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**Our Vision:**

*Contra Costa County's Workforce Development Board supports a network that creates and promotes dynamic education systems, high-performing businesses, and a prosperous local economy with an abundance of high-quality jobs and skilled workers to fill them.*

## Executive Committee Meeting

### Agenda

March 17, 2021

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

ZOOM Meeting

Meeting ID: 917 8167 8276

<https://zoom.us/j/91781678276?pwd=NWM1T3pEdUV5S0F1eDh1bTg4SHpZdz09>

Password: 538454

Join in Dial In

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- 3:00 PM** CALL TO ORDER AND REMINDER OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
PUBLIC COMMENT
- 3:05 PM** **CONSENT AGENDA**  
**C1** Approve minutes from January 13, 2021 meeting
- 3:10 PM** **ACTION ITEMS**  
**A1** Approve Initial Draft of Local and Regional Strategic Plan 2021-2024  
**A2** Approve Funding Recommendation – WIOA Youth Services per RFP 1174
- 4:10 PM** **COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS**  
CHAIR'S REPORT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
- 4:30 PM** **ADJOURN**

***Next Executive Committee Meeting is on Wednesday, April 14, 2021***

#### ***Upcoming Committee Meetings:***

*Business & Economic Development Committee Meeting is on Wednesday, April 7, 2021*

*Full Board Meeting is on Tuesday, May 4, 2021*

*Youth Committee Meeting is on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.*

*Any appropriate public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the Workforce Development Board and any of its committees to a majority of members of the Workforce Development and/or its committees, less than 72 hours prior to that meeting are available and for public inspection at 4071 Port Chicago Highway, Suite 250 Concord, CA during normal business hours.*

*The Workforce Development Board will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities planning to attend Board meetings. Arrangements can be made by contacting the Board at 925.671.4560*

**Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Contra Costa County  
Executive Committee Charter**

Charter Element	Charter Agreement Information
<b>Business Objective</b>	The primary objective of the WDB Executive Committee is to support system alignment, service integration, and continuous improvement, using data to support evidence-based policymaking.
<b>Case for Action</b>	<p>As we advance our work toward realizing our vision for creating shared opportunity and economic prosperity, a number of key factors drive our work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good jobs in today’s economy and labor market require workers to have a growing level of knowledge and skill in order to compete for them;</li> <li>• The employment gap is widening between those with higher levels of education and credentials and those who lack them;</li> <li>• Jobs are growing at both the high-skill and low-skill end of the labor market, while growth of “middle skill” jobs has been lagging; however, the retirement of baby boomers from the labor force will create openings in nearly every industry and occupation;</li> <li>• The incoming workforce does not have the education and skill-sets needed to perform many of these jobs, as manifested by a continued lag in the educational attainment levels of young people (although beginning to show some signs of improvement, student preparedness for post-secondary education remains very low); and</li> <li>• The difference between supply and demand indicates that there is a “skills gap” between what most workers have to offer and what businesses need, creating the urgency to develop and support new strategies that can better equip and train people for jobs in today’s economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Requirements</b>	<p>The WDB Executive Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and expand the Workforce Development Board's communications systems and networks</li> <li>• Develop and present legislative/advocacy platforms and position statements for consideration by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and other local elected officials</li> <li>• Recruit qualified board member candidates who are able to effectively advance the board’s strategic priorities and recommend membership appointments to the Board of Supervisors</li> <li>• Support and strengthen administrative, fiduciary, management, and oversight roles and responsibilities of the WDB, including monitoring performance of the WDB Executive Director</li> <li>• Help secure, leverage, and expand resources that help to support workforce and economic development in Contra Costa County and the greater region</li> </ul>
<b>Boundaries / Guidelines</b>	The Executive Committee will advise and influence the direction and implementation of the WDB’s strategic objectives as outlined the WDB 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, particularly with regards to work related to systems alignment, administration, coordination, and overall accountability.
<b>Team Membership</b>	<p>The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair(s) and Immediate Past Chair of the WDB; the Co-Chairs of each of its subcommittees, and up to three at-large members to provide appropriate representation of the overall membership. The Executive Committee and the WDB work on behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the businesses and residents of Contra Costa County.</p> <p>The WDB and the Executive committee often draw upon the knowledge and expertise of other individuals and organizations that are not members of the WDB and occasionally form <i>Ad Hoc</i> committees to do work.</p>
<b>Timing</b>	The work of the Executive Committee is aligned with the timeline of the WDB’s 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.
<b>Resources</b>	The WDB and the Executive Committee provide and/or support convening and networking functions that draw together a wide spectrum of stakeholders that contribute to the health of the local economy and prepare residents for effective participation in the workforce. These include local and regional businesses, economic development experts and organizations, public agencies, education, labor, and community-based organizations.
<b>Review Process</b>	<p>The Executive Committee monitors and reports its progress at regular committee meetings and full WDB member meetings as appropriate.</p> <p>Progress against the WDB 2013-2017 Strategic Plan is reviewed at regular intervals as determined by the WDB and any of its relevant governing authorities at the local, state, and/or federal levels.</p>

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

The Executive Committee met on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, via a ZOOM meeting. Chair Terry Curley called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm. Chair Terry reminded everyone of potential conflict of interest.

**ATTENDANCE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Yolanda Vega, Terry Curley, Thomas Hansen, Joshua Anijar, Kwame Reed, Stephanie Rivera

MEMBERS ABSENT – Michael McGill

OTHERS PRESENT – Donna Van Wert, Anita Kassem

WDB STAFF PRESENT – Patience Ofodu, Maureen Nelson, Noramah Burch, Amrita Kaur, Verneda Clapp, Rochelle Soriano

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**CONSENT ITEMS**

**C1 Approve December 9, 2020, Executive Committee meeting minutes.**

**Motion/Second Yolanda Vega/Thomas Hansen**

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION ITEMS**

**A1 Approve Funds Transfer Request for FY 2019-2020 Funds**

**Approve the WDB to initiate a funds transfer request to EDD, which, if approved, would move \$600,000 out of the WIOA Dislocated Worker program into the WIOA Adult program to balance each of these funding streams in accordance with customer demand, priority of service provisions, and changes in the local labor market.**

**Motion/Second: Yolanda Vega/Thomas Hansen**

**Motion Approved**

**AYES:** Yolanda Vega, Terry Curley, Thomas Hansen, Joshua Anijar, Kwame Reed, Stephanie Rivera

**NAYES:** None

**ABSENT:** Michael McGill

**ABSTAIN:** None

**A2 AJCC Comprehensive and Affiliate/Specialized Certification**

Approve an option for AJCC Certification Process.

**Option #1:** Direct Local Board staff to work in conjunction with the One-Stop Operator and Career Services Provider (within their scope) to conduct the Review and Evaluation and make recommendations to the Local Board

**Of the three options, staff are recommending Option #1 because it is the most streamlined path, appropriate to the current situation (career center closed during pandemic) and because of the tight timeline.**

**Motion/Second Joshua Anijar/Kwame Reed**

**Motion Approved**

**AYES:** Yolanda Vega, Terry Curley, Thomas Hansen, Joshua Anijar, Kwame Reed, Stephanie Rivera

**NAYES:** None

**ABSENT:** Michael McGill

**ABSTAIN:** None

**COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS**

**BED Committee (Kwame Reed)**

- Proposed to move the meeting to April 7, 2021.

**Youth Committee (Noramah Burch)**

- The Youth Committee met on Tuesday, January 12, 2021
- On the Agenda a presentation on National Youth Employment Coalition by a policy analyst.
- Youth RFP update is out on WDB Website, and EHSD Website will close on February 2, 2021.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

*Tribute to Tom Guarino, Board Member*

Earlier this year, our board was fortunate to welcome a new member, Tom Guarino. He joined in July as a Full Board member, serving on the BED Committee. We remember him today, at our Executive Board Meeting, and lament our loss at his death last month. Although he served our board a short while, I want to recognize his enthusiasm and commitment to serve with us.

Thank you, Tom. We are very grateful.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

*Tribute to Tom Guarino, Board Member*

Grateful has joined the WDB as a Board Member and a big miss to the board and the community. The Board of Supervisors has acknowledged his contribution to the community. Also, he will be recognized at the Full Board meeting and have a moment of silence.

**Upcoming Conferences:** Notify Rochelle Soriano if you are interested in attending.

- East Bay Leadership Council featuring Van Jones on January 28, 2021
  - 2 tickets available
- CWA Youth@Work 2021 Virtual Conference on January 19, 20, 21, 22, 2021
- CWA Return to Work Webinar

**Update on Recruitment:**

EHSD had started on recruitment for the following:

- WDB Executive Director
- Policy & Planning Director
- Community Services Bureau Director

Last Strategic Planning Session today, we are encouraging everyone to attend.

The Full Board Meeting is on February 2, 2021.

- Proposed agenda items as follows:
  - Presentations from :
    - EHSD by Kathy Gallagher, Director
    - Full Market Capacity
    - Update on Strategic Planning from Steve Shultz of Glen Price Group

**Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion/Second** Joshua Anijar/Kwame Reed

**Motion** Approved

**AYES:** Yolanda Vega, Terry Curley, Thomas Hansen, Joshua Anijar, Kwame Reed, Stephanie Rivera

**NAYES:** None

**ABSENT:** Michael McGill

**ABSTAIN:** None

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 2:35 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rochelle Martin-Soriano, Board Secretary

/rms



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**DATE:** March 17, 2021  
**TO:** Executive Committee  
**FROM:** Workforce Development Board Staff  
**RE:** **DRAFT - Workforce Development Board Local & Regional Strategic Plan 2021-2024**

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The WDB has put a great deal of time, effort and resources toward developing both the local and the regional plan in alignment with the California Workforce Development Board's vision and guidance for the plan for 2021-2024. This report brings forward the culmination of this effort for approval.

#### **A. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

As we sunset the WDB's 2017-2020 Strategic Workforce Development Plan, we are well positioned to use our success with this progressive plan as a springboard for the WIOA strategic planning process in the months to come.

On January 29, 2021, Employment Development Department (EDD) released the final directive on Regional and Local Planning Guidance for PY 2021-2024 (WSD20-05). This policy provides guidance and establishes the procedures regarding the preparation of both regional and local plans required by the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*.

#### **B. CURRENT SITUATION**

The California Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan (State Plan) is an overarching state policy document that provides a conceptual outline for Local Boards and their partners as they jointly develop Regional and Local Plans. The State Plan policy objectives, developed in collaboration with WIOA partners and Local Boards, drive towards the shared vision of creating a comprehensive system that impacts poverty, promotes income mobility, and embeds equity as a cornerstone of service-delivery.

As outlined under WIOA Section 106, **Regional Plans** provide a roadmap for alignment of resources and investments to meet specific outcomes within the 15 Regional Planning Units (RPU). Regional Plans are used to articulate how RPUs will build intentionality around industry sector engagement, drive workforce development outcomes across multiple jurisdictions, and expand on-ramps to career pathways for individuals who experience barriers to employment.

As outlined in WIOA Section 108, **Local Plans** provide an action plan for operationalizing the road map laid out in the Regional Plan by describing how individuals' access services through the America's Job Centers of California's (AJCC) system. Local Plans are used to articulate how Local Boards will coordinate with local partners to ensure a person-centered service-delivery.

In addition to the federal planning requirements, WIOA indicates that Regional and Local Plans should be consistent with the vision and goals of the State Plan. For developing cohesive narratives for

Regional and Local Plans, this guidance weaves together both federal and state requirements. The intent is to assist in the development of a seamless blueprint for the operationalization and implementation of all required plan content.

With the anticipation of no public comment on the Local or the Regional Plan, it is anticipated that both plans will be submitted as written and presented. In the event that there are subsequent comments (public comment period from March 19, 2021 thru April 19, 2021), they will be presented to the Executive Committee. Any and all comments received will be included in the submission of the Local and Regional plan documents. Any comment that is determined to have merit and consideration for changes to the plan will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Approve the Draft 2021-2024 Local Plan as presented and authorize any potential minor changes resulting from 30-day public comment period, and direct staff to submit the Final Local Plan to the State Workforce Board by April 28, 2021.
2. Approve the Draft 2021-2024 Regional Plan as presented and authorize any potential minor changes resulting from 30-day public comment period and direct staff to submit the Final Regional Plan to the State Workforce Board by April 28, 2021.

## **D. SCHEDULE**

- March 19, 2021 – plans released for public comment
- April 19, 2021– closing date for 30-day public comment period
- April 27, 2021- meeting of WDB Executive Committee to approve Final Plans
- April 28, 2021 – submit approved plan to State CWDB (unsigned acceptable)
- May 11 or May 18, 2021 – submit WDB 2021-2024 Local Plan to Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for approval
- August 1, 2021 – State Workforce Board approves Local Plans
- August 15, 2021 – State Board notifies Local Boards of deficiencies
- September 15, 2021 – Final Corrected Plans due with CLEO signature
- October 15, 2021 – Final Approval of Local Plan by State Board

## **E. FISCAL IMPACT**

The WDB is 2021-2024 Local and Regional Plans will help to prioritize and align the WDB's investments in different programs, initiatives, and activities supporting the workforce system in Contra Costa County and the region.

## **F. CUSTOMER IMPACT**

A sound local plan should help the WDB be more responsive to the needs of customers that utilize programs and services under its purview.

## **G. ATTACHMENTS**

**A1a** – DRAFT [WDB CCC Local Plan 2021-2024](#)

**A1b** – DRAFT [East Bay RPU Regional Plan Draft](#)

# Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County

## PY 2021-2024 Local Plan

Draft for Public Comment  
March 11, 2021



**Workforce**  
Development Board  
**Contra Costa County**

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## Introduction

As the third-largest county in the San Francisco Bay Area, Contra Costa County has an estimated population of 1.1 million residents. Nearly 7.9% of households in Contra Costa live below the federal poverty line. US Census Bureau estimates show that 24% of the population is foreign-born, with 35.8% of the population five years and older speaking a language other than English in the household. Of foreign-born residents, most are from Asia (44.7%) or Latin America (40.7%). Of the 34% of the population speaking a foreign language, 52% speak Spanish and 28.4% speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages.

Contra Costa County benefits from a distinct advantage geographically due to the strength of its regional economy. Its proximity to San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and some of the top educational institutions in the country provide access to premier research and technological resources. The county's top in-demand private industries include:

- Trade;
- Transportation;
- Utilities;
- Educational;
- Health Services;
- Professional and Business Services;
- Goods Production (of which 40% is in Manufacturing and 60% is in Mining, Logging, and Construction) and;
- Leisure and Hospitality.

WDBCCC and its neighboring Workforce Development Boards (in Alameda County, the City of Oakland, and the City of Richmond) together constitute the East Bay region. This region is home to a population of 2.1 million people, and a labor market of 1.3 million. It is one of the most geographically concentrated areas of technology and research clusters in the world. With the second- and third-most populous counties in the Bay Area, the East Bay is one of the largest economic drivers in the region. Relative to the larger Bay Area, the East Bay represents more than 25% of the total jobs in the region.

## I. Local Overview

### I.a. Workforce Development Activities in the Local Area

The workforce development activities, including education and training, in the Local Area.

The WDBCCC and its service providers provide basic and individualized intensive job seeker and employer services through its AJCC One-Stop career center. Services include assessment, plan development, coaching, referrals, and more intensive services such as occupational skills training and supportive services. The WDBCCC also provides specific programs to support job seekers with barriers such as former incarceration, low income, disabilities, and low levels of literacy or language. The WDBCCC makes use of powerful workforce development strategies such as cohort-based, hands-on occupational skills training in priority sectors such as health care, warehousing, and pre-apprenticeship construction trades.

The WDBCCC prioritizes services to the following populations with barriers to employment:

Priority Populations			
Justice System - Involved Adults	Basic Skills Deficient	English Language Learners	Homeless Individuals
Low-Income Individuals	Veterans and Spouses	People with Disabilities	

**I.b. Strengths of the Local Workforce System in Meeting Needs of Job Seekers**

**Collaboration with the Business Community**

Partners cite the WDBCCC’s strong relationships with the business community as a valuable asset in meeting the needs of job seekers. These links are especially critical for agencies that serve populations with barriers to employment who normally would not have avenues in which to meet employers, such as those exiting prison or jail. The WDB hosts job fairs and onsite recruitments that give job seekers immediate access to employers. In addition, the WDBCCC and the AJCC host groups such as the Workforce Integration Networks (WIN) to further facilitate those connections by giving a forum in which agencies can cross-share resources and relationships. The WINs are often attended by City economic development agency representatives who know which employers in their jurisdiction are looking to hire.

An important strength mentioned in public input sessions was the role the WDBCCC plays as a convener of organizations serving businesses. Business-facing staff from the WDBCCC, the EDD, and Rubicon Programs, operator of the Concord AJCC, join together to align strategies and approaches on how to assist businesses. The Integrated Business Services Team (iBEST) serves business owners directly and refers them to other organizations such as the Employer Advisory Council, the Small Business Development Center, and the California Employer Association, whose Human Resources (HR) Hotline the WDBCCC makes available at no cost to employers.

**The Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC)**

The CCWC utilizes an innovative service delivery design, operating the full-service One-Stop America’s Job Center of California and delivering tailored and geographically accessible services through affiliates in the collaborative. These affiliates include adult education organizations as well as other career development community-based organizations. Leveraging the experience and resources of Rubicon Programs, and the relationships the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) affiliates possess in their respective communities, the CCWC provides timely and effective services to those who need both general or intensive workforce services.

“The WDBCCC is willing to partner and work with CBOs. They’re willing to collaborate and work together to reach as many people as possible who need assistance.”

*--Public Input Session Participant*

**Human-Centered Design (HCD)**

The WDBCCC has a deep commitment to utilizing HCD strategies in service delivery models to ensure customers are provided services that are designed to reflect the needs of each individual customer. Staff have received training in HCD and have participated in a U.S. Department of Labor Customer-Centered Design Learning Exchange, resulting in a project that was selected to

be showcased at the White House. The WDBCCC is currently involved in a WAF 8.0 project on homelessness and workforce development that utilizes HCD training and strategies in the project design and goals. WDBCCC publicizes its preference for all contractors providing WIOA services to be familiar with and utilize HCD practices; current adult and youth service providers utilize HCD strategies.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices (TIP)**

WDBCCC staff have been trained on TIP through Employment and Human Services sponsored courses, and the CCWC and Rubicon Programs have been heavily invested in this training. Some WDBCCC staff involved in the WAF 8.0 project integrating homeless and workforce services have also received TIP training through the Contra Costa County Health Services Department. Content included types of trauma, body and mind reactions, how to recognize trauma responses, and how to avoid re-traumatizing people while trying to serve them.

### **Offering Virtual Access to Programs and Services**

The WDBCCC was quick to implement virtual service delivery strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic, including creating an online portal for people to quickly indicate their interest in WIOA services, holding online job seeker workshops, equipping staff with the technology needed to work from home, and providing additional resources and guidance to service providers for the purchase of technology (laptops, tablets, wifi access, routers, etc). The WDBCCC has made the Metrix online learning platform, which contains thousands of general and industry-specific courses, available to Contra Costa residents and continues to promote pilot projects with partner agencies that leverage the vast catalogue of courses. The online work-readiness curriculum is being used with WIOA Youth and youth with disabilities being served by the Department of Rehabilitation Workability program. The WDBCCC will continue to promote the use of and provide technical assistance for online classes.

### **Employment Placement and Sustainable Wages**

The WDBCCC has a strong record in participant outcomes including employment placement and median earnings. In PY 2018-19, 72.8% of participants were placed in employment and the median earnings were just under \$30,000 per year.

### **Emphasis on Justice System-Involved Community**

The WDBCCC provides programs to serve formerly incarcerated people through its partnerships with Rubicon Programs, the CCWC, Contra Costa County Probation, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), which administers parole. The WDBCCC is an active partner, with other Local Boards, in the regional Prison to Employment program, funded by a coalition of state workforce and criminal justice agencies, that includes the CWDB, CWA, CDCR and CalPIA (California Prison Industry).

### **Partnerships to Serve People with Disabilities**

The WDBCCC piloted a successful program to support job seekers with disabilities through its Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) grant, funded by EDD. The program focused on people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who, in many cases, are able to complete college but cannot obtain jobs because of lack of experience. The grant funded paid work experience and strengthened partnerships with East Bay Innovations in Alameda County and Futures Explored, two highly regarded providers of services for persons with disabilities in the East Bay. With consultation from disability community experts at the Independent Living Resource Center, the WDBCCC invested in a complete renewal of all accessibility computers, applications, and adaptive technology for the Concord AJCC.



### **Clear Industry Pathways**

The WDBCCC strives to ensure that short- and medium-term tracks to high-growth, high-demand strategic sectors are available to customers. Contra Costa County is home to a robust system of adult education programs and community colleges and is closely located near many top-tier colleges and universities, including University of California, Berkeley. WDBCCC staff serve on college and adult education advisory committees to strengthen this link and provide influence in industries such as transportation and logistics, advanced manufacturing, health care and life sciences, energy, and construction.

### **I.c. Opportunities for Improvement of the Local Workforce System**

As part of its planning process, the WDBCCC has identified a number of areas in which opportunities exist to strengthen services to address the workforce and education needs of the local community.

#### **Improving Cultural Competence of Staff**

The WDBCCC recognizes that a high degree of cultural competency is extremely important in a field in which services are provided to diverse cultures, and is committed to continuing to strengthen the cultural competence of staff in order to more effectively serve the diverse population of Contra Costa County. The WDBCCC has a long history of supporting training that increases cultural competency growth for staff and providers. WDBCCC staff and providers are well versed on HCD strategies and have received training in trauma-informed practices. The WDBCCC is fortunate to sit under the umbrella of the Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD), which is committed to staff training on cultural competency. EHSD has a robust staff development training platform (SMART) that provides numerous trainings on cultural competency, most of which are required of all EHSD/WDB staff. The WDBCCC will continue to seek out and embrace training and practices that promote the cultural competency of staff and providers in both theory and practice.

#### **Long-Term Success for Individuals with Disabilities**

As described in Section III.c. of this plan, the WDBCCC has been able to significantly build its capacity to serve individuals with disabilities through a Disability Employment Accelerator grant. The WDBCCC will seek new sources of support to sustain its work with people with disabilities, providing them with job opportunities and building on the lessons learned from this effort.

#### **Enhancing Virtual Service Delivery**

The WDBCCC has rapidly expanded its virtual delivery of training, workforce, and business services since the advent of COVID-19. It is likely that a substantial portion of remote service delivery activities will continue once the pandemic has ended. The WDBCCC looks forward to enhancing and strengthening its strategies for remote work and training, and to finding innovative ways to bridge the digital divide so that all participants are able to access and benefit from these resources.

#### **Expanding Skills-Development Services**

The WDBCCC will pursue new strategies for providing support for basic skills-deficient and English Language Learner job seekers in order to enable them to get on pathways to life sustaining employment and career advancement. The WDBCCC will support its partners that work directly with these populations in order to develop well-informed approaches that are relevant to the needs of the community. In particular, the WDBCCC will draw upon the expertise of its Adult Education partners who have a particular focus on serving this community.

### **Expansion of Supportive Services**

The COVID pandemic has resulted in a dramatic expansion in the need for supportive services among those served by the WDBCCC. WIOA funds have met a portion of this need, but the WDBCCC has had to seek additional funding to fill the gap. The WDBCCC will continue to pursue additional resources to provide more supportive services or subsidized employment opportunities to facilitate successful participation by low-income participants.

### **Workforce Accelerator 8.0 Integration of Homelessness and Workforce Service Delivery**

The WDBCCC is leading a Workforce Accelerator-funded initiative focused on using the Human-Centered Design approach to strengthen the integration of homelessness and workforce service delivery. The project has exposed the need for the two service systems to learn more about how the other operates, and the importance of finding more effective ways to collaborate in order to best help insecurely housed people gain and retain employment. The outcome of the project will be the design of more effective strategies

### **Job and Employer Search Assistance**

The WDBCCC aims to increase the visibility of quality careers and help job seekers understand the breadth of available career opportunities.

The pool of employers connected with the workforce system needs to be increased in order to expand access to work experience and employment opportunities for the people of Contra Costa County. The WDBCCC has added job developers to its contract with the CCWC to provide additional outreach to employers to provide OJT, work experience, and actual jobs for job seekers.

### **Racial Equity and Justice**

Increased awareness of issues of racial equity and justice throughout the country has raised the importance of addressing these challenges directly within the workforce system. The WDBCCC views its work through an equity lens and will weave this perspective throughout future WDBCCC programs and activities. The WDBCCC has participated in a number of local, regional, and state-level efforts around equity and justice. In a new partnership with Contra Costa Health Services, the WDBCCC launched a Health Ambassador Pilot project that focuses on the communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Dislocated workers are hired and trained to conduct public education and outreach on pandemic precautions, vaccine awareness and promotion, and other recovery activities. The project was designed using an equity framework.

WDBCCC staff have participated in Implicit Bias Training and Cultural Competency Training mandated by Contra Costa County. The WDBCCC Executive Director is a member of the core team of the Equity and Inclusion group of the County's Employment and Human Services Department. Also at the county level, the WDBCCC has helped to lead the Economic Equitable Recovery Task Force, which engages local business, CBOs, and public agencies to develop data driven strategies to forge an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. WDBCCC participated in a WAF 7.0 grant, titled Bay Area Workforce Solutions, which brought together workforce system and other leaders from around the Bay Area to develop strategies for closing racial and gender income and wealth gaps for the most vulnerable members of the community. The WDBCCC has also engaged with the Equity Task Force of the California Workforce Association. The WDBCCC will continue to explore additional opportunities to learn and to further integrate racial equity and justice into its practices and policies.

### **Reinvigoration of Workforce Integration Networks**

Prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, the WDBCCC operated Workforce Integration Networks (WINs), monthly convenings of education, workforce, and supportive service providers in West, Central, and East county that networked and shared information. These networks have been an extremely important resource for enabling service providers in the county, including multiple County departments, to access information and connect individuals to needed services. Coordination of the WINs is included in the WDBCCC's contract with Rubicon Programs. Though the WINs have been on hold during the pandemic, an important future strategy will be to initiate conversations about how best to reinvigorate this valuable resource when in-person meetings are not possible.

## **II. Strategic Vision**

### **Vision**

To support a network that creates and promotes a dynamic education system, high-performing businesses, and a prosperous local economy with an abundance of high quality jobs and skilled workers to fill them.

With communities facing unprecedented job loss and business closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County seek to address both the immediate needs of workers and businesses, as well as longer-term structural challenges that relate to equitable economic opportunity and economic growth. The strategies identified below address both immediate and longer-term challenges faced by the local economy.

#### **Create Earn and Learn Opportunities**

Earn and Learn strategies will offer businesses an increased and easily accessible incentive to recruit and retain employees. The WDBCCC will expedite access to training and resources to get job seekers into careers with livable wages. The WDBCCC will increase and leverage financial and human capital resources to support business retention and expansion. The WDBCCC will also support system alignment, service integration and continuous improvement, using labor market data to advance evidence-based policymaking.

#### **Implement Strategic Communication**

The WDBCCC will increase its social media presence to reach a wider population. The WDBCCC has begun a partnership with a new contractor to strengthen communication channels and will continue to prioritize improving its website design and social media capacity. The WDBCCC will build a strong, recognizable brand in the community by positioning the strategic work of the Board to meet these goals: 1) capture market share of job seekers, youth, and businesses who utilize services to meet or exceed performance metrics; 2) expand partnerships with those organizations that can help the WDBCCC bring its latest strategic plan to fruition; and 3) proactively garner discretionary funding needed to meet key performance metrics that are outside the scope of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

#### **Explore the Incorporation of Racial Justice and Equity into the Vision Statement**

While racial justice and equity are key priorities of the WDBCCC, they are not explicitly included in the current vision statement. As part of its efforts during the initial year of the strategic

planning period, the WDBCCC will develop a process for engaging community stakeholders in the re-imagining of the vision and mission statements to ensure that they are inclusive and communicate a clear message about the WDBCCC's commitment to this work.

### **II.a. Supporting Economic Growth and Economic Self-Sufficiency**

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the WDBCCC has developed this plan to guide the county toward fostering a dynamic, sustainable, equitable, and balanced workforce. The WDBCCC will empower Contra Costa's residents and support their pursuit of economic self-sufficiency through the following activities:

- Work with Contra Costa's most vulnerable residents to implement human-centered employment and training plans to meet unique needs, challenges, and aspirations;
- Connect job seekers to employment opportunities with sustainable wages to support themselves and their families;
- Strive for all workers to be in positions that have the opportunity for career advancement and upward mobility;
- Support access to resources not evenly distributed throughout the county and readily available to all;
- Strategically provide supportive services that are necessary for workers to succeed on the job; and
- Prioritize investments in Earn & Learn opportunities to ensure individuals can enroll in education and/or training while continuing to earn needed income.

The WDBCCC will pursue economic growth by supporting local businesses, employers, and community-based organizations to help them thrive and grow through these activities:

- Create community resource centers that can support all businesses, with an emphasis on minority-owned and micro businesses, gain greater access to appropriate resources;
- Proactively work with all partners (including EDD, CBOs, etc.) to respond to the needs of the community accordingly and appropriately;
- Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion in all outreach and resource sharing with local businesses and organizations;
- Invest in analysing and identifying the skill needs (occupations) of high-demand industries and optimize investments in these skills and occupations; and
- Develop and expand relationships to leverage knowledge and resources.

### **II.b. Service Delivery Strategies to Ensure Equitable Access to Regional Sector Pathways**

The WDBCCC is committed to leading and operating with an equity lens, to actively engaging community and partners in decisions that affect them directly, and to promoting equity and inclusion with dignity and respect. The WDBCCC will pursue the following primary service delivery strategies to allow all community members to participate fully and realize their full potential, valuing individual and community expertise.

#### **Strengthening Partnerships**

The WDBCCC will seek to identify and build meaningful local and regional partnerships that promote equitable and necessary investments in equitable access to pathways in priority sector industries. The WDBCCC will also establish stakeholder engagement best practices and processes to guide its work in these partnerships.

### **Data Collection and Planning**

The WDBCCC will use data collection and analysis to identify unique needs and existing access to services across the County. This information will in turn inform the development of strategies to address and ensure equitable access. In addition, the WDBCCC will explore ways to better monitor demographic data and deploy necessary resources in relationship to changing community needs. WDBCCC staff will work with partners to create decision making criteria that includes diverse and innovative ideas and strategies that promote equity. Finally, the Board will consider the implementation of a continuous evaluation and improvement process to assess and address work in this area.

### **Staff Training**

An important tool for ensuring equitable access to sector partnership opportunities includes strengthening the equity and inclusion knowledge and skills of staff. The WDBCC will develop and deliver training for staff and provider partners to ensure equity competency and advocacy.

### **Equity-Focused Industry-Sector Partnerships**

The East Bay Health Workforce Partnership, in which the WDBCCC is a partner, is particularly interested in promoting equity and connecting training with communities of color, and the WDBCCC will actively support these strategies. The WDBCCC will also support the health care sector goal focused on ensuring that workers in the sector are more reflective of the population as a whole. The WDBCCC will work with sector partnerships to assess regional system capacity to address disparate outcomes related to race and equity.

### **Supportive Services**

The WDBCCC will expand need-related payments to support people while they are taking part in training so that low income participants in particular can support themselves during training.

### **Targeted Training for Participants**

The WDBCCC will support investment in preparation programs for long-term career development in high-demand industries, focusing on narrowing the gap between high- and low-skilled labor. This will include support for investments/agreements in infrastructure, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships that move toward equity. In addition, the WDBCCC will seek to expand access to short-term certificate and credential programs.

## **III. Core Program Partner Coordination**

### **III.a. Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy Activities Established Under WIOA Title II**

The WDBCCC continues to actively engage and collaborate with adult education, including the Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium and literacy services providers, to coordinate WIOA Title I and Title II activities in order to strengthen the provision of education and employment services that help individuals develop the basic skills and literacy proficiency required to thrive in sustainable employment. Adult education providers are key partners in the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative, which provides a network of access to WIOA services throughout Contra Costa County.

The WDBCCC will continue to coordinate its efforts with organizations that deliver literacy programs for adults, such as Mt. Diablo Adult Education, which offers adult literacy and English

as a second language programs. The diverse population of the county makes these programs particularly important. As an example, the student body of Martinez Adult Education includes individuals from 48 different countries. The WDBCCC maintains a strong relationship with adult schools in the local area, referring staff to aid with training offerings such as the Business and Medical Office Academy at Liberty Adult Education in Brentwood and the Career and Technical Education Center at Mt. Diablo Adult Education in Concord.

Adult Education organizational staff are represented on the WDBCCC Board, which facilitates information sharing and more effective coordination of services in the local area. Board members include a highly engaged representative of the adult education system and member of the Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium. The WDBCCC has been actively involved in local applications for Adult Education providers (per WSIN 19-34) participating in extensive review of these applications to ensure that their plans align with WDBCCC Local Plan. The WDBCCC has participated in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges certification process for Liberty Adult Education, a CCWC partner.

The WDBCCC continues to collaborate with Adult Education and Literacy programs to deliver services to special populations in the county. WDBCCC's adult education partners provide robust programming for people with disabilities, English Language Learners, individuals with basic skills deficiencies, and youth. In the area of youth services, the WDBCCC intends to strengthen referrals between the WIOA youth program (which serves ages 16-24) and Adult Education for young people who need to complete secondary education equivalency. The WDBCCC will also provide training to staff who provide direct services related to existing articulation agreements between high schools, adult education, and community colleges.

The WDBCCC will continue to work to strengthen relationships with Adult Education, Literacy Programs, including ELL programs and providers, by creating a catalog of organizations providing services, the services provided, and what languages are supported. The WDBCCC anticipates having an on-site provider at the comprehensive AJCC as soon as COVID restrictions have eased, we will actively research, apply for, and dedicate resources (funding) to increase the level of support and services to English Language Learners.

### **III.b. Coordination with Employment Services Established Under WIOA Title III**

The Employment Development Department (EDD) is the WDBCCC's core partner for the Wagner- Peyser Act. Regional EDD staff members are co-located at the Concord Comprehensive AJCC and, in collaboration with WDB and AJCC staff, have created and provide regular workshops for Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) service recipients, RESEAs (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment), California Training Benefits, WIOA eligibility and services, and Rapid Response services.

WDB and AJCC staff have collaborated with EDD business services staff to create the Integrated Business Services Team (iBEST) to coordinate, align, and leverage resources in supporting businesses in Contra Costa. iBEST's goals include: improving and streamlining the recruitment process; convening and hosting forums to educate employers on the value of hiring special populations; providing comprehensive information on resources and incentives to employers including how to access these resources/incentives; and providing an opportunity for input from businesses to ensure processes are not duplicative, are business friendly, and address the real needs of businesses. WDBCCC will continue to support and grow this innovative approach to provide services to the business community.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment insurance workshops were provided on a weekly basis alongside an opportunity for claimants to meet individually with staff from EDD. WIOA and EDD AJCC staff members have regular meetings to ensure that they are working together strategically to serve UI recipients. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WDBCCC staff have established a business and employee hotline to serve as the first point of contact for individuals in need of UI information and other community resources such as referrals to public benefits, food banks, and rental assistance programs. The WDBCCC has served as the first point of contact for individuals in need of UI information and other community resources, such as referrals to public benefits, food banks, and rental assistance programs, and thus ensures that community members are able to access the services and referrals they need during this crisis.

In response to the pandemic, WDBCCC staff have also developed a bi-monthly laid-off/furloughed employee webinar in collaboration with EDD staff, AJCC service providers, and multiple resource agencies throughout the county, to provide community members the opportunity to connect directly with those who can meet their needs.

### **III.c. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Programs Established Under WIOA Title IV**

The WDBCCC will continue to strengthen its ongoing partnerships with state and local organizations in order to more effectively serve individuals with disabilities. The WDBCCC is part of the Contra Costa Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) that meets regularly to strategize ways to implement the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint. At this writing, the WDBCCC is attending planning meetings on a virtual job seeker forum.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) had a weekly presence at the Comprehensive AJCC. Currently, services are offered remotely and referrals continue to be made. DOR staff were also regular attendees at the WIN, which was on hold during the pandemic but will host meetings virtually in the future. The DOR also has a seat on the WDBCCC Board and on the WDBCCC Youth Committee. The WIOA Youth Program and DOR Workability program have teamed up on a pilot project that provides work-readiness training using Metrix online learning followed by paid work experience.

In 2018, the WDBCCC was awarded a California Employment Development Department (EDD) Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA) Grant to provide work experience to people with disabilities and facilitate employer-education forums spotlighting the skills of people with disabilities and the supports/government incentives they come with. The project successfully achieved its employment training and outcomes.

A primary achievement of the DEA grant project was the WDBCCC becoming a greater part of the disability advocacy community. The grant increased staff awareness of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, along with the strengths they bring as employees. It has also expanded understanding the resources available to persons with disabilities and prioritized the work of connecting them with employment. Moving forward, the WDBCCC will continue to implement best practices that were developed in coordination with vocational rehabilitation partners through the DEA grant.

The WDBCCC will use the expertise it has gained through the DEA grant to support services for specific populations with disabilities, including the unsheltered population. Contra Costa County's *2020 Point-in-Time Count Report* on homelessness in the county determined that 80% of survey respondents reported having at least one disabling condition. The WDBCCC is currently partnering with the County's Health, Housing, and Homeless (H3) Services

Department on a WAF 8.0 grant focused on integrating homeless and workforce services, and will contribute its expertise to H3's efforts to strengthen the provision of workforce services to unsheltered and precariously housed persons with disabilities. (It should be noted that chronically homeless individuals by definition have a disability, and individuals in Permanent Supportive Housing must have a disability.) The Council on Homelessness, the governing board of H3, also created a Workforce seat in 2020, which is filled by a WDBCCC staff member and will offer additional opportunities for collaboration.

## IV. AJCC System Partner Coordination

### IV.a. Roles and Resource Contributions of the Local Board and its AJCC MOU Partners

Current AJCC MOU partners for the Local Area and the service areas they represent are listed below:

- **Title 1 Adult/Title 1 Dislocated Worker/Title 1 Youth:** Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County,
- **Adult Education/Literacy:** Martinez Unified School District – Adult Education/Literacy; Mt. Diablo Unified School District – K12 and Adult Education; West Contra Costa Unified School District – Adult Education; Liberty Union High School District – Liberty Adult Education; Pittsburg Adult Education Center; Contra Costa Office of Education – Contra Costa Adult School (schools in jails)
- **Career/Technical Education:** Career/Technical Education
- **Wagner-Peyser/Veterans/Trade Adjustment Assistance/Unemployment Insurance:** Employment Development Department (EDD)
- **Vocational Rehabilitation:** California Department of Rehabilitation–Greater East Bay District
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):** Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD)
- **Job Corps:** Job Corps
- **Native American (Section 166):** Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc.-Scotts Valley Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- **Migrant/Seasonal (Section 167):** California Human Development
- **YouthBuild:** There are no YouthBuild programs in operation in this region
- **Community Action:** Contra Costa County, Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) – Community Services Bureau
- **Housing Authority:** Contra Costa County Housing Authority
- **Second Chance Act:** Contra Costa County Probation Department
- **TANF/CalWORKS:** Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD)

The WDBCCC relies on its AJCC partners to foster a service delivery system that is integrated, comprehensive, customer-focused, and performance-based. This collaboration offers universal access to employment, training, and educational services for all which includes employers, trainers, and job seekers. The AJCC MOU partners meet regularly to ensure that all partners are engaged and that the MOU is revisited and honored. While only a handful of the AJCC Partners are co-located at the comprehensive AJCC, there are established referral processes for all partners, including Title I, Title III, DOR-Title V, Senior Program, and Job Corps.

The WIN is another innovative practice used to facilitate information sharing, cross-training, and referrals throughout the system. The WIN is comprised of all AJCC MOU Partners and an



extensive list of additional community-based organizations and public agencies. Meetings are held every other month to establish a robust network of providers that are knowledgeable about resources throughout Contra Costa. WIN meetings also ensure agencies understand eligibility requirements for other agency resources, and have a referral process in place to eliminate undue frustration and hardship on customers being referred to agencies that will not be able to meet their needs.

The WDBCCC's collaboration with its Community College and Adult Education partners has included focused work over the past year. The WDBCCC, through its alliance with Rubicon Programs, worked with Contra Costa Community Colleges and Adult Education to identify priority high demand sectors which include advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, information technology, and energy. The WDBCCC also works with Diablo Valley College and Los Medanos College to ensure that the workforce system is participating in the development of upcoming pathway programs at the community colleges. The WDBCCC will continue to help Adult Education students assess and develop essential soft skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

#### **IV.b. Ensuring Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers**

The WDBCCC previously contracted out the monitoring of the local ETPL, but has recently brought this in-house. The WDBCCC is in the process of monitoring all ETPL providers for the Americans with Disabilities Act and WIOA Section 188 compliance, and establishing criteria for ensuring that Contra Costa has a robust network of providers that meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the region. The WDBCCC recognizes that the current state process for ETPL eligibility has placed an undue burden on many providers, thereby reducing the number of options for customers on the local ETPL. To address this barrier, the WDBCCC recently developed a policy to ensure customer choice and access to skills upgrading/ retraining and job readiness activities for programs that meet certain criteria but are not on the ETPL. The WDBCCC researches labor market data at regular intervals to ensure it is advising providers and workforce about the most current trends in the local and regional economy. WDBCCC also invests in innovative cohort training opportunities that are employer-driven, and supports Earn and Learn models.

#### **IV.c. Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs**

The WDBCCC has a unique and enduring relationship with EDD Workforce Services. EDD Workforce Services has been co-located at the Concord Comprehensive AJCC since the inception of WIA One-Stop Career Centers. WIOA staff and EDD - WFS staff collaboratively operate the AJCC, providing workshops on a variety of topics including applying for unemployment insurance and California Training Benefits.

The WDBCCC has collaborated with EDD to provide training on the UI online system and process to WDB and AJCC staff and partners. Training has also included ways to support people going through the unemployment insurance process and help them understand the online system. Trainings will continue to be provided at regular intervals to all WDBCCC and AJCC staff and partners to ensure that customers have a seamless experience as they receive services related to their UI needs.

Providing training on how to navigate the unemployment insurance process is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, given the extent of job loss and need for unemployment support among county residents. The WDBCCC established a hotline to support

laid off individuals and businesses impacted by the pandemic: the main service requested from callers was help with unemployment insurance. WDBCCC staff provided support to callers with filing claims, following up with claims and making contact with a representative from EDD, as well as multiple resource providers. The WDBCCC hosted a bi-monthly live webinar through which individuals could connect directly with support staff from EDD and other support organizations.

EDD is co-located at the comprehensive AJCC and is an important contributing partner in the AJCC MOU Partnership and in the WINS. EDD regularly shares information and offers training to all AJCC MOU partners. Partners will continue to participate in regularly offered EDD UI training to ensure they provide a seamless system of services to our community.

#### **IV.d. Coordination of Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs & Activities**

The WDBCCC has a long history of partnership and collaboration with the community colleges and adult education providers in Contra Costa County, with significant representation on the Local Board. Prior to the AJCC Required Partner MOU, the WDBCCC had resource sharing agreements with several adult schools and the community colleges. The community colleges and adult schools had a permanent presence at all of the WIOA One-Stop Career Centers. The adult schools provided assessments, career exploration, workshops on career technical pathways, customer service, and other cohort trainings to customers. The community colleges provided career counseling, and workshops on labor market information, financial aid, and career technical education.

Under the new service delivery model in Contra Costa, four of the adult schools and all three of the community colleges are members of the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative, linking and leveraging resources throughout the county. Currently, six of the eight adult education providers in Contra Costa County have also signed the AJCC Partner MOU. The WDBCCC Executive Director is an honorary member of the Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium, which consists of all the adult education providers in Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and the county's three community colleges. WDBCCC staff participated in the adult education and community college strategic planning and are partners on several Strong Workforce K-12 grants within Contra Costa and regionally. These multiple interconnected partnerships make for extremely strong collaborations across the post-secondary education and workforce systems in the county.

#### **IV.e. Coordination of Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development Activities**

Coordination between the workforce development system and local and regional economic development activities is essential to ensure that employers and job seekers receive the maximum benefit from these investments. The WDBCCC is an active member of several local and regional economic development organizations, which allows the workforce system to engage in advocacy and strategy development on issues related to economic growth. This involvement includes membership in the East Bay Leadership Council, whose task forces focus on various areas of economic development in the county and the larger region. The WDBCCC is a member of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, which includes representatives of regional businesses and industries, local government, education providers, and community-based organizations and advocates for a strong workforce and economy.

In addition to coordination with economic development organizations, the WDBCCC conducts direct outreach to economic development managers of local governments throughout Contra Costa County to collect information on city-level economic development initiatives and priorities. This strategy enables the WDBCCC to offer support to these initiatives and meet the needs of each constituent city. This level of outreach also allows the WDBCCC to be informed of new employers entering the area, creating an opportunity to reach these businesses with workforce services at the hiring stage. The WDBCCC will continue to work in close partnership with Contra Costa cities with the goal of improving coordination with economic development activities at the local level.

The WDBCCC Business & Economic Development (BED) Committee is a key structure for coordinating workforce development economic development activities in the local area. The primary objective of the BED Committee is to meet the workforce needs of high-demand sectors of the local and regional economies, and it brings together leaders from business, economic development, education, labor, community-based organizations, and the public sector to achieve its goals. The BED Committee co-chairs include business and economic development directors who are members of the WDBCCC Executive Committee, and all members of the BED Committee hold a seat on the Workforce Development Board.

The BED Committee and the WDBCCC work on behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the businesses and residents of Contra Costa County. The WDBCCC and the BED Committee often draw upon the knowledge and expertise of other individuals and organizations that are not members of the WDBCCC, and occasionally form ad hoc committees to complete specific work. The WDBCCC and the BED Committee provide and support convening and networking functions to draw together a wide spectrum of stakeholders that contribute to the health of the local economy and prepare residents for effective participation in the workforce. These include local and regional businesses, economic development experts and organizations, public agencies, education, labor, and community-based organizations.

Examples of collaboration on economic development include: employer forums, career fairs, resource fairs, and workshops and webinars hosted in collaboration with career services providers, economic development, CBOs, elected officials and employers. Workshop topics have included Fair Chance hiring, disability awareness, and recruitment support. The BED Committee collaborates with the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), Employment Training Panel, Small Business Administration, and the Small Business Development Center to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise.

As introduced above, the WDBCCC formed iBEST to coordinate and leverage resources in providing services to businesses and job seekers in the county. iBEST coordinates employer and community forums to bring workforce, education, CBOs, economic development, and business together. The WDBCCC has also invested resources to create and co-lead an Equitable Economic Recovery Task Force to develop strategies to support economic recovery in Contra Costa County.

Future economic development priorities for the WDBCCC include continuing to engage and educate businesses on the benefits of hiring priority populations, and providing resources to link to them. These benefits range from the tangible (e.g., tax credits) to the intangible (diversifying their workforce). The WDBCCC will also strive to increase the number of businesses that report that the workforce system consistently supplies the talent they need.

The WDBCCC is in the process of monitoring the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on small and micro-businesses, and has chosen to invest resources to address the needs of these businesses. The WDBCCC will support strategies that emerge from the Equitable Economic Recovery Task Force related to small business and entrepreneurship. The WDBCCC will also explore renewed engagement with the local SBDC in order to strategically and intentionally support and invest in entrepreneurial skills training.

“There has not been that big a push to look at how entrepreneurship can lead to and support self sufficiency - [for example a] young person working with developing his own video game - they have a passion and could greatly benefit from a mentor with these skills to help them along the way”

- Non profit organization staff, Public Input meeting participant

#### **IV.f. Transitioning to an Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management Information System**

The WDBCCC has invested in upgrading its website to ensure maximum virtual access, including creating video workshops and webinars on a variety of topics such as WIOA enrollment. The WDBCCC is working closely with both adult and youth providers to support their efforts to provide virtual services to the community. All programs are accessible by completing a short Interest Form on each provider’s website.

The WDBCCC has transitioned all of its providers to electronic case files. Documents used to substantiate eligibility, participant activities, and records are all uploaded and housed in the CalJOBS system. Due to the limits on in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the WDB has also encouraged use of electronic signatures. The WDBCCC acknowledges that different communities have very different levels of access to online technology, and that strategies for virtual service delivery need to be developed that address questions of equitable access.

The WDBCCC will pursue a new approach to coordination between the Adult program and Youth Program when an 18-24 year old is seeking services, determining how participants in this age span should be classified to ensure the best fit for services. The Youth programs focus heavily on career exploration and early career pathway work-based learning activities while the Adult Programs focus on training and family sustaining wage gains.

The WDBCCC is currently working with all of its AJCC partners to address the challenges involved in creating a technology-enabled intake and case management information system related to co-enrollment. There is a robust referral and resource sharing system across all partners to ensure that participants are able to access all of the services that they need.

#### **IV.g. Facilitating Access to the One-Stop Delivery System Through Technology and other Means**

The WDBCCC is pursuing multiple strategies to facilitate virtual access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system. The WDBCCC website has been fully updated to enable job seekers and businesses to access needed services online. Online marketing and enrollment tools have been expanded and enhanced. Providers have hosted virtual job fairs and virtual work experience opportunities and continue to grow their online services and ensure that customers have the knowledge and the technology to access these services. The WDBCCC’s hotline enables

job seekers to reach support staff during business hours. During off hours, participants can leave a message 24 hours a day, and their call will be returned within a day. The website for Rubicon Programs, which manages and runs the comprehensive one-stop, is connected to the website for the WDBCCC, and provides opportunities for virtual enrollment. CalJOBS online offers access to a wide array of virtual services. As introduced above, the WDBCCC has a contract for the Metrix online learning platform, a catalogue of thousands of industry-aligned virtual trainings. In addition to being made available to job seekers and businesses, the system is being used to pilot curated projects in work readiness, Microsoft Office, Quickbooks, and other tools. Finally, the WDBCCC is actively seeking ways to incorporate additional industry tracks into its virtual offerings. All virtual resources are provided without cost to the Contra Costa community.

#### **IV.h. Providing Accessible Facilities, Programs and Services, Technology and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities (WIOA Section 188)**

In the Fall of 2019, WDBCCC staff did a complete facility and equipment assessment utilizing funds from a DEA grant, including updating outdated tools/equipment and reaching out to local agencies to ensure it had the most updated and accessible high quality technology and equipment. The WDBCCC also took advantage of California Workforce Association and other trainings on serving individuals with disabilities, sharing and encouraging service providers to take advantage of these trainings as well.

The WDBCCC will continue to seek out and work with partner organizations working with individuals with disabilities to ensure that it is providing the most up-to-date resources/equipment, regularly monitoring its facilities to ensure optimal accessibility, and making training available to service providers on best practices for serving this population.

#### **IV.i. Providing Indian and Native Americans with Equal Access to AJCC Services**

The WDBCCC will work with relevant partners in the local area to facilitate equal access to AJCC services for Native American residents. The local Tribal TANF office in Contra Costa County is operated through the Scotts Valley Tribal TANF (SVTT) program, and has actively participated in WIN meetings in the past, though communication has been reduced during the temporary hiatus of in-person WIN meetings. The WDBCCC is in the process of developing new post-pandemic communication strategies with the SVTT to provide information about available workforce and other services, and to identify opportunities for co-enrollment in WIOA. The reinvention of the WINs, described elsewhere in this plan, will also be an important tool for engaging the Native American community in needed workforce development services.

#### **IV.j. Providing Eligible Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers with Equal Access to AJCC Services**

Though there are a limited number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the local area, Liberty Adult Education (an AJCC MOU partner and member of the CCWC) has provided space for a Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker representative at their site. Liberty Adult Education, an AJCC MOU partner in the local system, in collaboration with the Corporation for Human Development (CHD), serves Migrant Farm Workers in East Contra Costa County. Services include food, COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE), health education, technology assistance, and information, along with continued immigration resources. Many members of this community lack the knowledge and tools to access the Internet for online workforce service delivery. After temporarily closing in March 2020, the career center at Liberty Adult Education re-opened for in-person services in August and has been providing job seekers assistance with job search, resume writing, and access to computers for those needing to file or access UI.



The most significant current needs for this population, in light of the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, are Internet technology equipment, free or low-cost Internet service, and training in how to learn, work, and access services online. In order to address this need, the WDBCCC will collaborate with Liberty Adult Education and CHD to help provide the following resources: hybrid training (in-classroom and remote), online videos, referral to programs that provide low-cost computer equipment (desktops, laptops, and tablets), low-cost Internet service, and personal hotspot loan programs. The WDBCCC will also host trainings via Zoom on job skills (soft skills) in partnership with Brentwood library.

## **V. State and Local Strategic Partner Coordination**

### **V.a. Coordination with County Health and Human Services and Other Local Partners to Serve Local CalFresh Populations**

CalFresh recipients in Contra Costa County who are able to work face multiple challenges to success in the regional and local labor market. Many have a limited work history, lack a high school diploma or GED, lack stable housing, have been formerly incarcerated, have limited English proficiency, or have physical or mental health challenges. The CalFresh population thus requires specific workforce services. While optimal outcomes can be obtained by participating in sector-based training, many CalFresh participants need a more basic level of workforce and other supportive services that can include remedial education, basic/essential skills training, and social emotional skills required to navigate the workplace.

The WDBCCC has been a core participant in a strategic planning process for increasing information, outreach, and enrollment in CalFresh Employment & Training (Fresh Success) in Contra Costa County. There are currently two providers for Fresh Success, Rubicon Programs and Opportunity Junction, which are both part of the CCWC and serve as access points for WIOA services through that partnership. The WDBCCC has strong ongoing collaboration with both of these partners.

As a result of the strategic planning process, a strategy was developed for increasing the number of providers for CalFresh E&T, and are in the process of onboarding two new providers. A planned program at Diablo Valley College (through Rubicon Programs) will offer CalFresh E&T services to students at the college. The second new provider partner will be iFoster, a national nonprofit that provides services and resources to foster youth. Year Up Bay Area, an organization that prepares students for professional success through sponsored internships, is also seeking to become a CalFresh E&T provider.

Providers in Contra Costa served 141 CalFresh E&T participants in the last federal fiscal year (2019-2020) and have served 58 since October 1, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the number of people served and the types of services that were offered. Providers converted services to a virtual format, but there were significant time periods during which providers were unable to take on new clients. The pandemic also impacted the launch of Calservices scheduled to be offered at Diablo Valley College. The WDBCCC continues to be involved in planning for the expansion of CalFresh E&T opportunities in the county, and is exploring WIOA co-enrollment strategies with current partners for CalFresh E&T participants.

As indicated in the two-year modifications of the PY 2015-2020 Local Plan, the WDBCCC will continue to build upon these strengthened relationships to better provide WIOA services to CalFresh E&T participants. This will include the exploration of WIOA co-enrollment strategies with current partners for CalFresh E&T participants. The WDBCCC will build upon and expand

its collaboration and information sharing with staff in Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department and with the California Community College Foundation, the backbone organization for CalFresh E&T in Contra Costa County, regarding continued expansion of CalFresh E&T capacity in the county. This will enable the WDBCCC to determine how it can best provide support to CalFresh E&T participants through WIOA-funded services. Given the substantial increase in food insecurity as a result of the pandemic, this will be a particularly important time to strengthen information sharing regarding needed services.

### **V.b. Coordination with Local Child Support Agencies and Partner CBOs to Serve Local Non-Custodial Parents**

A key challenge for non-custodial parents in Contra Costa County is the ability to earn a high enough salary to keep their child support commitments and maintain their own self-sufficiency, in a region with an extremely high cost of living. Historically, non-custodial parents have been over-represented among the unemployed and underemployed, and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the challenges they face. Low skill levels, limited education, and a severely contracted economy have made securing a quality job at a good wage extremely challenging for this group. Justice-involved non-custodial parents face the added burden of unpaid support payments that have accumulated during incarceration.

The WDBCCC and its partners provide services that benefit individuals participating in the Employment and Human Services Department Child Support Program (CSP), such as reentry and financial mobility services. The WDBCCC is continuing to seek ways to strengthen coordination with the CSP in order to more effectively serve non-custodial parents. The CSP will continue to work on improved identification of non-custodial parents who would benefit from workforce services, and referrals to the appropriate supportive services. The WDBCCC and partners will also continue to explore the tracking of non-custodial parents to improve communication and coordination with the CSP and make it easier for the CSP to track individual's employment status.

While a loss of funding and resultant decrease in staffing at Child Support Services in Contra Costa County has made it difficult to sustain the coordination of services for non-custodial parents, the WDBCCC will continue to seek to strengthen this relationship. To best evaluate the needs of this population, the CSP will identify individuals that would benefit from training and employment support and will connect those individuals with WDBCCC and other partners for assessment and delivery of needed workforce services. The WDBCCC will also continue to work with the CSP to establish a communication pathway for updating CSP staff on the progress of clients in workforce training, employment, and retention. To support this, the WDBCCC will amend the intake process to track whether CSP is working with a non-custodial parent and will get necessary permission from participants so they can share information with CSP, depending on confidentiality requirements. The WDBCCC has participated in initial conversations with the CSP about setting up a system to enable those who are working towards employment to get temporary relief on their child support payments.

The WDBCCC will also explore the following strategies to address the needs of this population, in coordination with local CBO partners:

- Coordinate with Adult Education partners to support non-custodial parents in obtaining a GED or other educational credentials that can help them to improve their income.
- As needed, work with education partners to deliver English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for those whose lack of English proficiency is a barrier to employment.

- Provide training to improve basic skills and acquire soft skills needed to thrive in the workplace.
- Work with sector-based partnerships to facilitate access for non-custodial parents to sector-based pathways that lead to higher paying jobs.
- Coordinate with local CBOs to offer access to legal assistance in renegotiating the terms of their child support commitment so that it is an amount appropriate to their financial circumstances.
- Coordinate with local CBOs on the provision of financial literacy and planning services for non-custodial parents to enable them to better manage and save the money they earn.
- Work with the Fidelity Bonding Program through the EDD, which can help individuals who are not commercially bondable to remove a barrier to employment and become more attractive to employers.

### **V.c. Coordination with Local Partners to Improve Services for Jobseekers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The WDBCCC sits on the regional committee charged with implementing California's Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint. Comprised of the relevant State agencies (California Department of Rehabilitation [convener], California Department of Education, and California Department of Developmental Services), the Blueprint prioritizes employment in an integrated setting, at a competitive wage, for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). The key role of the WDBCCC is to provide the workforce, and in particular, an employer perspective on how to better employ ID/DD individuals, from recruitment and onboarding to development and retention.

The WDBCCC is particularly well-equipped to serve in this role, as a result of expertise gained through participation in a DEA grant with high capacity local CBOs that work with the ID/DD population. This work is described in greater detail in Section III.c. A primary focus of the DEA grant-funded project was convening and educating employers about the benefits of hiring persons with ID/DD, as well as the accommodations that could be made to ensure their success in the workplace.

The WDBCCC is an invited partner to the Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) for the region. The WDBCCC will support the work of the LPA to foster collaboration in order to streamline service delivery, engage communities, and increase CIE opportunities for individuals with ID/DD. The WDBCCC will continue to strengthen its coordination with LPA-participating organizations to more effectively serve persons with disabilities through the CIE model, including by developing new partnerships with CBOs receiving Regional Center funds.

At the local government level, the WDBCCC will collaborate with Contra Costa County EHSD programs focused specifically on employment opportunities for persons with ID/DD. The WDBCCC will coordinate referral and workforce services delivery with the BRIDGES to Success program, which provides an alternate route to specific County jobs for people with ID/DD. The WDBCCC will also refer persons with ID/DD to the EHSD Navigators program, which connects individuals to services within EHSD and beyond.

The WDBCCC will continue to build on partnerships at the state level to more effectively serve persons with disabilities, including working with the DOR point of contact to facilitate access of ID/DD participants to direct services upon referral from WDBCCC service providers. The WDBCCC will also engage the DOR point of contact in their capacity as a subject matter expert, to provide presentations to employers regarding best practices in hiring and employing



individuals with ID/DD, and to serve as a resource for linking clients to further services. The WDBCCC will seek to facilitate presentations of the Windmills Disability Etiquette best practice training for employers and identify employer champions willing to share their experience hiring this population with other employers.

#### **V.d. Coordination with Local Partners to Improve Service Delivery for English Language Learners, Foreign Born and/or Refugees**

The WDBCC is committed to working strategically with local organizations to expand its impact on services for English language learners (ELLs), foreign born residents, and refugees in Contra Costa County. The WDBCCC will continue to engage CBO and local government partners in activities to encourage coordination and the braiding of resources. WDBCCC will facilitate the co-enrollment of clients in workforce programs and supportive services to leverage support for potential barriers to progress such as housing, transportation, job training, and child care. The WDBCCC will work with partners to facilitate warm hand-offs and referrals, and will convene CBOs and relevant stakeholders to coordinate additional resources and support for this population.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created particular challenges in providing services to the ELL, foreign born, and refugee population, since many lack access to the technology tools and skills needed to connect virtually. A lack of facility with English creates additional barriers to online participation. The WDBCCC will continue to seek resources to help support its adult education and CBO partners in the provision of digital tools and training as a component of workforces services delivery.

In the area of refugee services, the WDBCCC is coordinating efforts with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an international refugee-serving nonprofit with offices in Oakland, Alameda County. Work with the IRC will focus on services to the relatively large population of refugees that reside in Contra Costa County, which has limited access to services. The WDBCCC has worked on several grant applications with IRC that include a workforce services role for the WDBCCC, and will continue to seek out further opportunities for funding. The WDBCCC has also committed to hosting staff from the IRC to provide services at the Concord Comprehensive AJCC. This strategy has been delayed as a result of the pandemic, but will be implemented as soon as the AJCC is able to reopen for in-person services.

The WDBCCC will also continue its collaboration with a number of partners in the CCWC that provide services to the ELL, foreign born, and refugee population. These include LAO Family Services and adult education organizations, which offer high quality services directed to specific immigrant and refugee populations.

## **VI. Title I Services**

“Title I services should maintain the focus on virtual and online delivery after the pandemic. The virtual process could be a powerful tool for increasing access and equity--the younger population can do a lot of things on tablets and set up services to take advantage of those platforms.”

-Los Medanos Community College staff, participant in public input meeting

### **VI.a. Type and Availability of Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in the Local Area**

The WDBCC is committed to accelerating employment and improving efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders, ensuring that all customers have access to the full array of services allowable under WIOA. The WDBCCC has spent considerable time and effort training staff in trauma-informed practices and human-centered design, to ensure that customers are met where they are and provided services that meet their needs.

The current AJCC operator and adult and dislocated service provider has a unique and comprehensive model for delivering services, represented by the acronym ACTION (Action Through Innovation, Opportunities, and Networking). This model for client flow and services reflects a joint commitment to a human-centered approach that addresses the unique needs of Contra Costa County job seekers and employers.

“An important improvement would be to make the Dislocated Worker application process faster for people - for someone who is a DW, the application is quite a process; they need help doing it and it should not be so difficult. It asks a lot of them and it should be quicker. It can take 3 months, by which time they could be halfway through their UI claim.”

- Adult Education provider, Public Input Session

Based upon feedback from our public input session, in which participants expressed concerns regarding delays in the process of applying for Dislocated Worker services, the WDBCCC will examine the process to determine where bottlenecks exist and develop strategies to streamline the process for application and enrollment. Feedback from the public input session identified a lack of information or understanding about the process, and the WDBCCC will seek to expand outreach and education about the Dislocated Worker program.

### **VI.b. Coordination of Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Activities**

The WDBCCC works with local and regional partners to implement its Rapid Response strategy. The Bay Area Rapid Response Round Table (BARRR) is the main forum for the regional Rapid Response team. The WDBCCC participates in quarterly meetings and communicates frequently to stay updated on policies and best ways to serve displaced workers. The WDBCCC also works closely with Labor representatives to support related activities. The WDBCCC has pivoted Rapid Response services to virtual platforms in collaboration with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) in response to the COVID-19 shutdown. The WDBCCC provides Laid-Off worker webinars two times a month and partners that provide American Job Center Career Services on behalf of WDB, Department of Labor, and others are invited to participate. Employer outreach was also offered virtually during the statewide Shelter in Place order. Once businesses open to the public, the WDBCCC will keep a combination of in person and virtual services for both Rapid Response and Lay Off Aversion.

The goal of the WDBCCC's Rapid Response Team is to work proactively with cities and other entities in the region in advance of any anticipated business downsizing or closure events to leverage the resources of local governments for layoff prevention. If this is not possible, the WDBCCC will coordinate activities to achieve rapid reemployment for the impacted workforce. To achieve these goals, the WDBCCC will take the steps detailed below to coordinate Rapid Response activities in the local area.

The WDBCCC will establish a proactive layoff aversion strategy. In the event of downsizing or closures, the WDBCCC will engage key partners, including local and regional economic development agencies and industry trade associations, to develop an understanding of business supply chains and potentially impacted industries, with the goal of acting preemptively to prevent additional layoff events following the loss of a single employer. To mitigate the impact of layoffs across supply chains, the WDBCCC will promote the use of the federal Work Share program and other incentives to help businesses reduce the number of employees affected. In addition to responding to layoffs proactively, the WDBCCC will seek to implement effective data collection and analysis and establish early warning systems. The WDBCCC will strengthen these efforts by educating staff on the resources available to prevent layoffs, including training to increase the skills and efficiency of the incumbent workforce, so that they can share this information with the employers they serve. Combining this type of training with available federal resources like the Work Share program will allow businesses to withstand economic contraction without shedding their workforce, enabling them to take full advantage of future growth opportunities.

The WDBCCC will also collaborate with the SBDC, California Employer Association, and other partners to target training and consulting services including workshops, technical assistance, and coaching to small businesses in high priority industries to facilitate access to information or workforce services to promote business stabilization and growth. This type of training can be used by entrepreneurs and small business owners to improve their business practices and prevent job loss.

The WDBCCC will continue to leverage its partnerships with the business community to facilitate the swift re-employment of laid-off workers in positions requiring similar skills at other local or regional employers. Following the receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), the WDBCCC will work with businesses to profile the skill sets of employees at risk of being laid off in order to identify opportunities to transfer these skills into similar positions in priority industry sectors.

To facilitate this type of response, the WDBCCC utilizes all resources and connections available to respond to closures. This includes the coordination of rapid response activities with EDD, Rubicon Programs, Covered California, and other AJCC and workforce system partners. Upon receipt of a WARN notice, Business Service Representatives contact the businesses to discuss the services available and to schedule a transition orientation for the impacted workers. Due to the ongoing Shelter In Place order due to COVID-19, Business Services Representative and EDD partners meet virtually to coordinate these services and will continue with virtual services until businesses return to in-person meetings. They deliver the orientation, which includes a panel of representatives that provide information on workforce services, unemployment insurance, and other resources available to dislocated workers.

For individuals eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), the WDBCCC will continue to provide assessments, transition, training, and access to AJCC and other services to facilitate a rapid transition to new employment, including career counseling, job search assistance, resume preparation, interviewing skills workshops, and information about the local labor market, unemployment insurance, and local education and training.

### **VI.c. Type and Availability of Youth Workforce Investment Activities in the Local Area**

The full range of WIOA Youth Services/14 Youth Elements are available to Contra Costa Youth including youth with disabilities:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Education Concurrent with Workforce Preparation;
- Labor Market and Employment Information for Local Area;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
- Occupational skill training;
- Financial Literacy;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours;
- Entrepreneurial Skills;
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol counseling and referral;
- Supportive services;
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completing participation; and
- Activities that prepare Youth to Transition to post-secondary education and training.

COVID-19 shelter-in-place provisions pushed WIOA Youth Programs in the county to quickly implement tech-based strategies for services delivery. Providing youth with access to technology was a key priority for the programs, which included loaning laptop computers to students in partnership with school districts, with a focus on ensuring that technology resources were available to both in-school and out-of-school youth. The program also includes a Youth Incentives component, which converts the loaner laptops to an outcome-based incentive, linked to participation.

Summer internships for students were also shifted from in-person experiences to virtual. This resulted in a number of challenges for youth participants, including a lack of access to real-time tech support and a lack of appropriate space in their homes that was conducive to virtual work. Providing the necessary supervision, support, and structure for the youth also proved to be a challenge for the business hosts. The WDBCC will continue to identify ways to support and enhance virtual internships in occupations that lend themselves to remote work. Implementing a more virtual approach will require the WDBCCC identify resources to increase supportive services for technology (such as laptops, wifi, and routers).

Some of the new pandemic-related strategies may be incorporated into Youth Programs permanently. The WDBCCC's school partners have reported that while student attendance initially declined when classes went online, one positive outcome of the virtual environment was the reduction in bullying and intimidation. With access to technology and training in its appropriate use, virtual instruction can be used as a strategy to help address equity issues.

Paid work-experience/internships aligned with a youth's interests continues to be a central component of the WIOA Youth Program. The WDBCCC firmly believes in the effectiveness of

Earn and Learn models and has encouraged providers to extend the duration and hours of the paid work experience component. Prior to the pandemic, most internships lasted for 120 hours. Providers have increased internship hours up to 500 and all work-experience interns are paid. WDBCC will continue to maximize the funding available for earn and learn strategies.

Two exciting apprenticeship opportunities have recently emerged in the East Bay: a coding and web development apprenticeship aligned with information and communications technology (ICT) industry needs and a Marine Technology Apprenticeship with connections to a wide range of trade-related learning opportunities.

While many Youth Committees and Local Boards have reserved 100% of their WIOA Youth funds for out-of-school youth, Contra Costa will continue to use a portion of its WIOA funds to support bridge programming, wrap-around services, and other strategies that support the connection of in-school youth/young adults to a career pathway.

The WDBCCC recognizes the significant barriers that system-involved youth and young adults experience in connecting to workforce services and career pathways, and eventual entry and advancement in gainful employment. These populations include current and former foster youth, those involved with the justice system, and young adults experiencing homelessness.

The WDBCCC will seek to increase the engagement of and provide meaningful opportunities to these populations in WIOA and other program services through the application of emerging and innovative strategies and approaches, the adoption and replication of quality practices from across the state and country, and active participation in regional efforts to address challenges faced by these populations.

#### **VI.d. Providing Training Through Individual Training Accounts**

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are an important tool that can be made available to eligible participants when it has been determined the individual will be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency from previous employment or through career services alone. ITAs may also be provided to eligible participants who have been assessed and determined to have specific skill-related barriers to employment. A key feature of ITA-related training programs is that they be connected to in-demand occupations, based on current labor market information, and emphasize employment opportunities within the Local Board's priority industry sectors. It is expected that ITA training will lead to an industry recognized certificate, competency, or skill recognized by employers.

The WDBCCC will build upon its robust history and policy supporting skill-upgrading and income mobility through the use of ITAs. While the WDBCCC provides policy guidelines and criteria, service providers are encouraged to use Human-Centered Design practices to meet every individual where they are, to counsel and advise them on relevant and current labor market information, and to ensure that customer choice is honored at all times. While the Local ETPL providers are shrinking, there are multiple providers on the local ETPL as well as additional relevant training and skill upgrading opportunities. The WDBCCC has policies and procedures established for the use of ITAs: for example, Policy #01-17 establishes the local policy for the use of ITAs in accordance with WIOA regulations.

The WDBCCC will continue to support WIOA service providers in assisting participants to make well-informed training decisions and to provide guidance in selecting a training facility and specific program from vendors currently on the ETPL, as required by WIOA. Exceptions to the ETPL requirements may occur when special grant funding allows flexibility or the Local Board

has approved other providers based on the local need within the guidelines of WIOA criteria established by the state.

### **VI.e. Ensuring Priority for Adult Career and Training Services will be Given to Recipients of Public Assistance, Low Income Individuals and Those who are Basic Skills Deficient**

The WDBCCC has a local Priority of Service Policy that is in line with EDD Workforce Services Directive #WSD 15-14 regarding WIOA Adult Program Priority of Service. This policy establishes locally defined additional priority target populations as Re-entry/ Returning Citizens/Justice Involved and Individuals with Disabilities, and establishes a local defined minimum threshold percentage of 51% of priority individuals to be served. However, the WDBCCC works to exceed the EDD WSD 15-14 minimum threshold and consistently serves a much higher percentage of individuals that meet the definition of priority population. Data from PY 2015-19 show that 70% of all WIOA adult participants were low-income.

### **VI.f. Coordination of Workforce and Education Activities with Provision of Supportive Services**

Throughout its history, the WDBCCC has had a robust policy related to the provision of needs-based support services for individuals enrolled in training and education, including support for training-related books and other materials, the cost of transportation to attend education or training, and childcare. With the decrease in WIOA funding over the past several years, the WDBCCC has found the need to reduce its provision of some of these support services using WIOA dollars.

As a result, a new priority has been to expand collaboration with partners to leverage these much needed services. This has been particularly critical in the area of youth services and support for adult and dislocated workers through the CCWC. In order to ensure the adequate provision of supportive services in the future, the WDBCCC will seek to develop a system to collect and report detailed information on the delivery of supportive services on a regular basis, which is now included as a single line item in the budget. This system will include information available in each contract that the WDBCCC participates in, including coordination with CalFresh and CalWORKs, homeless shelters, child care subsidy programs, and other efforts.

Data from CalJOBS indicates that the majority of services delivered to participants by WDBCCC over the past year have fallen into the following categories: transportation assistance, housing assistance, support for utility payments, work clothing and tools, linkages to community services, and other unclassified services. The majority of people who are provided with supportive services are those who are in an education and training program, with the goal of helping them to achieve success.

## **VII. Title I Administration**

### **VII.a. Entity Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds**

The Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) of Contra Costa County has been designated as the fiscal agent for the WDBCCC, and as such is responsible for the dispersal and reporting of all grant funds. EHSD has rigorous fiscal standards that they follow and employ for management of the WDBCCC. The WDBCCC continues to meet standards for all fiscal and procurement monitoring by the state and other entities.



### **VII.b. Competitive Process that will be Used to Award Sub-Grants and Contracts for WIOA Title I Activities**

EHSD is the Fiscal Agent for the WDBCCC, and WIOA funds for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are awarded according to the process prescribed by Contra Costa County. All Requests for Information (RFIs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are issued through the Contracts and Grants Unit of the Administrative Services Bureau within EHSD. RFPs and RFIs are published online on the EHSD website and the Contra Costa Purchasing portal and are also distributed via the WDBCCC mailing list. RFI and RFP postings clearly indicate the response due date and criteria for qualified responses, and RFIs and RFPs also include an Optional Bidders Conference when appropriate.

### **VII.c. Responsibility for AJCC Operations**

In early 2018, the WDBCCC, in accordance with WIOA and state regulations, put the operation of the comprehensive AJCC and the delivery of adult and dislocated worker career services out for procurement. Based on this procurement, as of August 2018, the WDBCCC has a contract with Rubicon Programs, Inc. for the operation of the comprehensive AJCC and the delivery of all adult and dislocated worker career services. Rubicon Programs, Inc. has robust partnerships with CBOs, education, and training providers to ensure the delivery of services throughout the expanse of Contra Costa County, providing multiple onramps to the workforce system. The RFP process for the AJCC will be coming up again in Spring 2021.

### **VII.d. Copies of Executed Cooperative Agreements Regarding Service Delivery for the Local One-Stop System**

The WDBCCC has MOUs with all of the mandated partners of the AJCC that contribute to the delivery of required services for all participants through the local one-stop delivery system. These documents are attached to the narrative.

## **VIII. Staff Training and Capacity Building**

### **VIII.a. Training and/or Professional Development for Targeted Sectors and Promoting Job Quality**

The WDBCCC has invested time and energy in creating educational workshops for both staff and partners in Contra Costa's identified priority sectors. These workshops are in varying stages of completion, with some on hold due to the inability to gather in person as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional sector partnerships in advanced manufacturing (Advanced Manufacturing Bay Area-AMBayArea) and health (East Bay Health Workforce Partnership-EBHWP) are developing resource tools on job openings, training, and stackable credentials in these fields and are engaging service delivery and front line staff in best practices for creating and implementing these tools. Through the advanced manufacturing sector partnership, workshops were developed for staff and customers to learn about occupations, training, and opportunities in this field. Workshops were held at the Concord AJCC with a focus on delivering this information to veterans in particular, though all were welcome.

The WDBCCC is working with these sector partnerships in advanced manufacturing and health to engage service providers and ensure that information for participants is accessible and integrated into service delivery. The WDBCCC is also focusing on COVID-19 recovery strategies and regional system capacity building to address disparate outcomes related to race and equity

in priority sectors. A key strategy will include the development of training for frontline staff to identify the key features of each of these sectors, LMI data, wages, and where sector-based job training can be accessed. An orientation to enable staff to use the AMBayArea Online Course Catalogue and Career Exploration site as tools for working with clients will also be provided.

### **VIII.b. Training and/or Professional Development to Ensure Cultural Competency and Understanding of Experiences of Trauma-Exposed Populations**

The WDBCCC has benefitted from Contra Costa County's history of investment and training in trauma-informed practices. WDBCCC staff participate in ongoing opportunities for trauma-informed and human-centered design training through the County's Employment and Human Services Department. Rubicon Programs, a primary WDBCCC adult and dislocated worker career service provider, has a deep commitment and understanding of trauma-informed care and provides services that meet their clients where they are and engage them in the process. Rubicon is committed to hiring those they serve and has a diverse staff that reflects the demographics of their service populations.

As part of a WAF 8.0 grant focused on the integration of the workforce and homeless services systems, WDBCCC staff and partners participated in a trauma-informed training to ensure that the design of integration tools will include a trauma-informed perspective. This training included information on the impact of chronic trauma on body, behavior, and health; types of trauma; antidotes to trauma (self-care, community care, and healing); and primary factors in resilience (supportive connections and healthy relationships). Included were how trauma responses show up in providers and clients, shifting the perspective from "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?" and recognizing how problematic behavior can also be seen as normal responses to trauma.

The WDBCCC is also committed to training staff on equity and inclusion, a commitment that also exists at the county level. The WDBCCC will participate in two levels of Implicit Bias training provided by Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department. Line staff receive a three-hour training on implicit bias and a methodology of addressing biases. Online training in workplace diversity and completing the Implicit Association Test (IAT) are required prerequisites. This training will include the following topics:

- The definition of implicit bias
- The difference between implicit bias and diversity
- How implicit bias influences our decisions
- The distinction between implicit and explicit bias
- The different types of biases
- Microaggressions
- Techniques for reshaping biased perceptions

Managers and supervisors receive training in the same topics but in the added context of hiring, evaluations, and promotions, and other judgments.

In addition to the strategies described above, the WDBCCC Executive Director serves on the California Workforce Association's Equity and Inclusion Task Force, and a member of WDBCCC staff is on the EHSD Equity and Inclusion Task Force. Each of these roles provide an opportunity for the WDBCCC to learn about current efforts and best practices in the area of equity and inclusion, while providing input into the work of these groups.

### **VIII.c. Training and/or Professional Development to Provide Proficiency in Digital Fluency and Distance Learning**



The capacity to use current technology and applications is key to effective functioning for front line staff, in particular in the era of COVID-19. The WDBCCC intends to explore a set of training sessions that would be most helpful for front line staff, and will contract for the delivery of training in relevant skills such as online case management, online interviewing, and the use of online conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The professional development budget for staff can be used to provide training in digital skills apart from training contracted for by WDBCCC.

EHSD is committed to improving the skills of County staff, and the WDBCCC will identify content for these training events that will best align with its needs. Management staff will review all of the options for training and identify a subset of specific training that would be most beneficial for the team. These include trainings offered by entities such as GPS Workforce, DOLETA, and CWA. Training will also be highlighted as a quarterly agenda item for WDBCCC staff meetings. The WDBCCC will also explore access to training resources for subrecipients to help increase their capacity.

#### **VIII.d. Training and/or Professional Development on Common Case Management and Co-Enrollment Strategies**

Training in Common Case Management, CalJOBS, WIOA, and other effective practices and tools is provided to all staff as part of their orientation when they begin employment at the WDBCCC. The WDBCCC also shares and promotes training provided by the State, California Workforce Association (CWA), and other organizations regarding Common Case Management and Co-Enrollment strategies with staff and partners. The WDBCCC has also received support in strategic planning for Co-Enrollment from the CWA at the state level. The WDBCCC will use the Workforce Integration Networks (WINs), once they are reinvigorated virtually or in person post-COVID-19, to develop and provide training on a shared co-enrollment process and a shared intake form to track all of the services an individual is receiving. Partner collaboration and staff training will be necessary for the development of this strategy, including the development of an online tracking system that could be used while the COVID-19 shutdown endures.

**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION DESIGNEE AND PLAN SIGNATURES**

This local plan represents the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County'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 with the provisions of the WIOA.

**Local Workforce Development Board Chair**

**Chief Elected Official**

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Signature

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Signature

Yolanda Vega

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Name

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Name

WDB Chair

Board of Supervisors, Chair

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Title

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Title

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Date

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Date





**EAST BAY REGIONAL  
PLANNING UNIT**

Regional Plan 2021-2024



**East Bay Regional Planning Unit  
PY 21-24 Regional Plan Public Comment Announcement**

The East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) is pleased to release the Draft 2021–2024 Regional Plan for 30-day public comment ending April 19, 2021.

The plan is available on the [EASTBAYWorks](#) website. Comments can be submitted directly to [regionalplancommentebrpu@gmail.com](mailto:regionalplancommentebrpu@gmail.com) or through the [EASTBAYWorks](#) website.

The State of California Workforce Development Board requires regions to create new Regional Plans every four years. The EBRPU comprises the four East Bay Workforce Development Boards serving Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the Cities of Oakland and Richmond.

Developed with input from partners and stakeholders, the regional plan describes goals and strategies for building regionally coordinated workforce services to meet the needs of employers and job seekers anchored by equity and inclusion.

The East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) includes the following Workforce Development Entities in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties:

- EASTBAYWorks
- Alameda County Workforce Development Board
- Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board
- Oakland Workforce Development Board
- Richmond Workforce Development Board



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# East Bay Regional Planning Unit Regional Plan 2021-2024

## Introduction

The East Bay Region of California is a sub-region of the nine county San Francisco Bay Area, one of the most productive and prosperous regions on the planet. The East Bay Regional Planning Unit (EBRPU) is a partnership of member Workforce Development Boards representing Alameda County and the City of Oakland, and Contra Costa County and the City of Richmond. The four Workforce Development Boards have a long-standing regional partnership pre-dating the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), under the EASTBAYWorks brand.

## 1. Analytical Overview of the Region

### Workforce and Economic Analysis

The East Bay Region's economy and its workforce have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, workforce and economic analysis requires maintaining a balance between short-term impacts and long-term trends. Further, the value of historical data in predicting future trends is limited. The uncertainties of the current economic crisis are woven into this analysis as part of the larger effort to plan for regional workforce development efforts once the COVID pandemic abates.

The following Workforce and Economic Analysis is intentionally framed through a racial equity and economic justice lens. The disproportionate impact of the COVID-induced recession on people of lower socio-economic status and persons of color cannot be overstated. Job losses have hit levels not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s, particularly in occupations such as food service, hospitality, personal service, entertainment, and travel—positions filled predominantly by lower paid workers. Protests on behalf of racial justice and equity occurred across the country in the Fall of 2020. Though these protests were sparked by incidents of police brutality against African American citizens, they were also an outcry against the economic inequity laid bare by the pandemic.

This section also includes information vital to workforce development planning, such as demographic information, income and poverty data, skills and educational levels, and employer demand.

#### *1.a. COVID-19 Impact on the East Bay Workforce*

Much like the rest of the United States, California and the East Bay Region have experienced serious disruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March 2020, counties issued stay-at-home orders and on March 19th California Governor Gavin Newsome issued the nation's first statewide stay-at-home order. At the time this plan was written the pandemic continues, and both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties are under stay-at-home orders as rates of infection and deaths remain high. This section details the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the East Bay workforce.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on jobs in the region, across sectors, with a 10.5% decrease in total jobs during a one-year period (October 2019 - October 2020). The leisure and hospitality industry has been the most affected industry during that time period, losing 36,700



(30.4%) jobs.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, when workers lose their employment during times of recession they experience much larger lifetime earning losses than when employment is lost during non-recession times. During the more recent Great Recession, workers in Washington State who were displaced and reentered the workforce “earned 16% less than comparable workers who had not been displaced.”<sup>2</sup> Job loss during a recession can also have generational impacts. For example, children whose fathers were dislocated during the 1980s recession earned less as adults than children of fathers who were not displaced.<sup>3</sup> It appears that job loss during a recession also has serious health implications, with workers displaced during the 1980s recession experiencing a life expectancy reduction of 1 to 1.5 years.<sup>4</sup> Although not yet fully quantified, the current pandemic and economic recession will likely have a similar impact on today’s workforce.

Prior to the pandemic (2014 - 2018), 28% of all workers (1.1 million) in the Bay Area were considered essential.<sup>5</sup> Among essential workers in the region, people of color and immigrants are disproportionately represented. People of color comprised 58% of all workers and 66% of essential workers. In contrast, white workers comprised 42% of all workers but only 34% of essential workers. As shown in Table 1, 10 of the Bay Area’s 11 essential worker sectors are filled disproportionately by people of color.

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<sup>1</sup> “Monthly Labor Force Data for Counties, October 2020 - Preliminary,” *Employment Development Department: Labor Market Information Division*, published November 20, 2020,

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjefSsx1sTUijeJDEL\\_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjefSsx1sTUijeJDEL_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821)

<sup>2</sup> B. Rose Kelly, “Great Recession Still Plagues Workers With Lower Lifetime Wages,” *Princeton University*, March 12, 2018, <https://spia.princeton.edu/news/great-recession-still-plagues-workers-lower-lifetime-wages>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/jobs/2011/11/04/unemployment-and-earnings-losses-a-look-at-long-term-impacts-of-the-great-recession-on-american-workers/>

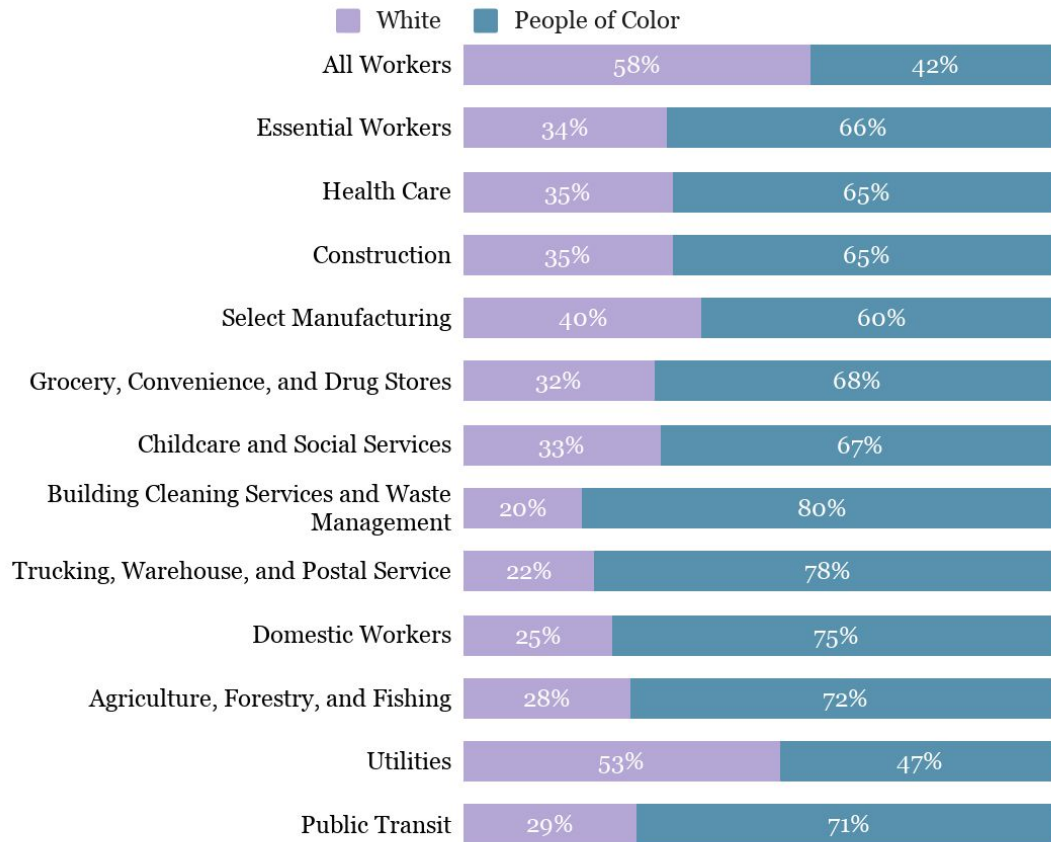
<sup>4</sup> Michael Greenstone, Adam Looney, and Michael Greenstone and Adam Looney, The Hamilton Project, “Unemployment and Earnings Losses: A Look at Long-Term Impacts of the Great Recession on American Workers,” *Brookings Institute*, November 4, 2011,

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/jobs/2011/11/04/unemployment-and-earnings-losses-a-look-at-long-term-impacts-of-the-great-recession-on-american-workers/>

<sup>5</sup> All data in this paragraph is from Jamila Henderson, “A Profile of Frontline Workers in the Bay Area,” *Bay Area Equity Atlas*, May 13, 2020, <https://bayareaequityatlas.org/essential-workers>

**Table 1: Bay Area Essential Workers By Industry and Race<sup>6</sup>**

### Bay Area Essential Workers by Industry, White vs. People of Color (2014 - 2018)



### ***COVID-19 Impact on Minority-Owned Businesses***

Workforce trends in the East Bay follow several national trends. Across the United States, over a two-month period at the beginning of the pandemic, the number of Black-owned businesses declined by 41%, immigrant-owned businesses by 36%, Latinx-owned businesses by 32%, and Asian-owned businesses by 26%.<sup>7</sup> In comparison, white-owned businesses decreased at a rate of 17%. As the pandemic endures and financial strain has continued to affect business, the impact on minority-owned businesses has likely worsened since these early statistics were reported. The East Bay small business community is particularly susceptible to negative effects caused by the economic downturn. The majority of East Bay businesses (80%) employ less than 10 employees. These “microbusinesses” are often less financially stable, with limited cash reserves for emergency situations. Moreover, microbusinesses in the East Bay are disproportionately minority or women owned,<sup>8</sup> making these populations particularly susceptible to economic loss. The

<sup>6</sup> Henderson, “A Profile”. <https://bayareaequityatlas.org/essential-workers>

<sup>7</sup> All data in this paragraph is from “Black and Brown Owned Businesses Hit Hardest by COVID-19 Pandemic,” Covid Insight Center, posted August 1, 2020 <https://insightcced.org/black-and-brown-owned-businesses-hit-hardest-by-covid-19-pandemic/>

<sup>8</sup> East Bay Economic Development Alliance, “East Bay Business Recovery Survey Results,” May 19, 2020: 3.

image below demonstrates East Bay job loss during the pandemic in three key sectors. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in October 2019, the East Bay Region was home to 1,187,600 total jobs in all sectors. As indicated in the figure below, the decline in total employment from that date to October 2020 was 124,700, equal to 10.5% of all jobs.

## East Bay jobs decreased by 124,700<sup>9</sup>

from October 2019 to October 2020.

**Figure 1: Decline in Jobs in Identified Sectors**

<p><b>Leisure and hospitality jobs</b> decreased by</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: #0070C0;"><b>36,700</b></p>	<p><b>Government jobs</b> decreased by</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: #0070C0;"><b>17,500</b></p>	<p><b>Private educational/ health services jobs</b> decreased by</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: #0070C0;"><b>14,800<sup>10</sup></b></p>
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### *COVID-19 Impact on Workers*

Many people have started working remotely to avoid health risks and abide by government mandates to work remotely to the extent possible during the pandemic. Compared to the rest of the Bay Area, the East Bay Region has fewer workers in occupations that are considered eligible to work remotely.<sup>11</sup> Although 45% of Bay Area residents can work remotely, in Contra Costa County only 38% and in Alameda County 40% have that option.<sup>12, 13</sup> Workers who are not able to work remotely are faced with extremely difficult decisions related to balancing the need for income, health, and issues related to childcare, child education, and public transportation.

Children across the country have been forced to rely on virtual or some form of home-based “distance learning” as a result of school closures during the pandemic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, almost 93% of all households with school-aged children report that their children have transitioned to learning at home.<sup>14</sup>

Working mothers, especially those with young children, have been negatively impacted by the pandemic at greater rates than mothers with older children and all fathers. According to a McKinsey & Company Women in the Workplace 2020 report, one out of every three working mothers have considered either leaving their jobs or reducing their hours because of the pandemic.<sup>15</sup> Black, Latinx, and Hispanic women have experienced higher rates of

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ajtpuoSRjo-4iLqswWuZDBOvwwJySkOj/view>

<sup>9</sup> Juliet Moeur, “Oakland Hayward Berkeley MD Labor Force and Industry Employment Narrative,” Employment Development Department, 2020,

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pI3oCSSlJT4zcnCfpBAKJjcXXLSoh5uL/edit#>

<sup>10</sup> Moeur, “Oakland Hayward”, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pI3oCSSlJT4zcnCfpBAKJjcXXLSoh5uL/edit#>

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan I. Dingel and Brent Neiman, “How Many Jobs Can be Done at Home?” Becker Friedman Institute, (July 2020) 2-4, [https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/BFI\\_White-Paper\\_Dingel\\_Neiman\\_3.2020.pdf](https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/BFI_White-Paper_Dingel_Neiman_3.2020.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> “Bay Area Economic Update,” Bay Area Council Economic Institute, October 22, 2020,

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ayW8UePzg\\_3F5aw1oqBo-TUL1wA4DakO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ayW8UePzg_3F5aw1oqBo-TUL1wA4DakO/view)

<sup>13</sup> East Bay Economic Outlook 2020,” *East Bay Economic Development Alliance*, published May 21, 2020,

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mB3T8vx56GPxjlonuspUipFvEnvDvpdl/view>

<sup>14</sup> Kevin Mcelrath, “Nearly 93% of Households With School-Age Children Report Some Form of Distance Learning During COVID-19” *United States Census Bureau*, August 26, 2020,

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/08/schooling-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Coury, Jess Huang, Ankur Kumar, Sara Prince, Alexis Krivkovich, and Lareina Yee, “Women in the Workplace 2020,” *McKinsey & Company*, September 30, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

unemployment compared to white women.<sup>16</sup> Further, economists predict that female employment will not return to pre-pandemic levels until 18 months after employment levels for men return to normal.<sup>17</sup>

“COVID-19 has also increased the pressure on working mothers, low-wage and otherwise. In a survey from May and June, one out of four women who became unemployed during the pandemic reported the job loss was due to a lack of childcare, twice the rate of men surveyed. A more recent survey shows the losses have not slowed down: between February and August mothers of children 12 years old and younger lost 2.2 million jobs compared to 870,000 jobs lost among fathers.”

- Bateman, Nicole and Ross, Martha. *Why has COVID-19 been especially harmful for working women?* Brookings. October 2020.

## **EBRPRU COVID-19 Recovery Strategy**

EBRPU partners are preparing for continued COVID-19-impacted and post-COVID-19 scenarios. The Region does not want to develop plans with potentially obsolete or inaccurate data or in a state of great uncertainty. This exploratory work could include: strategies for surge occupation recruitment, response to regional layoffs, and business engagement and support. It could also include re-envisioning service delivery strategies, updating Board policies, streamlining service delivery, and expanding virtual capacity. All of the above would be considered through an equity lens, ensuring access for priority populations, with particular emphasis on quality jobs and the training pathways and supports necessary for success in the evolving labor market.

This work would more likely begin in the latter part of the first -year of 2021-2024 Regional Plan implementation based upon the state of public health measures and of the economy. The region does not want to develop plans with potentially obsolete or inaccurate data or in a state of great uncertainty. The beginning of this exploratory work could include When it does, it could begin with convenings of EBRPU partner Board Directors to develop priorities, a potential scope of work, and outcomes to put out for procurement, contract piggy-backing, or sole-sourcing, as appropriate, to project manage this activity.

This initial activity would help the Region achieve the Regional Plan objective of developing regional COVID-19 recovery strategies that are aligned with external developments and are most likely to succeed.

### **1.b. Overview**

As of the 2019 census, the East Bay Region had a population of 2,799,005 (1,656,754 in Alameda, 1,142,251 in Contra Costa).<sup>18</sup> Homelessness in the East Bay has been increasing in recent years: in 2019, 8,022 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Alameda County

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<sup>16</sup> “May Jobs Report: A Case Study in Pervasive Racism and Sexism,” *TIME’S UP Impact Lab: Women on the Front Lines*, June 8, 2020, <https://timesupfoundation.org/may-jobs-report-a-case-study-in-pervasive-racism-and-sexism/>

<sup>17</sup> André Dua, Kweilin Ellingrud, Michael Lazar, Ryan Luby, Sanjay Srinivasan, and Tucker Van Aken "Achieving an Inclusive US Economic Recovery," *McKinsey & Company*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/achieving-an-inclusive-us-economic-recovery>

<sup>18</sup> "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates," *United States Census Bureau*, 2018, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=dp05&g=0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACSDP5Y2019.DP05&hidePreview=false>

(compared to 4,040 in 2015 and 5,629 in 2017).<sup>19</sup> In 2020, 2,277 individuals experienced homelessness in Contra Costa (compared to 1,730 in 2016, 1,607 in 2017, and 2,234 in 2018).<sup>20</sup>,  
21

In the Bay Area as a whole, almost 3 out of every 5 workers are people of color.<sup>22</sup> Among the emerging workforce (workers 25 years or younger), 70% are people of color. The largest emerging demographic group is Lantinx workers, who will soon comprise 33% of the Bay Area workforce.

## Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Residents of the East Bay have a relatively high level of educational attainment when compared to the state as a whole. In Alameda County, 50.6% residents 25 years old or older have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>23</sup> The comparable statistic for Contra Costa County is 43.0%. This is significantly above the 35.0% of people 25 years and older statewide who have a bachelor's degree or higher. At the other end of the spectrum, 27.7% of residents of Alameda County aged 25 and older had a high school education of less, as did 28.8% of Contra Costa County residents in this age group. The percentage for the state as a whole is 36.6%.

These relatively high levels of educational attainment for the region as a whole do not reflect the substantial educational challenges faced by communities in Hayward, Oakland, Richmond, and East Contra Costa County. As shown in the images below, educational attainment in the Bay Area varies considerably in different geographic locations within the counties and within the cities.

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<sup>19</sup> "Alameda County Homeless Count & Survey," *Applied Survey Research*, 2019: 1-87,

<https://homelessness.acgov.org/homelessness-assets/docs/2019AlamedaCountyHomelessCountReport.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> "Contra Costa County: Annual Point in Time Count Report" *Contra Costa Health Housing & Homeless Services*, August 2020: 1-47, <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>

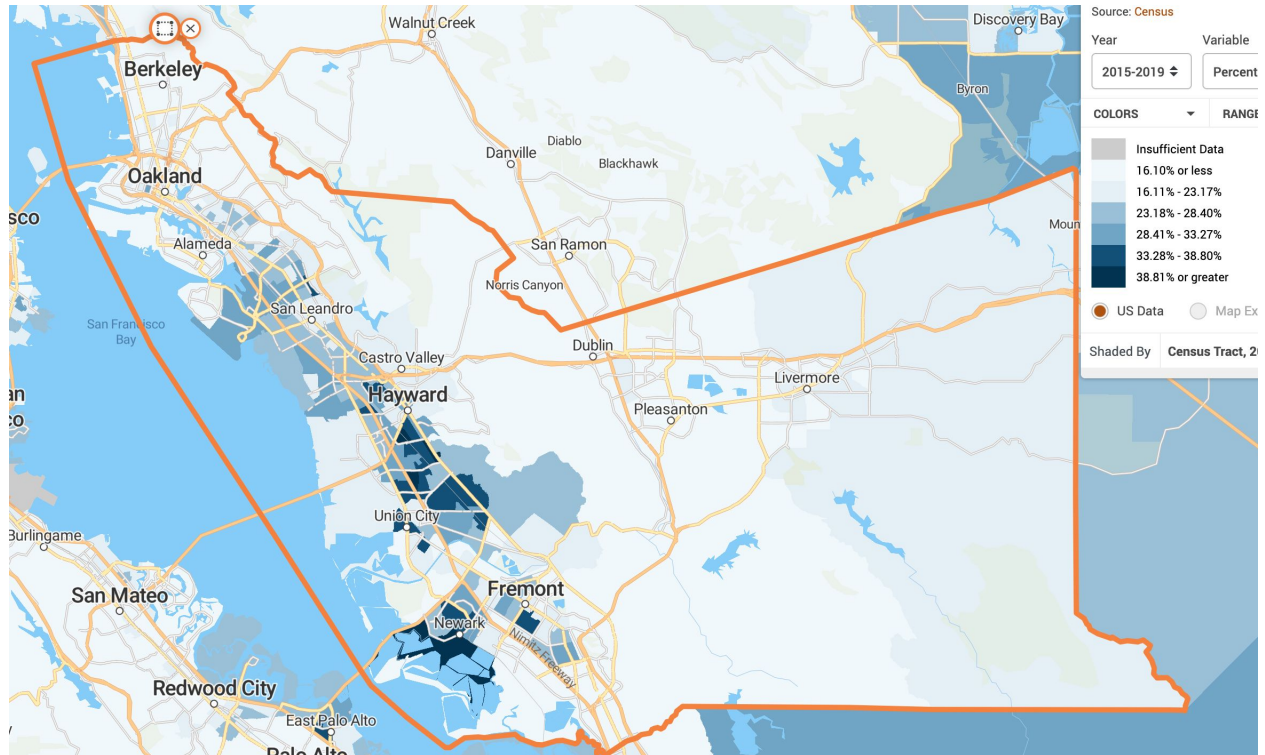
<sup>21</sup> Contra Costa, "Annual Point in Time Count Report" . <https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> All the data in this paragraph is from Abbie Langston, Edward Muña, and Matthew Walsh, "Advancing Workforce Equity in The Bay Area: A Blueprint for Action," Rework The Bay, 20, Accessed February 22 2021, [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

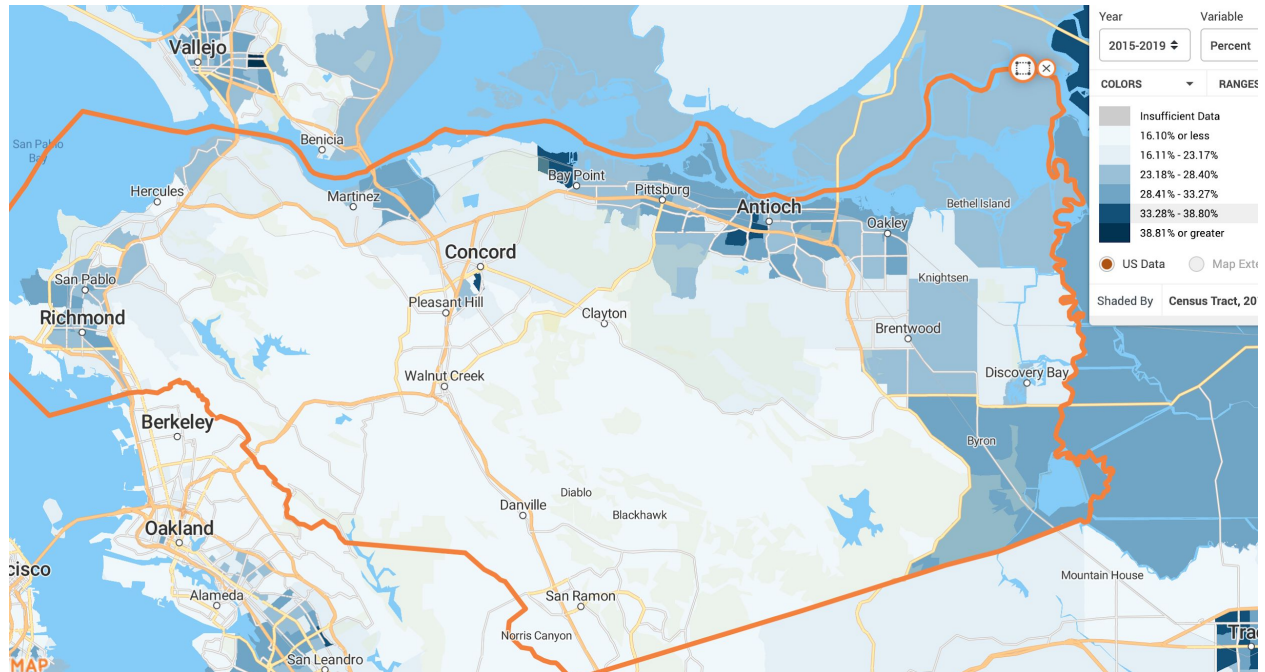
<sup>23</sup> All data in this paragraph is from "American Community Survey: Educational Attainment For The Population 25 Years And Over," United States Census Bureau, August 26, 2020, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=American%20Community%20survey%20Table%20B15002&g=0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B15002&hidePreview=false>



**Figure 2. Percentage of Alameda County Residents with a High School Degree or Less**

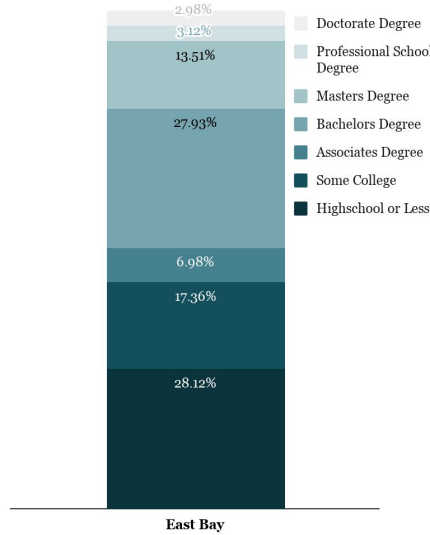


**Figure 3. Percentage of Contra Costa County Residents with a High School Degree or Less**

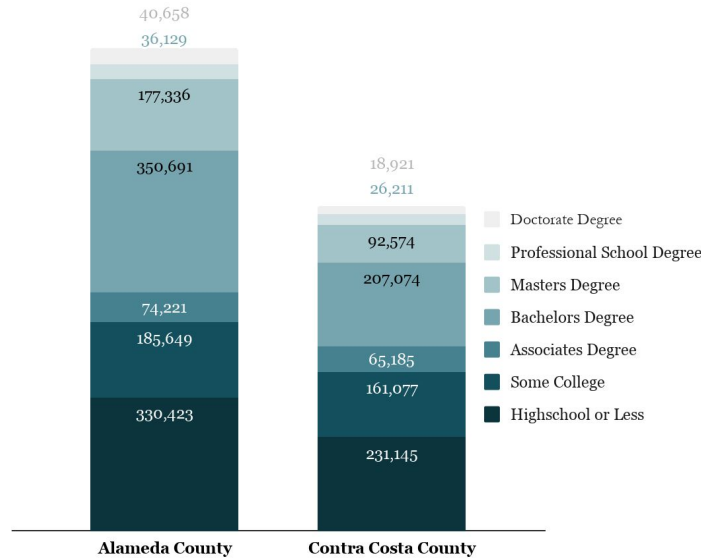




**Figure 4. 2019 Educational Attainment in the East Bay for Population Age 25 and Older<sup>24</sup>**



**Figure 5. 2019 Educational Attainment in Alameda and Contra Costa County<sup>25</sup>**



In the long term, the relatively low level of formal education in these communities poses a particular challenge, considering 7 out of the top 10 fastest growing professions in the Bay Area all require more than a high school diploma (see Table 10).<sup>26</sup> Educational attainment in the Bay

<sup>24</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Sex By Educational Attainment” . <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=American%20Community%20survey%20Table%20B15002&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B15002&hidePreview=false>

<sup>25</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Sex By Educational Attainment” . <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=American%20Community%20survey%20Table%20B15002&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B15002&hidePreview=false>

<sup>26</sup> Employment Projections: 2016-2026 Local Employment Projections Highlights,” *Employment Development*

Area varies considerably by race and ethnicity. For example, of individuals ages 25 - 64, more than 60% of Asian or Pacific Islanders have a Bachelor's Degree compared to 29% of the Black population and less than 28% of the Latinx population.<sup>27</sup> These educational disparities depict a critical challenge to achieving equity in the workforce.

**Table 2. Bay Area Resident Education by Race**

Bay Area Residents with a High School Diploma or Less <sup>28</sup>	
Race	Percentage with HS Diploma or Less
Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant	21%
Asian or Pacific Islander U.S.-born	12%
Black	31%
Lantinx Immigrant	71%
Lantinx U.S.-born	37%
Native American	40%
White	14%

### Workforce Age

In the East Bay, 1,886,664 people (67.9%) are of “working age,” between 15 and 64 years old. There are 172,120 additional individuals (6.1%,) between the ages of 10 to 14, who will likely enter the workforce in the near future.<sup>29</sup> Figure 6 demonstrates the share of the East Bay population by age group.

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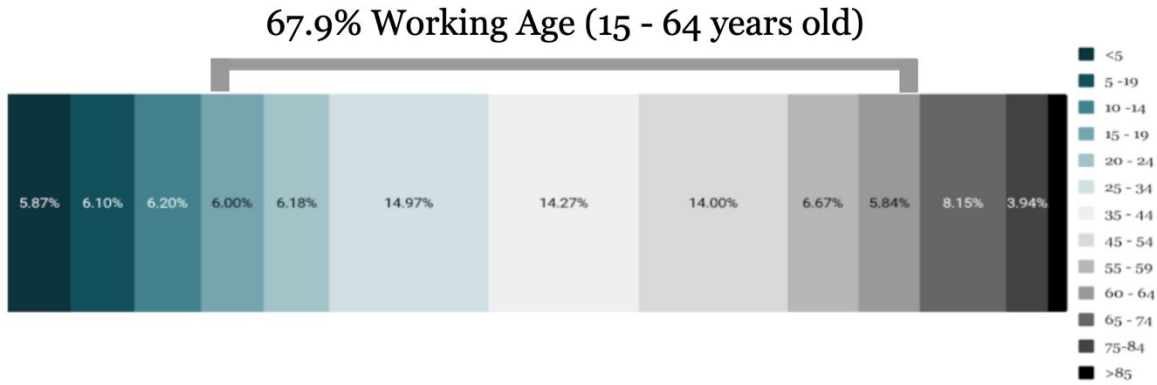
Department State of California, accessed February 22, 2021  
<https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/employment-projections.html>

<sup>27</sup> Abbie Langston, Edward Muña, and Matthew Walsh, “Advancing Workforce Equity in The Bay Area: A Blueprint for Action,” *Rework The Bay*, 28, Accessed February 22 2021, [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Langston, Muña, and Walsh, “Advancing Workforce Equity,” 28 . [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> "American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates: 5-Year Estimates Data Profile ," *United States Census Bureau*, 2018, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=dp05&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSDP5Y2018.DP05&hidePreview=false>

**Figure 6. Age of East Bay Population<sup>30</sup>**



### Cost of Living

The annual cost of living for a family of two adults and two children in Alameda County is \$121,922 in Alameda County, and \$125,672 in Contra Costa County. In the East Bay, housing constitutes the largest expenditure in a family’s budget. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, child care constituted 15% of the cost of living budget. Due to the pandemic, many working families can no longer rely on traditional child care options, which has likely impacted child care expenses. While the portion of the cost of living devoted to transportation has likely declined for better-off workers who have been able to work from home, transportation remains a substantial cost for lower income workers who do not have this option. This is particularly true for those who have had to relocate farther from their place of employment in search of more affordable housing.<sup>31</sup> Table 3 below shows the breakdown in the annual cost of living for a typical family in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

**Table 3. Annual Cost of Living for a Family in Alameda & Contra Costa Counties<sup>32</sup>**

Costs	Alameda County	% of Total Cost of Living	Contra Costa County	% of Total Cost of Living
Housing	\$27,525	22.58%	\$28,713	22.85%
Food	\$10,959	8.99%	\$10,443	8.31%
Child Care	\$17,984	14.75%	\$18,440	14.67%
Transportation	\$14,679	12.04%	\$15,922	12.67%
Health Care	\$13,228	10.85%	\$12,953	10.31%

<sup>30</sup> United States Census Bureau, " Demographic and Housing Estimates" . <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=dp05&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSDP5Y2018.DP05&hidePreview=false>

<sup>31</sup> “Family Budget Calculator” *Family Budget Map*, Economic Policy Institute, last modified March, 2018, <https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/>

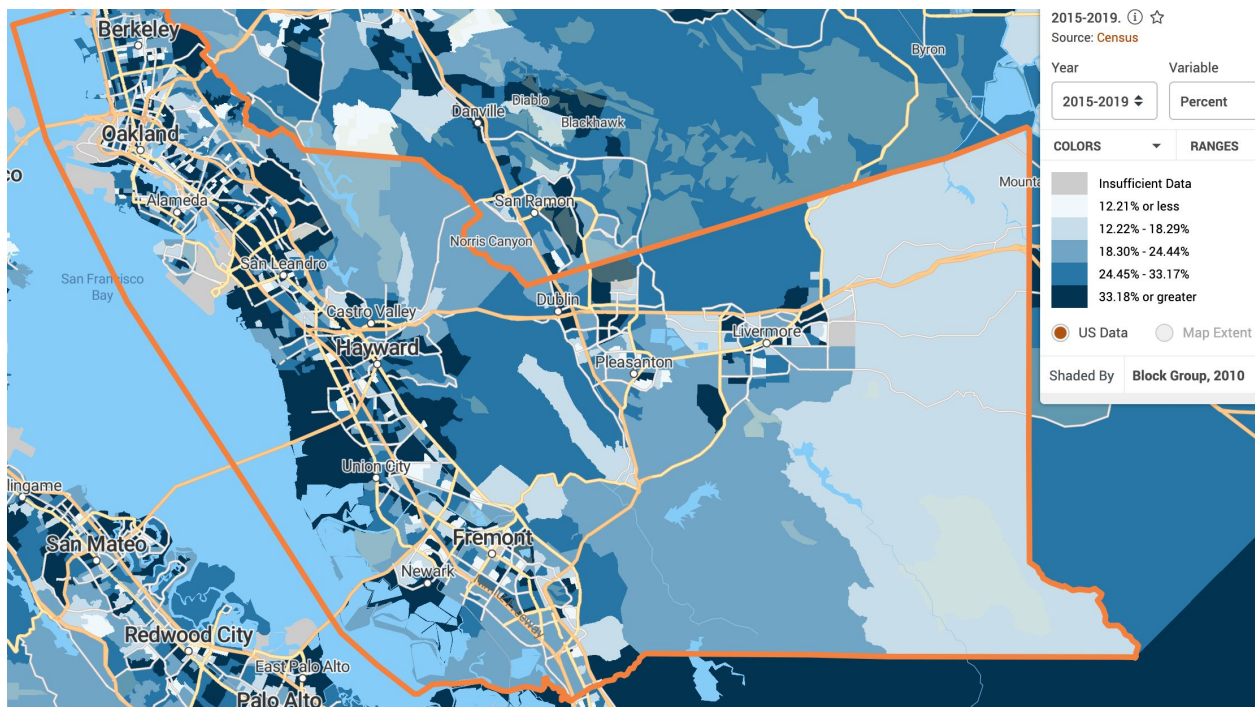
<sup>32</sup> “Family Budget Calculator” *Family Budget Map*, Economic Policy Institute, last modified March, 2018, <https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/>

Costs	Alameda County	% of Total Cost of Living	Contra Costa County	% of Total Cost of Living
Other Necessities	\$15,526	12.73%	\$15,797	12.57%
Taxes	\$22,021	18.06%	\$23,405	18.62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$121,922</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$125,672</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### High Housing Cost

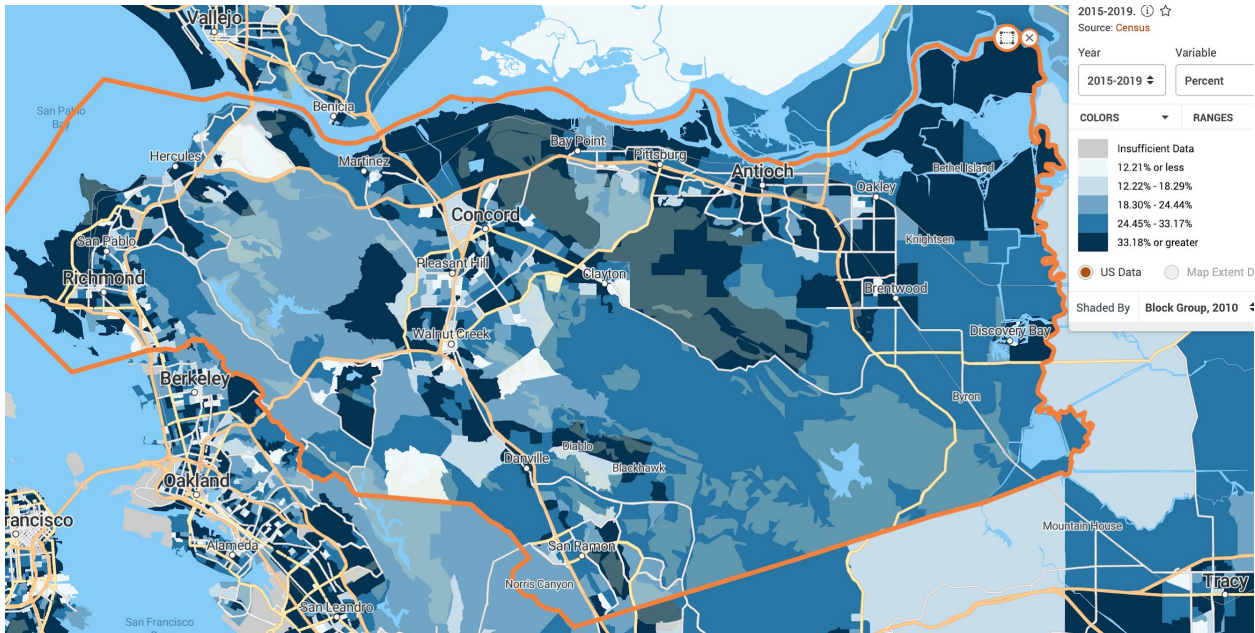
The very large number of households in the East Bay whose incomes fall below the cost of living identified in the table above are required to spend an unmanageable portion of their income on housing. When a household spends 30% or more of its income on housing costs, it is considered housing burdened. Much of the East Bay is overburdened by housing costs. Almost all of the East Bay has households that are housing burdened, however, specific geographic locations (as shown in the maps below, developed from recent data from the U.S. Census) have much higher percentages of their communities that are considered housing burdened.

**Figure 7. Alameda Homeowners Burdened by Housing Costs (Census 2015 - 19)**



As the maps indicate, the western portion of Alameda County is home to communities that are experiencing housing burden, specifically portions of the cities of Berkeley, Hayward, and Oakland. In contrast, the areas in Contra Costa County with the highest percentage of their community burdened by housing costs are scattered throughout the county.

**Figure 8. Contra Costa Homeowners Burdened by Housing Costs (Census 2015 - 19)**



## Workforce Household Income

Cost of living for a two-adult and two-child household exceeds the median household income in both Alameda (\$121,922 cost of living compared to \$92,574 income) and Contra Costa (\$125,672 compared to \$93,712).<sup>33-34,35</sup> Many households in the East Bay earn much less than the national median income (\$68,703 in 2019).<sup>36</sup> Nearly one quarter of households in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties had an income between \$10,000 and \$49,999. In addition, both counties have a sizable number of households making less than \$10,000 per year (4.2% in Alameda and 3.5% in Contra Costa).<sup>37</sup> Further detail is provided in Figure 9 below. In the State of California, minimum wage is \$13.00 per hour for employers with 25 or less employees and is \$14.00 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> “Family Budget Calculator” Family Budget Map, Economic Policy Institute, last modified March, 2018,

<https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/>

<sup>34</sup> Jessica Semega, Melissa Kollar, Emily A. Shrider, and John Creamer, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2019" *United States Census Bureau*, September 15, 2020,

[https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html#:~:text=Median%20household%20income%20was%20%2468%2C703,and%20Table%20A%2D1\).](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html#:~:text=Median%20household%20income%20was%20%2468%2C703,and%20Table%20A%2D1).)

<sup>35</sup> "Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2018 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars): 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables," *United States Census Bureau*, 2018,

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S1901&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACST5Y2018.S1901&hidePreview=false>

<sup>36</sup> Jessica Semega, Melissa Kollar, Emily A. Shrider, and John Creamer, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2019" *United States Census Bureau*, September 15, 2020,

[https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html#:~:text=Median%20household%20income%20was%20%2468%2C703,and%20Table%20A%2D1\).](https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html#:~:text=Median%20household%20income%20was%20%2468%2C703,and%20Table%20A%2D1).)

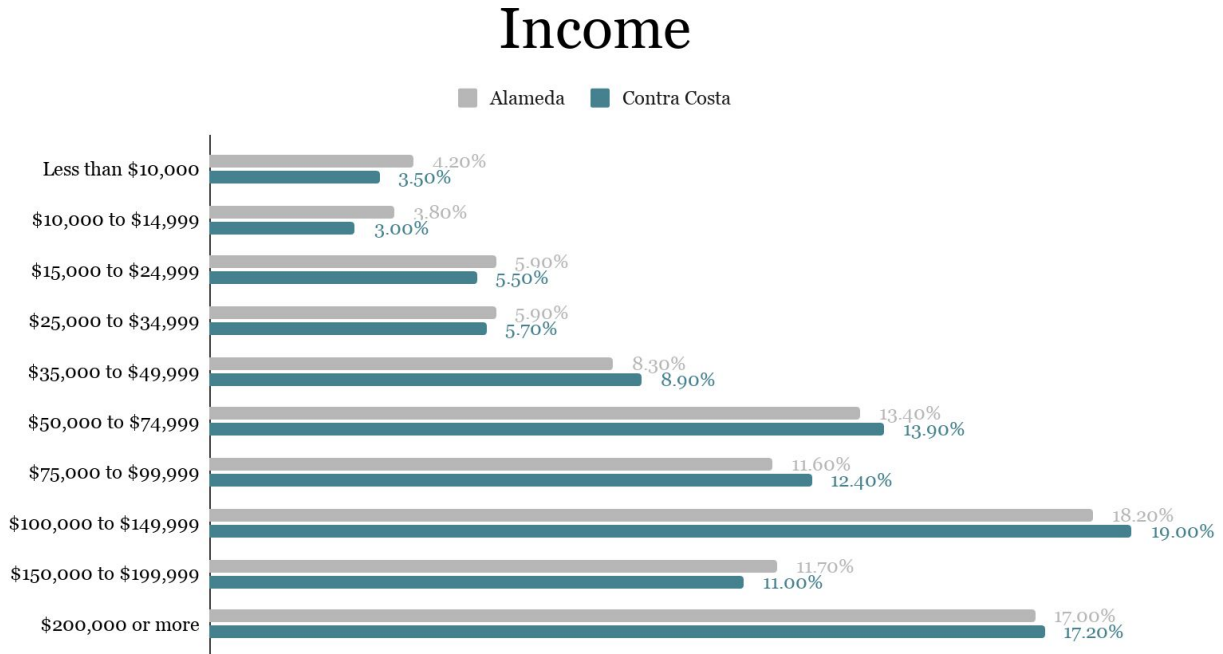
<sup>37</sup> United States Census Bureau "Income in the Past 12 Months".

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S1901&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACST5Y2018.S1901&hidePreview=false>

<sup>38</sup> “State Minimum Wage Laws,” Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, last modified January 1, 2021, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/state#ca>



**Figure 9: Proportion of the Population at Different Income Levels in the East Bay**



The technology boom of recent decades brought dramatic changes to the San Francisco Bay Area. However, from 1990 to 2018, the Bay Area experienced incredible job growth, the highest of which was for low-wage jobs (50% compared to 38% for high-wage and 25% for middle-).<sup>39</sup> However, during this same period, increases in total earnings for low- and middle-wage workers (51% and 44%, respectively) significantly lagged behind those for high-wage workers (149%).<sup>40</sup> During this same period, .<sup>41</sup> Though the number of low-wage jobs grew faster than the number in other categories, the wages for those jobs increased at just one third of the rate for high-wage jobs, raising significant questions about entrenched injustice within the region’s economy.

There are multiple factors that are currently contributing to an economic crisis for lower income workers in the East Bay. These include: an extraordinarily high cost of living, including an inordinate amount of income spent on housing; and growing commutes for workers who have relocated in search of lower housing costs. These burdens have fallen most heavily on communities of color, which are disproportionately represented among lower income workers. For this reason, racial equity and economic justice must continue to be key reference points for the creation of workforce development strategies for the region.

### Poverty

The rate of residents living in poverty in the East Bay (8.47%) is considerably lower than the national average (12.3%); however, these figures do not account for the high costs of living in the East Bay compared to the rest of the nation (see Cost of Living above). The federal poverty line

<sup>39</sup> Langston, Muña, and Walsh, “Advancing Workforce Equity,” 24 . [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Langston, Muña, and Walsh, “Advancing Workforce Equity,” 24 . [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

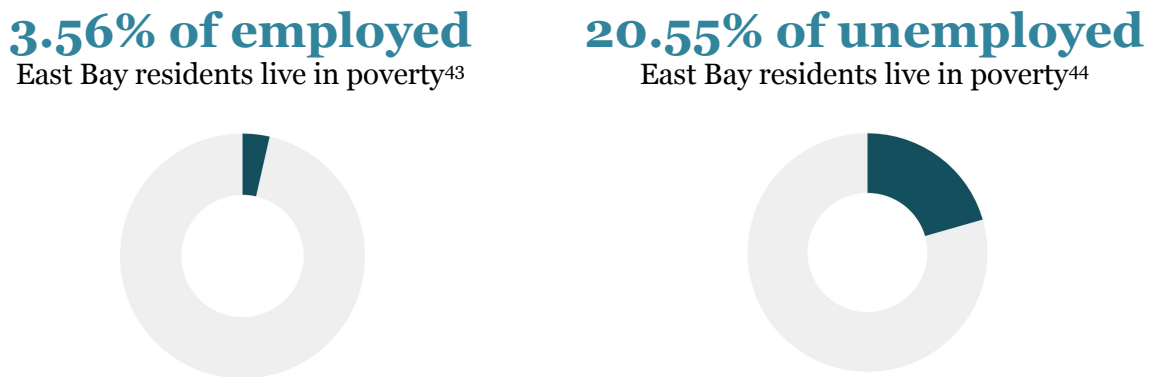


does not take into account geographic differences in the costs associated with housing, transportation, child care, or medical costs, for example.<sup>42</sup>

In the Bay Area as a whole, nearly 60% of Black women renters and more than 50% of Latinx women renters “are both housing-cost burdened (meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing) and economically insecure (meaning they have family incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level). This is more than double the rate for white male renters.”

Employment is a major protective factor against poverty. Therefore, workforce development initiatives that enable unemployed individuals to secure employment should be viewed as a major anti-poverty strategy in the region. Figure 10 indicates the poverty rate for unemployed East Bay residents in contrast with that of employed residents.

**Figure 10. Poverty Rates for Employed and Unemployed Individuals in the East Bay**



The above findings are particularly relevant during the current economic crisis. For low-wage workers (those earning less than \$27,000 per year), the employment rate from January to October 2020 decreased by 22% in Alameda and 33% in Contra Costa. This is in contrast to only a 0.9% decrease for high-wage workers (those earning more than \$60,000) in Alameda and a 0.1% increase in employment for high-wage workers in Contra Costa.<sup>45</sup> The threat of unemployment makes already disadvantaged low-wage workers even more susceptible to falling into or falling further into poverty.

Poverty among Black residents of the East Bay is 3 times the rate for white residents, while poverty among the Latinx East Bay community is 1.8 times the rate for those who are white.

<sup>42</sup> Areeba Haider, Justin Schweitzer, “The Poverty Line Matters, But It Isn’t Capturing Everyone It Should,” *Center for American Progress*, March 5, 2020 <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2020/03/05/481314/poverty-line-matters-isnt-capturing-everyone/>

<sup>43</sup> “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months: 2019: ACS 1-year Estimates Subject Tables” *The United States Census Bureau*, 2019, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=poverty&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSS1Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=false>

<sup>44</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Poverty Status” . <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=poverty&g=0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSS1Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=false>

<sup>45</sup> Langston, Muña, and Walsh, “Advancing Workforce Equity,” 39 . [https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area\\_FINAL\\_o.pdf](https://reworkthebay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Advancing-Workforce-Equity-in-the-Bay-Area_FINAL_o.pdf)

Among all census-designated race categories, whites have the lowest poverty rate. Table 4 below provides the most recent census data by race for residents of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

**Table 4. Poverty Rates by Race in the East Bay (2019)<sup>46</sup>**

Race	Alameda County		Contra Costa County		Combined	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b><i>By Census Race Category</i></b>						
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,180	9.60%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asian	35,178	6.90%	10,270	5%	45,448	6.34%
Black or African American	33,881	19.30%	14,771	14.8%	48,652	17.68%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	797	6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Two or More Races	7,546	7.20%	5,349	7.4%	12,895	7.32%
White	39,280	6.20%	33,500	5.6%	72,780	5.90%
Other Race	27,699	14.70%	25,816	16.1%	53,515	15.32%
<b><i>By Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity (as defined by the Census)</i></b>						
Hispanic or Latino	37,577	10.30%	34,202	11.5%	71,779	10.84%
Not Hispanic or Latino	107,984	8.45%	56,306	6.66%	164,290	7.73%

**1.c. Labor Force**

**Unemployment**

As of October 2020, the East Bay region had a slightly lower rate of unemployment (7.9% in both Alameda and Contra Costa County) than the state as a whole (9%). The region’s unemployment rate more than doubled since March 2020 when it was 3.9%.<sup>47</sup> According to a national Federal Reserve analysis, COVID-19-caused unemployment is disproportionately impacting workers in the lowest wage quartile.<sup>48</sup> Wage earners in the lowest quartile are experiencing unemployment above 20%, compared to less than 5% for the highest-wage earners.

<sup>46</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Poverty Status” .  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=poverty&g=0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=false>

<sup>47</sup> “East Bay Economic Outlook 2020,” *East Bay Economic Development Alliance*, published May 21, 2020, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mB3T8vx56GPxjlonuspUipFvEnvDvpdl/view>

<sup>48</sup>All of the following data is from Lael Brainard, speech on full employment in the new monetary policy framework, January 13, 2021. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/brainard20210113a.htm>

White unemployment rates nationwide are at 6%, while Latinx unemployment is 9.3% and Black unemployment is 9.9%. Table 5 provides a snapshot of employment in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

**Table 5. October 2020 East Bay Labor Force<sup>49</sup>**

County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<b>Alameda</b>	830,900	765,400	65,500	7.9%
<b>Contra Costa</b>	552,600	508,900	43,700	7.9%

In an article published in June of 2020, the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics acknowledged that the published national unemployment rate of 13.3% for May of that year was actually closer to 16.4%<sup>50</sup> It is likely that the unemployment rates identified above are even higher than estimated due to this misclassification.

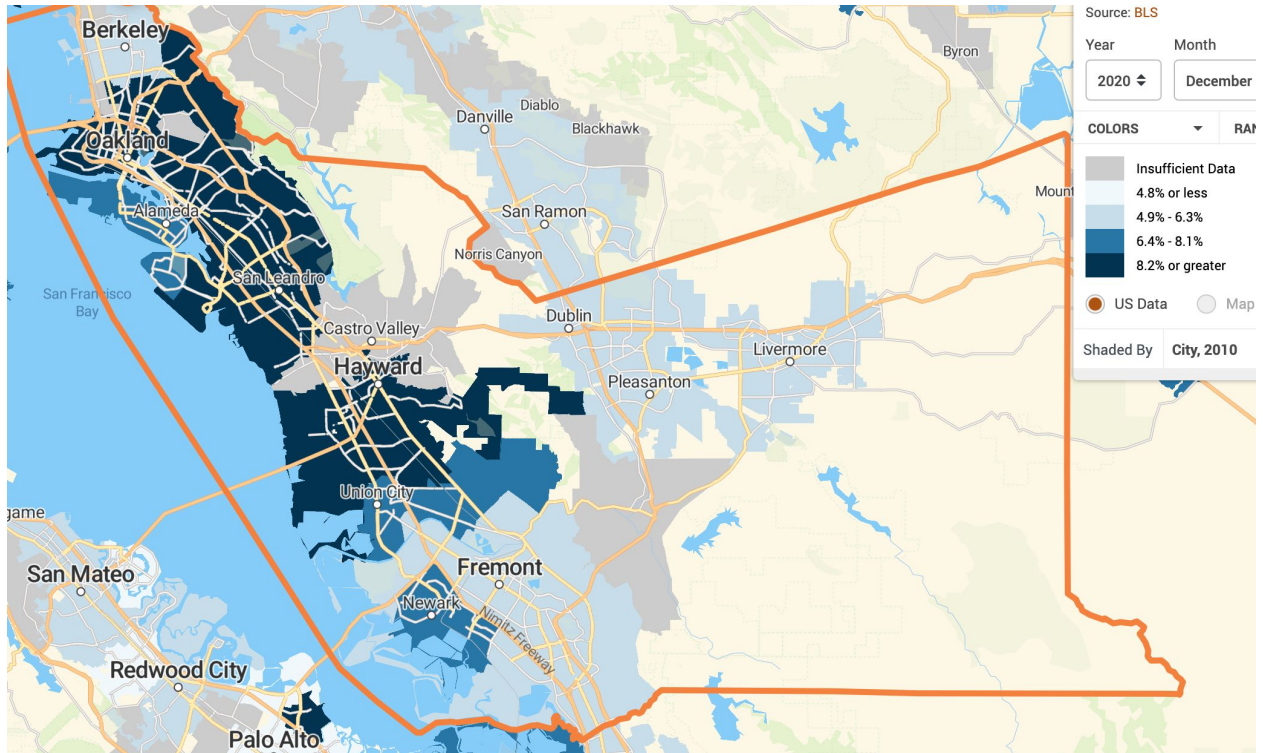
Although the East Bay Region has a lower rate of unemployment than does California, cities within the region have higher rates than the state as a whole. In Alameda County, the highest rates of unemployment are concentrated in the cities of Hayward, Oakland, and San Leandro. Historically, certain ZIP Codes within Oakland and Hayward in Alameda County, and Richmond and Pittsburg in Contra Costa County have experienced disproportionately high levels of unemployment compared to the surrounding region. It is likely that these communities have continued to experience extremely high rates of unemployment during the economic crisis sparked by the pandemic.

The maps that follow provide a sense of the distribution of unemployment across each county in the East Bay region.

<sup>49</sup> “Monthly Labor Force Data for Counties, October 2020 - Preliminary,” Employment Development Department: Labor Market Information Division, published November 20, 2020, [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjtesSxi1sTUijeJDEL\\_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjtesSxi1sTUijeJDEL_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821)

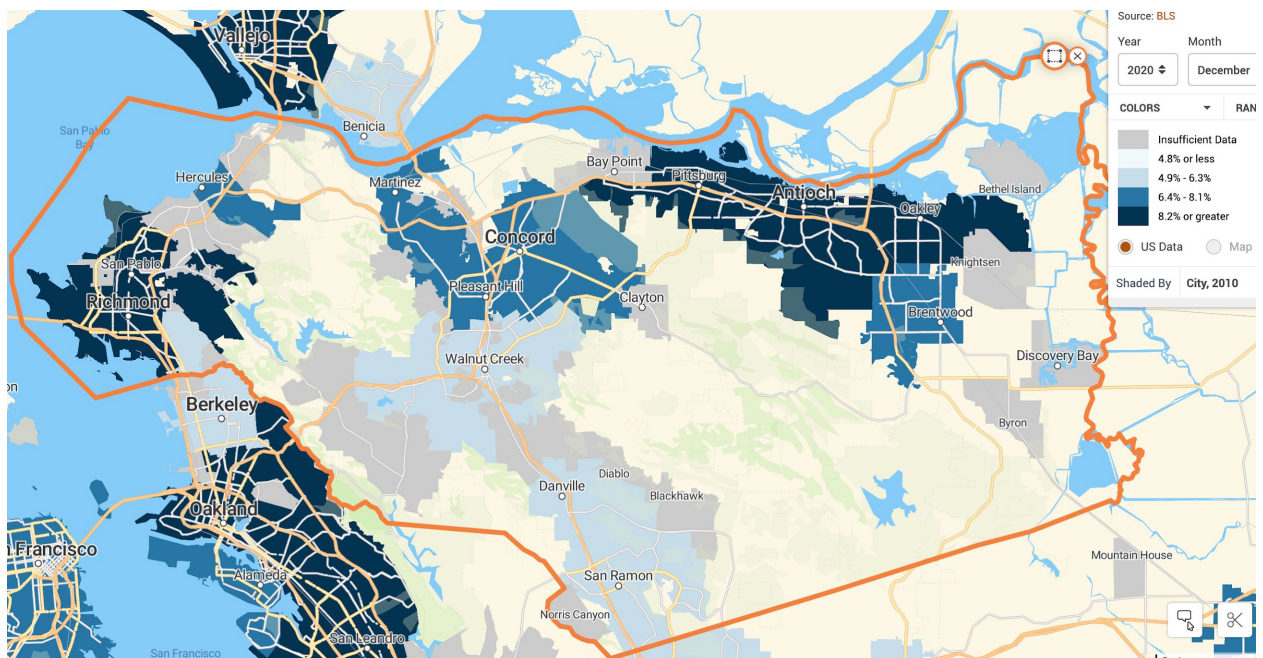
<sup>50</sup> Update on the Misclassification that Affected the Unemployment Rate, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 29, 2020 <https://blogs.bls.gov/blog/2020/06/29/update-on-the-misclassification-that-affected-the-unemployment-rate/>

**Figure 11: Alameda County Unemployment Rates: December 2020**



In Contra Costa County, the highest rates of unemployment are in the cities of Richmond, Pittsburg, Antioch, and Oakley.

**Figure 12. Contra Costa County Unemployment Rates: December 2020**



Although the unemployment rates the number of “people who are jobless, looking for a job, and available for work” is an important indicator of a regional workforce, it is also important to consider the labor force participation rate, which provides the “percentage of the population [16 years old and over] either working or actively seeking work.”<sup>51, 52</sup> In other words, those not counted in the labor force participation rate are, for whatever reason, not participating in the labor force. Along with the 7.9% of unemployed people who are actively looking for work in the East Bay, 32.9% of individuals over the age of 16 in Alameda and 35.2% in Contra Costa have chosen not to participate in the labor market. These numbers are even higher for individuals who are living in poverty, of whom more than half have dropped out of the labor market. As presented in Table 6 below, education appears to be a major protective factor against leaving the labor market, as 34.6% of individuals in Alameda County with less than a high school diploma have dropped out of the labor force compared to only 13% with a bachelor’s degree or more. The numbers are similar for Contra Costa County (32.1% and 15.3%, respectively).<sup>53</sup>

**Table 6. East Bay Labor Force Participation Rate 2019<sup>54</sup>**

	Alameda County	Contra Costa County	California
Over Age 16	67.1%	64.8%	63.7%
Under Poverty	45.5%	49.5%	48.5%
< High School Graduate	65.4%	67.9%	65.5%
High School Graduate	75.0%	74.2%	73.1%
Some College or Associates	80.0%	79.2%	73.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	87.0%	84.7%	85.8%

In November 2020, approximately eight months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the labor force participation rate for California as a whole was 60.5% (39.5% not participating).<sup>55</sup> According to a national Federal Reserve analysis released in January 2021, “labor force participation for prime-age workers has declined, particularly for parents of school-aged children, where the declines have been greater for women than for men, and greater for Black and Hispanic mothers than for White mothers.”<sup>56</sup> These statistics demonstrate that the pandemic has not only worsened

<sup>51</sup> “How the Government Measures Unemployment: What are the basic concepts of employment and unemployment?” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified October 8, 2015, [https://www.bls.gov/cps/cps\\_htgm.htm](https://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm)

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “How the Government Measures Unemployment” . [https://www.bls.gov/cps/cps\\_htgm.htm](https://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm)

<sup>53</sup> “Employment Status: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table,” U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06\\_0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06_0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false)

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Employment Status” . [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06\\_0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06_0500000US06001,06013&tid=ACST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false)

<sup>55</sup> “Labor Force Participation Rate for California [LBSNSA06],” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, retrieved from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, February 22, 2021. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LBSNSA06>

<sup>56</sup> Lael, Brainard, speech on full employment in the new monetary policy framework, January 13, 2021. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/brainard20210113a.htm>



unemployment, but has potentially forced additional people out of the labor force altogether, creating additional strain on communities and municipal services.

Prior to the pandemic (as shown in Table X below), although youth unemployment in the East Bay was lower than the unemployment rate for the state as a whole, Alameda County was facing lower rates of youth labor force participation than the rest of California. In Alameda, 70.5% of 16 to 19 year-olds and only 32.2% of 20 to 24 year-olds were participating in the labor market.

**Table 7. Youth Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rate 2019<sup>57</sup>**

Age	Labor Force Participation			Unemployment		
	Alameda	Contra Costa	California	Alameda	Contra Costa	California
16 - 19	29.5%	37%	31%	11.2%	15.6%	18.44%
20 - 24	67.8%	76%	72.7%	7.9%	5.3%	9.2%

### 1.d. Industry and Occupational Demand

#### Job Openings

Likely impacted by the pandemic, the total number of jobs in the East Bay Region decreased by 10.5% from October 2019 to October 2020. The leisure and hospitality industry was particularly impacted during that time period, losing 36,700 (30.4%) jobs.<sup>58</sup> Table 8 below demonstrates....

**Table 8. Total Employers, Employees and Payroll for the East Bay Region and California<sup>59</sup>**

Area	Total Employer Establishments	Total Employees	Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Alameda	40,508	698,915	\$51,985,434
Contra Costa	24,286	340,960	\$23,960,119
California	954,632	15,223,664	\$1,020,958,926

While there has been a decrease in the region’s total number of jobs, the East Bay region still has job openings in a variety of industries. Considering the larger percentage of the population with a low level of formal education (see Workforce Education section above), it might be encouraging that the top 10 occupations with the most projected job openings between 2016 and

<sup>57</sup> “Employment Status: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Table [ Table S2301],” U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06\\_0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=s2301&g=0400000US06_0500000US06001.06013&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S2301&hidePreview=false)

<sup>58</sup> Employment Development Department, “Monthly Labor Force Data” .

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjefSsxi1sTUijeJDEL\\_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1boqhAzDjefSsxi1sTUijeJDEL_CTO1i/edit#gid=175580821)

<sup>59</sup> “COVID-19 Demographic and Economic Resources: US Demographic and Economic Data At A Glance,” U.S. Census Bureau COVID-19 Site, last modified January 1, 2021, <https://covid19.census.gov/>



2026 only require a high school diploma or less. However, as shown in Table 9 below, none of these occupations provide wages comparable to the median income (\$92,574 in Alameda and \$93,712 in Contra Costa). Personal care aides were projected to have the most job openings, followed by food workers, cashiers, retail salespersons, and waiters and waitresses. Due to the impact on both the leisure and hospitality and retail industries from the pandemic, it is possible that the demand for these positions will be impacted, at least in the short term future. Out of the occupations with the most projected job openings, personal care aides are the lowest paid (\$24,707 median annual wage) and customer service representatives are the highest (\$41,998).

**Table 9. East Bay Job Openings by Occupation 2016 - 2026<sup>60,61</sup>**

Occupational Title	Qualifications	Total Projected Job Openings	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
Personal Care Aides	High School diploma or equivalent	82,800	\$11.88	\$24,707
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	No credential required	51,000	\$12.18	\$25,325
Cashiers	No credential required	47,950	\$12.46	\$25,909
Retail Salespersons	No credential required	40,880	\$12.92	\$26,880
Waiters and Waitresses	No credential required	32,740	\$13.06	\$27,166
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	No formal educational credential	29,150	\$15.63	\$32,497
Office Clerks, General	High School diploma or equivalent	27,490	\$18.24	\$37,934
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	High School diploma or equivalent	22,540	\$13.52	\$28,128
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	No credential required	22,150	\$16.75	\$34,829
Customer Service Representatives	High School diploma or equivalent	21,270	\$20.20	\$41,998

<sup>60</sup> “Employment Projections: 2016-2026 Local Employment Projections Highlights,” *Employment Development Department State of California*, accessed February 22, 2021  
<https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/employment-projections.html>

<sup>61</sup> Updated projections that consider the impact of COVID and recovery efforts may look different.

## COVID-19 Impact on Job Openings in the East Bay

In contrast to the projections (2016 to 2026) presented above, the San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research examined job postings over an eight-month period during the pandemic (March through October 2020). This analysis is reflected in the charts below, which show the types of low-level and mid-level skill jobs in the East Bay with the most job openings over this period on average. Middle-skill jobs are defined as jobs “that require more education and training than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree.”<sup>62</sup> Of the 25 jobs they recorded the most postings for, 19 are considered to require only low- or middle-level skills. Although the “Laborer / Warehouse” worker was the leading job in terms of the number of postings during the period (1,961), the second most prevalent was “Software Developer / Engineer” (1,128), which is considered a high-skill job.<sup>63</sup> Overall, low-skill jobs appear to be more resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic than middle skills jobs, with 7,199 low skill job postings versus 4,466 middle skill job postings in the region.

Many similar occupations projected to have the most job openings in the table above are also proving to be resilient during the pandemic, as indicated in the chart below. The “Laborer / Warehouse” occupation, which likely corresponds with the category of “Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand” is the most resilient occupation during the pandemic and was also projected to be the occupation with the 6th most openings between 2016 and 2026. Personal care aides were the most projected occupation before the pandemic and are still very prevalent in the region, ranking seventh most common in the Excellence for Labor Market Research’s analysis. Considering the extra demand for cleanliness and sanitation caused by the public health crisis,<sup>64</sup> it is particularly noteworthy that “Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners,” which ranked number nine in the projection, does not even appear in the most COVID resilient list. Many of these positions may have experienced a reduced demand because employees are now working from home instead of in office buildings. This is one occupation that could rebound in the near future, especially as workers return to the workplace while the pandemic continues. “Sales Delivery Driver” makes an appearance on the most resilient list, but was not projected at all before the pandemic, which is likely the result of the increasing number of Americans buying goods online during the pandemic.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “Research: Middle Skills,” *Harvard Business School*, accessed February 22, 2021  
<https://www.hbs.edu/competitiveness/research/Pages/middle-skills.aspx>

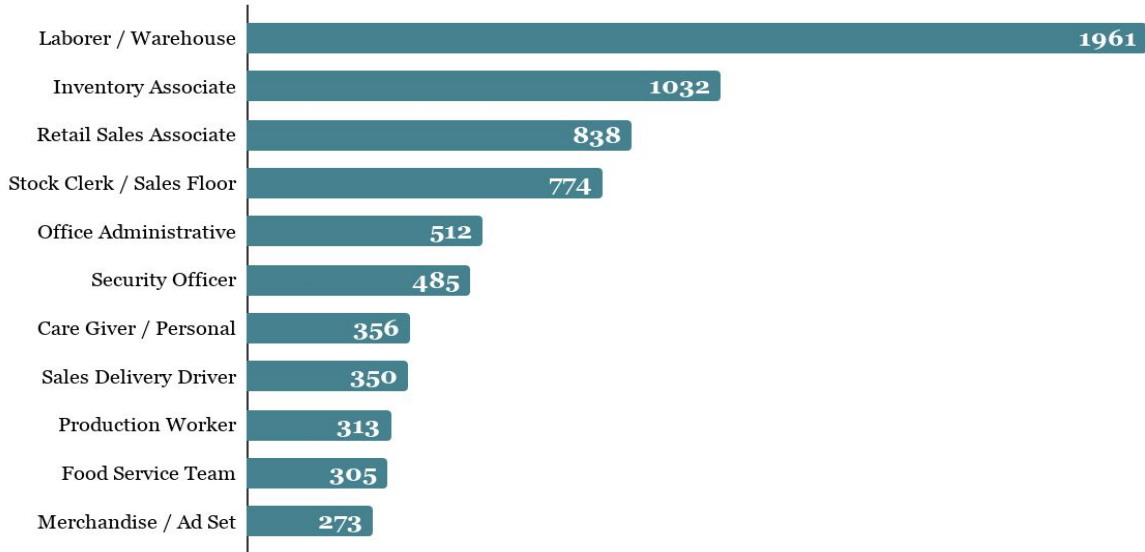
<sup>63</sup> “San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research,” *San Francisco Bay Region: LMI News & Updates*, published December, 2020 <https://sites.google.com/baccc.net/coe>

<sup>64</sup> Dan Biewener, “Janitorial Services Face Explosive Demand Due to COVID-19. Are You Ready?” *Fundbox*, March 24, 2020 <https://fundbox.com/blog/covid-19-janitorial-demand-rise/>

<sup>65</sup> “Exclusive Data: Twenty-Five Percent of Consumers Say Retail, Online Grocery Digital Shift Will Stick” *PYMNTS*, June 4, 2020 <https://www.pymnts.com/coronavirus/2020/the-great-reopening-doubling-down-on-digital-commerce-contactless/>

**Figure 13: Low-Skill Job Openings March to November 2020**

**East Bay Low-Skill Jobs with the Most Openings During COVID (March - November 2020)**

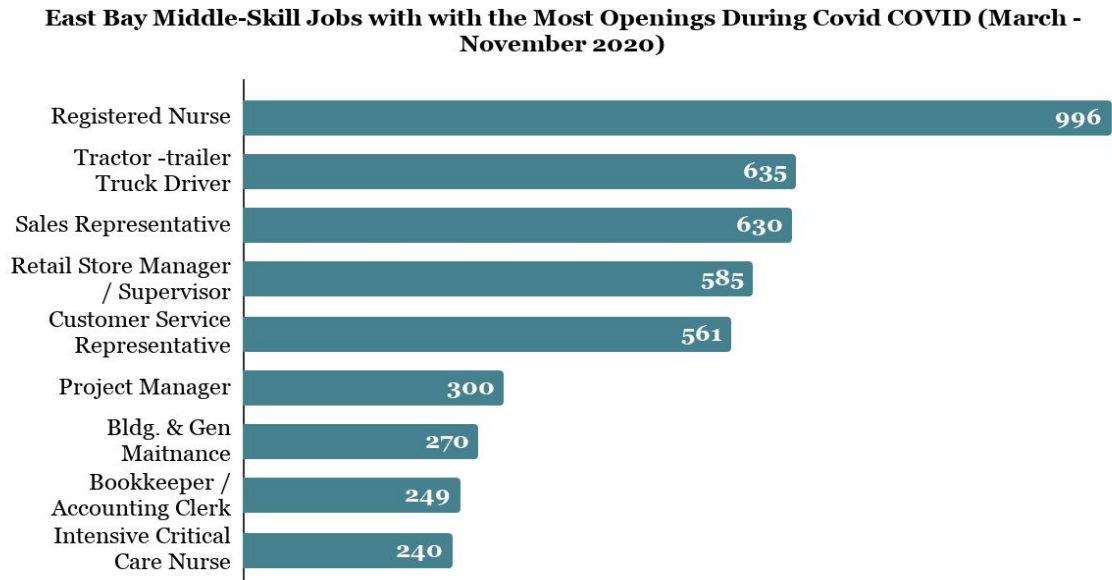


Overall, middle skill jobs comprised 5 out of the top 10 job postings during the pandemic.<sup>66</sup>

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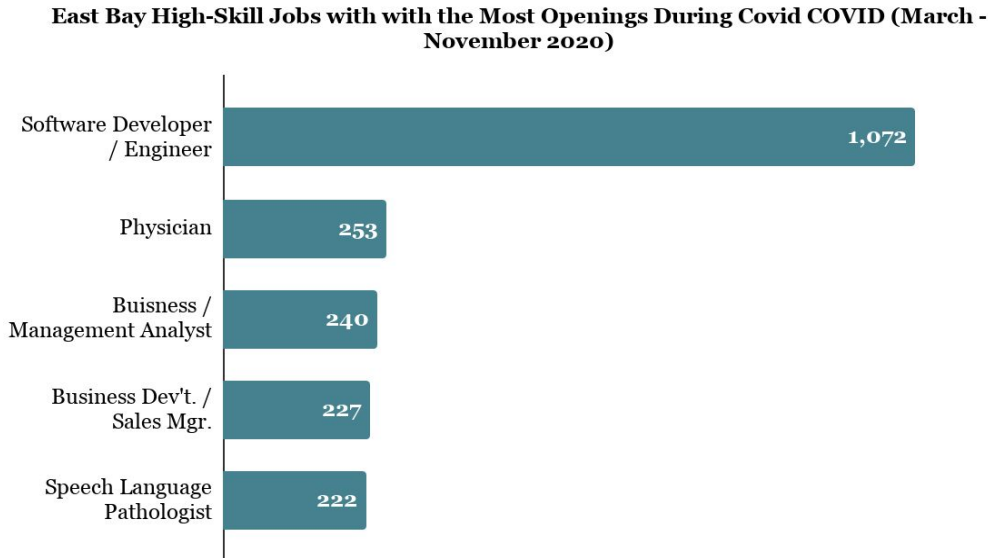
<sup>66</sup> “San Francisco Bay Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research,” *San Francisco Bay Region: LMI News & Updates*, December, 2020, <https://sites.google.com/baccc.net/coe>

**Figure 14: Middle-Skill Job Openings March to November 2020**



Software Developer / Engineer was the only high-skill job in the top 10 job posting.<sup>67</sup>

**Figure 15: High Skill Job Openings March to November 2020**



### Fastest Growing Occupations

Looking forward, wages for the fastest growing occupations are much higher compared to wages for the current most common jobs. Although many of the fastest growing occupations only

<sup>67</sup>“San Francisco Bay Region: The Labor Market in 2020,” *Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research*, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://sites.google.com/baccc.net/coe>

require at the most an Associates or postsecondary non-degree award, educational requirements for these occupations are substantially higher than the current most common occupations, which only require at most a high school education. Table 10 below demonstrates the wages for the region’s fastest growing occupations. Across these 10 occupations, the average median wage (excluding Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians) is \$40,263.

**Table 10. East Bay Fastest Growing Occupations (2016 - 2026)<sup>68</sup>**

Occupation	Qualifications	Change	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	High school diploma or equivalent	120.80%	\$18.94	\$39,401
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	High school diploma or equivalent	50.90%	\$17.90	\$37,237
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Associate's degree	42.90%	\$48.02	\$99,881
Medical Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	38.30%	\$18.89	\$39,283
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	Postsecondary non-degree award	37.60%	\$19.35	\$40,263
Surgical Technologists	Postsecondary non-degree award	34.90%	\$31.19	\$64,868
Respiratory Therapists	Associate's degree	33.60%	\$41.68	\$86,711
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	Associate's degree	33.00%	NA	NA
Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	32.80%	\$13.20	\$27,454
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	Associate's degree	31.10%	\$41.55	\$86,426

### Middle-Skill Jobs

Middle-skill jobs, “those that require more education and training than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree”<sup>69</sup> are abundant in the East Bay region. The region’s

<sup>68</sup> “Employment Projections: 2016-2026 Local Employment Projections Highlights,” *Employment Development Department State of California*, accessed February 22, 2021

<https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/employment-projections.html>

<sup>69</sup> “Research: Middle Skills,” *Harvard Business School*, accessed February 22, 2021

<https://www.hbs.edu/competitiveness/research/Pages/middle-skills.aspx>

large number of people with some college experience or an associate’s degree have plenty of potential job opportunities. Table 11 below provides job opening information for the Bay Area as a whole. The occupation title category of bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks have the most job openings out of the region’s top 20 occupations with the most openings and the ninth highest wages (\$54,468). is the average median annual wage across the top 20 middle skill occupations which have the most job openings in the East Bay occupations is \$51,412.

**Table 11. Bay Area Top 20 Middle Skill Occupations By Total Job Openings (2016-2026)<sup>70</sup>**

Occupational Title	Total Projected Openings	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	14,825	\$26.19	\$54,468
Teacher Assistants	13,662	NA	\$39,704
Nursing Assistants	11,265	\$19.88	\$41,351
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	10,355	\$23.82	\$49,548
Medical Assistants	8,959	\$22.18	\$46,139
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	5,308	\$20.31	\$42,239
Dental Assistants	5,113	\$21.65	\$45,039
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	5,035	\$25.62	\$53,276
Computer User Support Specialists	4,435	\$33.93	\$70,576
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	4,426	\$32.50	\$67,595
Manicurists and Pedicurists	4,373	\$13.41	\$27,894
Hairdressers, Hair Stylists, and Cosmetologists	3,991	\$15.02	\$31,244
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	2,575	\$29.59	\$61,552
Massage Therapists	2,532	\$23.36	\$48,598
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	2,353	\$33.05	\$68,738
Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	2,301	\$31.25	\$64,990
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	2,041	\$34.18	\$71,110
Web Developers	1,913	\$47.08	\$97,923
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	1,833	\$17.00	\$35,349
Computer Network Support Specialists	1,531	\$38.97	\$81,061

<sup>70</sup> “Employment Projections: Supply and Demand Tool,” Employment Development Department State of California, accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/geography/supply-and-demand-tool.html>



## Industry Trends

Table 12 below provides estimates of 2016-2026 growth in several core industries in the East Bay. Given the disruption to the leisure and hospitality industry caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the projected growth of this industry is unlikely without significant public investment as part of COVID recovery efforts. Out of the jobs that are considered most vulnerable to layoff in the U.S. during the COVID-19 pandemic, food and beverage jobs are ranked the most vulnerable and travel and attraction-related jobs are the sixth most vulnerable to layoffs.<sup>71</sup>

In the short term, there is potential for the other industries listed below to also be negatively impacted. While healthcare was predicted to be the industry with the most growth between 2016 and 2026, in May of 2020, the American Hospital Association predicted major revenue loss within hospitals due to canceled surgeries and increased cost of protective equipment. This loss of revenue may reduce industry growth, at least in the short term.<sup>72</sup>

**Table 12. Top 5 Industries with Projected Growth in the East Bay by 2026<sup>73</sup>**

Industry	Percent Increase	2020 Estimate	2026 Estimate
Healthcare	14%	174,200	198,582
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10.8%	101,600	112,607
Construction	12.2%	77,200	86,597
Manufacturing	9.1%	99,700	108,760
Leisure and Hospitality	6.9%	120,000	128,306

### 1.e. Employer Needs

#### Skills

Average monthly job postings in the Bay Area between March and November 2020 revealed that by far the most in-demand skill is “customer service and contact” which is posted 58% more frequently than the second leading skill (scheduling). Because of the increasing sanitation and public health concerns of the pandemic, skills such as cleaning and patient care have the potential to rise in demand. While some of the highest demand skills appear to be those requiring a limited amount of training, others include highly specific training in a particular kind of computer software, for example. Table 13 below shows the number of job postings in the Bay Area from March to October of 2020 that identified the need for a specific skill, provided by the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research.

<sup>71</sup> “Aligning Contra Costa’s Workforce with the Regional Economy: Labor Market Analysis to Guide Local Workforce Strategies,” *Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board*, September 29, 2020, 7.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/16ljBVGdu\\_5A4juKOHArhl9kV1ma7QNwh/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16ljBVGdu_5A4juKOHArhl9kV1ma7QNwh/view)

<sup>72</sup> “Hospitals and Health Systems Face Unprecedented Financial Pressures Due to COVID-19,” *American Hospital Association*, May, 2020 <https://www.aha.org/guidesreports/2020-05-05-hospitals-and-health-systems-face-unprecedented-financial-pressures-due>

<sup>73</sup> “East Bay Economic Outlook 2020,” East Bay Economic Development Alliance, published May 21, 2020, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mB3T8vx56GPxjlonuspUipFvEnvDvpdI/view>

**Table 13. Bay Area In-Demand Specialized Skills (Monthly Average Postings March - October 2020)<sup>74</sup>**

Skill	# of Postings	Skill	# of Postings
Customer Service and Contact	22,167	Staff Management	4,492
Scheduling	13,978	Accounting	4,342
Sales	10,940	Lifting Ability	3,726
Java / Javascript	10,777	Product Management	3,597
Project Management	9,965	Patient Care	3,577
Budgeting	9,126	Merchandising	3,509
Python	7,100	Linux	3,447
SQL	6,407	Product Sales	3,341
Software Engineering	5,965	Business Development	3,320
Quality Assurance and Control	5,720	Salesforce	3,250
Retail Industry Knowledge	5,436	Data Analysis	3,230
Repair	5,205	Product Development	3,125
Software Development	4,899	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	3,103
Teaching	4,652	Data Entry	3,023
Cleaning	4,633	Administrative Support	2,944

### **Credentials / Certificates / Licenses**

East Bay employers’ requirements vary considerably depending on the specific industry, organization, position, and task needed to be performed.

In manufacturing, there are numerous trainings specifically for welding, machining, hydraulics, pneumatics, electronics, and carpentry. More generally, training in process technology can be completed to assist workers in a range of roles ,such as refinery operator or food equipment operations. At most manufacturing companies in the region, specific credentials are usually not required before entering the organization.

In healthcare, requirements associated with specific positions are more clear. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), behavioral health technicians, and community health workers, for example, are only required to have a high school diploma. Numerous positions require high school diplomas and certificates based on completion of course work and required clinical hours, such as medical and dental assistants. Respiratory technicians are required to obtain an associate’s degree at a minimum, and are advised to also have a bachelor’s. Pharmacy technicians also require an associate's degrees at a minimum. For imaging positions such as X-

<sup>74</sup> “San Francisco Bay Region: The Labor Market in 2020,” Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://sites.google.com/bacc.net/coe>

ray technicians, an associates degree is required. A bachelor's degree is required for both nuclear technicians as well as mammography technicians.

More advanced healthcare positions such as clinical lab scientists and physical therapists require both a master’s degree as well as certain high level certifications. In many cases, physical therapists are now also required to have a doctoral degree.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracer positions have become increasingly in demand. The CDC offers training for those interested in becoming a contact tracer.<sup>75</sup>

## Employers

The East Bay is home to a range of different industries and successful private and public sector organizations. The public sector, health, energy, manufacturing, and retail industries are all represented in the region, as shown in the table of major regional employers below.

**Table 14. Major East Bay Employers<sup>76</sup>**

Alameda County	Contra Costa County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alameda County Law Enforcement</li> <li>● Alameda County Sheriff's Office</li> <li>● Alta Bates Summit Medical Center</li> <li>● BART (San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit)</li> <li>● Bayer Health Care</li> <li>● California State University East Bay</li> <li>● East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)</li> <li>● Grifols Diagnostic Solutions</li> <li>● Highland Hospital</li> <li>● Kaiser Permanente Oakland</li> <li>● Lawrence Berkeley Lab</li> <li>● Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory</li> <li>● Lifescan Incorporated</li> <li>● Tesla Incorporated</li> <li>● Transportation Dept-California</li> <li>● UCSF Benioff Children's Hosp</li> <li>● University of California Berkeley</li> <li>● Valley Care Health System</li> <li>● Washington Hospital Healthcare</li> <li>● Western Digital Corporation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● BART</li> <li>● Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc.</li> <li>● Broadspectrum Americas</li> <li>● California &amp; Hawaiian Sugar Company, Inc.</li> <li>● Chevron Corporation</li> <li>● Chevron Research &amp; Technology</li> <li>● Chevron Richmond Refinery</li> <li>● Contra Costa Regional Medical Center</li> <li>● Job Connections</li> <li>● John Muir Health Concord Med</li> <li>● John Muir Medical Center</li> <li>● Kaiser Permanente Antioch Med</li> <li>● Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek</li> <li>● La Raza Market</li> <li>● Martinez Medical Offices</li> <li>● Nordstrom</li> <li>● Robert Half International</li> <li>● San Ramon Regional Medical Center</li> <li>● Santa Fe Pacific Pipelines</li> <li>● Shell Oil Prod US Martinez</li> <li>● St Mary's College</li> <li>● Sutter Delta Medical Center</li> <li>● Tesoro Golden Eagle Refinery</li> <li>● US Veterans Medical Center</li> <li>● USS-Posco Industries</li> </ul>

<sup>75</sup> “Contract Tracing,” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, last modified November 10, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/index.html>

<sup>76</sup> “Major Employers in California,” Employment Development Department State of California, last modified January, 2019, <https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/majorer/MajorER.asp>

## **2. Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment Regional Sector Pathways**

### ***2.a. Developing Sector Initiatives for In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations***

#### **Supporting Sector Initiatives**

The EBRPU has played a key role in the development of in-demand industry sector initiatives in the East Bay Region and the Greater Bay Area that have made an impact by facilitating connections between employers in these sectors, fostering communication between employers and the workforce, and developing training opportunities that prepare job-seekers for success. The EBRPU's Regional Organizer functions as a central point of contact between the region's industry partnerships, identifying collaborative opportunities, facilitating coordination and managing grants related to strategic initiatives.

The EBRPU is currently working closely with two mature partnerships in the manufacturing and health sectors: the Association of Manufacturers Bay Area (AMBAYArea) and the East Bay Health Workforce Partnership (EBHWP). As indicated in the narrative that follows, the EBRPU has an extensive history of engagement with both of these partnerships, providing financial and infrastructure support, networking, and thought leadership in the development of these efforts. One of the EBRPU's key contributions to these initiatives has been the development of career navigation tools and the creation of training programs for in-demand occupations. In addition, the EBRPU helps to advance the sector initiatives in the region by providing directors of these partnerships with a forum with career centers to share LMI data, answer questions, and discuss training opportunities.

In addition to these endeavors, the EBRPU has a history of involvement in regional information and communications technology sector initiatives that have the potential for renewed activity. This work is also described below. The EBRPU continues to explore the potential reinvigoration of these initiatives, as well as to seek out new areas in which sector initiatives can be fostered.

#### **Advanced Manufacturing**

The **Association of Manufacturers Bay Area** (AMBAYArea) includes approximately 60 dues-paying employer partners from the nine county Bay Area, with many more engaged through events and communications. The primary focus of the collaborative is to ensure that manufacturing thrives in the Bay Area. The EBRPU has been engaged with and actively supported AMBAYArea since its inception. AMBAYArea has pursued an array of strategies and activities focused on increasing awareness of and expanding access to career opportunities in advanced manufacturing, aligning available training activities with employer demand, and linking manufacturing employers with prospective employees.

With the support of the EBRPU, AMBAYArea has developed a Manufacturing Ambassador Program to connect manufacturers with students, parents, and educators and increase public awareness of career opportunities in manufacturing. The program selects manufacturing employees who are comfortable with being in a public role to provide presentations to groups of students and others about the benefits of a career in manufacturing. Ambassadors share the story of their choice to train for their specific job, what kind of post-secondary education and training they pursued, and what their current job includes. They are also trained to provide more general information about the variety of career opportunities in manufacturing and what the job market looks like. The Manufacturing Ambassador Program is funded by the EBRPU,

and conducted in partnership with the region's Workforce Development Boards, Bay Area Community Colleges, Bay Area LEEDS (Linking Education and Economic Development Strategies), The Manufacturing Institute, Earn & Learn, and Bay Area schools.

The regional Earn and Learn initiative, which began as a project of the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County, also partners with AMBayArea, providing a customer relationship management (CRM) platform that links Local Workforce Boards, K-12 schools and community colleges with work-based learning opportunities in the advanced manufacturing sector.

In the area of access to sector based opportunities, Local Workforce Boards have also participated in a Women in Manufacturing program launched by AMBayArea, which hosted a symposium attended by over 100 participants in February of 2020. The focus of the symposium was on promoting careers in manufacturing to women, sharing career pathway information for these occupations, and offering networking opportunities for professional advancement and entry into the field. AMBayArea has also offered Manufacturing Day and annual Manufacturing Week events to increase awareness of advanced manufacturing careers, which have been participated in by the Local Boards in the East Bay region. AMBayArea sources employers to participate in these events for K12 and community college students.

A key activity of AMBayArea prior to the advent of COVID-19 was the sponsorship of an annual summit that brought together employers and other project partners around employer-driven workshop tracks, which included workforce development. The EBRPU and its Local Boards have played an important role in driving the workforce development-related content of these summit events. AMBayArea is exploring the possibility of future delivery of these summits virtually or through a combination of virtual and in-person.

In 2020, after a highly successful tenure leading the partnership from an idea to a self-sustaining, industry-driven organization in partnership with the region's workforce and economic development entities, AMBayArea's founding Director stepped down. He was succeeded by the Bay Area Community College Consortium's Regional Director of Employer Engagement for advanced manufacturing. The new Director had previously served on the AMBayArea Board and was a long-time collaborator with EBRPU partner Boards, enabling a smooth transition and even deeper partnership between workforce development, industry and community college and high-school partners.

## Health

The **East Bay Health Workforce Partnership** (EBHWP) is an employer-led initiative carried out with the support of community and education leaders, which seeks to meet current and future workforce needs of healthcare employers, to expand employment opportunities for local workers, and strengthen the regional economy. The EBHWP employs a range of strategies to achieve these goals:

- Increase and diversify the pool of qualified health workers and secure jobs to meet regional demands
- Align the needs and priorities of employers in health profession education and training programs
- Systematically increase work based learning opportunities for K-16 and health professions students
- Build a data-driven rationale for changing current systems, infrastructure development and sustaining healthcare workforce initiatives
- Develop and advocate for policy solutions that eliminate barriers to increase workforce

and education capacity, investment and sustainability

The EBHWP also seeks to implement more specific internship and training opportunities in the healthcare field. These include: identifying opportunities for youth internships with industry partners; support for growing healthcare training opportunities in behavioral health, medical assistant, dental assistant, phlebotomy, emergency medical technician, and pandemic-related employment; and supporting outreach and recruitment for regional training opportunities. The EBHWP has begun to develop apprenticeship models and has taken leadership in designing training programs for contract tracers and community health workers in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The EBRPU has provided direct funding to the EBHWP for project staffing and has played an active role in implementation of project activities.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The EBRPU has had past engagement with the East Bay Information Communication Technology Partnership (EBICTP), now **Bay ICT**, which launched in 2016 and is made up of regional business leaders and community partners focused on promoting economic growth in the East Bay region through the ICT sector. Historically, the partnership has included employer partners that are leaders in their fields and have a commitment to serving as industry champions for the work of the initiative. An important part of the work of what is now Bay ICT has been to document career pathways, with a particular focus on connecting disadvantaged populations and youth to ICT career opportunities. The EBRPU has been a key partner in this work, along with community based organizations, community colleges, and other institutions and organizations that serve job seekers who might not traditionally be exposed to the career opportunities in the ICT sector.

Bay ICT has also collaborated with the California Community Colleges Bay Area Center of Excellence based at San Francisco City College to access Burning Glass data to better understand the diverse sectors in the ICT field. This labor market information is then validated and enhanced by partnership member companies to inform strategy.

Bay ICT has focused on three key initiatives: 1) Defining a new set of skills for the ICT workplace, which includes both technical and non-technical skills, knowledge, and abilities; 2) Shifting to an experiential learning model, that gives students much more workplace experience and a curriculum focused on problem solving and collaboration, which will require a deeper collaboration between ICT-intensive businesses and education and training institutions and programs; and 3) Building new awareness and attracting more people to ICT careers, using creative approaches and representatives to create a much more diverse workforce.

Based on long-standing feedback from stakeholders, including Workforce Boards, Bay ICT's community college partners have begun developing and offering short-term, flexible training programs for in-demand occupations across sectors that are better aligned to the needs of job seekers, career changers, and incumbent workers. This is a promising trend championed by the partnership. To further enable accessibility, these trainings are registered on the State's Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individuals enrolled in WIOA services access to funding for training.



## **Additional EBRPU Strategies and Activities to Support Sector Pathways**

The EBRPU is actively working on strategies in which it has a unique role to play in supporting the growth and development of sector pathways in the region. One key area of this work is related to building systems and infrastructure to connect Career Center referrals to sector opportunities in a timely manner. The number and diversity of the network of EBRPU's workforce-related partners represents a unique resource. The multiple America's Job Center of California (AJCC) sites in the region offer a prime mechanism for direct referrals to training and employment opportunities in manufacturing, health, and other in-demand sectors.

An important area of future support from the EBRPU will be the provision of enhanced data on the outcomes of people referred to sector-related activities, which will be carried out with the next round of Regional Plan Implementation funding. Tracking this data (which includes information such as participant completions, certificates, job placements, etc.) more closely will facilitate review of different components of each sector-based partnership to determine what elements are working effectively and where changes need to be made. By incorporating data related to race and gender, the EBRPU will bring an equity lens to this effort, supporting each partnership in ensuring that women and communities of color are obtaining the same opportunities as other individuals in achieving access to sector-based training and employment.

The EBRPU also intends to expand its contribution to the success of these initiatives by developing a more robust system of conveying LMI data to career systems networks and partners. Through its close collaboration with the California Employment Development Department (EDD), and the qualitative and quantitative data provided by the California Community Colleges-Bay Area Center of Excellence, the EBRPU has the capacity to collect, organize, and share labor market data relevant to employers and job-seekers in a timely fashion, facilitating decisions that are well aligned with market conditions in a rapidly changing economy.

### ***2.b. Increasing Access to Training and Education Aligned with the Regional Labor Market***

The EBRPU will continue to provide financial and strategic development support for workforce training and education in sectors with significant demand in the regional labor market, and work to expand participant access to these resources. The EBRPU is well-positioned to pursue this goal, grounded in its access to data regarding trends in the regional labor market and its history of convening and mobilizing partners that include employers, labor, education and training providers, nonprofit service agencies, local government, and economic development entities. The subsections below identify current and anticipated efforts in the key sectors in which the EBRPU is actively engaged.

A key strategy identified by the EBRPU in its Regional Plan Implementation 4.0 framework is the development of mechanisms to *enhance the tracking of data regarding training* developed by or in partnership with regional industry partnerships and other priority sectors across the region. This work could include identifying and implementing mechanisms to verify and capture training activities associated with the Region's industry partnerships; verifying and capturing service network participant referrals; identifying co-enrollment opportunities; and documenting co-enrollments, completions, and employment by sector.

This activity would help to establish benchmarks for the number of individuals who complete training and/or who obtain industry recognized credentials in the region's identified priority sectors and occupations. This will help to support the Regional Plan Implementation 4.0

strategy of better informing the career service network of trainings in general, and early enough for the workforce system to prepare and refer competitive customers. EBRPU partner Boards would work in concert with the advanced manufacturing (AMBAYArea) and health (EBHWP) partnerships described above to implement this data tracking strategy. Additionally, the EBRPU plans to collaborate with the State's technical assistance providers, Jobs for the Future and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, to explore viable and relevant regional indicators of success as prescribed by the California State Workforce Development Board.

One of the greatest challenges to expanding access to training and education for in-demand sector employment for those with barriers is the lack of opportunity to continue to earn income during the training process. For this reason, the EBRPU and its partners have prioritized supporting education and training opportunities that enable participants to continue to receive income while they learn.

### **Advanced Manufacturing**

In a move to increase program integration, the Director of AMBAYArea also serves as a regional director of employer engagement for the region's community colleges. The EBRPU has contributed Regional Plan Implementation resources to support the implementation of this model, which facilitates a structural integration of industry, workforce development, and community colleges in the region, leading to more efficient, timely systems coordination, alignment, and stakeholder engagement.

In the advanced manufacturing sector, the EBRPU is using Regional Plan Implementation funding to develop and launch a suite of virtual career navigation tools for front line case managers and job seekers. The tools include a career guide that provides rapid access to information on job functions, skill requirements, training and education opportunities, and career options in in-demand manufacturing occupations in the region. The accompanying online course catalogue includes a robust inventory of industry-validated trainings along pathways articulated in the career guide. Its intuitive search functions allow users to filter training by job type, duration, cost, and format, as well as by provider, including community colleges and adult schools.

AMBAYArea is in the process of designing trainings to build workforce system capacity to use these virtual tools. In collaboration with AMBAYArea, EBRPU is also exploring opportunities to register promising virtual trainings on the State's ETPL. These resources were intentionally designed for portability and transfer, to be used in any geography and for any industry sectors.

The Career Guide and Catalogue will serve as a resource and case management tool for workforce development counselors in the region, helping determine if clients are interested in a career in manufacturing, and then enabling them to narrow down their search to a specific job area and the training available. Sector employers will also use the new resources to promote professional development and training for incumbent workers. The Career Guide and Catalogue will help: inform the regional workforce system on the key skills and abilities employers seek for in-demand jobs; provide clear pathways to careers; and offer a clearinghouse of training offerings including those offered virtually or in-person by industry recognized training providers, community colleges, and adult schools.

### **Health**

The EBRPU's work with the EBHWP seeks to advance access to training and education for the health sector in multiple ways. Two of the key priority areas identified by the EBHWP explicitly

address the importance of strengthening access to training and education aligned with the needs of the health field. The first seeks to “increase the alignment of healthcare education and training with employer needs – especially regarding shifting competencies, demand, and new models for delivering care.” This priority is to be carried out through examining the changing competencies in occupational pathways by fostering cross-system discussions on the changing landscape of regional delivery systems and their impact on workforce demand, competencies, and training systems. Educators, Workforce Development Boards, and workforce service providers are essential participants in this conversation.

An additional priority for the EBHWP aims to “systematically increase work-based learning (WBL) opportunities in healthcare for K-16 and health professions students.” Activities to achieve this priority include: mapping and coordinating regional and sub-regional health pathway initiatives and mechanisms for WBL; support for the development of infrastructure to simplify the processes for employers to provide WBL opportunities for K-16 students; fostering a discussion with CEOs and human resources (HR) leadership of health employers to identify WBL incentives and models that could exist inside institutions and facilitate cultural shifts; and identifying emerging promising practices to move community colleges and four-year graduates into health fields using WBL and targeting gaps in the pipeline. These are all strategies in which the EBRPU can make an important contribution.

### **Supporting Work-Based Learning**

The EBRPU has been able to leverage important support for work-based learning opportunities through AMBayArea's Ambassador program, described above, and EBHWP's leadership role in developing robust pathway program partnerships in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The Ambassador program sources and trains diverse early career professionals to serve as industry ambassadors for K-12 and community college students and teachers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program provided in-class presentations and on-site factory tours, as well as other career exposure opportunities. The program also provides externship opportunities for educators to increase their capacity to provide meaningful, industry-informed and career relevant experiences for their students. Due to the prohibition of in-person engagement during the pandemic, the program has been redesigned to accommodate virtual presentations. The previous programming will resume when schools reopen and employers are sufficiently stabilized to allocate the necessary staffing resources.

The EBHWP has offered leadership by providing education and training partners with up-to-date LMI for the health sector, sourcing work-based learning opportunities, summer internship programs, and other opportunities. The EBHWP has also identified new career path opportunities into healthcare through contact tracing and community ambassadors, and developed robust pathway program partnerships in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties. It has also successfully secured ETP funding for training cohorts in collaboration with health care providers.

Prior to the pandemic, the EBHWP was instrumental in sourcing clinical opportunities to fulfill training requirements for in-demand occupations as part of training pathways supported by the partnership, and sponsored a robust summer internship program. EBHWP has convened other regional industry partnerships to identify points of alignment, pursue programmatic efficiencies, and other opportunities for learning.

The EBRPU also continues to contribute to the Earn and Learn regional work-based learning initiative, specifically to leverage their CRM tool to source work-based learning opportunities

through AMBayArea. The EBRPU will continue to explore opportunities to partner and integrate programs.

### ***2.c. Training and Education Leading to Industry-Recognized Post-Secondary Credentials***

There are numerous points of connection between the EBRPU and the regional community college infrastructure, specifically the Bay Area Community College Consortium (BACCC), the Bay Region Center of Excellence, and the California Community College District Regional Directors for Employer Engagement. For the past 10 years, the region has invested heavily in regional industry partnerships. This work began with a Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACT) grant that aligned the collaborative work of the region's community colleges, Workforce Development Boards, economic development entities, and K-12 institutions and continues to anchor and guide their partnerships to this day.

As previously introduced, the EBRPU has provided seed and sustainability funding to several of the region's priority sector industry partnerships in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and ICT. AMBayArea and Bay ICT are both managed by locally hosted California Community College District Regional Directors for Employer Engagement, who also work closely with the Region's Center of Excellence for labor market research and analytics. The EBRPU has played a role in facilitating coordination across these industry and post-secondary partners.

Through these channels, the EBRPU and the regional community college system strive towards regional information sharing, plan coordination, resource alignment, and strategic partnerships. The BACCC hosts monthly Regional Engagement / Adult Career Pathways meetings in which the EBRPU Regional Organizer and Board management staff participate. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings have been a venue for cross-system information sharing, learning, and adaptation. Based on longstanding feedback from workforce and other system partners, the region's community colleges have begun to offer short-term, flexible course offerings, including virtual and asynchronous courses for credit, for in-demand jobs in the region's priority industry sectors. Further, many courses will be qualified for eligible training provider lists, allowing for systems alignment and the removal of barriers for participants to take advantage of critical education and training that can enable access to higher quality jobs and economic mobility.

The EBRPU will seek to continue and expand collaboration with post-secondary workforce training that is fully aligned with the changing needs of employers and job seekers, and ensures the credentials provided by post-secondary institutions are industry-recognized, portable and stackable. An important part of the EBRPU's agenda for this work is supporting the alignment of training commitments in order to move people toward better quality jobs.

The Manufacturing Career Guide and Online Manufacturing Course Catalog are a notable example of EBRPU and community college collaboration. These virtual resources for advanced manufacturing were developed by the Bay Region's Director for Employer Engagement in collaboration with the EBRPU Regional Organizer and key stakeholders with regional workforce funding. The EBRPU intends to use the lessons learned from this very successful work to inform future activities in other sectors.

The EBRPU also supports information sharing through HOTJOBS, an EBRPU-administered communication network connecting over 300 workforce and education professionals in the East Bay. This venue provides the opportunity to share training opportunities, job openings, and other information related to the intersection of workforce, education, and training providers.

## **Adult Schools**

There are four adult education consortia in the East Bay, each of which serves a subset of the full geography of the region and operates with different structures. As a result, EBRPU Local Boards primarily engage the adult schools on a sub-regional and local level. Historically, there has been regional coordination on regional career pathway grants and work-based learning initiatives, and the EBRPU will continue to seek out funding for these efforts.

### ***2.d. Improving Program Alignment and Expanding Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Opportunities***

Apprenticeship has been a continuing topic of conversation in the Region's manufacturing and healthcare industry partnerships. The EBHWP has established a new Home Care Aide Apprenticeship program serving Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in collaboration with its long-term care partners including Senior Helpers. It is anticipated that pre-pandemic labor shortages will continue to persist in many occupations, presenting opportunities to invest in talent development pipelines to fill openings especially as baby boomers retire. Apprenticeship represents a particularly promising strategy for immersing job seekers in a new field. The EBRPU will work with the DIR-DAS and regional partners to explore different approaches to the development of regional apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in in-demand occupations in the region's priority sectors.

Apprenticeship offers substantial opportunities to advance equity in the workforce by providing access to quality, family-sustaining jobs, and income mobility. It can allow individuals who are unable to forego income to continue to earn a salary while they learn a new profession, or to advance in their existing field. This is particularly important during the present COVID-related economic downturn. Apprenticeships can also offer women and persons of color the chance to overcome barriers by demonstrating their skills in a particular field to potential employers, enabling them to be judged and hired on their merits rather than being excluded based on their identification as part of a particular group.

The EBRPU has been funded to procure consulting services to develop and execute a plan for researching the feasibility of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in association with regional industry partnership and employers. While this funding is limited, the scope of this work could include some of the following activities:

- Facilitating meetings with the EBRPU partner Workforce Boards and with additional key stakeholders, conducting interviews, carrying out research, identifying priority occupations (in collaboration with partner employers), stakeholder engagement, interviews, facilitation, convenings, preparing reports, and making presentations;
- Leveraging the extensive work already taking place in region to explore and develop apprenticeship opportunities in key sectors; and
- Leveraging the activities of the California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI), a project of the Foundation for California Community Colleges in partnership with CA Community Colleges, CA DAS and the California Department of Labor's (DOL) ApprenticeshipUS, which has a particular focus on equitable apprenticeships. The CAI is launching peer learning circles to share best practices related to apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships across the state.

These activities will help the EBRPU achieve the Regional Plan objective of exploring high road career pathways into quality jobs in regional priority industries.

In order to create scalable models for the development of apprenticeships, the EBRPU is collaborating with a new, youth-focused, non-traditional, credit-bearing, paid pre-apprenticeship pilot program called Boatworks 101. The mission of the program is to train the next generation of craftspeople in the marine industry. To achieve this mission, the program will include a traditional classroom component linked to hands-on training that rotates through multiple employers throughout the East Bay. While this apprenticeship is focused on the marine industry, training will include cross-sector skills in multiple occupations including electricians, diesel mechanics, riggers, carpenters, and composites. The program has received DAS approval, and is included on the ETPL list. Collaboration with this innovative pilot effort will offer the EBRPU the opportunity to identify best practices and lessons learned that can be applied to the establishment of apprenticeship programs in other sectors.

In order to carry out a regional apprenticeship strategy, EBRPU partner Boards could pool resources in support of education and training for target populations. Where feasible, the EBRPU would target ETPL-registered programs to enable access to ITA funds for enrolled participants. This would create the opportunity for co-enrollments, requiring the development of a system to track co-enrollees across systems and capture data on training completion and credential attainment. Collection and analysis of this data could serve as a valuable tool for measuring race and gender equity in relationship to access to valuable apprenticeship opportunities in fields with growing opportunities and good wages.

EBRPU partner Boards continue to work with MC3 (Multi-Core Construction Curriculum) programs in all four Local Areas, which serve as pre-apprenticeships to the building and construction trades. These programs have provided significant opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment to access high-quality family sustaining jobs.

### **3. Enabling Upward Mobility For Californians**

Providing workers and job seekers in the East Bay with the opportunity to improve their economic status and achieve long-term financial stability is a driving principle of the EBRPU. All four Local Boards, along with training providers and partners, are committed to creating a workforce system in the East Bay that promotes equity. This section describes some of the programs, policies, and initiatives that will empower workers, families, and the broader community.

#### **3.a. High Road Workforce System**

##### **Criteria for Selecting Employers**

East Bay Workforce Boards will continue to prioritize employers based on a number of factors including presence in priority sectors, wages, and the options they provide for career advancement. While specific employer criteria are determined at the Local Board level, it is core to the region's economic justice-based mission to align job seekers with organizations that will allow them to obtain their long term career and financial goals.

##### **Incumbent Worker Training**

Training of incumbent workers is an important strategy for enabling upward mobility, and is of particular interest to both employers and employees in the EBRPU's advanced manufacturing and health sector partnerships. It is a primary training service offered in both Alameda and



Contra Costa Counties.<sup>77, 78</sup> Incumbent worker training is an employment retention strategy providing training that will result in progression on a career pathway and income mobility.<sup>79</sup> A key focus of WIOA incumbent worker training is to train individuals with barriers to employment so that they can remain competitive in their current position and increase their contributions to their employer. By focusing on individuals with barriers to employment, local Workforce Boards strive to improve equity in the workforce by increasing the marketable skills of individuals with identified needs. Training can take place within an organization or externally and often takes place in the classroom, in the lab, on the computer, and through video conferencing.<sup>80</sup>

### **3.b. Equity and Economic Justice**

The EBRPU and its member Boards are engaged in a range of structural and systemic efforts intended to promote equity and economic justice in the region's workforce system. This will be a focus on the current round of regional plan implementation funding in tandem with economic recovery planning activities. The goal is to integrate equity into the emerging strategies that the Board will employ during recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic has required the redirection of resources to address the most urgent issues, it also provides the chance to revisit existing strategies and explore new approaches. Best practices that are identified at the local level will be scaled regionally.

The EBRPU has a number of promising initiatives to draw upon that exist at the local level. In the area of equity in workforce strategies, the Oakland Workforce Development Board is working with the City of Oakland's Department of Race and Equity to develop and integrate equity-focused policies and practices into the local workforce system. On-the-job training is being used by a number of Local Boards as a strategy for enabling training participants with limited income and assets to support themselves while they engage in training. Employment Training Panel (ETP) funds are being used by the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) to offer paid work experience to students with disabilities, and by the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC) to provide medical assistant training in a partnership with the EBHWP. The Alameda County, Oakland, and Richmond Workforce Boards have developed their own equity strategies around First Source and Local Hire agreements in their jurisdictions. All four of the Local Boards are engaged in the Prison to Employment (P2E) project, which builds upon AB109 realignment in both counties to bring paid work experience and customized supportive services to justice-involved individuals returning to the community.

### **Racial Equity Dialogue, Capacity Building, and Service Delivery**

The East Bay region is beset with significant equity challenges, and local areas have historically responded in particular ways that reflect local dynamics and perceived needs. The Black Lives Matter movement has created a new urgency and openings to reckon with structural and

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<sup>77</sup> "Customized & Incumbent Worker Training Program," Alameda Workforce Development Board, accessed February 24, 2021,

<https://www.acwdb.org/acwdb-assets/img/Customized%20Training%20Flyer.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> "County Local Plan: For the WDBCCC and Contra Costa County Local Area (2017-2020)," Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County, accessed February 24, 2021,

[https://www.wdbccc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WDBCCC-Local\\_Plan\\_2017-2020.pdf](https://www.wdbccc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/WDBCCC-Local_Plan_2017-2020.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> "Incumbent Worker Training," *Employment Development Department State of California*, July 2, 2019, 3, [https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs\\_and\\_Training/pubs/wsd19-01.pdf](https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/pubs/wsd19-01.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> "Incumbent Worker Training," *Employment Development Department State of California*, July 2, 2019, [https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs\\_and\\_Training/pubs/wsd19-01.pdf](https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/pubs/wsd19-01.pdf)

systemic racism and engage in difficult conversations. EBRPU partner Boards are earnestly engaging with these conversations about how to re-envision policies, practices, and programs that address equity more concretely.

The City of Oakland has taken a leadership role as it relates to local government, race, and equity, and the region could learn from its experience and support, particularly in workforce development. The City has established a Department of Race and Equity, whose mission is to work with all City departments to assess and process dimensions of race, equity, and inclusion in policy, practice, and outcomes. The Oakland Workforce Board has engaged with the Department extensively.

Another important effort that the EBRPU has engaged in regionally is Bay Area Workforce Solutions, a WAF 7.0 funded initiative focused on increasing racial equity across the Bay Area. Bay Area Workforce Solutions brought together a very large and diverse array of collaborators to break down silos and increase economic equity across San Francisco, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties. Project activities included a series of panels including national thought leaders to discuss and respond to questions regarding strategies designed to close racial and gender income and wealth gaps for the most vulnerable members of the community. The WDBCCC was a convening partner for this effort, and the OWDB provided a presentation at one of the panels on the City of Oakland's groundbreaking equity work.

In the first year of 2021-2024 Regional Plan implementation, capacity building work in the area of equity and economic justice could begin with peer-to-peer learning among EBRPU partner Board Directors including convenings of key stakeholders to explore equity in workforce strategies. Partner Boards could also consider identifying existing policies and programs shown to produce positive outcomes. This could lead to the identification of measures to track dimensions of equity in practices and outcomes across the regional workforce system, and could include adopting policies supporting equity and job quality standards or those that emphasize income mobility.

This activity could create spaces for difficult and necessary conversations and processes within local workforce areas and with EBRPU partners and stakeholders. These conversations, inquiries, and learning exchanges could move the region towards policies that support greater equity and strive to improve job quality. Strategic service alignment could take place where opportunities present themselves.

This racial equity work would support the Regional Plan objective of providing regional system capacity building around race and equity. The Region could develop a plan by which progress would be measured, including collecting existing policies and programs designed to address equity, informational presentations with regional leaders on the topic, peer learning exchanges, convenings, and application of inquiry and other tools created by the City of Oakland Department of Race and Equity. Progress on this activity could be measured by process outcomes.

### **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**

The EBRPU has used OJT as a critical equity strategy prior to and during the pandemic, and will continue to promote this model of training as the economy recovers. Participation in unpaid training and education is often not an option for individuals with barriers to employment. Low wages in comparison to the high cost of living in the East Bay region means that workers cannot forego income and sustain themselves. Providing workers with wages while they are training

enables them to focus on learning new skills while not having to sacrifice income for themselves and their families. Workers are guaranteed a minimum of 32 hours per week and must be paid wages at least those of the current industry standard. After completion, the training employers must offer the employee a regular long-term position with the company.<sup>81</sup>

On-the-job training allows for employers to be reimbursed for a portion of a worker's wages while they are in a training period. This training period generally lasts about three months, but is based on a dollar cap and varies by Local Board. Employers are reimbursed up to 50% of hourly wages.<sup>82</sup> When workers participate in on-the-job training, they have the opportunity to earn wages and learn how to perform tasks at their new place of employment at the same time.

Another way in which OJT wage reimbursements can promote equity is by providing incentives to employers to train and hire individuals with barriers who might not otherwise be considered for employment. An added barrier for many of the individuals within these populations is a lack of work history, something which OJT can help to address. OJT incentive programs include individuals in the following groups:

- Justice involved
- Completing substance use treatment
- Experiencing housing instability or homelessness
- Physical / cognitive disability
- Veterans
- Out of school youth
- Native Americans / American Indians / Indigenous Americans
- Migrant workers

## Employment Training Panel

California's Employment and Training Panel is made up of union, business, and government representatives and provides financial assistance for training purposes directly to businesses in collaboration with local Workforce Boards in the East Bay.<sup>83</sup> Training efforts provide many traditionally unserved / underserved groups with the skills required to remain competitive in the labor market and obtain high paying and stable employment. Among the goals of the Employment Training Panel is to provide training opportunities for the following:<sup>84</sup>

- Individuals in rural California (including the Central and Imperial Valleys)
- Individuals in urban High Unemployment Areas (HUAs)
- Individuals who are veterans
- Individuals who were formerly incarcerated
- Youth who are considered at-risk of becoming involved in criminal activity
- Individuals who are injured or disabled
- Individuals with other barriers to employment

HUAs are incentivized by the Employment Training Panel to provide training opportunities. For example, training providers in these areas can receive funding without meeting certain

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<sup>81</sup> Alameda Workforce, "(OJT)," <https://www.acwdb.org/acwdb-assets/img/Updated%20ACWDB%20-%20OJT%20flyer.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> "On The Job Training Program (OJT)," *Alameda Workforce Development Board*, accessed February 24, 2021, <https://www.acwdb.org/acwdb-assets/img/Updated%20ACWDB%20-%20OJT%20flyer.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> "Employment Training Panel," Home Page, Employment Training Panel, accessed February 22, 2021, <https://etp.ca.gov/>

<sup>84</sup> "Employment Training Panel 2019-2020 Strategic Plan," *Employment Training Panel*, 2019-2020, [https://etp.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/70/2019/06/ETP19-20\\_StrategicPlan\\_Accessible.pdf](https://etp.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/70/2019/06/ETP19-20_StrategicPlan_Accessible.pdf)

requirements necessary to receive reimbursement in other areas of the state.<sup>85</sup>

EBRPU Local Boards have engaged ETP funds in a variety of ways to promote economic equity and justice. The WDBCCC has partnered with the EBHWP to obtain ETP funding to cover the cost of medical assistant training for Contra Costa County residents. The RWDB has collaborated with the West Contra Costa Unified School District and the Department of Rehabilitation over several years to offer workforce training and paid work experience in local businesses for students with disabilities.

### **First Source and Local Hire Ordinances**

Three of the four Workforce Boards in the region have supported the development of, and are engaged with, local hire ordinances in their communities, which leverage the economic power of local government to expand opportunities for local residents to obtain employment with contractors on city-funded projects. The RichmondBuild pre-apprenticeship construction training program works closely with employers who are subject to this ordinance to provide a pathway to construction employment for program graduates. Also in the construction sector, the Richmond and Contra Costa County Boards partner with providers of the Multi-Core Construction Curriculum (MC3), which offers on-ramps into skilled trades in the building and construction sector.

The City of Richmond, the Port of Oakland, and Alameda County as a whole have local hiring policies which mandate a certain percentage of those employed on government-funded construction projects be filled by qualified local residents.<sup>86, 87, 88</sup> In Richmond, local hiring policies impact not only construction employment but also retail, office, administrative, and other employment in the city. Along with benefiting the employers by facilitating the provision of qualified applicants in response to their labor needs, local hiring also provides needed employment for local residents. Local hiring can be viewed as an anti-gentrification policy by both providing community residents with incomes which will allow them to continue to reside in the community, while preventing new development from attracting outside workers and displacing existing community residents. By reinvesting public works and other local tax subsidies to fund construction projects, local hiring provides further economic development benefits by reinvesting those funds into jobs for local residents.

### **Supportive Services**

A key to delivering supportive services with an equity lens is developing an equity-centered service delivery system design, ensuring that services are as accessible as possible to those who need them and are allocated to different communities in proportion to the need. The Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) model is an innovative approach to the no-wrong-door model of service delivery, which is being adopted by the Alameda County Workforce

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<sup>85</sup> “Employment Training Panel 2019-2020 Strategic Plan,” *Employment Training Panel*, 2019-2020, [https://etp.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/70/2019/06/ETP19-20\\_StrategicPlan\\_Accessible.pdf](https://etp.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/70/2019/06/ETP19-20_StrategicPlan_Accessible.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> “An Ordinance Of The Council Of The City Of Richmond Amending Chapter 2.56 Of The Municipal Code Of The City Of Richmond: Chapter 2.56 Local Employment Program,” The Council of The City of Richmond, accessed february 24, 2021,

<https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/1374/Local-Employment-Ordinance?bidId=>

<sup>87</sup> “Maritime And Aviation Project Labor Agreement (MAPLA) 2016 Social Justice Program,” Port of Oakland, last modified November 8, 2018, 1-32.

<https://www.portoakland.com/files/PDF/responsibility/CIP%202018-11.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> “First Source Program,” About Us, Alameda County, CA, accessed February 22, 2021

<https://www.acgov.org/auditor/sleb/sourceprogram.htm>

Development Board (ACWDB) for their most recent service provider Request For Proposals. The OWDB has also used an equity analysis to identify the most impacted communities and aligned resources to meet the need.

Regional workforce development efforts in the East Bay are predicated around an understanding that all workers have unique challenges and needs. Without vital services and resources, workers will not be successful on the job and will not be able to provide their full potential to their employer and society as a whole. The following supportive services are some of the strategies that the region utilizes to empower the region's job seekers and workers:

- Child Care
- Subsidies
- Transportation
- Work Clothing
- Work tools
- Books
- Health Care
- Costs to cover required medical tests (e.g., TB tests)
- Legal Resources
- Emergency Food
- Shelter
- Costs associated with obtaining required documentation or licensing (e.g., California state ID card, state testing, licensing fees)
- Parking permit fees for training purposes at local community colleges

### ***SparkPoint Centers***

SparkPoint Centers, an initiative of the United Way of the Bay Area, provide financial literacy education to individuals and families with the aim of helping participants move towards financial self-sufficiency. The Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County has developed a strong collaboration with SparkPoint to enable individuals who are receiving workforce services to enable them to learn how to improve their income, increase their savings, build assets, and strengthen their credit rating. Because financial literacy is fundamental to the success of so many workforce development program participants, this partnership provides a strategy for other Boards in the region to help participants improve their financial literacy skills.

### ***COVID-19-Specific Supportive Services***

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact which has directly affected the financial stability of East Bay workers and job seekers. The region's Workforce Development Boards offer assistance to individuals during this time of increased economic need.

The digital divide has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Access to computers and broadband service, already a challenge for many low income individuals, has suddenly become essential for job search, interviewing, workforce training, and the performance of job-related tasks in many occupations. Local Boards have established programs to lend equipment and offer training to facilitate virtual access for enrolled participants. Delivery of these services is certain to continue to be important in the post-COVID era, due to shifts in employment and work that will persist even after the return of more in-person engagement.

In the East Bay, job seekers who have had wages negatively impacted by the pandemic or individuals who are collecting unemployment insurance payment can qualify for financial



assistance. This assistance can help with payments for the following:<sup>89,90,91</sup>

- Utility Bills
- Housing Expenses
- Child Care
- Work-related needs (e.g. tools/technology)

### ***Assessing an Equitable Response to COVID-19 in the East Bay***

The COVID-19 pandemic has ruptured assumptions about the nature of work and workplaces. It has resulted in global adoption of remote communications and other virtual resources that dramatically impact how the public workforce system will develop policies, service delivery strategies, investment in digital infrastructure, and partnerships. An equity focus will be vital as these are developed, given the scale of unemployment and pre-pandemic labor market trends.

Progress on an equitable COVID-19 response in policy, strategy, and implementation could be measured by process outcomes. The EBRPU could work with a contractor to project manage an equitable response to the pandemic-driven recession. The partner Workforce Development Boards could develop a scope of work with a timeline and deliverables, which could include research, policy review, interviews, facilitating planning sessions, developing scenario frameworks, and synthesizing the project in a final report to the EBRPU partners.

The development of scenario frameworks would assist East Bay Region Local Boards to navigate the near future, individually and as a region. Scenario frameworks would help the partner Boards think about systems, structures, and strategies; policies and programs to address inequitable labor market outcomes; and how to sustain and embed engagement around matters of race and equity in standard operations. This activity would help the region move towards adopting policies that support equity and improved job quality.

## **Equity Initiatives with Specific Populations**

### ***Individuals with Disabilities***

Based in Alameda County, East Bay Innovations operates Project Search, a workforce program with the goal of enhancing the transferable skills of individuals with developmental disabilities. Along with a focus on the individual worker, Project Search serves the business community by allowing an untapped labor pool of workers to find employment in local public and private organizations.<sup>92</sup> The WDBCCC has partnered with East Bay Innovations on a successful Disability Employment Accelerator grant, funded by the California Employment Development Department, to provide workforce development and work experience opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

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<sup>89</sup> “Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County: Job Seeker Services,” WDBCCC, accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.wdbccc.com/jobseeker-services/>

<sup>90</sup> “Laid off? Wages cut? Due to COVID-19 Need help paying Bills?,” Alameda Workforce Development Board, accessed February 24, 2021, <https://www.acwdb.org/acwdb-assets/img/6.%206.15.20%20CERSS%20FLyer%20Final-page-001.jpg>

<sup>91</sup> “Financial Assistance For Eligible Unemployed Oaklanders Impacted by COVID-19,” City of Oakland, accessed February 24, 2021, <https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Flyers-Financial-assistance-for-eligible-unemployed-oaklanders-eng-spa-SIG.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> “Project Search,” Our Services, East Bay Innovations, accessed February 22, 2021, <https://www.eastbayinnovations.org/services/project-search/>

### ***Reentry for Justice-Involved Individuals***<sup>93</sup>

In 2017-18, EBRPU enrolled a total of 3,108 individuals into WIOA-funded staff-assisted services. Of those, approximately 250 (8%) self-reported an offender status at program enrollment.<sup>94</sup> It is very likely that these numbers are not reflective of the full number of current or former offenders served in the region, as individuals are not obligated to disclose offender status and face stigma about sharing this information.

Justice-involved individuals face fundamental barriers to employment that are often not addressed through traditional workforce development programming. These include lack of access to housing or transportation, difficulties in document recovery, and behavioral health needs. There are 135 organizations within the region's network of publicly-funded, community-based providers serving the supervised population, 48 of which are providing some level of workforce-related services. However, only a handful of organizations provide a continuum of workforce services paired with other support services, and few provide Earn and Learn or on-the-job training opportunities. Addressing this gap using Prison to Employment (P2E) funds will offer justice-involved individuals greater incentives to participate in workforce programs, and a path with fewer barriers and challenges to a sustainable career.

Obtaining a job has the potential to provide not only a source of legitimate income to individuals who were formerly incarcerated, but structure in their lives and daily schedules. The East Bay offers several programs and initiatives to attempt to make the reentry process smoother and produce long-term sustainable results for this vulnerable population. All four Boards in the region have developed partnerships with legal advocacy groups and community-based organizations that are committed to assisting formerly incarcerated individuals secure employment. Key among these reentry initiatives are the following:

**Prison to Employment (P2E):** Along with all four Local Boards in the East Bay, the EBRPU works with County Probation Departments and the California Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections to implement P2E. Each of the East Bay Region WDBs intends to commit WDB business services staff resources to building employer partnerships and creating a strong infrastructure of support and information-sharing among employers and other P2E partners. In addition to developing new partnerships, P2E is an opportunity to enhance existing employer partnerships through the introduction of paid work experience, subsidized employment, and employer training on best practices for working with justice-involved individuals.<sup>95</sup>

The EBRPU recognizes that partnerships with entities who are experts in addressing the unique needs of justice-involved individuals is crucial to P2E success, as is ongoing training, knowledge sharing, and networking. To this end, each partner Board will mobilize existing service providers with this expertise and conduct procurement processes that comply with local and state procurement standards for employment and training services for justice-involved individuals where services will be procured.

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<sup>93</sup> "Alameda County Workforce Development Board: Job Seeker Services," *Alameda Workforce Development Board*, accessed February 22, 2018, [https://www.acwddb.org/\\_jobseeker\\_resources.page?](https://www.acwddb.org/_jobseeker_resources.page?)

<sup>94</sup> Each EBRPU Local Board provided data reports from CalJOBS on WIOA clients with formerly incarcerated status.

<sup>95</sup> "Regional Plan PY17-21 – Two Year Modifications," East Bay Regional Planning Unit, March 15, 2019, 5. <https://www.eastbayworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PY17-21-Regional-Plan-Mods-Narrative-v2.pdf>

EBPRU determined that it could best optimize limited P2E resources for the region's justice-involved population by utilizing funding to: 1) cultivate increased coordination and collaboration among partners throughout the region; and 2) address gaps and scale promising existing services within the region's reentry workforce development landscape, specifically by increasing the availability of wrap-around and support services and furnishing more opportunities for paid training and paid work experience. Data reveals low employment retention rates for justice-involved individuals due to numerous potential causes, such as lack of job readiness or poor matching, poor job quality, lack of post-placement supportive services, lack of post-placement career planning, as well as internal client factors. EBRPU Workforce Board partners will utilize P2E resources to support the strategies described above to meet individual needs.

Through the P2E initiative, the EBRPU plans to increase local Workforce Board staff capacity to coordinate existing P2E partners, including with Probation and Community Correction Partnerships, launch a new regional partnership with California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Adult Parole Operations, and expand the reentry employer networks that are currently supported by a variety of grants and other funding from federal, state, local, and philanthropic sources. The addition of funding from P2E will help to infuse crucial and timely support that will effectively integrate these efforts into a more coordinated and seamless local and regional service-delivery system that meets the needs of justice-involved populations. Local Board partners have also engaged with an array of programs at the local level to offer workforce services to justice-involved individuals, including:

- Job fairs offered at detention facilities to currently incarcerated individuals. These events include assistance with resume writing, preparation for presentations to employers, and connection of individuals with employers for future employment opportunities.
- AB 2060 Supervised Population Grants have been used to assist individuals transitioning out of prison to “ensure that they have access to training and education, job readiness skills, and job placement assistance.”<sup>96</sup>
- Partnerships with CDCR and County Parole to host monthly Parole and Community Team (PACT) meetings, which include information on available career center resources, WIOA training opportunities, recruitment opportunities, and supportive services.
- Participation by the WDBCCC in the U.S. Department of Labor's Customer-Centered Design Learning Challenge, which included a broad range of partners in the use of a human-centered design approach to developing a pilot tool kit for assisting recently incarcerated individuals.
- The Reentry Success Center, a Richmond-based program that provides workforce development services to justice-impacted individuals and families throughout the county.<sup>97</sup>

### ***Opportunity Youth***

The EBRPU recognizes the significant barriers that youth and young adults involved with the foster or justice system, and those who are homeless, experience in connecting to workforce

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<sup>96</sup> “AB 2060 Workforce Bill Signed Into Law,” *PolicyLink*, September 19, 2014,

[https://www.policylink.org/Blog/tags?field\\_blog\\_tags\\_tid=1056&items\\_per\\_page=10&page=2](https://www.policylink.org/Blog/tags?field_blog_tags_tid=1056&items_per_page=10&page=2)

<sup>97</sup> “Reentry Success Center,” Welcome Page, Reentry Success center, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.reentrysuccess.org/>

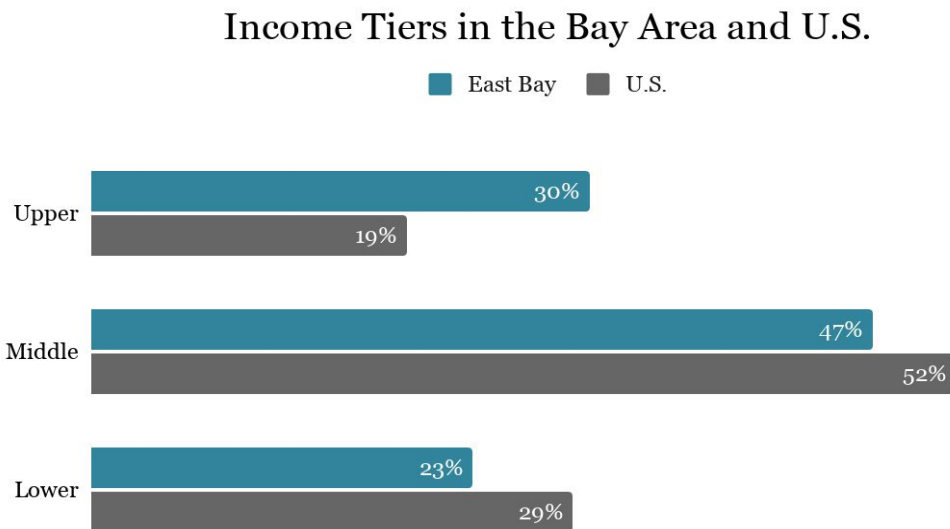
services, career pathways, and employment. As a potential approach, the EBRPU could seek to increase engagement and services for this population, including emerging and innovative strategies, in order to address barriers and enable these opportunity youth to connect with life-sustaining employment.

### *Creating a Path to the Middle Class*

Defining the “middle class” can be challenging due to geographic differences in the cost of living, consideration of assets, wealth, other capital, and income, as well as increasing levels of inequality. Factors associated with income such as health insurance, education beyond high school, and assets for retirement, are the most commonly used metrics for determining middle class status.<sup>98</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession further complicate the criteria for what constitutes middle class status. The EBRPU plans to work with the State’s designated technical assistance providers to pursue measures of success that are tailored to the specific characteristics of each region, including the question of what middle class status represents for the East Bay region.

Figure 16 represents the percentage of San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward residents in the upper, middle, and lower tiers of income, according to the Pew Research Center’s definitions of each.<sup>99</sup>

**Figure 16: Income Tiers in the Bay Area and the United States**



Factors associated with income such as health insurance, education beyond high school, and assets for retirement, are the most commonly used metrics for determining middle class

<sup>98</sup> “Defining and Measuring the Middle Class,” American Institute for Economic Research, August, 2015, <https://www.aier.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WP007-Middle-Class.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> Jesse Bennett, Richard Fry, and Rakesh Kochhar, “Are You in the American Middle Class? Find out with Our Income Calculator,” *Pew Research Center*, July 30, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/23/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/>

status.<sup>100</sup> According to one study, \$52,120 is the minimum income for a family of 2 in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area to be considered middle class.<sup>101</sup>

In the recent past, the East Bay region has concentrated its workforce efforts on serving individuals with multiple barriers to employment who are often at or below the poverty level. For these individuals to be placed on a path to the middle class, the EBRPU will need to develop innovative education and support strategies that enable participants to fully achieve their potential.

As described in section one, income greatly increases as a person obtains higher levels of education, such as when an individual moves from having some college experience to at least an associate's degree. However, the average median income for both the most common occupations (\$27,647) and the fastest growing occupations (\$40,263) are still well below what the Pew Research Center considers a middle class income for a family of two. Furthermore, many middle skill occupations do not produce an income which would be considered middle class (\$51,412 is the average median wage across top 20 occupations, versus the middle class income of \$52,120 cited above). Out of the top fastest growing and middle skill occupations, the following are the only occupations that produce an average median wage above PEW's threshold:

- Diagnostic Medical Sonographer
- Surgical Technologists
- Respiratory Therapists
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists
- Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
- Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
- Computer User Support Specialists
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians
- Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
- Web Developers
- Computer Network Support Specialists

Local Boards in the East Bay will seek to include the above occupations as benchmarks when designing trainings and placing job seekers into new employment opportunities.

#### **4. Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services**

The EBRPU seeks to continue to strengthen coordination and collaboration across East Bay Regional Workforce development programs and services in order to more effectively support job seekers and employers. As described in Section 2 of this regional plan, the role of aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs has been key to the EBRPU's success co-leading advanced manufacturing and health initiatives. The following section provides an initial framework that can be built upon for future workforce development alignment efforts.

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<sup>100</sup> "Defining and Measuring the Middle Class," American Institute for Economic Research, August, 2015, <https://www.aier.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WP007-Middle-Class.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> Bennett, Fry, and Kochhar, "Are You in the American Middle Class?" . <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/23/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/>

## 4.a System Alignment

### *Administrative Cost Arrangements for the Region*

The annual budget for the EBRPU supports regional communications and functions, including a website with a virtual service locator and a regional events calendar populated by all of the EBRPU's funded partners. The budget contains line items for resource development, strategic planning, and other items as needed when the annual budget is created. In addition, the EBRPU administers the HOTJOBS email listserv that links more than 300 workforce, education, and training professionals and provides a conduit for information sharing in the field. The four Local Boards occasionally share the costs of regional research and planning efforts, and the EBRPU is exploring additional opportunities for expanding coordination of administrative cost sharing.

The regional budget also supports the Regional Organizer (RO). The RO is key to managing all regional initiatives, resource development and grant reporting and serving as a central point of contact between partner systems and regional industry partnerships. The RO convenes and facilitates meetings for numerous staffing levels at Local Boards in the region (directors and business services / service network / youth program / career center managers) to identify best practices, troubleshoot, support the regional EASTBAYWorks brand, and identify opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

### *Regional Service Strategies, Including Cooperative Agreements and MOUs*

The four Workforce Boards in the East Bay have more than two decade's experience of regional cooperation and coordination, which began with the establishment of EASTBAYWorks in 1997. Directors, assistant directors, business service managers, and youth managers of each of the four Boards meet regularly to discuss challenges and brainstorm best practices and solutions to address workforce development obstacles and promote regional solutions.

### **Existing Regional MOU**

Although the four Local Boards have their own MOUs with their local partners, the EASTBAYWorks Partnership serves as the regional workforce MOU. This MOU joins the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa as well as the municipalities of Oakland and Richmond as the EBRPU to implement regionally funded initiatives, primarily but not limited to subgrants under WIOA.<sup>102</sup>

The EASTBAYWorks Partnership MOU goals include the following:

- Streamline processes, reduce duplication, and manage similar services;
- Receive funding and / or grants for regional planning, plan implementation, staff and workforce system training, and expansion of regional initiatives;
- Coordinate, jointly carry out tasks, and share in the regional funds;
- Lead Subgrantee shall contract with the other parties in a separate services agreement for each WIOA Subgrant in order to allocate current and future WIOA Subgrants and to implement programs on behalf of the EBRPU more efficiently; and
- Establish a "Lead Agent" framework for other regionally funded initiatives to more efficiently implement programs on behalf of the EBRPU.

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<sup>102</sup> "Memorandum Of Understanding For The Eastbay Works Partnership / East Bay Regional Planning Unit," County of Alameda, County of Contra Costa, City of Oakland and City of Richmond, January 1, 2020, 1. [http://64.166.146.245/docs/2020/BOS/20200121\\_1445/40653\\_EBWORKS%20RPU%20MOU%201-21-20.pdf](http://64.166.146.245/docs/2020/BOS/20200121_1445/40653_EBWORKS%20RPU%20MOU%201-21-20.pdf)



## **American Job Centers of California (AJCCs)**

The AJCCs of the East Bay Region operate as independent entities but contribute to the regional service strategy by sharing information on the *EASTBAYWorks* website, enabling job seekers across the region to locate the services that are most accessible to them. The geographic distribution of the centers in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties unifies the region by providing access to one-stop services to all of the region's residents.

## **Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC)**

One of the promising best practices for cooperative service delivery in the region is the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC). The CCWC is an innovative public-nonprofit partnership of 12 Contra Costa county education and workforce development organizations that currently operate within the county. The CCWC was developed in response to an identified need for regional collaboration and system alignment to move beyond strategies that prioritize low-wage, immediate employment opportunities and towards pathways to sustainable well-paid employment for diverse job seekers.

The CCWC works to support the expansion of the workforce development system by coordinating with the Employment Development Department (EDD), WDBCCC, WIOA's required AJCC MOU partners, Workforce Integration Network (WIN) members, and other workforce organizations or networks in the design, coordination, and implementation of service delivery and capacity building.

The CCWC leverages WIOA dollars and resources already available in the County to provide services that connect participants to education and training opportunities. These services attempt to enhance essential employability skills and assist in the development and pursuit of educational and career goals that lead to income mobility and quality jobs. Within the region, there is discussion about how the CCWC model could be used as an approach to strengthening workforce system coordination in Alameda County.

## ***Coordination of Services with Regional Economic Development Services and Providers***

An important component of the EBRPU's coordination with regional economic development efforts is the representation of the Business Services Manager of each of the four East Bay local Workforce Boards on the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (EDA) Economic Development Director's table. This relationship allows for cooperative conversations about business climate, business closings and openings, and other collaborative opportunities between economic development and workforce development. A key service of the EDA is the development of annual economic outlook reports that provide data and analysis on the important trends impacting the region's economy and its workforce.

The Oakland Workforce Development Board is uniquely situated for collaboration with local economic development initiatives because it is located within the Office of Workforce and Economic Development within the City of Oakland. This structure enables the OWDB to more closely align its policies and programs with the economic development agenda of the city, and to influence city policy related to workforce training and development.

In addition to collaboration with EDA and local economic development in Oakland, the EBRPU benefits from a strong relationship between the WDBCCC and the East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC), as well as the Contra Costa Economic Partnership (CCEP), both of which are based in

Contra Costa County. The EBLC is a public policy advocacy organization whose mission is to increase the economic vitality and quality of life in the East Bay, and whose membership includes many of the region's largest employers. The WDBCCC is currently partnering with the CCEP to lead the Equitable Economic Recovery Task Force, which is focused on creating an equitable recovery and opportunities for those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic-induced recession.

### ***Coordination of Supportive Services***

At present, the four Local Boards in the East Bay have their own internal processes for delivery of supportive services and have not yet developed a strategy for coordination. Models for future coordination of supportive services within the region are under consideration.

### ***Negotiating Local Levels of Performance***

As mentioned in the Section 2 discussion of regional sector pathways, a major EBPRU strategy moving forward is to explore development of mechanisms to enhance data tracking on trainings developed by or in partnership with the EBRPU's regional industry partnerships. This could aid the region in establishing benchmarks to track individuals that complete training and/or attain industry-recognized credentials aligned with the Region's priority sectors and occupations. This could be a potential area for negotiation among partners on local levels of performance.

Data tracking would be undertaken by EBRPU partner Boards, the Region's two most mature industry partnerships, Association of Manufacturers, Bay Area and the East Bay Health Workforce Partnership, and the network of workforce services, education and training providers, and CBO partners with whom they collaborate. Outcomes could include identification of tools to capture and communicate training pathways data, and data tracking could inform potential benchmarks for the region.

This activity is contingent on the state of public health and of the economy which impacts the availability of training and job opportunities. As this strategy is implemented, it could help the region meet the objective of better aligning Local Workforce Development Board service delivery networks and customers with the region's industry partnerships. It would also support the Regional Plan objective of achieving enhanced data tracking as it relates to trainings associated with the region's industry partnerships and inform mechanisms to better collect and communicate pathway opportunities, activities and outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

Workforce development efforts in the East Bay are strong, innovative, and committed to promoting equity and ensuring social justice. During the current economic and public health crisis, Local Boards have proven to be extremely resilient, adapting to the rapidly changing and urgent community circumstances. As the pandemic comes to an end, this plan will serve as an invaluable guide for the EBPRU in its short- and long-term strategic development efforts.

**East Bay Regional Planning Unit  
2021-2024 Regional Plan  
Local Area Approval**

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**Local Workforce Development Board:** Workforce Development Board of  
Contra Costa County

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Yolanda Vega  
Peak Performance Corporate Training  
Board Chair, Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County

**DATE:** March 17, 2021  
**TO:** Executive Committee  
**FROM:** Youth Committee Workforce Development Board Staff  
**RE:** **Funding Award Recommendation – WIOA Youth Services**

**A. BACKGROUND**

Competitive selection of WIOA service providers is required every four years. In accordance with regulations and at the recommendation of the Youth Committee, the Workforce Development Board approved the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for WIOA Youth Services. The RFP anticipated awarding up to \$1,200,000 of youth funds in one-year contracts starting July 1, 2021. In addition to the 14 Youth Elements required by WIOA, the RFP addressed additional priorities established by the Youth RFP Ad Hoc Committee including virtual service delivery, expanded work-experience, and strategies that address the digital divide and other equity issues.

**B. CURRENT SITUATION**

After a compliance review completed by the EHSD Contracts Unit and a Fiscal review completed by EHSD Fiscal, three (3) proposals were received by the WDB and were distributed for programmatic evaluation to a team Reader/Raters.

Proposal Requests were as follows:

RFP 1174 WIOA Youth Services Bidders					
	<b>Geographic Region proposed to be served</b>	<b>Funding Request</b>	<b># of Out-of-School Youth</b>	<b># of In-School Youth</b>	<b>Cost per Youth served</b>
Contra Costa County Office of Education	East and West	\$ 900,000	130	30	\$ 5,625
Lao Family	West	\$ 317,649	38		\$ 8,359
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	Central	\$ 375,000	40	10	\$ 7,500

Contra Costa WDB recognizes three distinct regions of Contra Costa County each with their own set of characteristics, needs and assets: East/Far East, Central, and West. One bidder, Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD), proposed to serve Central Contra Costa. Contra Costa County Office (CCCOE) of Education proposed to serve two (2) regions of the County: East/Far East and West. Lao Family proposed to serve West.

Under WIOA, there are two categories of youth: Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth. WIOA requires that a minimum of 75% of the Youth allocation be spent on Out-of-School youth. While many local boards have opted to use WIOA funds to serve out-of-school youth, the Contra Costa WDB and its Youth Committee recognize the value of drop-out prevention and elected to continue to make WIOA funding available for both of the youth populations.

CCCOE and MDUSD proposals indicated both Out-of-School and In-School Youth would be served. Lao Family proposed to serve Out-of-School youth.

Reader Rater Summary and Aggregate Scores:

Reader/Rater Recap - RFP 1174						
	Rater #1	Rater #2	Rater #3	Average Score (possible Total 100 points)	Region/s	Recommended for Funding
Contra Costa County Office of Education	88	86.5	88	87.5	East and West	YES
Lao Family	85	83	75	81	West	NO
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	89	89.5	88	88.8	Central	YES

The Youth Committee met on March 9, 2021 and approved moving the funding recommendation onward to the Executive Committee for approval and directed staff to begin contract negotiations up to the \$1.2 million identified in the RFP while maximizing allowable WIOA resources for In-School youth.

**C. RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Youth Committee’s Recommendation that action be taken to award contracts to **Contra Costa County Office of Education** and **Mt. Diablo Unified School District** and direct staff to negotiate contracts up the \$1.2 million identified in RFP1174 WIOA Youth Services while maximizing allowable resources for In-School Youth.

**D. FISCAL IMPACT**

\$1,200,000 of WIOA Youth funding for the provision of WIOA Youth Services.

**E. SCHEDULE**

Approving the Youth Committee Recommendation will ensure approvals move forward in accordance with Board of Supervisor’s meeting schedule for contracts to start July 1, 2021.

**F. CUSTOMER IMPACT**

By awarding the proposed contracts under RFP #1174, the WDB will ensure the continued provision of high-quality youth development and youth employment services that are essential to helping young people in Contra Costa County realize educational and career success.