

WIB NEWS

Empowering California's Youth: Career-Connected Learning and Youth Apprenticeships

By Maureen Fifer

In today's fast-paced world, preparing young individuals for future career success is paramount. California is taking proactive measures to connect its diverse youth to promising career pathways through innovative programs such as Career-Connected Learning and Youth Apprenticeships.

Career-Connected Learning is an educational approach that extends beyond traditional classrooms, integrating real-world experiences and industry exposure into the curriculum. Through robust partnerships between schools, businesses, and community organizations, California aims to facilitate a smooth transition from education to the workforce. These programs, including internships and mentorships, offer students opportunities to explore diverse careers, gain hands-on experience, and develop valuable skills desired by employers.

Youth Apprenticeship programs elevate Career-Connected Learning by providing a structured pathway for students to earn academic credentials while gaining practical work experience. California recognizes the potential of these apprenticeships in addressing the skills gap and creating a workforce aligned with industry needs. Collaborating with businesses and trade organizations allows young people to explore various career paths, fostering skills in manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and green energy.



Benefits for Students:

Enhanced understanding of how education connects to the real world, making learning more relevant.

Development of a wide range of essential soft and technical skills for workplace success.

Exposure to different industries reduces career indecision, saving time and money in higher education decisions.

Benefits for Employers:

Access to a direct pipeline of skilled and motivated young talent tailored to industry needs.

Youth Apprenticeship programs contribute to building a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Active participation demonstrates a commitment to community development and the education-to-employment pipeline.

In summary, these initiatives not only bridge the gap between education and the workforce but also provide a win-win situation for students and businesses, creating a more skilled, diverse, and motivated workforce for California's future.

Youth Resource and Job Fair: Be the Change

By Liliana Roman-Aguilar

Job Link successfully organized a Youth Resource and Job Fair, themed 'Be the Change!' on September 22. The event aimed to provide resources to youth aged 16-24 and connect them with employment opportunities. The fair featured the presence of various agencies, recognized as trusted messengers, actively working with priority youth populations, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, unsheltered individuals, those with low income, foster youth, and more.

The partners did an amazing job of engaging the youth that participated, here are some quotes:

*"We got 3 youth that signed up for our Good4Youth Program" - **Goodwill***

*"We found some great candidates for our Youth Promoters program" - **Latino Services Provider***

*"We had several people interested in volunteering with us! Two young ladies left their resumes which will be followed up on for potential enrollment in Department of Rehabilitation's Student Services Program and possibly for Work Experience" – **Department of Rehabilitation***

And the Job Link Youth Program Outcomes:

- 15 referrals from the Youth Fair.
- 1 youth utilized the Youth Program services- short term shelter (SAY) and was consequently employed with CCNB and Whole Foods.
- 2 other youth are working with Job Link Youth Program, they are justice involved and need help with job search.



In a dedicated effort to make the event youth-centered, youth-led, and amplifying youth voices, our Job Link youth intern, Erik, played a crucial role in creating the flyer and contributed significantly to the planning and design of the marketing materials. Kudos to Erik for his outstanding contributions!

To ensure the event's alignment with its youth-centric goals, we encouraged participating agencies to bring along youth representatives who could share their success stories in utilizing the services and engage directly with other youth attendees.



Petaluma Job Fair for the Unhoused

By Antonio Vigil

The 2nd Job and Resource Fair for the unhoused or at risk, held at the Petaluma Community Center on November 16, 2023, was a success. Highlights include:

- 200 guests and 30 providers/employers attended, with a notable presence of Spanish speakers.
- Community volunteers played a crucial role in the event's success.
- A participant from the March event shared a success story, now employed and pursuing a Class A truck driving license with Job Link's assistance.
- Outstanding collaboration from partners, including DOR covering the Community Center expenses and Goodwill distributing 100 clothing vouchers.
- Various sponsors' donations provided a hot lunch, snacks, and over \$4500 in gift cards.
- A buzzing resume clinic was set up, actively supporting job seekers.
- Antonio's Unit, led by Eric and Chris, ensured the event's seamless flow.
- Special thanks to Sylvia and the Iglesia Cristiana SE for donating bags filled with goodies.
- Petaluma Enterprises expressed intent to hire four candidates from the fair.
- Thanks to Judy C. and John M. for generous contributions.
- The positive impact of Job Fairs and referrals is evident, and we remain committed to making a difference.



LUNCH AND LEARN TO HIRE THE HOMELESS

By Carol McHale

On October 25th, Job Link hosted a Lunch and Learn event dedicated to hiring individuals experiencing homelessness. The gathering aimed to showcase the array of free business services provided by Job Link, demonstrating their role in connecting businesses with top talent and fostering growth.

Job Link's own Antonio Vigil, Chris Willover, and Dawn Montgomery played pivotal roles in the event, shedding light on their experiences and advocacy for hiring unhoused individuals. Testimonials from community workgroup members and employers, such as Tracey Feick from Goodwill Redwood Empire, Eileen Morris from COTS, and Chase Williamson from Mary's Pizza, were warmly received. The team highlighted various facets and advantages of Job Link's services and incentives, showcasing how they empower businesses to hire individuals experiencing homelessness.

Antonio shared the project's inception journey, highlighting John Paul's support, creative ideas, and the evolution from job fairs for individuals to the present-day Lunch and Learn event for businesses. Chris delved into the operational details of the programs, emphasizing tangible benefits such as incentives and tax credits for businesses. Dawn underscored the commendable efforts of Job Link's counselors in preparing individuals for workforce entry or reentry. Notably, five employers have already completed the necessary paperwork to become an "employer of record."

The event's success was further enhanced by the generous donation from Mary's Pizza Shack, providing all attendees with a delightful lunch featuring pasta and pizza.

If you are interested or know someone who may be interested in Job Link's Business Services, please contact Chris Willover directly at (707) 565-2381.

