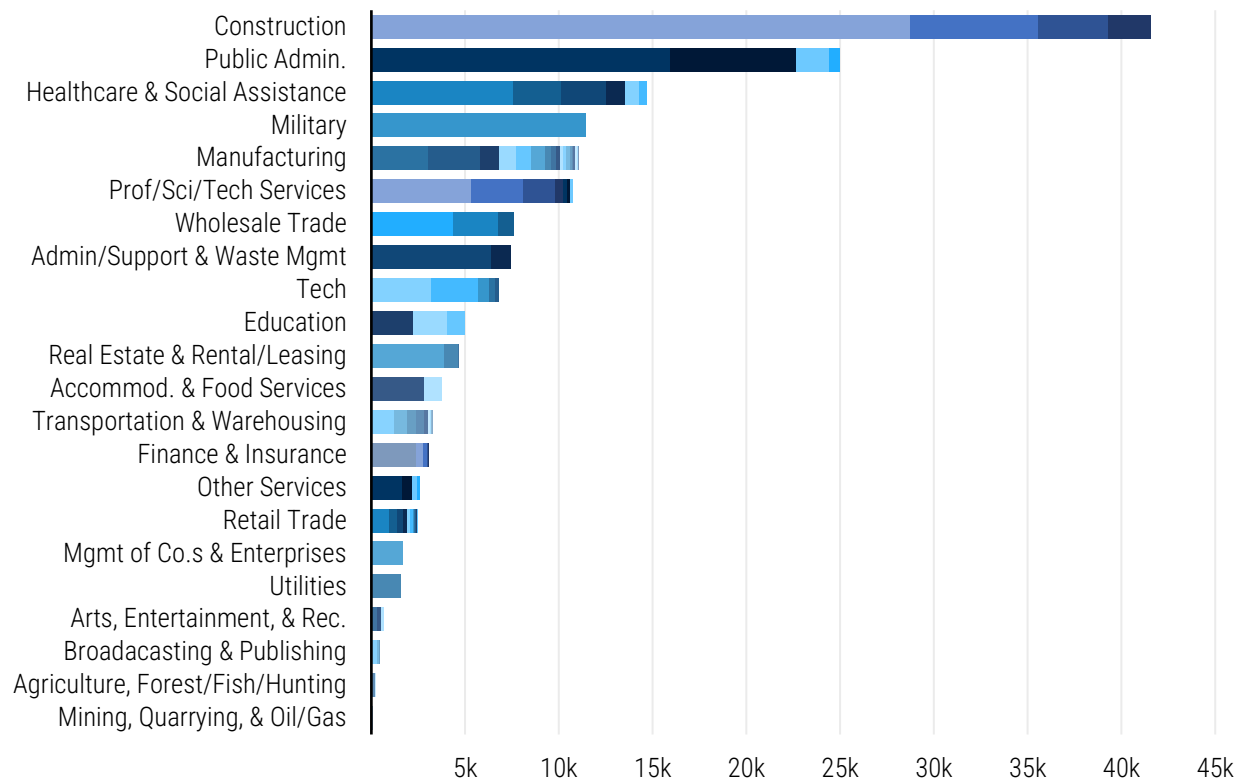


Figure 13. San Diego County Priority Jobs by Sector



As figure 12 shows, these are the sectors supplying the most priority jobs in Imperial County (each over 1,000 jobs):

1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting
2. Health Care & Social Assistance
3. Retail Trade
4. Public Administration
5. Accommodations & Food Services
6. Education
7. Administrative Support & Waste Management
8. Transportation & Warehousing

As figure 13 shows, these are the sectors supplying the most priority jobs in San Diego County (each over 5,000 jobs):

1. Construction
2. Public Administration
3. Healthcare & Social Assistance
4. Military
5. Manufacturing
6. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
7. Wholesale Trade
8. Administrative Support & Waste Management

Figure 14. Top 8 Priority sectors in Imperial and San Diego Counties



Despite only two boards comprise the SBR, there are extreme differences in their economies and their workforce. This diversity makes the Boards focus on what supports the overall area while not detracting from the individual County's needs. To reiterate, the emphasis on research and technological solutions is key. At this point, with the increased state funding that includes partner systems and cross-county employers, the work to provide services as each County's

residents needs them in a unified approach such as HRCC, will begin to bring programming solutions to the Region.

SBR Communication with Regional Employers

The SBR engages employers in both Counties and between the Counties. Through the regional high roads grants, employers are engaged with offices in both Counties. This is particularly true of construction and healthcare sectors. Through these systems level grants, supply-side and demand-side partners are engaged to provide economic and employment opportunities for the Region.

Through the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) framework, employers will engage in a nationally recognized framework established by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation and applied locally through initiatives in cities throughout the United States. It is an employer-led, demand-driven workforce process that applies supply chain management strategies to talent acquisition, reducing the skills gap and solving for skilled talent shortages. Employers play an expanded leadership role as the “end customers” of regional education and training systems by engaging in a six-step process that includes employers engaging in collaboratives and demand planning, communicate competency and credential requirements, analyze talent flows, build talent supply chains and participate in continuous improvement.

Through this process, education and training partners are made aware of the emergent needs in quality jobs and provide up to date training and education for upskilling employees or new employees. In addition to these pre-vetted training providers, space is made for engaging other industry partners providing recognized credentials like centers of excellence and other focused providers.

By beginning with employer partners who directly inform training investments and are committed to hiring from our talent pool, we will set candidates up for even greater success from the outset: with a clear pathway from career interest to training/certifications to quality jobs with employers who are eager and willing to hire from a pre-qualified pool of talent. This demand-informed approach ensures all training investments result in skilled talent that meets industry need. This initiative is aligned with the Region’s strategic pillars of Job Quality, Inclusive Business Growth, Outcomes-Focused Funding and Population Specific Interventions. It also supports the SBR’s advocacy for success metrics that are not yet part of the Workforce system but will align with outcomes and introduces a replicable model for other workforce development boards of demand-driven programming that results in greater impact.

Finally, this initiative enhances the opportunity for braided funding to promote greater flexibility in training and support to enable job seekers and employees to engage in training that provides mobility to resilient and in-demand occupations and sectors. Businesses need a combination of the Education and Training Program List (ETPL) process with access to flexible emergent training and credentials funding to recover and compete in the new and rapidly changing environment, in the post COVID 19 period.

Enabling Upward Mobility

Upward mobility requires a myriad of supports and opportunities. In addition to supports for job seekers and youth to enter and advance in pathways to self sustaining careers, focus on targeted services and support to employers to increase quality are fundamental to individual and family upward mobility.

High Road Workforce System

The SBR understands that the workforce system must have on and off ramps for employees and job seekers to change careers, find family-sustaining careers and filling immediate employment needs while supporting the unique needs of the Region's employers. In support of connecting job seekers with employers and supply-side with demand-side partners, the SBR continues to engage them at all levels including individual funding opportunities, research and larger County and partner engagement. As noted below, equity is job quality. Access to quality jobs is key to engaging traditionally barriered communities in family sustaining employment.

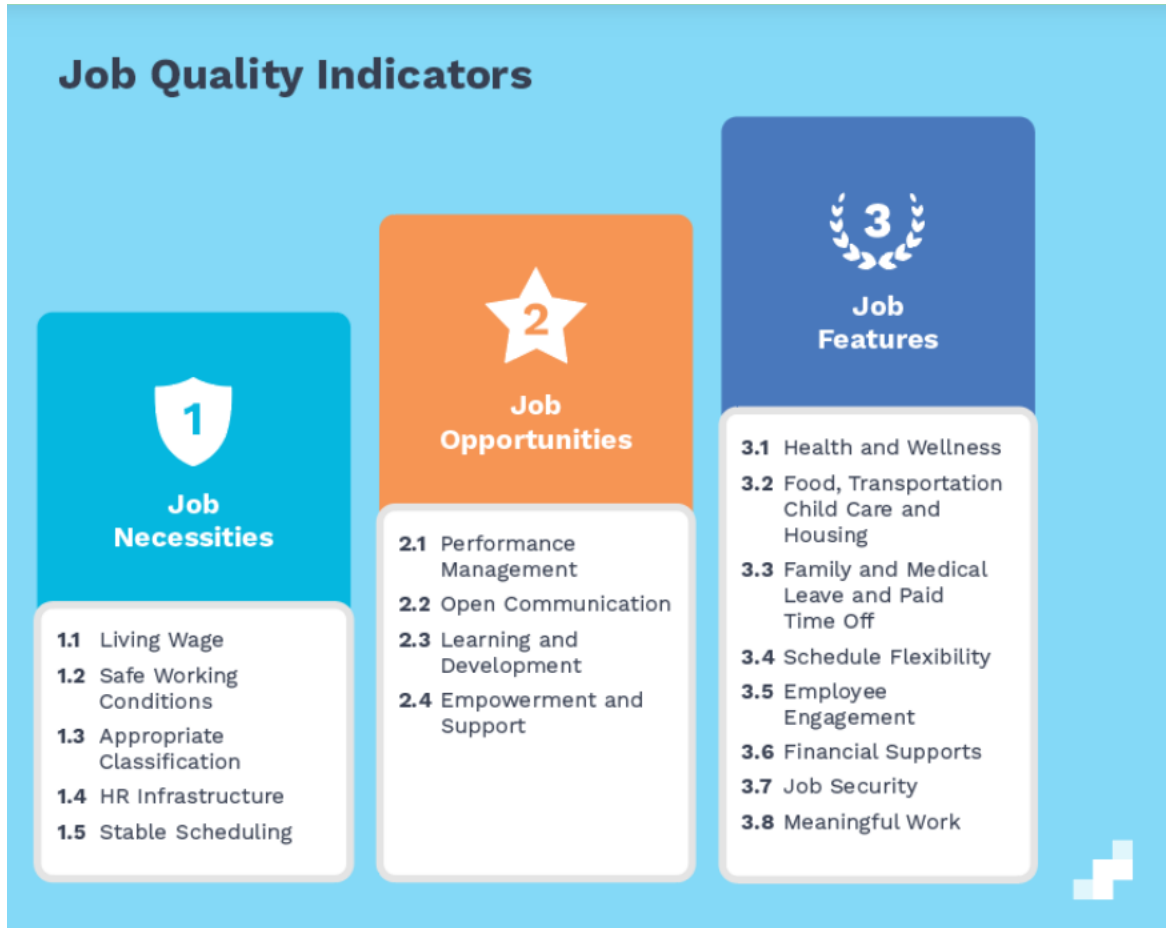
Job Quality Definition and Implementation

The region has created a job quality framework and set of indicators which inform all of our work. We believe that the path forward is to rebuild equitably and doing so requires strong infrastructure that is equipped to meet the evolving needs of both businesses and our job seekers. One important building block of equity is job quality. Efforts to improve the quality of jobs help to shift centers of power by equipping workers, paying fair wages that sustain families and providing career ladders and employee ownership opportunities.

Figure 15. Job Quality Frame work



Figure 16. Job Quality Indicators.



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The SBR believed strongly in 2021 that quality jobs are not a luxury and there has been no evidence to change that belief today. Quality jobs are not a sidebar. They are not something we can push off until after the pandemic crisis has passed. The creation, protection and elevation of quality jobs will take focus and partnerships. Quality jobs produce both outstanding outcomes for businesses and their frontline workers. The jobs not only pay well but also give workers the stability and support they need to care for their families and take the next step in their careers.

Good jobs help the business meet and exceed its bottom-line goals. The SBR had established goals that it is moving forward through virtual opportunities for customers to learn what businesses have quality jobs as the individual may define it at the time.

Prioritizing Employers Providing Quality Jobs

The SBR recognizes that the work done in one Board supports the larger Region. To that end, the Workforce Partnership's Business Engagement department teamed up with partner Talent Rewire to guide San Diego business partners on how to build a culture that fosters trust and belonging. These "high road" business partners aim to activate the voice of their frontline workers. We engaged the voices of individuals with current and previous experience in frontline employment to share their perspectives and lived experience with participating San Diego area employers. Participants in these conversations had an opportunity to engage with employers who were seeking to learn from frontline employees about how to elevate the voices and opinions of their own frontline workers.

When the pandemic hit, the Business Engagement Department worked closely with partners like One Fair Wage to implement a relief program for restaurants impacted by COVID. Restaurant owners pledged to bring their restaurant staff up to fair wages (with tips on top), and to make dishes available to low-wage workers and health-care workers on a sliding scale. In return, these restaurants received \$5,000 initial investment to put towards these goals, along with wage subsidies and other business relief resources from government and philanthropic partners.

We've made progress in recent months with "high road" employers willing to pay our county's livable wage rates of \$20+. Our department has restricted the awarding of funds to businesses that pay this wage or otherwise offer substantial benefits and wrap-around services to barriered communities entering the workforce. Through this work, we've successfully negotiated higher salaries on behalf of the job seekers we serve. Additionally, we've had an impact on 2 apprenticeship programs to raise the wages of the workers for their earn and learn models. While some small businesses are unable to afford these rates, our consulting has uncovered many other [job quality benefits](#) available to our workers such as on-site childcare, flexible work schedules and robust career pathways. Our service delivery models incorporate consulting on [job quality indicators](#) to grow the community of "high road" business partners in our network.

Regional High Road Employer

The Region is also engaging with the State funding for High Roads employment that includes High Roads Construction Careers (HRCC) and Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (RERP). These funding opportunities allows for networks of employers and providers in both counties to support training and engagement of residents in quality jobs and career paths. It also supports focus on the Region's sectors that support the most quality and long-term pathways to self-sufficiency. The RERP work will network employers in the health care sector that in some cases have a footprint in both counties. Additionally, training providers in both counties will engage in the credentialing work to support access for participants recognizing the barrier that the distance between county population centers creates.

SBR Process to Develop Targeted Service Strategies

The SBR Leadership consists of the Vice President of Client Services in San Diego County and the Director of the Workforce and Economic Development Department in Imperial County. Additionally, the Chief Economist and Director of Learning at the Workforce Partnership have roles within the RPU framework. Through this leadership and broader regional participation, strategies are developed and agreed to between the two workforce boards. It is through these key leadership positions that work is decided on that will benefit the larger Region.

Through this leadership structure, SBR elected to use the 5 Strategic Pillars, develop a middle school career center in Imperial County using the model implemented in San Diego County and use the Workforce Partner online infrastructure at the Workforce Partnership to facilitate accessibility in both Counties. Despite efforts to serve participants between Counties, it is the opportunities of the structured High Road grants that support those efforts. Other means are too difficult with the distance between population areas and the contrasts between the Counties' economies and populations.

Fundamentally, the SBR leadership and team are focused on providing the best services possible for their residents. They evaluate opportunities and test out models to see how well they might work. Their recognition that regional work can only enhance their customers' experience and will not detract from either workforce board shows their commitment and professionalism with which they imbue the entire team.

A key component of our regional plan implementation is the execution of work in each of our five pillars. These pillars support the State Plan's overarching policy objectives of fostering demand-driven skills attainment, enabling upward mobility for all Californians, and aligning, coordinating and integrating programs and services. Three of these pillars—population specific interventions, inclusive business growth and job quality— weave together the components necessary to set diverse populations on a road to economic mobility through clear career pathways, innovative delivery mechanisms and partnerships with high road employers. Not every person needs the same support to get into and keep a high-quality job; a one-size-fits-all approach to workforce development simply does not work. Successful service delivery is about listening to the unique needs of each population and individual.

In addition to applying a human-centered approach to the services available at our career centers, we are leveraging the implementation process of our regional plan to make sure we have solutions which are custom designed for the particular needs of individuals and families while working toward impact goals that can be felt (and seen in data) across entire populations. In a dynamic American economy where more than 70% of jobs require some type of post-secondary credential, the Southern Border believes it is not only critical to help foreign-born workers strengthen their English skills and earn industry-recognized credentials but more importantly, to help those who already have credentials understand how to navigate US system to set immigrant families on a path to economic mobility through quality jobs and connections to high road employers.

Additionally, while there had been an observed overall youth disconnection rate decline five years ago, during the COVID-19 pandemic, disconnection rates are much higher and since the rate in certain sub-regions had increased five years ago, it is an even greater need now. This shows that the more focused efforts placed on youth in these areas must be continued.

Our ongoing goal is to explore the dynamics of disconnection and continue to find better ways to gather data to highlight the life events that cause these detours, helping the region to support these youth more effectively.

The Region will engage them through the work with business and population specific interventions discussed above in the strategic pillars and the high roads grant opportunities in conjunction with partners, to provide pathways to resilient and family sustaining employment. In this way, the work will continue to expand networks and systems and continuously improve the work to best serve the residents of both Counties.

Equity and Economic Justice

The Southern Border Region has determined that equity requires prioritizing those who have been systemically denied opportunity through policies, priorities, practices, and behaviors that result in access to opportunity for all colleagues, customers and communities. Earn and learn opportunities are important to offer in multiple forms. While the traditional apprenticeship model is a path to family sustaining union jobs, other sectors benefit from specific employee upskilling or other employer focused training support to focus on barriered communities entering and advancing in these priority sector and priority job areas.

Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

The geography of the SBR requires out of the box thinking to make the greatest use of funding and partner systems to support the Counties' resident job seekers. While it makes sense to provide virtual tools to support staff and participants, actual participant sharing has proven to be unsuccessful. Looking at it in context of sharing businesses is more realistic since many employers have offices in both Counties. It is this aspect that is being most engaged in the new and future regional funding.

System Alignment

The SBR employs programming across the Region as makes sense given the geography. As an experiment with funding opportunities, the Region has engaged in programming around mature workers, leveraging multiple funding sources to enable a single case manager to work with job developers in both Counties and local case managers in Imperial County to provide job search training and internships for mature workers. It was an important learning experience and had added challenges with COVID-19 pandemic issues for this population.

The most critical enhancement to aligning the system between the Boards in the SBR is the new funding opportunities that support the coordination and engagement residents of both Counties in training and job search in shared priority sectors. This programming particularly High Road Construction Careers and High Road Training Partnership brings a larger system together across County lines to engage businesses and training partners to provide residents of both Counties opportunities for quality careers.

Regional Service Strategies

It is within the High Roads grants that regional systems will continue to be developed and grow such as healthcare in RERP and HRCC. The trainings, produced with Regional funding, will be available past the period of the programming to ensure broad coverage in Imperial as well as in San Diego Counties. However, service strategies are shared most effectively by engaging one or the other workforce boards in pilot work with certain populations and sharing the learnings to engage culturally competent programming throughout the Region.

The Region benefits most from staff and partner staff capacity building. This next phase will focus on cultural competency, trauma informed care and distance and digital communication.

Regional Administrative Cost Arrangements

The SBR has employed a strategy of using pooled resources for the past four years. It engages the existing talent within each local workforce board for regional insights and programming. It also uses single site housing of online tools that are available to all regional staff and partner

staff. Examples include the My Next Move and Career Coach tools that are housed on the Workforce Partnership website and trained regularly by the regional learning director who is on the Workforce Partnership's staff. Other shared staff in addition to the Regional Organizer are the Regional Economist performing labor market and special population research across the region and by specific location, as well as pandemic research for the local areas. Moreover, it was determined that it made sense to engage an integrated services manager to focus on online/remote experiences for all customers including “no wrong door” access, remote training and consolidation of eligibility information in a single location. This is a first step and one within a strategy of streamlining the system to make it easier for participants to move between partners to support their specific needs. As this work develops, more systems will be considered to address ongoing community and participant issues around hardware and software accessibility to support participant access to online training.

Additionally, the SBR has determined that because of the structures of each local board, the Workforce Partnership will provide fiscal agent support for regional funding. Each board benefits from those opportunities that make sense locally and the Regional Organizer collaborates to ensure that the integrity of the regional concept is maintained.

Appendix A

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

The stakeholder engagement community conversations to develop the update to the San Diego local and regional plans for program years 2021-2024 were held virtually twice, December 14, 2022 and January 6, 2023 to enable the greatest number of interested participants to attend. The Southern Border Regional Plan community input meeting invitations were sent to both the general mailing list for the Workforce Partnership that included 14,000 community members, participants, employers, CBOs and government partners. Added to the list were key stakeholders and partners in the event they were not also on the larger mailing list for both San Diego and the Imperial County Workforce Development Boards.

The Southern Border Regional Plan was held in conjunction with the San Diego Local Plan meetings. The meeting began with introductions that resulted in participants connecting after the meeting as well as good feedback and conversation.

Southern Border Regional Leadership discussed the background to the plans, the reason and the process to explain why it was important and what we were hoping to accomplish, which was to invite community input to our region plan that support the update to the State Plan. The Regional Plan was then discussed beginning with its basic structure provided by the State directive and then a discussion of items that were important to the attendees.

To facilitate input, the regional plan strategies were offered to frame the question: What best practices have you seen or done in your organization in any of the following areas:

Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

- Processes or strategies to communicate effectively and cohesively with regional employers

Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians

- Job quality definition/Prioritizing work with quality job employers
- Developing targeted service strategies for unserved and underserved communities

Aligning, Coordinating and Integrating Programs/Services

- Service strategies with partners

The following comments resulted from the conversation. They are not verbatim:

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	San Diego and Imperial stakeholders, partners and broader community	176 registrants. Government, CBO and education partners were all represented.	1. An organization provided an example that they have a person available to help students who need

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
			<p>services walk through and apply for them. It's not a warm handoff it sounds like the IPS model where one person is a contact and coordinator for the person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students at a community organization don't have the option to take an unpaid internship so braided funding is needed to ensure that "unpaid" internships from a WIOA program can be paid from other funding. 3. Organizations need preparation to have empathy for first generation college students who don't have the experience and skills like some soft skills needed. The system needs to work with them and many populations to prepare them with these needed skills from keeping the supervisor informed to how to be on time. 4. Target outreach for industries with high numbers of undocumented workers and immigrants to ensure appropriate levels of health and safety and benefits. 5. They train from High school to professional launch – need

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
			<p>employers to have a cultural responsiveness plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Youth don't want in person services but need social skills so implementing meetings to go over soft skills needed for work/working with employers to overcome bias about these inexperienced youth. 7. Job quality work with labor for quality definition creating a DEI index for employers Recommend a service strategy to get schools involved to access their large student populations of underserved – also paid micro internships to support students in unpaid internships (creative wioa funds). 8. Employment Training Panel partners with CBOs to connect employers and training with braided funding.

Appendix B

Public Comments That Disagree with Regional Plan

The directive WSD22-05 governs the update to the plan and indicates that the summary of comments is to address those that disagreed with the relevant plan. In fact, there were no comments that disagreed. Instead, they suggested how the next iteration of plans can be made better and potential work in the interim to be considered. The 30 day comment period began January 11, 2022 and ended February 9, 2023. The comments are noted here as a record for the anticipated next plan update in the 2024-2025 timeframe.

There were 5 comments relevant to the Southern Border Regional Plan. Please see the following:

Comment #1

- Immigrants and refugees - here is a place, I think, where adult ed should be included as a crucial partner and training provider.

Resolution:

- There is new collaboration with the Sector Initiatives and an intentional collaborative effort that will mirror, as appropriate, the community college district collaboration with the Workforce Partnership. Again, this will be further rolled out in future updates to the plans as these strategies unfold.

Comment #2

- That is quite in depth-info for justice involved; would be cool to have something similar for the other groups.

Resolution:

- This is part of the lessons learned as we move into more robust programming for other populations as funding is available.

Comment #4

- Deeply appreciate the reasoning for finding projections unreliable

Resolution:

- No resolution required but noted to continue this critique going forward.

Comment #5

- I think I get the (fine) explanation of difference in poverty levels; however, within San Diego's 10% there are some very deep pockets of poverty (as high as 37%)

Resolution:

- No resolution required but noted to continue this critique going forward.

Appendix C
Signature
Southern Border Regional Plan

The San Diego Workforce Development Board approves the regional plan for submission to the State.

Signature

Rick Viccari

Chair

Name

Role

Date

The Imperial County Workforce Development Board approves the regional plan for submission to the State.

Signature

Jason Jackson

Chair

March 22, 2023

Name

Role

Date

**Imperial County Workforce Development Board
Action Agenda Item 6**

MEETING DATE: March 22, 2023

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Discussion/Action to approve the revisions to the Supportive Services Policy

FROM: Priscilla Lopez, ICWED Director

RECOMMENDATION:

ICWED Director recommends to approve the revisions to the Supportive Services Policy

BACKGROUND:

IT is recommended to approve revisions made to the Supportive Services Policy. Supportive services are provided to eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth to address needs or barriers. Supportive services includes transportation, ancillary expenses, child care, elder care, dependent care, housing and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I.

The revisions to the Supportive Services Policy were made at the recommendation of the AJCC Supervisors and the Program and Compliance Manager. The updates elaborate on allowable expenses under Transpiration. The policy states that participants can still qualify for transportation assistance if they are driven by a third party, such as a friend, family member or Rideshare. The reimbursement rate for this services will determined by mileage. Additionally, if an individual drives less than 10 miles a day, participants are eligible for a flat rate at \$10 per day.

On March 8, 2023, this policy was presented to the One-Stop Policy and Oversight Committee, as an action item. The committee approved the changes to the Supportive Services Policy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Determined by qualified participant



IMPERIAL COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

2799 S. Fourth Street - El Centro, CA 92243 - Tel: (442) 265-4974 - Fax: (760) 337-5005

POLICY	ORIGINAL DATE	LAST REVISION
ICWED Supportive Services Policy	FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015	December 14, 2022

POLICY OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and criteria to be used by the Imperial County Workforce Development Board (ICWDB), Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development (ICWED), America's Job Center of California (AJCC) staff, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I funded service providers in the administration of supportive services for current WIOA eligible adult, dislocated worker and youth participants residing in Imperial County.

REFERENCES:

- WIOA Section 3 (59), Definition of Supportive Services
- WIOA Section 134 (c) (2), Required Local Employment and Training Activities
- WIOA Section 134 (d) (2) and (3), Permissible Local Employment & Training Activities
- WIOA Section 129(a)(c), Use of Funds for Youth Workforce Investment Activities
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16, Section 14
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 21-16, Section 7
- 20 CFR: Part 663 Subpart H for Adults and Dislocated Workers
- 20 CFR Part 680 - ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I OF THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

BACKGROUND:

The WIOA provides program guidelines for supportive services for WIOA eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth participants. The term "Supportive Services" refers to financial or physical accommodations that are reasonably necessary, and/or required, in order for an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I. Supportive services are provided to eligible WIOA adults, dislocated workers, and youth in order to remove barriers and help participants reach employment and training goals.

DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Self-Attestation: Self-attestation, also referred to as a participant statement, occurs when a participant states their status for a particular data element, such as identifying as low-income, and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status.

POLICY:

Supportive services for eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth are defined in WIOA Section 3 (59) and 134 (c) (2) and (3). Supportive services are provided to address a participant's needs or barriers as identified during the initial and on-going individual assessment process, and may include services such as transportation, ancillary expenses, child care, eldercare, dependent care, housing, and needs-

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related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I.

The availability of and referral to supportive services must be made available to adults and dislocated workers through America's Job Centers and is a required Youth Program element to be made available based upon demonstrated need. All efforts to secure supportive services from other sources must be exhausted by the participant and documented in the participant's case file before expending WIOA funds.

WIOA Title I supportive services are only to be provided when they are determined necessary, reasonable, and allowable. The need for supportive services must be based on an objective assessment and described and justified when developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for adults and an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for youth. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the resources and services available from other agencies is essential in providing supportive services with WIOA funds. ***Under no circumstances should a participant be denied supportive services without the documented concurrence of an America's Job Center Site Supervisor.***

ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:

Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation.

Eligibility to receive supportive services will coincide with the following criteria;

- Participating in programs with activities authorized under WIOA
- The inability to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services

Non-WIOA funded programs may have different support service guidelines than those listed above. In these instances, funding specific grant guidelines should be followed.

Supportive Services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in career services or training services. In order to be considered to receive supportive services, a Supportive Services Request Form (see ATTACHMENT 1) must be properly completed by the participant and a service provider Case Manager (CM), or an ICWED Client Service Specialist (CSS).

The general requirements for Supportive Service Payments include the following:

- All requested expenditures must be supported by an itemized invoice for the approved supportive services. All such documentation will be retained both at the service provider level and the ICWED Fiscal Department. Receipts must be submitted within thirty (30) days of purchase
- Determination of needed supportive services on behalf of a participant must include documentation regarding the reasonableness of the specific supportive service and its associated costs determination
- ICWED CSS/CM staff must coordinate with the participant regarding receipt of the approved supportive service and associated reimbursement for the supportive service
- Supportive services payment for mileage will coincide with the current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) authorized per mile rate. This reimbursement rate will be updated as the IRS rate changes
- Supportive services payments made on behalf of, or directly to, a participant must have written approval by CM/CSS supervisory staff. The written approval must denote the specific service to be provided and the amount to be expended

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- Supporting documentation must be retained in each participant's file with assessment of need in case notes and IEP for participants in Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and ISS for participants in Youth Programs
- Service providers must implement a supportive services tracking log to ensure adequate safeguards are in place, prior to the payment of all supportive service, and
- CM/CSS shall ensure that case notes regarding supportive services received are entered in CalJOBS within three (3) working days from the date of service

Self-attestation, as a documentation source, will be an acceptable method of verification only when the preferred options of paper documentation or third party corroboration are not available, or in the event of a local, state or federal emergency declaration. Self-attestation is not to be used as the primary method of gathering documentation to verify data elements.

In the event of a local, state, or federal emergency declaration, necessary documentation can be obtained through self-attestation by verbal verification. If physical documents are not available, a photo or digital document can be accepted, if a form of identification is provided. The participant then must provide a signed copy of the Self Attestation Form to America's Job Center of California staff. Staff members are responsible for documenting the Self-Attestation form and the date of enrollment.

Under emergency situations, a digital signature is considered a valid signature. The client's original/digital signature on their program application will be validated by the site supervisor and all additional documentation. The site supervisor will be required to initial all applicable forms confirming the individual's signature is valid.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICE LIMITS:

Supportive services are contingent upon funding availability and approval of request. Eligible WIOA participants are may qualify to receive a **lifetime maximum limit of \$2,000**. The maximum lifetime limit may be exceeded only on a case by case basis based upon a documented needs assessment and approval by the ICWED Director.

Additionally, participants who are enrolled an Individual Training Account (ITA) training service may qualify to receive an additional **\$500** in supportive services upon completion of their training program. The purpose of these expenses are to be used towards equipment to assist with work readiness and retention. (These funds are also based on available funding for the program year)

ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS:

Supportive services categories for WIOA eligible adults and dislocated workers are outlined in the Allowable Supportive Services List (see ATTACHMENT 1) and include the following:

1. Transportation

Transportation is not subject to supportive services lifetime limits. Expenses may be provided to adults and dislocated workers when transportation assistance is needed for participation in WIOA activities, including employment activities such as OJT and Customized Training. Transportation expenses for eligible WIOA participants, *including round trip expenses to and from a childcare provider*, are authorized but limited to usual and customary public/community transportation, such as bus line, or on a mileage reimbursement basis.

Bus tokens are available to participants in order to engage in career services and Individualized Career Services. It is the responsibility of the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) to determine if a participant is in need of transportation assistance in order to access an America's Job Center or training

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site. This supportive service is made available in order to assist all participants, including youth participating in Youth Programs or services, in accessing the AJCC or training facilities.

Gasoline/mileage assistance is provided to participants who use a vehicle registered to the participant or immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, brother, sister, in-laws, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, step-parent, step-child) member. If a privately owned vehicle is used, the participant must provide a valid driver's license, proof of vehicle registration, and proof of financial responsibility (insurance). If the participant makes use of another individual's vehicle, written authorization must be provided. For individuals who drive less than ten (10) miles a day, transportation expenses are subject to a flat rate of \$10.00 per day.

Participants who receive rides from a third party (i.e. friend or family member) may also qualify for transportation assistance. The third party driver must submit a valid driver's license, proof of vehicle registration, and proof of insurance. ICWED is unable to reimburse the third party directly. Fund will be distributed directly to the participant. The reimbursement amount will be determined by mileage. Additionally, assistance for Rideshare, such as Lyft, Uber, etc., is available at the same mileage rates as an individual whom is using their personal vehicle.

Continued documentation must demonstrate an ongoing need for transportation services. Supportive services for transportation may continue to assist a participant in retaining employment no longer than the point of exit from the program.

2. Housing

Only under extraordinary circumstances may supportive services be used to pay for housing. Extraordinary circumstances may include a WIOA participant who has been confronted with a property owner's/landlord's notice of eviction or by a complaint filed in the appropriate jurisdiction of a local court of law. Funds may only be used to pay monthly rental costs and not for the purpose of being applied toward the purchase of a residence owned by the WIOA participant.

3. Ancillary Expenses

Ancillary expenses shall be costs necessary to attend WIOA activities which include, but are not limited to, books, tools, clothing, background checks, testing fees, application fees, drug tests and other costs necessary to attend and/or participate in an approved training activity that is not otherwise included in the total cost of the program. An ancillary expense may also include those costs directly related to obtaining employment, including expenses related to a condition of employment and/or expenses for the purpose of interviewing for an employment position (i.e. hygiene, clothing, employment related physical or eye exam, tests for communicable diseases, safety or eye glasses, etc.)

4. Child Care Assistance

Child care expenses will **not** be included in the lifetime limits and will be calculated separately. Participants with children 12 years or younger are eligible for child care when it is determined other funding sources, including but not limited to CalWORKS, are not available to pay for such services. Child care for children over the age of 12 years will be considered if the child is physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves. The need for child care must be verified and documented by AJCC staff. Child care for multiple children is available, as long as the need is present and documented by AJCC staff.

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If the participant spouse or significant other is not working, looking for work, or in a training program, child care will not be authorized. This does not include circumstances where the spouse of significant other is incapacitated or has special needs.

Types of allowable child care include: Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Homes, and TrustLined/Relative care. Payments for child care may not exceed the Regional Market Rate Ceilings for subsidized child care (<http://www3.cde.ca.gov/rcscc/index.aspx>). Participants must explore licensed Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes before TrustLined/Relatives can be considered. Information regarding licensed child care facilities can be found at <https://www.icoe.org>. If licensed child care is not immediately available, TrustLined/Relatives must be explored as an option. The selection of safe and adequate child care providers is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian of the child in need.

5. Needs-Related Payments

WIOA allows for needs-related payments to provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training as a supportive service. Unlike other supportive services, to qualify for needs-related payments, a participant must be enrolled in training services.

Adult Eligibility for Needs-Related Payments:

In order for adults to qualify for needs-related payments, the participant must be:

- a. Unemployed
- b. Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for unemployment compensation, and
- c. Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3).

Dislocated Worker Eligibility for Needs-Related Payments

In order for dislocated workers to qualify for needs-related payments, the participant must be:

- a. Unemployed, and:
 1. Have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA, and
 2. Be enrolled in a training service under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3) by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility as a dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed 6 months, or
- b. Unemployed and ineligible for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA, and be enrolled in a program of [training services](#) under [WIOA](#) sec. 134(c)(3).

The level of needs-related payments shall not exceed:

1. The applicable level of unemployment compensation for dislocated worker, or
2. If the worker did not qualify for unemployment compensation, an amount equal to the poverty line, for an equivalent period, which amount shall be adjusted to reflect changes in total family income

*For needs-related payments, the assessment and IEP will be re-assessed at a minimum of every 60 days to accommodate any changes in an individual's financial status.

6. Supportive Services upon Completion of Training Program

Additional supportive services are available to individuals who have completed an ITA training service. Upon completion of the training program, participants are entitled to up to \$500 in supportive services to assist participants with work readiness. Work readiness equipment includes, but is not limited to,

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clothing, uniform, shoes, tools, safety equipment, laptop, and/or any work equipment/costs in order to assist an individual with retaining employment.

YOUTH:

Supportive services is one of the fourteen WIOA services elements that must be made available to eligible youth based on each participant's assessment and Individual Development Plan (IDP). The standards to authorize supportive services for youth shall not vary from those for adults and dislocated workers. These supportive services also include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Linkages to community services;
- b. Assistance with transportation;
- c. Assistance with housing;
- d. Referrals to medical services; including eye glasses;
- e. Assistance with uniforms and protective gear;
- f. Child care assistance; and
- g. Other appropriate WIOA activities.

All youth participants must receive follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months after program exit. Follow-up services include supportive services, and continued necessary documentation must be maintained and demonstrate an ongoing need for services.

In the event that an eligible youth is co-enrolled in an adult program, supportive services may be provided under the WIOA adult program.

MONITORING:

ICWED is responsible for ensuring oversight of the WIOA Title I funded programs. Monitoring shall take place by means of on-site visits to America's Job Center of California (AJCC) and contracted Service Providers. Site visits shall be performed at a minimum of once a year per each approved training. An annual monitoring visit schedule and monitoring review tool will be used to ensure adherence to WIOA laws, regulations and policies to insure that clients are provided appropriate access to programs or activities.

ACTION:

This policy supersedes WIOA Supportive Service Policy, July 15, 2020. Please bring this policy to the attention of ICWDB, AJCC system staff and appropriate WIOA funded service providers and sub-recipients. This policy is effective immediately. All submitted forms are live documents and subject to change according to local, State, and Federal needs. Once the forms and exhibits pertaining to this policy are approved by the ICWDB, they will not require board approval if other changes occur, unless the change affects protocols. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact ICWDB staff at (442) 265-4974, (442) 265-4959, (442) 265- 4955 or the Program and Compliance Manager (442) 265-4963.