



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Strategic Workforce Development Plan for the Capital Region

Project Years: 2025-2028



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Capital Area Regional Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Project Years: 2025-2028

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DRAFT: Capital Area Regional Strategic Workforce Development Plan

INTRODUCTION

This document represents the Regional Plan for Program Years (PY) 2025-28, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029, as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This region consists of the counties of Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba. This plan builds on previous work and is jointly submitted by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and the four Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). The Regional Plan outlines strategies that assist adults and youth with gaining access to employment opportunities, including career pathways, within critical industry sectors identified within the greater Capital Area Regional Planning Unit (RPU) and in alignment with California Jobs First priority and opportunity sectors. The plan emphasizes targeting vulnerable populations to ensure equitable access to programs and services. The ultimate goal of these strategies is to support inclusive economic prosperity and income mobility for all community members. This will be completed through aligning the regional plan objectives in support of sector strategies that enhance WIOA outcomes and the State Workforce Development Plan goals while taking into consideration the residual disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased cost of living, and necessity to connect participants to quality jobs with family-sustaining wages. State plan goals include the following seven specific strategies building on the state's High Road Training Partnership model of co-equal emphasis on Job Quality, Equity, Climate and Environmental Sustainability:

1. Sector Strategies
2. Career Pathways
3. Regional Partnerships
4. Earn and Learn
5. Supportive Services
6. Creating Cross-System Data Capacity
7. Fostering Workforce Standards

The Capital Region RPU has developed the regional plan maintaining a clear understanding of the State's three overarching Policy Objectives:

1. Fostering Demand Driven Skills Attainment
2. Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians
3. Aligning, Coordinating and Integrating Programs and Services

The RPU has solidified its agreement for WIOA systems alignment through the signing of the "Memorandum of Understanding for the Capital Area Regional Planning Unit" or Cap Region MOU. The purpose of the Cap Region MOU is to establish mutually beneficial relationships in regards to regional coordination and systems alignment including the regional planning items

outlined in WIOA Section 106 commonly referred to as the A-H requirements. The RPU further agreed to work towards meeting the objectives in the state plan and expanded the agreement to include the following seven additional elements of alignment:

1. Review and align local policies and procedures
2. Investigate co-branding of initiatives
3. Coordinate outreach and business engagement strategies
4. Coordinate capacity building for Workforce Board Members, Chief Local Elected Officials, Partners and staff
5. Coordinate Staff and system partners' development activities
6. Coordinate regional business advisory groups and employer engagement strategies
7. Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements

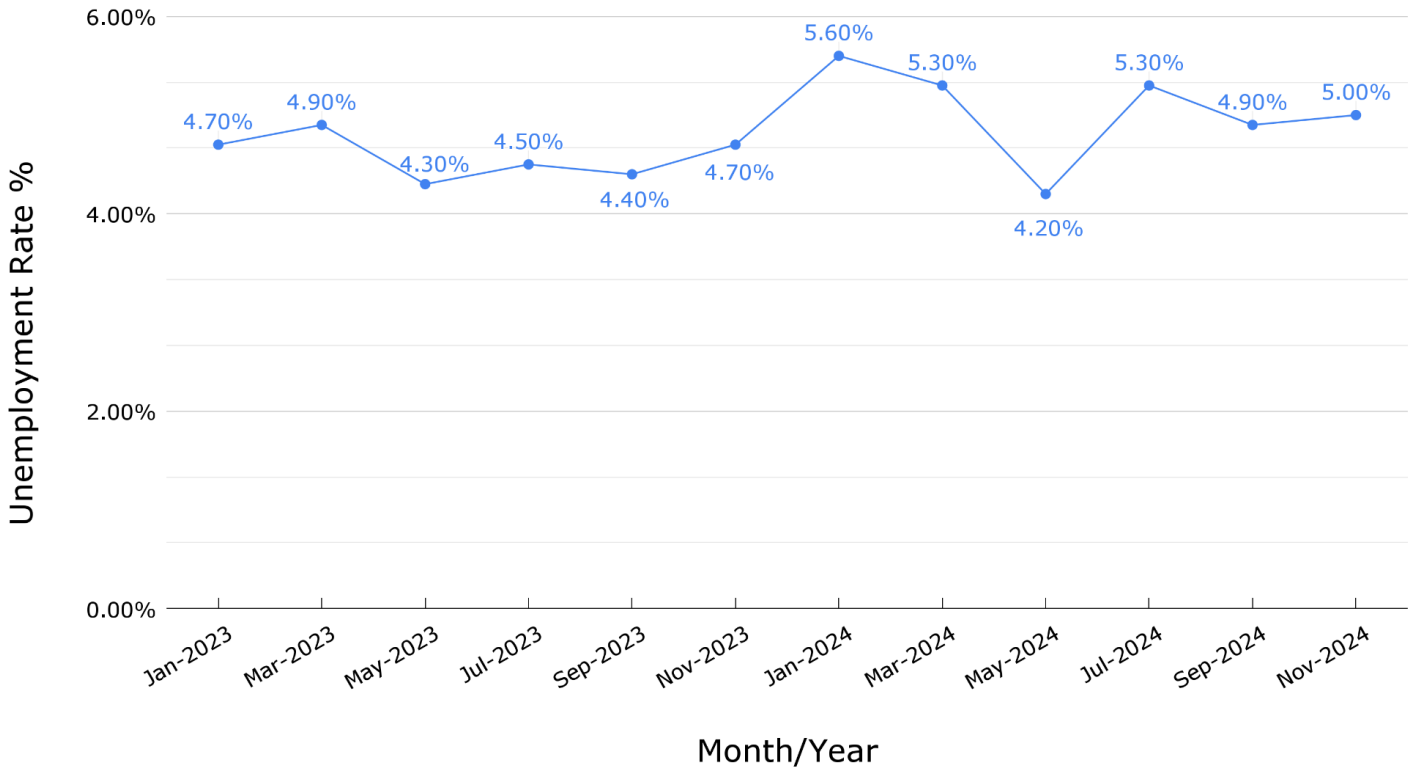
Representatives from the RPU membership meet to discuss these issues on a monthly basis facilitated by Valley Vision, the RPU's regional organizer.

ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CAPITAL AREA REGION

This section of the Regional Plan reflects the labor market data in the Capital RPU and guides the RPU in strategic planning and decision-making. As the region continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates, labor force participation, and employment rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels. Conversely, inflation is at record levels and higher wages are needed to establish self-sufficiency for individuals and families. A sustained, equitable recovery and future growth for the Capital Region depends on the ability of historically underinvested workers gaining the skills, access and support to obtain quality jobs and upward mobility in order to stay relevant with emerging technologies and industry adaptations in the future of work.

Employment/Unemployment Landscape and Labor Market Participation

Unemployment in the Capital Region (January 2023 - November 2024)



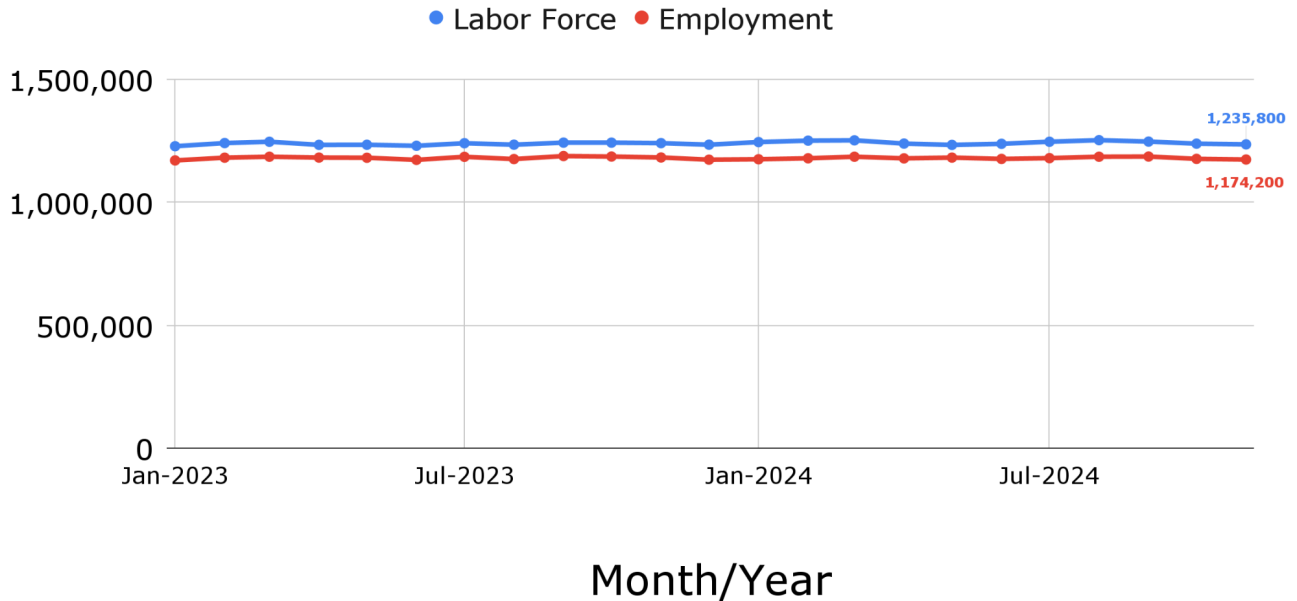
Source: State of California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division

The above chart notates the unemployment rate in the Capital Region Planning Unit fluctuated between 4% and 6% over the period from January 2023 to November 2024. It started at 4.7% in January 2023, briefly increased to 4.9% in March, and decreased to 4.3% in May. There were further variations, including a rise to 5.6% in January 2024, followed by a drop back to 4.2% in May. By November 2024, the rate stood at 5%. These changes reflect typical seasonal fluctuations, with some volatility. Overall the unemployment rate remained relatively stable, within the 4% to 5.5% range, and suggests a resilient labor market. This data demonstrates an ongoing recovery from pandemic highs and may indicate a return to stable, pre-pandemic unemployment rates in the region.

Labor Market Participation



Labor Force and Employment in the Capital Region (January 2023 - November 2024)



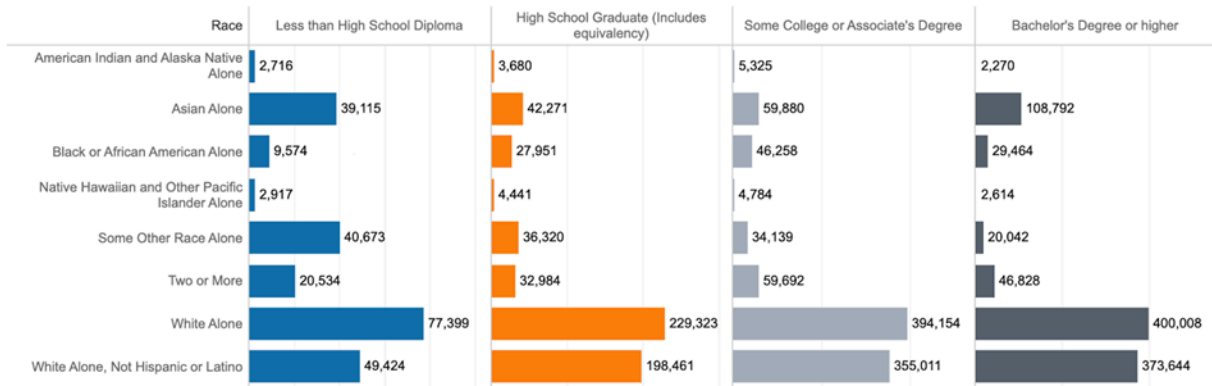
Source: State of California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division

Following the fluctuations in the unemployment rate, the labor force and employment data for the Capital Region Planning Unit demonstrate consistency from January 2023 to November 2024. While there are minor monthly fluctuations, the overall trend indicates that both the labor force and employment have remained steady. While the tight labor market has pushed average wages up, they have not kept pace with inflation and particularly the rising cost of housing, childcare, and food - essentials for daily life. These patterns align with broader labor market trends in the state and nation.

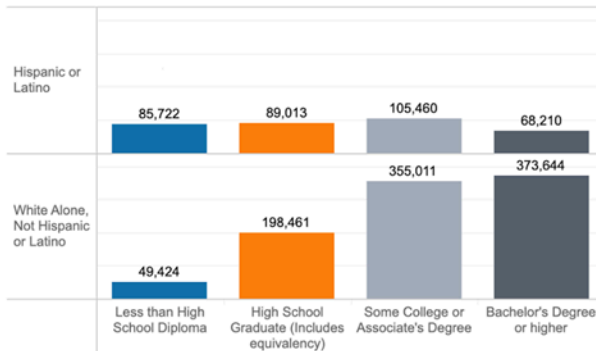
Current Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The following chart from the California Employment Development Department's Regional Planning Unit Labor Market Information Dashboard depicts the region's educational levels by race, gender and ethnicity. Significant disparities are apparent especially within the region's American Indian/Alaskan Native, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and those of multiple races. The disparity becomes more pronounced as educational levels increase. Hispanic or Lantino populations also fare worse than their white counterparts in educational attainment at all educational levels.

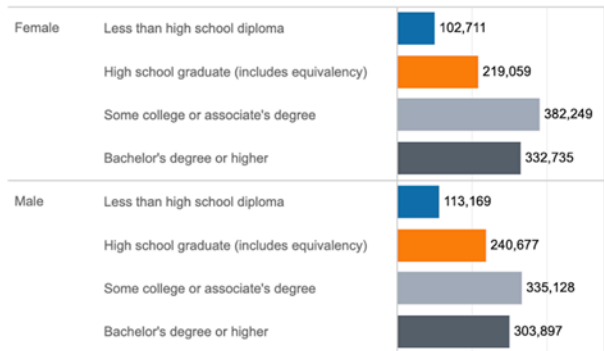
Educational Attainment by Race



Educational Attainment by Ethnicity



Educational Attainment by Gender



Source: State of California Employment Development Department, Regional Planning Unit Labor Market Information Dashboard

While over half of the region's jobs are opportunity jobs— defined as **quality jobs** plus **promising jobs** – workers' likelihood of having an opportunity job depends on their personal characteristics including age, educational level, race and gender as noted in the chart above.

- **Quality jobs:** Jobs that pay a livable wage on an annual basis, provide employer-sponsored health insurance, and are likely to continue offering pathways to these benefits.
- **Promising jobs:** Jobs that may not pay a livable wage or provide benefits currently but do offer career pathways to quality jobs within the next 10 years.

More than two-thirds of struggling adults in the region are at an age when people often begin or are actively raising a family. Capital Region workers who are younger and/or have less formal education are more likely to belong to struggling families. Because industry often uses age and education as a proxy for work experience and skills training, workers with less of either tend to have lower wages. Less educated young workers face the worst of both worlds, typically earning

less than older workers at the same education level as well as more highly educated workers from their age group.

More than half of struggling adults in the region have some level of postsecondary education short of a four-year degree. Another 34% have a high school diploma or G.E.D. Although this sizable contingent of workers has education and skills that should enable them to find well-paid work, regional shortfalls in the number of quality jobs available makes this impossible. The odds of struggling to make ends meet in the Capital Region are also shaped by race, ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics. These factors correlate with persistent barriers to educational and economic success, reflecting a long history of limited access to opportunity for people of color and women in the United States. Over half of struggling workers are people of color, many of whom chose “other” when asked to identify their race. Because so many of these workers are also raising children, improving labor market outcomes for struggling workers can help address existing racial and gender disparities and prevent similar inequities from taking hold in the future. Programs and strategies that meet the needs of specific communities will be essential in order to counteract barriers to opportunity and produce more equitable outcomes for all Capital Region residents.

Additionally, the majority of opportunity jobs are held by those who have attended college. Opportunity jobs have stronger representation in highly technical occupations including architecture and engineering, legal, computer and mathematics, life, physical and social sciences, management, business and financial operations along with healthcare practitioners and technicians. The Cities GPS analysis led to three key findings on talent for the mostly overlapping Capital region:

- Technical skills are especially important for accessing quality jobs, particularly for mid-skilled workers.
- The average striving worker has over 85% of the talent or “human capital” needed for quality jobs, leaving select technical knowledge and skill gap areas that could be effectively addressed through targeted short-term training.
- The Capital Region boasts effective post-secondary educational institutions in preparing students for careers in opportunity jobs; access and support through these institutions can prepare workers for careers learning to economic security.

Current Needs of Employers in the Region

Employers across the Capital Region are seeking individuals equipped with both technical and soft skills. Despite the region's educational advancements, notable skill gaps remain. Employers report challenges in finding candidates with the requisite technical skills, particularly in specialized fields such as cybersecurity, data analysis, healthcare technologist roles, and

advanced manufacturing technologies. Additionally, there is a shortage of individuals possessing strong soft skills, including effective communication and leadership abilities. These gaps hinder employers' ability to fill positions and impede the region's economic growth.

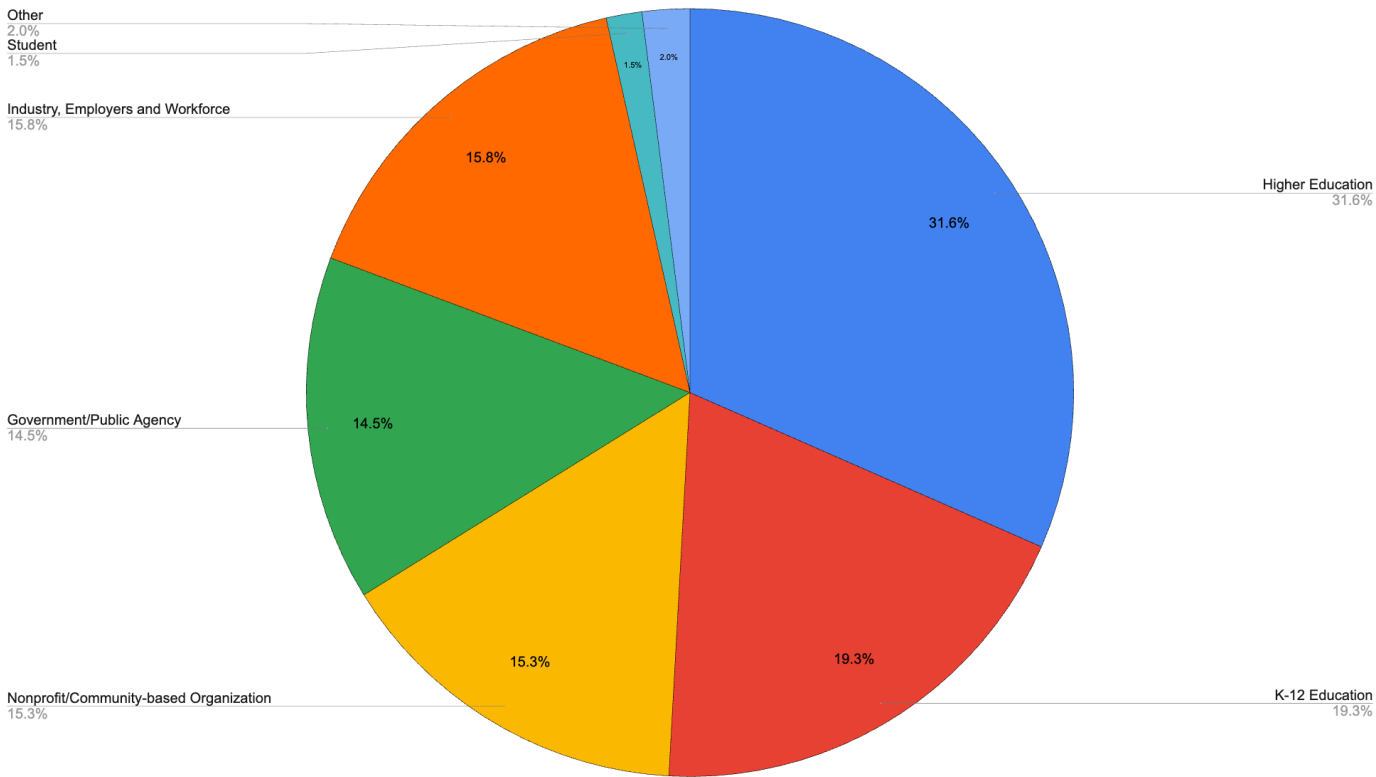
Technical competencies and building a workforce to support growth in key and emerging areas where quality jobs are prevalent are critical to meeting the current and future demands of our region's employers while ensuring our region's workforce has access to family sustaining career choices. Key industries highlighted in the Capital Region's California Jobs First Regional Plan are healthcare, construction, precision manufacturing, biotechnology, working lands, and business services. These sectors either have currently available quality jobs or have the capacity to expand the number of quality jobs available to our region's residents through focused and aligned economic and workforce development activities. Equally important are soft skills including effective communication, problem-solving, and teamwork, which are essential for workplace success. Employers are also prioritizing candidates with adaptability and a willingness to engage in continuous learning to keep pace with evolving industry standards.

REGIONAL INDICATORS

The Capital Region RPU selected Regional Indicators A and B for primary emphasis, not excluding activities relating to the remaining two regional indicators. Regarding Regional Indicator A: ***Region has a process to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners***, the RPU has been tracking attendance at industry sector convenings including the number of registrants, number of attendees, and type/category of workforce partners in attendance. These metrics demonstrate the reach of industry demand driven information throughout the regional workforce ecosystem to supply side partners and assist in informing specific strategies as needed for additional stakeholder engagement. In the 2023-2024 year, 458 participants joined regional industry advisories with identified organization/role affiliation as outlined in the chart below. The large percentage of education and training partners noted by higher education at 31.6%, K-12 Education at 19.3%, and Community Based Organizations at 15.3% demonstrate the reach of these advisories to appropriate service delivery partners. In addition to receiving information on industry needs from employers and labor market data, these advisories provide an opportunity for networking between supply side partners to align their programs and systems, as well as networking between supply side partners and industry to develop internships, work-based learning, and employment placement relationships. A next step for the Capital Region RPU is to establish objective goals to continue ensuring supply-side partners stay well informed of industry workforce needs.



Fall 2023 - Spring 2024 Regional Advisory Participant Affiliation



In addition to attendance at industry advisories, recordings, meeting proceedings with key findings, and one-page job seeker handouts are produced by Valley Vision, our regional organizer, to encapsulate the information in various usable forms to meet the needs of a variety of supply side partners and customers. Furthermore, presentations of key findings across the advisories are presented to regional and local WIOA system partners at WIB partner meetings and gatherings of supply side partners including community college career education convenings, adult education regional consortium meetings, and county office of education advisory gatherings.

The Region has also continued to address Regional Indicator B: **Region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.** Regional workforce board chairs and key staff informed the objective measures established through our region’s California Jobs First planning phase to establish job quality metrics. Regional boards endorsed the following definitions for quality and promising jobs, particularly emphasizing the need to allow for promising jobs as onramps for our region’s highest need residents to promising careers. The combination of

quality and promising jobs described below are referred to as “opportunity jobs” in this document and in our region’s California Jobs First Regional Plan.

- **Quality jobs:** Jobs that pay a livable wage on an annual basis, provide employer-sponsored health insurance, and are likely to continue offering pathways to these benefits.
- **Promising jobs:** Jobs that may not pay a livable wage or provide benefits currently but do offer career pathways to quality jobs within the next 10 years.

Additionally, research conducted during the California Jobs First planning phase created quantitative targets for quality job wages per county in most of the RPU’s overlapping counties. This target hovers around \$62,000 per individual, equating to an hourly full-time wage of almost \$30.00 per hour.

WAGE THRESHOLD FOR QUALITY JOBS IN THE CAPITAL REGION, BY SUBREGION

| County | Hourly Wage | Annual Earnings |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Placer and El Dorado | \$34.30 | \$69,972 |
| Nevada | \$33.50 | \$68,340 |
| Sacramento and Yolo | \$30.70 | \$62,628 |
| Colusa | \$29.50 | \$60,180 |
| Yuba and Sutter | \$29.20 | \$59,568 |

The region continues to prioritize access for underinvested, high barrier communities within the RPU to system services to increase their earnings potential. The RPU established a target 90% of individuals served having one or more barriers to employment. The most recent full year measurement details the Capital Region with 87.8% of the RPU’s adult customers having one or more significant barriers to employment. Although there is still room for improvement to meet the target of 90%, this is a significant increase from 81.1% in 2022. Additionally, average earnings increased per participant from \$38,542 in 2022 to \$45,919 in 2024.

As our region’s We Prosper Together initiative continues to drive economic and workforce system alignment, we anticipate focusing outreach and awareness efforts to our community members with an emphasis on underinvested, high barrier populations to increase knowledge, interest and access to the priority industry sectors with significant quality job growth potential.

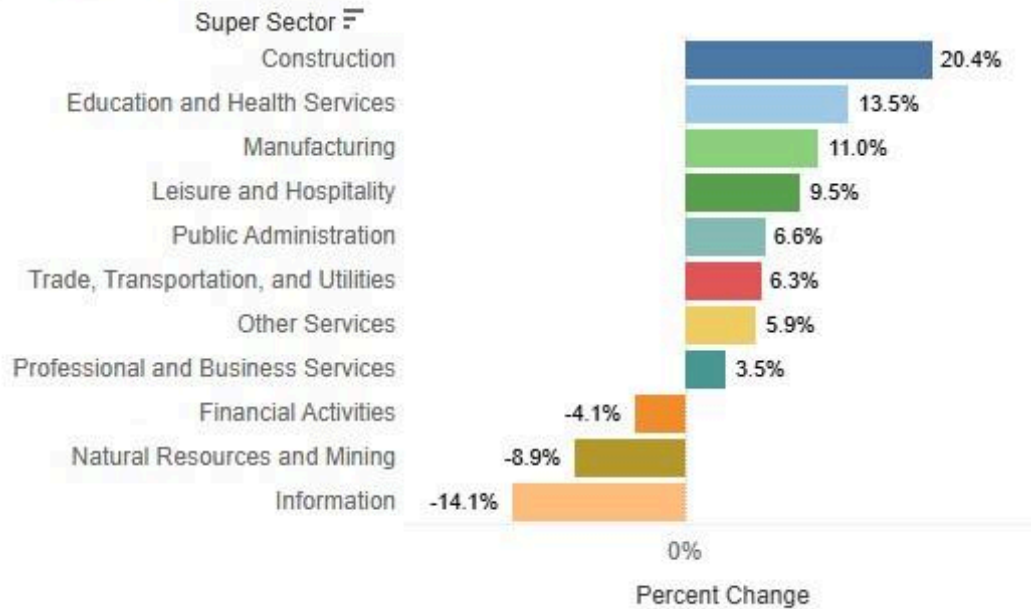
While not formally selecting Regional Indicators C or D, the RPU has targeted initiatives to serve specific populations detailed further in this plan.

FOSTERING DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS ATTAINMENT

In-Demand Industry Sectors

Industry Employment Change (2018 - 2022)

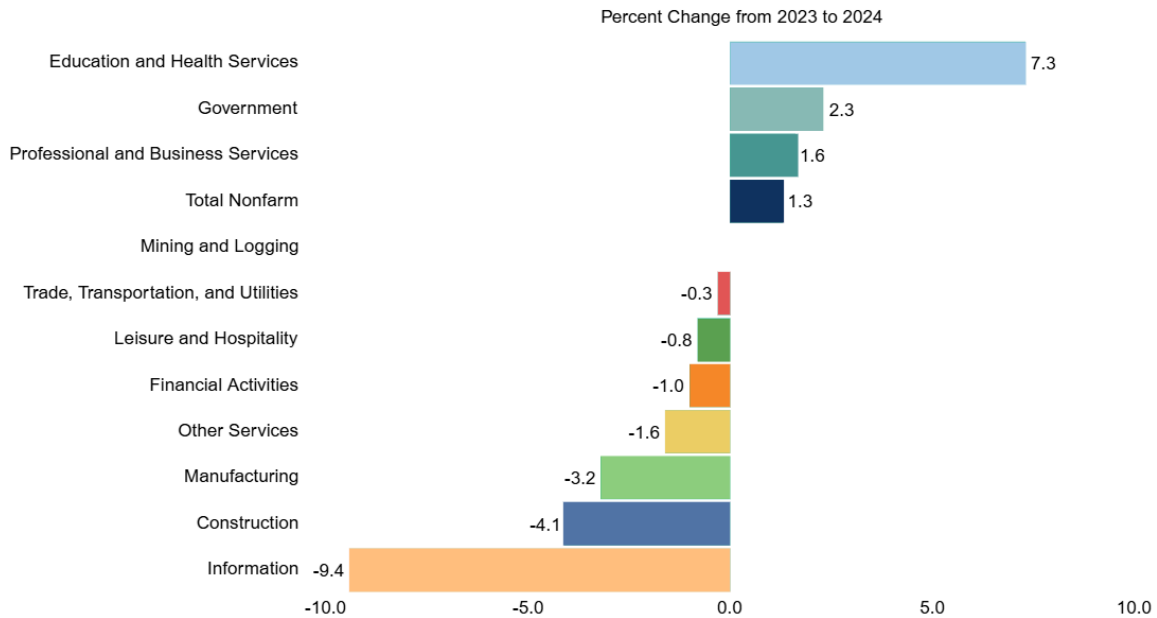
2018 to 2022 Growth Rate



Source: State of California Employment Development Department, Regional Planning Unit Labor Market Information Dashboard

The Capital Region industry employment change from 2018 through 2022 detailed the Construction sector maintaining as the highest growth sector at 20.4%. Additional industries with growth included Education and Health Services (13.5%), Manufacturing (11%), Trade, Leisure and Hospitality (9.5%), Public Administration (6.6%), Transportation and Utilities (6.3%), Other Services (5.9%), and Professional and Business Services (3.5%). The Information sector maintains the most significant losses at a loss of 14.1% of jobs. Other industries with job losses include Financial Activities (-4.4%) and Natural Resources and Mining (-8.9%) .

Previous Year Industry Employment Change (Nonfarm Payrolls)



Source: U.S. BLS, Current Employment Statistics

Industry data available for the Sacramento Metro Area in the Capital Region RPU showcases industry trend data over the past one-year period from October 2023 to October 2024. The most significant growth was observed in Education and Health Services (7.3%), with Government (2.3%) and Professional and Business Services (1.6%) also showing job gains. Job losses were consistent with Information (-9.4%), followed by Construction (-4.1%), Manufacturing (-3.2%), Other Services (-1.6%), Financial Activities (-1.0%), Leisure and Hospitality (-0.8%), and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities at (-0.3%).

This data highlights the continued recovery and strength in sectors like Education and Health Services and Government, which align with the RPU's initiatives in Health and Life Sciences and Public Sector employment. Additionally, growth in Professional and Business Services connects to the largest priority sector identified in our region's California Jobs First data as having the largest share of quality jobs available to our region's residents. Declines in sectors such as Construction and Manufacturing point to potential challenges that could inform future workforce development strategies.

Valley Vision, the Capital RPU's regional organizer, is also the fiscal agent and regional convener for the Capital Region's California Jobs First initiative, "*We Prosper Together*." Within the *We Prosper Together* initiative, Valley Vision spearheads efforts to identify and support the region's priority tradable sectors, and local serving high quality job opportunity sectors. By connecting economic development, employers and industry representatives, education and training providers, and community based organizations, *We Prosper Together* drives the creation of

targeted demand-driven inclusive strategies to expand career opportunities, close equity gaps, and strengthen the region's economy. The newly created [We Prosper Together Regional Plan](#) focused on three key action areas: growing and creating high quality jobs, connecting divested communities to currently available quality jobs, and driving equitable outcomes. The following four priority tradable industry sectors were identified as poised for significant growth and quality job creation in the Capital Region:

- **Biotechnology:** This sector focuses on the development of innovative medical and agricultural products, contributing to advancements in health and sustainability.
- **Precision Manufacturing:** Involving advanced manufacturing techniques, this sector emphasizes high-quality production in industries such as aerospace, electronics, and medical devices.
- **Working Lands:** Encompassing agriculture, forestry, and related activities, this sector leverages the region's natural resources to support sustainable economic development.
- **Business Services:** This sector includes a range of professional services that support business operations, such as finance, marketing, and consulting, driving efficiency and growth across industries.

By focusing on these tradable sectors, the Capital Region aims to enhance its economic resilience and ensure that strategic economic growth benefits all residents. Additionally, information shared from industry and regional community engagement across the region identified significant opportunities to improve access and pathways to currently available high quality jobs in Construction and Healthcare.

As Valley Vision continues to lead the Capital RPU as Regional Organizer, it will assist in identifying, as well as creating and implementing, regional sector pathways aligned to these priority industry sectors and regional industry needs. The boards have been involved in the Planning and Catalyst phases of the *We Prosper Together* initiative, participating on the Leadership Council, in workgroups and planning sessions. Valley Vision serves as the regional hub for dialogue, information sharing, planning and development of resource strategies with the workforce boards, businesses, labor, education, and economic development. The result is better alignment, coordination, and integration of regional resources to support the development of industry-specific partnerships, the alignment of programs and funding streams to support demand driven sector initiatives, and the development of connected career pathways in key competitive and emerging industry sectors in the RPU.

The RPU utilizes Valley Vision to host industry and employer advisories in critical sectors important to our regional economy including: Advanced Manufacturing; Health and Life Sciences; Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies; Energy, Construction and Utilities; Information and Communications Technology; Business Services; and Public Sector pathways. These advisories are a co-investment initiative funded through Regional Plan Implementation funds through the California Workforce Development Board, and Strong Workforce Program funds through the California Community Colleges. These advisories, open and marketed to all workforce stakeholders including education, nonprofit, governmental, and industry, are designed to maximize employer engagement by creating a wide audience for our

employer partners to learn and coalesce around specifically articulated industry needs. These convenings, with a six year history, are a proven strategy to advance cohesive workforce development program solutions aligned to business and industry needs. The impact is to: align education and workforce investments with employer designated priority needs; inform the development of industry-led training and education curriculum, certificates and programs; assist in the development of work based learning opportunities including internships, apprenticeships and on the job training; and foster expanded career awareness in regional priority industries. These industry advisories boast a host of employer partners including DMG MORI (Manufacturing), Del Monte Foods (Agriculture), Kaiser Permanente (Healthcare), Swinterton (Construction), Sacramento Municipal Utility District (Utilities), ServiceNOW (ICT), and CalHR (Public Sector).

Regional Sector Pathways

Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) - The Capital Region launched several Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) initiatives to strengthen employer-education partnerships. This employer-led approach, created by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is being applied in the healthcare, biotechnology, manufacturing, information technology, and construction sectors to address workforce challenges and improve talent pipelines. The TPM curriculum equips employers to take a leadership role in addressing workforce challenges by forming collaboratives that pool regional and critical talent-demand data. These collaboratives work together to identify common workforce needs, standardize key- positions, and streamline pathways into their respective industries. The Roseville Chamber of Commerce (Placer County) in partnership with Golden Sierra Job Training Agency (GSJTA) has been actively engaging employers and educators to build talent pipelines and improve workforce skills through TPM initiatives in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, hospitality, and informational technology. In Sacramento, a Biotech TPM Employer Collaborative hosted in partnership with Sacramento Employment Training Agency (SETA), Valley Vision, and the City of Sacramento, is bringing together industry leaders to identify and address workforce challenges, aiming to create sustainable, high-quality career pathways in the expanding biotech sector.

After TPM Collaboratives identify their primary quality job occupational needs, the effort shifts to aligning educational programs with evolving industry requirements. These Collaboratives have resulted in the production of regional, sector-specific recommendations that provide overviews of occupations, industry trends, and skill requirements. For instance, the Healthcare Collaborative identified four key technologist occupations meeting job quality criteria and in high demand for the region's largest healthcare employers. Effort is now underway to expand community college training offerings leading to these key positions. In support of this, Valley Vision facilitated a Healthcare Summit at Folsom Lake College to advance collaboration between hospital systems and local education partners, to specifically discuss and address community college needs including equipment, qualified instructors, and capital infrastructure, as well as the imperative of having guaranteed clinical placements for students to complete their certifications.

By fostering these employer collaboratives, TPM builds a foundation for more consistent, employer-driven workforce solutions across industries. This data-driven approach ensures that workforce development strategies are informed by actionable information regarding key occupations, skill requirements, and emerging industry trends. This information guides the design, expansion, and revision of training programs, ensuring responsiveness to both current and future workforce needs. TPM initiatives, supported by workforce investment boards, prioritize equity by creating additional onramps for historically underinvested populations. This focus contributes to a more inclusive and equitable workforce development ecosystem, providing clear and accessible pathways into high-quality careers across the region.

Public Sector Pathways - With the region encompassing the state's capital, public sector occupations provide quality jobs to populations throughout the RPU. To that end, the region supports the Innovative Pathways to Public Service initiative, a coalition of stakeholders working together to improve awareness and inroads to public sector jobs for youth and adults in efforts and to provide employers a more diverse and representative applicant pool. Valley Vision and representation from the RPU participate in the IPPS leadership group including strategic planning, awareness campaigns, supporting research efforts, and engaging partners to strengthen career pathways in the sector. The desired impact is to increase interest in and access to public sector jobs while diversifying the pipeline of applicants and supporting efforts to streamline public sector hiring processes to improve accessibility for underrepresented candidates. The initiative has expanded employer and community engagement with partners expanding work-based learning opportunities as viable onramps and pathways for students and job seekers.

Additionally, Los Rios Community College District received and is just wrapping up a federal four-year Strengthening Community Colleges grant targeted specifically to public sector employment opportunities. This funding included the creation and convening of a public sector employer advisory board that met for the duration of the grant and informed the revamp of the district's general administrative certificate program to specifically Business Information Professional Certifications Levels 1 and 2 matched to hiring and job requirements dictated by our region's public sector employer base. Local workforce board involvement was critical to the success of this initiative.

The RPU continues to work cohesively with additional industry-led organizations including the Sacramento Valley Manufacturing Alliance (SVMA) and the Northstate Building Industry Association and Foundation (NSBIA & NSBIF) partnering with them on informing and aligning education and training providers to the current and projected needs of the region's employers.

ENABLING UPWARD MOBILITY FOR ALL CALIFORNIANS

The Capital RPU has aligned efforts with our region's California Jobs First initiative, *We Prosper Together*. Through this process, local boards leaders were integral partners in the creation of quality jobs definitions. The region recognizes historically disadvantaged job seekers often

require lengthy pre-employment and pre-educational activities in order to even qualify for entry-level jobs, making a singular definition for job quality challenging. Acknowledging that entry-level jobs are a necessary and valuable opportunity for many customers that desire high-road employment to obtain the basic skills and experience needed for advancement along a career pathway, the Capital Region’s California Jobs First initiative and regional boards have adopted the following definitions.

- **Quality jobs:** Jobs that pay a livable wage on an annual basis, provide employer-sponsored health insurance, and are likely to continue offering pathways to these benefits.
- **Promising jobs:** Jobs that may not pay a livable wage or provide benefits currently but do offer career pathways to quality jobs within the next 10 years.
- **Opportunity jobs:** Quality jobs plus promising jobs

Quality job wages as determined by research during the planning phase of California Jobs First established the following guidelines for wage thresholds for the majority of overlapping counties in the Capital RPU.

WAGE THRESHOLD FOR QUALITY JOBS IN THE CAPITAL REGION, BY SUBREGION

| County | Hourly Wage | Annual Earnings |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Placer and El Dorado | \$34.30 | \$69,972 |
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High Road Workforce System

The RPU prioritizes working with employers who offer self-sufficient career pathway opportunities to its job seeker customers as well as employers that are willing to work with job seeker customers on a long-term basis to develop the skills necessary to move to high-road employment. The RPU prioritizes industry partnerships that deliver equity, sustainability and job quality and is partnering with California Jobs First efforts in prioritizing the advancement of workforce development efforts in key industry sectors meeting these three goals. These priority industries include:

- **Biotechnology:** This sector focuses on the development of innovative medical and agricultural products, contributing to advancements in health and sustainability.
- **Precision Manufacturing:** Involving advanced manufacturing techniques, this sector emphasizes high-quality production in industries such as aerospace, electronics, and medical devices.
- **Working Lands:** Encompassing agriculture, forestry, and related activities, this sector leverages the region's natural resources to support sustainable economic development.
- **Business Services:** This sector includes a range of professional services that support business operations, such as finance, marketing, and consulting, driving efficiency and growth across industries.

The efforts of California Jobs First and the RPU are implementing key interventions lined out in the state plan, particularly democratizing access to good-quality middle-skill jobs and lifting all workers to the high road. Additionally notable is our region's efforts to include workers and historically underinvested communities in co-designing pathways into climate and clean economy careers as noted in the following section.

Climate and Environmental Sustainability

The critical juncture of the advancement of Clean Economy jobs is a particular area of emphasis for this planning unit, ensuring populations historically experiencing the negative impacts of climate change are positioned to benefit from the quality job offerings in this expanding sector. The RPU is partnering with California Jobs First efforts in prioritizing the advancement of workforce development efforts in key industry sectors meeting the goals of equity, job quality and environmental sustainability within our region.

In addition to partnering with our region's California Jobs First effort, the Capital RPU has supported Valley Vision in producing two Climate, Justice and Jobs Summits centered on career awareness and access to jobs emerging from the transition to clean energy, particularly for those most impacted by adverse climate impacts. These Summits served to uplift community voice to a wide audience of industry, training providers, and support agencies, and included a panel of traditionally underserved residents to inform the design and delivery of high road pathways that are accessible and attainable.

Equity and Economic Justice

The RPU continues to emphasize policies and services that focus on equity and job quality to underserved populations including disadvantaged youth, veterans, basic skills deficient, justice involved, ELL, disability, low-income, public assistance, homeless and dislocated workers. This emphasis is evidenced by the customers served in the system, with over 87.8% of adults having one or more significant barriers to employment. Over the past year, 45,850 individuals served by the region had one or more barriers to employment. The RPU's focus is on regional initiatives that support economic prosperity and income mobility, and ensure equity and accessibility to all for a strong, sustained workforce. The RPU has utilized incentives and subsidized employment

to support high barrier populations in advancing along their chosen career pathway. Specific initiatives utilizing community ambassadors through aligned Accelerator funding have also proven effective models for connecting priority populations to higher quality promising job pathways.

The RPU focuses primary efforts on low income populations and those with one or more barriers to employment. Additionally, the RPU emphasizes addressing the needs of historically underinvested populations through specific initiatives including the following:

Prison to Employment (P2E)

The RPU's Prison to Employment (P2E) initiative provides justice-involved individuals with the services needed to assist them in finding gainful employment in quality, sustaining jobs. Under the initiative, the targeted justice-involved population includes subjects to probation, mandatory supervision, or post-release community supervision. These individuals experience significant barriers to employment including:

- Drug Abuse/ Addiction
- Mental Health Issues
- Homelessness
- Gaps in Employment
- Lack of Family Support
- Unreliable Transportation, No Driver's License, or Lack of Insurance
- Lack of Education, Training and/or Job/Readiness Skills
- Lack of Diploma/GED
- Lack of Certifications/Licenses to Support Living Wage/Wage Progression
- Inadequate Life Skills

Capital RPU partners under this initiative focus on "earn and learn activities" and direct placements in employment consistent with objectives which emphasize rapid employment after re-entry as a primary means of mitigating recidivism. Establishing individualized pathways to success for this population is critical. The pathway includes the life/foundation skills to make good decisions, completing high school, reducing additional barriers they may have and providing an onramp to a career pathway. The overall strategy anticipates that rapid employment, sustained attendance, and the implicit incentives with this work-centric opportunity outweigh the draw to recidivate.

Disability Initiatives

The RPU administers several disability initiatives to increase employment for these historically underemployed individuals. While most initiatives are administered locally in conjunction with the Department of Rehabilitation and other partners, this population receives shared target emphasis within the planning unit to reduce the gap in labor market participation between disabled and non-disabled populations.

RERP

Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships for the Capital Region focused on Low Income populations and English Language Learners. Specific strategies include digital upskilling in Spanish as well as English to prepare very low skill workers, particularly agricultural workers, for higher level positions. Other strategies include work based learning and expanded support services to advance these priority job seekers along promising industry pathways including Business Information Worker training leading to Public Sector employment, and Healthcare technologist positions.

On the regulatory side, the WIOA regulations and State policy guidance requires “priority of service” for use of WIOA, Title I, Adult funds. In addition to giving priority to veterans and spouses of veterans, American Job Center systems are required to give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. All four boards in the RPU have approved and implemented priority of service policies that assist them locally and regionally in providing equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities to those most in need.

Additionally, on an annual basis, all boards in the RPU meet compliance under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions found in Section 188 of the WIOA. Section 188 of the WIOA and its implemented regulations prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identify), national origin, including Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Compliance with this section of the WIOA ensures that programs, services, and employment practices are provided in a manner that ensures nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

ALIGNING, COORDINATING, AND INTEGRATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

This section describes the RPU’s commitment to regional coordination and integrating programs and services to better economize limited resources, to maximize effectiveness, and to achieve a greater return on investment, and community reach.

In August and September of 2016, the RPU solidified its agreement for WIOA systems alignment through the signing of the “Memorandum of Understanding for the Capital Area Regional Planning Unit” or Capital Region MOU, and that MOU remains in place today. The purpose of the MOU is to establish mutually beneficial relationships in regards to regional coordination and systems alignment including the regional planning items outlined in WIOA Section 106 commonly referred to as the A-H requirements. The RPU further agreed to work towards

meeting the objectives in the state plan as indicated above. The RPU expanded the agreement to include the following seven additional elements of alignment:

1. Review and align local policies and procedures
 2. Investigate co-branding of initiatives
 3. Coordinate outreach and business engagement strategies
 4. Coordinate capacity building for Workforce Board Members, Chief Local Elected Officials, Partners and staff
 5. Coordinate Staff and system partners' development activities
 6. Coordinate regional business advisory groups and employer engagement strategies
 7. Continuous planning in response to state and federal requirements
- Representatives from the RPU membership meet to discuss these issues on a monthly basis.

Central to alignment efforts is Valley Vision. Due to Valley Vision's central role in regional planning matters, its expertise in conducting objective research and findings, and its ability to convene and coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives, multiple regional partners have jointly engaged Valley Vision to lead joint planning efforts. SETA, Los Rios Community College District, economic development and private industry have all jointly invested in Valley Vision as the region's workforce intermediary, to assist with effective employer engagement aligned to in demand training and job placement. Valley Vision is also the regional convener and fiscal agent for We Prosper Together, our region's California Jobs First initiative, further solidifying their position as an effective intermediary to advance an industry driven economic and workforce strategy for the Capital region. Co-investment in Valley Vision provides the opportunity to coordinate multiple and often overlapping planning efforts in a more efficient manner that reduces the time commitment from partners and private industry and leads to more aligned, effective strategies.

The RPU and Valley Vision continue to identify and deploy shared/pooled resources such as regional industry cluster/sector studies, regional business services strategies, regional policies/protocols, and to the extent practicable, regional MOUs and agreements. The RPU's strategy to engage Valley Vision as the Regional Organizer allows for improved coordination of policies, strategies and initiatives across the region. In addition, Valley Vision's central role on initiatives that cross funding silos and programs enables the Boards to better align and integrate supply-side partners and improve the system-wide responsiveness to business needs. Through the CART Team, the RPU continues to track professional development training for workforce and partner staff, with an emphasis on activities that improve remote services to customers.

In addition to the four workforce boards, regional partners include the State of California, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and the Employment Development Department (EDD)—Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Trade Assistance Act, County CalWORKs and child support departments, local economic development agencies, county offices of education, labor partners, the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC), Job Corps, representatives of Indian and Native American, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, older worker programs, numerous community based organizations and additional partners.

Many of the regional partners are simultaneously conducting concurrent planning efforts, and workforce board members, partners and staff are participating in these regional planning efforts including the community college's Strong Workforce initiatives, and the CAERC's AB 86 Comprehensive Regional Plan both involve regional planning on workforce development, with the goal of alignment and consistency with other planning efforts. CAERC is comprised of 15 members, inclusive of four community colleges, and 11 K-12 school districts, as well as 23 partner organizations.

Currently, no formal administrative cost arrangements exist between the four local areas of the region. However, through previous Regional Implementation Planning grants and most recently RERP, the RPU has secured Valley Vision to assist regional alignment and coordination, and various facets of implementation of the regional plan. The region already splits costs in some areas such as the procurement of training providers and access to online training licenses. For recent regional awards like P2E and SB1, the Boards have designated Golden Sierra to be the grant administrator and fiscal agent.

Should a formal decision be made to share administrative costs in some manner, a process will be established to evaluate the cost sharing arrangements. Standardized procurement procedures would be used in the selection of consultants, facilitators and/or trainers.

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Outreach Efforts

The Capital Region Workforce Boards facilitated two Public Input Meetings to solicit input from local workforce development stakeholders (education, labor, business, economic development and community-based organizations) on the update to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local and Regional Plans. Attendees were informed that the plan is intended to respond to current and foreseen challenges faced by the local workforce system, that it would provide a framework for continued regional cooperation and investment, that it would encourage continuous improvement of integrated services to clients, and finally that it would respond to policy direction in workforce legislation.

The stakeholder meetings were hybrid with in person and facilitated zoom discussions. The meetings were held on the following dates and times:

Wednesday, December 4th, 2024, 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Sacramento Employment and Training Agency
925 Del Paso Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95815

Wednesday, December 11th, 2024, 4:30 PM -6:30 PM
Yolo County Office of Education

1280 Santa Anita Court, #100
Woodland, CA 95776

Public Notices were posted in local and regional publications and published on the workforce boards' websites. In addition, an email notification was widely disseminated to regional and local area stakeholders including the required list as mandated by the state's policy guidance, and other representatives from the business and organized labor communities, the K-12 system, the community college system, adult education, private postsecondary institutions, and community based organizations. Special care was taken to ensure that organizations representing historically disadvantaged populations, such as County Departments of Human Assistance, the California Human Development, Department of Rehabilitation, PRIDE Industries, the local American Association of Retired Persons, Vietnam Veterans of California, the California Indian Manpower Consortium, Alta Regional, NorCal Center on Deafness, to name a few, received notifications. Partners were also invited to submit written comments via email to our regional convener.

Public Input Meetings

The meetings included a presentation on economic landscapes, an overview of the workforce development system, current state and regional plans, goals and priorities, and offered questions designed to solicit input from the attendees on how to improve services to job seeker and business communities. Attendees included stakeholders and partners from education, labor, business, economic development and community-based organizations, including those focused on serving low-income and other vulnerable populations including Building Careers Foundation, Wellspace Health, the Department of Rehabilitation, La Familia Counseling Center, Alchemist Community Development Corporation and the Sacramento County Office of Education.

The overarching input indicated a need for increased and ongoing communication among service partners and improved alignment of services to meet the needs of all customers. Recurring issues expressed by attendees included transportation and housing challenges, the need for wrap-around supports, mitigating lengthy/cumbersome processes and paperwork to access services, and increasing access to job readiness and career pathway programs for vulnerable populations. An additional primary theme centered on meeting individuals where they are, both physically and digitally, to increase awareness of workforce services. Recommendations included enhanced outreach strategies, collaboration with employers, and systemic improvements to service delivery. Below are the key insights from the meetings:

Outreach and Engagement Strategies:

- Prioritizing proactive, in-person interactions including active outreach in youth and community hubs, high-traffic areas, and drop in centers, rather than relying solely on traditional job fairs or presentations.
- The importance of genuine, one-on-one conversations to build trust and increase awareness of available resources.
- The effectiveness of physical outreach through flyers posted in high-traffic, low-income areas such as grocery stores.
- Needed collaboration with youth, LGBTQ+ centers, drop-in locations, programs, and community representatives or ambassadors.
- The importance of tailored outreach to unhoused youth and underrepresented populations.
- Leverage digital media campaigns, including Google search ads and social media, alongside physical outreach methods like distributing flyers in low-income neighborhoods to connect with diverse job-seeking audiences.
- Organize events in community hubs like churches, parks, or local centers to address transportation challenges for job seekers.
- Provide small incentives, e.g., food vouchers, to encourage participation in workforce services.
- Attend other organization's outreach events to assess attendees' needs and connect them to relevant programs, services, and supports.

Employer Collaboration

- Build stronger partnerships with employers to better understand their workforce needs, inform training programs, and facilitate placements.
- Consider sector-specific sessions and orientations, including trade group involvement, tailored to industries like healthcare, construction, and manufacturing.
- Encourage case managers to act as liaisons between employers and employees to address workplace challenges.
- Address the challenge of maintaining continuity when employer contacts leave, requiring the cultivation of new relationships.
- Conduct trauma-informed training on hiring practices and culturally competent communication to educate employers on workforce diversity needs and improve

employment retention for businesses working with employees from underrepresented or diverse backgrounds.

- Provide employer training and/or support on navigating challenges with new generations entering the workforce.

Enhancing Service Delivery

- Streamline fragmented service systems to reduce duplication of information sharing and entry, and reduce barriers for job seekers and employers.
- Develop user-friendly, mobile-accessible platforms to reduce barriers for all demographics.
- Implement real-time, warm hand-off connections between job seekers and resources to maximize engagement and support and provide immediate access to resources.
- Align programs to integrate education, skills training, and job readiness effectively for improved user experiences.
- Address the need to balance efforts between preparing job seekers for employment and educating employers to adapt to modern workforce needs.
- Create a centralized resource directory of available resources and opportunities that can be shared with workforce services stakeholders and partners, including colleges and community-based organizations.
- Strengthen partnerships between educational institutions, community colleges, workforce boards, and local community groups.

Addressing Key Barriers

- Identified affordable housing and accessible transportation as foundational needs for workforce participation.
- Stressed the importance of programs addressing mental health, self-confidence, and systemic barriers.
- Discussed the need for better alignment of expectations between young workers entering the workforce for the first time and employers, and emphasized the need for on the job training, mentorship and soft skills training.
- Recommended strengthening collaborations with housing providers to tailor programs for transitioning individuals.
- Highlighted housing as foundational to job stability and employment readiness, noting that lack of housing complicates other essential processes like opening a bank account and the importance of focusing on preventative measures, such as rental assistance programs.

- Recommended expanding earn-and-learn opportunities to provide hands-on training similar to apprenticeship models.
- Highlighted the importance of multilingual staff in addressing language barriers and accessibility for specific populations.
- Create programs to boost self-esteem, improve self-image, address mental health challenges, and cultivate confidence to help job seekers overcome systemic barriers.
- Address the unique barriers faced by formerly incarcerated individuals, including employer hesitation and systemic funding limitations.
- Increase advocacy and collaboration with city and regional partners to better serve justice-involved populations.

Literacy and Education

- Focus on integrated education and training (IET) programs that combine basic education with job-specific skills training.
- Promote dual-instructor models that teach language and technical skills simultaneously to accelerate successes.
- Address the need for digital literacy training to ensure all job seekers, especially underrepresented populations, can effectively navigate and engage in an increasingly digital world.

Economic Mobility and Poverty Alleviation

- Differentiate between individual and community-level strategies, focusing on systemic solutions like homeownership and local micro-enterprises, and a self-sustaining economy.
- Emphasize key areas such as affordable housing, transportation, childcare, and mental health services as vital components to lift individuals and communities out of poverty.
- Engage community members in co-creation of solutions including assessing their assets and opportunities for local development.