



Merced County Workforce Development Board Local Plan

Merced County Local Workforce Development Area (2021-2024)

DRAFT

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Local Overview

Merced County is located in the San Joaquin Valley and has a population of approximately 277,680 people. As of 2019, Merced has had a median household income of \$53,672 and a poverty rate of 21.5 percent. Its population increases moderately each year as the region's lower cost of living attracts individuals who currently reside in the state's costlier areas. At the same time, its prominent agricultural industry consistently appeals to immigrant workers. Since the 2009 recession, the County has maintained steady growth in its total number of jobs; however, the region has an increasing shortage of qualified workers in growing key industries. As the population and industries continue to grow, education, job skills, and language barriers are even more important to the labor force's health.

The County has a labor force of approximately 113,600 individuals. Although the region is diverse in industries and skillsets, over 13 percent of the region's workforce exhibits educational attainment below the State average. Healthcare, Construction, and Logistics are the fastest growing industries in Merced, and an immediate need exists for targeted job skills training as baby boomers near retirement from Agriculture, Education, and Government industries. Applied Development Economics, Inc.'s (ADE) analysis and discussions with key employers, workforce organizations, and training providers has identified specific occupations as potential priorities for additional training efforts, including Medical Technicians, Electricians, and Maintenance Mechanics. It also cites specific skills needed by business, such as the ability to use computer-operated processing controls and instruments, supervisory and management skills, business skills, and related English competency. Based on trends in the demographic data provided by the US Census Bureau and ADE reports, the region should develop a strategy to mobilize underrepresented groups such as veterans, disabled workers, and high skilled minorities to fill immediate industry needs and prevent employment gaps.

Merced County boasts a strong, coordinated and communicative system of service partners. These community-based organizations, public institutions, education and training providers and subject-matter experts are collaborative and tuned into the needs of County job-seeking residents and businesses. The following Local Plan works to describe this system of support and the Merced Workforce Development Board's commitment to continuous improvement in the area of career service provision and partner coordination.

Economic Indicators

Merced County is the 25th largest county in California and is well known for its agriculture industry. Less known is that Merced has over 6,000 businesses in various employment industries, including Agriculture, Education, Healthcare, and Manufacturing. The County has an unemployment rate of 11.5 percent (December 2020), having been hard-hit during the winter surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Residents have a median household income of \$53,672, while the region's poverty rate is 21.5 percent. The California Economic Development Department (EDD) indicates that salary levels are below the state average, and are not expected to increase dramatically over the next five years. This is further exacerbated for specific groups of workers, making the County more vulnerable to workforce development trends and downturns. For example, the Latino population is the largest in the region and has the highest poverty rates, with employment concentrated in vulnerable industry sectors.

A. WIOA Core and Required Partner Coordination

Given COVID-19 restrictions, virtual meetings have taken place over the last few months that have brought core and required partners together to actively engage in collaborative planning around the workforce system in Merced County. The most recent took place on February 16,

2021, from 9:30-10:30 (Flyer and notes attached as Attachment A), which consisted of a forum held to help with assistance on the regional/local plan. Representation of local partners at this forum was typical of the type of collaboration the local area enjoys, including: EDD; Merced County Office of Education (MCOE); UC Merced; Merced Community College; Human Services Agency (TANF); Merced High School District; Adult Education Block Grant Consortium Representative; and other partners.

MCWDB convenes the core and local partners quarterly to continue conversations regarding the strategies to carry out the workforce system's core programs. Additional topics covered include supportive services, common customer service efficiencies, collaborative business engagement activities, labor market responses, career pathway development, and implementation, among others. These quarterly meetings allow the mandated partners to continuously monitor and improve the workforce system to respond quickly to economic and employer shifts in the region. In addition to the quarterly meetings, MCWDB convenes bi-weekly meetings with members of the education field to ensure sector strategies and career pathways' relevance. Finally, MCWDB regularly coordinates conversations with labor, education, and private industry representatives to discuss apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, OJT's, and other earn and learn models that will support the development of qualified workers to meet the needs of local employers.

i. WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy

MCWDB works closely with adult education providers such as Merced Adult School to ensure access to services. MCWDB participants in meetings alongside adult education partners and attends industry-focused forums together. MCWDB engaged in the review of the adult education plan to determine compatibility and consistency with the MCWDB local plan, and made substantive comment. Further, the MCWDB Director is on the agenda of every regular meeting of the Gateway Adult Education Network (GAEN) to share workforce information and inform the organization's service strategies.

MCWDB is actively engaged in strengthening efforts and bridges between Title I and Title II programs to provide education and employment opportunities for adults at all levels. Leveraging of resources benefit both program's participants through co-enrollment, and recent meetings between MCWDB's Director and Merced Adult School principal have focused on data sharing and service flows to facilitate stronger co-enrollment as well. *With respect to* collaboration with Adult Schools and Consortia, both Merced and Los Banos AJCCs will continuously refer customers to the Merced Adult School, as well as other members of GAEN.

To codify this work, there is a WIOA Memorandum of Understanding with the Adult school outlining roles and responsibilities.

ii. WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser

The Employment Development Department (EDD) serves as a core partner in the AJCC. It provides Basic Career Services that fall under Labor Exchange services available to all eligible customers, including WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula) programs, Title II Adult Education and Literacy Act programs Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act employment services. Career Services involve activities such as outreach, intake, and orientation to the AJCC system. Other services are provided by WP staff, such as job preparation, referral to programs and services, provision of labor market information, referral to supportive services, assistance in establishing financial aid for training purposes, and assistance in providing information on unemployment insurance programs. The MCWDB facilitates convening quarterly partner

meetings with all partners (collocated or not), coordinated in part by the One-Stop Operator. These meetings address and formulate further plans, assurances, and strategies to maximize coordination, improve service delivery, and avoid duplication of services through the One-Stop System.

MCWDB acknowledges that collaboration between WIOA Adult and Dislocated worker funding programs, and WP Employment Services, is critical to the AJCC system's success. AJCC staff work closely with WP partners to offer seamless delivery of programs and services such as job search workshops, assistance in identifying jobs and training opportunities, interview preparation, and resume writing. WP staff collaborate with AJCC staff to make available additional jobseeker resources such as tools to assist in job identification, including LMI, O*NET Online, and other career exploration tools (e.g., California Occupational Guides, mySkills, myFuture, and My Next Move). In the integrated service delivery model (ISD), services and activities are designed to encourage coordination, improve employment outcomes, and eliminate duplication of services among system partners. Services are regularly adapted to meet special populations' needs, including veterans and jobseekers age 55 and above. This coordination was further cemented during COVID-19. Throughout most of 2020, individuals were seen in the AJCC by appointment only, and continued to receive valuable information and services from WP and Unemployment Insurance (UI).

iii. WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (DOR)

MCWDB has a strong partnership with WIOA Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation, and will continue to do so. MCWDB has braided services with DOR, where training is funded through WIOA and transportation and tutorial services for customers are funded by DOR. Per WSD18-12, MCWDB has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with DOR to enhance MCWDB and DOR services. On an annual basis, the EDD monitors the physical and programmatic accessibility of the AJCC. The physical checklist of tools ensures disability accommodation, while the program accommodation focuses on the rights and the assurances to participants.

iv. Carl Perkins Career Technical Education

MCWDB coordinates with relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs as a method to enhance services and avoid duplication of efforts. MCWDB recognizes the value of coordination among partners as essential to the growth and prosperity of its residents. The following section details multiple partnerships and collaborations through which MCWDB will coordinate educational programs to enhance service delivery.

LiUNA Training-Merced College/Laborers' Union: The Laborer's International Union of North America (LiUNA) pre-apprenticeship training is brought locally for the 24 cohorts in Merced County. It was designed for 21 workforce participants in total. Merced College facilitates three (3) Pre-Apprenticeship LiUNA Training classes. This training responds to the regional expansion in public infrastructure, construction, and green energy job areas. Pre-apprenticeship construction trainees are a vital need as MCWDB foresees the economic growth in the next 5 years with the ongoing UC-Merced construction projects, the high-speed rail, the expansion of highway and road construction projects; and the restructure of Main Street, the Merced Mall, and Merced's iconic buildings.

MCWDB is partnering on veteran training in the manufacturing sector with secondary and post- secondary partners. MCWDB coordinates with the UC Merced Venture Lab to supply

services to participants and coordinates with post-secondary and secondary education to hold job fairs to provide an opportunity to participants. Services and opportunities between MCWDB are heavily coordinated to avoid the possibility of duplication and to enhance services to participants as much as possible. To this end, MCWDB conducts meetings with Merced College to discuss strategies and other ways to partner to bring the maximum amount of effective service and relevant training to our participants.

v. Title V Older American Act

The Title V Older American Act is overseen by the Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA), Adult and Aging Program. MCWDB has begun to coordinate service strategies to ensure older participants have full access and support. As both HSA and MCWDB are administered by the County, this coordination is supported by County Administration and is being advanced by staff whom regularly collaborate on a number of programs.

vi. Job Corps

Currently, there is no local Job Corps site, and the nearest location is in Fresno County. As information is requested, individuals are directed to call the Fresno Job Corps location. MCWDB refers the eligible individuals to the youth provider in the local area for other services as well, and has facilitated connection between the County's WIOA Youth Provider and Job Corps. Though impacted by COVID-19, a Job Corps representative visited the AJCC regularly, and met with clients monthly to shepherd them into the program based on referrals.

vii. Native American Program (WIOA section 166)

MCWDB recognizes the unique employment barriers that Native Americans face in today's economy. MCWDB formalizing a written policy and strategy to increase access for Native Americans to local AJCC services and partners. MCWDB will collect and analyze demographic data on the local Native American population to determine their place of residence, educational attainment, and levels of employment/unemployment. MCWDB will build partnerships that will help the board understand local Native Americans' service needs, discuss strategies to provide them with appropriate services, especially if individuals live in remote areas, and need access to services virtually. MCWDB will then discuss the ability to commit staff to conduct outreach at Native American partner sites and/or local areas where there are dense Native American populations. MCWDB will also provide staff with tools and training on cultural sensitivity to ensure that staff appropriately communicate with these customers to fulfill their needs best. MCWDB hopes that by striving to better understand Native American employment and social service needs, MCWDB and its partners can conduct more targeted outreach and provide more services that are necessary.

viii. Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (WIOA Section 167)

MCWDB continues to utilize demographic data on Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) populations and other immigrant populations to understand their unique employment and supportive service needs. MCWDB collects and analyzes demographic data on the local MSFW immigrant populations to determine their place of residence, country of origin, native language, cultural practices, educational attainment, transferrable skills, and levels of employment/unemployment. Additionally, MCWDB provides staff with tools and training on cultural sensitivity to ensure that staff appropriately communicates with these customers to fulfill their needs best. MCWDB crafts strategies to increase partnership among English Language

Learners (ELL) providers to serve immigrant communities in which English is not the native language. In addition, MCWDB will develop strategies to collaborate with employers for short-term OJTs to provide learning opportunities to these skilled clients and incentivize employers' hiring of them. Lastly, MCWDB is developing multi-generational approaches to serve both MSFW/immigrants and their children with appropriate support. This may involve co-programming with partners in one physical location to create a "multi generational or "multi-service" center that can provide the appropriate employment, training, and supportive services to an entire MSFW/immigrant family.

In Merced County, WIOA section 167 is led by Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), a three-county community organization whose director sits on the WDB. The 2020-21 program year included great collaboration with CVOC, including dissemination of COVID-19 support to migrant seasonal farmworkers, appreciating their role as "essential workers." In the first three months of 2021, CVOC and MCWDB have further cemented their partnership, applying for two jointly implemented grants serving English Language Learners, and hosting the first quarterly workforce board meeting at CVOC's offices.

The new collocation of EDD and CVOC in the AJCC ensures that Section 167 grantee eligible individuals can access the AJCC services, though this has been stymied by COVID-19. Individuals who have been seasonally employed come into the office to file for unemployment and utilize the resource room to register in CalJOBS to search for employment. Customers are invited to attend a scheduled orientation to learn more about available services. MCWDB is currently developing a co-enrollment 'portal' kiosk at CVOC that will allow CVOC customers to meet and work with AJCC career service staff virtually.

ix. Veterans

In partnership with EDD, MCWDB works with the local veteran representative to ensure that basic career services intensive and training services are available to all veterans and their eligible spouses. The priority of services is also given to all veterans and their eligible spouses. Through this partnership, training is funded through WIOA, and the EDD Veteran Program funds support services, such as transportation, childcare, and housing needs.

x. Youth Build

Currently, there is no local Youth Build office or services in Merced County. Information about services offered by Youth Build in Fresno County are made available to youth via the local WIOA Youth provider.

xi. Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA)

In partnership with EDD, MCWDB has been working with TAA individuals for many years. When a TAA is announced and the number of workers are affected, MCWDB staff will coordinate the eligibility process with the EDD TAA Representative to ensure that the impacted individuals meet the WIOA services requirement. MCWDB can provide TAA-affected individuals with basic career, intensive, and training services. In the partnership, the EDD TAA Program funds training and WIOA funds supportive services. Per WSD14-15, a co-enrollment/Referral Form has been developed to help both WIOA and TAA Program track and report the TAA individuals.

xii. Community Service Block Grant

MCWDB has been working with the Merced Community Action Agency (MCCAA) and Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC) and has an established referral process. Both MCCAA and CVOC have a presence on-site to provide a variety of services to disadvantaged populations. Both agencies have executed an MOU regarding their roles and responsibilities. In addition, MCWDB collaborates with the County's Community and Economic Development Department on CDBG-funded services offered through the Department.

xiii. Housing and Urban Development

MCWDB has a long history of working with the Housing Authority of Merced County, and every effort is made to ensure that individuals receive information regarding public housing needs. MCWDB will continue to provide information regarding Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), public housing, Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing, and Section 8 Projected-Based Voucher at its WIOA orientation. MCWDB is also exploring the support of city-based applications and projects within the County to expand affordable workforce housing and business support. MCWDB is collaborating with County and Merced City partners on serving those experiencing homelessness, a key fulfillment of HUD's mission.

xiv. Unemployment Insurance

Recipients of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits are encouraged to get involved in labor market research, attend the orientation about AJCC services, take advantage of the assessments to provide insight into areas of strength, and attend workshops on completing applications, interviewing, resumes, cover letters, and employer expectations when hired. If individuals have not earned their high school diploma or GED, referrals to Merced Adult School in Merced are available to help them accomplish their goals. MCWDB also provides step-by-step instructions on how to e-mail EDD to request interest in California Training Benefits to be noted.

MCWDB works closely with EDD partners in the local service area, including Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, and the Veterans. Wagner-Peyser delivers services through the AJCC system and includes information sharing on Unemployment Insurance (UI).

Wagner-Peyser-funded staff is co-located in both AJCCs in Merced County. Both sites utilize the Labor Exchange System, provide access to CalJOBS for participant job search, and resume posting. The AJCCs are partners with EDD in providing information to participants regarding UI eligibility and the claims filing process. Any individual may file an Unemployment Insurance claim (UI) either by phone or online. UI applicants have access to a dedicated telephone line and the internet in the resource room to complete the claims process and required follow-up. The dedicated phone line provides instant access to the UI Call Center and serves customers better, reducing wait time and providing individual service.

MCWDB's goal is to ensure that all job seekers are connected with the services to which they are eligible such as employment, training, and education available through the AJCC, as well as access to information on Unemployment Insurance. UI recipients are encouraged to enroll in the AJCC so that they may benefit from re-employment programs and services available to them, including job search orientation and workshops, development of an individual work search and employment plan, access to LMI, education and training services, individual counseling, and case management. One way to increase the collaboration between UI and the other AJCC

programs would be to profile the customers and coordinate skill-based or experience-based interactions with relevant employers and job seekers. Naturally, this creates a network of individuals that have worked in the same industry or have the same skills, but it also connects them directly to an employer looking to fill a need. The AJCCs in the area work to integrate services such as Job Services, Older Workers, Vocational Education, Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Development, and Youth services through partnerships with local, state, and national partners. Multilingual staff are available to assist second-language speakers in filing for UI benefits and meeting their employment needs. In our development and negotiation of the MOU process, the partnership between MCWDB and Wagner-Peyser and UI programs will continue to be solidified and strengthened.

xv. Second Chance

MCWDB has been working with several Second Chance organizations in recent years. These organizations included Merced County Probation Department, the Merced County Homeless Court Program, and the Merced County Rescue Mission. Each organization is serving different populations, with the overall goal of the MCWDB being the same.

a. Merced County Probation Department

Since 2018, MCWDB and Merced County Probation have a joint MOU to provide WIOA vocational services to probation clients. The services included comprehensive object assessment; on-going case management; supportive services as needed; on-the-job training (OJT), pre-vocational training, and vocational training. MCWDB actively participates in Prison to Employment (P2E), the state program serving ex-offenders. MCWDB has developed a continuum of services and specialized training cohorts.

b. The Merced County Homeless Court Program

Funded via the Workforce Accelerator 8.0 grant, MCWDB is working with the Merced County Homeless Court Program. The program is designed for individuals that are experiencing homelessness and are going through the justice system. This is an innovative project in which AJCC staff work with the Homeless Court team to assist, coordinate, and screen candidates for the Homeless Court where individuals can have charges released after working with a workforce counselor. Participants are offered continuing services via WIOA enrollment to gain self-sufficiency. The first court date is set for April 2021.

c. Merced County Rescue Mission (Navigator Center)

Merced County Rescue Mission serves the same clientele that MCWDB and many other second chance organizations are serving – justice-involved homeless populations. MCWDB has a joint MOU with the Merced County Recuse Mission to provide WIOA services to this population. The WIOA services include job search, resume writing, interview readiness training, job environment etiquette training, and referral to on-the-job training (OJT), pre-vocational training, and vocational training.

xvi. Temporary Assistance for Needy Family/CalWORKs

Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) oversees the Temporary Assistance for Needy Family/CalWORKs Program. HSA is a One-Stop partner and has attended the One-Stop partner quarterly meetings convened by the One-Stop Operator, Propath. Information regarding TANF/CalWORKs is disseminated at the quarterly meeting. MCWDB has also coordinated several programs with HSA for TANF/CalWORKs individuals. The Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) is one of the programs where MCWDB staff works with HSA TANF/CalWORKs individuals to be placed in an “earn and learn” model, have a chance to

earn wages while learning new skills. In addition to the ESE program, MCWDB has coordinated with the HSA TANF/CalWORKs Program for years and will continue to do so. MCWDB was able to leverage the cost where WIOA funds training through supportive services.

xvii. How Local Boards and AJCC partners will coordinate the services and resources identified in their MOU, as outlined in WSD18-12 - *WIOA Memorandums of Understanding*. See Attachment B

MCWDB and AJCC partners meet quarterly to discuss the services and resources identified in the MOU, convened by the One-Operator. At the quarterly meeting, AJCC partners discuss opportunity for improvement, exchange ideas, develop, modify, or enhance the One-Stop strategy. A common intake referral form has been developed and disseminated to all AJCC partners to use. MOUs are periodically reviewed and enhanced to include new service opportunities. Additional partners are regularly added to the system and this is shared with the WDB's Executive Committee. The direct engagement of the WDB Director with MOU partners also ensures the partnerships are relevant and fresh.

xviii. How the Local Board and AJCC partners will work towards co-enrollment and/or common case management as a service delivery strategy, as outlined in WSD19-09 - *Strategic Co-Enrollment – Unified Plan Partners*.

Co-enrollment strategies are specifically included in the MOU between AJCC partners and the Local Board as outlined in WSD19-09. The MOU also acknowledges that participants may be co-enrolled into workforce development, training, and support programs offered by WIOA and other funding administered by the Local Board, identifying processes to address co-case management opportunities. Both AJCCs offer services in English, and Spanish and staff (Local Board and AJCC partner) attend training to work with a diverse population, including immigrants, farmworkers, people with disabilities, ex-offenders (re-entry), youth, dislocated workers, and others from communities surrounding the centers. MCWDB staff has initiated a series of meetings with partners to work through co-enrollment processes, including data sharing protocols, "warm hand off" procedures, shared eligibility and resources sharing. MCWDB is developing a partner matrix document and website page to more clearly calibrate service delivery.

xix. How the Local Board and AJCC partners will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

MCWDB will utilize several strategies to facilitate access to services provided through the AJCC delivery system throughout Merced County, including remote areas. Strategies include:

- Comprehensive AJCCs located at Eastern and Western sides of the County (Merced and Los Banos) provide access to the highest number of possible participants. Each is located at the center of rural areas.
- Regional coordination of services help a broad spectrum of participants through community partners located in smaller communities.
- Meetings between Merced WDB and rural CBOs regularly assess access and enhance connection when needed.
- Job Fairs in remote areas, including virtual jobs and drive-thru job fairs.
- Virtual forums in rural community areas provide information on services provided.

- Access points at local community partners, such as libraries, will increase access to services. MCWDB is developing “portals,” or kiosks, that will enable residents to meet virtually, scan and send documents, and receive services.
- Development and implementation of a plan to incorporate technology into the delivery of services, increasing the access to service beyond the two comprehensive AJCCs.
- Enhanced operational agreement with the County Library system will place staff (part-time) at library branches, cross train and support library staff on workforce services and CalJobs, and portals at half of the Library’s twelve branches so that residents can meet and work with AJCC staff. Library co-location is critical because the County’s Library branches are located in small, rural communities; some are towns of less than 5,000 residents.

xx. How the Local Board and AJCC partners will coordinate workforce and education activities with the provision of appropriate supportive services.

MCWDB provides supportive services in coordination with its co-sponsored training in order to help participants succeed in whatever program they attend. This includes, but is not limited to providing the following: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); Testing fees; Work gear and uniforms; Certifications and exams; Tools; GED; Transportation vouchers and reimbursements; Child Care Fees, as well as others.

The AJCCs work with community partners to identify and locate non-WIOA funded child and/or dependent care, transportation, cash assistance for auto repair and other automobile-related costs, uniforms, tools, or other items required for employment, and emergency services such as utilities food, and health and medical services. Customers in need are regularly referred to local community partners to address supportive service needs beyond what is available via WIOA to ensure those needs do not become a future barrier to training or work. The following supportive services are those most often offered to participants in accordance with state and federal regulations, and in partnership with Local organizations.

- *Transportation:* The AJCCs work to provide individual bus tickets or gas vouchers to clients requiring transportation to attend training or job interviews.
- *Childcare:* Customers are screened for eligibility for CalWORKs-funded supportive services. These services include transitional childcare. If the participant is not qualified, MCWDB assists with childcare.
- *Housing:* MCWDB works to support participants in securing permanent housing and other supportive housing services through rental assistance programs, security deposit assistance, and utility assistance.

MCWDB aims to provide helpful and reliable information and referral of services to community organizations in order to avoid duplication of resources. Staff assess participant supportive service needs, record those needs in the case file, and assist in meeting those needs in order to ensure full participation in job search and training activities. The State’s investment via the COVID-19 SS grant (MCWDB received \$300,000) has accelerated its provision and coordination of supportive services. It quickly introduced the need to accommodate atypical supportive services and overcome barriers to access. In response, MCWDB and its subcontractors have developed new streamlined, paperless processing to benefit customers. Local policies have been expanded to facilitate faster and broader approval, and new ways of leveraging the resources with partners have flourished.

xxi. How the Local Board and AJCC partners will comply with WIOA Section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, as outlined in WSD17-01 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Procedures

Merced County requires all buildings occupied by county agencies to be ADA compliant. Should a currently occupied building not be ADA compliant, then the lease may not renew on said building after termination. In September 2020, Merced WDB relocated its business and administrative teams to 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 94301. The new facility is certified as being ADA compliant.

AJCCs within Merced County have been regularly monitored by the State of California to ensure compliance with EEO requirements. These assessments specifically address the availability of services for individuals with disabilities. MCWDB has previously held a Disability Employment Initiative Grant. Staff received training from DOR, Eric Glunt, the Department of Behavioral Health and Rehabilitation Services, which were involved in quarterly statewide meetings on DEI to provide training and best practices.

Outside of formalized guidance, MCWDB is making strides to improve and expand services to individuals with disabilities and other special populations. AJCC partners agree not to discriminate, harass or allow harassment against any person because of age, race, culture, religious or political affiliation, gender, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, or sexual orientation. Therefore, all partners in the AJCC system agree to comply with section 188 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and receive training on the specifics of the act related to the provision of services and accessibility. Given new WIOA requirements, AJCC partners agree to plan towards innovative ways to increase customer access through center locations, referrals, and the use of modern technology. Creative access planning will include exploration of co-location, direct linkages, cross-training, and referrals as outlined in a forthcoming planning guide.

Engagement of Employers for Individuals with Disabilities

To engage employers for individuals with disabilities, MCWDB ensures that staff participate on a Disability Task Force to facilitate rapport with disability advocates and stakeholders and position MCWDB for better partnership; develops opportunities to collaborate with the Adult Schools as they transition adults with disabilities from training and education courses to employment; involves a Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) representative on the WDB; and guarantees DOR's involvement in the Partner MOU process for services coordination.

MCWDB recognizes opportunities to continue developing strategic partnerships and a shared vision for the commitment to individuals with disabilities. MCWDB will contact a previous contractor, Lisa Jordan of Human Solutions, LLC, to work with Business Service Representatives and employers around Merced County concerning engaging individuals with disabilities. The Department of Rehabilitation, Mental Health, and others have provided staff training to increase knowledge on legal issues to become more informed and better serve individuals with disabilities. MCWDB continues to contract with consultants like California Employers Association (CEA), which provides the HR Hotline for small businesses to utilize their expertise for human resources issues and concerns. CEA also offers educational workshops to familiarize employers with the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and clarify any questions they may have regarding risks or liabilities. MCWDB will implement a pilot program designed to place individuals with disabilities in employment while providing support to employers. MCWDB will aim to alleviate

concerns with hiring individuals with disabilities and position key employers as leaders for accessibility in the business community.

Engagement of Relevant Stakeholders

MCWDB has identified multiple stakeholders to be engaged in these efforts, including Merced County Department of Behavioral Health and Rehabilitation Services, The Department of Rehabilitation, Local businesses and other nonprofits serving the differently abled community.

B. State Strategic Partner Coordination

i. ***How the Local Board will coordinate with County Health and Human Services Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who access Cal Fresh E&T service.***

a. The Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) is responsible for CalWORKS and other public welfare programs. HSA is a one-stop partner and is part of the network of agencies that comprise the local workforce development delivery system. CalFresh participants are diverse. They include families, some led by single parents, and individuals. Many are unemployed, while others are low-wage earners. Because the group consists of individuals with many distinct needs, participants are served by all types of education, social services, and support organizations in the county, including the AJCC. Engagement with HSA leadership and staff during the recent planning process revealed the status of CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) programs in Merced County. Representatives of HSA indicated that the County had not yet implemented a CalFresh E&T program. However, the County has examined and considered adopting the California Bridge Academies model. Prior to implementing the program, Merced County would be required to submit an annual CalFresh E&T Plan to the State Department of Social Services for approval. While a final decision to adopt the Bridge Program has not been made by HSA, there is ample evidence to suggest that the model, or one like it, would benefit CalFresh participants in Merced County.

Madera, Fresno, and San Joaquin counties have all implemented a CalFresh E&T Program, utilizing a third-party provider model that uses the Bridge Academy design. The three programs all leverage non-federal funds to access the 50% “rebate” for dollars spent on authorized activities. Social services agencies in Fresno and Madera counties contract with Reading and Beyond, a Fresno-based non-profit organization that was an early implementer of CalFresh E&T programs. In San Joaquin County, the Community Partnership for Families operates the Bridge program. Reading and Beyond created the Bridge Academy model, which is an 18-month voluntary program. Individuals and families are under no obligation to enroll in the program and once registered. They are under no obligation to continue the program. Therefore, the one characteristic all participants have in common is a degree of motivation to improve prospects for themselves and their families. As evidenced by the following statistics, most participants must surmount significant challenges to succeed: 100% of families have incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level; 24% of heads of household have not earned high school diplomas or GEDs; 18% have criminal records; 8% are single mothers; 2% are veterans, and 25% begin the program with no employment history. Although most participants obtain jobs long before the end of the 18-month program, they remain in the program because the objective is to ensure that positive outcomes are sustained. The program design is flexible and provides basic education, supportive services, and training in-demand occupations with the goal of the participant moving into a job, then a better job, and, ultimately, a career. In addition, these CalFresh E&T programs have all established linkages with their local workforce systems and AJCCs. Bridge Academy outcomes include the following: more than 80% of the primary wage earners in enrolled families gain employment or attain material wage growth; more than 80% of them retain employment one

year later, and about 30% achieve full self-reliance within just 18 months from enrollment.

Concerning alignment, coordination, and integration, the responses below address approaches for the general CalFresh population, as the CalFresh E&T program has not yet been implemented. For additional information concerning background and needs assessment of participants in CalFresh and the CalFresh E&T Program in Merced County, please refer to descriptions provided in Attachment C.

b. Braiding Resources and Coordinating Service Delivery for People Receiving CalFresh to Participate in Workforce Services, Sector Pathway Programs, Supportive Services and Retention Efforts:

Given the population size and diversity that participates in the CalFresh Program, many of the workforce system partners and allied stakeholders serve individuals in this target group. Services begin with assessing participants' needs and evaluating their background, experience, and circumstances. A service strategy is customized to meet education, training, and support needs. When CalFresh participants seek services through the AJCC, they are oriented not just to the services provided under WIOA but to programs and resources available through the one-stop partners and other service agencies. A service plan is developed that addresses their full range of needs but has skills development and employment as primary goals. Many CalFresh participants are referred to education partners for training ranging from adult basic education to career technical education courses that prepare them for jobs in local and regional target sectors. Linking participants to community-based resources for housing, medical, legal, and other services is part of a braided strategy to ensure participants are equipped to complete training and succeed in the workplace.

c. Workforce System Collaboration with Community Organizations Serving Specific CalFresh Populations:

For CalFresh participants, the workforce system uses a wide range of strategies to coordinate and leverage resources from stakeholders of all types. Individuals with particular circumstances and barriers (e.g., job seekers with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, migrant and seasonal farmworkers) will often qualify for specific types of funding and programs and, in some cases, are referred by those programs to the AJCCs and other workforce system providers. County and state justice system agencies, WIOA Section 167 Farmworker programs, the State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and other disabilities services agencies, veterans' services programs, refugee support agencies, and other organizations with a unique, population-specific focus are part of the workforce system's extended network. Referrals, co-enrollments, and coordinated service delivery are commonplace among stakeholders. Stakeholders communicated that the linkages between HSA are solid with the AJCC and with the Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), the WIOA Section 167 grantee that serves Merced and two adjacent counties.

For additional information, please refer to descriptions provided in Attachment C.

d. Braiding Resources and Coordinating Service Delivery for People Receiving CalFresh to Participate in Workforce Services, Sector Pathway Programs, Supportive Services and Retention Efforts:

Services begin with assessing participants' needs and evaluating their background, experience, and circumstances. A service strategy is customized to meet education, training, and support needs. When CalFresh participants seek services through the AJCC, they are oriented not just to

the services provided under WIOA but to programs and resources available through the one-stop partners and other service agencies. A service plan is developed that addresses their full range of needs but has skills development and employment as primary goals. Many CalFresh participants are referred to education partners for training ranging from adult basic education to career technical education courses that prepare them for jobs in local and regional target sectors. Linking participants to community-based resources for housing, medical, legal, and other services is part of a braided strategy to ensure participants are equipped to complete training and succeed in the workplace.

e. Workforce System Collaboration with Community Organizations Serving Specific CalFresh Populations:

For CalFresh participants, the workforce system uses a wide range of strategies to coordinate and leverage resources from stakeholders of all types. Individuals with particular circumstances and barriers (e.g., job seekers with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, migrant and seasonal farmworkers) will often qualify for specific types of funding and programs and, in some cases, are referred by those programs to the AJCCs and other workforce system providers. County and state justice system agencies, WIOA Section 167 Farmworker programs, the State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and other disabilities services agencies, veterans' services programs, refugee support agencies, and other organizations with a unique, population-specific focus are part of the workforce system's extended network. Referrals, co-enrollments, and coordinated service delivery are commonplace among stakeholders. Stakeholders communicated that the linkages between HSA are solid with the AJCC and with the Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), the WIOA Section 167 grantee that serves Merced and adjacent counties.

f. Workforce Services Available to People Receiving CalFresh That Are Funded by Local/Regional Partners:

The types of services available to CalFresh participants are outlined above. Again, the diversity of the population suggests that needs vary significantly. Stakeholders indicate that many in this target group have low educational attainment levels and few skills to compete in the current labor market. The local education agencies that make up the Gateway Adult Education Network offer a wide array of basic education, literacy, ESL, and career technical education programs to which CalFresh participants will be referred. Most organizations serving CalFresh individuals do not use CalFresh enrollment status as a basis for eligibility/participation and do not record this data. Therefore, baseline service levels for most education, training, and support programs are not available. Some programs and providers do collect information regarding their participants' CalFresh status. Even without the availability of baseline service levels, recent Biennial Modification planning and the community and stakeholder engagement process have made clear that there is potential to serve a greater number of CalFresh participants in workforce development and career technical education programs by the partners' working together to promote services to this population. Under the WDB's leadership, the one-stop partners will work together with HSA to identify and develop strategies to specifically market workforce and training programs for CalFresh participants.

g. Partners' Roles in Helping Provide Services to and Integrating People Receiving CalFresh into Sector Pathway Programs:

The WDB, HSA, and the full range of local workforce system partners are all committed to ensuring that participants' training and employment preparation are focused on demand occupations within priority sectors that hold promise for career advancement, wage gains, and a

family-supporting income. Over the last several years, Merced County WDB has been intensively focused on providing career exploration, service planning, career guidance, case management, work-based learning, and referrals to training that are sector pathway-focused, concentrating on-demand industries that are creating jobs and are stimulating economic growth throughout the region. The WDB has begun a process of intensively engaging with businesses in key sectors with the goal not only to meet supply-side demand but to create new employment opportunities for priority populations, such as individuals enrolled in CalFresh. Participants benefit from this focus by participating in services designed to qualify them for jobs that will lead to careers with good wages and benefits. Merced County WDB continues to lead discussions among the workforce system stakeholders, including our education partners, regarding the development of coursework and work-based learning strategies focused on regional sector pathways. Career pathway training available to CalFresh participants includes, but is not limited to, courses designed to meet changing needs in manufacturing; training to prepare workers for jobs in the growing transportation/logistics sector in the county; and a wide range of programs to prepare students for entry-level and higher positions in healthcare. As discussed in Section V of this narrative, pathways programs in addiction counseling and entrepreneurship are in development. Other providers in the county, such as CVOC, offer training for jobs in priority sectors, such as transportation, reporting starting wages of \$25/hr. or higher for truck drivers.

h. Coordination among Partners to Provide Supportive Services to this Population and Facilitate Program Completion:

WIOA, CalFresh, the Rehabilitation Act, and many other programs for which some CalFresh participants may qualify allow a portion of funds to be used to provide a variety of support that enables participation in services and training and successful transition to employment. For individuals needing supportive services (e.g., housing, transportation, childcare) that may exceed the resources available through public workforce and education programs, referrals are made to public and non-profit providers throughout the county. As described above, the delivery of services to CalFresh and other workforce system participants begins with assessment and service planning. These services are critical in determining support needs and form the basis for designing a program of support that will ensure a participant's success. Additional information on supportive services is provided in Attachment C.

i. Strategies to Retain Participants in Regional Sector Pathway Programs and Employment:

AJCC staff and representatives of our workforce services partners (e.g., EDD, DOR, local education agencies) orient all prospective candidates to workforce, education and training services that are available to support their career goals. This is followed by assessment and service planning that not only ensures that suitable workforce services are identified but that customers understand the actions required to advance on a career path that will pay family-sustaining wages. These include gaining work experience in an occupation and, frequently, continuing education and training to secure credentials that businesses recognize and value. Services, including counseling and case management, provide encouragement to motivate participants to complete training and pursue their career objectives.

Local/Regional Partners fund workforce Services Available to People Receiving CalFresh
That: The types of services available to CalFresh participants are outlined above. Again, the diversity of the population suggests that needs vary significantly. Stakeholders indicate that many in this target group have low educational attainment levels and few skills to compete in the current labor market. The local education agencies that make up the Gateway Adult Education Network offer a wide array of basic education, literacy, ESL, and career technical education programs to

which CalFresh participants will be referred. Most organizations serving CalFresh individuals do not use CalFresh enrollment status as a basis for eligibility/participation and do not record this data. Therefore, baseline service levels for most education, training, and support programs are not available. Some programs and providers do collect information regarding their participants' CalFresh status.

Even without the availability of baseline service levels, recent Biennial Modification planning and the community and stakeholder engagement process have made clear that there is potential to serve a greater number of CalFresh participants in workforce development and career technical education programs by the partners' working together to promote services to this population. Under the WDB's leadership, the one-stop partners will work together with HSA to identify and develop strategies to specifically market workforce and training programs for CalFresh participants.

ii. ***How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Child Support Agencies and other local partners who serve individuals who are non-custodial parents.***

The workforce system's partnership with the Merced County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) represents the enhancement of an existing relationship among the WDB, the AJCCs, and Child Support. Referrals are made from Child Support to the AJCCs during a "payment delinquent" non-custodial parent's early stage of arrears. While this approach is yielding some success, as a result of the WDB's recent stakeholder engagement process, DCSS and the WDB have developed an MOU that outlines a structured relationship for cross-referrals. The WDB, DCSS, and the entire network of one-stop and community partners that comprise the workforce system are all fully committed to building a strong partnership to improve employment outcomes for Non-Custodial Parents (NCP) with child support orders. For background information on the target group and an assessment of need. See Attachment D

a. ***Existing Workforce and Education Program Partnerships***

1. Partners' Collaboration to Provide Supportive Services to Enhance Job Retention: The population comprising non-custodial parents with child support orders, unemployed, underemployed, or payment delinquent is exceptionally diverse and experiences a vast array of circumstances. Some individuals are entirely disconnected from the labor market, having never worked a traditional job and possessing few marketable skills. Others may be formerly incarcerated individuals, including those who are recently released and, therefore, unemployed. Still, others may be English language learners, persons with disabilities, disconnected youth, or older workers. As a result of their circumstances, some are homeless, lack transportation, and need a combination of services to meet basic needs. The common thread among them is their status with regard to child support payments, employment, and the ability to command family supporting wages within the marketplace. Given the diversity of the population and the spectrum of support needs that is likely to exist, AJCC staff will work individually with each non-custodial parent to determine supportive service needs. Staff is experienced in assessing needs at various levels and in surveying the community for resources. Foremost on the list of support services to be addressed are those corresponding to fundamental needs such as food, housing, and clothing. While WIOA and other federally-funded programs that comprise the one-stop partners may be able to make support funds available on a one-time basis or for short-term interventions to meet these needs, AJCC staff work to develop linkages with local organizations, many of which are faith-based, to address these needs. AJCC and workforce system partner staff will also work with NCP customers to determine if there may be resources within their personal networks (e.g., family members, friends) who may assist with fundamental support needs. Other "stabilizing" services

may include counseling and health services, which can be obtained through referrals to a wide range of agencies, including behavioral and other public health services and private, non-profit, and community resources, including a network of community clinics. Support services that enable participation in training and a successful transition to employment generally include assistance with transportation, child care, work-related clothing, tools, and similar services. Such services are available from WIOA, through other one-stop/AJCC partners (when NCPs are co-enrolled in these programs), and through various community agencies, such as the D Street Shelter and the Merced County Rescue Mission. To build a more robust network of support for this population, case managers from all organizations will confer regularly to ensure that the full range of customers' support needs continues to be met throughout program participation and in the months following employment. The WDB will lead these efforts.

2. Comprehensive Services to Facilitate Labor Market Success and Career Advancement: As indicated above, AJCC staff and representatives of our workforce services partners (e.g., EDD, DOR, local education agencies) orient all prospective candidates to the workforce, education, and training services that are available to support their career goals. This is followed by assessment and service planning that not only ensure that timely workforce services are identified, but that customers understand the actions required to advance on a career path that will pay family-sustaining wages. These include gaining work experience in an occupation and, for many, continuing their education and training after starting a job to secure credentials that businesses recognize and value. Staff will work with each NCP to develop short-, mid-and long-range employment goals. Based on the child support obligations of targeted NCPs, the partners recognize that they have a need to identify employment paying wages sufficient to meet these obligations and provide enough remaining income so that the NCP can support him/herself. DCSS and other stakeholders and allies strongly emphasized the need to concentrate on jobs paying a living wage. Therefore, staff may recommend that NCPs consider employment options where an entry-level worker can earn relatively good wages after minimal training or while learning on the job. Among the regional priority industries offering such opportunities are construction, manufacturing and transportation, and logistics. Once the NCP is working and meeting support obligations, s/he can take advantage of training programs that will offer opportunities for even higher wages in these industries or other sectors, such as healthcare. Providers offering training at little or no cost include the educational institutions that comprise the Gateway Adult Education Network: Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified School District; Gustine Unified School District; Le Grand Union High School District; Los Banos Unified School District; Mariposa County Unified School District; Merced Community College District; Merced County Office of Education and Merced Union High School District.

3. Impact of WIOA Eligibility Criteria on Serving the Target Population: Merced County DCSS and other system partners that serve targeted NCPs (e.g., social services, workforce development) indicated that two features of WIOA eligibility criteria might impact the ability of NCPs to participate in federally-funded workforce services. These are registration for selective service and documentation of right to work. With regard to selective service, local boards can review circumstances and have the authority to "forgive" the non-compliance with registration requirements, allowing non-registrants to participate in WIOA. The state has recently published guidance on the required collection of right-to-work documentation for various services under WIOA. While NCPs lacking documentation could use resource information at the center and be referred to non-federally-funded programs for assistance, the AJCC would be unable to provide such individuals WIOA individualized services.

4. Other Obstacles to Serving the Child Support Program Population: Local Child Support professionals and others that work with the NCP population have indicated that the only significant

obstacle to providing workforce services to the Child Support Program population is individual NCPs themselves. Based on workforce-child support pilots that have been implemented elsewhere (such as Los Angeles County) and on their own experience working with this population, stakeholders anticipate that many NCPs referred to WIOA/AJCC services will be interested in the opportunity to prepare for jobs that can lead to family-supporting wages and in DCSS “incentives,” which are described below. Still, others will not initially be convinced that any “public program” to which Merced County DCSS is making referrals would be beneficial, as they have a negative perception of the agency.

According to stakeholders, many individuals that are insignificant arrears on child support payment are so distrustful of Child Support Services and “the government” in general that they work exclusively in the underground economy, where they pay no taxes and their funds. However, limited, remain out of reach. All agree on the long-term ill effects this has on NCPs. Key to making the new partnership work will be the stakeholders’ developing and promoting messages to NCPs that are benefits-focused and demonstrates that workforce services offer a path to in-demand jobs, careers, and good wages. Merced County DCSS leadership and staff acknowledged that perceptions and messaging are core issues and that altering perceptions about the child support agency is critical. Child Support officials indicated that the department is working diligently to address perception problems affecting NCPs. A crucial element of new, more positive messaging is DCSS’s focus on providing resources to assist NCPs in meeting their child support obligations and improving their quality of life. The enhanced partnership with the workforce system will be a feature of this new benefits-oriented messaging.

5. Strategies to Motivate and Support Participation: Merced County Department of Child Support Services, like local child support agencies (LCSAs) throughout the state, acknowledges that its first priority is to ensure that the county’s children are financially supported and well cared for. To this end, LCSAs have at their disposal a series of “enforcement tools,” such as a revocation of drivers’ and professional licenses, attachment of wages, and imposing liens. Conversely, there are several “motivation tools” that Merced County DCSS is willing to utilize to encourage NCPs to take advantage of workforce programs and services. Among these are the restoration of licenses, revisiting support orders to ensure they reflect the current circumstances of the NCP and deferring or lessening the requirement for payment during the time in which NCPs are engaged in workforce services, training, and job search. Officials from Merced County DCSS have repeatedly emphasized the department’s willingness to assist NCPs in meeting their obligations. Child Support Services is prepared to use the “incentives” described above to encourage NCP’s efforts to gain skills, engage in job search, and be successful in their careers.

The WDB, Child Support Services, and other stakeholders all agree that the best tool to motivate and support NCPs’ engagement with the workforce system is providing good and accurate information about child support obligations; payment options; labor market and employment opportunities; and services that can lead to well-paying jobs with career ladder potential. Again, under the newly enhanced partnership with the workforce system, creating clear, positive messaging will be of paramount importance. The other major factor that may serve as an incentive is ensuring a warm hand-off between the two systems. Under a new MOU, opportunities, and procedures for directly connecting NCPs to the AJCCs and community-based organizations are being clearly defined.

6. Opportunities for and Obstacles to Local Partnerships: No significant obstacles have been identified to the stakeholders’ engaging in a meaningful and productive partnership.

b. *Plans for Building Successful Partnerships or Scaling up Existing Successful Partnerships*

1. Strategies to Support Participant Retention in Training Programs: Communication and the ability to make referrals from the workforce system currently exist, but need to continue to expand. Under a more structured partnership, MCWDB and DCSS have prepared and executed an MOU that frames roles, responsibilities, and processes associated with their enhanced collaboration. Among the provisions of the agreement is a commitment to maintaining communication on the services and outcomes of participants, thereby encouraging both agencies to support participants in achieving their employment and wage goals. Providing supportive services and leveraging “incentive tools” from Child Support Services will be key strategies to encourage participants’ retention in training and services. As we do with other job seekers, AJCC staff and partners will help customers devise long-range career plans, including multi-year, multi-step processes to gain work experience and develop high-demand technical skills. The planning process will provide a “road map” for participants to progress along a career path on which experience and attainment of skills and credentials will increase their earning power and enable them to earn family-sustaining wages.

2. Existing, New, and Prospective Workforce and Training Partnerships: As described above, a working referral relationship already exists between the workforce system and DCSS. However, a newly draft MOU provides structure and establishes processes that will improve the relationship's effectiveness. The MOU outlines the purpose of the agreement, roles of each department, shared responsibilities, and confidentiality requirements. Incorporated into the agreement are: provisions for referrals of NCPs from Child Support to the AJCC and from the AJCC to Child Support; a consent and release form pertaining to sharing specific types of information between the two agencies; and mechanisms for AJCCs to report workforce program activities and employment outcomes to Child Support.

3. Braiding Resources and Coordinating Service Delivery: By entering into a partnership with the WDB, the Child Support system immediately becomes connected to the entire workforce system, including the WIOA-mandated one-stop partners and a host of local government programs, community agencies, and faith-based organizations that are stakeholders in and contributors to workforce service delivery. AJCC staff will function as the principal case managers for NCPs enrolled in workforce programs and make referrals and promote co-enrollments, as appropriate and necessary, to training and service partners, thereby accessing additional resources.

4. Coordination with Community-Based Organizations to Serve the Target Population: Given the diverse nature of the target population and the fact that NCPs generally do not identify themselves as such, local CBOs are not aware of the number of individuals from this population that they are serving. This is true of the WDB itself, as AJCC staff is often unaware that a customer has an order for child support payment. Staff indicates that an issue signaling payment delinquency is a customer having a suspended drivers' license. The most prominent local resource for male NCP's is operated through Merced County HSA. The “All Dads Matter” fatherhood program provides a variety of counseling and support services. These include a “boot camp for dads,” a one-day, three-hour workshop for first-time or expectant dads. They use a unique man-to-man approach: veteran dads and their babies orient rookie dads who are expecting a new baby. Topics include perspectives on fatherhood, supporting mom in her role as a new mother; crying baby checklist; baby safety; managing “New Daddy Stress”; and self-care. Also available is the “Leadership for Life” series of workshops where men will develop skills to navigate, communicate, and advocate for themselves and their children. Dads are invited to: receive honest information and peer support; join other dads at “Hands-on Applications” sessions; view interactive videos and practice communicating in a safe and supportive environment; take field trips with other dads, and build one’s resource “toolbox.” A fathers’ support group meets weekly. Merced County is also home to

a companion “All Moms Matter” support group.

5. Referral Processes and Systems: The Merced County partners plan to implement a structured referral process and forms like the ones used elsewhere in the state. The parties to the MOU will follow a referral process where Child Support communicates with a designated single point of contact (liaison) at the AJCC about customers being referred. Child Support will also assign a liaison as a single point of contact. Child Support will provide customers a referral form that identifies them to AJCC staff as Child Support participants. When a referred customer enrolls at the AJCC, center staff will notify Child Support by email of the enrollment and workforce activities, providing updates no less than quarterly. This email notification will include information that communicates that the referred individual has registered or enrolled and the services they are participating in. It will also include a consent and release form signed by the participant. While it is anticipated that most referrals will come from Child Support to the AJCC, referrals from the center to Child Support may also occur (in a case, for instance, where a participant needs to get a drivers' license reinstated).

Staff will email referral forms to DCSS for enrolled customers only. The role of the court system in the referral process has yet to be determined.

c. Working with the Local Child Support Agency to Identify Incentives to Increase the Success of Non-Custodial Parents Sustained Participation in Local Workforce Programs

Tools and incentives to promote participation and retention are those described under item II.A.5, above.

iii. How the Local Board will coordinate with Local Partnership Agreement partners, established in alignment with the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint, and other local partners who serve individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Merced County WDB and partners within the local workforce system have developed a clear understanding of the goals set at the state level by the State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and the State Department of Education (DOE) in connection with their agreement to increase competitive integrated employment (CIE) opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We became familiar with the CIE Blueprint and with the guidance, the state agencies have provided to their local counterparts with regard to the development of Local Partnership Agreements (LPAs) to support the expanded use of CIE throughout California. An LPA for Merced County has been completed. An LPA has been executed for Merced County. The Competitive Integrated Employment LPA has been established for the purpose of improving service levels and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and developmental disabilities (DD) through focusing on person-centered planning, streamlining the provision of services for the target population and building creative collaborations among the core LPA partners (signature parties to the agreement), community partners (such as the WDB, CVOC and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) and businesses. The local LPA has been built on a strong foundation. More than 30 years ago, the Merced County Transition Council (MCTC) was established as a platform for communication among agencies in the disability services network, including all of the current LPA core partners and many of the LPA's community partners. The group meets eight times per year to share information and identify resources and solutions that will achieve better labor market results for individuals with disabilities. The LPA advances the MCTC's work, which has focused on education and employment programs. The LPA defines the roles and responsibilities of all partners, including community partners. Referral processes among partners and stakeholders are

described in detail, including the process by which referrals can be made to the AJCC. In addition, the LPA specifies services that WorkNet of Merced County offers to individuals with disabilities, ages 18 and older (e.g., career guidance; skills training; job readiness skills; job placement assistance). The LPA does not explicitly state the role of the WDB, the AJCCs, or the workforce system in supporting DOR's business outreach efforts in connection with the CIE initiative. For additional information on the LPA partners and anticipated plans to increase CIE availability in Merced County, please refer to the descriptions provided in Attachment D.

a. AJCC Staff Knowledge and Training Needs about Serving Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and about Programs and Resources Available for the Target Population.

Both MCWDB/AJCC staff and managers and staff representing the system partners have expressed interest in training from the LPA partners about the workforce-related needs and barriers of individuals with ID and DD, as the workforce system, overall, has limited experience working with this target group. While the Local Board and its partners have significant experience serving individuals with disabilities, they acknowledge the need for CIE-specific training. State guidance on the CIE initiative indicates that DOR and State Board leadership will ensure that training is available for AJCC staff and that the DOR District Office will assign a point of contact to support the workforce system's CIE activities. Once this occurs, MCWDB will work with state and local CIE partners to secure training for AJCC frontline staff and system stakeholders.

b. Planned Coordination with DOR Point of Contact Regarding Services and Resources for the Target Population Who Are Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers:

Merced County WDB has not yet been assigned a DOR point of contact for the CIE expansion initiative. We intend to work closely with our DOR-assigned contact to engage with contractors that serve the target population and coordinate our services with the LPA partners.

c. DOR Collaboration in Outreach to Employers and Partners to Support Opportunities for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities to achieve Competitive Integrated Employment.:

MCWDB and AJCC staff currently collaborate with DOR to serve customers with disabilities. Supporting DOR's and the LPA's business outreach efforts to expand the use of CIE would be a natural extension of our current, productive working relationship. While DOR has not communicated to the WDB its goals or its approach to increasing CIE opportunities through the LPA, we envision supporting DOR's efforts in several ways. WorkNet Merced currently serves many individuals with disabilities, including some with ID/DD. Based on this experience; the AJCCs are prepared to work in partnership with DOR and the LPAs partners in developing a comprehensive messaging strategy to inform local businesses about the advantages of hosting work-based learning and hiring employees within a competitive integrated employment framework. The WDB has been effective in engaging local businesses within priority sectors in discussions on how the AJCC, local education providers, and the entire workforce system can be more responsive to the needs of companies to secure job-ready talent. As a result of this engagement with employers, the system has become more business-responsive, and key sectors are coming to rely more on the public workforce system to meet their hiring and training needs. The same strategies utilized to target employers in key industries can be used to engage with businesses of all types and sizes on hiring individuals with ID/DD and the expansion of CIE. For example, business champions would be used to promote the initiative. The Merced County WDB

is also prepared to assist the LPA partners in outreaching directly to local businesses to promote CIE. This process may include contacting larger companies' corporate offices to educate and inform human resources decision-makers about CIE. It will also include expanded efforts to work with small- and medium-sized businesses local to Merced County. Frank and clear information on expectations in working with the target group will be crucial to building trust among businesses, explaining how job coaches and other supports can help ensure that placements are successful. Following DOR's assignment of a CIE liaison, which we anticipate will occur in early 2021, the Merced County WDB will work with DOR and the LPA partners to define our specific role in the CIE business outreach process.

iv. ***How the Local Board will coordinate with community-based organizations and other local partners who serve individuals who are English language learners, foreign born, and/or refugees.***

In Merced County, of the approximately 277,680 people who call the county home, nearly sixty percent are Hispanic or Latino. One in every four individuals is foreign-born, including immigrants from Mexico and Central America but also immigrants from Southeast Asia, such as the Hmong. English language learners (ELLs), foreign-born individuals, refugees, and immigrants comprise a significant portion of the county's population and its current and future workforce. They are critical to every aspect of the local economy, working across all key industries and providing the foundation for the agriculture industry, which remains crucial to local and regional prosperity. Investments in this target group are essential to the well-being and economic vitality of the county. The WDB understands that ELLs are a diverse population with a wide range of needs. Some individuals are just learning English, while others have developed a level of fluency that enables them to take advantage of training and upskilling opportunities that will make them candidates for jobs in the region's priority sectors, which often provide better wages and career advancement potential than jobs in other industries.

a. Sharing Resources and Coordinating Services for the Target Population:

The MCWDB acts in various ways to support ELLs and engage stakeholders in Merced County work in collaboration and partnership to address the workforce needs of immigrants, refugees, and English Language Learners. This work is of critical importance to the Local Area, and to MCWDB leadership, as so much of the County's economic activity has been developed and, in no small part, dependent on these workers. This coordination includes working closely with community organizations and a new commitment to provide more services, and information about services in Spanish and Hmong. MCWDB leadership is making inroads in this area, such as hosting the Regional Planning Units two Spanish-language forums in February 2021, and new relationships with the County's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and its participation in the County's COVID-19 South East Asian outreach committee. Renewed efforts will take into account a number of intersecting barriers, utilizing an equity-first lens. In 2021-2024, the WDB will work to further enfranchise these populations by meeting them in their communities and in their language as well as English.

b. Increasing Access to Sector Pathway Programs:

Stakeholders continue to emphasize the importance of English language skills acquisition and the positive effects of English fluency on one's earning potential and ability to advance in a career path. English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) training is available through agencies that comprise the adult education consortium and through local community-based organizations. While assisting English language learners in improving their fluency and attaining academic credentials is

fundamental to increasing their prospects for well-paid jobs, the need to earn a family-supporting income is critical for most in this target group. Merced County workforce system partners (including the AJCC, education providers, and CBOs) recognize that this target group needs long-term interventions that will include on-ramps and off-ramps from education to better jobs and careers. While many Merced County immigrants have worked in agriculture, workforce system partners successfully assist job seekers in finding entry-level employment in other priority sector careers. Industries where immigrants and those learning English are experiencing the most success, include construction, manufacturing, and transportation/logistics, all of which offer a path to good wages with minimal time spent in formal training. Stakeholders cited jobs in transportation/trucking and the building trades as providing good opportunities to earn family-supporting wages.

c. Ensuring the Availability of Support Services:

The AJCC staff assesses each participant's need for services to support their participation in training and job search and their success on the job. The target population is diverse, ranging from refugees who completed college in their home countries to immigrants with low literacy in their native languages. Moreover, while economic circumstances may vary, the vast majority of individuals in the target group are low-income. They generally have limited skills to compete in the labor market. Because of limited resources and the frequent need to participate in multiple activities and services, access to various forms of support can be critical. In addition to utilizing a portion of Merced County's WIOA Title I allocation to provide a variety of support, AJCC staff works closely with partners to secure support services for customers. Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), the local WIOA Section 167 grantee, is a principal provider of support services to address basic individual and family-sustaining needs for workforce program participants. CVOC's services are described under item F below. Other forms of support (e.g., translation, resettlement, specialized services for refugees) may be provided by various organizations with which Merced County WDB, the AJCCs, and workforce system partners collaborate, such as the International Rescue Committee, Golden Valley Health Center, Merced County Community Action Agency, and the Mexican Consulate. Many of the one-stop partner programs (e.g., Rehabilitation Act, Older Americans Act) also offer a range of supportive services to individuals enrolled in their programs. For those who qualify and need assistance from those programs, referrals resulting in co-enrollment may be made.

d. Promoting Retention in Training, on the Job and in Career Path Progression:

As suggested above, the keys to promoting ELL and immigrant job seekers' progression into self-sustaining and family-supporting careers are career information, career planning, and the availability of flexible and modular services offering a variety of on- and off-ramps. Collaborating across organizations and disciplines, the workforce system partners and allied stakeholders all recognize the need to balance the target group's immediate income needs with their need to build language and technical skills that will qualify them for well-paid jobs. Developing this balance starts by making available comprehensive information about the labor market and careers in the region. Using this information, stakeholders assist customers in devising long-range career plans, which may include multi-year, multi-step processes to gain work experience and develop technical skills. The more flexible and diverse services are, the greater the likelihood that participants will remain engaged or periodically re-engage over the long-term. Community-based and education partners offer strategic resources for such engagement. The availability of training and services during the evening, on weekends, during agricultural "slow-down" periods, and at remote locations, all contribute to customers taking advantage of services over time.

Amazingly, Merced County is not home to any formally designated Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. MCWDB has begun working with local adult schools to introduce local IET programs, and forged introductions among IET provider in other counties.

e. Coordination and Alignment with Other Plans and Planning Partners:

The local workforce services plan most closely aligned to the mission and objectives of the Merced County WDB and the local workforce system is the Three Year Plan of the Gateway Adult Education Network, which serves Merced and Mariposa counties. The Consortium's plan update provides the following information with regard to the ELL and immigrant target population:

- A priority for the region is meeting students' needs for basic education services, including ESL, GED instruction, and programs leading to a high school diploma.
- The majority of districts in the consortium offer ESL classes to enhance English language learners' proficiency and allow them to advance in their careers.
- Programs for immigrants in citizenship, ESL, and workforce preparation are a regional priority.

f. Coordination with the National Farmworker Jobs Program:

Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC) is the WIOA 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program grantee for a three-county region, including Madera, Merced Stanislaus counties. CVOC receives funding from several major federal and state funding sources. The organization's services address an extensive list of priorities for the farmworker population and others who need assistance. These include, but are not limited to vocational training, ESL, GED instruction, on-the-job training, job placement assistance, training-related support services, counseling, case management, a Summer Migrant Youth Project, rental assistance, emergency shelter, emergency food assistance, translation services, referrals for immigration services, assistance in applying for social services, transportation, and energy assistance. Merced County WDB has executed an MOU with CVOC, outlining processes for the mutual referral of customers and agreement with regard to the sharing of data, as appropriate and permissible. The MOU also acknowledges that participants may be co-enrolled into workforce development, training, and support programs offered by the AJCC and CVOC and identifies processes to address opportunities for co-case management. In addition to working together to serve and co-case manage job seekers, CVOC leadership and staff are connected to the local workforce system by participating in partner meetings, staff development, and cross-training events, workshops, and other events to ensure that eligible MSFW participants have access to the full array of available AJCC services.

g. Recognizing and Replicating Best Practices:

While strong, effective practices for collaboration and service delivery exist throughout the county and among many providers, Merced County WDB is committed to continuously improving workforce and support services for the immigrant community. As a result of the community and stakeholder engagement process, several opportunities for improvement were identified. These include the following efforts: making available a broader array of support services, as the target population has extensive and wide-ranging needs, spanning basic services, such as housing and transportation, to multi-shift childcare to immigration and acculturation support; developing services that address the mindset and perspective of immigrants that will enable them to understand available opportunities and to set goals to take advantage of them; and promoting the availability of training, employment, and support services through the use of success stories that feature role models and champions that represent the immigrant community. The partners will

address these issues as part of their work on meeting local plan goals.

C. WIOA Title I Coordination

i. **Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning.**

Beginning May 2021, training and professional development will be provided to frontline staff to gain and expand their proficiency in digital fluency and distance learning, including serving customers with limited technology skills and accessibility. The WDB has explored various trainings for procurement, and considered leveraging County resources, such as those within the Library System, to build staff skills. During COVID-19, staff quickly developed new ways of doing business based on virtual access. New training will focus on how to assist customers with limited digital literacy, and on building staff's competency and understanding of virtual technologies, such as virtual contract signing and virtual meeting technologies.

ii. **Training and/or professional development that will be provided to frontline staff to ensure cultural competencies and an understanding of the experiences of trauma- exposed populations.**

The Regional Organizer will procure training to include topics related to trauma-related training and cultural competencies. The WDB may augment these through a variety of professional development experiences rooted in trauma-informed care and human-centered design. This will include collaborative (WDB and AJCC staff) sessions that focus on "customer dignity." These discussions and trainings will be an informal review of all customer touch points and environments to ensure all customers are supported. Human-centered design approaches will engage staff and customers in developing solutions and improvements to services. This will launch in summer 2021.

iii. **How the Local Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities, as outlined in WSD16-04 - Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities.**

MCWDB and their partners' goals are to prevent the need for Rapid Response activities by in part investing in strong layoff aversion activities. MCWDB responds to Rapid Response in three different ways:

- In joint partnership both regionally and locally, the Merced Business Resource Team (BRT) and other staff coordinate with the EDD, HSA (Merced Human Services Agency), and HUD on surveying businesses to identify training and skills gaps, barriers, and solutions to growth, business satisfaction on partner services, continuous Improvement to existing systems, unique and timely targeted training, layoff aversion and rapid response efforts.
- MCWDB staff utilize Rapid Response as a proactive intermediary for priority industry sectors to educate and plan with business in the community in the event rapid response becomes necessary.
- Rapid Response Early Warning signs such as those observed by the EDD and MCWDB staff based on traffic patterns in the AJCC and receiving a Worker Adjustment Retraining and Notification Act (WARN) letter from the employer and the state. When the letter is received, the BRT and Its partners will work closely with the employer and employees to deliver as many services as possible before their layoff occurs. The goal here is to avoid any time in between employment opportunities for the employees affected by the WARN. MCWDB continues to utilize the EconoView system based upon data from Dunn & Bradstreet to identify stress levels

of businesses and provide appropriate outreach before the business reaches the WARN notice stage.

- iv. **A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area. This includes how the Local Board will ensure that priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as outlined in WSD15-14 - WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service.**

WIOA provides states and Local Areas (LWIA) an opportunity to develop employment and training systems explicitly tailored to the state and local area's needs. MCWDB contracts with service providers in Merced County to offer employment and training services to support job seekers through all phases of their employment and re-employment process. Through its Adult and Dislocated worker provider, a priority of service is given to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient. A priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service among all eligible individuals; however, they must meet the WIOA Adult program eligibility. MCWDB has established strong pipelines of high-need customers by working alongside community based organizations, such as The Rescue Mission, and Public institutions, such as County Department of Child Support Services. The Adult and Dislocated Worker service provider recently met with MCWDB staff to establish a proactive, community-based outreach plan that will see it regularly part of community events and services advertised in community papers.

America's Job Center of California (AJCC) On-Site Resources

AJCCs provide onsite and virtual resources, including the following: a career services resource room; access to computers and the internet; office equipment (e.g., copiers, fax, and telephones); access to business resources and interview rooms; individualized career assistance and career counseling; referral to career training; GED and ESL programs; and, access to Labor Market information and assistance with program placement. MCWDB addresses employers' skills needs for their current and future workforce by working with training providers as they design and implement training programs. Training providers will involve employers to provide input into the design of relevant training, as well as offer feedback on the effectiveness of the training. This coordinated approach to addressing training providers' needs will ensure that they are providing "just in time, relevant training. MCWDB and training providers will utilize industry cluster studies and labor market data on growth occupations, as well as the State's online Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), to align curriculum with in-demand skills needs. While these in-person services were temporarily available by appointment only, MCWDB began to re-open its centers on March 8, 2021.

AJCC Career and Training Services

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, training, education, and supportive services to succeed in the labor market. Basic Career Services, or "universal access, are made available to all participants in an effort to meet a variety of needs of both Adult and Dislocated Workers. MCWDB, through its Adult and Dislocated worker provider, provides Career Services under the categories of universal services, basic career services, individualized career services, training, and follow-up services. The service delivery approach allows for maximum flexibility in service provision while meeting participant needs.

- v. **A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce**

investment activities in the Local Area, as outlined in WSD17-07- WIOA Youth Program Requirements. This includes any strategies the Local Board has about how to increase the digital literacy and fluency of youth participants, including youth with disabilities.

Through its youth provider programs in the local area, MCWDB seeks to find ways to provide job readiness, placement, and retention services to assist youth in a career pathway and skills development. As of this writing, MCWDB is in procurement of a Youth Services Provider for services from 2021 through 2025. This procurement introduces new requirements to ensure a countywide distribution of services, access to out-of-school youth under age 18, and an emphasis on work experiences. The new program will include minimum thresholds for training, work experiences and rural enrollment. In fall 2021, MCWDB will introduce a limited In-School program to help at-risk youth in the County's remote areas. Both Out-of-School and In-School enrollees will have access to entrepreneurial training and experiences.

Description and Assessment of Youth Workforce Development Activities

MCWDB currently contracts with Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) to provide youth services to those out of school from ages 18-24. MCOE offers access to all required components of WIOA Youth, including but not limited to: training, work readiness and remediation, work experience and career exploration. MCWDB also participates in a career day, which involves approximately 1,000 high school students. During career day, MCWDB assists with the facilitation and coordination of the annual youth conference that exposes high school students to careers in the health care industry through the utilization of several panels of experts. MCWDB uses the youth conference to recruit potential participants/customers and explain to high school students career planning and upskilling while they are sophomores to stimulate their future career planning.

For the past three program years, WIOA Youth enrollments have totaled approximately 200 annually. The most recent program year has seen an expansion in enrollment (even despite COVID-19) and more enrollments outside of the County's larger population centers. All students complete comprehensive work readiness activities, and have access to training, work experience and employment.

MCWDB sees opportunities for enhancement in its youth outlay, and is using the procurement process described above as a way to make these changes. MCWDB regularly monitors Youth programs, including quarterly monitoring by MCWDB staff and, beginning in 2021, annually by an external monitor. Monthly, data in CalJobs is assessed to track youth activities and progress, as well as demographic representation.

- vi. **The entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) or the Governor, and the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.**

The designated recipient for the disbursal of grant funds under WIOA is the Merced County Workforce Development Board and the Merced County Department of Workforce Investment, which is staff to the LWDB, as designated by the chief local elected official under WIOA Section 107(d)(12) (B)(i).

- vii. **A description of how the Local Board fulfills the duties of the AJCC Operator and/or the Career Services Provider as outlined in WSD19-13 - Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers. This should include the name(s) and role(s) of any entities that the Local Board contracts with.**

The AJCC operator's role includes coordinating the service delivery of required AJCC partners and service providers and ensuring the implementation of partner responsibilities and contributions agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding. The Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services Provider's role includes providing basic career services, including but not limited to participant intake, orientations, initial assessments, employment services, and referrals to other partners and services.

They are providing individualized career services, including but not limited to comprehensive and specialized assessments, case management, individual employment plans, career planning, and vocational counseling. We are managing the daily operations in coordination with local fiscal agents for the lease, utilities, and other property activities in support of the AJCC premises and managing the hours of operation for AJCCs. The responsibilities of both the AJCC Operator and Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services Provider includes reporting to Local Boards on operations, performance, and continuous improvement recommendations. Implementing policies established by MCWDB. Adhering to all applicable federal and state guidance. MCWDB may also choose to regionally select an AJCC Operator or Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services Provider to align regional planning efforts if operational conditions make it feasible. Our One-Stop Operator is Propath, and our Career Service Provider is Equus Workforce Solutions.

viii. Public Transparency, Accessibility and inclusivity

a. Public Comment Period

Outreach strategies to get input from CBOs and target populations on the plan utilized were community forums and conference calls with representatives from partners and others. A master invite list of who attended and who was invited is attached to the San Joaquin Valley Regional Plan and incorporated herein by reference.

MCWDB will continue to engage relevant stakeholders throughout the planning process, including the public comment period. MCWDB has convened MCWDB members, leadership, staff, and relevant stakeholders, including representatives from Adult Education, Community Colleges, Vocational Rehabilitation, system contractors, local CBOs, WIOA, and CalWORKs clients, and employers, throughout the strategic planning process. Their feedback was garnered through public meetings, focus groups, interviews, and other forms of communication (e.g., phone calls). MCWDB will provide these stakeholders with the draft Local Plan to allow for their continued feedback. MCWDB will also provide this plan to all of its MOU partners to ensure that their input is included in the strategies and processes set forth in the plan.

In regards to public posting, the MCWDB 2021-2024 WIOA Local Plan and subsequent updates were posted on the MCWDB Website for an initial 30-day public comment period beginning on March 15, 2021. Hard copies were available at the MCWDB office, and at both AJCCS and accommodations were made for any party need a copy translated to another language. Notice of this publication and comment period will be announced through the following outlets:

- Posting to the MCWDB website at www.worknetmerced.com;
- Public Service Announcement provided to the County clerks in Merced County to be posted at all courthouses;
- Email notices distributed to the Chairperson of all County Board supervisors within Merced County and all MCWDB board members; and
- AJCC partners and local community-based organizations will be notified of the publication end

30-day comment period via email

The posting period commenced on March 15, 2021, and terminated on April 14, 2021. The published attachments, comments, MCWDB response(s) to comments, and a copy of the notice will be forwarded to the California Department of Workforce Development in the manner required in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Final Local Plan Guidelines.

Public comments were delivered to Reyna Espinoza by phone at 209-724-2082, by email at Reyna.Espinoza@countyofmerced.com, or first class mail at 1900 Airdrome Entry Atwater, CA 95301. The MCWDB WIOA Local Plan, updates, and related materials are available on the MCWDB [Website](#). Notification of the public comment period was posted in a newspaper of general circulation for the county, and documents were made available at both Merced County comprehensive centers as well as the website. Notices that the public comment period has opened will be sent to the Board of Supervisors and all partners in order for them to review and comment.

After the conclusion of the 30-day public comment period, members of leadership met to review all comments received and determine which comments were to be incorporated into the plan, which will be revised to represent the work better, and which will not be incorporated for a variety of reasons. To promote transparency, all public comments and responses are included as Attachment E.

Attachment A - Community Forum Minutes

Hinson, Patricia

Subject: How Worknet Merced can HELP JOBSEEKERS FIND GOOD JOBS AND CAREERS
Location: <https://zoom.us/j/94608624571?pwd=ZXpoa0RXMUM5MFdwB3Exc1IxSUVLQT09>

Start: Thu 2/11/2021 5:30 PM
End: Thu 2/11/2021 6:30 PM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Accepted

Organizer: Espinoza, Reyna
Required Attendees: Serrato, Erick

Merced County Workforce Investment is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94608624571?pwd=ZXpoa0RXMUM5MFdwB3Exc1IxSUVLQT09>

Meeting ID: 946 0862 4571

Passcode: 896652

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,94608624571#,,,*896652# US (San Jose)

+14086380968,,94608624571#,,,*896652# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 946 0862 4571

Passcode: 896652

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abxGZQOABM>

Virtual Community Forum: “How Worknet can Help Jobseekers Find Good Jobs and Careers.”

Hosted by Merced County Worknet via Zoom

February 11, 2021

5:30-6:30 PM

Participants

Erick Serrato- Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Erick.Serrato@countyofmerced.com

Reyna Espinoza- Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Reyna.Espinoza@countyofmerced.com

Valente Huitron – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Valente.Huitron@countyofmerced.com

Linda Gutierrez – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Linda.Gutierrez@countyofmerced.com

Mario Pena – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Mario.Pena@countyofmerced.com

Stacie Tury – Equus Workforce Solutions, Stacie.tury@equusworks.com

Luis Sobrevilla – Merced County Office of Education, Gateway Adult Education Network
LuSobrevilla@mcoe.org

Dondi Lawrence – Merced College – Student Support Coordinator, Dondi.lawerence@mccd.edu

Angelica Flores – Attendee

Ellen – Attendee

Mathew – Attendee

Lawrence – Attendee

Arjuna-Attendee

Meeting Notes

Erick Serrato welcomed the participants and introduced himself as the Director of Merced County Development Board/MercedWorknet. He then asked all attendees to do self-introductions.

Erick S. introduced Reyna Espinoza as being the co-facilitator for this forum.

Reyna E. shared the topic of discussion: **“How Worknet can Help Jobseekers Find Good Jobs and Careers.”** (PowerPoint presentation).

- Erick S. noted that every 4 years Merced Workforce Development Board puts together a plan that describes the current workforce environment and lays out what and how Merced County Workforce Investment/Worknet plans to do in regards to helping people connect with work opportunities and helping businesses connect to skilled workers.
- Every 4 years information is collected from the community requesting information on what they would like to see and what the problems are related to workforce

environment. He added that the focus for today's forum is getting feedback from the community and partner agencies and share what areas and strategies we need to improve to provide good paying jobs for individuals and also give the employers skilled workforce. All your opinions matter and will be considered. There will be another forum scheduled for next week.

- He asked Reyna E. to start with the first question.
- Questions:
 - **1. How can we help you get job training, learn new skills, and find your career path?**
 - Erick S. shared another way to think about this would be, what things could we be doing to make it easier to either get training in those skills, or have a new career path? Maybe you know about a problem right now that is preventing people from being able to access it, or maybe you know about something that has worked and we should do more of, he asked Luis Sobrevilla-MCOE, to provide feedback.
 - Luis S. noted that he feels there is different layers to it. When he works directly with students, looking at it from his end is identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and the direction that they want to go with their career. In general, just getting to know people. From a student's perspective, it is sometimes, "I want to come here and get something quickly and move forward" and other times it is, we need a little bit more time to process this, especially when people are moving careers or starting something for the first time. Going back to the student's perception understanding that this is a process and knowing that it is not something that can be done in five minutes, especially if they are not just looking for a job but a career. Once we get the students to understand the whole picture, it makes the journey a lot easier for staff especially when it goes back to placements. This helps see the student's success because they actually did the work and went through the assessments available. Looking it through the eyes of the businesses, its understanding open positions meeting the needs of the business but at the same time making students understand that it's a business and employers are looking for motivated workers with good time management skills. In addition, it is also good to getting businesses more connected to the work that is being done through training, this will assist the training facilitators to know how to better prepare their students in their jobs. Closing the pipeline and to have more conversations with businesses at a deeper level to understand their needs. Being able to close the gaps for jobs in certain industries.
 - Erick S. asked if anybody else wanted to share

- Angelica Flores added that students need help with figuring out how students can tie their interests to the community. For example, in her situation, she sees jobs that interest her and that require certain qualifications, like experience working with certain communities. She feels she has to start with these steps first, before she is able to get the jobs she is interested in. She needs assistance in how can she get more involved with the communities that she is interested in with a focus group.
 - Dondi L. – Merced College, stated that some of the students in regards to the NextStep Program, which is focused on assisting current foster youth who are eligible, and that don't have working experience. The program is assisting by placing the youth through the ROP program where students get job experience working through the program and getting placed in temporary jobs with employers, and if the employer wants to keep them after the program, but they are getting the experience required to move forward. Other barriers that the youth have is their age.
 - Stacie T. – EquusWorkforce Solution noted that through Worknet, they have On-The-Job-training program, which is geared towards participants that may not have the job experience in that field. This program helps in working together with the businesses and build a relationship and to be able to promote the resumes to the businesses. The business is reimbursed for part of the employee's salary in exchange of training employees to get the experience necessary for the job.
 - Dondi L. is interested in the On-the-Job training program. She will connect with Stacie to get more information
 - Erick S. stated that he would like to have a meeting with Dondi from Merced College to discuss further the foster youth program and how to assist in regards to job trainings and jobs available for foster youth. A meeting will be set soon to discuss the needs.
- **2. What approaches would help identify career opportunities that are aligned with the job-seekers strengths and interests?**
 - Erick S. noted how do you meet the person right in that moment and help them identify what career is best for them? Moreover, this is a combination of what's out there, and what's growing, and what's paying well, and what their interest are, and what they have a hunger for learning about. Therefore, when you think about that, how may we do a better job helping people explore career opportunities and then connecting them to those jobs? Any thoughts in regards to career exploration and finding that good fit.
 - Mathew shared that before the pandemic started, he was a computer science student and he tried reaching out to the governor and tried to start a digital computer science program to tackle the need for computer

science students, so far he has not found a solution for it yet.

- Erick S. asked Ellen what she had shared at the beginning about maybe in a couple of months she might be looking for a new opportunity. How are you figuring out what steps to take? Is it clear to you what kind of options might work for you, or are you in a space where you are trying to figure that out?
- Ellen stated that she will soon be left with a part-time employment that is on-call. What she is doing right now is not her ideal job, it is just a survival job. She wants to start looking at ways to incorporate more of her dream job but she does not know how to step towards that goal other than giving them all of her history
- Erick S. stated that this is a great opportunity for the department, since our goal is to try to help people connect to their dream jobs. He added that he will give her information to Stacie T. to further assist her in maybe training for that particular career she is interested in or assist with an internship or doing an OJT. He asked Stacie to share more information
- Stacie T. shared that the department's goal is to get to know the participant first. To do that, staff will have an initial assessment with the participant, and will interview the individual to find out their work history, what skills they have, and what are transferable skills they have. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to do an assessment called Traitify that focuses on personality traits and matches the individuals to careers and jobs. Currently there are training dollars available for participants to be put into training if that is what they desire. Stacie asked Ellen what she is doing currently
- Ellen shared that she is currently a Dietary Aide at a long-term care facility. Her duties included, setting up the side dishes and putting them in the carts to be delivered to the residents, served the drinks, and assist with cleaning and maintaining of the kitchen area. She added that when the pandemic started, she lost her vehicle
- Stacie asked Ellen, what would be her dream job?
- Ellen replied that she has always enjoyed the office environment. She worked at a job in retail doing accounts receivable duties for fifteen years, and she enjoyed it. At that time, there was no opportunities for advancement, and this was before she got her Associate Degree in Business Administration. She now would like to find a job in the same environment. She has had several interviews. So far, nothing has been suitable and having no vehicle, makes it harder. She prefers to work in an office environment in a fast pace environment, where she can carry a caseload of fifty clients or more
- Erick S. stated that he will forward her information to Stacie so that staff can contact her

- Angelica asked if what Stacie is doing right now, as to helping people finding out what is best for each applicant, and assisting participants where they are at and where they want to go
 - Erick S. said, 'yes' and added that the role of the Workforce Board is to go out and engage with the employer. Stacie's part in the system is to work with participants in a one-on-one environment and use the assessments and information on the Labor Market to better assist the staff and the participants decide what is best for them
 - Luis S. said hello to Ellen. He asked her what she thinks we can do as providers and Worknet that will connect that role; it seems that you already identified the area that you want to work into. What would be the last piece that we can do to connect you to the work that you want to do?
 - Ellen stated that she needs that magic list that she sees on the board of opportunities
 - Erick S. noted that it's a great idea for transparency
 - Luis S. noted that he is working together with Stacie to develop a database and try to solve this problem in connecting and closing the gap between businesses and job seekers. He thanked Ellen for her feedback
 - Stacie T. asked Ellen if she follows Worknet on Facebook or LinkedIn
 - Ellen replied 'yes'
 - Stacie T. added that the jobs available are posted on the page and interest forms to be filled out by the individuals and sent to the webpage so that staff can make contact and assist with job search activities
 - Ellen replied that yes she has post her resume, but having problems with her resume being so long. She is having problems connecting to her job coach
 - Stacie T. let her know that she will be connecting with her on a one-on-one interview with her
 - Mathew asked what are the requirements to be enrolled in Worknet
 - Erick S. stated that it's about having the commitment to move forward and need assistance with job search or training – Worknet is here to help you
- **3. Job seekers can search for and find a job during the pandemic through the aid of modern technology, like Zoom, Micro Soft team and Google meet, how do we prepare job seekers so that they make a lasting impression with the employers they meet?**
 - Erick S. asked what we should be doing to make sure those individuals be more prepared for this new environment
 - Dondi L. shared that the mock interviews workshops are great
 - Erick S. asked Dondi if the students she works with in regards to the skills gap, is she referring to the technology part that they lack or is it the communication style, or both?

- Dondi L. feels that it could be both. She added that within the program there is so much diversity, from financial, stability, some have more experience than others do. She added that the students under this program are uncomfortable using the virtual platforms and they would like to learn more about it
 - Erick S. understands and stated that we all need assistance with it
 - Stacie T. noted that every month they hold an event called 'Coffee with the Employer' the event consist in connecting the employer directly with the job seeker which allows the jobseeker to meet and converse with the employer in a more comfortable environment through zoom. In general, this process helps both the employer and job seeker ask questions related to the job in a friendlier manner
 - Reyna E. noted that as we are moving more into the virtual interviewing we are becoming to do more virtual workshops
- **4. How do we equipped jobseekers to increase their economic mobility, help businesses grow and thrived equitability for the world of work?**
 - Erick paraphrased the question and asked any final thoughts on what we can do to help workers find the job that they want but also to have the opportunity to move up, this is what we consider as economic mobility, and at the same time deliver those skills to the businesses so they grow too. Any big ideas that you might have in linking the businesses and individuals to grow
 - Ellen would like Worknet to invite innovators and have job seekers come and explore through them. To see what is new and upcoming with the new technology and learn how businesses are starting to move forward
 - Erick S. stated that this is a great idea. In addition, he added that his though is to make the system do a better job with the new technology. He asked if anybody else would like to share
 - Dondi L. shared that she is looking forward to meet with Erick and have him talk to the NextUp students at Merced College, and have the students share more about the virtual world
 - Erick S. said, 'yes' it's going to be great. He shared that this is one group of human being that have demonstrated resilience in regards to them pursing college education despite all of the barriers they have faced. He feels that this is what employers want. The things that drive us forward. He is looking forward to meet with the group and learn from them. He asked Angelica if she would share within the next 5 to 10 years, how she imagines how her world would be like
 - Angelica F. stated that she is very passionate with her major. Her focuses are on women's health and children as well, but mainly women's health, and women in community of colored. She plans to branch out from Merced and is currently doing an internship on pregnant women with disabilities. She plan to stay within the public health environment. Her 10

year goal is to stay working with the San Joaquin area and moving forward to the Bay area. She enjoys community work and will be graduating this year.

- Erick S. added that maybe she will stay in the workforce field with the possibility of doing an internship with Worknet
 - Angelica stated she is looking forward to it
 - Erick S. thanked everybody for attending the forum via zoom and thanked everybody for providing feedback. He extended his invitation to all attendees for the next forum scheduled on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m.

Chat Transcript (Bolded lines indicate discussion points)

17:33:04 Luis Sobrevilla: Luis Sobrevilla, MCOE/Gateway Adult Education Network,
LuSobrevilla@mcoe.org
17:33:14 Cesar Enriques: Cesar Enriquez/Cesarenriquez70@icloud.com

Hinson, Patricia

Subject: How Worknet Merced can SUPPLY BUSINESSES WITH READY, SKILLED, AND COMMITTED EMPLOYEES

Location: <https://zoom.us/j/94819864662?pwd=UytnU3RrWGZGbytyTndFUUNXcmJiQT09>

Start: Tue 2/16/2021 9:30 AM
End: Tue 2/16/2021 10:30 AM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Accepted

Organizer: Espinoza, Reyna
Required Attendees: Serrato, Erick

Merced County Workforce Investment is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94819864662?pwd=UytnU3RrWGZGbytyTndFUUNXcmJiQT09>

Meeting ID: 948 1986 4662

Passcode: 856359

One tap mobile

+14086380968,,94819864662#,,,*856359# US (San Jose)

+16699006833,,94819864662#,,,*856359# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 948 1986 4662

Passcode: 856359

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/acLcTcQLjz>

Virtual Community Forum: “How Worknet Merced can Supply Businesses with Ready, Skilled, and Committed Employees.”

Hosted by Merced County Worknet via Zoom

February 16, 2021

9:30-10:30 AM

Participants

Erick Serrato- Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Erick.Serrato@countyofmerced.com

Reyna Espinoza- Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Reyna.Espinoza@countyofmerced.com

Valente Huitron – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Valente.Huitron@countyofmerced.com

Linda Gutierrez – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Linda.Gutierrez@countyofmerced.com

Mario Pena – Merced County Department of Workforce Investment/Worknet,
Mario.Pena@countyofmerced.com

Stacie Tury – Equus Workforce Solutions, Stacie.tury@equusworks.com

Harprit – Small Business owner – Olive Dental Care

Tara – Small Business owner – Curves Jenny Craig

Monika Grasley- Small Business owner – Non-profit

Wik Verma– Small Business owner – WCC/LivTech Solutions

Meeting Notes

Erick Serrato welcomed the participants and introduced himself as the Director of Merced County Development Board/MercedWorknet. He added that his is the second forum and the last forum scheduled for the local plan series. He asked attendees to provide feedback. The focus of today's forum is a little different from previous forums. The focus will be about the connection between job seekers and employers. If you have any insights or any ideas, or anything you would like to see, please share with the group.

Erick S shared the topic of discussion: **“How Worknet can Supply Business with Ready, Skilled, and Committed Employees”** (PowerPoint presentation).

- Erick S noted that every 4 years Merced Workforce Development Board puts together a local plan. We are 1 out of 45 workforce boards in the state and we are part of a regional plan unit that includes all of the Central Valley which are 8 local WDB's, as high north as Stockton and all the way to the Bakersfield area. All WDB are doing this local plan in their individual counties. This information will be submitted at the end of April

both to the Regional coordinator and to the state as well. The information will be reviewed and either approved or asked to make some adjustments. The most important thing to know is that these local plans are an approach to solving some of the workforce issues in our particular community and they also serve as a testament to the work that is already being done, and an idea to where the local economy is going. Your input today will be very helpful to us.

- Started questions:
 - **1. Which of these is the biggest pain point for the employer?**
 - Erick S. added that some of you worked with an employer, some of you are business owners, and we want to hear from you regardless. Which of these do you think is the biggest pain point for employers, finding the workers they need, skilled workers, keeping the individuals for long term. Maybe there is information that they wished they had, that they don't or something else? So let's start with this question.
 - Harprit – Small business owner, stated that finding skilled workers. He added that COVID-19 has caused a big shift in the general workforce. People have been sick and it is hard to recover from that. The unemployment was granted to many of the employees, but most of them have left and the re-hiring was a challenge. Moreover, finding skilled workforce especially in the Merced area is very challenging. For whatever the reasons may be, skilled workforce is a challenge
 - Erick S asked if it is due to a technical skill, or a certificate that the individual does not have, or is it a soft skill. Which of these are you having trouble finding?
 - Harprit added that its technical skills and soft skills, a combination of all of them
 - Erick S asked if anybody else had other thoughts they wanted to share, which of these pin points, finding the right skills, keeping individuals for long-term, having data or something else. He asked Stacy to share what she has heard from employers
 - Stacie T– EquusWorkforce Solution noted that it's a lack of all of the above. It's more as to where we are all at right now with the community, businesses are struggling to find skilled employees and to keep them as well. Some of the barriers that the community is facing right now is the lack of childcare for school age students
 - Erick S asked Harprit a follow-up question, in regards to the employees who have left and is rehiring, are you looking at rehiring the same individuals you had in your organization or do you see some transition in terms of individuals before the pandemic and after the pandemic
 - Harprit stated that for his business they have rehired most of their existing employees, but the demand in health care is relatively high and there is a shortage of qualified individuals that they can choose from

- Tara – Small business owner shared that her situation is a little bit different. Her big struggle right now is being able to pay the employees for the skills that she needs them for—being a small business and relying on membership fees right now is challenging to pay the employees. She's been very successful keeping few long-term employees, but it's a struggle with the retention of the younger population due to lack of work hours, this has been very challenging
- Harprit added that with the younger generation of employees the challenges they face is job retention and lack of skills. He is willing to train younger staff, and apparently, they just have a different mindset.
- Erick S noted that it is something that you hear often. He asked Tara if she has the same issues
- Tara replied, 'yes' very much, as much as she likes to work with the younger population, they want to move forward and find more sustainable jobs. It's hard to count with the younger population in regards to long-term employment and trying to keep up with their demands and needs. COVID has changed the workforce retention for younger employees
- Erick S added that some of the businesses have shared that the extension for unemployment incentive that was offered through the pandemic worked more against the employers because employees did not want to go back to work since they were being paid more through their unemployment benefits. He asked the group if they also have seen this
- Monika G – Small business owner, shared that it was easier for her staff to step back in light of childcare issues, because they got the unemployment and it was difficult for the single mothers to find the balance between going to work and doing distant learning for their children as well as trying to keep their own family healthy. It was a difficult situation because sometimes larger families are living together, and then it is difficult for them to justify going to work and may be bringing back COVID to their family instead of just going on unemployment
- Erick S mentioned that this is a set of tough choices for individuals. He asked Tara a follow-up question in regards to wages, and keeping employees. What do you think has worked in terms of retention for employees that has been with you longer? Is it wages, it is sense of mission, or connection to the company, your relationship with them, what do you find keeps people in their position?
- Tara shared that she has a couple that have been with her over eighteen years. She feels it's the relationship and the job itself is very rewarding, she added that she is very flexible with their schedule when it comes to family problems or school. She works with her staff and is willing to modified schedules as necessary to allow them to pursue other things. She sees her biggest problem is when she offers part-time employment

especially now, she is hardly working due to the situation. The employees that she has been able to keep for longer time-shared that they like their job because of the challenges, the diversity and skills they learn. She lets them know that this is an opportunity for them to grow and learn a lot of soft skills as well as communication skills.

- Harprit stated that as a small business owner you have to work with your employees as well as being flexible, and wages are a strong indicator of retaining them

- **2. Are Worknet customers sufficiently prepared to meet the demands of the workforce, in terms of skills development, what is working and what can be improved?**

- Erick S noted that for those of you that know our workforce system know that there are many jobseekers who come in to the career centers seeking either a job lead, connection to a training or to start a new career or get back to the one that they were displaced from. The question is, how well are those individuals being prepared for the job market? Do you as employers or as community leaders, stakeholders see that there is a gap in those skills? Those of you that are in the business of preparing people either through Worknet or through your non-profits, have you seen some really good practices with skills development, workshops, training, or do you have an idea of what more we can do? This is a two part question, are individuals getting the skills they need, and if not, is there something else we might need to do to fill those gaps
- Tara stated that individuals are lacking phone skills and computer skills
- Wik-Small business owner specialized in the beauty market—he has been assisting the salons, the beauty businesses that has been really hit hard with COVID. One thing he realizes is that the main problem was that these businesses were not prepared. They were not able to pivot because they did not have the marketing skills. They did not know how to attract clients, how to use social media for services. To him it goes across the board, it's the marketing training. It is the ability to sell a solution. He has been working with businesses who are doing really well in the beauty retail business. He interviewed several of the businesses and asked what are they doing different from other beauty business that are not doing so well. The businesses that were doing really well were up on their customer service skills and understanding that there is more work that needs to be done
- Erick S shared that individuals are not being equipped for the whole job. Some of them do not understand that they are an extension of that brand
- Monika G stated that sometimes its difficult when you are in the environment of learning a certain tool and when you have to apply it to your position, to your job, it makes it more difficult. She asked if there is a

way on doing continued education to help individuals in the transition. In addition, she would like to see more streamline communication efforts between childcare agencies and the parents requesting for childcare services

- Erick S asked if there are other gaps in preparing individuals to go back to work in regards to the skills they might lack or maybe from a customer's perspective. He asked Stacie T to share
- Stacie T noted that it is a combination of the soft skills in regards to being on time for work, time management, being a team player, and customer service. These skills are very essential to employers and employees
- Wik suggested doing role-play between the employees and employers to include doing mock interviews; he added that this is beneficial for all parties

- **3. What role should/could Worknet play in helping connect businesses with the right job seekers? In addition, what more might Worknet do to support this?**
 - Erick S noted that one of the roles we play, as a system is individuals that need work and we have businesses that need workers. We do that in many ways—the question is, as kind of that supplier of labor and talent, is there more that we can do in terms of presenting that resource to you as a business. Are you getting the information that you need about who is applying for the job and what skills they have, do you have enough information about them or about our product, and how we might be able to help
 - Wik stated that one of the things needed are the soft skills, because soft skills are universal. He would hire someone who possess strong soft skills.
 - Erick S asked if you are an employer and you are looking for employees, how we present that person to you, what is it in terms of how we might present the individuals to you that help you make the decision in terms of who to interview and whom you want to hire. What's more important to know about them as you're gathering your candidates
 - Harprit stated to present candidates who are qualified for the job.
 - Tara stated to be able to present yourself, and knowing the field. She does not mind training them, and sharing her expectations with them as well. They need to have confidence in what they do and say.
 - Stacie T mentioned that it all depends on the employer's request. Some want Worknet to assist in the screening process, and some request individuals who have strong soft skills. Worknet is currently working in partnership with Merced College to offer a workforce-training course that will address some of the soft skills classes. The class goes live this summer and Worknet will offer it to all individuals interested in the training

- 4. What kind of information is most helpful to job seekers as they make decisions on training, careers and opportunity?
 - Erick stated it's the identity of that business, what does that business really want, it may be different than others. What kind of information do you think its most valuable to the job seeker when they are thinking about what training to choose from or what employer to go to
 - Wik noted that when he is working with beauticians, the first thing that he teaches them that 'it is possible' this sets the foundation.
 - Erick asked what kind of information as a job seeker is most helpful for them, from the training perspective, and as to what employer is the best fit for them
 - Harprit shared that from the job seekers perspective, their concerns is wages, benefits, job stability, who their employer is, and if they are flexible enough to work with them. Job seekers are seeking out these qualities.
 - Erick thanked Harprit for sharing. He mentioned that it would be great to get employers to develop a way to ask some of these questions; maybe it can be added to the employers hiring profile questionnaires. Most of the job seekers are not comfortable asking these kind of questions , this would benefit the employer and job seeker as well
 - Tara added that she has gone to Indeed and ZipRecruiter Apps, and has noticed that some of these questions are being asked as part of the screening process for the businesses. Some questions include, are you flexible, what is your goal, can you handle high stress, what is your passion, are you detailed
 - Monika G stated that some individuals that have never worked, worked in the fields, or in the fast food, or other limited skills positions may not have been exposed to, or understand how to navigate Apps such as Indeed and ZipRecruite
 - Erick thanked everybody for attending the forum.
- Meeting concluded at 10:30 a.m.

Chat Transcript (Bolded lines indicate discussion points)

09:54:57 From **Reyna Espinoza**: Merced County Dept. of Workforce
Investment/Worknet, Reyna.Espinoza@countyofmerced.com
09:58:04 From **Monika Grasley**: I want to know the question!!!
10:30:55 From **Monika Grasley**: Coordination around childcare

CONTRACT BOARD AGENDA ITEM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
THROUGH: COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FROM: DAVID MIRRIONE, DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT (WI)

VENDOR OR CONTRACTOR	AJCC Partners Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	
PRODUCT OR SERVICE	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partner Services	
TYPE	Action	No.
Agreement	New	
Process	Date of last Competitive Process	Other
Original Contract Date	Date of last Board Action	N/A

SCOPE OF SERVICES/SUMMARY:

Pursuant California Workforce Services Directive WSD18-12, dated April 30, 2019. In order to establish a high quality America's Job Center of California (AJCC) delivery system and enhance collaboration among partners, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires Local Boards to develop MOUs with all required partners within their Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). These MOUs will serve as a functional tool as well as visionary plan for how the Local Board and the AJCC partner will work together to create a unified service delivery system that best meets the needs of their shared customers. The directive also provides guidance for Local Areas in reviewing and updating their AJCC MOUs and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA). The MOU and IFA are valid for three years with an annual review of and, if necessary, amendments to the IFA.

-REQUIRED REVIEW:

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Auditor-Controller | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CEO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Counsel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admin Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risk | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Department Contact/Phone Yang Her, 2045

REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION/ACTION NEEDED:

Approve and authorize the Chair to sign the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Memorandum of Understanding with all mandated America's Job Centers of California Partners.

For Board Staff Only

Target Board Date: 09/10/19

BOARD ACTION: 9/10/2019

LOR / SILVEIRA - APPROVED RECOMMENDTION

CONTRACT NO. 2019288

TO: DWI

Page 2

Budget Unit 55000
Contract Period Beginning 07/01/2019
Total Contract Amount \$0
Difference \$0
Budgeted Amount

Account Number
Ending 06/30/2022 **Months** 36
Prior Contract Amount \$0

Actual Expenditures
Budget Transfer Attached No

Funding Source All funds referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding have been apportioned through other agreements and are accounted for in the PY 2019/20 budget.

Staffing Impact None.

Additional information if needed

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Merced County Memorandum of Understanding

Preamble/Purpose of MOU

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that a MOU be developed and executed between the Local Board and the America's Job Center of CaliforniaSM (AJCC) partners to establish an agreement concerning the operations of the AJCC delivery system. The purpose of the MOU, is to establish a cooperative working relationship between the parties, and to define their respective roles and responsibilities in achieving the policy objectives. The MOU also serves to establish the framework for providing services to employers, employees, job seekers and others needing workforce services.

California's one-stop delivery system, the AJCC, is a locally-driven system which develops partnerships and provides programs and services to achieve three main policy objectives established by the California Workforce Development Strategic Plan, which includes the following:

- Foster demand-driven skills attainment,
- Enable upward mobility for all Californians,
- Align, coordinate, and integrate programs and services.

These objectives will be accomplished by ensuring access to high-quality AJCCs that provide the full range of services available in the community for all customers seeking the following:

- Looking to find a job,
- Building basic educational or occupational skills,
- Earning a postsecondary certificate or degree,
- Obtaining guidance on how to make career choices,
- Seeking to identify and hire skilled workers.

Local/Regional Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and Goals

Mission:

Responding to business needs by providing quality resources.

Vision:

The system will keep pace with new growth, the emerging economy, and the ever-changing needs of employers by creating a better educated, highly-skilled workforce that is capable, prepared, and thoroughly knowledgeable.

Goals:

- Comprehensive programs for employment and life skills for youth and adults,
- Facilitating resources and networks to help business succeed,

- Influence workforce legislation and workforce regulations,
- Improve America's Job Center effectiveness and quality,
- Development strategies, public awareness, and outcomes,
- Capacity in the system to gather business data.

Parties to the MOU

Required partners include local/regional representatives of the following programs:

- WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Merced County Workforce Development Board),
- WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy (Merced County Adult Education),
- WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser (Employment Development Department),
- WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (Department of Rehabilitation),
- Carl Perkins Career Technical Education (Merced College),
- Title V Older Americans Act (National Council On Aging),
- Job Corps (San Jose Job Corps, to be added in update in June, 2020),
- Native American Programs (Section 166) (California Indian Manpower Consortium),
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (Section 167) (Central Valley Opportunity Center),
- Veterans (Employment Development Department),
- Youth Build (N/A),
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (Employment Development Department),
- Community Services Block Grant (Merced County Community Action Agency),
- Housing & Urban Development (Housing Authority of Merced County),
- Unemployment Compensation (Employment Development Department),
- Second Chance (N/A),
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/CalWORKs (Merced County Human Services Agency).

One-Stop System, Services

The Merced County One-Stop Delivery system has evolved over the years through inter-agency efforts and partnership collaboration. This system is a partnership of education/training providers, human/social services providers, economic development agencies, and employer groups. The system's focus is on two customer groups: businesses and job seekers. The Merced County workforce system considers itself to be a demand-driven system where job seeker services are driven by business needs; thus, assuring job seekers are prepared for industries/occupations available in the region while benefitting the local economy.

The job seeker flow within the One-Stop System begins with Basic Career Services for all users with options to proceed through Individual Career Services, comprehensive vocational assessments, as well as intensive and training/placement services delivered as needed/appropriate.

Basic Career Services, which are deemed to be self-service and informational in nature, are

available without registration/enrollment. Numbers and demographic information are captured for reporting purposes. All users of the facilities are notified of orientation times if they would like to gain knowledge about additional services that may be available to them through our job centers. Every effort is made to assure quick response and rapid process flow to facilitate the development of a viable career path and employment suited to individual needs on a timely basis without undue bureaucracy.

This service delivery system strives to maintain the One-Stop model that allows a wide variety of information and resources to be accessed from one facility. Merced County has two comprehensive One-Stops which are located in the cities of Merced and Los Banos and are comprised of available mandatory partners. Additional partners are used to address specific needs as they are determined.

Meetings with One-Stop partner staff members are held quarterly at the Merced One-Stop facility to discuss opportunities for improvement. These meetings are comprised of key decision makers representing partners with meetings held on a quarterly basis to exchange ideas and develop, modify, or enhance One-Stop strategies, including the formal development of a referral process among all partners.

The Business Resource Team (BRT) is comprised of specialists who coordinate directly with businesses. The BRT provides Labor Market Information (LMI) and attends meetings and business recruitments as needed. The BRT has a vast array of business services available to businesses which are communicated through brochures, social and conventional media, and other outreach devices. BRT representatives post job orders and screen employment candidates for appropriateness of specific occupations.

The Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Merced and in Los Banos both provide Basic, Individual, and Training services to customers, and are ADA Accessible facilities with equipment to assist visually or hearing impaired customers.

Services may be accessed by self-directed customers seeking information regarding employment, education and training, and staff-assisted customers may use the facility as needed during their training. Self-directed customers may utilize:

- High-speed internet to link them to job-search engines and other job search websites,
- Computer access to file UIB or Disability claims on line,
- Links to Labor Market Information, demand jobs,
- The Eligible Training Provider List is available on the computers in the resource room,
- A fax, copier, scanner, and telephone are available along with workshops on job search techniques, resume preparation and interviewing,
- Job Listings are posted on the Job Wall and on the internet,
- Rosetta Stone is available for customers to learn English or Spanish,
- PLATO Skills Lab for individuals to refresh or improve their academics and prepare for the GED,

- Self-assessment tools, computerized assessments and skills assessment tools are utilized to provide a customer with information on their unique set of skills and abilities and to guide them in selecting career options.

Further services provided by partners can be seen in graphic form on pages 15-19 of the attached Infrastructure Funding Agreement and Other Systems Cost Budget.

Responsibility of AJCC Partners

- The AJCC partner agrees to participate in joint planning, plan development, and modification of activities to accomplish the following:
 - Continuous partnership building.
 - Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements.
 - Responsiveness to local and economic conditions, including employer needs.
 - Adherence to common data collection and reporting needs.
- Make the service(s) applicable to the partner program available to customers through the one-stop delivery system.
- Participate in the operation of the one-stop system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorized laws.
- Participate in capacity building and staff development activities in order to ensure that all partners and staff are adequately cross-trained.
- The state is in the process of implementing the requisite statewide data tracking system, and once such data are available, all non-colocated partners who are receiving benefit from the AJCCs will also be required to contribute their proportionate share towards infrastructure costs. All parties agree that when data are available to determine the AJCC benefit to non-colocated partners, the infrastructure cost sharing agreement will be renegotiated.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement & Other Shared System Costs

Please see attached cost sharing agreement.

Methods for Referring Customers

The co-located partners have been meeting on formalizing a referral system, with common referral and intake forms. Development of these forms is anticipated in Summer of 2019, with an expanded rollout to all system partners by the end of 2019. Quarterly meetings and periodic calls have occurred to discuss the development of forms and procedures to achieve these goals, and will continue to do so going forward.

Goals of the referral system are:

- Customer-Focus: By streamlining information gathering, the customer will not have to be concerned with duplicative entry, and will know that the system communicates with each other to provide them with the most robust services possible to meet their needs

- **Information Sharing:** Meetings between partners will help to familiarize each other with our services, and materials will be shared with customers around partner services
- **Electronic Referral:** Forms will be delivered from partner to partner via email to ensure swift delivery of information and the ability to serve clients before they engage with another partner
- **Direct Linkage:** Electronic referrals and communication between case managers in real time will be formalized so that customers are being served as efficiently as possible

Access for Individuals with Barriers to Employment

A focus of the system is access for individuals with barriers to employment, which consist of:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Native Americans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in, or have aged out, of the foster care system
- English language learners
- Individuals with low levels of literacy
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility
- Single parents
- Long-term unemployed individuals

The system partners are committed to offer priority of services to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient when providing individualized career services and training services. This includes a commitment to ensure that all policies, procedures, programs, and services are in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* and its amendments, in order to provide equal access to all customers with disabilities.

The Merced County one-stop system includes two comprehensive centers, in Merced and Los Banos. These centers are placed in the largest communities in the county in order to reach the most residents possible. The geographic placement of the centers also allows for the reach of the workforce system to extend into smaller communities. These locations are within a half hour of most populated areas in the county, thereby increasing the accessibility of the services provided. Likewise, the centers are located near hubs of the highways that run through the county, both Interstate and Intrastate in nature.

A map of the county, with the location of the two career centers, is included for your edification below:



Shared Technology and System Security

WIOA emphasizes technology as a critical tool for making all aspects of information exchange possible, including client tracking, common case management, reporting, and data collection. To support the use of these tools, each AJCC Partner agrees to the following:

- Comply with the applicable provisions of WIOA, Welfare and Institutions Code, California Education Code, Rehabilitation Act, and any other appropriate statutes or requirements.
- The principles of common reporting and shared information through electronic mechanisms, including shared technology.
- Commit to share information to the greatest extent allowable under their governing legislation and confidentiality requirements.
- Maintain all records of the AJCC customers or partners (e.g. applications, eligibility and referral records, or any other individual records related to services provided under this MOU) in the strictest confidence, and use them solely for purposes directly related to such services.
- Develop technological enhancements that allow interfaces of common information needs, as appropriate.
- Understand that system security provisions shall be agreed upon by all partners.

Confidentiality

The AJCC Partner agrees to comply with the provisions of WIOA as well as the applicable sections of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the California Education Code, the Rehabilitation Act, and any other appropriate statute or requirement to assure the following:

- All applications and individual records related to services provided under this MOU, including eligibility for services and enrollment and referral, shall be confidential and shall not be open to examination for any purpose not directly connected with the delivery of such services.
- No person will publish, disclose use, or permit, cause to be published, disclosed or used, any confidential information pertaining to AJCC applicants, participants, or customers overall unless a specific release is voluntarily signed by the participant or customer.
- The AJCC partner agrees to abide by the current confidentiality provisions of the respective statutes to which AJCC operators and other AJCC partners must adhere, and shall share information necessary for the administration of the program as allowed under law and regulation. The AJCC partner, therefore, agrees to share client information necessary for the provision of services such as assessment, universal intake, program or training referral, job development or placement activities, and other services as needed for employment or program support purposes.
- Client information shall be shared solely for the purpose of enrollment, referral or provision of services. In carrying out their respective responsibilities, each party shall respect and abide by the confidentiality policies of the other parties.

Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

The AJCC partner shall not unlawfully discriminate, harass or allow harassment against any employee, applicant for employment or AJCC applicant due to gender, race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, veteran status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition(s), age, sexual orientation or marital status. The AJCC partner agrees to comply with the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code Section 12990) and related, applicable regulations.

The AJCC partner will assure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as other applicable regulations and guidelines issued pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Grievances and Complaints Procedure

The AJCC partner agrees to establish and maintain a procedure for grievance and complaints as outlined in WIOA. The process for handling grievances and complaints is applicable to customers and partners. These procedures will allow the customer or entity filing the complaint to exhaust every administrative level in receiving a fair and complete hearing and resolution of their grievance. The partner further agrees to communicate openly and directly to resolve any

problems or disputes related to the provision of services in a cooperative manner and at the lowest level of intervention possible.

American's with Disabilities Act and Amendments Compliance

The AJCC partner agrees to ensure that the policies and procedures as well as the programs and services provided at the AJCC are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments. Additionally, partners agree to fully comply with the provisions of WIOA, Title VII of the civil Rights act of 1964, the Age Decimation Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 29 CRF Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the aforementioned laws.

Effective Dates and Term of MOU

This MOU shall be binding upon each party hereto upon execution by such party. The term of this MOU shall be three years, commencing on the date of execution by all parties. The MOU will be reviewed not less than once every three years to identify any substantial changes that have occurred.

Modifications and Revisions

This MOU constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and no oral understanding not incorporated herein shall be binding on any of the parties hereto. This MOU may be modified, altered, or revised, as necessary, by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by the parties.

Termination

The parties understand that implementation of the AJCC system is dependent on the good faith effort of every partner to work together to improve services to the community. The parties also agree that this is a project where different ways of working together and providing services are being tried. In the event that it becomes necessary for one or more parties to cease being a part of this this MOU, said entity shall notify the other parties, in writing, 30 days in advance of that intention.

Administrative and Operations Management Sections

License for Use

During the term of this MOU, all partners to this MOU shall have a license to use all of the space of the AJCCs for the sole purpose of conducting acceptable AJCC services as outlined herein.

Supervision/Day to Day Operations

The day-to-day supervision of staff assigned to the AJCCs will be the responsibility of the site supervisor(s). The original employer of staff assigned to the AJCCs will continue to set the

priorities of its staff. Any change in work assignments or any problems at the worksite will be handled by the site supervisor(s) and the management of the original employer.

The office hours for the staff at the AJCCs will be established by the site supervisor(s) and the primary employer. All staff will comply with the holiday schedule of their primary employer and will provide a copy of their holiday schedule to the operator and host agency at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Disciplinary actions may result in removal of co-located staff from the AJCCs and each party will take appropriate action.

Each party shall be solely liable and responsible for providing to, or on behalf of, its employee(s), all legally-required employee benefits. In addition, each party shall be solely responsive and save all other parties harmless from all matters relating to payment of each party's employee(s), including compliance with social security withholding, workers' compensation, and all other regulations governing such matters.

Dispute Resolution

The parties agree to try to resolve policy or practice disputes at the lowest level, starting with the site supervisor(s) and staff. If issues cannot be resolved at this level, they shall be referred to the management staff of the respective staff employer and the operator, for discussion and resolution.

Press Releases and Communications

All parties shall be included when communicating with the press, television, radio or any other form of media regarding its duties or performance under this MOU. Participation of each party in press/media presentations will be determined by each party's public relations policies. Unless otherwise directed by the other parties, in all communications, each party shall make specific reference to all other parties.

The parties agree to utilize the AJCC logo developed by the State of California and the Local Board on buildings identified for AJCC usage. This also includes letterhead, envelopes, business cards, any written correspondence and fax transmittals.

Hold Harmless/Indemnification/Liability

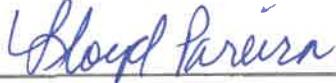
In accordance with provisions of Section 895.4 of the California Government Code, each party hereby agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless all other parties identified in this MOU from and against any and all claims, demands, damages and costs arising out of or resulting from any acts or omissions which arise from the performance of the obligations by such indemnifying party pursuant to this MOU. In addition, except for Departments of the State of

California which cannot provide for indemnification of court costs and attorneys fees under the indemnification policy of the State of California, all other parties to this MOU agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless each other from and against all court costs and attorneys fees arising out of or resulting from any acts or omissions which arise from the performance of the obligations by such indemnifying party pursuant to this MOU. It is understood and agreed that all indemnity provided herein shall survive the termination of this MOU.

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced County Board of Supervisors



Lloyd Pareira, Chairperson

SEP 10 2019

Date

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM

MERCED COUNTY COUNSEL



Thomas E. Ebersole, Deputy County Counsel

9/9/19

Date

Local Board Authorized Representative



Chairperson Leslie Abasta-Cummings

8/22/19

Date

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT



David Mirrione, Director

8/22/19

Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced County Human Services Agency

Scott Pettygrove, Executive Director

Signature and Date

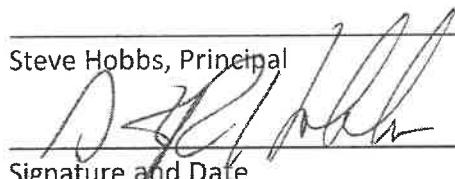
Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced Adult School

Steve Hobbs, Principal

Signature and Date



6/24/19

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc

Lorenda Sanchez, Executive Director

 June 11, 2019

Signature and Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Central Valley Opportunity Center

Jorge de Nava
Jorge de Nava, Executive Director

Jorge de Nava 6-24-19
Signature and Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

CA Department of Rehabilitation

Terry W. Nichols, Staff Services Manager I

0-20-2019

Signature and Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced County Office of Education

Steve Tietjen, Superintendent

10.02.2019

Signature and Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced College

Chris Vitelli

Chris Vitelli, Superintendent/President

11/20/19

Signature and Date

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Infrastructure Funding Agreement and Other System Costs Budget

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Process and Development

Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area): Merced County Workforce Development Board

Date Submitted: June 30, 2019

1. The period of time this agreement is effective: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2022
2. Identification of all AJCC partners, Chief Elected Officials (CEO), and Local Boards participating in the infrastructure and other system costs funding agreements.
CEO/s: Merced County Board of Supervisors
Local Board/s: Merced County Workforce Development Board
AJCC Partners Participating in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA): Merced County Workforce Development Board and CA Employment Development Department
AJCC Partners Participating in the Shared Other System Costs Agreement: Merced County Workforce Development Board
3. Steps the Local Board, CEO, and AJCC partners took to reach consensus and/or an assurance that the Local Area followed guidance for the state infrastructure funding mechanism.
Local Board staff worked with Employment Development Department staff to split costs on the two career centers in the region via email and in-person meetings. These two partners cover six programs that utilize the career center.
4. A description of the process to be used among partners to resolve issues during the MOU duration period when consensus cannot be reached.
Issues to be resolved will be addressed either in the quarterly system partner meetings, or via monthly meetings between Workforce Board staff and Employment Development Department management.
5. A description of the periodic modification and review process that will be used to ensure all AJCC partners continue to contribute their fair and equitable share of infrastructure and other system costs, including the identification of who will fulfill this responsibility. This must include a reconciliation schedule. (Who, What, When, How)
The MOU will be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account any new co-located partners, as well as changes in expenses, each summer of the MOU period.

Sharing Infrastructure Costs

Budget, Cost Allocation Methodology, Initial Proportionate Share

MOU Content Requirements:

A budget outlining the infrastructure costs for each AJCC in the Local Area with a detailed description of what specific costs are included in each line item.

When establishing the infrastructure cost budget, Local Boards have two options:

- Option 1: Develop a separate budget for each AJCC.
- Option 2: Develop a consolidated system-wide budget for its network of AJCCs.
- Option 3: A mixture of separate and consolidated budgets.

If the Local Board chooses to negotiate infrastructure costs based on their network of AJCCs, rather than center by center, then the budgets for all the AJCCs can be consolidated into one system budget. However, this consolidation may not distort the distribution of costs as they must be attributable to each partner equally and in accordance with the agreed upon cost allocation methodology. Consolidations might allow the “financing” of infrastructure cost between partners more easily. It is not required that each partner contribute to each comprehensive AJCC, as long as their consolidated share of contributions equals their responsibility to pay as determined by the agreed upon cost sharing methodology.

If using Option 3, multiple budgets will need to be included with clear identification of which AJCCs belong to which budget.

The Local Board and AJCC partners have chosen this option for developing the infrastructure cost budget:

- Option 1: A separate budget for each AJCC.
- Option 2: A consolidated system-wide budget for the network of AJCCs
- Option 3: A mixture of separate and consolidated budgets for the Local Area’s AJCCs.

AJCC(s) and Colocated Partners

- Include all AJCCs Identified in the MOU
- Include if the AJCC is a comprehensive, affiliate, or specialized center.
- Colocated Partner definition: All AJCC partners who have a physical presence within the center, either full time or part time.

AJCC #1

Name/Address of the AJCC:

Merced AJCC
1205 West 18th St
Merced, CA 95340

Type of AJCC: Comprehensive

Partners Colocated at This AJCC: Merced County Workforce Development Board, CA Employment Development Department

AJCC #2

Name/Address of the AJCC:

Los Banos AJCC
800 7th St
Los Banos, CA 93635

Type of AJCC: Comprehensive

Partners Colocated at This AJCC: Merced County Workforce Development Board, CA Employment Development Department

AJCC Infrastructure Budget
Network of AJCCs

Cost Category/Line Item	Line Item Cost Detail	Cost
Rent		
Rental of Facilities		\$266,611
Rental Costs Subtotal:		
Utilities and Maintenance		
Utilities, W/S/G		\$12,199
Alarm Services		\$2,018
Floor Mat Services		\$228
High-Speed Internet		\$3,220
HVAC Maintenance		\$153
Telephones (Landlines)		\$15,076
Janitorial Services		\$15,853
Pest Control		\$180
Utilities and Maintenance Costs Subtotal:		
Equipment		
Assessment-related products		\$1,232
Assistive technology for individuals with disabilities (Access and Accommodation)		
Copiers		\$1,397
Fax Machines		

Computers		\$4,608
Other tangible equipment used to serve all center customers (not specific to an individual program partner)		
Specify Other Tangible Equipment		
Technology to Facilitate Access to the AJCC	Equipment Costs Subtotal:	\$7,237
Technology used for the center's planning and outreach activities		
Specify the Technology		
Cost of creation and maintenance of a center website (not specific to an individual program partner) that provides outreach to customers by providing information on AJCC services and/or provides direct service access to AJCC services		
Website Address: _____ (Does not include data systems or case management systems specific to individual program partners.)	Technology to Facilitate Access Costs Subtotal:	\$0

Common Identifier Costs (Local Option, If Agreed To By All Colocated Partners)	
Creating New AJCC Signage	
Updating Templates and Materials	
Updating Electronic Resources	
	Common Identifier Subtotal: \$0

SUMMARY OF TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS TO BE SHARED BY COLOCATED PARTNERS	
Cost Category	Total Cost
Subtotal: Rental Costs	\$266,611
Subtotal: Utilities and Maintenance Costs	\$48,927
Subtotal: Equipment Costs	\$7,237
Subtotal: Technology to Facilitate Access Costs	\$0
Subtotal: Common Identifier Costs	\$0
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS FOR THIS AJCC/Network:	\$322,775

Cost Allocation Methodology to Share Agreed Upon Infrastructure Costs

The Local Board and colocated partners must agree to a cost allocation methodology to identify the proportionate share of infrastructure costs each partner will be expected to contribute. Any cost allocation methodology selected must adhere to the following:

- Be consistent with federal laws authorizing each partner's program
- Comply with federal cost principles in the Uniform Guidance.
- Include only costs that are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable to each program partner.
- Be based on an agreed upon measure that mathematically determines the proportionate use and benefit received by each partner.

Infrastructure Cost Allocation Methodology

Identify the chosen and agreed upon cost allocation methodology:

The proportion of a partner program's occupancy percentage of the AICC (square footage)

Initial Proportionate Share of Infrastructure Costs Allocated to Each Colocated Partner

The initial proportionate share of infrastructure costs allocated to each partner based on the agreed upon cost allocation methodology, each partner's estimated total contribution amount, and whether it will be provided through cash, non-cash (in-kind), and/or third-party in-kind contributions. This initial determination must be periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly.

AJCC partners (or their respective state entity) may provide cash, non-cash, and third-party in-kind contributions to cover their proportionate share of infrastructure costs. If non-cash or in-kind contributions are used, they cannot include non-infrastructure costs (such as personnel), and they must be valued consistent with Uniform Guidance Section 200.306 to ensure they are fairly evaluated and meet the partner's proportionate share.

If third-party in-kind contributions are made that support the AJCC(s) as a whole (such as space), that contribution will not count toward a specific partner's proportionate share of the IFA. Rather, the value of the contribution will be applied to the overall infrastructure budget prior to determining proportionate amounts and thereby reduce the contribution required for all partners.

Third-Party In-Kind Infrastructure Contributions to Support the AJCC As Whole

Cost Categories	Total Cost	Contributor/s	Value	Balance to Allocate
Rent				
Utilities/Maintenance				
Equipment				
Access Technology				
Common Identifier				
Total Infrastructure Balance to Be Allocated to Colocated Partners:				

Initial Allocation of Proportionate Share of Infrastructure Costs for Colocated Partners					
Colocated Partner/s	Shared Infrastructure Costs	Application of Methodology	Allocated Initial Share	Amount: Cash	Amount: In-Kind
Partner 1: Merced County Workforce Development Board	\$322,775	Costs split between Los Banos and Merced center costs. MCWDB utilizes 94.23% of Los Banos square footage, 43.09% of Merced square footage. This may change based on contracted amounts from EDD.	\$188,726.37	\$188,726.37	\$0
Partner 2: CA Employment Development Department	\$322,775	Costs split between Los Banos and Merced center costs. EDD utilizes 5.77% of Los Banos square footage, 56.91% of Merced square footage. This may change based on contracted amounts from EDD.	\$134,048.63	\$134,048.63	\$0

Signature Page: Colocated Partners Sharing AJCC Infrastructure Costs

The CEO, the Local Board Chairperson, and all colocated AJCC partners included in the sharing of infrastructure costs must sign.

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in the IFA.

Merced County Board of Supervisors

Employment Development Department

Lloyd Pareira

Lloyd Pareira, Chairperson

SEP 10 2019

Signature and Date

Merced County Workforce Development Board

Chukwudi Nnebe, Deputy Division Chief

Leslie Alaska-Cunningham

Chairperson

Leslie Alaska-Cunningham

8/22/19

Signature and Date

Signature Page: Colocated Partners Sharing AJCC Infrastructure Costs

The CEO, the Local Board Chairperson, and all colocated AJCC partners included in the sharing of infrastructure costs must sign.

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in the IFA.

Merced County Board of Supervisors

Employment Development Department

Lloyd Pareira, Chairperson



Chukwudi Nnebe, Deputy Division Chief

Signature and Date



Merced County Workforce Development Board

Mike Altomare, Chairperson

Signature and Date

Signature Page

By signing below, all parties agree to the terms prescribed in this MOU, including the attached IFA and other system costs budget.

Merced County Board of Supervisors

Central Valley Opportunity Center

Lloyd Pareira, Chairperson

Jorge de Nava, Executive Director

Signature and Date

Merced County Workforce Development Board

Signature and Date

CA Department of Rehabilitation

Mike Altomare, Chairperson

Terry Nichols, Staff Services Manager

Signature and Date

California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc

Signature and Date

CA Employment Development Department

Lorenda Sanchez, Executive Director

Chukwudi Nnebe, Deputy Division Chief

Signature and Date

 June 5, 2019

Sharing Other One-Stop System Costs

MOU Content Requirement:

A budget outlining other system costs relating to the operation of the local One-Stop delivery system and a description of what specific costs are included in each line item. The budget must include "applicable career services" as well as any other shared costs agreed upon by the AJCC partners and Local Board.

While only colocated partners share infrastructure costs, all partners must share in other system costs, including applicable career services.

The One-Stop System Partners Included in the Sharing of Other One-Stop Delivery System Costs

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker,
and Youth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title V Older Americans Act | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trade Adjustment Assistance Act |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title II Adult Education and
Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Corps | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Services Block Grant |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III Wagner-Peyser | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Programs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing and Urban Development |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Compensation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carl Perkins Career Technical
Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Veterans | <input type="checkbox"/> Second Chance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> YouthBuild | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TANF/CalWORKS | | |

Required Consolidated System Budget for "Applicable Career Services"

The agreed upon budget for other system costs must align with the outlined shared customers and services.

The other system costs budget must be a consolidated budget that includes a line item for applicable career services. The MOU requires identification of the applicable career services for each partner program. Accordingly, this budget must include each of the partner's costs for the service delivery of each applicable career service and a consolidated system budget for career services applicable to more than one partner.

Applicable Career Services are services authorized to be provided under each partner's program.

Summary of Career Services Applicable to Each One-Stop Delivery System Partner						
Basic Career Services	T-I Adult	T-I DW	T-I Youth	T-II AEL	T-III WP	T-IV VR
T-I Program Eligibility	X	X	X		X	X
Outreach, Intake, Orient	X	X	X		X	X
Initial Assessment	X	X		X	X	X
Labor Exch/Job Search	X	X	X		X	X
Referrals to Partners	X	X	X	X	X	X
LMI	X	X	X		X	X
Performance/Cost Info	X	X	X			X
Support Service Info	X	X	X		X	X
UI Info/Assistance	X	X	X		X	X
Financial Aid Info	X	X	X			
Basic Career Services	Tech Ed	T-VOAA	Job Corps	Veterans	MSF	YouthBuild
T-I Program Eligibility			n/a	X		n/a
Outreach, Intake, Orient	X		n/a	X	X	n/a

	Basic Career Services	Comm Act	Housing	UI	Native Am	
Initial Assessment	X		n/a	X	X	n/a
Labor Exchange/Job Search	X		n/a	X	n/a	X
Referrals to Partners	X		n/a	X	X	n/a
LMI	X		n/a	X	X	X
Performance/Cost Info	X		n/a		n/a	X
Support Service Info	X		n/a		n/a	X
UI Info/Assistance			n/a	X	n/a	X
Financial Aid Info	X		n/a		n/a	X
			X			
T-I Program Eligibility						
Outreach, Intake, Orient						
Initial Assessment						
Labor Exchange/Job Search						
Referrals to Partners						
LMI						
Performance/Cost Info						
Support Service Info						
UI Info/Assistance			X			
Financial Aid Info						
Individual Career Services	T-I Adult	T-I DW	T-I Youth	T-II AEL	T-III WP	T-IV VR
Comp Assessment	X	X	X			X
IEP	X	X	X		X	

Career Plan/Counsel	X	X	X	X	X
Short-Term Prevoc.	X	X	X		X
Internships/Work Experience	X	X	X	X	X
Out-of-Area Job Search	X	X	X		
Financial Literacy	X	X	X		X
IET/ELA	X	X		X	
Workforce Preparation	X	X	X	X	X
Individual Career Services	Tech Ed	T-VOAA	Job Corps	Veterans	MSF
Comp Assessment		n/a		X	n/a
IEP		n/a	X	X	n/a
Career Plan/Counsel	X	n/a	X	X	n/a
Short-Term Prevoc.		n/a	X	X	n/a
Internships/Work Experience	X	n/a	X	X	n/a
Out-of-Area Job Search		n/a	X	n/a	X
Financial Literacy		n/a		n/a	
IET/ELA	X	n/a		n/a	
Workforce Preparation	X	n/a	X	X	n/a

Individual Career Services	Comm Act	Housing	UI	Native Am
Comp Assessment				
IEP				
Career Plan/Counsel				
Short-Term Prevoc				
Internships/Work Experience				
Out-of-Area Job Search				
Financial Literacy				
IET/ELA				
Workforce Preparation				

Required Consolidated Budget for the Delivery of Applicable Career Services

The other system costs budget must be a consolidated budget for applicable career services. This budget must include each of the partner's costs for the service delivery of each applicable career service and a consolidated system budget for career services applicable to more than one partner. Unlike the IFA, other system costs should include all costs, including personnel, related to the administration and delivery of those services.

Applicable Career Services	T-I Adult	T-I DW	T-I Youth	T-II AEL	T-III WP	T-IV VR	TANF
Basic Career Services: T-I Eligibility/Initial Assess Outreach, Intake, Orient Labor Exchange/Job Search Referrals/LMI							
Support Service Info							
UI Info/Fin Aid Info	\$767,054	\$669,848	\$196,354	\$50,000	\$644,976	\$	\$6,354,341
Applicable Career Services	Tech Ed	T-V OAA	Job Corps	Veterans	MSF	YouthBuild	TAA
Basic Career Services: T-I Eligibility/Initial Assess Outreach, Intake, Orient Labor Exchange/Job Search Referrals/LMI							
Support Service Info	\$	\$	\$0	\$180,836	\$	\$0	\$15,289
Applicable Career Services	Comm Act	Housing	UI	Native Am			
Basic Career Services: T-I Eligibility/Initial Assess Outreach, Intake, Orient Labor Exchange/Job Search Referrals/LMI							
Support Service Info	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$			
UI Info/Fin Aid Info							

Applicable Career Services	T-I Adult	T-I DW	T-I Youth	T-II AEL	T-III WP	T-IV VR	TANF
Individual Career Services: Comp Assessment/IEP Career Plan/Counsel Short-Term Pre-vocational Internship/Work Experience Financial Literacy IET/ELA/WF Prep							\$7,811,492
Applicable Career Services	Tech Ed	T-V OAA	Job Corps	Veterans	MSF	YouthBuild	TAA
Individual Career Services: Comp Assessment/IEP Career Plan/Counsel Short-Term Pre-vocational Internship/Work Experience Financial Literacy IET/ELA/WF Prep	\$767,055	\$669,849	\$785,414	\$200,000	\$113,819	\$	
Applicable Career Services	Comm Act	Housing	UI	Native Am			
Individual Career Services: Comp Assessment/IEP Career Plan/Counsel Short-Term Pre-vocational Internship/Work Experience Financial Literacy IET/ELA/WF Prep	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$			\$2,698

Consolidated budget total of career services delivered through the One-Stop system: \$ 19,260,937

Partner Agreement to Share Other One-Stop System Costs

The other system costs budget may include any other shared services that are authorized for and commonly provided through the AJCC partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other One-Stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs related to the Local Board's functions.

As with infrastructure costs, other system costs must be allocable according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the AJCC partner programs, consistent with the partner's authorizing federal statute and Uniform Guidance. The MOU must also include an agreed upon budget for these other costs along with the agreed upon cost sharing methodology. These costs may be shared through cash, non-cash, or third-party in-kind contributions.

All AJCC partners must agree to the other system costs budget. There is no state funding mechanism for other system costs that will be triggered due to lack of agreement at the local level for these costs.

Options for Local Agreement for Partners to Share Other System Costs

- **Initial Intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, and referrals to other AJCC partners.** This may include costs such as technology and tools that increase integrated service delivery through the sharing of information and service delivery processes.
- **Business services.** This may include costs related to a local or regional system business services team that has one or more partners on the team or has delegated a specific partner to provide business services on behalf of the system.
- **AJCC partner staff cross training.** This may include any staff cross training on partner programs and eligibility.
- **One-Stop operator.** This may include the system role of the One-Stop operator (e.g., coordinating service providers across the One-Stop delivery system) when the role is not specific to the operation of the AJCC and/or specific partner programs, so long as the role was defined by the Local Board in the procurement process and agreed to by all AJCC partners in the MOU.
- **Shared personnel costs for AJCC colocated partners.** This may include center receptionists and/or center managers.

Optional partner agreement to share other One-Stop system costs: initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, and referrals to other AJCC partners.

This may include costs such as technology and tools that increase integrated service delivery through the sharing of information and service delivery processes.

One-Stop System Budget: Initial Intake, Assessment, Basic Skills Identification, Services, Referrals

Line Item	Budget Detail	Cost
Total Budget:	\$ 0	

Agreed Upon Cost Allocation Methodology to Share These Costs

Proportionate Share: Initial Intake, Assessment, Basic Skills Identification, Services, Referrals

Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share in Cash	Share in In-Kind
T-I Adult		\$	\$	\$
T-I Dislocated Worker				
T-I Youth				
T-II Adult Ed/Literacy				
T-III Wagner-Peyser				
Veterans				
Migrant Seasonal				
Trade Act				
Unemployment Comp				
Career Tech/Ed				
T-IV Voc Rehab				
TANF/CalWorks				
T-V OAA				
Job Corps				
Native American				
Youth Build				
Community Action				
Housing Authority				
Second Chance				
Total Budget:		\$0	\$0	\$0

Optional Partner Agreement to Share Other One-Stop System Costs: Business Services

This may include costs related to a local or regional system business services team that has one or more partners on the team, or has delegated a specific partner to provide business services on behalf of the system.

One-Stop System Budget: Business Services

Line Item	Budget Detail	Cost
Total Budget:	\$ 0	

Agreed Upon Cost Allocation Methodology to Share These Costs:

Proportionate Share: Business Services				
Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share in Cash	Share in In-Kind
T-I Adult		\$	\$	\$
T-I Dislocated Worker				
T-I Youth				
T-II Adult Ed/Literacy				
T-III Wagner-Peyser				
Veterans				
Migrant Seasonal				
Trade Act				
Unemployment Comp				
Career Tech/Ed				
T-IV Voc Rehab				
TANF/CalWorks				
T-V OAA				
Job Corps				
Native American				
Youth Build				
Community Action				
Housing Authority				
Second Chance				
Total Budget:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Optional Partner Agreement to Share Other One-Stop System Costs: AJCC Partner Staff Cross Training

This may include any staff cross training on partner programs and eligibility.

One-Stop System Budget: AJCC Partner Staff Cross Training

Line Item	Budget Detail	Cost
Total Budget:	\$ 0	

Agreed Upon Cost Allocation Methodology to Share These Costs:

Proportionate Share: AJCC Partner Staff Cross Training				
Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share In Cash	Share In In-Kind
T-I Adult	\$	\$	\$	\$
T-I Dislocated Worker				
T-I Youth				
T-II Adult Ed/Literacy				
T-III Wagner-Peyser				
Veterans				
Migrant Seasonal				
Trade Act				
Unemployment Comp				
Career Tech/Ed				
T-IV Voc Rehab				
TANF/CaiWorks				
T-V OAA				
Job Corps				
Native American				
Youth Build				
Community Action				
Housing Authority				
Second Chance				
Total Budget:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Optional Partner Agreement to Share Other One-Stop System Costs: One-Stop Operator

This may include the system role of the One-Stop operator (e.g., coordinating service providers across the One-Stop delivery system) when the role is not specific to the operation of the AJCC and/or specific partner programs, so long as the role was defined by the Local Board in the procurement process and agreed to by all AJCC partners.

Description of the One-Stop Operator's System Role Not Specific to Operation of AJCC/s

One-Stop System Budget: One-Stop System Operator

Line Item	Budget Detail	Cost
AJCC Operator	Contract with ProPath	\$15,000
	Total Budget:	\$ 15,000

Agreed Upon Cost Allocation Methodology to Share These Costs

Merced County WDB will cover the cost of the AJCC Operator.

Proportionate Share: One-Stop Operator				
Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share in Cash	Share in In-Kind
T-I Adult		\$7,500	\$7,500	\$
T-I Dislocated Worker		\$7,500	\$7,500	
T-II Youth				
T-II Adult Ed/Literacy				
T-III Wagner-Peyser				
Veterans				
Migrant Seasonal				
Trade Act				
Unemployment Comp				
Career Tech/Ed				
T-IV Voc Rehab				
TANF/CalWorks				
T-V OAA				
Job Corps				
Native American				
Youth Build				
Community Action				
Housing Authority				
Second Chance				
Total Budget:		\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0

Optional Partner Agreement to Share Other One-Stop System Costs: Shared Personnel Costs for AJCC Colocated Partners

This may include center receptionists and/or center managers.

One-Stop System Budget: AJCC Personnel

AJCC Personnel	Budget Detail	Cost
Total Budget:	\$ 0	

Agreed Upon Cost Allocation Methodology to Share These Costs

Proportionate Share: AJCC Personnel

AJCC #1 Merced

Colocated Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share in Cash	Share in In-Kind
Partner # 1:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 2:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 3:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 4:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Budget AJCC:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Proportionate Share: AJCC Personnel

AJCC #2 Los Banos

Colocated Partner	Compute Methodology	Partner Share	Share in Cash	Share in In-Kind
Partner # 1:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 2:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 3:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Partner # 4:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Budget AJCC:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

SUPPLEMENTAL NARRATIVE

CALFRESH PARTICIPANTS- BACKGROUND AND ASESSMENT OF NEED

The information below supplements content provided in Section II of the principal narrative.

1. Overview of the Size and Characteristics of the Total Ca/Fresh Recipient Population

Representatives of the Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) reported that there are 7,944 active CalFresh cases in Merced County. Characteristics of the population include:

Gender	Female	4,765
	Male	3,179
Age	18-24	491
	25-34	1,542
	35-54	4,346
	55-64	892
	65+	673
Ethnicity/Country of Origin	American Indian or Alaskan Native	5
	Asian Indian	57
	Black or African American	4
	Cambodian	2
	Chinese	8
	Cuban	1
	Filipino	3
	Guamanian	0
	Guatemalan	12
	Japanese	1
	Korean	5
	Laotian	62
	Mexican	5,594
	Native Hawaiian	0
	Other	249
	Puerto Rican	8
	Salvadoran	26
	Unknown	58
	Vietnamese	5
	White	1,362

Note: Ethnicity/country of origin and formerly incarcerated data is not available.

2 Overview of the Size and Characteristics of Ca/Fresh E&T Participant Population

As the CalFresh E&T program has not yet been implemented, there is no information to report concerning participant characteristics.

3. *Types of Workforce Services Needed by the Target Population*

The tremendous diversity of the Cal Fresh population makes it difficult to generalize about the workforce services they need. However, stakeholders engaged in the planning process provided a number of examples of services that segments of the target group likely need. These fall, generally, into three broad categories: basic education and remediation; job/technical skills training; and supportive services to enable training. In the first category, literacy and numeracy skills, GED/high school equivalency and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) were all identified by stakeholders as needed workforce services. With regard to job skills, there was substantial agreement that both classroom-based and work-based programs have value. In the supportive service category, stakeholders highlighted the need for transportation and childcare services. In addition to the one-stop partners, stakeholders agree that grassroots and faith-based partners are effective resources for addressing support needs.

4. *Employment Barriers Experienced by the Target Population and Resources Available to Address Barriers*

Again, the diversity of the population suggests that virtually every type of employment barrier would be experienced by some portion of the CalFresh population. However, during the stakeholder engagement process, representatives from HSA, education, the WDB , AJCCs, and other stakeholder organizations and programs identified the following as significant barriers affecting the CalFresh population and the county as a whole: lack of educational attainment and insufficient job skills; lack of information about programs and services; language barriers; cultural barriers; insufficient access to broadband; generational poverty; issues pertaining to substance abuse; affordable/transitional housing; childcare; and transportation. The organizations listed in the following responses provide the education, training and support services required to address and minimize or eradicate these barriers.

5. *Collaboration between the WDB and Merced County HSA*

The partnership among the local board, the AJCCs and HSA is strong. HSA is a one-stop partner. An MOU has been executed between the WDB and the HSA. Referrals between the agencies occur on a regular basis and co-enrollments are not uncommon.

Other organizations that collaborate with HSA, the AJCC and CalFresh include: Merced College; CVOC; Merced County Office of Education; Gateway Adult

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
MERCED COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT
AND
MERCED COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

This agreement is made and entered into, effective July 1, 2020, between the Merced County Department of Workforce Investment (hereinafter referred to as "DWI") and the Merced County Department of Child Support Services (hereinafter referred to as "DCSS").

DCSS has requested that an experienced and knowledgeable DWI Staff Services Analyst (and related supervision) continue to collaborate with DCSS to provide workforce services for participants in OCSS programs who are in need of employment assistance.

1. Duties and Responsibilities:

The DWI Staff shall:

- a) Serve as the liaison and point of contact between the OCSS and DWI teams as it pertains to shared cases;
- b) Ensure that participants are invited to participate in orientation sessions to familiarize them with DWI services;
- c) Provide DCSS with information as it relates to participant progression in employment assistance, with that information to include total and/or individual attendance, training services provided, and employment status (to the degree that DWI staff are made aware of a particular participant's employment status by the participant);
- d) Seek or explore opportunities to collaborate and partner between agencies up to and including job fairs and co-location.

DCSS shall:

- a) Provide DWI with the contact information of participants who have been ordered, or referred, to seek out DWI for employment services.
- b) Provide participants with DWI contact information.
- c) Provide a liaison to DWI for programmatic assistance.
- d) Seek or explore opportunities to collaborate and partner between agencies up to and including job fairs and co-location.

2. Compliance:

DWI and DCSS hereby agree to comply with all state and federal laws, regulations, and requirements relative to the objectives, intent, and content of this agreement.

3. Information Release:

Completion of Information Release Form by participants provides written permission for DCSS and DWI to exchange participant information.

4. Communication:

At least monthly, DWI will provide DCSS a spreadsheet indicating status of referred participants. DCSS and DWI agree to meet at least quarterly to continue to build a strong partnership.

5. Term and Termination:

The term of this agreement will be for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022 or until termination by either party upon thirty (30) calendar day's written notice of such termination.

6. Compensation:

No compensation is due to either party as a result of this MOU. The promises of the parties are sufficient consideration. All costs associated with the performance of obligations under this MOU shall be assumed by the party performing the duty.

7. Notice of Performance:

Deficiencies in contracted performance shall be communicated to the deficient party in writing. Frequent and regular communication between the liaisons is encouraged to quickly minimize and resolve performance deficiencies as they arise.

Signature page to follow

SIGNATURES

MERCED COUNTY

By Marci Barrera

Marci Barrera

Assistant County Executive
Officer

7/22/2020

Dated

MERCED COUNTY DWI

By David Mirrione

David Mirrione

Director

6/30/2020

Dated

MERCED COUNTY DCSS

By Sharon Wardale-Trejo

Sharon Wardale-Trejo

Director

6/22/2020

Dated

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM

MERCED COUNTY COUNSEL.

By Jepna Anderson

Jepna Anderson

7-13-2020

Dated



DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

Sharon Wardale-Trejo
Director

Darlene Ingersoll
Assistant Director

Physical Address
3365 N. Highway 50
Suite A
Merced, CA 95348
(209) 721-3212
(209) 721-1310 Fax

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 3194
Merced, CA 95344

Equal Opportunity Employer

INFORMATION RELEASE FORM

I, _____
(Print Name)

give permission to the Merced County Department of Child Support Services to release the following information to the Merced County WIOA Title I Program:

My name
My address
My phone number
My next court hearing date

In addition, I give permission to the Merced County WIOA Title I Program, to release any information concerning me and my involvement and/or participation in workforce activities to the Merced County Department of Child Support Services. I understand that this information may be used in conjunction with a child support court case, and may be released to the court to report on my participation in the WIOA Title I Program.

Signature

Date

INTERAGENCY REFERRAL

Date: _____ Report to Worknet Merced County by: _____

TO: Merced County DWI
Rigo Medina
1205 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340
209-724-2000

FROM: Organization: Merced County Department of Child Support Services
Attention: Nicole Cortez (DWI Program Liaison)
Address: 3368 N. Highway 59, Suite A Merced, CA 95348
Phone: 209-381-1335
E-mail: Nicole.Cortez@countyofmerced.com

The following person is being referred to your agency for services:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Next Court Hearing: _____

Purpose of Referral (Services Requested):

1. Orientation
2. CASAS (or similar skills evaluation)
3. Portfolio Completion and Turn in
4. Meet with assigned career coach/ Obtain career coach verification form to return to court

Agency Reply (Actions taken):

Name of individual completing response

Date

Attachment E - Public Comments

Comprehensive One-Stops and AJCC Partners in the Local Area

Comprehensive Centers:

Merced County-Department of
Workforce Investment
1205 West 18th Street
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209) 724-2100
Fax: (209)725-3592

Merced County-Department of
Workforce Investment
800 7th Street
Los Banos, California 93635
Tel: (209) 710-6140
Fax: (209)725-3592

Partners:

Merced AJCC:

Job Corps
Mariposa Mall #360
Fresno, California 93721
Tel: (559) 233-3868
Fax: (559) 233-9536

Central Valley Opportunity Center, Inc.
6838 Bridget Court/P.O. Box 1389
Winton, California 95388-1389
Tel: (209) 357-0062
Fax: (209) 357-0071

California Department of Rehabilitation
464 East Yosemite Avenue, Suite A
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209)726-6529
Fax: (209) 726-6307

Employment Development Department
1205 West 18th Street
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209) 726-5407
Fax: (209)576-6086

Los Banos AJCC

Central Valley Opportunity Center, Inc.
6838 Bridget Court/P,O, Box 1389
Winton, California 95388-1389
Tel: (209) 357-0062
Fax: (209) 357-0071

Employment Development Department
800 7th Street
Los Banos, California 93635
Tel: (209) 826-0420
Fax: (209)576-6086

AJCC partners participating in the shared other system costs agreement

California Indian Manpower Consortium,
Inc.
5108 East Clinton Way
Fresno, California 93727
Tel: (559) 456-9195
Fax: (216) 641-6338

Merced Adult School
50 E. 20th Street
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209) 325-2800
Fax: (209) 385-6430

California Department of Rehabilitation
I.2llil
464 East Yosemite Avenue, Suite A
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209)726-6529
Fax: (209) 726-6307

Central Valley Opportunity Center, Inc.
6838 Bridget Court/P.O. Box 1389
Winton, California 95388-1389
Tel: (209) 357-0062
Fax: (209) 357-0071

Human Services Agency-Merced
County
2115 Wardrobe Avenue
Merced, California 95341
Tel: (209) 385-3000
Fax: (209) 354-2503

Merced County Department of
Workforce
Investment
1880 Wardrobe Avenue
Merced, California 95341
Tel: (209) 724-2000
Fax: (209) 725-3592

Merced County Office of Education
632 West 13t h Street
Merced, California 95341
Tel: (209) 381-6600
Fax: (209) 381-5992

Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, California 95348
Tel: (209) 384-6000
Fax: (209) 386-6793

Employment Development Department
1205 West 18t h Street
Merced, California 95340
Tel: (209) 726-5407
Fax: (209)576-6086

Employment Development Department
800 7th Street
Los Banos, California 93635
Tel: (209) 826-0420
Fax: (209)576-6086

State of California

**Local Area Subsequent Designation and
Local Board Recertification Application
Program Year 2021-23**

Local Workforce Development Area

Merced County Workforce Development Board

Application for Local Area Subsequent Designation and Local Board Recertification

This application will serve as your request for Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area) subsequent designation and Local Workforce Development Board (Local Board) recertification for Program Year (PY) 2021-23 under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA).

If the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) determines the application is incomplete, it will either be returned or held until the necessary documentation is submitted. Please contact your [Regional Advisor](#) for technical assistance or questions related to completing and submitting this application.

Merced County Workforce Development Board

Name of Local Area

1900 Airdrome Entry

Mailing Address

Atwater, CA, 95301

City, State, ZIP

February 5, 2021

Date of Submission

Erick Serrato

Contact Person

209-724-2100

Contact Person's Phone Number

Local Board Membership

The WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A) through (E) states the requirements for nominating and selecting members in each membership category. The WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A) requires that business members constitute a majority of the Local Board. The chairperson shall be a business representative, per WIOA Section 107(b)(3).

The local Chief Elected Official (CEO) is required to provide the names of the individuals appointed for each category listed on the following pages, and attach a roster of the current Local Board which identifies each member's respective membership category.

Business – A majority of the members must be representatives of business in the Local Area who (i) are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy-making or hiring authority; (ii) represent businesses, including small businesses, or organizations; and (iii) are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade association (WIOA Section 107[b][2][A]).

Please identify the Local Board chairperson by typing CHAIR after their name.

Name	Title	Entity	Appointment Date	Term End Date
Leslie Abasta-Cummings - CHAIR	CEO	Livingston Community Health	02/25/2020	06/30/2024
Vinton Thengvall	CFO	Kellogg Supply, Inc.	06/19/2018	06/30/2022
Michael Altomare	Owner	Agrecom, Inc	06/19/2018	06/30/2022
Satvir Arias	HR Director	Dignity Health	01/14/2020	06/30/2023
Amie Marchini	Owner	Amie Marchini Senior Care	05/21/2019	06/30/2023
Jack Mobley	Owner	ServiceMaster	02/25/2020	06/30/2023
Lynda Munoz	HR Director	Ingomar Packing Company	01/14/2020	06/30/2023
Tim O'Neill	Owner	Image Masters	06/19/2018	06/30/2022

The Board understands it has four vacancies in Business Representation. The Board held off on filling vacancies in preparation of the Board's new executive director, who joined in late November 2020. Since his arrival, he has worked with the Board to identify appropriate membership, recruit new nominations to the Board and confirm the process for their approval. This topic was included in the January 2021 Executive Committee Agenda and will be discussed at the Board's April 2021 meeting. As of this submission, one additional business member, representing the County's largest employer, has been recruited to join, with three other efforts in development.

Labor – Not less than 20 percent of the members must be representatives of workforce within the Local Area who must include: (i) representatives of labor organizations who have been nominated by state labor federations; (ii) a member of a labor organization or a training director from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the area, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the area; and may include: (iii) representatives of community based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, veterans, or individuals with disabilities; and (iv) representatives of organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth and/or out-of-school youth (WIOA Section 107[b][2][B]).

California Unemployment Insurance Code (CUIC) Section 14202(b)(1) further requires and specifies that at least 15 percent of Local Board members shall be representatives of labor organizations unless the local labor federation fails to nominate enough members. For a local area in which no employees are represented by such organizations, other representatives of employees shall be appointed to the board, but any local board that appoints representatives of employees that are not nominated by local labor federations shall demonstrate that no employees are represented by such organizations in the Local Area.

Name	Title	Entity	Appointment Date	Term End Date
Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D.	Superintendent	Merced County Office of Education	02/25/2020	06/30/2023
Joshua Lepper	Organizer	Laborers International Union of North America	02/25/2020	06/30/2024
Greg Vinculet	Training Coordinator	Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 442	06/19/2018	06/30/2022
Tim Robertson	Executive Director	North Valley Labor Federation	02/25/2020	06/30/2024
Jorge De Nava, Jr.	Executive Director	Central Valley Occupational Center	01/15/2019	06/30/2022

Education – Each Local Board shall include representatives of entities administering education and training activities in the Local Area who must include (i) a representative of eligible providers administering WIOA Title II adult education and literacy activities; (ii) a representative of institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities; and may include (iii) representatives of local educational agencies, and community-based organizations with

demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to employment (WIOA Section 107[b][2][C]).

Name	Title	Entity	Appointment Date	Term End Date
Steve Hobbs	Principal	Merced Adult School	02/25/2020	06/30/2024
Chris Vitelli, Ed.D.	Superintendent	Merced College	05/12/2020	06/30/2023

Economic and Community Development – Each Local Board shall include representatives of governmental, economic, and community development entities serving the Local Area who must include (i) a representative of economic and community development entities; (ii) a representative from the state employment service office under the Wagner-Peyser Act; (iii) a representative of the Vocational Rehabilitation program; and may include (iv) representatives of agencies or entities administering programs serving the Local Area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance; (v) representatives of philanthropic organizations serving the Local Area; and (E) individuals or representatives of entities as the local CEO in the Local Area may determine to be appropriate (WIOA Section 107[b][2][D] and [E]).

Name	Title	Entity	Appointment Date	Term End Date
Daron McDaniel	Chairman, Supervisor - District 3	Merced County Board of Supervisors	06/16/2020	06/30/2024
Mark Hendrickson	Director	Merced County Community and Economic Development	06/19/2018	06/30/2022
Chudy Nnebe	Site Manager	Employment Development Department	01/26/2021	06/30/2023
Terry Nichols	Staff Services Manager	Department of Rehabilitation	02/25/2020	06/30/2024

Performed Successfully

The Local Area hereby certifies that it has performed successfully, defined as having met 80 percent of their negotiated performance goals in PY 2018-19 or PY 2019-20 for the following indicators:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit
 - Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit
 - Median Earnings
 - Credential Rate
- ❖ Awarded High Performing Board (HPB) status

PY 2018-19 Performance Goals				
	Adults	Dislocated Workers	Youth	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	125%	128%	108%	Employment or Education Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	135%	129%	123%	Employment or Education Rate 4th Quarter After Exit
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,734.00	\$8,551.00	BASELINE	Median Earnings
Credential Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	169%	152%	171%	Credential Rate
Measurable Skill Gains 2nd Quarter After Exit	BASELINE	BASELINE	BASELINE	Measurable Skill Gains

PY 2019-20 Performance Goals				
	Adults	Dislocated Workers	Youth	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	117%	113%	123%	Employment or Education Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	120%	128%	132%	Employment or Education Rate 4th Quarter After Exit
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,937.00	\$7,876.00	BASELINE	Median Earnings
Credential Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	152%	141%	148%	Credential Rate
Measurable Skill Gains 2nd Quarter After Exit	BASELINE	BASELINE	BASELINE	Measurable Skill Gains

Sustained Fiscal Integrity

The Local Area hereby certifies that it has not been found in violation of one or more of the following during PY 2018-19 or PY 2019-20:

- *Final determination of significant finding(s)* from audits, evaluations, or other reviews conducted by state or local governmental agencies or the Department of Labor identifying issues of fiscal integrity or misexpended funds due to the willful disregard or failure to comply with any WIOA requirement.
- *Gross negligence* – defined as a conscious and voluntary disregard of the need to use reasonable care, which is likely to cause foreseeable grave injury or harm to persons, property, or both.
- *Failure to observe accepted standards of administration* – Local Areas must have adhered to the applicable uniform administrative requirements set forth in Title 2 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200.

Certify No Violation

Engaged in Regional Planning

Engaged in regional planning is defined as participating in and contributing to regional planning, regional plan implementation, and regional performance negotiations. The Local Area hereby certifies that it has participated in and contributed to regional planning and negotiating regional performance measures in the following ways:

Merced County Workforce Development Board, like all members of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Unit, engage regularly on a wide variety of planning efforts. This work, underscored by regularly-held meetings of all eight workforce boards, includes:

- a. Past leadership in RPU planning and administration. Merced County WDB held the Regional Organizer role and through this work actively supported and organized regional planning activities, including fiscal administration and economic analysis;
- b. Active engagement in the negotiation of performance measures with the State, including collaboration with fellow RPU members to collectively raise regional performance levels and maintain high-quality service delivery;
- c. Active participation in the development of the Regional Plan, including recently hosting two Spanish-language forums to uplift the needs and voice of the Valley's monolingual Spanish-speaking population;
- d. Contribution of important labor market information and economic indicators to the Regional Planning process;
- e. Development and leadership on regional and sub-regional projects, most recently the development of a strategic effort among three RPU Boards to expand and enhance IET in the Valley; and
- f. Support and fiscal administration of the Central Valley RPU's business engagement working group.

Merced County Workforce Development Board continues to maintain a posture of collaboration, resource sharing, and engagement, in a genuine appreciation for the Regional Planning process and best practices it promotes.

Local Area Assurances

Through PY 2021-23, the Local Area assures that:

- A. It will comply with the applicable uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements (WIOA Section 184[a][2] and [3]).

Highlights of this assurance include:

- The Local Area's procurement procedures will avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items, software, and subscriptions (in alignment with Title 2 CFR Section 200.318).
- The Local Area will maintain and provide accounting and program records, including supporting source documentation, to auditors at all levels, as permitted by law (Title 2 CFR Section 200.508).

Note that failure to comply with the audit requirements specified in Title 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F will subject the Local Area to potential cash hold (Title 2 CFR Section 200.338).

- B. All financial reporting will be done in compliance with federal and state regulations and guidance.

Highlights of this assurance include:

- Reporting will be done in compliance with Workforce Services Directive WSD19-05, *Monthly and Quarterly Financial Reporting Requirements*, (December 4, 2019).
- All close out reports will comply with the policies and procedures listed in WSD16-05, *WIOA Closeout Requirements* (July 29, 2016).

Note that failure to comply with financial reporting requirements will subject the Local Area to potential cash hold. (Title 2 CFR Section 200.338)

- C. Funds will be spent in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance.

Highlights of this assurance include:

- The Local Area will meet the requirements of the *California Unemployment Insurance Code Section 14211*, to spend a minimum of 30 percent of combined total of WIOA Title I adult and dislocated worker formula fund allocations on training services.
 - The Local Area will not use funds to assist, promote, or deter union organizing (WIOA Section 181[b][7]).
- D. The Local Board will select the America's Job Center of CaliforniaSM operator(s), with the agreement of the local CEO, through a competitive process such as a Request for Proposal, unless granted a waiver by the state (WIOA Section 121[d][2][A] and 107[g][2]).
- E. The Local Board will collect, enter, and maintain data related to participant enrollment, activities, and performance necessary to meet all CalJOBSSM reporting requirements and deadlines.
- F. The Local Board will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA Section 188, including the collection of necessary data.
- G. The Local Area will engage in and contribute to regional planning and regional plan implementation (e.g., Local Area has participated in regional planning meetings and regional plan implementation efforts, and the Local Board and local CEO have reviewed and approved the regional plan and modifications).
- H. The Local Area will participate in regional performance negotiations.
- I. The Local Area will comply with CWDB policies and guidelines, legislative mandates and/or other special provisions as may be required under federal law or policy, including the WIOA or state legislation.
- J. Priority shall be given to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient for receipt of career and training services funded by WIOA Adult funding (WIOA Section 134[c][3][E] and *Training and Employment Guidance Letter* [TEGL] 10-09, and TEGL 19-16).

Application Signature Page

Instructions – The local CEO and Local Board chair must sign and date this form. Electronic signatures will be permitted for the PY 2021-23 application.

By signing the application, the local CEO and Local Board chair request subsequent designation of the Local Area and recertification of the Local Board. Additionally, they agree to abide by the Local Area assurances included in this application.

Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Local Chief Elected Official

Signature

Signature

Leslie Abasta-Cummings

Daron McDaniel

Name

Name

Workforce Development Board Chair

Chairman, Merced County Board of
Supervisors Representing the 3rd District

Title

Title

Date

Date



■ Dr. I. Angelov Farooq, Chair ■ Tim Rainey, Executive Director ■ Gavin Newsom, Governor

12/01/2020

Erick Serrato
Merced County
1205 West 18th St
Merced, CA 95340

SUBJECT: Application for Certification of High Performing Board

Dear Director Serrato,

The California Workforce Development Board has received and carefully assessed your application for certification as a High Performing Board under the California Unemployment Insurance Code Section 14200.

This letter is to inform you that Merced County met the eligibility requirements outlined in [Workforce Services Directive WSD19-12](#). Therefore, your application requesting designation as a High Performing Board for the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2023 has been approved.

If you have any questions, please contact your Employment Development Department Regional Advisor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Rainey".

TIM RAINY, Executive Director
California Workforce Development Board

cc: Yvette Quevedo, Regional Advisor

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEE AND PLAN SIGNATURES

This local plan represents the Merced County Workforce Development Board's efforts to maximize and coordinate resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

This local plan is submitted for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024 in accordance the provision of WIOA.

Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Chief Elected Officer

Signature

Signature

Name

Name

Title

Title

Date

Date

The Merced County Workforce Development Board has reviewed the Local Plan as [Date], after a public comment period from March 15, 2021 thru April 14, 2021. The Merced County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to provide final of the Local Plan and authorized the Chairman's signature after the required first submission date for the local plan. As such, this local plan was unable to be submitted with signature, which will be added when the plan is submitted again after comments from the state.