WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF TULARE COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, November 12, 2026; 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Employment Connection
4025 W. Noble Ave, Visalia, CA

REMOTE ACCESS: To participate remotely, please join the meeting via Zoom Webinar: Join the WIB Webinar

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1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (Three minutes per speaker; fifteen minutes total for general public comment.)** Any member of the public wishing to address the Employment Connection Committee on a matter within its jurisdiction may do so during the general public comment period. The Committee may not discuss or take action on items not listed on the Agenda. For items listed on the Agenda, public comment will be taken when the item is considered. Speakers are asked to state their name for the record. The Chair may limit the total time for public comment as needed.

3. **CONSENT ITEMS:** Items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be approved by a single motion. A Committee member or member of the public may request that an item be removed for separate discussion and possible action. Items removed from the Consent Calendar will be considered under Regular Items at the direction of the Chair.

   a. Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes
   Approve August 27, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes.

4. **REGULAR ITEM**
   a. Employment Connection Partner Handbook
   Approve the revised Employment Connection Partner Handbook and recommend approval by the Workforce Investment Board.

5. **PARTNER ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

6. **ONE-STOP OPERATOR ITEMS**
   a. AJCC Certification
   b. Partner Action Items
   c. Employment Connection Committee Dates for 2027

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Executive Director's Report & Partner Dialogue

Discussion with Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) on upcoming HR 1 changes, potential impacts on Tulare County residents, and opportunities for partner collaboration.

b. Employment Connection Integrated Workgroup Update

i. Training & Professional Development

ii. Partner Relationship Building

iii. Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use

c. Innovators by Design (IBD)

d. Business Services Updates

e. Employment Connection OSO Report (Handouts)

8. UPCOMING ECC MEETING DATE - 2027

February 25, 2027

9. GOOD OF THE ORDER/ADJOURN

ACCOMMODATIONS: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you require special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Laura Gonzalez at (559) 713-5200 or laura.gonzalez@tularewib.org during normal business hours. Requests made at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance will help ensure appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

AGENDA MATERIALS: Agenda packets and supporting documents related to items on this Agenda are available at www.tularewib.org and for public inspection at the Workforce Investment Board office, 309 W. Main Street, Suite 120, Visalia, CA, during normal business hours.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 27, 2026

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Present: Esbeydy Ruvalcaba-Vice Chair, Michelle Engel-Silva, John Werner, Krishna Adams, Aleyda Montenegro, Michelle Miller-Galaz, Tami Olson, Victoria Guzman, Paul Prado, Larriann Torrez, Jacky Bader, Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Absent: Teri Dobson, Jean Cardenas, Mary Rodarte, Misty Bond

1. **CALL TO ORDER**: Esbeydy Ruvalcaba-Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**: Esbeydy Ruvalcaba-Vice Chair called for public comments; none were presented.

3. **CONSENT ITEMS**
   a. Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes
   Approve May 14, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes

   Motion by Tami Olsen, seconded by Michelle Miller-Galaz, to approve the Consent Items, The Motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. **GUEST SPEAKERS**
   a. Porterville Development Center
   Jacky Bader, Supervisor of Academic Instruction, presented an overview of Porterville Developmental Center (PDC), a state-operated facility serving court-referred adults with intellectual developmental disabilities and complex support needs.

PDC offers education, high school diploma pathways, competency restoration, career technical training, and paid vocational experience in printing, woodworking, upholstery, landscaping, and culinary arts.

Ms. Bader highlighted employment opportunities in healthcare, education, social services, skilled trades, and support services. Openings are available through CalCareers. The WIB partnership will support recruitment and connect individuals transitioning out of PDC with workforce services.

b. Careers in Care Hub

Staci Chastain, HHSA Deputy Director of Public Health Operations, introduced the Careers in Care Hub, a resource connecting job seekers to local healthcare employers, career opportunities, and pathways into essential healthcare careers.

Larissa Alvarado, Director of Career Pathways with True North Health Works, discussed using the Hub in career coaching, classrooms, and career events. An adult-school pilot involving approximately 60 students received positive feedback.

Planned improvements include career-ladder information, expanded classroom use, and educator outreach. Partners were encouraged to promote the Hub using available flyers, QR codes, and social media materials.

5. PARTNERSHIP ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Partners shared updates on services and activities.

6. ONE-STOP OPERATOR ITEMS

a. Partner Action Items & Deadlines

Partners were asked to update their Partner Guide entries, Partner-at-a-Glance information, Training Navigators, and referral contacts through the emailed electronic form. Each organization should identify at least two referral contacts for backup coverage.

Updates were requested by September 30, 2026, with flexibility if needed. Referral contacts were encouraged to attend Employment Connection onboarding.

b. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Infrastructure Funding Agreement Timeline

Most signatures had been received for the Infrastructure Funding Agreement covering co-located partners in Visalia and Porterville. The target completion date was September 14, 2026, followed by distribution of the executed agreement and reconciliation of prior-year and current-year agreements.

c. AJCC Certification

The AJCC certification process for the Dinuba, Porterville, Visalia, and Tulare Employment Connection Centers was scheduled to begin October 19. 2026. The review will address WIOA requirements, accessibility, equal employment opportunity, partner MOUs, service delivery, and continuous improvement. Independent reviews, site visits, and partner input will be included.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. WIB Executive Director Report

Jennie C. Bautista provided a federal budget update, noting that forward funding generally protects current workforce operations from immediate budget delays.

The WIB will begin the two-year modification of the 2025-2028 local and regional plans, incorporating labor market data, state priorities, and stakeholder input. David Schinder will facilitate input sessions. An internal kickoff was scheduled for December 9, 2026, with stakeholder meetings to follow.

Ms. Bautista introduced Miriam Vasquez, Career Services Analyst, and Diego Lopez, Youth Services Analyst. She recognized Mary Rodarte's 35 years of service and announced her planned retirement on September 18, 2026. She also introduced the importance of artificial intelligence literacy in workforce services.

b. Employment Connection Integrated Workgroup Update

i. Training & Professional Development

The workgroup resumed implementation of the 2026-2028 Professional Development & Training Plan, researched training resources, and launched the Training Navigator Model.

Next steps include confirming Training Navigators and developing training in four areas: Communication with Success, Advanced Customer Service, Practical Trauma-Informed Service, and Cross-Training & System Knowledge. Training Navigator responses were due September 30, 2026

ii. Partner Relationship Building
The updated EC System Overview & Cross-Training was launched. Updates to the Partner Guide, At-A-Glance resources, and Single Points of Contact continued.

Next steps include reconvening the workgroup and expanding cross-training and networking opportunities to strengthen partner communication and knowledge of services. Partner updates were due September 30, 2026

iii. Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use
The workgroup continued implementing the Referral Guide and Process Map and launched the Partner Referral Customer Survey. Erika Bentancourt became Workgroup Lead.

Next steps include reviewing survey results, establishing referral performance metrics, and identifying service gaps and improvements. The workgroup will determine which data best supports ECC and partner decision-making.

c. Innovators by Design (IBD)
Nicola Wissler provided an update on the Innovators by Design Conference, scheduled for October 7, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center.

The conference will focus on innovation and regional partnerships. Keynote speaker Dr. Saul Jimenez-Sandoval, President of Fresno State University, will present *Strengthening the Valley Together: Expanding Opportunity Through Partnership.*

d. Business Services Updates
Ryan Leasure reported that recruitment events drew 8,648 attendees and 230 employers, with 1.174 job openings and 760 positions filled.

Events included the Tulare Count Job Fair, Visalia Economic Development Corporation, Healthcare, and Porterville College job fairs, along with Job Connect events in Visalia and Porterville.

Sector partnership efforts continued in industry engagement, career healthcare pathways, and agriculture.

e. Employment Connection Centers and OSO Reports
Reports were provided as handouts.

8. ECC MEETING DATES – 2026

November 12. 2026

9. GOOD OF THE ORDER/ADJOURN

There being no further business, Vice Chair Esbeydy Rubalcaba adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Employment Connection

A proud partner of America's Job Center of California℠ network.

EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION

Partner Handbook

A shared guide to working together across the Employment Connection System

WORKING TOGETHER • SERVING TULARE COUNTY

Consistent, coordinated, customer-centered workforce services.

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1 | WELCOME & ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION SYSTEM

Welcome to the Employment Connection System!

The Employment Connection (EC) System is a network of workforce development, education, human services, and community-based organizations (CBOs), as well as other community partners, working together to provide coordinated, customer-centered services to job seekers and businesses throughout Tulare County. Through collaboration and referrals, partners help customers access employment, education, training, and supportive services that support their career goals and economic self-sufficiency.

About the Employment Connection System

Employment Connection is the local Tulare County brand for the workforce system and is part of the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) network. The AJCC designation reflects the statewide one-stop workforce system; EC is the local identity customers see and experience in Tulare County.

Understanding Our Roles

- **Workforce Investment Board (WIB):** Oversees the EC System, coordinates partnerships, and supports the implementation of shared workforce system strategies, operations, and service delivery.
- **Employment Connection Center Staff:** Staff from all partner organizations, including subrecipient staff, who work at an EC Center and provide direct services or support daily center operations.
- **Employment Connection System Staff:** Staff from all EC partner organizations, whether co-located at an EC Center or providing services at another location, contribute to the coordinated delivery of workforce services.
- **WIOA Title I Subrecipient Staff:** Staff employed by organizations contracted to deliver WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program services throughout the EC System and, in most cases, are also EC Center Staff.

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook establishes shared expectations for all EC System partners and provides operational guidance for staff working at the EC Centers.

Handbook Sections	Who It Applies To
Section 1-6: System Overview, Shared Expectations, and Customer Services	All EC System staff, including colocated and non-colocated partners
Section 7-9: Center Operations, Professional Standards, and Shared Spaces	All EC System staff colocated at or utilizing the EC Centers, as applicable

Section 10-12: Safety, Communications & Resources	All EC System staff, with center-specific requirements applying where relevant

EC System leadership should use this handbook to support staff onboarding, communication, and coordination. Staff should refer to the "Current References sections" throughout the handbook for applicable directives, procedures, and resources.

Our Centers

Center	AJCC Designation	Address
Porterville Employment Connection	Comprehensive	1063 W. Henderson Ave
Visalia Employment Connection	Comprehensive	4025 W. Noble Ave, Suite B
Dinuba Employment Connection	Affiliate	400 W. Tulare St.
Tulare Employment Connection	Affiliate	155 N. K St.

The WIB oversees the EC System and coordinates with partners and service providers to support integrated workforce services throughout Tulare County.

Current References

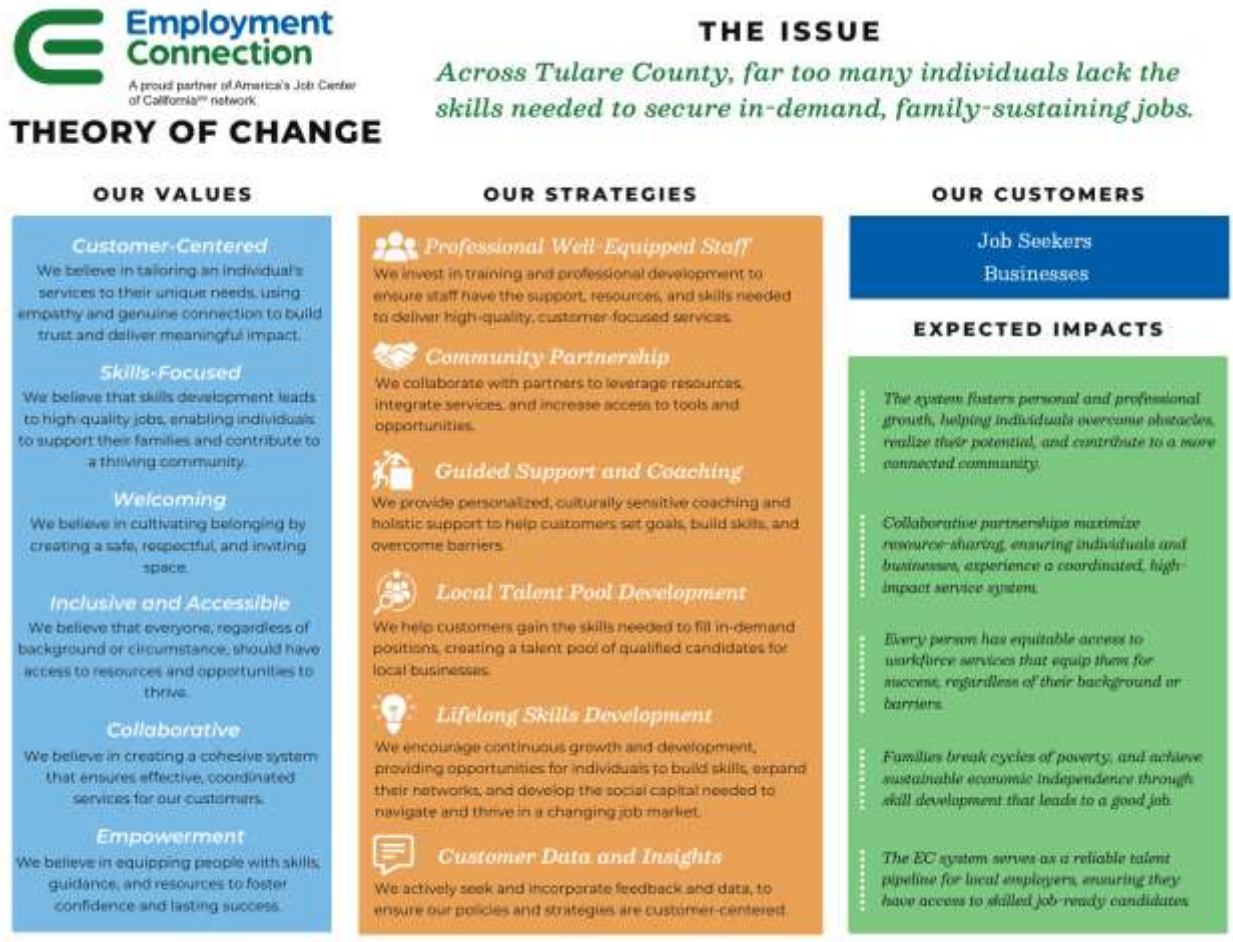
Employment Connection Partner MOU	www.tularewib.org/ecsystem
EC Partner Guide	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources

2 | OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

How We Work Together

The EC Theory of Change (ToC) provides a shared framework for how partners work together as a workforce system. It connects the challenge we are working to address with the values that guide our work, the strategies we use, and the impact we seek to achieve for job seekers, businesses, families, and the broader community.

Through our network of EC System partners, customers have access to a range of workforce, education, training, employment, and supportive services. Each partner contributes unique resources and expertise, while our shared values and strategies guide how we coordinate services, support customers, and strengthen our system.



Putting Our Theory of Change into Practice

The EC ToC is reflected in the shared expectations and practices outlined throughout this handbook. All EC System partners contribute by:

- **Creating a consistent customer experience** through welcoming, professional, and accessible services (Sections 3, 5-6).
- **Connecting customers to resources and opportunities** through informed referrals and coordination across partner organizations (Section 4).
- **Strengthening partner collaboration** through communication, cross-training, shared knowledge, and participation in systemwide initiatives.
- **Supporting continuous improvement** by sharing feedback, identifying service gaps, and working together to improve customer experience.

These shared practices help translate our EC ToC into everyday actions, regardless of where EC System partners provide services.

Current References

Employment Connection Theory of Change	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources

3 | EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION CULTURE & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

One System, Consistent Customer Experience

Every interaction contributes to the customer's experience of the EC System. Regardless of which organization employs a staff member, customers should experience a welcoming, coordinated, and professional environment.

Our Voice

We Aim to Be	What That Looks Like
Welcoming	Help customers feel they have reached a place where someone will listen and help them identify next steps.
Hopeful	Focus on possibilities, practical next steps, and pathways forward without overpromising.
Empathetic	Listen, acknowledge the customer's circumstances, and respond respectfully.
Simple & Direct	Avoid unnecessary acronyms and program jargon; explain processes in plain language.
Professional	Maintain appropriate boundaries, protect privacy, and communicate consistently.

Terminology

- **Customers:** the preferred external term for individuals and businesses receiving services.
- **Job seekers:** may be used internally when distinguishing individual customers from business customers.
- **Business customers:** businesses and employers receiving workforce services.
- **Employment Connection:** use when referring to the local system, centers, and shared service environment.

How We Relate to Customers

- Greet customers, take initiative to understand their needs, help identify solutions, follow through on commitments, and ensure they understand their next steps.
- Listen and clarify before directing or referring.
- Respect privacy and be mindful of staff conversations within the customer's hearing.
- Ask before providing physical assistance to a person with a disability.

- Do not guarantee eligibility, funding, training, or paid services before the appropriate determination is completed.
- Explain what the customer can expect, what staff will do, and what actions the customer may need to take.

De-escalation & Professional Boundaries

Customers may arrive frustrated, discouraged, or under significant stress. Staff should remain calm, respectful, and focused on resolving the immediate service issue when possible.

- Listen without becoming defensive and acknowledge the concern.
- Set clear, respectful boundaries when behavior becomes disruptive, threatening, or abusive.
- Offer practical next steps or an opportunity to continue the conversation later when appropriate.
- Involve a supervisor, site leadership, or security when safety, disruption, or escalation requires additional support.
- Follow applicable incident-reporting and emergency procedures after significant events.

4 | CONNECTING CUSTOMERS ACROSS PARTNERS

Referrals Are a Shared Customer Experience

A referral should do more than give a customer another phone number. EC System partners work to ensure referrals are appropriate, timely, and actionable, with sufficient information for the receiving partner to respond appropriately.

Referral Expectations

1. Identify the customer's need and explain to the customer why a referral to another partner or service may be helpful.
2. Use the current EC referral method and follow the guidance in the current Referral Process Map and Partner Guide.
3. Provide only the information necessary for the referral and follow privacy, consent, and confidentiality requirements.
4. Receiving partners make reasonable efforts to follow up with referred customers in accordance with their organization's processes.
5. When additional coordination is needed, staff use available Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) to help address referral questions or barriers.
6. A referral is not complete until the customer is connected.

Current References

Employment Connection Partner Guide	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
Employment Connection Partner Referral Guide	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
Employment Connection Referral Process Map	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
Approved Employment Connection Referral Form / Platform	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-referral

5 | PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY & INFORMATION SECURITY

Protecting Customer Information

Maintaining the privacy and security of customers' personally identifiable information (PII) is a shared responsibility across the EC System. Partner organizations may be subject to additional confidentiality requirements based on the services they provide, including applicable privacy laws for education, healthcare, and workforce programs. Staff must follow their organization's policies and applicable requirements when accessing, maintaining, or sharing customer information.

All EC System staff are expected to:

- Collect and retain only information necessary for the service or program purpose.
- Limit access to individuals who need the information to perform their duties.
- Keep confidential information out of public view and secure paper records when not in use.
- Lock computers when away from the workstation and protect usernames, passwords, and authentication methods.
- Keep login credentials confidential and refrain from sharing accounts or passwords.
- Use approved secure methods for transmitting or storing sensitive information, including PII.
- Dispose of paper containing confidential information through approved secure shredding methods.
- Avoid discussing confidential customer information where unauthorized individuals may overhear.
- Request Social Security numbers only when necessary and authorized.

Current References

TUL 19-03 - Use and Confidentiality of Participants' Personally Identifiable Information (PII)	www.tularewib.org/directives

6 | ACCESSIBILITY, LANGUAGE ACCESS & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Welcoming and Accessible Services

EC System partners share a commitment to providing welcoming, inclusive, and accessible services. Staff should know how to connect customers with reasonable accommodation, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance, and applicable Equal Opportunity resources.

- Do not make assumptions about whether a person needs assistance; ask how you can help.
- Use accessible communication practices and available auxiliary aids/services when needed.
- Follow applicable procedures for language assistance and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
- Know how to direct customers to Equal Opportunity and complaint information.
- Maintain clear paths and customer spaces that support physical accessibility.
- Escalate accessibility barriers to the appropriate site or organizational contact so they can be addressed.

Current References

TUL 17-05 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures	https://www.tularewib.org/directives
TUL 18-01 - Limited English Proficiency	https://www.tularewib.org/directives

7 | COLOCATED PARTNER OPERATIONS

Working Together in a Shared Employment Connection Center

Colocation allows customers to access multiple workforce partners in a shared environment. It also requires ongoing coordination related to staffing, schedules, space, equipment, facilities, and other changes that may affect center operations or customer access.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)

The EC Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) establish the requirements and methodology for allocating infrastructure and other shared costs among colocated partners.

Changes that may affect a partner's use of space, staffing, or shared costs should be communicated promptly so they can be reviewed and addressed through the appropriate process.

Communicating Operational Changes

Colocated partners must notify the appropriate EC Site Coordinator or WIB contact in advance of planned operational changes that may affect shared center operations. Unanticipated changes should be communicated as soon as practical.

Change	Who to Notify
Staffing levels: Changes in colocated staffing levels or vacancies that affect occupied space.	WIB
Workplace relocation: Requests to relocate staff or change assigned workspace when the change affects space allocations or cost-sharing arrangements established in the IFA.	WIB
Telephone services: Requests to add, remove, or modify telephone services.	EC Site Coordinator
Furniture and equipment: Requests to reconfigure furniture, equipment, or workspaces, even when the change does not affect the IFA.	WIB
Schedule and services: Changes to operating schedules or service delivery that affect center operations or customer access.	EC Site Coordinator and WIB

Change	Who to Notify
Shared operations: Changes that may affect shared costs, facilities, security, technology, or customer and service delivery.	EC Site Coordinator and WIB

Employment Connection Operations Calendar

The EC Operations Calendar provides EC Center partners with a shared view of center closures, limited coverage days, and service impacts resulting from partner holidays, professional development days, and systemwide events.

Because colocated partners do not operate on the same schedules, the calendar supports coordination among partners and helps staff provide accurate information about center and service availability.

The WIB works with colocated partner leadership annually to identify known holidays, professional development days, systemwide events, and other anticipated service impacts. The EC Operations Calendar is finalized at the beginning of the new year. Once finalized, partners should notify the WIB of significant schedule or service changes that occur during the year so the calendar can be updated.

Technology & Equipment

Technology and equipment that are not included in the IFA remain the responsibility of the individual partner organization unless otherwise arranged with the WIB.

- Each partner is responsible for its staff computers, program-specific equipment, office supplies, and internal technology support.
- Partners should use their own organizational support process for computer, software, or network issues specific to their organization.
- Shared center internet or facility-connectivity issues should be reported to the EC Site Coordinator.

WIB Property

Furniture, equipment, and other property purchased with applicable WIB/WIOA funds must be managed in accordance with current WIB property requirements.

Colocated partners should not remove, dispose of, relocate, or reconfigure WIB property without submitting a request to the EC Site Coordinator. The EC Site Coordinator must follow current WIB property guidance. This includes furniture or equipment assigned to partner workspaces within an EC Center.

Colocated Partner Staffing Changes

To support center coordination, safety, and awareness of who is working within EC Centers, colocated partners should keep the EC Site Coordinator informed of staffing changes that affect the center.

Partners should notify the EC Site Coordinator when:

- A new staff member will begin working at the Employment Connection Center.
- A staff member is reassigned to or from the center.

- A staff member is no longer employed by the partner organization or will no longer be working at the center.
- There are other staffing changes that affect who is regularly assigned to or authorized to work at the center.

Notification helps ensure center leadership and partners have an accurate understanding of who should be working within the center and allows any necessary onboarding, facility access, identification, workspace, or other operational arrangements to be coordinated.

Center Access

The following access, security, and parking expectations apply to all staff. Exceptions may be permitted under special circumstances with prior approval from the EC Site Coordinator. Any approved exception that presents a potential safety or security concern must be closely monitored by staff, with appropriate precautions in place.

- Use designated staff entrances/exits and follow current site security procedures.
- Do not prop open or bypass secured doors.
- After-hours or non-workday access requires the EC Site Coordinator's authorization and must follow the site's current access/sign-in process.
- Customer-priority parking is the first five spaces directly in front of the center entrance. Staff should avoid priority parking.

Current References

Employment Connection Partner MOU & IFA	www.tularewib.org/ecsystem
EC Operations Calendar	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
WIB Property Requirements	https://www.tularewib.org/directives

8 | PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & WORK ENVIRONMENT

Professional Appearance & Attire

EC Centers are professional, customer-facing environments. Staff are expected to maintain a professional appearance and wear workplace-appropriate attire that reflects the professional nature of the services provided.

This expectation applies to all staff working in the EC Centers or representing the EC System, particularly when interacting with customers, businesses, community partners, visitors, or other members of the public.

Clothing should be clean, neat, and appropriate for the workplace, staff member's role, and work activities. Partner staff remain subject to their respective organizations' dress and appearance policies; however, while working at an EC Center, staff are also expected to maintain the professional standard appropriate for a shared workforce service environment.

Any accommodation, safety, uniform, religious, cultural, or organization-specific requirements should be handled through the staff member's employer and, when needed, coordinated with the EC Site Coordinator.

Professional Conduct in Shared Workspaces

Staff share responsibility for maintaining a professional environment throughout EC Centers. Because customers, businesses, community partners, and visitors may be present throughout the workday, staff should remain mindful of whose conversations, noise levels, and workplace interactions others may experience or overhear.

Staff should:

- Maintain an appropriate volume when speaking with coworkers, customers, or on the telephone.
- Keep personal conversations appropriate, limited, and mindful of customers and others working nearby.
- Discuss customer information discreetly and avoid conversations involving confidential or sensitive information where others may overhear.
- Maintain professional language, tone, and conduct when interacting with coworkers, partner staff, customers, businesses, community partners, and visitors.
- Be mindful that shared and customer-facing areas reflect the Employment Connection System as a whole, regardless of which organization employs the individual staff member.

Identification & Guest Badges

Staff working in EC Centers must wear identification that clearly identifies them as staff. Badges should be visible while working in the center.

Guests and visitors who are not receiving customer services must obtain and visibly wear an EC Guest Badge, available at the front desk. Guest Badges should be returned to the front desk before leaving the center.

Workstations & Shared Spaces

EC Centers are shared professional environments. Staff are responsible for maintaining their assigned workstations and contributing to clean, organized, and clutter-free customer and shared areas:

Workspace Cleanliness & Organization

- Keep workstations, cubicles, and customer-facing areas clean, organized, and of a professional appearance.
- Keep walkways, shared surfaces, and customer areas free of unnecessary items, boxes, supplies, and other clutter.
- Store documents and materials appropriately and keep confidential or sensitive information out of public view.
- Clean shared spaces after use and promptly report facility, cleanliness, or maintenance concerns to the EC Site Coordinator.

Personal Items & Professional Environment

- Keep personal items and decorations reasonable in number and appropriate for a shared professional environment.
- Ensure decorations, displays, signage, and other materials do not interfere with the professional, welcoming, inclusive customer environment.
- Be mindful of strong fragrances, air fresheners, and cleaning products that may affect individuals with respiratory or sensory sensitivities.

Workspace Modification & Equipment

- Use only approved methods for mounting items to walls, cubicle walls, or other shared surfaces to prevent damage to facilities.
- Obtain approval from the EC Site Coordinator before adding personal furniture, appliances, or electrical items, such as space heaters, refrigerators, coffee makers, or similar equipment.

9 | CUSTOMER AREAS & SHARED SPACES

Customer Areas & Center Rules

The EC Center rules are posted to help maintain a safe, respectful, and productive environment. Staff should apply posted rules consistently and make reasonable efforts to address routine rule violations before escalating the matter.

Incident Response and Communication Responsibilities

The following table outlines how different situations are addressed, who takes the lead, and the communication expectations to ensure appropriate coordination among EC staff, partners, and WIB leadership.

For incident communication purposes, the WIB Team includes the Executive Director, Deputy Director of Administration, Deputy Director of Operations, Program Manager, and One-Stop Partnership Coordinator.

Situation	What Happens	Who Takes the Lead	Incident Communication
Noncompliant or Disruptive Customers in Shared Areas	Staff should first make reasonable efforts to address routine rule violations. For repeated noncompliance or an incident requiring additional intervention, notify the EC Site Coordinator, who determines the appropriate next step, including whether the customer should be asked to leave.	Appropriate staff for routine concerns EC Site Coordinator if escalation is needed If unavailable: • EC Alternate Site Coordinator • EDD Manager • WIB Program Manager	EC Site Coordinator determines additional communication based on the nature and severity of the incident: • Colocated Partners, *as appropriate* • WIB Program Manager
Noncompliant or Disruptive Customers in Partner Work Areas	The partner generally addresses incidents involving its customers or service interactions in accordance with its organization's procedures.	Partner Supervisor	The Partner Supervisor notifies the EC Site Coordinator. EC Site Coordinator determines additional communication based on the nature and severity of the incident: *(cont.)*

Situation	What Happens	Who Takes the Lead	Incident Communication
			• Colocated Partners, *as appropriate* • WIB Program Manager
Safety or Security Concern	Staff respond according to established security and emergency procedures. Partner-specific procedures also apply.	EC Site Coordinator/Partner Supervisor, based on where the incident originated. Security responds in accordance with assigned duties and security procedures.	Security or responding staff notifies the EC Site Coordinator as soon as practical. The EC Site Coordinator coordinates additional center-level communication: • Colocated Partners, *as appropriate* • WIB Team
Law Enforcement Contacted	Follow applicable emergency, security, and partner procedures. Partner-specific requirements for contacting law enforcement remain in effect.	Depends on the nature of the incident and where it originated. Emergency/law-enforcement response takes precedence when applicable.	Partner Work Area Incidents – Partner notifies EC Site Coordinator. EC Site Coordinator notifies: • Colocated Partners, *as appropriate* • WIB Team
Immediate Threats or Emergency	Call 911 when appropriate and follow established security/emergency procedures. Do not delay an emergency response to obtain approval.	Emergency response takes priority. EC Site Coordinator or Partner Supervisor coordinates center/partner response as appropriate.	As soon as practical, EC Site Coordinator notifies: • Colocated Partners • WIB Team

Situation	What Happens	Who Takes the Lead	Incident Communication
Customer Asked to Leave for the Day or Banned from the Center	**For the Day:** Customer is required to leave the Center for the day. **Banned from Center:** Customer is prohibited from returning for a defined or indefinite period.	**For the Day** **Shared Area:** EC Site Coordinator **Partner Work Area:** Partner Supervisor in coordination with EC Site Coordinator **Customer Ban:** EC Site Coordinator	For incidents in the Partner Work Area, the Partner Supervisor notifies the EC Site Coordinator. EC Site Coordinator coordinates notification to: • Colocated Partners, *as appropriate* • WIB Team

Customer Bans: The EC Site Coordinator is responsible for determining whether a customer should be banned from the Center, in coordination with the involved Partner Supervisor when applicable. The EC Site Coordinator also determines when a ban may be lifted, in consultation with appropriate leadership and affected partners.

Partner Requirements: Partner organizations must continue to comply with their own incident and law-enforcement requirements. If a partner's organizational procedures require contacting law enforcement when an employee is threatened, those requirements remain.

Incident Reporting: An Incident Report must be completed and submitted to the WIB when a customer is required to leave the Center because of an incident, is banned from the Center, law enforcement is contacted or responds, or an emergency occurs.

The EC Site Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the Incident Report is completed and submitted to the WIB. When the incident occurred within a Partner Work Area, the EC Site Coordinator can coordinate the completion of the Incident Report with the Partner Supervisor.

The Incident Report should document what occurred, actions taken, the outcome, and recommended follow-up and preventive measures to reduce the likelihood or impact of a similar incident.

Role of Security: Security personnel support the safety and security of the Employment Connection Center in accordance with their assigned duties and established security procedures. Security may respond to safety concerns, observe and report incidents, and assist staff and center leadership as appropriate.

Decisions regarding responses to and consequences for general center-rule violations, including whether a customer should be asked to leave for repeated noncompliance, are referred to by the

EC Site Coordinator. When an immediate safety or security concern exists, Security should respond in accordance with established security and emergency procedures.

Conference & Meeting Rooms

Employment Connection meeting rooms may be available for partner meetings, training, recruitment, and other workforce-related activities.

Room Reservations

Visalia Employment Connection:	Submit room reservation requests by email to visalia.reservations@employmentconnect.org.
Porterville Employment Connection:	Contact (559) 788-1400 and request to speak with the EC Site Coordinator to request a room reservation.

When requesting a room, please provide the date, start and end time, purpose of the reservation, expected attendance, and requested room or setup, if applicable.

Room Use Expectations

- Reserve rooms as early as possible. Reservations are subject to room availability and EC Center operations.
- Coordinate after-hours access in advance.
- Follow current room technology, food/catering, cleanup, and sign-in requirements.
- Return the room to its standard setup after use.
- Report any facility, technology, or equipment issues to EC Center staff.

Appropriate Use of EC Facilities & Resources

EC facilities, equipment, telephones, and shared resources are intended to support workforce-system business and activities consistent with the mission and purpose of the EC System.

Political & Sectarian Activities

EC facilities, resources, and services must be used in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements. Partners must ensure that program funds, facilities, and resources are not used for prohibited activities, including:

- **Political Activities:** Use of WIOA-funded resources for political activities is prohibited under federal law.
- **Sectarian Activities:** Use of WIOA funds for religious activities or employment and training of participants in sectarian activities, except as permitted under applicable law.

Partners are responsible for complying with any additional restrictions associated with their respective programs and organizations.

Personal or Unrelated Business

Conducting personal business or other activities unrelated to the Employment Connection mission is prohibited onsite when it interferes with work responsibilities, customer service, center operations, or the appropriate use of public resources.

Telephone & Equipment Use

Staff should limit the use of Employment Connection telephones and equipment for personal business. Occasional personal calls are permissible when reasonably necessary, such as for medical appointments, family matters, emergencies, or similar circumstances. Personal calls should be brief and must not interfere with work responsibilities or customer service.

The WIB may review long-distance telephone usage. . If personal calls to destinations unrelated to the Employment Connection business are identified as inappropriate, the caller may be required to reimburse the WIB for any associated charges.

Current References

WIB Directives, Policies and Forms	https://www.tularewib.org/directives
Posted EC Center Rules / Site Guidance	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 194(6) – 29 U.S.C. § 3254 (6)	https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-113publ128/related
WIOA, Section 188(a)(3) – 29 U.S.C. § 3248 (a)(3)	https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-113publ128/related
20 CFR § 683.255 - Restrictions on religious activities	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-683/subpart-B/section-683.255

10 | SAFETY, EMERGENCIES, INCIDENTS, GRIEVANCES & COMPLAINTS

Detailed emergency, incident, grievance, and complaint procedures are maintained in applicable WIB directives, partner policies, and site Emergency Action Plans. Staff should know where to find the current procedures and who to contact.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for each center are located at the entrance and exit doors. The EAP outlines evacuation routes, assembly areas, emergency communication procedures, and procedures for lockdown and other site emergencies.

Incident Reporting

Significant incidents, suspected fraud or abuse, safety events, threats, or other reportable matters must be handled using current organizational and WIB procedures.

Grievances & Complaints

Customers served at the Employment Connection have the right to file a grievance or complaint. Each partner organization is responsible for addressing complaints related to its programs and services in accordance with its established grievance and complaint procedures. EC System staff should assist customers in identifying the appropriate contact or process for submitting a complaint.

Grievances or complaints involving the WIB and its WIOA Title I Adult, DW, and Youth subrecipient staff must be submitted in writing, signed, and dated by the complainant to the WIB in accordance with established procedures.

Partner & Staff Operational Disputes

Staff and partners should first attempt to resolve operational concerns or disputes informally at the lowest appropriate level, beginning with staff and center supervisors involved.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the One-Stop Operator may be asked to facilitate discussion and support resolution. Matters that remain unresolved may be submitted in writing to the One-Stop Operator and, if necessary, appeal to the Workforce Investment Board for the final resolution.

Current References

EC Center Emergency Action Plans	www.employmentconnect.org/partner-resources
TUL 19-01 - WIOA Grievance and Complaint Resolution Procedures	https://www.tularewib.org/directives
TUL 24-07 - Incident Reporting	https://www.tularewib.org/directives

11 | COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA & CO-BRANDING

Employment Connection Brand

Employment Connection (EC) branding creates a consistent public identity across partner organizations and centers. Materials representing EC or funded through the WIB must comply with current branding, co-branding, accessibility, and funding disclosure requirements.

Media Inquiries

- Partner staff should follow their organization's media policies and Employment Connection/WIB coordination requirements.
- Media inquiries concerning EC operations should be promptly shared with the appropriate WIB Communications Coordinator and EC Site Coordinator.
- Do not speak on behalf of another partner organization without authorization.
- Coordinate public messaging when multiple Employment Connection partners are involved.

Materials & Public Communications

Before publishing materials that represent EC or use WIB funding, staff should verify the current requirements for logos, co-branding, accessibility, Equal Opportunity language, and federal funding disclosures. Do not rely on boilerplate copied from an older Handbook.

Current References

TUL 26-02 - Employment Connection One-Stop System Marketing and Co-Branding Guidelines	https://www.tularewib.org/directives

12 | CURRENT RESOURCES & HANDBOOK MAINTENANCE

Use Live Sources for Current Information

Policies, directives, forms, contact lists, and web links change more frequently than the Handbook. Staff should use current live resources whenever a procedure, requirement, form, or contact may have changed.

Employment Connection	https://www.employmentconnect.org
Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County	https://www.tularewib.org
WIB Directives, Policies and Forms	https://www.tularewib.org/directives
CalJOBS	https://www.caljobs.ca.gov
CareerOneStop	https://www.careeronestop.org
U.S. Department of Labor - WIOA	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa
EDD Policy and Guidance for Workforce Partners	https://edd.ca.gov/en/jobs_and_training/policy_and_guidance/
EDD Workforce Services Directives	https://edd.ca.gov/en/Jobs_and_Training/Active_Directives
O*NET Online	https://www.onetonline.org
EDD Labor Market Information	https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/
Public Law 113-128 – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	https://www.govinfo.gov/
Code of Federal Regulations	http://www.ecfr.gov

Handbook Review & Updates

The WIB will review the Employment Connection Partner Handbook annually, in collaboration with the EC partners, to ensure it remains accurate, relevant, and aligned with current center operations. Partners will have an opportunity to recommend updates during the annual review process, and feedback will be requested.

Operational information, including contacts, links, and resources, will be reviewed and updated as needed throughout the year. Significant changes affecting shared center operations will be communicated to partners in a timely manner.

Substantive revisions to the Handbook will follow the established review and approval process.

Employment Connection

A proud partner of America's Job Center of California℠ network.

TO: Employment Connection Committee

FROM: Edith Hernandez, One-Stop Partnership Coordinator

DATE: November 2, 2026

REPORT: Employment Connection One-Stop Operator Report

Highlights from July 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026

Activity	Brief Narrative
Partner Referrals:	**Referrals by Receiving Partner Programs**

Partner Agency	Referrals
College of the Sequoias	5
Community Services & Employment Training	3
Department of Rehabilitation (Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance)	14
Employment Connection	165
Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)	5
Proteus, Inc.	38
Sequoias Adult Education Consortium (SAEC)	87
SER - Jobs for Progress	2
Tulare Adult School	1
Visalia Adult School	8
Youth@Work Program	65
Grand Total	**393**

EC System Integrated Workgroups: Customer Experience, Partner Relationship Building, Training & Professional Development

EC System Integrated Workgroups – Phase 2 Update

During the reporting period, the Employment Connection (EC) System Integration Workgroups reconvened to begin Phase 2 activities, building on the recommendations and accomplishments from Phase 1. Efforts focused on strengthening partner collaboration, improving referral effectiveness, and advancing professional development opportunities across the EC System.

Partner Relationship Building Workgroup

	Goal: Strengthen collaboration between partners through engagement, networking, and planning based on customer needs. The workgroup met to review the revised EC Partner Handbook, providing input from a systemwide perspective to ensure the guidelines reflect shared expectations and support consistent practices across EC partners. The workgroup also began planning a Cross-Training & Networking initiative to create opportunities for partner staff to learn about one another's programs and services, build relationships, and strengthen collaboration across the EC System. **Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use Workgroup** **Goal:** Improve coordination of services by identifying shared customers and creating a seamless referral process across partners. The workgroup reconvened to begin Phase 2, focusing on defining what constitutes a successful EC referral and identifying meaningful indicators to measure referral effectiveness. Discussions included timely follow-up, successful service connections, and customer experience. These efforts will help establish a foundation for evaluating referral outcomes, identifying service gaps, and using data to inform continuous improvement across the EC System. **Training & Professional Development Workgroup** **Goal:** Ensure staff are cross-trained and equipped to deliver seamless, customer-centered services that evolve with changing needs. The workgroup continued advancing the 2026–2028 Professional Development & Training Plan by identifying training opportunities and potential trainers aligned with the professional development needs of EC System staff. The workgroup is reaching out to prospective trainers to explore customized training opportunities that address systemwide priorities and support consistent, high-quality customer service across partner organizations.
System Updates & Training Opportunities Process updates, Training opportunities	**Employment Connection System Overview & Cross-Training** An interactive session designed to strengthen staff understanding of the Employment Connection System and their role within the partnership. Participants will learn how the WIB, Employment Connection, service providers, and system partners work together; explore workforce services and resources available across the network; and practice using partner resources and making quality referrals to connect customers to the right services. The session emphasizes a customer-centered, No Wrong Door approach and the shared responsibility we all have in creating a connected and consistent customer experience.

	Registration: • **EC Partners *(register through Eventbrite)*:** https://bit.ly/49ALM2W • **Subrecipients (staff providing services through WIB-funded programs):** Contact Edith Hernandez to register.