



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF TULARE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE AGENDA

Thursday, February 26, 2026; 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Employment Connection Center – 4025 West Noble, Visalia

1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2) **PUBLIC COMMENTS (Three minutes per individual/organization, fifteen minutes total).** Any member of the public wishing to address the Employment Connection Committee on a specific matter under its jurisdiction, please notify WIB staff of your name and provide a brief description of the subject matter before the meeting. The Employment Connection Committee will not be able to act on any item that does not appear on the agenda.

3) **CONSENT ITEMS** – All under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be approved in one action without discussion. If a committee member requests that an item be removed from the Consent Calendar or a citizen wishes to speak on an item, the item will be considered under Regular Items.

a) Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes

- i. Approve November 13, 2025, Employment Committee Meeting Minutes.

4) PARTNER PRESENTATION

Able Inc.

Keith Stump, Executive Director of Able Inc., will present an overview of the organization's life skills programs, job training and internship opportunities, and competitive integrated employment programs.

5) ONE-STOP OPERATOR (OSO) ITEMS

a) Employment Connection Center Updates

Employment Connection Site Coordinators will join in a panel discussion about center activities, customer experience, system integration efforts, program updates, and upcoming priorities.

b) System Integration Workgroup Updates

- Partner Relationship Building
- Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use
- Training & Professional Development

6) DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

a) WIB Executive Director Report

b) Business Services Updates

c) Employment Connection Center and OSO Reports (Handouts)

7) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

8) ECC Meeting Dates – 2026

May 14, 2026, August 13, 2026, November 12, 2026

9) ADJOURN

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Laura Gonzalez at (559) 713-5200. Reasonable requests made at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting will help ensure accessibility.

Documents related to the items on this Agenda are available for public inspection online at www.tularewib.org and at the Workforce Investment Board office, 309 W. Main Street, Suite 120, Visalia, CA.



**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
OF TULARE COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

Thursday, November 13, 2025

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Present: Robert Kleyn-Chair, Mary Rodarte, Jean Cardenas, Larriann Torrez, Michelle Engel-Silva, Mist Bond, John Werner, Krishna Adams, Aleyda Montenegro, Paul Prado

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Absent: Teri Dobson, Michelle Miller-Galaz, Joanna Schengel, Carla Calhoun, Victoria Guzman, Tami Olson

- 1) **Call to Order:** Robert Kleyn-Chair called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- 2) **Public Comment:** Robert Kleyn-Chair called for public comments; none were presented.
- 3) **Consent Items:**
 - a) Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes
 - i. Approve August 21, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Larriann Torrez, seconded by Aleyda Montenegro, to approve the Consent Items; carried.

4) One-Stop Operator (OSO) Items:

- a) System Integration Workgroup Updates
Edith Hernandez reviewed status reports on the progress of the three Integration Workgroups formed to strengthen shared customer services:
 - **Partner Relations Building** – Lead: Aleyda Montenegro (HHSA)
 - **Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection and Use**-Lead: Mary Rodarte
 - **Training & Professional Development** – Lead: John Werner.

Workgroups will present recommendations by May 14, 2026. Members were reminded that details and team lists are included in the agenda packet.

Edith also provided a demonstration of online referral and appointment scheduling tools and encourage partners to guide customers directly into setting appointments for quicker service.

- b) Visalia Employment Connection – Update on SER-Jobs for Progress Colocation
Starting November 17, 2025, they will be co-located at the Visalia Employment Connection Office.
- c) WIOA Title I Adult & Youth – Partner Referral Options
Discussion on referral pathways and coordination options for shared customers.

Edith Hernandez provided an overview of the referral process for Title I Adult and Youth programs. It was noted that while the referral system is robust and easy to use, some process challenges remain and are being addressed through the work group.

Partners may refer customers through the electronic referral system on the website, which generates an email notification to staff. In addition, partners may assist customers in scheduling an appointment directly with Employment Connection staff.

The online appointment system is available in English and Spanish and includes an optional overview video of services. Customers complete a brief intake process, receive job search and training research resources, and are scheduled for a Calendly appointment based on age, program eligibility, and residential location.

- d) Employment Connection Center Updates
Employment Connection Site Coordinators will provide brief overview of centers activities, highlight customer experience, system integration efforts, program updates, and upcoming priorities.

Lea Ann Price reported on Tulare Employment Connection activities and outcomes. Enrollments included 38 Adults, 7 Dislocated Workers, and 34 Youth. There were nine work experience contracts and training enrollments in education, occupational skills training, and NDWG co-enrollment. Rural community enrollments included Adults and Dislocated Workers. Partner referrals were received, with several individuals being reached for eligibility. Youth participants completed truck-driving training and earned Class A license. Group greeting appointments are scheduled to begin next week. Available programs include Adult/DW, AgSkills Youth, ESE, SAFE, and Next Step.

Amanda Miller provided an update on Visalia Employment Connection services. Customer visits and enrollments were reported, along with partner referrals. High-demand training areas include medical assisting, nursing, psychiatric technician, and truck driving. The group greeting model was implemented to manage referrals. Workshops and onsite recruitment were conducted. MC3 construction cohorts are scheduled for January and March 2026. Success stories were shared for participants who completed training and obtained employment or further education.

5) Information/Discussion Items:

a) WIB Interim Executive Director Report

Jennie Bautista provided program and system updates:

- **MC3 Program:** First time hosted in Tulare County, offering easier access for customers.
- **New Board Memberships:** Jake Pilard (IBEW Local 100), Thomas Geiger (Roofers Local 27) and Esbeydy Ruvalcaba (EDD)
- **Federal Update:** Government shutdown ended; continuing resolution through January 2026 and funding stability restored for CalFresh and DOL programs.
- **Success Videos:** Newly release at Innovators by Design; ECO video coming soon.

b) Ag Skills Advancement Project

The Ag Skills Advancement project supports individuals from historically underserved farmworker communities who have been affected by COVID-19, climate change, and evolving agricultural practices. The project offers career services, occupational skills training, and cohort-based programs to help participants access, re-enter, or advance in high-quality jobs across growing industries.

Tom Price with Middlestate reviewed outreach efforts for the Ag Skills grant, including flyers, media coverage, food distribution, and upcoming learning sessions. Lea Ann Price, Site Coordinator with Tulare Employment Connection, reviewed eligibility and services.

c) Business Services Updates – Christina Hopper

- **Recruitment Assistance - Job Connect, Tulare County Job Fair (Oct. 2):**
Over 1,000 attendees, 70 employers, 494 open positions, 171 confirmed hires to date
- **Rapid Response:**
41 business engaged, 740 potentially impacted employees, 18 orientations for 383 employees
- **Industry Sector Partnerships:**
Industrial: Reviewing automation technician programs; equipment funding applications reviewed
Ag Skills: Focus on citrus occupations; relaunching Ag Career Exploration event (Sept. 2026)

Tulare-Kings Healthcare: Externship events at Avenal State Prison, Adventist Health/Tulare Hospital, and Dinuba Healthcare

d) Employment Connection Center and OSO Reports (Handouts)

6) Roundtable Discussion:

Partners shared brief updates, services and information.

7) ECC Meeting Dates – 2026

February 12, 2026, May 14, 2026, August 13, 2026, November 12, 2026

8) Good of the Order/Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Robert Kleyn-Chair at 11:28 a.m.



A proud partner of America's Job Center of CaliforniaSM network.

TO: Employment Connection Committee
 FROM: Edith Hernandez, Partner Services Coordinator
 DATE: February 23, 2026
 REPORT: Employment Connection One-Stop Operator Report

Highlights from October 1, 2025 – December 30, 2025

Activity	Brief Narrative
Partner Referrals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner Referrals Submitted: 1070 • Specific Referrals to partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment Connection: 533 ○ youth@work Program: 181 ○ HHSA: 81 ○ CSET: 32 ○ Proteus: 139 ○ DOR: 39 ○ Visalia Adult School: 15 ○ COS: 5 ○ WIB Special Grants: 15 ○ Porterville Adult School: 9 ○ SER: 3 ○ Tulare Adult School: 5 ○ Parenting Network: 6 ○ EDD: 5 ○ SAEC: 2
EC System Integrated Workgroups: Customer Experience, Partner Relationship Building, Training & Professional Development	<p>Employment Connection System Integration Workgroups Overview Based on input from previous ECC discussions, three workgroups have been established to strengthen service integration across partners and improve support for shared customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 focuses on developing detailed work plans and identifying actionable milestones needed to launch each group's efforts successfully • Phase 2 will establish measurable key results and assess the overall impact of the work. <p>Phase 1 Project Period: December 1, 2025 – May 14, 2026</p> <p>ECC Update: Each Action Team has been meeting regularly since January 2026 and has focused on Phase 1 to establish shared goals, build collaboration, and develop tools that strengthen system integration.</p> <p><u>Action Team 1: Partner Relationship Building</u></p>

Goal: Strengthen collaboration between partners through engagement, networking, and planning based on customer needs.

Team Lead: Aleyda Montenegro

Team Members: EDD, Amanda Miller (Visalia EC), Tami Olson (VAS), Michelle Silva (Proteus), Larriann Torrez (PAS)

Phase 1 Priorities:

1. Expand system onboarding and cross-training to build partner knowledge of programs, services, and resources that support shared customers.
2. Enhance the Partner Guide to serve as a practical, customer-centered tool that helps staff connect individuals to the right partner service.
3. Create networking opportunities between all partner staff to strengthen relationships, share updates, and foster a unified Employment Connection system culture.

Action Team 2: Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use

Goal: Improve coordination of services by identifying shared customers and creating a seamless referral process across partners.

Team Lead: Mary Rodarte

Team Members: EDD, Carmen Becerra (SAEC), Maria Guerrero (CSET Y@W), Milee Vang (VAS), Proteus Staff

Phase 1 Priorities:

1. Identify referral challenges and bottlenecks across partner agencies, distinguishing between organization-specific issues and system-wide process barriers.
2. Develop recommendations to address identified referral challenges and bottlenecks, focusing on both organizational improvements and system-wide solutions.
3. Develop and implement a customer satisfaction survey focused on the referral experience to gather feedback on how effectively customers are connected to partner services and identify opportunities to improve coordination and follow-up.

Action Team 3: Training & Professional Development

Goal: Ensure staff are cross-trained and equipped to deliver seamless, customer-centered services that evolve with changing needs.

Team Lead: John Werner

Team Members: EDD, Denise Douglas (PAS), Carla Calhoun (CSET), Ryan Waters (VAS)

Phase 1 Priorities:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify system training needs by gathering input from partners to ensure staff development aligns with current and emerging customer needs. 2. Establish an EC System training calendar that coordinates and tracks professional development opportunities across all partner agencies. 3. Partners identify a “Training Navigator” within each partner organization to participate in training, share information with their teams, and champion continuous learning across the system. <p><u>ECC Role:</u> The ECC will review progress quarterly, provide guidance to support alignment across teams, identify opportunities to integrate outcomes from each workgroup into the broader Employment Connection System strategy, and approve recommendations.</p>
<p>Actions Process updates, Training opportunities</p>	<p>Employment Connection System Onboarding Orientation WIB staff has developed and launched a system-wide training to onboard new Employment Connection partners and subrecipients and provide a refresher for existing staff. The training is offered monthly, and attendees gain an understanding of the workforce system and their role within the system.</p> <p>Onboarding Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration – completed through an online registration form on Eventbrite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EC Partners: https://bit.ly/49ALM2W ○ Subrecipients (staff providing services through WIB-funded programs): email Edith Hernandez, edith.hernandez@tularewib.org



Employment Connection

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TO: Edith Hernandez, One-Stop Partnership Coordinator
 FROM: Sandra Gomez Gonzalez
 DATE: 2/18/2026
 REPORT: Affiliate Site Report – (Dinuba)

Center Highlights

Activity

Data Count PY 2025-26 2nd Quarter – October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Customers Served
VOSGreeter, Adult, DW, Youth, ESE

- Universal Visits – 1,468
- Adult - 41
- DW - 7
- Adult/DW-Occupational Skills Training: - 4
- Youth – 34
- Youth OST -

Brief Narrative

Referrals
Employment Connection, MSFW, Training

- The Employment Connection program in Dinuba continues to actively collaborate with partner agencies, including the Cutler-Orosi Family Education Center, Dinuba Unified School District, CSET, EDD, HHSA, the City of Dinuba, Visalia Adult School, COS, William Maguy School, and other agencies. Through these partnerships, the program consistently receives referrals for individuals seeking training and employment support. These strong community connections allow the program to effectively reach and assist participants while ensuring seamless coordination with local agencies.

Coordinated Partner Activity
Rapid Response, EDD, OSY, education, and other resources

- The Dinuba Employment Connection team actively engages in coordinated partner activities with Rapid Response, EDD, Out-of-School Youth (OSY) programs, educational institutions, and other community resources. The team supports Rapid Response and EDD initiatives, provides OSY participants at our location with information about programs and services, and ensures partner agencies are informed through meetings attended by the supervisor to strengthen collaboration and outreach.

Center Highlights
Successes, challenges, new training opportunities, group size training, new partnerships, new programs/grants, community outreach

- This quarter, the Dinuba Employment Connection office continued to provide excellent customer service, with staff actively assisting participants and making referrals to support their needs. One of the challenges the office faced was staff shortages, which made it more difficult to stay on track with service delivery. However, this challenge has not prevented the team from providing essential services, and once the office is fully staffed, services will be fully met.
Another success this quarter is that staff continue to receive training as needed, ensuring they are equipped to support participants effectively. Additionally, the team greatly values the ongoing support and guidance from the supervisors, which strengthens service delivery and overall operations.



Employment Connection

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TO: Edith Hernandez, One-Stop Partnership Coordinator
 FROM: Priscilla Gonzales-Gray, Division Director
 DATE: 2/19/2026
 REPORT: Comprehensive Employment Connection Report – (Visalia or Porterville)

Center Highlights

Activity

Data Count PY 2025-26 2nd Quarter – October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Customers Served
Adult, DW, Youth, ESE, RESEA, JS4UI, GJC, Ag Skills

- Universal Visits: 10,532
- Adult: 154
- DW: 30
- Occupational Skills Training: 52
- Work-Based Training: 16
- RESEA:
- ESE: 28 (Enrollments)

Brief Narrative

Universal Services
Customer experience, iHUB, Resource Room,

The center maintained steady engagement in the Resource Room. Customers accessed job search assistance, resume development tools, labor market information, and CalJOBS registration support. Staff provided individualized guidance to improve customer experience, including assistance with unemployment claim navigation, referrals to training, and supportive service coordination. Resource Room utilization remained consistent, with staff available to provide real-time technical assistance and support.

Employment Services
Recruitments, Rapid Response, Job Connect, new businesses being served, business response

The center continued active employer engagement efforts, including recruitments and weekly Job Connect events. Staff coordinated closely with local employers to host hiring events, conduct on-site recruitments, and provide direct candidate referrals. Rapid Response services were delivered as needed to support workforce transitions and potential layoffs within the region, ensuring affected workers were connected promptly to reemployment resources.

New and existing business partnerships were strengthened through ongoing outreach, follow-up, and relationship building. Employers continued to utilize the center for job postings, applicant screening, and the development of work-based training opportunities. Employer feedback has remained positive, particularly regarding the quality of candidate preparation and job readiness support provided by staff. Job Connect continues to be a highly attended event every Tuesday, serving as a

	<p>consistent and reliable connection point between job seekers and available positions in Tulare County.</p>
<p>Career Services Career Services, Work Readiness Workshops, Talent Pool</p>	<p>Career Services remained a strong component of center operations. Participants engaged in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Employment Plan (IEP) development • Work Readiness Workshops • Resume and interview preparation • Career pathway exploration • Talent Pool participation <p>Work readiness group sessions focused on workplace expectations, communication skills, interview preparation, and application completion. The Talent Pool continued to serve as a pipeline for employers seeking pre-screened, job-ready candidates.</p> <p>Occupational Skills Training enrollments (52 participants through all grants) and Work-Based Training placements (16 participants) demonstrate strong training utilization and employer collaboration during the quarter.</p>
<p>Center Highlights Successes, Challenges, new training opportunities, group size training, new partnerships, new programs/grants, community outreach</p>	<p>Throughout the second quarter, the center experienced several notable successes that reflect both strong program performance and effective service delivery. Enrollment in Occupational Skills Training remained strong, demonstrating continued participant interest in advancing their skills and securing industry-recognized credentials. Work-Based Training opportunities also continued to be fully utilized, reinforcing strong employer partnerships and providing participants with meaningful, hands-on work experience.</p> <p>Universal Service traffic remained steady, with consistent utilization of both the Resource Room and iHUB. Customers continue to rely on the center as a primary access point for employment resources, job search assistance, and career guidance. Employer engagement efforts expanded during the quarter, resulting in improved candidate referrals and strengthened relationships with local businesses. Additionally, the integration of multiple funding streams allowed the center to maximize service delivery, ensuring participants could access a full range of workforce services without duplication or gaps.</p> <p>At the same time, the center navigated several operational challenges. Balancing staff capacity with high Universal Service demand required ongoing coordination and prioritization to maintain quality customer service. Ensuring timely and accurate case documentation across multiple programs remains a continued focus area, particularly given the complexity of compliance requirements. Maintaining consistent participant engagement through the completion of training activities also requires ongoing staff support and follow-up to promote successful outcomes.</p>

	<p>Community outreach efforts have strengthened the center's visibility and increased referrals from partner agencies. Staff continue to participate in local events and collaborate with community-based organizations to ensure broad and equitable access to workforce services throughout the region.</p>
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Employment Connection

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TO: Edith Hernandez, One-Stop Partnership Coordinator
 FROM: Lea Ann Price, Site Coordinator
 DATE: 2/19/26
 REPORT: Affiliate Site Report – Tulare

Center Highlights

Activity

Data Count PY 2025-26 2nd Quarter – October 1, 2025-December 31, 2025

Customers Served
 VOSGreeter, Adult,
 DW, Youth, ESE

- Adult 16
- DW 14
- OST : 5 Adult/DW,
- RC: 9 Adult/ 9 DW

Brief Narrative

Referrals
 Employment
 Connection, MSFW,
 Training

- Partner referrals are now scheduled for Calendly appointments or group greetings that are conducted every Tuesday at 10 am and Thursdays at 3 pm at the Affiliate site.

Coordinated Partner
 Activity
 Rapid Response, EDD,
 OSY, educations, other
 resources

- Tulare EC Adult staff continue to collaborate with RC and Youth Teams for co-enrollment. In Q2 the team attended a Career Fair at Tulare Adult School and provided information on all services including the Ag-Skills Advancement project.
- Monthly site visits are conducted at Tulare Adult School by the OST Coach to visit with current medical students to provide information about our services and to be available for questions.

Center Highlights
 Successes,
 challenges, new
 training opportunities,
 group size training,
 new partnerships, new
 programs/grants,
 community outreach

- Rural Communities continues to strengthen its outreach and collaborative efforts. We have successfully rekindled our partnership with the NextStep program and are working together to provide services to individuals referred to the affiliate site who reside in rural areas. Through this collaboration, customers who face transportation barriers and who may not otherwise be able to access affiliate or comprehensive centers can receive assistance through the pop-up site. We have successfully enrolled and are actively assisting one customer through this partnership, and look forward to serving additional individuals in the future.
- The Rural Communities team has also expanded employer engagement efforts in the southwest region to better address the employment needs of customers who prefer to work south of the Pixley area. Additionally, Tulare Affiliate and Rural Communities leadership continue to actively participate in the EC Customer Experience/Referral Workgroup. Through workgroup discussions and networking, a need was identified for one-on-one support for customers utilizing the resource room, as well as internship opportunities for students enrolled in

	<p>training programs to gain hands-on office experience. In response, we have initiated a process that will allow Adult School students enrolled in the Office Automation training program to complete office internships at the Tulare Affiliate and Visalia Employment Connection (VEC) sites.</p>
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TO: Edith Hernandez, One-Stop Partnership Coordinator
 FROM: Amanda Miller, Site Coordinator, Visalia Employment Connection
 DATE: February 20, 2026
 REPORT: Comprehensive Employment Connection Report – Visalia

Center Highlights

Activity

Data Count PY 2025-26 2nd Quarter – October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Customers Served
 Adult, DW, Youth, ESE, RESEA, JS4UI

- Universal Visits: 6355
- Adult: 93 enrollments
- DW: 32 enrollments
- Occupational Skills Training: 11
- Work-Based Training: 12 (includes 7 ECO)
- RESEA: 17 RESEA profiled enrollments
- ESE: 18 enrollments, 8
- Youth: 28 enrollments, 11 WEX

Brief Narrative

Universal Services
 Customer experience, iHUB, Resource Room,

- Q2 remained a high-volume period, with many customers seeking scholarship assistance for the spring semester. Staff continued providing dedicated support through in-person eligibility appointments, Group Greetings, and career coaching sessions.
- The Group Greeting format streamlined in Q1 led to improved tracking and efficiency during peak traffic in Q2. A total of 285 customers attended Group Greetings and learned about available services and how the center could support their career goals.

Employment Services
 Recruitments, Rapid Response, Job Connect, new businesses being served, business response

- Job Connect attendance remained steady, with 3 guest employers in Q2 (City of Visalia, Precision Painting, and Diaz Family Care Homes.)
- The team also engaged with Rapid Response customers affected by company closures, providing guidance and reemployment support. During Q2, staff presented at Vistar Green Rabbit in Visalia in addition to open-invite Rapid Response events immediately following Job Connect.

Career Services
 Career Services, Work Readiness Workshops, Talent Pool

- In Q2, 13 new candidates successfully entered the pool, helping to expand the pipeline of job-ready participants.
- In Q2, 9 Talent Pool customers successfully obtained unsubsidized employment.
- The team facilitated both in-person and universal workshops covering Resume Writing, Interview Skills, Ethics in the Workplace, and Social Media. In addition to building valuable career readiness skills, customers attending meet key milestones required for enrollment into the Talent Pool.

Center Highlights

Successes, Challenges, new training opportunities, group size training, new partnerships, new programs/grants, community outreach

- Customers continue to co-enroll in special grants, including Environmental Cleanup Opportunities (ECO), Good Jobs Challenge (GJC), Prison 2 Employment (P2E), Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (RERP), and Tulare County Probation RESET.
- In Q2, the team began providing all essential pre-enrollment steps, including Orientations, WorkKeys assessments and co-enrollments to build the first cohort for the MC3 Construction Pre-Apprenticeship program.
- Q2 included strong outreach efforts and community engagement activities. The team presented at the Tulare-Kings LPA meeting (October 2), conducted Rapid Response sessions at Vistar Green Rabbit (October 22), and participated in the TCOE College & Career Fair (October 23). Presentations were also delivered at the COS Hanford campus (October 27) and COS Tulare campus in preparation for spring start dates. In November, the Occupational Skills Training (OST) team met with SJVC and Carrington College and provided a refresher on the WIOA scholarship process and flyers to support students. On December 19, the OST team attended the Visalia Adult School Annual Staff & Community Update event.
- The team participated in the Tulare County Job Fair on October 1, offering an enhanced level of career services to potential customers exploring employment opportunities and strong support to Talent Pool VIPs.

