



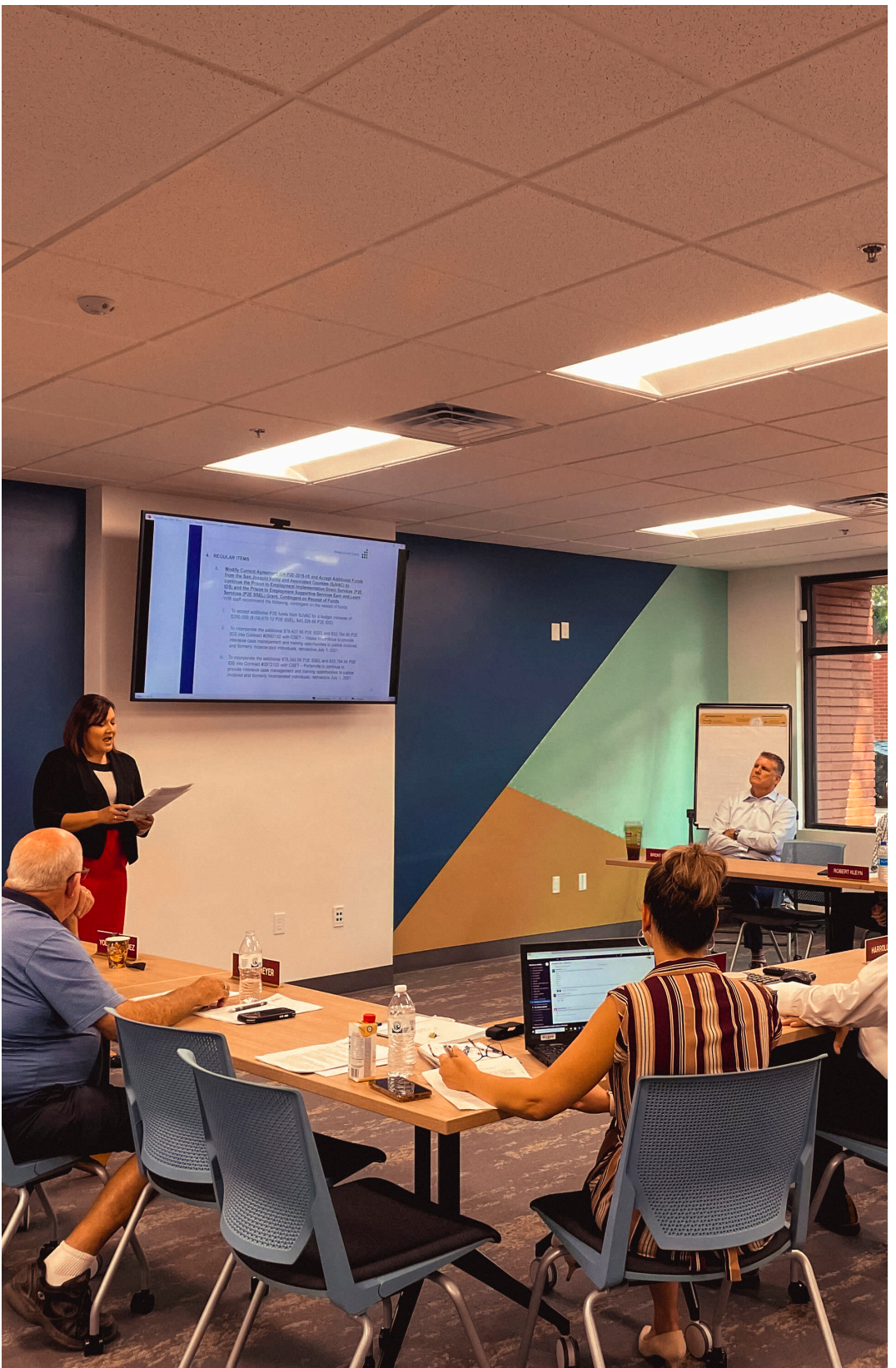
WIB

Workforce Investment Board
OF TULARE COUNTY

Driving Economic Success

agile

ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020 / 2020-2021

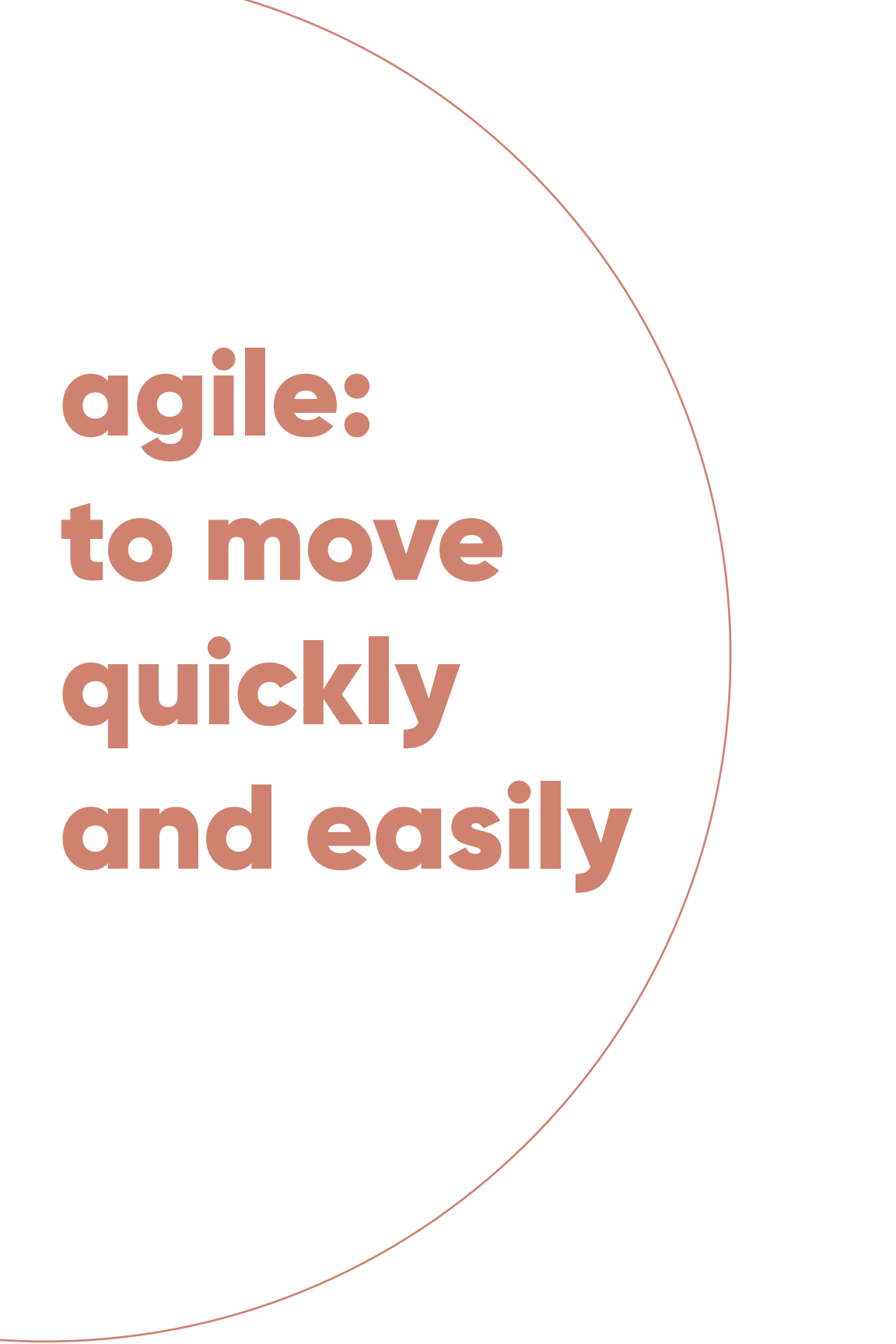


4. REGULAR ITEMS

1. Month's Current Activities - 10/17/2024 and Accept Address Change from the Sea Jetties, Long and Associates Contract, A/C 2024, the Contract for the 2024-2025 Construction Management Services, PGE Services, PGE 2024, and the Project 2024 Employment, Respective Services List and other VPP staff recommend the following, subject to the general terms of \$200,000 (1/1/2024) to PGE 2024, 10/17/2024 PGE 2024.
2. To incorporate the additional \$75,000 of PGE 2024 and \$50,000 of PGE 2024 into Contract 2024 for the 2024-2025 Construction Management Services, PGE Services, PGE 2024, and the Project 2024 Employment, Respective Services List and other VPP staff recommend the following, subject to the general terms of \$200,000 (1/1/2024) to PGE 2024, 10/17/2024 PGE 2024.
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**agile:
to move
quickly
and easily**

During Trying Times, We Proved Resilient

It's been a hard couple of years. Our nation has endured unimaginable suffering due to a global pandemic that has taken the lives of over 700,000 Americans and 908 residents of Tulare County. So many of our loved ones are gone or permanently impacted by a loss.

Together, we took extraordinary measures to stem the spread of the pandemic: sharply curbing economic activity, closing schools, and disrupting supply chains in unprecedented ways. The unemployment rate in Tulare County went from near-all-time lows to all-time highs in a single month.

Our mission statement is simple. We ensure that businesses have the skilled workers they need to prosper. We make certain that every member of our community can gain valuable skills to find a good job and raise a family in our community. When the economy is strong, businesses scramble to find a sufficient workforce needed to grow. In downturns, people struggle to find jobs and need to retool their skills to remain competitive in an ever-changing labor market. Our agile approach to these challenges allows us to focus on the most pressing needs, either on the demand or supply side.

Since March of 2020, this moment has demanded that we respond to both supply and demand-side needs with severe urgency. Vast numbers of workers were without a job, while businesses doing critical work had difficulty finding a workforce. Small businesses, including sole proprietors, were stripped of the ability to ply their trade and needed help like never before.

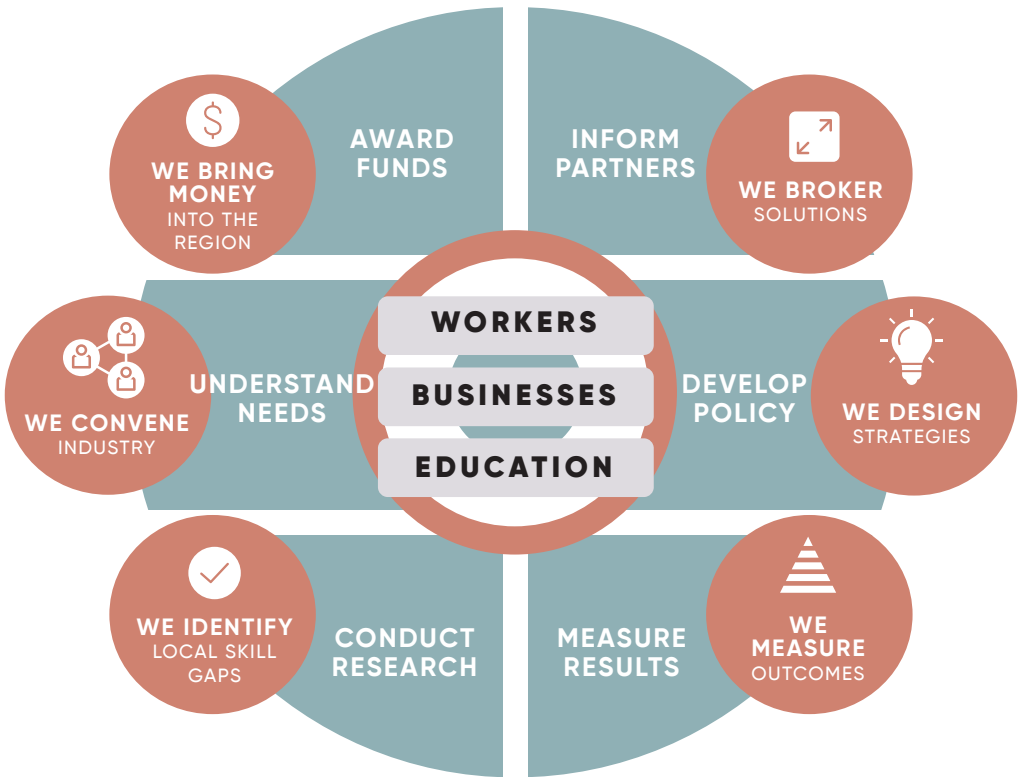
Within this chaotic world, the WIB, through the Employment Connection and youth@work programs – not only continued, but also succeeded. This report tells the story of how the WIB and the system it leads deftly rose to this moment. It's a narrative that speaks to the triumph of workers and businesses in our community over difficult circumstances.



I am so proud of the work of WIB staff, the workers in our Employment Connection, youth@work system, and the array of community partners that come together in this community to make it such a great place to live and work.

I can't wait to see what we accomplish in the coming year.

OUR PURPOSE MAP



Workforce Investment Board, Meeting Community Need

Crisis management tends to be remembered in two parts: the event and the response. But the response doesn't materialize out of the ether, it's the unsung work of tireless coordinators behind the scenes devising plans and creating collaboration to bring about constructive change. Often, these individuals and organizations remain invisible to the public. In Tulare County, the Workforce Investment Board represents that key actor, stringing together a response plan that softened the blow of the virus and empowered business owners and community members to take their next best steps.

After a calamity, there's a necessary recalibration for recovery: How will we deliver services in the aftermath of disaster? WIB recognized that their response to a pandemic must weigh public safety with swift responsiveness in equal measure. Through remote, socially distanced, and drive-thru settings, WIB threaded the needle to meet community needs. For starters, the Employment Connection Centers in Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville, and Visalia never closed during the pandemic. Keeping an 8 to 5 workday, all centers continued to address the significant need for services with COVID precautions. The Employment Connection pivoted to virtual services to meet demand.

The Employment Connection's virtual services took on a variety of forms. For job seekers, career counseling became a telephone or Zoom consultation with trained Workforce professionals. For those seeking to interview candidates or businesses receiving interview requests, accommodations for virtual interviews were available as well as on-site designated interview rooms. Workshops went fully remote for everyone: employers seeking instructions on how to shift

to totally remote workplaces and prospective employees searching for new job skills.

With a customer centered design approach to services, Employment Connection integrated their response to clients within their organization, allowing for seamless handoffs through online referrals and business support through the Human Resources hotline. A step further, WIB's partnerships with local and regional businesses placed job seekers, employment services, and hiring managers in one succinct web, creating a frictionless experience for all parties to find their needs met.

Collaborative and creative solutions took on different tacts as well. Employment Connection, in partnership with WIB, organized 18 drive-thru events, taking job fairs mobile with 12 employers and over 500 candidates participating. Facebook Live became an epicenter of job searching and advertising, with Employment Connection's Facebook page's likes soaring from a respectable 890 to an eye-popping 5,850 – since February 2019. On the business side, WIB strengthened its ties with business leaders, with revamped roundtables committed to lightning-fast solutions with both Community Collaborative weekly calls and the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable.

The way COVID exploded onto the community was devastating. But the resilience of the community proved that Tulare County is stronger than a virus. Even more importantly? Organizations like WIB underscored that **agility** in the face of disaster cues the turning point. Swift, nimble, purposeful. WIB's pivot turned the whole community around, right side up, and ready to fight for the next round.



career services



career
services

ACE

ACE-ing It

Everyone deserves a chance to reach their potential. For some of us, it's about mind over matter. But for others with disabilities, it's an issue of making it in a world not structurally designed for your needs.

The challenge to forge a path forward becomes thornier, scarier, but never lacking in importance: living with dignity being the bottom line.

For Access to Careers and Employment (ACE) enrollees, the program is designed to address participants' baseline needs, abilities, and disabilities. Funded by a Disability Employment Accelerator Grant, ACE focuses its programming on career development and job opportunity prep through workshops to close skills gaps in job readiness. Through strategic collaboration and sharing information,

resources, and tools, the ACE Integrated Resource Team meets their clients' career needs with personalized plans, evaluated for each individuals' strengths and weaknesses.

For Martha, a 1977 graduate of the California School for the Deaf, her struggle centered around adapting to the new digital reality. Unable to log into her email account, let alone fill out an online job application, Martha felt on the ropes about finding a job. With ACE's assistance, Martha zoomed to digital literacy and even found a job at Graphic Packaging International as a 2nd Shift Cup Loader – all made possible by her ability to apply for jobs online.

Abraham's story mirrors Martha's gains. As someone with a disability that hindered communication, Abraham needed help finding a job and a voice to advocate for one. With personalized coaching for job readiness, Abraham's skillset grew and transformed him into a qualified candidate for a paid internship, which he scored. With positive performance results at Kaweah Container, Abraham's internship ended and immediately converted into a full-time job.

Martha and Abraham represent a sliver of the people with disabilities (PWD) that soared with ACE's help. Out of **41 people served by the grant, 14 now boast gainful employment.** The grant has been renewed through March of 2023, but the ultimate goal has already materialized: transformed, empowered lives.

Serious, Speedy Support

With the virus making many workers economically vulnerable nearly overnight, WIB needed to act fast to address new widespread needs. The state of California's Employment Development Department (EDD) saw the need to provide a sizable award to serve Tulare County's COVID-impacted folks. **WIB received \$180,000 from EDD to address these needs.**

In order to optimize these dollars, WIB allocated these funds through multiple Employment Connection Centers in different regions: Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville, and Visalia. With the money spread out to hit a range of impacted individuals, WIB also modified their delivery systems and customer service through virtual means. An electronic interest form generated by WIB and disseminated on social media, garnered 2,126 completed applications. The need was never understated.

Where did the money go? From May 2020 to September 2020, **WIB issued payment vouchers to 320 eligible individuals based on need with payouts averaging \$354.** Paying for basic necessities like Internet, utilities, rent/mortgage, auto repair, phone bills, and tech for job searching and telecommuting, grant money went straight to immediate needs faced by community members. When the call came, WIB acted fast, so folks got support with speed.

A stack of several books is shown on a dark, reflective surface. The books are mostly white with some light blue or teal covers. The background is a warm, blurred brown. A semi-transparent red rectangular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the title text in white.

Leaping Over the Language Barrier



career services

ELL

Imagine struggling with basic needs for life: speaking to your landlord, paying bills, completing everyday tasks and errands. For Susana Ruiz, a Mexican immigrant with degrees in interior design and cosmetology, this was her reality in California for the last three years.

Signing up for WIB's English Language Learner (ELL) Pilot Program changed the game for her. Designed as a workforce navigator

program for immigrants and individuals with limited English language proficiency, ELL provides

access to English language instruction, citizenship classes, high school and GED diploma assistance, job searching resources, and vocational and on-the-job training. With ELL, Susana enrolled in both Tulare Adult School for ESL instruction and GED certificate and College of the Sequoias for English writing, grammar, and speech courses.

Pivoting the ELL Pilot Program during

COVID proved possible with the introduction of Chromebooks for students. Armed with her laptop, Susana diligently remote-learned during her classes, even going that extra mile after class to join Employment Connection's Virtual Job Connect session on Facebook Live to learn more about local career opportunities.

Susana holds immense gratitude for the opportunities given to her through the

program.

In a note to her program coordinator, Saul Magana, Susana underscored the importance of the program

**276 individuals served,
75 individuals co-enrolled
in workforce and education
services, and 25 individuals
obtained employment**

to her: "Thank you, Saul, for your grand support. Arriving to this country and realizing that everything I achieved in my country became nothing, it was a bucket of cold water with which I am now learning to bathe in new knowledge and new culture."

Today, Susana Ruiz works as a web developer for a local company, right on track, no longer lost in translation.

career
services

Reentry

Renewed Chances



During lockdown, nearly every American experienced a feeling of separation from society. For others, lockdown paled in comparison to being physically locked away from the world – and the struggle to re-enter society. To ease the transition back into the workforce, the state of California created reentry grant programs like Prison to Employment (P2E), to assist justice-involved or formerly incarcerated individuals in their quest for gainful employment, self-sufficiency, and a dignified life.

P2E helps tackle the particular vulnerabilities of the newly released. Oftentimes barred from unemployment benefits, even during COVID-19, P2E offered alternative means of support. Training opportunities, job matching, job training, and a support system with encouragement are on the table for the taking. Services did not halt during the pandemic; instead, the reentry team shifted their services to virtual platforms and socially distanced in-person settings.

A mentoring group is more powerful when all members have lived through the reentry network process. P2E's peer-to-peer reentry program captures that power of shared lived experience within a group, allowing those who have walked the path before opportunities to help others along on their own journeys. This group finds a way to lift everyone up as they climb.

Through partnership with WIB, Employment Connection, Tulare County Probation,

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), this program also works hard to close literacy gaps with one-on-one technical support so that participants can conquer online hurdles which include job applications, hotspot access and tech support. **The strategy is effective and it shows. Since January 2020, 83 individuals have been enrolled in reentry programs, 55 have been employed – a 62% hire rate.**

For people like Gregory Rivera, his drive to change his life showcases how each data point in P2E's system carries an even bigger story. Gregory enrolled in P2E because of his conviction barriers, eager to be a team player in the program. Having

worked towards certification in drug and alcohol counseling while incarcerated, his career counselor brainstormed with Gregory

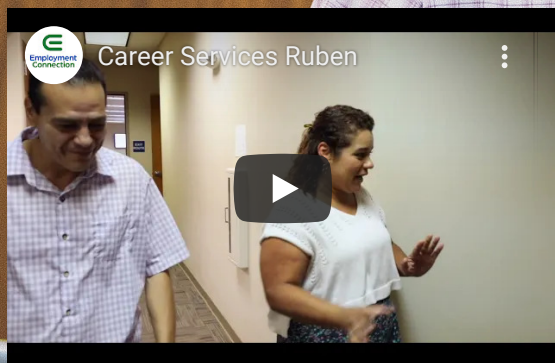
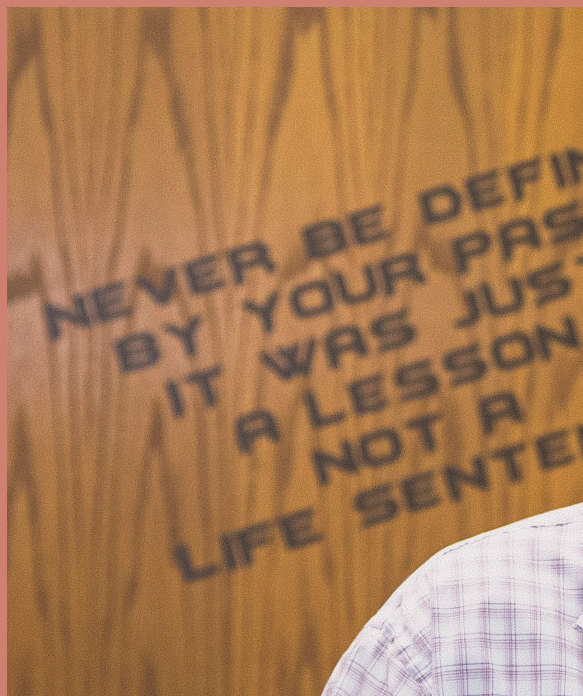
83 individuals enrolled, 55 individuals employed, and 62% hire rate

to form a career plan to launch his career dreams into reality. He worked a survival job, biking five miles to and from work due to the lack of a driver's license. Once his certifications were compiled from years past, Herb Scheider, his Business Resource Specialist, helped him land an interview at Central Valley Recovery Services (CVRS). Gregory aced his interview and completed his transitional work training agreement with CVRS, well on his way to becoming a fully certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor. His joy at his turn of fate is palpable, "This is too good to be true... I never thought I'd get here."

Emerging Resources During a Pandemic

COVID's explosion demanded a counterbalance: Contact Tracers. The government issued a response in the form of a grant, specifically the 2020 COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Grant, or NDWG for short. For Tulare County, this grant recruited 39 residents of the area to provide disaster relief and humanitarian aid to minimize the blow of the virus on the community. All 39 of these individuals immediately slid into contact tracing training through the NDWG's disaster relief program at Tulare County's Health and Human Services Agency. The definition of frontline warriors against the disease's spread, Tulare County's HHSA met the area's demand for contact tracing through the generosity of NDWG's grant allocation.

The contact tracers have their own story too. Ruben Rue, a single father, found himself at a crossroads. A jack of all trades person – anthropologist, artisan, agricultural laborer – Ruben needed a job, already hard to come by with the baggage of someone formerly incarcerated in a



terrible pandemic job market. Enrollment within NDWG's contact tracing program was a godsend. Already affiliated with the reentry program, Readiness for Employment through Sustainable Education and Training (RESET), Rue co-enrolled in numerous grant programs that built career possibilities. A contact tracing trainee position morphed into an

Career Services

NDWG



opportunity for a full time job as a HHS extra help Office Assistant. Beyond Ruben, 24 other individuals in the contact tracing trainee program landed employment opportunities, proving disaster doesn't have to be disastrous: after all, under pressure diamonds are made.

Contact Tracer Trainees

39

NDWG disaster relief
employment program enrollees

25

Of these individuals obtained
unsubsidized employment

17

Of the former Contact Tracer
Trainees were employed by
HHS primarily in positions
to assist in the COVID-19
pandemic recovery efforts

Data

Tulare County Labor Market

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

OCCUPATION CHANGES

INDUSTRY CHANGES

2019-2021 Occupations With Greatest Growth

+786

Home Health and
Personal Care Aides

+326

Laborers and
Material Movers

+245

Elementary and
Middle School Teachers

+194

Registered Nurses

+128

Counselors

+956

Services for the
Elderly and Persons
with Disabilities

+478

Hospitals
(Local Government)

+279

Couriers and Express
Delivery Services

+252

Other Outpatient
Care Centers

+241

General Merchandise
Stores, including Warehouse
Clubs and Supercenters

2019-2021 Occupations With Greatest Decline

-1,716

Miscellaneous
Agricultural Workers

-580

Substitute Teachers,
Short-Term

-455

Retail Salespersons

-405

Cooks

-377

Waiters and Waitresses

2019-2021 Industries With Greatest Decline

-3,461

Support Activities for
Crop Production

-1,261

Education
(Local Government)

-555

Local Government,
Excluding Education
and Hospitals

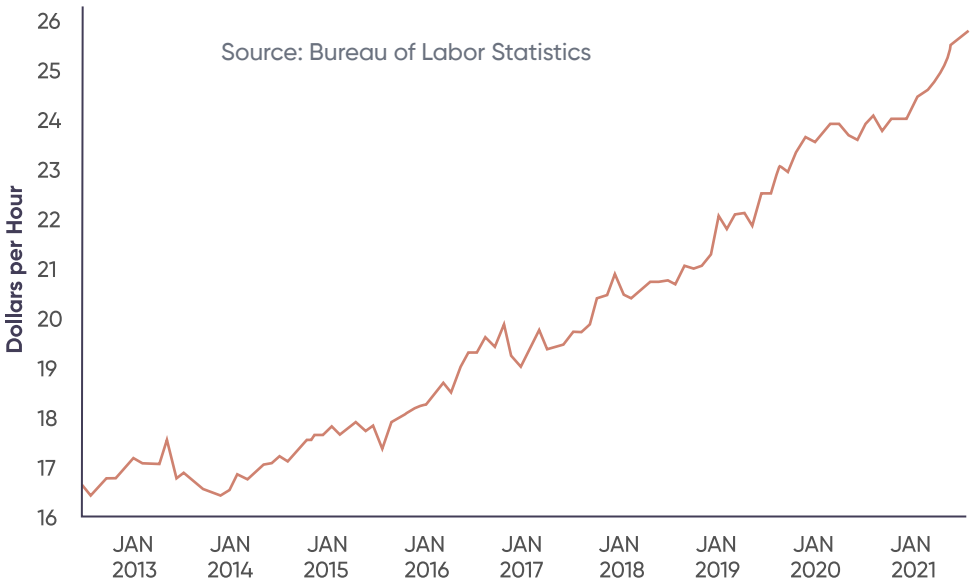
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Restaurants and Other
Eating Places

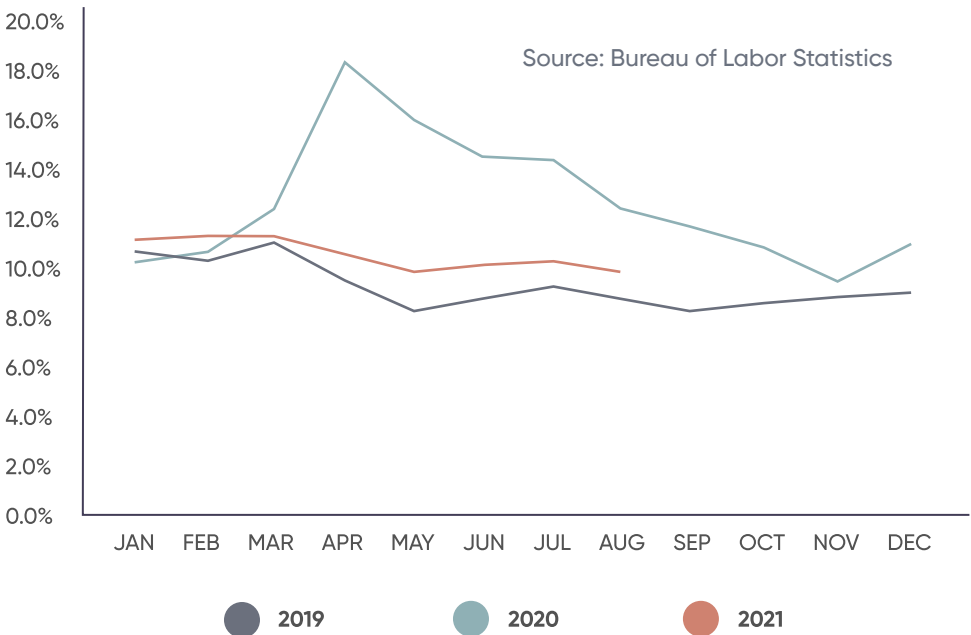
-296

Department Stores

A Surge in Average Hourly Earnings



Unemployment Rates Returning to Pre-Pandemic Levels



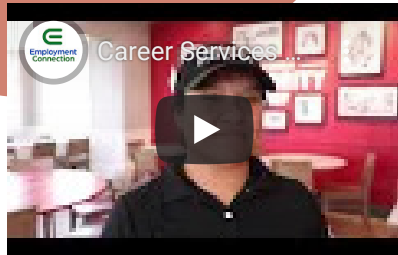
Data

Workforce Services

Employment Connection

Integrated services are provided through comprehensive Employment Connection Centers in Visalia and Porterville and affiliate sites in Dinuba and Tulare. These sites are managed by WIB Service Provider partners CSET and Proteus, Inc.

The Employment Connection system is a fully integrated service delivery system that includes all Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, blending the various funding sources available through federal offerings.



2019-2020 WIOA CAREER SERVICES

ACTIVITY	ADULT	DW*
Initial Assessment	1,571	1,721
Job Search Workshop	464	221
Individual Counseling	924	728
Objective Assessment	1,556	1,690
Interest and Aptitude Testing	202	211
Development of IEP/ISS/EDP	239	170
Occupational Skills Training	181	132
On-the-Job Training	16	20
Transitional Job	25	7

2020-2021 WIOA CAREER SERVICES

ACTIVITY	ADULT	DW*
Initial Assessment	931	1782
Job Search Workshop	232	91
Individual Counseling	990	781
Objective Assessment	918	717
Interest and Aptitude Testing	0	1
Development of IEP/ISS/EDP	318	442
Occupational Skills Training	149	155
On-the-Job Training	14	8
Transitional Job	42	21

2019-2020 RESULTS

52,513

Total Visitors

17,575

Distinct Visitors

2020-2021 RESULTS

36,201

Total Visitors

12,053

Distinct Visitors

*Dislocated Worker

youth@work

youth@work is a comprehensive youth employment program providing services to eligible youth and young adults ages 16–24 years old who face education, training, and employment barriers. youth@work helps transition young adults to adulthood by providing career exploration, work readiness training/coaching, education support, and work experience opportunities. In addition, youth@work has an In-School Youth component for high school students which bridges education and workforce gaps by providing wraparound services so that students can achieve educational goals and career objectives. The youth@work program is operated by our service provider partners CSET (Culter–Orosi, Visalia, Tulare) Proteus, Inc. (Woodlake, Farmersville, Exeter), and Tulare County Office of Education/SEE (Porterville, Lindsay) and funded with WIOA.

2019–2020 WIOA YOUTH SERVICES

46	In-school youth served
384	Out-of-school youth served
224	Paid work experience
\$401,950	Wages and benefits paid to youth



2020–2021 WIOA YOUTH SERVICES

154	In-school youth served
399	Out-of-school youth served
294	Paid work experience
\$788,822	Wages and benefits paid to youth





youth services



youth
services

youth@work

1102

pharmacy

11:00 - 12:00
12:00 - 1:00
1:00 - 2:00
2:00 - 3:00
3:00 - 4:00
4:00 - 5:00
5:00 - 6:00
6:00 - 7:00

times

services

COVID-19
vaccines are here

Las vacunas
contra el COVID-19
ya están aquí.



COVID-19
updates

Actualizaciones de COVID-19

Se requieren
cubiertas faciales
para su seguridad
y la nuestra.

Hard Work, youth@work



 Youth Services Sandra

With the young always representing the future, youth@work operates as a program to ensure that the future stays bright for all.

When you're young, opportunities should feel in reach. For some youth, access to opportunities doesn't always seem close at hand. Even more importantly, true belief that a new future is possible – both in the world and in one's self – needs to feel real.

With youth@work, this program tackles all three challenges and operationalizes futures for young people. Originally designed as a face-to-face initiative, youth@work is a two-pronged approach for both young people seeking opportunities and businesses seeking new hires, with each side receiving in person guidance for their next steps. Students and young adults received one-on-one time with counselors for case management and work-readiness workshops along with added opportunities for computer and internet access. In the pre-COVID years from 2019 to 2020, **over 430 youth were served, resulting in 224 young people gaining paid work experience with the collective earning power of \$401,950.**

Post-COVID, youth@work engineered a swift pivot. All services switched to fully virtual for public safety. In one way, the digital shift leveled the playing field. Prospective participants located in rural areas no longer had to worry about transportation costs for a walk-in experience. For all other students, logging on became the replacement for walking in, creating a frictionless experience

for those otherwise gun-shy of in-person encounters but comfortable as Gen Z digital natives. The result? **A 29% increase in enrollment from the previous fiscal year with 553 youth receiving services.** A slight uptick in paid work experience followed, but with a massive increase – **96%! – in collective earnings, capping out at \$788,822.**

At its heart, youth@work shepherds vulnerable young people through a time that's already full of painful transitions. For Christopher Palmer, the program became a lifeline for self-stability and self-sufficiency. Walking through the door at the youth center, Palmer shouldered tough circumstances: an



unstable home life, unemployment, and unmoored with no set goals. With guidance from Lupe Moreno, Senior Program Specialist, Palmer

received mentorship for resume building, job searching, interview skills, and financial planning. It was his mentor's foresight to check in on Palmer's emotional wellbeing that brought the walls down; he wasn't okay, but needed the support of a trusted adult to get there.

Today, Palmer's gainfully employed at Flying J Travel Center as a Stock Clerk, after receiving paid work experience. His story is one of resilience, even overcoming eviction and homelessness. With the help of WIB, youth@work gave him a shot at taking back control of his life, even with all the challenges. In his own words, "The struggle of the climb is real, but once you reach the top it's a breath of fresh air and a new beginning."

youth services

In-School Youth



School is in Session



High school is hard. But approaching your education when you may be the first in your family to graduate or consider a two or four year college program can feel daunting. Add in having English as a second language or a need for unique accommodations, and the task starts to feel even more impossible. Youth@work programs allow students to strike early and decisively at their challenges, paving pathways for them to secure stable, sustainable, and satisfying futures.

Support for students is comprehensive. Pupils enrolled in the youth@work In-School program located within seven partner high schools in Tulare County, automatically fast-tracking them for

wraparound support. Academic and career-oriented information, mentoring, supportive services, work-based learning experience are all inclusive within youth@work, including a post-program follow up; youth@work checks on every graduate's adjustment to expanded education or new employment. During COVID, all of these services switched to virtual.

Out of the 62 high school students that enrolled, 97% graduated and a whopping 67% continued on to post-secondary education.

Kimberly Rios Cruz, through her own determination and hard work, used youth@work as a launch pad for the rest of life. As an ambitious English

language learner coming from a financially strained single parent household, Cruz transformed within the program, in the words of her supervisor, from being “shy and reserved” into “a leader who is dependable, and self-motivated.” Having never been employed, she went through training to develop job-readiness skills, develop her resume, and prepare for interviews. She even received support to buy interview clothes before interviewing for her first internship at Proteus Inc. Now starting her first year at Fresno State with 200 hours of work experience under her belt, Cruz lauded the program for “a chance to uncover skills that I was unaware that I had” and an opportunity to “figure out what I want to pursue in college.”

A Focus on Students with Disabilities

For enrollees of Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS), students get met by professionals who view them by their ability, rather than their disabilities. Framed by student empowerment, STEPS works with students ages 16-21, building skills for job preparedness and paid employment experiences. Students are brought into the program after identification from educational partners, ranging from the Foundation of Community Colleges

to the Department of Rehabilitation. Prioritizing interactive learning with 30 hour immersive work readiness training within local businesses, grads of the program leave understanding workplace expectations and more confident in their abilities.

For Joye and Lane, two College of Sequoias students, STEPS opened doors for their future. Joy, a Spring 2020 enrollee, interned at Visalia’s Employment Connection, gaining office and customer service experience.

Phased by the new office environment, she walked away with confidence and competence, Joy affirmed STEPS as a positive experience: “The knowledge I gained while on

a work experience opened up new opportunities; I’m [sic] thankful for the STEPS program.” Lane, also a Spring 2020 participant, quickly established himself as a team player in virtual workshops, consistently offering peer advice to other students in the program. A compassionate soul driven towards the arts, Lane looks forward to completing an Associates of Art degree with the possibility of a four year program on the other side of graduation. Thinking of the best part of STEPS, Lane remembers his coaches and peers as “amazing people.”

With this group of students, we feel amazed by their accomplishments too.

Out of the 62 high school students that enrolled, 97% graduated and a whopping 67% continued on to post-secondary education.

WIB'S RESILIENCE

WIB Before COVID

WIB meets community needs through the four Employment Connection Centers. Clients are served in-person with the help of partner networks.

January 2020
First COVID-19 cases reported
11.2%

April 2020
Unemployment Rate
18.6%

Unemployment Rate Before and After Covid

The unemployment rate in Tulare County entered 2020 steady and below 10%. Following the first cases of COVID-19 in January and the rapid growth of the pandemic, the unemployment rate spiked above 18% in April. The result has been a transformation of the workforce and the services provided.

The Workforce Cost of COVID Nationally

Between January 2020 and April 2020, nonfarm payrolls dropped by 22.1 million jobs. By April 2020, the national unemployment rate hit 14.8% – the highest since data collection on these metrics began in 1948. Labor force slumped to only 60.2% by April 2020, levels that hadn't been seen since the early '70s.

WIB's New Presence

WIB revamps its services for digital access. Social media impressions skyrocket, a dynamic Facebook Live, "Job Connect," links job seekers to employers. Virtual and socially distanced, drive-thru job fairs bridge the gap between employers and jobseekers. A vibrant virtual system and digital experience emerges.

WIB's COVID Response

COVID hits. The virus demands a shift from WIB. Over the course of three weeks, WIB reimagines how it will deliver its services.

They immediately applied for the National Dislocated Worker Grant, the COVID-19 Supportive Services Grant, and partnered with the county to administer mini grants to businesses.



June 2021
11.1%



Workforce Investment Board
OF TULARE COUNTY
Driving Economic Success





**business
services**





**business
services**

COVID
RESPONSE

Mini Grants, Big Help

Grants by the Numbers

1,074

businesses received funding



Tulare County awarded a total of **\$5,370,000** in grant funds to small businesses in dire need

COVID left the community in the lurch. Tulare County's Board of Supervisors contracted with WIB to address the economic division left in COVID's wake. The solution: the Tulare County Small Business COVID Relief Fund. Worth \$5,000, these mini grants were available to businesses with 20 or fewer employees looking for financial assistance to repay COVID-related costs incurred between March 31 and October 31, 2020.

Within weeks, WIB launched a digital application for interested businesses in collaboration with Middlestate, a local human-centered design studio. The digital application stood apart from the average form in terms of its accessibility. Distributed in Spanish and English, WIB's form broke down steps of what could have been a complicated and frustrating experience into easily digestible steps.

"Take a deep breath," the form would remind users after small inputs of information – never neglecting the emotional experience of applicants over the necessary data collection for aid.

In just six weeks, WIB evaluated submissions, and awarded 1074 applicants with grants – near unprecedented speed. \$5,370,000 went out to the community fast and efficiently. The dollars reached businesses in all parts of the county, from a small salon in Farmersville to a restaurant in Downtown Visalia. Unsurprisingly, many respondents found the form to be their best experience applying for assistance – ever.

WIB proves that no job is too big to serve the community, that grit and creative solutions can close the gap in any situation.

Funded Businesses by Incorporated Cities

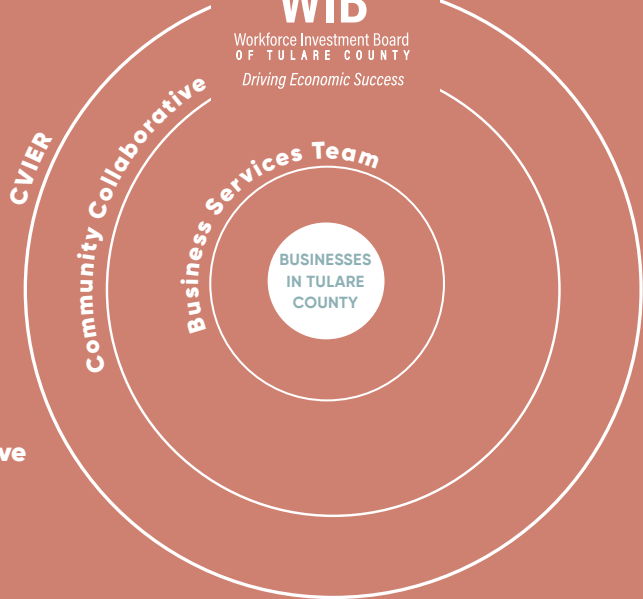
Visalia 586	Tulare 156	Porterville 84	Dinuba 55	Exeter 53
Lindsay 39	Woodlake 21	Farmersville 16	Other 64	

Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable (CVIER)

- Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board
- Kern County Employers' Training Resource
- Kings County Job Training Office
- Workforce Development Board of Madera County
- Worknet Merced County
- San Joaquin County WorkNet
- Stanislaus County Workforce Development
- Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County
- Employment Development Department
- California Labor Federation
- California Workforce Development Board
- Valley Community Small Business Development Center

Community Collaborative

- Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County
- Workforce Development
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development
- Small Business Administration
- Community Based Organizations
- City Staff
- County Staff
- Tourism



Business Services Team

- Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County
- Employment Development Department
- Department of Rehabilitation
- youth@work
- Employment Connection

Networks Supporting Businesses

The Business is at the Center of All We Do

Known for helping businesses to recruit qualified candidates, build a talent pipeline, and understanding labor market data, WIB exists so that businesses can make smart and informed decisions. Their ability to partner and collaborate with other organizations allows them to help

businesses navigate and find the resources that they need.

Business Services Team

Within the workforce system, WIB convenes the Business Services Team (BST) monthly. Workforce staff from multiple partner

business services

Industry Partnerships

organizations discuss and develop best practices, employer trends, and comprehensive strategies for reaching out to businesses in Tulare County in need of services. Team members share successes and challenges, while working together to understand the workforce needs of businesses.

Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable

In August 2019, WIB launched a new network of partners called the Central Valley Industry Engagement Roundtable (CVIER). CVIER operates as a way for Workforce Boards from the San Joaquin Valley to share effective practices and obstacles around core business services, Rapid Response, Labor Market Information, Incumbent Worker Training, and Sector Partnerships. The group met to identify ways to improve regional efforts and find opportunities to better engage with local businesses. When the pandemic began, CVIER pivoted and began meeting on a weekly basis to share fresh work strategies so that each board could continue to provide essential services in a whole new way.

Developing consistent messaging around mandates and state and local orders, alleviated business owners' concerns about false information.

Community Collaborative

COVID dramatically shifted the way that businesses were able to operate. Lockdowns caused employers to send employees home. Stores closed, manufacturing stopped, and hospitals went on high alert. Business owners suddenly needed a clear and trusted voice to guide them through their tough new questions: How do I run my business and survive the lockdown? WIB quickly pulled together a new network of partners, the Community Collaborative, to support Tulare County businesses with unified messaging and timely information. They met weekly to discuss the rapidly changing landscape and best practices for emergency support. As a group, the Collaborative developed consistent messaging around mandates opportunities for financial assistance, alleviating business owners' concerns about false information around regulations.

Partnerships deepen the impact of everyone at the table – and WIB has seen evidence of that in the results. The Community Collaborative became the engine that allowed WIB to award mini-grants to more than 1000 businesses in Tulare County. Through participating in BST, WIB's Rapid Response services reached businesses forced to lay off employees. Through CVIER, WIB gained online and virtual tools to help businesses recruit new employees. The best kept secret in Tulare County may appear to be WIB, but collaboration was the key.

business services

RECRUITMENT
AND RAPID
RESPONSE

Rapid Response



When disaster strikes, people need immediate help. Rapid Response is a series of customized, confidential, and convenient services designed to help businesses that are downsizing and restructuring.

Operated as a partnership between the WIB, Employment Connection, and the Employment Development Department (EDD), these organizations each facilitate part of the discussion. After WIB receives a layoff notice, the Rapid Response team schedules an orientation meeting for the company's affected employees.

Over the course of the orientation, the Rapid Response team educates impacted workers about the resources available. Unemployment Insurance, training and employment opportunities at the Employment Connection, temporary rental and mortgage assistance, and health insurance. All of these details are

explained to workers by subject matter experts. All participants leave armed with training and employment opportunities, ready for the next step.

During the last two years the Rapid Response Team has served 146 businesses and 5,171 workers.

For Eagle Mountain Casino, unavoidable layoffs forced them to turn to their local WIB for Rapid Response care. Within 24 hours, the Rapid Response Team, integrated with Eagle Mountain's Human Resources Department to provide a customized webinar for more than 700 impacted employees. This only goes to prove that when help is needed fast, Rapid Response is there.



Recruitment Reimagined



Traditionally, Employment Connection (EC) supports business recruitment through onsite job fairs, pre-screening candidates, and in-person Job Connect workshops. Between layoffs and other disruptions, the local economy balanced on a knife's edge – and many organizations and people needed help. WIB, in partnership with Employment Connection answered the call.

COVID posed obvious constraints to recruitment efforts for businesses since public health mandates and distancing requirements abounded. Both WIB and Employment Connection orchestrated a pivot to meet safety regulations while still providing quality recruitment services for local businesses.

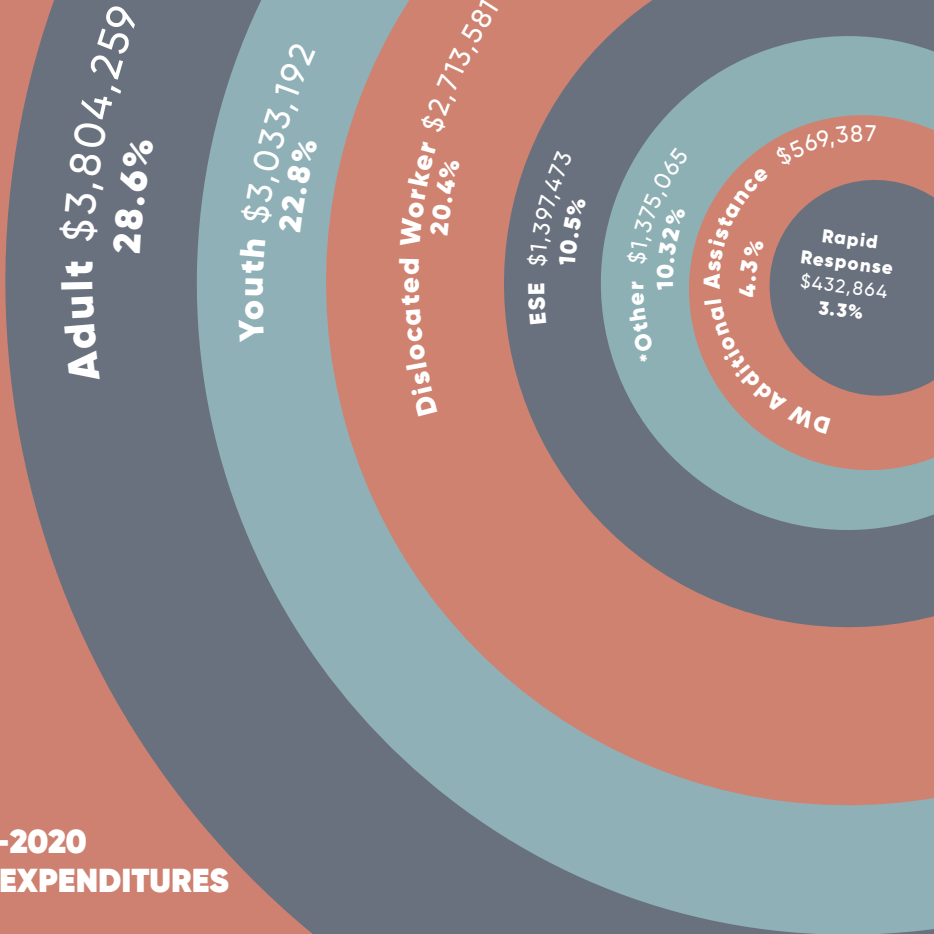
Waterman Valve used WIB and EC's virtual and socially distanced resources for support, partnering on both virtual and drive-thru recruiting events.

Michelle Mendonca of Waterman Valve had praise for EC's help. "We hired the perfect candidate for exactly what we were looking for. He has turned out to be a gem."

For Kaweah Health, utilizing Job Connect proved invaluable. A totally virtual platform hosted through Facebook Live, Job Connect offers a place for businesses to advertise their open positions and job seekers a place to scout out career opportunities.

Overall, **over 77 employers received hiring assistance with Job Connect with over 100,000 views from prospective job seekers.** Beyond Job Connect, EC helped even more businesses with recruitment **over the last two years: 188 businesses and 2551 job seekers in total were served.**

FY 2019-2020 EXPENDITURES



FY 2019-2020 *OTHER EXPENDITURES

Environmental Cleanup	\$206,288
Supervised Population	\$163,286
English Language Learners	\$143,460
RESET	\$139,758
Disability Employment Accelerator	\$117,242
Step up #LEAD	\$100,489
STEPS	\$87,246
Pathways to Employment (TCSO)	\$79,544
Layoff Aversion	\$61,352
R2Y - RESET to Youth	\$53,007
CCWC Regional Contract	\$42,361
WAF 6.0	\$39,309
Prison to Employment IDS	\$27,985
COVID-19 Support Services	\$27,664

Prison to Employment SSEL	\$22,982
City of Tulare - Homeless Project	\$22,840
Career Pathways	\$22,084
Construction Pre-Apprenticeship	\$12,500
National Dislocated Workers Grant-COVID-19	\$4,129

Total

\$13,324,886

FY 2020-2021 EXPENDITURES

Youth \$4,203,864
27.1%

Adult \$4,102,545
26.5%

Dislocated Worker \$3,080,857
19.9%

***Other** \$1,579,430
9.8%

ESE \$1,036,698
6.7%

Rapid Response \$887,638
5.7%

National Dislocated Workers Grant
\$597,916
3.9%

FY 2020-2021 *OTHER EXPENDITURES

Environmental Cleanup	\$203,816
Prison to Employment SSEL	\$156,697
COVID-19 Support Services	\$152,336
English Language Learners	\$138,261
RESET	\$137,309
County Small Business Grants - COVID-19	\$137,168
R2Y - RESET to Youth	\$123,517
Disability Employment Accelerator	\$101,925
Prison to Employment IDS	\$91,454
CCWC Regional Contract	\$70,992
City of Tulare - Homeless Project	\$64,672

STEPS	\$63,839
Layoff Aversion	\$49,187
Step up #LEAD	\$42,250
Career Pathways	\$38,821
City of Farmersville Small Business Grants	\$7,186

Total **\$15,488,942**



WIB

Workforce Investment Board
OF TULARE COUNTY

Driving Economic Success

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