



The
**WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT
BOARD of
TULARE
COUNTY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

**Investing in People, Systems,
and Partnerships**

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WHAT TO EXPECT

02 Board Members

04 Letter from the Chair

05 WIB Theory of Change

06 Fiscal Expenditures

08 Tulare County Labor
Market Information

10 Leadership & Growth

12 Building Capacity

14 Sector Partnerships

18 Employment
Connection System
Theory of Change

20 EDC Pilot Program

22 Career Services

26 Specialized Grants

31 Youth Services

34 Business Services

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Committed to Building Skills and Creating Pathways

As Chairperson of the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, I'm proud to present this year's Annual Report, a reflection of both the progress we've made and the shared vision that continues to guide our work.

This past year has been marked by significant transformation across our system. With a strong commitment to equity, innovation, and inclusion, we have strengthened partnerships, expanded access to services, and introduced new strategies to meet the evolving needs of our communities. From launching incentive-based training programs to restoring local parks through disaster recovery jobs, the stories in this report illustrate the power of investing in people and the positive impact that investment has on families, neighborhoods, and our local economy.

At the heart of this work is our commitment to building skills and creating pathways. Whether it's supporting a young person finding their first job, helping a reentry participant gain confidence and purpose, or guiding an experienced worker into a new career, our programs are designed to do more than place people in jobs—they're designed to change lives.



This report also highlights how our team has assumed leadership roles across the region and state. By sharing our knowledge, co-designing policies, and modeling new ways of working, we're helping to shape a workforce system that is more responsive, human-centered, and sustainable in the long term.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about what we can accomplish together. The challenges we face are real, but so is the momentum we've built. As we continue to listen deeply, invest intentionally, and lead with purpose, we are building a stronger, more resilient Tulare County—one where every person has the opportunity to grow, contribute, and succeed.

Thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your continued belief in the power of workforce development.

Sincerely,

Colby Wells

Chairperson, Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County



WIB THEORY OF CHANGE

The Issue

Too many people are unemployed or in low-wage jobs that don't sustain their families, and too many businesses have high-quality jobs that go unfilled.

Our Focus

Workers & Businesses

Education

**Community & Civic
Leaders**

Our Values

Human-Centered

Agile

Inclusive

Collaborative

Skills-Focused

Evidenced-based

Our Strategies



Fund



Convene



Guide



Broker



Measure



Invest

Expected Impact

The system is agile and responsive to community needs.

Partnerships develop essential talent pipelines for local businesses.

Workers gain the skills and confidence to find high-quality jobs and good wages.

Industries advance and generate pathways for high-quality jobs.

Data insights inform and impact decisions and investments.

Businesses prosper, the community thrives, and the economy flourishes.

FISCAL EXPENDITURES

2024-2025 Program Year

Adult

\$4,114,647

28.2%

Youth

\$3,973,397

27.2%

Dislocated Worker

\$1,109,185

7.6%



\$14,614,172

Total Expenditures



TULARE COUNTY

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

2021-2025 Changes

GREATEST GROWTH



Occupations

+ 2,793	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
+ 1,247	Fast Food and Counter Workers
+ 744	Stockers and Order Fillers
+ 684	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term
+ 496	Farmworkers, Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse

Industries

+ 3,147	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
+ 3,073	Education (Local Government)
+ 2,379	Support Activities for Crop Production
+ 1,914	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals
+ 1,650	Restaurants and Other Eating Places

GREATEST DECLINE



Occupations

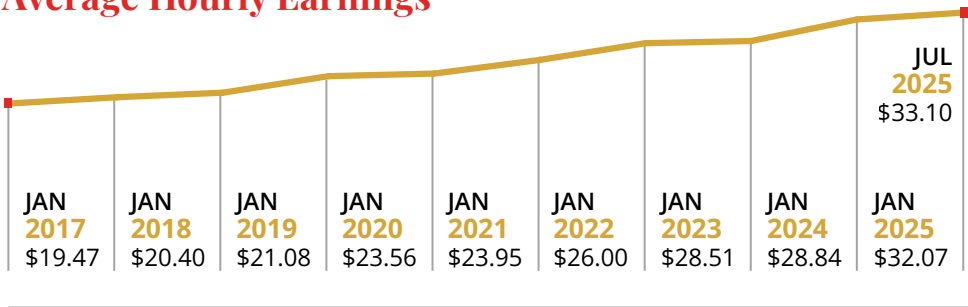
- 793	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers
- 292	Cooks, Fast Food
- 235	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals
- 157	Psychiatric Technicians
- 157	Cashiers

Industries

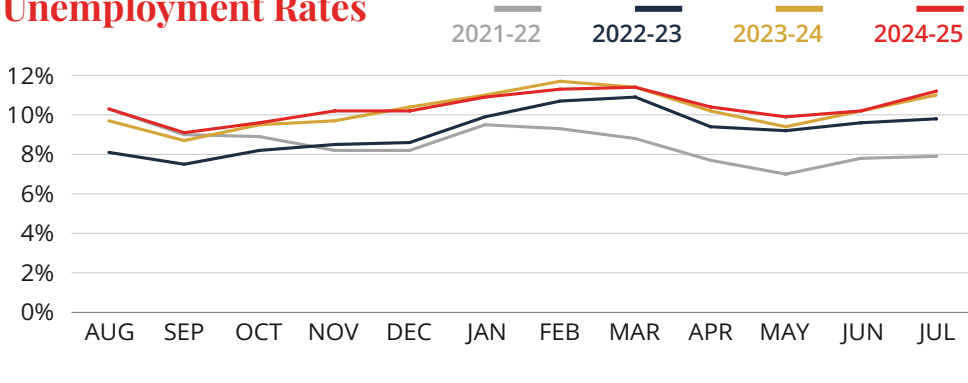
- 2,136	Crop Production
- 727	Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers
- 715	Temporary Help Services
- 430	Direct Life, Health, and Medical Insurance Carriers
- 269	Animal Production



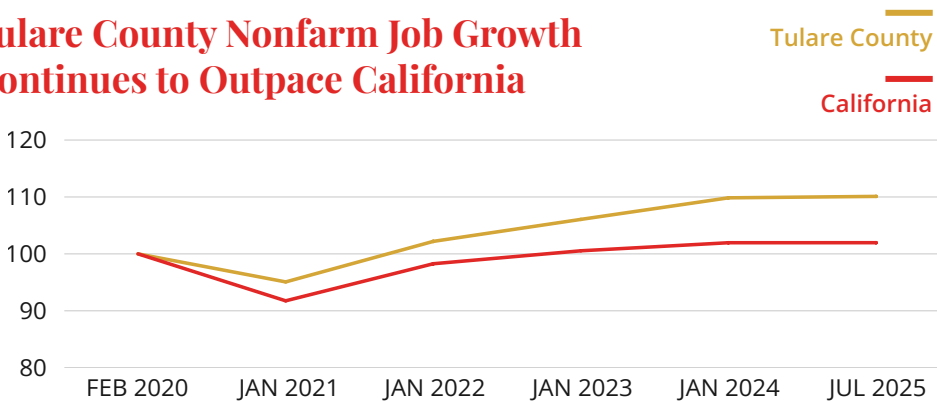
Average Hourly Earnings



Unemployment Rates



Tulare County Nonfarm Job Growth Continues to Outpace California



Labor Force

From June 2024 to June 2025, the labor force increased by an estimated 6,600 people, a continued robust expansion of the labor market.



LEADERSHIP & GROWTH

Growing From Within: Investing in Leadership, Learning, and Innovation

A strong workforce system relies not only on its programs—but on the people who power them. At the WIB, we know that building a resilient, responsive system begins with investing in the growth and leadership of our staff. This year, we made intentional strides to do just that.



Leadership at All Levels

Leadership happens at every level—and this year, our team embraced it. Staff stepped into visible roles across the region and state, facilitating strategic planning sessions, contributing to panels on equity-focused workforce strategies, and helping shape new community initiatives like Tulare County Probation's mobile unit outreach.

Through programs like Leadership Visalia and Leadership Tulare, staff connected with community leaders and expanded their understanding of workforce development's broader impact.



When we invest in our people, we're investing in the future of the system. The knowledge and leadership of our staff are what power long-term impact.



Investments in Learning and Growth

Capacity-building remained a priority. A six-member cohort completed the California Workforce Association's Workforce Development Apprenticeship Program (WDAP), gaining critical skills in policy, systems thinking, and career coaching. Other staff trained in Theory of Participation (ToPs) facilitation, with several going on to co-lead sessions both internally and with partner organizations.

These investments are about more than training—they're about creating a system that learns, adapts, and grows.

Hands-On Innovation

Our team also led from the front with innovative practices. After implementing the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) model, staff shared results and insights at conferences statewide. One member now mentors others in applying TPM to better align training with industry needs.

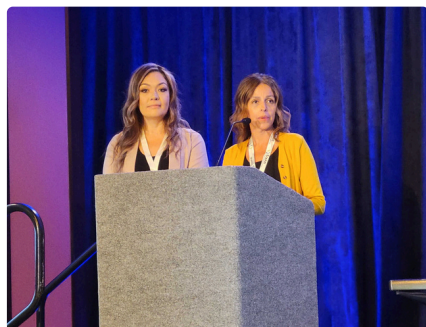
Staff also helped develop our system-wide Theory of Change, aligning values, services, and strategies across the Employment Connection network.

With each new skill, partnership, and idea, we are building a stronger, more agile workforce system—ready to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.



WDAP Outcomes

6 WIB staff completed 12,480 hours of on-the-job training and 864 hours of classroom learning.



BUILDING CAPACITY

Public Workforce Capacity Fund (PWC): Strengthening Systems, Expanding Equity

The James Irvine Foundation's PWC fund provided the WIB with a powerful opportunity to reimagine and reinvest in its workforce system. The result is a more agile, inclusive, and responsive infrastructure—one that's better positioned to meet the diverse needs of Tulare County's communities.

This initiative focused on building the internal systems, strategies, and culture needed to increase equity and expand access across the region. Key achievements include:

Revamped WIOA procurement

policy: Evaluated providers based on demonstrated success and their capacity to serve specific regions.

Reorganized service delivery structure to establish subregions:

Aligned providers with communities to streamline service delivery and avoid duplication.

Expanded rural outreach strategies:

Expanded services to serve areas that have historically been underrepresented in workforce services.

Reimagining Workforce Success.

Reimagining and reinvesting in our workforce system has created a more agile, inclusive, and responsive infrastructure, better equipped to meet the diverse needs of Tulare County's communities.

System-wide staff training:

Introduced inclusive and holistic coaching techniques and new tools.

This work is not only strengthening the workforce system internally—it's leading to more consistent and community-driven services across Tulare County.

To ground these improvements in lived experience, the WIB launched a Rural Community Listening initiative in partnership with Middlestate, detailed in the following article.

The PWC grant allowed us to pause, listen, and rebuild with intention. We've used it to shape the kind of system we believe in—one that puts people first, responds with agility, and reflects the communities it serves.



Rural Community Engagement: Listening, Learning, & Leading with Equity

When the WIB set out to improve its system, one thing was clear: real transformation had to start with the voices of the people who rely on the system the most. That's why, with support from the PWC Fund, the WIB partnered with Middlestate to conduct a Rural Community Listening Tour across Tulare County.

Across four rural communities, including Earlimart, Strathmore, Cutler/Orosi, and Ivanhoe, the team held both large and small group discussions in trusted spaces like schools and community centers.

Three recurring themes surfaced:

Stability and Security: Residents want reliable hours, fair wages, and benefits, not just a paycheck.

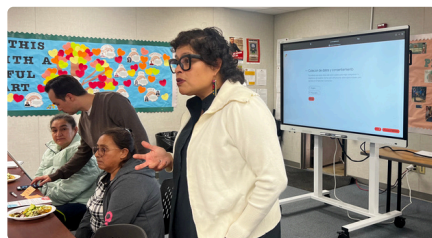
Opportunity & Growth: People are eager to learn, grow, and move forward, but lack access to local training or clear career paths.

Supportive Environments: Job seekers emphasized the importance of inclusive, respectful workplaces that value their contributions.

Rather than stop at insight gathering, the findings are actively shaping the WIB's strategy. The community has informed RFPs, contract design, and outreach plans—ensuring that future services are better aligned with the real lives, schedules, and values of rural residents. For the WIB, this work marks a shift from simply serving communities to designing with them.

149 Community Members Participated

- 475** Households Reached Through Door-to-Door Outreach
- 4** Communities Visited
- 9** Community Listening Sessions
- 6** Partner Collaborations



“If there were a place where everyone could walk in and get information on jobs, training, and support, it would help so much.”

— Ivanhoe Participant

SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Tulare-Kings Industrial Partnership: Building a Skilled Workforce for Tulare County's Future

Tulare County's industrial sector remains a key driver of the regional economy, providing high-quality jobs and offering long-term career potential. Yet, for many employers, positions in manufacturing, logistics, and maintenance remain hard to fill.

To address this challenge, the WIB has deepened its investment in the Tulare-Kings Industrial Sector Partnership (TKIP)—a robust collaboration between employers, educators, and workforce professionals committed to connecting unemployed or underemployed workers with high-quality industrial careers, while helping local employers fill critical workforce gaps.

This partnership is built on two nationally recognized models, Next Gen Sector Partnership and Talent Pipeline Management (TPM).

Together, these models help the WIB and its partners understand industry demands, review existing training programs, provide targeted feedback to educators, and secure commitments from employers to hire or offer work-based learning opportunities to qualified candidates.

Next Gen Sector Partnership

An industry-driven collaboration among employers, educators, and workforce professionals dedicated to aligning training with real-world labor market needs.

Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)

A six step employer-led, demand-driven approach to closing the skills gap.

Step 1:

Organize for Employer Leadership

Step 2:

Engage in Demand Planning

Step 3:

Communicate Competency & Credential Requirements

Step 4:

Analyze Talent Supply

Step 5:

Build Talent Supply Chains

Step 6:

Continuous Improvement



Tulare-Kings Industrial Partnership Outcomes

Industry Sector Summits

In collaboration with the Tulare-Kings College and Career Collaborative, Industry Sector Summits offer immersive industry tours for educators and workforce professionals.

At events like the Transportation Summit, attendees examine emerging trends, skills needs, and hiring challenges in the industrial sector.



24 Attended the Transportation Summit



PowerUp 2.0

In partnership with College of the Sequoias Training Resource Center, the WIB launched PowerUp 2.0—a no-cost training program that prepares participants to earn Smart Automation Certification Alliance (SACA) micro-credentials in Electrical Systems and Electric Motor Control Systems.



PowerUp 2.0 was funded through the Good Jobs Challenge grant.

20 Enrollments

17 Completers

14 Obtained SACA 201 & 202 Credentials

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

TKIP enhanced hands-on training by partnering with companies like Ruiz Foods to offer on-the-job training (OJT) placements. These opportunities equip job seekers with essential workplace skills and industry exposure, bridging the gap between classroom learning and full-time employment.

3 OJT Contract Placements

Critical Occupations Identified

- Warehouse/Forklift Operator
- Maintenance Technician
- Quality Assurance Technician
- Mechanical Industrial Engineer
- Sanitation Hygienist
- Electrical & Automation Technician
- Refrigeration Technician

7 Training providers submitted curricula for evaluation in the Forklift Operator, Maintenance Technician, and Quality Assurance Technician training programs.

Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership: A Model for Regional Collaboration and Workforce Innovation

The Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership (TKHP) continues to stand out as one of the region's most ambitious and impactful workforce collaborations. This industry-led initiative provides a platform for local healthcare employers to come together, identify challenges, and co-design solutions that align with the sector's educational, workforce, and policy needs.

What makes TKHP unique is not just its focus—it's the way it operates. Unlike traditional advisory models, TKHP is driven by the healthcare industry itself, supported by a committed network of education and workforce partners who align training and support services with real-time labor market demands.

Together, healthcare employers, educators, and community stakeholders identify skills gaps, shape career pathways, and ensure that training programs reflect real-time job requirements, creating clear on-ramps into high-demand, higher-wage healthcare careers.

TKHP's collaborative structure and results-driven approach have drawn statewide recognition and frequent visits from external organizations seeking to replicate its success. The partnership serves as a model of what's possible when industry leads, and the system aligns behind shared goals.

When healthcare leaders take the lead, and the system aligns behind their vision, we don't just fill jobs, we build a stronger, more resilient workforce. The Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership is proof that when industry drives the conversation, lasting change follows.

Opening Doors for Local Nurses

After identifying a critical nursing shortage and the barriers preventing local students from entering community college nursing programs, the College of the Sequoias championed Senate Bill 1183 (Hurtado) to improve access for students from medically underserved areas. The Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership supported this effort, helping to amplify local voices and advance a more equitable, homegrown healthcare workforce pipeline.

Visit tularewib.org/tkhp to learn more and view TKHP's industry & public partners.



TKHP Priorities & Action Teams

Pathways to Careers

Develop meaningful career exploration to prepare, inspire, and educate students about in-demand health careers.

Careers in Care Connection

Enhance the connection between healthcare employers and potential future employees by showcasing workplace culture and career opportunities.

Talent Pipeline Management

Strengthen employer-educator partnerships by analyzing workforce needs, building data-driven talent pipelines, and advocating for current & future workers through measurable outcomes.

Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership Outcomes

13th Annual Growing Health Leaders Conference (GHL)

GHL is an annual event focused on health career exploration for high school students in the Tulare and Kings County School Districts. Hosted by the Tulare-Kings College & Careers Collaborative in partnership with the WIB, this event is organized on behalf of the TKHP.



321 Students Attended

40 Speakers from various industry partners

13 Educational Booths

Careers in Care Hub

TKHP employers collaborated with educational institutions to create a resource that meets industry demand while considering the needs of students and job seekers.

Careers in Care Hub was presented at the 2025 GHL conference.



Critical Occupations Identified

- Medical Assistant
- Psychiatric Technician
- Licensed Vocational Nurse
- Paramedic
- Pharmacy Technician
- Community Health Worker
- Radiology Technologist
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Assistant

2 New Apprenticeship standards were developed and submitted to the Department of Labor and the Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION SYSTEM THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

More Than a Plan: A Shared Vision for Workforce Transformation

This year, the Employment Connection partners took a transformative step forward with the launch of the first system-wide ToC. This structured, strategic framework defines a shared vision, values, and path forward for the workforce development system in Tulare County.

The ToC was created through a collaborative process involving more than 45 individuals across the workforce system. Together, this diverse group contributed critical insights to shape a model that is not only aspirational but deeply actionable.

The EC Theory of Change provides a roadmap to:

Unify staff and partners around a common purpose.

Affirm system values rooted in inclusion, human-centered design, and responsiveness.

Skills First, Always.

The EC system is united in a single goal—helping every individual build the skills and confidence to thrive in a changing economy, because true career growth extends beyond job placement.

Outline strategies for braided service delivery, partner collaboration, and equitable access.

Define and measure impact, with a focus on sustainable, system-wide outcomes.

At the heart of the EC ToC is a commitment to skills development and recognition that real career growth requires more than job placement.

“The process brought clarity to our specific focus moving forward. I left feeling inspired—not just by the vision we built together, but by the shared commitment to creating real, lasting pathways to opportunity for every person in our county. Furthermore, the facilitation was engaging, thoughtful, and motivating, and has inspired me to explore doing similar work within my own organization.”

— Michelle Engel-Silva,
Chief Executive Officer, Proteus, Inc.



Employment Connection Theory of Change

The Issue

Across Tulare County, far too many individuals lack the skills needed to secure in-demand, family-sustaining jobs.

Our Focus

Job Seekers

Businesses

Our Values

Customer-Centered

Skills-Focused

Welcoming

Inclusive + Accessible

Collaborative

Empowerment

Our Strategies



Professional Well-Equipped Staff



Community Partnership



Guided Support + Coaching



Local Talent Pool Development



Lifelong Skills Development



Customer Data + Insights

Expected Impact

Foster personal and professional growth by aiding individuals in overcoming obstacles and realizing their potential.

Collaborative partnerships maximize resource-sharing and coordinate a high-impact service system.

Every person has equitable access to workforce services that equip them for success.

Families break cycles of poverty, and achieve sustainable economic independence.

The EC system serves as a reliable talent pipeline for local employers.

EDC PILOT PROGRAM

Incentivizing Progress, Advancing Potential

With funding from the California Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) initiative, the Fresno Economic Development Corporation selected the WIB to administer the EDC Pilot Program. This bold, future-focused initiative reimagines how the local workforce system engages, supports, and motivates individuals on their path to meaningful employment through skill development.

At its core, the EDC Pilot is an incentive-based model, a strategy that offers financial rewards for achieving key educational and skill development milestones. This approach acknowledges the real-world barriers job seekers face and provides timely motivation to continue building momentum, developing skills, and gaining confidence.

Participants earned incentives by completing one or more of the following programs:

JumpStart: Early career exposure and work readiness for young adults.

High School Diploma or Equivalency (HSD/HSE) Attainment: A critical credential for long-term employment success.



Job Readiness Milestone

Completion: Verifiable progress in the EC career development model.

Occupational Skills Training and/or On-the-Job Training (OJT): Hands-on experience with industry-aligned skill building.

This model fuels engagement by ensuring that each step forward is recognized and reinforced. As we scale this model, we continue to collect data, listen to participants, and refine our approach—ensuring the program remains responsive, equitable, and impactful.



Incentives in Action: The Data Behind the EDC Pilot

A total of \$995,316 was awarded to the WIB to provide milestone-based incentives that motivate progress, engagement, and achievement.

848

Incentives Issued

\$341,510

Incentive Funds Disbursed

Four Opportunities to Earn Incentives

259



Participants
Completed
Job Readiness
Milestones

370



Students
Participated
in JumpStart

89



Participants
Obtained a
HSD/HSE

130



Participants
Completed a
Training
Program

The EDC Pilot ensures that each step forward is recognized and reinforced, particularly for students, young adults, and adults who may not have a high school diploma or are re-entering the workforce.

CAREER SERVICES

Personalized Support Creates Pathways to Skills and Stability

At the core of Tulare County's workforce strategy is a simple belief: a good job leads to a better life. That belief guides the WIB's investment in WIOA Title I Career Services, delivered through four Employment Connection Centers in Visalia, Porterville, Tulare, and Dinuba.

These centers are more than service points—they're launchpads for change, offering personalized support to help job seekers build confidence, set goals, and develop actionable career plans.

A central focus of these services is skills-based training. Career Coaches help individuals explore opportunities that match their interests and local job market demand, ensuring they're equipped to compete in today's economy. Participating individuals can access workshops, assessments, labor market information, and supportive services to overcome barriers like transportation, childcare, or housing.

Services are delivered by trusted community-based partners, CSET and Proteus, Inc., who bring strong local relationships and innovative practices to meet the unique needs of each community.

Providing these career services ensure Tulare County residents are not just connected to work—but prepared to build lasting, meaningful careers in a fast-changing economy.

By helping people find quality jobs that allow them to support their families, we are not only strengthening individual lives but investing in the long-term prosperity of our community.

Impact of Career Services

Customized Support: Personalized coaching and action plans help individuals overcome barriers, explore career pathways, and achieve employment goals.

Expanded Access to Training: Practical skills and industry-recognized credentials enhance employability.

Improved Job Readiness: Workshops and assessments help individuals develop job search skills, prepare for interviews, and build confidence.

Connection to Job Opportunities: Job seekers gain access to immediate openings and connect with local employers ready to hire.



Meet Brandon

A Career Services Success Story

A Journey from Aspiration to Licensed Psychiatric Technician

Brandon came to the Porterville Employment Connection in May 2023, seeking a path into the healthcare field. Facing long-term unemployment and financial barriers, he learned about scholarship opportunities that could help him pursue his dream of becoming a Psychiatric Technician.

With support from EC staff and an occupational skills training (OST) scholarship, Brandon enrolled in Porterville College. He completed his



training in December 2024, and passed his state boards just a month later. Though job searching was challenging, Brandon stayed connected with his EC coaches, received resume and interview support, and ultimately secured full-time employment with the State of California at Coalinga State Hospital.

Brandon's story is a powerful reminder of what's possible with determination and the right support system.

Looking ahead, Brandon has plans to continue developing skills to pursue additional certifications.

“The guidance, workshops, and community support at Employment Connection made a huge difference in my success. The connections I made and the skills I developed have been crucial for my growth, making it a worthwhile investment for anyone looking to further their education.”

—Brandon Bravo



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

Employment Connection Visits

49,310

Total Visits

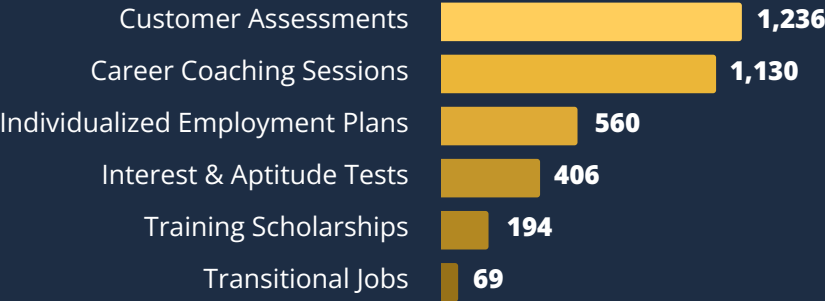
12,997

Distinct Customers

Employment & Training Services

- Career Coaching
- Training & Scholarships
- Hiring Events and Job Leads
- Job Readiness Workshops
- Accessible Resource Room

Customer Services Provided



*Funded by WIOA

Center Locations & Contact Information

Dinuba

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

Visalia

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

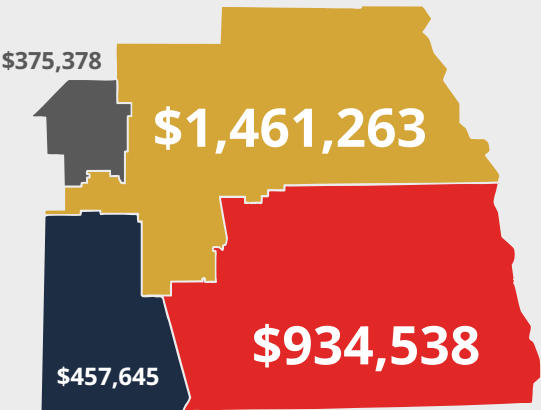
Tulare

155 N "K" St.
559-684-4987

Porterville

1063 W. Henderson Ave.
559-788-1400

Total Investments by Service Area



Investing in Skill-Building Success

\$1,678,281 Invested in Training, funded by WIOA and Specialized Grants

\$1,071,080

Total Scholarship Investment

327

Total Scholarships Awarded

Scholarship Investments by Industry

Healthcare

57%

192 Scholarships → \$660,309

Warehousing & Logistics

37%

108 Scholarships → \$422,402

Public Safety

4%

14 Scholarships → \$44,188

Manufacturing

2%

9 Scholarships → \$20,287

"Other" scholarships make up less than 1%.

Investments in Work-Based Training



138

Subsidized Employment & Transitional Jobs
\$583,816 paid in wages



4

OJTs
\$23,385 paid in reimbursements

Training Services Impacts

Transitional Jobs (TJ)

Paid, short-term work experiences for individuals facing barriers to gain income and build skills.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Participants earn wages while learning in the workplace. Employers are reimbursed for training, promoting retention, and growth.

Occupational Skills Training Scholarship

Financial assistance for required program fees for individuals pursuing industry-recognized credentials in high-demand sectors.

SPECIALIZED GRANTS

Restoring Opportunity, Rebuilding Lives

A community is strongest when everyone has a chance to thrive—including those who are justice-involved. Through the RESET (Readiness for Employment through Sustainable Education & Training) and Prison to Employment (P2E) programs, the Employment Connection system provides meaningful second chances, connecting individuals with the support, skills, and opportunities they need to re-enter the workforce and rebuild their lives.

These programs show the WIB’s commitment to equity, restoration, and long-term community well-being. Whether re-entering society after incarceration or facing systemic barriers to employment, the programs are tailored to meet people where they are. Participants are empowered to develop real-world skills and define a new path forward with dignity and support. RESET and P2E offer personalized, wraparound services that help participants build confidence and prepare for success.

RESET and P2E are creating real, lasting change—for individuals, families, and neighborhoods. They are a powerful example of what’s possible when we invest in people, collaborate across systems, and believe in the power of a second chance.

Key Collaborators: CSET, the San Joaquin County Employment & Economic Development Department, and Tulare County Probation

Impact of Re-entry Programs

Career Counseling and Job Readiness Training

Paid Transitional Jobs for hands-on experience and income stabilization

Supportive Services to address barriers like transportation, housing, or documentation

Connections to Permanent Employment and skill-building opportunities

108 Enrolled Customers

38 Transitional Jobs Funded

48 Customers Entered Unsubsidized Employment



Meet Loraha

A Re-entry Success Story

From Uncertainty to Triumph: Loraha's Journey to Employment

When Loraha first visited the Porterville Employment Connection in October 2024, she had never worked before, struggled with self-confidence, and faced housing instability. At the time, she was also working with a probation officer and looking for a second chance to move her life in a new direction.

With guidance and encouragement from Employment Connection staff, she attended job readiness workshops, participated in Job Connect, and received one-on-one coaching to build her skills and confidence.

Her dedication paid off when she landed



a temporary training opportunity at Black Bear Diner, earning \$17 per hour. With strong performance and a positive attitude, she successfully completed her training in December 2024 and was offered full-time employment.

Loraha's story is a powerful example of perseverance and the impact of meaningful support. Now on a path to stability, she's proving that with the right tools and encouragement, success is always within reach.

With support and determination, Loraha turned opportunity into success.

“ I never thought I could do this, but now I know I can. Employment Connection believed in me before I believed in myself.”

—Loraha Rutledge Garfield

Restoring Parks, Rebuilding Futures

When disaster strikes, recovery is about more than rebuilding structures—it's about restoring opportunity. The Severe Winter Storm (SWS) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) allowed Tulare County to do both. The project restored two public parks, Bartlett Park in Porterville and Kings River Park near Visalia, while providing temporary jobs to 64 individuals, many of whom faced significant employment barriers.

A major milestone was reached in March 2025, when Bartlett Park officially reopened after being closed for two years due to severe flooding. Over 17 months, crews cleared debris, restored restrooms and playgrounds, and made the park safe and welcoming once again. The reopening brought together community members, County leaders, and partners to celebrate the achievement.

Many of these individuals simply needed the chance to demonstrate their work ethic, gain experience, and re-enter the workforce. This grant gave them that chance—and it changed lives.

Building on that success, a new crew launched a similar restoration effort at Kings River Park, removing debris, rebuilding fences, and restoring walking trails.

Participants received job coaching and ongoing support while gaining hands-on experience in park maintenance, debris removal, and construction, building valuable skills that set the stage for long-term employment. These roles offered more than income—they delivered structure, purpose, and a pathway to stability.



Photo: Bartlett Park, Kings River



Meet Samuel

A Temporary Job Success Story



From Setback to Stability

In May 2024, Samuel Guerrero walked into the Porterville Employment Connection Center determined to restart his life. With over 11 years of management experience, he felt confident, but re-entering the workforce proved more difficult than expected. Despite his background, Samuel faced barriers that made securing a job a challenge.

With support from the Severe Winter Storm (SWS) program, Samuel received career coaching, resume assistance, and job leads. After reinstating his driver's license, he accepted a temporary laborer position helping restore Bartlett Park.

That opportunity became a turning point. Samuel gained new skills, developed a passion for public service, and set his sights on a permanent role with Tulare County Parks & Grounds. With guidance from his coach and a letter of recommendation, he reapplied—despite initially being told he didn't qualify.

In June 2025, Samuel officially began his new role as a full-time Parks & Grounds Worker, earning \$19.30/hour. His journey shows how temporary jobs can lead to long-term opportunity—and how determination, support, and the right chance can transform a life.

Samuel turned temporary work into a permanent career path.

“Working here has given me the opportunity for personal and professional growth. It's helped me gain confidence and purpose, knowing I'm providing a service to the community. This program taught me communication, teamwork, and adaptability. It's not just a job—it's been a turning point in my life.”

—Samuel Guerrero Barajas

The Data Behind Specialized Grants

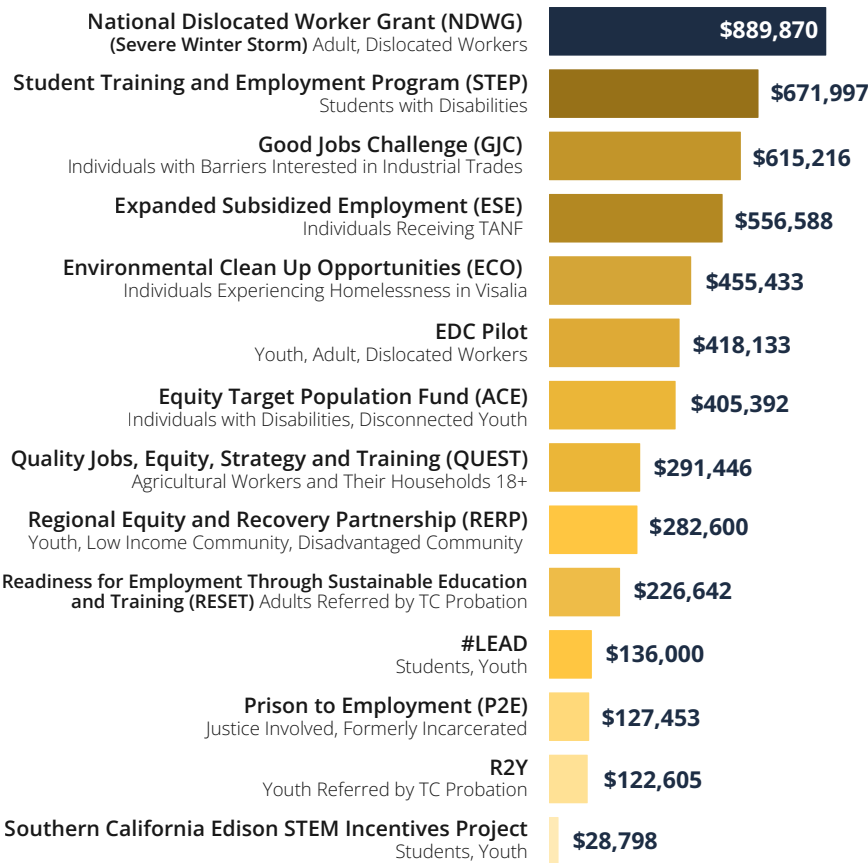
\$5,228,173

Specialized Grant Expenditures

1,665

Customers Served

Targeted Funding to Reach Underserved Populations



YOUTH SERVICES

Investing in the Next Generation

Preparing young people for a successful future is one of the most powerful investments we can make as a community. That's why the WIB invests funding in youth services designed to support young people across the county—whether they are still in school or navigating the challenges of early adulthood.

Youth services are delivered through two tracks, tailored to meet young people where they are in their journey:

Out-of-School Youth (OSY): Serves young adults aged 18 to 24 not currently employed or enrolled in post-secondary education. The goal is to help these young adults explore careers, gain hands-on experience, and build marketable skills.

In-School Youth (ISY): Serves high school students enrolled in Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways, this program provides additional support to help students stay on track and envision their future.

All youth services are individualized and customer-focused. Career Coaches work closely with each young adult to develop a plan tailored to their unique

goals, needs, and potential. This might include skills assessments, labor market exploration, assistance in earning a high school diploma or equivalency, or referrals to supportive services that remove barriers to success.

Services are delivered by trusted community-based partners, CSET, Proteus, Inc., and TCOE, who bring strong local relationships and innovative practices to meet the unique needs of each community.

Impact of Youth Services

Empowered Career Pathways

Young adults gain clarity and direction through career exploration, hands-on training, and exposure to real-world work environments—setting them on paths toward meaningful careers.

Improved Educational and Employment Outcomes

Young adults are more likely to earn a high school diploma or equivalent, enroll in post-secondary education or training, and secure quality employment with long-term growth potential.

Reduced Barriers, Increased Equity

Through tailored support, coaching, and access to resources, young adults—especially those facing significant challenges, are given the tools and opportunities to succeed, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive local workforce.

Meet Alissah

A Youth Services Success Story



From Uncertainty to Opportunity: Alissah's First Step into the Workforce

After graduating from high school in Exeter, Alissah was eager to enter the workforce but didn't know where to start. She turned to the youth@work program, where she quickly identified her strengths in customer service and set a goal to find employment in retail.

With the program's support, Alissah received job leads and wasted no time applying. Within a week, she landed her first-ever job at a clothing retailer in Visalia. When unexpected transportation costs became a challenge, youth@work provided a gas voucher, ensuring she could get to work without worry.

Alissah's hard work and determination paid off, earning her an employment incentive and a newfound confidence in her future. "I didn't know where to start, but now I have a job I love and a clear path forward," she shared.

Her story is a testament to how guidance, support, and determination can turn uncertainty into success!

With guidance and support, Alissah found her path forward.

“ I didn't know where to start, but after just one appointment, I had a clear path forward. Now, I have a job that I love and the confidence to keep growing.”

—Alissah De la Torres



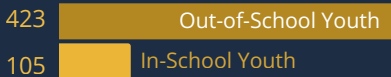


Employment, Training, and Education Services

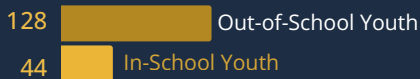
- Career & Education Exploration
- Paid Internships & Work Experience
- Job Leads and Hiring Events
- Work Readiness Training
- One-on-One Mentoring
- Supportive Services

Youth Services by the Numbers

525 Youth Served



172 Paid Work Experiences



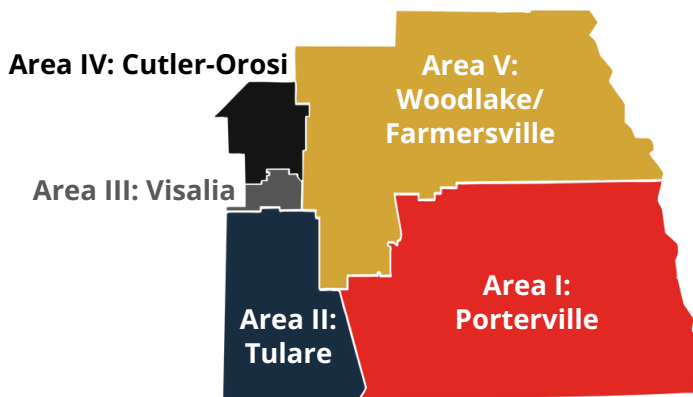
Wages & Benefits

\$656,211
Paid Wages

Training Scholarships

33 Young Adults
\$74,844 Invested

Youth@work Service Delivery Areas in PY 24-25



BUSINESS SERVICES

Helping Businesses Compete and Communities Thrive

A strong local economy starts with strong businesses—and the WIB plays a critical role in supporting employers as they grow, adapt, and invest in talent. Through its Business Services team, the WIB offers a robust suite of workforce solutions designed to help Tulare County businesses remain competitive, resilient, and forward-focused.

Our approach is collaborative and customized. We listen to what businesses need, and tailor our support accordingly—whether that means helping to fill urgent hiring needs, supporting workforce upskilling, or navigating a business transition. Business Services ensures that local employers have access to resources that strengthen both their teams and our economy.

When businesses thrive, our communities do too. We're here to make sure employers have the talent, tools, and support they need to grow and adapt—no matter the challenge.

Services for Businesses

Recruitment Assistance

Connect employers with candidates through job promotion and hiring events.

Employee Training

Support upskilling through customized, business-aligned training.

Subsidized Employment

Offset training costs with wage reimbursements for new hires.

Restructuring & Downsizing

Help for businesses and workers navigating downsizing transitions.

Labor Market Information

Provide data to guide hiring, wages, and growth planning.

No-Cost HR Hotline

Connect with HR experts and monthly compliance webinars.



Meet

Security First Alarm King

A Business Success Story



Hiring Made Easy: Security First's Job Connect Experience

In September 2024, Security First Alarm King connected with the WIB after being referred by the Fresno Workforce Connection. They initially utilized the WIB's recruitment assistance services by participating as a guest employer at Job Connect, a monthly hiring event that offers direct access to job-ready candidates. The company hosted open interviews immediately following the networking portion of the event, resulting in the successful hire of three alarm technicians, two sales consultants, a sales manager, and an office assistant.

Security First Alarm King described Job Connect as a game-changer, returning as a guest employer on four occasions. They especially valued the structured format and private space provided for interviews, which allowed them to connect with candidates more effectively.

In addition to Job Connect, Security First Alarm King participated in the VEDC Job Fairs and the annual Tulare County Job Fair. They continue to collaborate with the WIB team when hiring needs arise and have expressed interest in utilizing training incentives, such as On-the-Job Training contracts, to support the development of their team.

Strategic recruitment events strengthen local workforce hiring.

“Helen Keller once said, *'Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.'* This is also true for the WIB, which not only caters to our community members but also supports the success of small businesses, I am proud to be affiliated with such a community-driven establishment and plan to continue our successful relationship for many years to come.”

—Jaime Biggins, Operations Manager, Security First Alarm King

Connecting Employers with Skilled Talent

In today's competitive labor market, helping businesses find the right talent is essential to regional economic success. The WIB plays a vital role in connecting employers to a pipeline of skilled, job-ready candidates. Through a range of coordinated and customizable services, we make it easier for businesses to identify, attract, and hire the workforce they need to thrive.

Recruitment Assistance is a key pillar of our business services strategy. It's not a one-size-fits-all solution—our approach is flexible, collaborative, and designed to meet employers where they are.

Each of the Recruitment Assistance strategies supports a shared goal of helping businesses access skilled talent while assisting job seekers in finding meaningful employment. Our success is rooted in strategic partnerships, real-time labor market intelligence, and a human-centered approach that ensures job seekers are prepared and employers are supported.

Recruitment Assistance Strategies

Job Fairs & Hiring Events

The WIB hosts and supports large-scale job fairs and targeted hiring events across Tulare County, bringing together employers and job seekers in dynamic, high-impact forums.

Job Connect

This popular weekly recruitment event allows businesses to showcase open positions and connect with talent in a streamlined format.

Job Leads Packet

Distributed weekly, this resource compiles active job openings from across the region and is shared widely with job seekers and partners.



Recruitment Assistance Outcomes

Job Fairs & Hiring Events



26 Events

299 Participating Employers

6,126 Participating Attendees

Job Connect



32 Participating Employers

4,432 Participating Attendees

Youth Job Fairs



3 Events

47 Participating Employers

375 Participating Attendees

Supporting Businesses and Workers Through Transition

When a business faces downsizing, layoffs, or closure, the impact is felt deeply across the organization and the broader community. In these moments, the Rapid Response team steps in—not just as a provider of services, but as a trusted, compassionate partner. Led by the WIB, in partnership with the Employment Development Department (EDD) and Employment Connection Centers, the Rapid Response program is a fully customizable, employer-centered service designed to support both businesses and their employees during times of change.

Each Rapid Response engagement begins with listening. The team meets directly with business leadership to understand the scope of the transition and tailor a service plan that reflects the organization's specific needs. The approach is flexible, confidential, and built on a foundation of empathy. Our goal is to reduce disruption and minimize stress for both employers and employees—guiding each through the transition with clarity, respect, and actionable support.

Employer Benefits

Strategic planning and guidance for communication with employees

Coordination with state compliance requirements (i.e., WARN notices)

Access to HR consultation and business service resources

Connection to restructuring and reemployment support

Employee Benefits

Information on unemployment insurance and benefits

Career counseling and skills assessments

Job search support and placement services

Access to training opportunities and supportive services

Rapid Response Outcomes

37

Employers Served

31

Orientations Provided

4,249 / 1,460

Employees Affected / Served





Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County

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