

DEO Proposal to use \$1 Million in Innovation Funds for Wildfire Disaster Relief, Cleanup, and Recovery Workforce Training

Overview: The LA County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is recommending the allocation of up to \$1 million in WIOA Innovation Funds to support training necessary for local workers to participate and fully meet the labor needs of the cleanup and rebuild following the January 2025 windstorms and wildfires. This funding will be administered through DEO's America's Job Centers of California (AJCC), with 2 AJCCs responsible for enrolling individuals into clean up and rebuild focused trainings. Eligible trainings must be aligned to the cleanup and rebuild and active on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) or through contract training in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations.

Key Points:

- **Policy Direction:** On February 18, 2025, the LA County Board of Supervisors directed DEO to identify sources of funds to build the workforce needed for cleanup and rebuilding after the 2025 windstorm and wildfire disasters, including partnering with the LA/OC Building Trades Council and train new and current members to ensure the region has local hires for the fire recovery.ⁱ DEO provided a report back to the Board proposing the use of WIOA funds to support these efforts.
- **Workforce Needs:** LA/OC Building Trades estimates a total need of \$2.5 million to serve 300 new pre-apprentices annually through the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program. This includes enhancing regular programming to offer HAZWOPER 40 certification, lead and asbestos removal training, and other stackable credentials needed to ensure a skilled and trained workforce for cleanup and recovery. Laborers' International Union

of North America (LIUNA) Local 300 estimates 1,000 workers are needed over 18 months for clean-up and debris removal.

- **Training Opportunities:** Currently on the ETPL, there are several trainings that align to cleanup and rebuild including the MC3, Advanced Construction, or similar training that includes OSHA 10/30, HAZWOPER, and/or CPR/First Aid components. These are a non-exhaustive list and DEO will continue to work with the AJCCs to identify aligned trainings and encourage new ETPL trainers, including our community colleges and labor partners.
- **Fund Distribution:** To expedite release of funds, the existing subawards for our AJCCs will be amended to include Innovation Funds to the two AJCC providers who are leading dislocated worker programming in response to the fires – West LA AJCC and East San Gabriel Valley AJCC.

Since the Altadena fire primarily impacted County unincorporated areas under our direct area of responsibility, a preponderance of the funding will run through the center that serves the Altadena area – East San Gabriel Valley AJCC. The funding will be split 60/40, with East San Gabriel Valley AJCC receiving \$600,000 and West LA AJCC receiving \$400,000 in WIOA training dollars. Using an estimate of \$8,300 per trainee, this Innovation Fund is estimated to train 120 WIOA eligible participants. Pending WDB approval, contract amendments will be sent to the AJCCs within 30 days of approval with an end term to spend by July 2026.

- **Additional Supports:** AJCCs will oversee assessment, enrollment, training and employment placement as well as data entry and reporting into CalJOBS and to DEO. They will also provide case management and wraparound supportive services including transportation, work tools, union initiation fees, and others. The primary two AJCCs will coordinate with the County AJCCs to support co-enrollment to ensure broad access across the system.
- **Priority Service:** To ensure opportunities for individuals with the highest barriers to employment, priority of service under these funds shall be for individuals with disabilities, those

that are unhoused or housing insecure, justice-system impacted, opportunity youth, and other high-barriered populations, particularly those from marginalized communities most impacted by the fires.

- Program Outcomes:** In alignment with WIOA performance measures, DEO will set completion and placement goals for enrolled participants including employment rate 2nd quarter after exit; employment rate 4th quarter after exit; median earnings; credential attainment and measurable skills gains. Goals are aligned with our State negotiated rates for Dislocated Workers, with the exception of median earnings. To ensure we are focused on lifting those populations most marginalized into jobs with living wages, we have a higher median earnings goal. The living wage in Los Angeles County for a single adult is \$27.81 per hour, according to [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Los Angeles County, California](#), which is the baseline used to calculate the quarterly median earnings goal below.

Indicator	Goal	East San Gabriel Valley AJCC	West LA AJCC
Training Enrollments	120	72	48
Priority Training Enrollments	75%	54	36
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	71.0%	51	34
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	71.0%	51	34
Median Earnings (Quarterly)	\$14,461.20	\$14,461.20 or higher per employment placement	\$14,461.20 or higher per employment placement
Credential Attainment	72.5%	52	35
Measurable Skill Gains	65.0%	47	31

Placements must be in training related positions supporting cleanup and rebuild and training and enrollments Community Colleges or Adult Schools should have first consideration.

- **Outreach:** DEO will create physical and digital collateral as a part of a targeted marketing campaign to promote these training pathways and occupations by May 15, 2025, that include highlighting LA County WDB leadership and Innovation Fund.

Conclusion: The proposed allocation of \$1 million in Innovation Funds will significantly contribute to the training and upskilling of the workforce needed for wildfire disaster relief, cleanup, and recovery. This initiative will ensure a skilled and trained workforce capable of meeting the demands of future wildfire disasters.

ⁱ [Supporting a Skilled and Trained Workforce for Fire Recovery Board Motion.pdf](#)