

Partnering For

Impact



Mission

Our investment and funding strategies advance Tulare County's economic vitality by growing the skills and talent of our workforce.

Vision

Because of our skilled workforce Tulare County businesses continue to thrive.

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Opportunity and need.

We live in a community with astounding levels of both. As we emerge from a pandemic that destroyed lives and livelihoods at unprecedented levels, we remarkably are at an all-time historic low for unemployment rates and all-time highs for earnings. At the same time, our community continues to experience substantial challenges because even though data measuring economic prosperity in Tulare County are at all-time highs, we still have one of the highest levels of unemployment and poverty in California.

At the Workforce Investment Board, our work is to connect those in need with opportunities. If you are a business in need of quality workers, we are here to help you find them. If you are an individual in need of work, we are here to make sure you have the best opportunity to compete for good jobs in our community.

But we don't do any of that work alone. We accomplish everything we do by partnering with people and institutions in our community. We contract with community-based organizations like CSET and Proteus to serve workers in our Employment Connection Centers. We assist those job seekers by connecting them to education partners or directly with businesses. We work with education partners to provide scholarships for workers to get industry-valued credentials and ensure that K-16 pathways connect to relevant industry sector needs. We work with the County, cities, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations to ensure that businesses growing or looking to relocate to our community are informed about our loyal, skilled, and resilient workforce and get assistance in hiring workers.

As we look at the hazy economic horizon ahead, we realize uncertain challenges await us. Will inflation erode wage growth and continue to squeeze households? Will monetary actions taken to tackle inflation lead to a recession?

We can't precisely know the answers to these questions now. However, we know that whatever economic opportunities or challenges lie ahead, Tulare County is a community with people and organizations that move quickly to unite in response to opportunities and needs. The Workforce Investment Board is honored to play an important role in rallying the community around that work and making investments in workers so that families and businesses in our community thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Peck". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping "A" and a long, horizontal stroke for the "P".

–Adam Peck, Executive Director

Board Members

Kerry Hydash	Chair	Family Health Care Network
Colby Wells	Vice Chair	Southern California Gas Company
Joe Hallmeyer	Secretary/Treasurer	Ken's Stakes & Supplies
Gil Aguilar		Pine, Pedroncelli & Aguilar, Inc.
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Martha McCurry		Ruiz Foods
Randy Baerg		Warren & Baerg Manufacturing, Inc.
Brandon Lovenburg		U.A. Local #246
David Pena		SMW Local Union #104
Ronny Jungk		IBEW LOCAL #100
Brent Calvin		College of the Sequoias
Yolanda Valdez		Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District
Robert Kleyn		Department of Rehabilitation
Christina Garza		Employment Development Department
Amy Shuklian		Tulare County Board of Supervisors

**United States
Department of Labor**



**California Workforce
Development Board**



**Workforce Investment
Board of Tulare County**



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. WIOA funding is allocated through the U.S. Department of Labor to the State and local level.

At the local level the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) is responsible for using WIOA funds to connect job seekers to employment and training opportunities. This is done through the Employment Connection Centers, Youth Services, and other Special Grants and Projects.



**Special Grants
& Projects**

2021-
2022

Fiscal Year
Expenditures

Youth

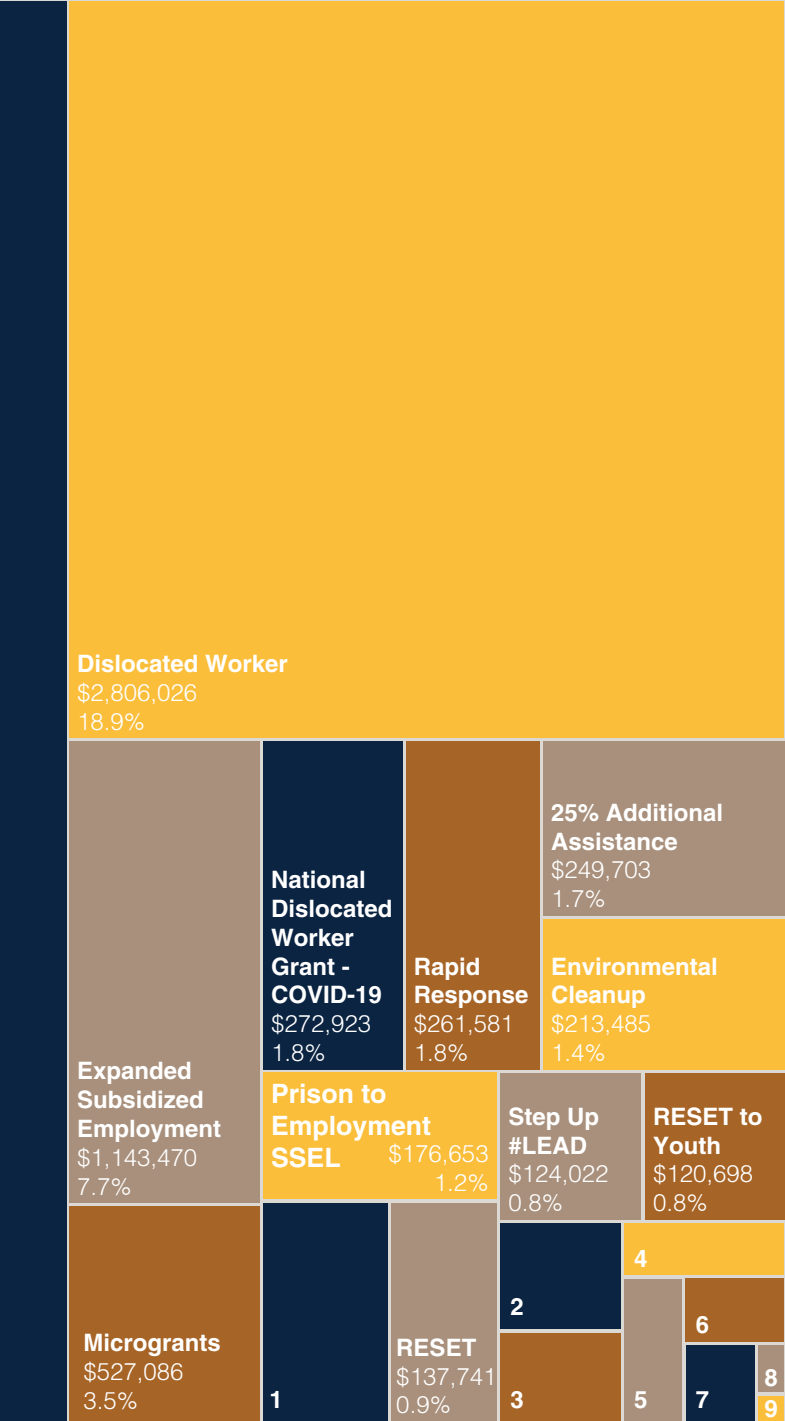
\$3,920,146

29.9%

Adult

\$4,448,795

26.3%



- 1 Disability Employment Accelerator**
\$161,260
1.1%
- 2 Layoff Aversion**
\$78,201
0.5%
- 3 Summer Training Employment Program for Students**
\$62,841
0.5%
- 4 Prison to Employment IDS**
\$52,095
0.4%
- 5 NDWG - Wildfires**
\$51,139
0.3%
- 6 Career Pathways**
\$37,404
0.3%
- 7 Equity and Special Populations**
\$30,917
0.2%
- 8 City of Tulare - Homeless Project**
\$7,408
0.05%
- 9 High Performing Boards**
\$3,846
0.03%

September 2021

Tulare County Job Fair

The WIB organized and hosted the 29th Annual Tulare County Job Fair in partnership with Employment Connection of Tulare County at the Visalia Convention Center.

Nearly one hundred businesses participated, 435 job seekers attended, and more than 100 people received job offers during the event.

October 2021

Employment Connection System Rebranding Launch

The Employment Connection (EC) launched an updated brand identity and mission statement to bring increased awareness of the Employment Connection System to customers and partners.

December 2021

America's Job Center of California (AJCC) Certification

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) established a framework under which the WIB is responsible for maintaining a network of high-quality and effective job centers through the America's Job Center of California (AJCC), locally known as Employment Connection Centers. The WIB conducted an independent and objective evaluation of Employment Connection Centers in Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville, and Visalia. All four centers were certified through June 30, 2024. This process is conducted every four years.

March 2022

Launched Objectives and Key Results Initiative (OKRs)

OKRs channel efforts, and coordination for the Employment Connection System and youth services. Develop by WIB and subrecipient leadership, OKRs link diverse operations around the systems primary goals to prepare job seekers to find quality jobs

May 2022

Launched Employment Connection System Onboarding Training

To further unify the Employment Connection System and provide high quality services at every center, the WIB launched monthly onboarding training for all new and existing Employment Connection staff and system partners.

Occupation Changes

2019-2022 Occupations with Greatest Growth

+1,217	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
+765	Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers
+581	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers
+533	Registered Nurses
+435	General and Operations Managers

2019-2022 Occupations with Greatest Decline

-3,352	Miscellaneous Agricultural Workers
-1,189	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term
-602	Childcare Workers
-520	Office Clerks, General
-417	Waiters and Waitresses

Industry Changes

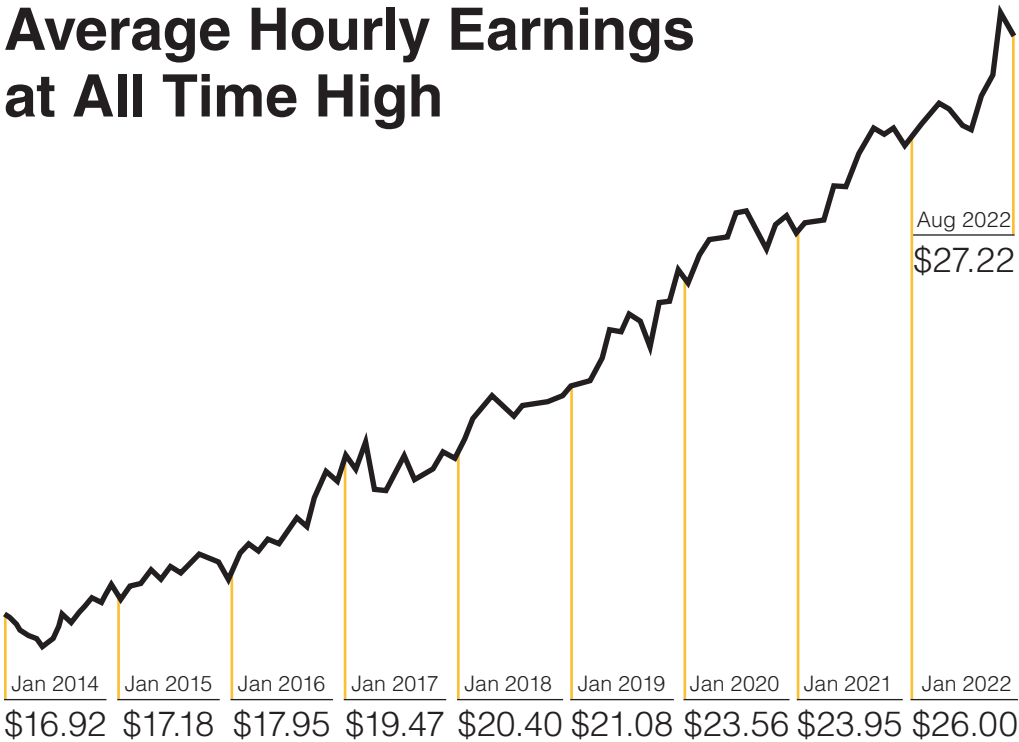
2019-2022 Industries with Greatest Growth

+1,280	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
+1,240	Crop Production
+970	Restaurants and Other Eating Places
+890	Couriers and Express Delivery Services
+846	Hospitals (Local Government)

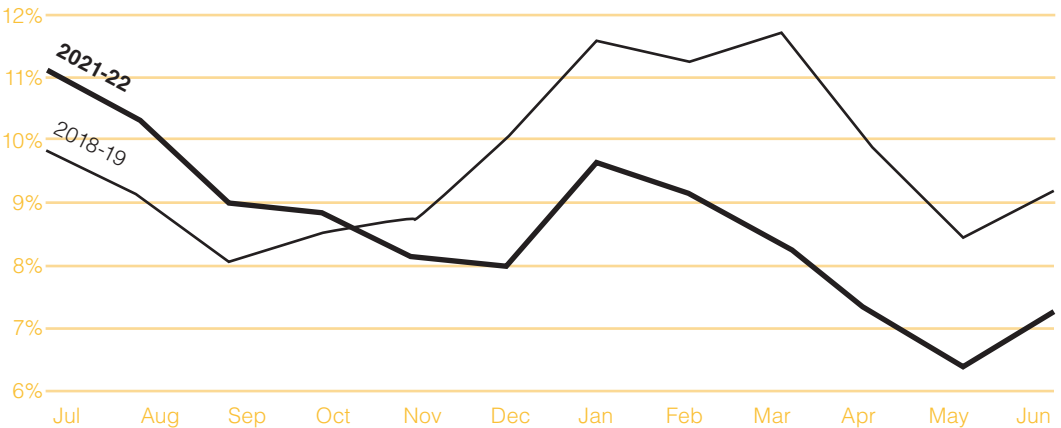
2019-2022 Industries with Greatest Decline

-3,772	Support Activities for Crop Production
-1,736	Education (Local Government)
-691	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals
-363	Temporary Help Services
-259	Accounting, Tax Prepara- tion, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services

Average Hourly Earnings at All Time High



Unemployment at All Time Low



Mission

At Employment Connection, we understand that having a good job is key to having a good life.



Service Providers

The Employment Connection Centers are managed by our Service Providers: Community Services Employment Training (CSET) and Proteus Inc. These organizations are subrecipients of WIOA funding from the WIB. They assist with carrying out the mission of the WIB by providing direct services to customers at the Employment Connection Centers.



Locations & Contact Information

Visalia

4025 W. Noble Ave.
Suite B
559-713-5000

Porterville

1063 W.
Henderson Ave.
559-788-1400

Tulare

304 E. Tulare Ave.
559-684-4987

Dinuba

400 W. Tulare St.
Suite C
559-406-1001

Partners

County of Tulare Health & Human Services • Employment Development Department (EDD) • Proteus Inc. • CSET • Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) • SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. • Tule River Tribal Council • Visalia Adult School • Tulare Adult School • Cutler Orosi Joint Unified School District • Tulare County Office of Education • Porterville Adult School • Porterville College • College of the Sequoias • Porterville Sheltered Workshop • Sequoias Adult Education Consortium • Farmersville Adult School

Expenditures by Site

Excluding Individual Training Accounts

Visalia	\$2,615,544
Porterville	\$1,511,109
Tulare	\$666,881
Dinuba	\$569,749

Employment Connection Visits

86,061
(in-person & virtual)

Career Services Provided

- Customer Assessments **1,849**
- Career Coaching Sessions **1,527**
- Individualized Education Plans **506**
- Vocation Training Scholarships **293**
- Interest & Aptitude testing **121**
- On-the-Job Training **25**
- Transitional jobs **25**

Career Services is the “backbone of the workforce system” in Tulare County, representing nearly 50 percent of the WIB’s investment in 2,130 job seekers who received pre-employment skills, vocational training, and job placement assistance in 2021-2022. Thirty percent of the Career Services funding is invested in training workers for a career in an in-demand occupation in Tulare County.

Career Services helps to develop a vital pipeline for businesses to access a ready, willing, and trained workforce for in-demand industries to fill job openings. Career Services allows the WIB to provide individuals with customized services to meet their needs.

Career Services

Job Readiness Workshops

- Resume Building
- Interview Skills
- Job Search
- Managing Stress
- Social Media Do’s and Don’ts

Resource Room

- Computers
- Printers
- Copier
- Phone
- Fax

Training Opportunities

- On-the-Job Training
- Vocational training scholarships
- Paid work experience

Career Coaching

- Career guidance and planning
- Assessment of job skills
- Re-employment services
- Job leads

Career Services funding supports local competitive grant applications throughout the year. Each year the WIB applies for multiple grants that focus on assisting individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, and other individuals with barriers to employment. By leveraging the Career Services funding, the WIB helps individuals with barriers to work gain entry to or re-enter the workforce.

In 2021-2022, Career Services funds supported eight specialized workforce development projects, which the WIB leveraged into receiving **\$5.7 million** in additional grant funds.

Projects Supported by WIOA Career Services

Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE)

Individuals receiving CalFresh

\$2,000,000

Dislocated Worker Additional Assistance

Laid off/not currently working

\$997,542

National Dislocated Worker Grant (COVID-19)

Laid off/not currently working

\$ 885,000

RESET/Prison to Employment (P2E)

Justice Involved Individuals

\$648,257

Equity and Special Populations (ESP)

English Language Learners

\$500,000

Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA)

Individuals with a disability

\$250,000

Environmental Cleanup Opportunities (ECO)

Individuals experiencing homelessness

\$239,847

National Dislocated Worker Grant (Wildfires)

Laid off/not currently working

\$200,000

Total

\$5,720,646

Training

The WIB allocates a portion of its Career Services and Youth Services funds to provide training opportunities to eligible Tulare County residents. This includes scholarships for vocational training programs for in-demand occupations in Tulare County and paid work experience opportunities with local businesses. Training investments are vital to the mission of the WIB. Individuals participating in training programs increase their skills, making them highly qualified candidates for in-demand jobs. In turn, the earning power of those who complete training increases significantly, making it possible for them to become more self-sufficient. Thirty percent of all Career Services funding and twenty percent of all Youth Services funding is allocated to training and work experience.

Career Services Training Expenditures

\$1,206,642

294 individuals received scholarships

132 individuals participated in on-the-job training and transitional jobs

Youth Services Training Expenditures

\$856,867

24 individuals received scholarships

258 individuals participated in paid work experience

Partners

Proteus • CSET • Advanced Career Institute • Airstreams Renewables Inc. • Heavy Equipment College of California • Career Development Institute • Milan Institute • Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts • Fresno-Madera-Kings-Tulare Building & Construction Trades Council • Instituted of Technology • William Maguy School of Education • San Joaquin Valley College • Visalia Adult School • Clovis Adult School • Tulare Adult School • Porterville Adult School • West Hills Community College • College of Sequoias • Fresno City College • Reedly College • Clovis Community College • Porterville College • Bakersfield College • Madera Community College • Training Institute



Training Investments by Industry

Healthcare

\$393,784

172 individuals

Transportation

\$312,384

85 individuals

Industrial

\$35,189

18 individuals

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

\$20,000

5 individuals

Office

\$19,451

7 individuals

First Responder

\$5,763

4 individuals

Fire Technology

\$6,161

4 individuals

Access to Careers and Employment (ACE)

Access to Careers and Employment (ACE), funded by the Disability Employment Accelerator grant, was established in 2019 to provide career development and job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. ACE addresses the high unemployment and poverty faced by individuals with disabilities in Tulare County and ultimately leads job seekers to career pathways and lasting employment. ACE brings much-needed attention to the importance of inclusivity within the workforce.

The success of ACE relies on an Integrated Resource Team comprising local partners who work together to align resources, share information, provide a network of supportive services, and assist customers as they work to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. With the help of the Integrated Resource Team, ACE met or exceeded each of the following goals, enrollment, work-based training, employment, and occupational skills training.

\$15,647

paid to vocational skill training programs.



\$40,156

wages paid to participants in transitional jobs.

53 individuals

enrolled

15 individuals

participated in
work-based training

16 individuals

were placed in
unsubsidized employment

6 individuals

enrolled in
occupational skills training



Partners

CSET • College of the Sequoias Access and Ability Center • Porterville College Job Entrepreneur and Career Center • Department of Rehabilitation • Tulare County Office of Education • Visalia Adult School • Tulare Adult School • Porterville Adult School • Employment Development Department (EDD) • Central Valley Regional Center



Success Story

After being unemployed for over a year, Clara came to the Visalia Employment Connection looking for assistance. She was frustrated with not being able to find work on her own. After initial conversations, it was determined that Clara needed help with job searching and creating a resume because she had limited work experience and more than a year's gap in her employment history.

While job searching, Clara came across a Caregiver position for a local Senior Care Home. Clara mentioned that she had always hoped to have a career where she could assist others. Although hesitant to apply, her Career Coach encouraged Clara to submit her application and go to the interview. The employer stated they were pleased with Clara's interview; however, they had some reservations about hiring someone without experience as a Caregiver or Patient Care Assistant.

Through ACE, Clara participated in on-the-job training, allowing Clara to learn the skills needed for a new career in Home Health. After completing her training, she was hired for a full-time position making more than minimum wage. Clara is now motivated to obtain her GED and further her education to achieve her ultimate goal of becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Environmental Cleanup Opportunities (ECO)

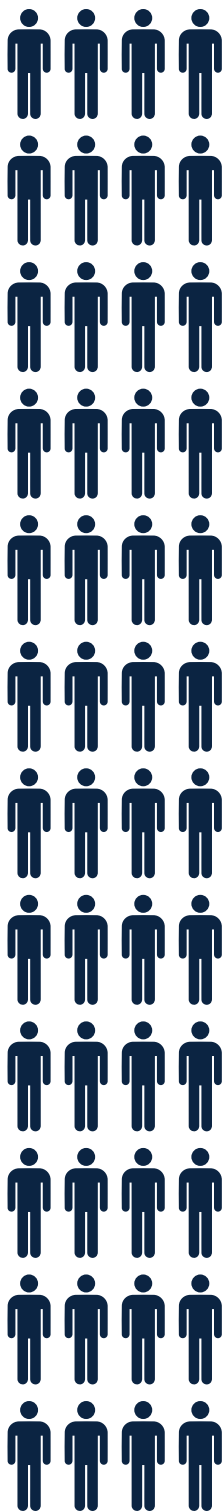
In 2017, the City of Visalia and the WIB developed the Environmental Cleanup Opportunities (ECO) program that allows individuals experiencing homelessness or very low-income levels in Visalia to acquire the work skills necessary to obtain gainful employment while simultaneously addressing a community need by cleaning up illegally dumped materials around the city. Individuals participating in ECO are referred to Employment Connection by community partners, such as the Rescue Mission, the Visalia Police Department HOPE Team, and other community partners.

Upon beginning ECO, individuals spend up to three months working as part of the CSET work crew and are guided by a crew supervisor who helps prepare everyone to transition to regular full-time employment. Individuals focus on picking up trash or illegally dumped material in the city right-of-way and other public areas. They also work with their Career Coach to learn basic job skills such as punctuality, teamwork, accepting and executing instructions, etc.

After successful completion of the first phase of the program, individuals begin working alongside city employees under the supervision of the Solid Waste Department. Here, they learn to work with less direct supervision and increased accountability. Work includes assembling residential trash cans, helping with deliveries, and other related duties. After acquiring additional skills and experience, during this second training period, the goal is for the individuals to obtain outside employment to help them transition from homelessness to stable housing.

Partners

City of Visalia • CSET • Employment Connection • Visalia Rescue Mission • Visalia Police Department • HOPE Team • Tulare County Health and Human Services • Recovery Homes • Kings View • Family Services of Tulare County • Other Community Partners



48 Individuals Placed in a Transitional Job Level 1

18 Individuals placed in a Transitional Job Level 2

30 Individuals placed in Unsubsidized Employment

\$127,810

wages paid to participants in transitional jobs

Prison to Employment (P2E)

In 2018 the State of California developed the Workforce Partnership and Prison to Employment initiatives (P2E) focused on strengthening the linkages between the state workforce and corrections systems to improve the process by which formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals reenter society and the labor force. Funding for this program was provided through a regional grant and the WIB began providing services to formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals through the P2E program in January 2020. The team of support partners provides access and opportunities for employment, training, careers, and support services to help individuals succeed in their employment journey.

P2E Outcomes

Enrollments	134
*Training Enrollments	94
*Training Completions	60
Attained Certificate	42
Direct Hires	86

Certificates attained in: HVACC | EERE Solar | Truck Driving | Welding and more.

*Training includes but is not limited to Vocation skills training, Pre-apprenticeship, Transitional jobs, and On-the-job training.

64% Employment Rate

\$25,365

paid to vocational skill training programs

\$49,959

wages paid to participants in transitional jobs

Partners

WIB • CSET • Department of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) • Central Valley Recovery Services • Employment Connection • Tulare County Probation • Turning Point Visalia Reentry Center PAAR • California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)



Success Story

In December 2021, The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) referred Barney to Employment Connection. Barney met with a Career Coach to assess his skills and aptitude and explore possible career paths. He participated in soft skills training as part of his job readiness training, and soon he was connected with a local employer in Porterville. Barney participated in the first interview, and the business called him back for a second onsite interview, where they provided a tour of the plant and shared potential job duties.

Soon after, Barney began work-based training with the business to increase his skills. With his coach, Barney set several short-term goals, including being hired full-time by the company and being able to ring the bell, signifying being hired after his training ended. When the training ended, Barney was ecstatic to learn he was being hired and proudly rang the bell in celebration.

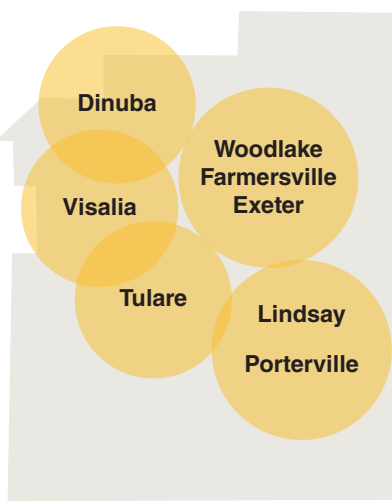
Barney received his first paycheck in 24 years, earning \$16.00 per hour. He noted that the Employment Connection staff provided support and guidance throughout the process.

Mission

youth@work provides services to young adults ages 16-24 years old who face education, training, and employment barriers.



Locations and Contact Information



Visalia 4025 W. Noble Ave. Suite B 559-713-5000 - CSET	Porterville 1063 Henderson Ave. 559-788-1417 - TCOE SEE
Tulare 304 E Tulare Ave. 559-684-1987 - CSET	Woodlake 168 N. Valencia Blvd. 559-781-1852 - Proteus
Cutler/Orosi & Dinuba 40802 Rd 128 559-528-1790 - CSET	Exeter & Farmersville 909 W. Visalia Rd 559-781-1852 - Proteus

Service Providers

Our service providers, Community Services Employment Training (CSET), Proteus Inc., and Tulare County Office of Education Services for Education and Employment manage the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School-Youth (ISY) programs. These partners are subrecipients of WIOA funding from the WIB and assist with carrying out the mission of the WIB by providing direct services to young adults ages 16-24 years of age.

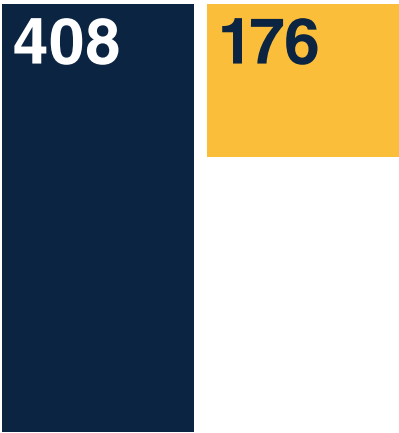


Youth Services:

Academic & career-oriented information | Follow-up | Work readiness training
Paid & unpaid work-based learning experience | Mentoring | Supportive services

Out-of-School Youth Expenditures

\$3,076,700



In-School Youth Expenditures

\$617,975



● Total Enrolled ● Work Experiences

Special Grants

Youth Services funds support the WIB's ability to apply for and manage additional specialized grants that serve young adults ages 16-24 years old.

R2Y

#LEAD

Summer Training & Employment Program for Students (STEPS)

Justice-impacted young adults

Leadership skills training for young adults

Students with disabilities

Total Special Grant Funds **\$284,492**

Partners

Dinuba Unified School District • Cutler Orosi Joint Unified School District • Lindsay Unified School District • Porterville Unified School District • Tulare Joint Union High School District • Visalia Unified School District • Woodlake Unified School District

2021-2022 OSY youth@work Outcomes:

408 Out-of-school youth were served

176 Young adults participated in paid work experience

\$234,624 wages and benefits paid to youth

The WIB invested **\$37,314** to support **16** young adults in the youth@work program as they entered training programs, including:

Medical Assistance | Certified Nurse Assistance | Truck Driving | Energy Efficiency Renewable Energy

The Out-of-School (OSY) program is designed to help young adults ages 18-24 years of age who are not currently employed or enrolled in an educational or training program. OSY strongly emphasizes occupational skills training in high-growth and in-demand occupations by supporting young adults who desire to increase their skills as they transition from secondary education to career technical education training.

This year youth@work ISY partnered with Tulare Joint Union High School District and Cutler/Orosi Joint Unified School District to host two job fairs targeting graduating seniors who were not planning to enroll in a four-year college or university. Before the job fairs, students participated in work readiness workshops hosted by youth@work staff. Over 400 seniors attended the job fairs equipped with resumes and dressed for success. Students had the opportunity to meet with over 60 employers and ten educational partners.

2021-2022 ISY youth@work Outcomes:

146 In-school youth were served

\$186,900 collective earnings for paid work experiences

In-School-Youth (ISY) is focused on partnerships with local school districts to develop specialized projects for high school students that face significant barriers, including homelessness, English as a second language, foster care, etc. These projects bridge the gap in services that these students often encounter between education, training, and employment. The ISY program strengthens communication and coordination of services to better serve the most in need in the workforce through skills attainment and supportive services.



Success Story

Minerva was a 20-year-old young adult with no prior work experience except working during her summer breaks. After getting her high school diploma, she was unsure of what to do with her life and didn't know where to begin. She tried desperately to find a job, but without any work experience, employers were reluctant to hire her. Through a friend, she was referred to the youth@work program in Porterville.

Minerva began working with the youth@work staff to explore her career and educational options. She decided to enroll in the Porterville Adult School Medical Assistant Program. Through this program, she learned that hard work and determination make anything possible. She completed her program in December 2021 and has since secured employment with a local health care provider working as a Navigation Center Representative. She hopes to grow her career within the organization as she gains additional experience. Minerva reported that youth@work provided her with the resources and direction that led her to secure a certificate, and most importantly, a stable job.

Summer Training Employment Program for Students (STEPS)

The WIB received \$250,000 from the Foundation for California Community Colleges, in coordination with the Department of Rehabilitation, to design and implement a Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS). STEPS provides workplace readiness, skills training, and work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities.

Students are referred by educational partners and are enrolled in a 32-hour work readiness training over two weeks. The training provides interactive job exploration through presentations from business community members to help the students better understand employer expectations. Then, students are given opportunities to work at a local business that provides them with meaningful paid work experience.



49 students

enrolled in work readiness training

43 students

received a paid training stipend & participated in paid work experience with a local employer

\$18,705

stipends to participants

Partners

Department of Rehabilitation • Central Valley Regional Center • College of the Sequoias Work Ability Program • Porterville College • Porterville, Tulare, and Visalia Adult Schools, and high schools throughout Tulare County • CVS Pharmacy • Grocery Outlet • Central CA Family Crisis Center • Mendonca Spine Center • WHS Ag Farms • Lindsay Wellness Center • The Human Bean • Dinuba Lumber • Visalia Pizza House • Blaze Pizza • Porterville Unified School District • Baskin Robbins • Arts Visalia • Treasure Thrift Store



Success Story

Alejandra is an excellent example of how STEPS provides valuable resources and support to students with disabilities. After enrolling in STEPS and doing some initial career exploration with her Career Coach, Alejandra decided to begin a career pathway in physical therapy. Following her work readiness training, Alejandra participated in work-based training with a local Spine Care Center. Initially, she was apprehensive about starting because she lacked experience. However, she persevered and used the skills she learned during her training, including attendance at work ethic, to make a good impression. After completing her work-based training, the doctor at the center decided to hire her for a part-time position while she continued her education.

Business Services

Outreach to businesses is a core component of the workforce development system. Engaging with businesses allows the WIB to better understand the needs of the business community, and when appropriate, connect those businesses to services offered by the Employment Connection Centers, or other community partners.



In 2021-2022

the business services team comprised of WIB, Employment Connection, and youth@work staff engaged with:

1,261

unique businesses



2,627

services provided

Partners

WIB • Employment Connection • Employment Development Department (EDD) • Small Business Development Center (SBDC) • Visalia Chamber of Commerce • Tulare Chamber of Commerce • Exeter Chamber of Commerce • CSET • Proteus Inc. • Tulare County Economic Development Corp.

Top 5 Services Utilized by Businesses

Employer Information and Support Systems	1,058 Businesses Served
Marketing (Social Media, Job Connect)	138 Businesses Served
Work Experience	135 Businesses Served
Recruitment Assistance	65 Businesses Served
Direct Hires	43 Businesses Served

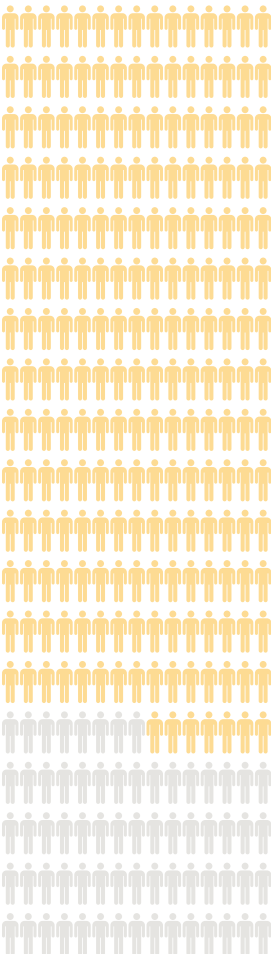
Top 5 Industries Served

Retail Trade	233 Businesses Served
Other Services	215 Businesses Served
Health Care and Social Assistance	168 Businesses Served
Accommodation and Food Services	164 Businesses Served
Public Administration	105 Businesses Served

Rapid Response

Rapid Response is a series of customized, confidential, and convenient services designed to assist businesses experiencing downsizing, restructuring, or closure. It is a cooperative effort between the WIB, Employment Connection, and the Employment Development Department (EDD) to help affected workers return to work as quickly as possible following a layoff by connecting them to training and employment opportunities.

This service provides immediate relief for the affected worker by offering resources such as utility and housing assistance, unemployment insurance information, occupational skills training, and more. For the Business, this service helps alleviate some of the stresses of letting people go when unfortunate circumstances arise.



6 Businesses Served

285 workers affected

217 workers served

Partners

Employment Connection • WIB • Employment Development Department (EDD) • Tulare County HHSA • United Way of Tulare County • Downtown Visalians



Success Story

The WIB received a WARN notice from EDD stating that a local distribution company would be laying off 68 employees. The Rapid Response team reached out immediately to identify the needs of the business and its employees. The team identified a strategy to provide services for the affected workers even though the workers involved worked on various shifts and there were still some COVID restrictions in place. With multiple virtual orientation events for the employees and additional Human Resources support for the business, resources and materials were provided to all affected workers.

In addition to the resources provided, the team planned and organized a job fair immediately following the layoff date. The job fair included five employers from within similar industries or those with open positions matching the skill set of the employees being laid off. Employment Connection also offered training opportunities to those affected workers interested in learning a new skill in an in-demand occupation.

Recruitment Assistance

When a business has open positions, the WIB engages with the company to develop a customized recruitment assistance plan. The plan often includes multiple approaches to finding qualified employees, including social media marketing, virtual Job Connect events, and in-person hiring or job fairs.

In 2021-2022 the WIB expanded the scope and scale of recruitment assistance services far beyond anything that had been done in the past. The team adapted and learned to be flexible in providing services, as the lingering effects of COVID-19 continued to pose limitations for in-person events. For instance, the 29th Annual Tulare County Job Fair held in September 2021 was revamped to include pre-registration for job seekers and splitting the event into two sessions to comply with COVID-19 mandates and maintain safe social distancing.

As Tulare County slowly opened, the way job seekers engaged with the recruitment process changed. Meeting job seekers “where they are” became the focus for recruitment events and led to new partnerships throughout the county. The partners began inviting the recruitment assistance team to their facilities to co-host recruitment events where employers were brought onsite to meet the job seekers rather than asking the job seekers to travel to attend the events. This was a novel and successful way to organize job fairs and hiring events.

110 Businesses

participated in 19 in-person recruitment events

1078 Individuals

attended an in-person event

22 Businesses

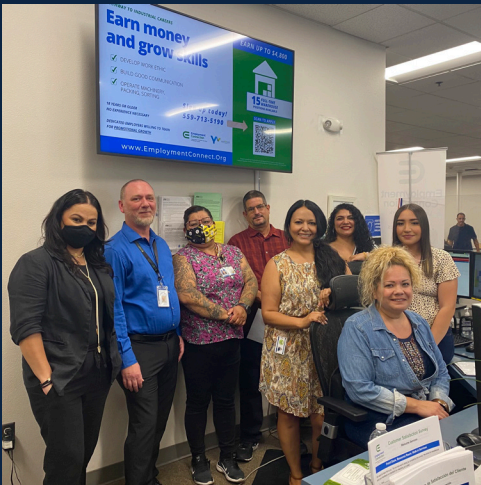
participated in 25 virtual Job Connect events with
94,844 reach

49 Job Postings

on social media platforms 217,471 reach

Partners

WIB • Employment Connection • Porterville College • Tulare Joint Union High School District • Cutler/Orosi Joint Unified School District • Kings County Job Training Office • Employment Development Department



Tulare County Microbusiness COVID Relief Grant

In 2021 the County of Tulare asked the WIB to administer the Microbusiness COVID Relief Fund Grant project on their behalf. \$600,000 was allocated by the California Small Business Advocates (CalOSBA) to the WIB to award 200 microgrants in the amount of \$2,500 each to microbusinesses in Tulare County. Eligible businesses must have been significantly impacted by the pandemic and made less than \$50,000 annual gross revenue in 2019. The grant application was open from April to June 2022. The microgrant program focused on helping microbusinesses that did not receive the California Small Business Relief Grant and whose owners were women, minority, or veteran-owned. Additionally, funding was to be awarded to micro businesses in rural and hard-to-reach communities when possible.

Using customer-centered design and working with local partners, the microgrant team developed systems and processes that helped remove barriers for business owners to complete the application process. Many of the microbusiness owners required one-on-one technical assistance, provided via zoom, phone, and in-person meetings. While many of the business owners were hesitant to participate in a government program and intimidated by the paperwork required to become eligible for funding, the team was able to assist those businesses that had been previously overlooked and unable to qualify for aid.

Funding Awarded by Target Group

122

Women-owned businesses

159

Minority-owned businesses

4

Veteran-owned businesses

Top Industries Awarded

41%

Salons, Barbers & Other services

18%

Retail Trade

10%

Health & Social Assistance

Partners

Middlestate • Small Business Development Center • Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce • Proteus Inc. • CSET • Local Chambers • Local Economic Development partners • Tulare County Environmental Health

Funding Awarded by Business Location

Visalia	\$235,500
Porterville	\$72,500
Tulare	\$55,000
Farmersville	\$30,000
Lindsay	\$30,000
Dinuba	\$30,000
Woodlake	\$17,500
Exeter	\$7,500
Ivanhoe	\$5,000
Orosi	\$5,000
Strathmore	\$5,000
Poplar	\$2,500
Tipton	\$2,500

200 Grants

\$500,000

