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\$500K Grant to Train Workers in Marine Skills Trades through Regional Coalition *Public/private partnership gives stipends to selected trainees to move into high demand jobs*

Concord, CA (April 2, 2024) – The Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County (WDBCCC) received a \$500,000 grant from the [California Workforce Development Board's Workforce Accelerator Fund](#) to provide accelerated training that increases opportunities and pathways to highly skilled well-paid employment in the maritime industry. The project places a particular focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, working with partners rooted in local communities to recruit participants who would not ordinarily have access to these opportunities.

The project is supported by the Marine Trades Skills Training (MTST) Industry Board comprised of 12-15 maritime commercial employers in the region who understand the skills needed to excel in the in this growing industry and are responsible for the development of the training curriculum. Class content includes extensive hands-on training with industry instructors, presentations by guest lecturers and employer site visits.

"The Bay Area is home to some of the largest ship repair and maintenance facilities on the West Coast," said WDBCCC Executive Director, Tamia Brown. "Employers at these facilities report a significant shortage of skilled workers in the marine trades. By establishing an employer-designed marine trade curriculum, the MTST will provide participants with the relevant skills required to attain one of the many high demand jobs available in the industry."

To further strengthen opportunities for program graduates, MTST board members will commit to a First Source Hiring strategy, giving primary consideration to participants for potential employment following completion of the program. Additionally, there are multiple alliances with key partners for this grant including California State University (CSU) Maritime Academy that will provide orientations regarding careers in the maritime industry, and field trips to program sites in Richmond and Vallejo. A partnership with the Red Oak Victory Ship will give participants the chance use their skills in community service, through restoration work on an historic ship.

"A key feature of the project will be to offer short-term focused training that rapidly prepares participants for entry into the marine trades", said Sal Vaca, the MTST project lead for WDBCCC. In addition to input from the MTST board members, the program will partner with the Machinists Institute in Seattle, union partners and other industry experts on development of the training curriculum.

Maritime jobs typically start at \$50,000 annually, and workers can advance quickly to six-figure salaries. Jobs and careers in this industry include marine technicians, machinists, welders and electricians, as well as station agents, captain assistants and captains.

The first part of the project is the launch of an 8- to 10-week course for 30 students with plans to expand after the first cohort. The curriculum will include both marine maintenance and repair skills, as well as essential (soft) skills such as effective communication, customer relations, and successful work habits. Including this component will enable trainees to bring these skills to the workplace, increasing their likelihood of retention in their jobs.

Participants will receive a stipend during their three months of training, enabling them to support themselves prior to rapid entry into employment. There will be an informational session for those interested in the opportunity on May 22, 2024 from 1pm – 3pm at the San Pablo Community Center. To RSVP, contact Patricia Conley at pconley@ehsd.cccounty.us

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About the Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County: a business-led board that builds public-private partnerships with education, economic development, labor, and community organizations to solve complex workforce challenges. Our work achieves equitable economic growth for Contra Costa County. We ensure a pipeline of diverse workforce talent is available to keep local companies competitive. Through our strategic connections and partnerships, we find innovative, sustainable solutions to solve complex workforce issues and leverage public-private resources to benefit the workforce and businesses alike. More at www.AchievingEquityContraCosta.com