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Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County Awarded \$1,000,000 Ag Skills Advancement Project Grant Funding

Visalia CA [March 11, 2024] The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) is excited to announce the successful acquisition of \$1,000,000 in funding for the Ag Skills Advancement Project from the Department of Labor’s Disaster Relief National Dislocated Worker Grant Initiative. This prestigious grant, facilitated by the Employment Development Department (EDD), comes as a recognition of the WIB’s proven success with past National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) projects and the economic significance of Tulare County’s thriving agricultural community. Among all California regions, Tulare County stands as one of only three selected to receive the Ag Skills Advancement Project funding, available until September 2026.

The primary objective of the Ag Skills Advancement Project is to engage with and convene local Ag businesses to gain a deeper understanding of current trends impacting their workforce, identify skills gaps, and develop educational and talent pipelines to meet the growing needs of the industry.

Focusing on the agricultural industry in Tulare County, the Ag Skills Advancement Project responds to the industry’s ongoing transformation driven by technological advancements, regulatory shifts, the impacts of climate change, and the aftermath of COVID-19. These shifts have reshaped the nature of work and the job landscape within agriculture, creating a pressing need for farmworkers to acquire new skills and adapt to evolving work environments. The Ag Skills Advancement Project grant consists of two major components: firstly, it allocates funding to launch a dedicated agricultural sector partnership, ensuring alignment with the needs of businesses and incorporating those needs into new and existing training programs. Secondly, empowering farmworkers, their families, and residents of disinvested communities with the skills essential for securing stable and safe employment in agricultural and other growth sectors.

Key partners in the implementation of this initiative include Community Services Employment Training (CSET), Proteus, Inc., College of the Sequoias, Porterville College, and the Employment Development Department. Each of these partners brings invaluable expertise in workforce development, education, and community service, ensuring the program aligns seamlessly with the evolving needs of the community.



The WIB remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering economic resilience. This Ag Skills Advancement Project grant exemplifies the board's ability to respond effectively to dynamic challenges and contribute to the prosperity of Tulare County. By equipping the workforce with the necessary skills and leveraging educational partnerships, the WIB aims to create lasting pathways to good jobs, making a positive impact on both individuals and the broader community.

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The mission of the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB) is to advance the economic vitality of Tulare County through strategic funding investments aimed at growing the skills and talent of our workforce. The WIB brings funding to the region to convene industry, identify skills gaps, and broker solutions that help local businesses find the skilled workforce they need to succeed.

This project is funded by the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, an equal-opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. This project is fully funded by the California Development Department (EDD) with Department of Labor Funds as part of an award totaling \$1,000,000.