



2024 | IMPACT REPORT



**MONTEREY
COUNTY
WORKS**

GROWING TALENT • SUPPORTING BUSINESS

MontereyCountyWorks.com

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Dear Monterey County Friends and Partners,

As Chair of the Monterey County Workforce Development Board, I present this year's annual report, which highlights the Board's commitment to driving economic growth and enhancing the quality of life in our community. Our work centers on collaboration, innovation, and a dedication to creating opportunities for job seekers and businesses alike.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that a strong workforce is the cornerstone of a thriving economy. To this end, we equip individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to secure meaningful employment while partnering with businesses to address their human resource needs. By fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors, we ensure that our workforce development efforts are not only effective but also responsive to the unique needs of Monterey County.

This year, we placed a special focus on our young adults, recognizing their potential to shape the future of our region. Our innovative Monterey County Cadre programs are designed to empower young people by combining meaningful work experiences with practical skill development. The Green Cadre Program engages participants in community service projects that address environmental challenges and food insecurity, while also allowing them to earn a paycheck. The Hospitality Cadre Program provides a pathway into the vibrant hotel and restaurant industry, equipping participants with the tools for a fulfilling career. The Health Cadre Program connects young adults with entry-level roles in direct patient care, opening doors to careers in healthcare. The Technology Cadre Program focuses on digital marketing and social media, helping participants build professional connections and acquire in-demand tech skills. These programs prepare young adults for the workforce and also instill a sense of purpose and a connection to their community.

This report offers a closer look at the breadth of services we provide, our impactful programs, and inspiring success stories from both job seekers and employers. These stories exemplify the transformative power of workforce development and the collective impact of our partnerships.

As we reflect on the past year, I want to extend my gratitude to our staff, community partners, and stakeholders for their collaboration and support. Together, we are building a brighter future for Monterey County—one where opportunities abound, businesses thrive, and every resident has a pathway to success.



Sincerely,

Erik Cushman

Chair, Monterey County Workforce Development Board

From the Executive Director

It is with great pride that I reflect on the achievements of the Monterey County Workforce Development Board over the past year. Together, we have worked to equip individuals for meaningful employment while fostering robust partnerships with the business community. These partnerships have been the foundation of our success, allowing us to improve the quality of life for residents throughout Monterey County.

Our collaborations with businesses have proven instrumental in creating a dynamic and adaptable workforce. Through initiatives like paid internships, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and incumbent worker training programs, we have supported over 1,000 businesses by helping them attract, train, and retain talent while enhancing competitiveness in rapidly evolving industries.

Highlights of our partnerships include:

- **Joby Aviation:** Over two years, we have facilitated competitively paid internships for 20 young adults, offering them hands-on experience in aerospace production and supply chain management. Additionally, more than 65 adults have participated in OJT positions, contributing to manufacturing operations at the Joby-Marina location.
- **CaliforniansForAll Green Cadre:** Through fire mitigation and winter storm restoration efforts, our participants have played a vital role in revitalizing Monterey County and California State Parks. These programs have provided employment opportunities, addressed critical environmental challenges and have revitalized our green spaces throughout the county.

The synergy between businesses and workforce development is key to driving innovation, ensuring economic resilience, and fostering sustainable growth. We are committed to strengthening these relationships by continuing to offer tailored recruitment events, labor market insights, and technical assistance. Through partnerships, we empower both businesses and individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing economy.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our dedication to creating a strong, skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers while providing meaningful opportunities for job seekers. As we move forward, I invite you to join us in shaping the future of Monterey County—one partnership, one program, and one success story at a time.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.



Sincerely,

Chris Donnelly, Executive Director

Monterey County Workforce Development Board

Mission

The purpose of the Workforce Development Board is to provide strategic planning, policy development, oversight, and evaluation of the local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act system;

The Workforce Development Board will provide leadership to support the best practices of the public and private sectors to create a demand-driven, dynamic, efficient, and effective Workforce Investment Board;

The Workforce Development Board shall develop innovative models that effectively acquire and leverage alternative funding sources to offer access to all services; and

The Workforce Development Board shall contribute to a healthy economy that is filled with jobs that are built with integrity and offer positive experiences by empowering the community members and businesses with the knowledge and skills to be successful.

Vision

To improve the economy by promoting and supporting alignment of workforce and educational programs with priority industry sectors and local business needs.



The 2024 Monterey County Workforce Board of Directors

The Monterey County Workforce Development Board (WDB) oversees the effective use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds, guiding workforce development strategies across Monterey County.

Appointed by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, the WDB is a business-led group made up of diverse leaders, including representatives from businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, community groups, economic development agencies, the Employment Development Department (EDD), and rehabilitation services.

Erik Cushman, Chair

Monterey County Weekly

Denise Dorsey

Department of Rehabilitation

Margaret D'Arrigo-Martin, Vice Chair

AIM Youth Mental Health

Mark Faylor

One Workplace Monterey Bay

Cesar Lara, Second Vice Chair

Monterey Bay Central Labor Council

Michael Gutierrez

Hartnell College

Paula Calvetti, Executive Committee Member

Hyatt Regency Monterey

Steve MacArthur

Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 62

Efrain Aguilera

*United Food and Commercial Workers
Local 5*

Catherine Sampognaro

InterContinental The Clement

Rich Aiello

Santa Cruz County Bank

Casey Van Den Heuvel

Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 104

Luis Alejo

Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Monterey County Workforce Development Board

344 Salinas Street
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 796-3331

Monterey County Works Career Center Locations

Monterey County Works has strategically located three Career Centers throughout Monterey County to provide customized services to employers and individuals seeking employment opportunities.

Monterey County Works Center - Salinas

344 Salinas Street, Suite 203
Salinas, CA 93901

Monterey County Works Center - Marina

MPC Marina Campus
289 Twelfth Street, #201
Marina, CA 93933

Monterey County Works Center - Seaside

Monterey Adult School
1295 La Salle Avenue, Room #7
(Enter from Playa)
Seaside, CA 93955



Unveiling a New Era of Workforce Excellence

This past year, the Monterey County Workforce Development Board proudly completed the unveiling of our new initiative, **Monterey County Works**, marking an exciting evolution for the organization. Along with this launch, the organization also introduced new building signage to showcase its refreshed identity.

The Monterey County Works initiative embodies the organization's ongoing mission to provide innovative workforce solutions to the Monterey County community. "Monterey County Works reflects our unwavering commitment to supporting the communities we serve," said Chris Donnelly, Executive Director. "This initiative underscores our dedication to helping individuals and businesses thrive as we continue to grow and adapt to meet their needs."

The addition of new building signage further underscores the initiative's significance, creating a visible presence that strengthens the organization's connection to the community. The signage not only enhances the physical identity of Monterey County Works but also serves as a beacon for those seeking workforce solutions.

The unveiling of Monterey County Works marked a pivotal milestone for the Workforce Development Board. Through this initiative, the organization is poised to better engage with the community and continue its mission of making a positive, lasting impact on people's lives.





Connecting Job Seekers to Opportunities and Growth

Monterey County Works is committed to guiding individuals as they explore potential career opportunities, equipping them with the knowledge and resources needed to succeed. The organization provides comprehensive information on in-demand jobs, labor market trends, and educational pathways. Additionally, job seekers can access skills training programs, including our Winter Storm Restoration Project program, Tri-County Pre-Apprentice Program and On-The-Job Training program, to enhance their qualifications.

For those actively seeking employment, Monterey County Works offers a range of job search support services. These include resumé building, interview coaching, and access to a robust job board featuring local employment opportunities. Importantly, all of these services are provided at no cost to the job seeker.

Monterey County is home to several high-growth industry sectors that present promising career opportunities with excellent earning potential. Monterey County Works plays a pivotal role in helping job seekers capitalize on this growth. By identifying local high-growth industries and providing detailed insights into in-demand occupations and required skills, the organization ensures individuals are well-informed about their options.

To further support career development, Monterey County Works offers specialized training programs tailored to prepare individuals for success in these dynamic fields. By connecting job seekers with employers and educational institutions, the organization creates clear pathways to thriving careers in these high-growth sectors.

A Journey of Growth with the Winter Storm Restoration Project (WSRP)

Ricardo Hernandez's journey with the Winter Storm Restoration Project (WSRP) has been transformative. For him, participating in WSRP was more than just a job—it was an opportunity to refocus and solidify his professional goals. As a WSRP participant, he strengthened essential skills in leadership, communication, and planning, pushing himself both physically and mentally. This focused commitment has left him with a renewed sense of confidence and clarity about his career. His next step? Returning to school to complete his IT degree, with an eye on future public service in Monterey County's IT sector.

The Winter Storm Restoration Project itself addresses critical needs in Monterey County. After the devastating 2023 winter storms, which caused widespread property destruction, the WSRP was launched to help repair and restore the region's parks and public lands. For those who want to make a real impact in the community, the WSRP offers a rewarding chance to contribute to the restoration of Monterey County's natural beauty. Ricardo's story is just one example of how WSRP participants are making a difference while gaining valuable skills that will serve them for years to come.



Building Futures: Tri-County Pre-Apprenticeship Program Equips the Next Generation of Skilled Tradespeople

The Monterey Bay Area Tri-County Collaborative, serving Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties, offers a construction pre-apprenticeship program to empower underserved young adults. Sponsored by the Monterey County Workforce Development Board, Local 62 Plumbers and Steamfitters, and the Monterey/Santa Cruz Counties Building & Construction Trades Council, this program prepares participants for careers in the skilled trades.

Now in its ninth year, the program recently celebrated the graduation of 14 pre-apprentices, many of whom are pursuing apprenticeships in various trades. The ten-week pre-apprenticeship program combines paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction, providing skills needed for high-demand careers offering middle-class wages. The program's Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) introduces students to different trades and the skills required for each.

Students gain hands-on experience in safety protocols, blueprint reading, welding, drywalling, sheetrock installation, and construction grading, which is essential for preparing building sites. In the final weeks, they practice concrete pouring, tape measuring, using power tools, and building framing fundamentals. These skills ensure students are job-ready for the construction industry.

Program instructor Greg Venegas supports each student in refining their career aspirations, whether entering a specific trade or continuing education. Even after graduation, the program remains committed to students by offering career support for up to a year.

The construction pre-apprenticeship program stands as a testament to the Collaborative's dedication to fostering opportunities and paving the way for fulfilling careers in the skilled trades.



Building Careers Through Experience: Jonathan's Success with the Monterey County Works OJT Program

The MCWDB's On-the-Job (OJT) program offers job seekers a unique opportunity to earn a paycheck while gaining hands-on experience in their chosen field. OJT placements typically last about six months, providing participants with a pathway to develop skills and build their careers.

One recent success story is Jonathan Demers, who aspired to work in construction project management but struggled to find consistent employment. Our OJT team connected him with Ryken Construction, a company seeking someone with Jonathan's interests and abilities. During his placement, Jonathan gained valuable experience managing project schedules, coordinating with subcontractors, ensuring safety compliance, and communicating with clients. He also developed hands-on skills, including framing, drywall installation, and site safety management. Jonathan's responsibilities included ordering materials, resolving on-site challenges, meeting project deadlines, and maintaining high-quality standards.

Throughout his placement, the OJT team supported Jonathan with regular check-ins, access to additional training resources, and guidance on navigating workplace challenges. The Monterey County Works team also facilitated communication with his supervisors, ensuring alignment on progress tracking and professional development goals.

Ryken Construction's leadership was so impressed with Jonathan's performance and growth that they offered him a permanent position at the end of his placement. While not every OJT participant is hired by their placement employer, most gain invaluable work experience that helps them secure full-time, permanent roles in their field.



Community Health Worker (CHW) Program Receives Major Grant

The MCWDB's Community Health Worker (CHW) program secured a significant boost this fall with an \$866,260 grant from the Central California Alliance for Health (CCAH). This funding will support four additional training cohorts over the next two years, covering student tuition, staffing expenses, and operational costs.

This is the second grant CCAH has awarded to the CHW program. In 2023, CCAH provided \$152,960 to fund two training cohorts. The latest grant comes at a critical time, as state and federal funding for the CHW program had ended, making alternative funding sources essential to continue this vital initiative.

Since its launch in the fall of 2021, the CHW program has trained three cohorts and approximately 90 students have received their CHW credential. A fourth cohort is currently in training and will graduate in March 2025. Thanks to CCAH's new funding, three additional cohorts will be trained over the next two years.

In addition to CCAH, the CHW program has benefited for our partnership with Monterey Peninsula College, which has provided key support.

CHWs play a vital role in bridging gaps in healthcare and social services. They help patients navigate complex medical and social service systems, ensuring they receive the support they need to stay healthy or improve their health. With limited time available for primary care providers to evaluate patients, CHWs step in to explain treatment plans and assist patients in adhering to them.

Additionally, CHWs address critical social needs. For example, if a client or their family is food insecure, a CHW can connect them to local food banks or help them enroll in programs like CalFresh, which provides financial assistance for groceries.

The continued success of the CHW program demonstrates the importance of such funding in training professionals who make a meaningful difference in their communities.



Empowering the Next Generation: How Monterey County Cadre Programs Are Building Careers and Communities

Monterey County Works is empowering young adults to discover their career paths and secure meaningful employment through the innovative Monterey County Cadre programs. These initiatives are designed to equip participants with the skills, experiences, and networks they need to thrive in the workforce and make a lasting impact in their communities.

Real Work, Real Pay. The Cadre programs offer young adults the chance to earn a real wage while gaining hands-on experience. By working on impactful projects that address critical community issues, participants build their resumés with tangible achievements that matter.

Level Up Skills. Participants develop essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. These traits are highly valued by employers, making Cadre alumni stand out as top candidates in any field.

Build Networks. The programs foster a supportive environment where young professionals connect, share experiences, and exchange ideas. This collaborative community helps participants grow their job networks and opens doors to future opportunities.

Make an Impact. The work completed by Cadre members directly addresses pressing challenges like healthcare, climate change and food insecurity. The programs not only help participants build their careers but also empowers them to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work. The Cadre's unique structure emphasizes collaboration, allowing participants to learn from and support one another. This team-oriented approach serves as a launchpad for both personal and professional growth.



The Monterey County Cadre program instills the following core values:

Community: Tools and resources are provided to inspire participants to become involved in their communities.

Advocacy: The program teaches young adults how to advocate for themselves and others.

Diversity: Through experiences with people from diverse backgrounds, participants expand their worldview and understanding.

Resilience: By leveraging relationships and the talents of fellow Cadre participants, individuals learn how to increase their resilience.

Empowerment: The program offers opportunities for active engagement, mentoring, and self-development, enabling participants to learn and grow.

The Monterey County Cadre programs exemplify how Monterey County Works is investing in the future by providing young adults with the skills, connections, and confidence to succeed in their careers and positively impact their communities.



Monterey County Works' Green Cadre Program Empowers Young Adults Through Community and Environmental Stewardship

The Green Cadre program provides young adults with paid work experience while fostering leadership skills and hands-on training in environmental and natural resource management. Through this initiative, participants engage in impactful community projects, such as park and trail maintenance, tree planting, habitat restoration, and wildfire mitigation.

In addition to conservation efforts, the program addresses food insecurity through initiatives like establishing community gardens, distributing food to those in need, and implementing strategies to reduce food waste. These activities not only contribute to a healthier environment but also support the well-being of local communities.

A collaborative effort between Monterey County Works and the #CaliforniansForAll Youth Jobs Corps, the Green Cadre program equips participants with practical skills, leadership development, and a sense of purpose as they contribute to their communities and the environment.

By blending paid work experience with meaningful projects, the Green Cadre program empowers the next generation to take an active role in creating a sustainable future while building a foundation for their personal and professional growth.

Green Cadre Community and Environmental Impact*



Distributed 13,000 Food Parcels

Participants produced and distributed 13,000 food parcels for the Monterey County Food bank. Each parcel serves approximately 4 people equating to 52,000 individuals fed! Distribution sites were in Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, Marina, Seaside, Pajaro, Castroville, Chualar, and multiple locations in Salinas.

Prepared over 2,400 meals

Helped prepare and serve over 2,400 meals to unhoused residents.

Harvested and Distributed Produce

Participants working on the 5-acre farm at the Food Bank for Monterey County and its organic partner's fields harvested fresh produce, including garlic, peppers, onions, radishes, and carrots, which were distributed to the community through produce programs. Additionally, they salvaged 60 pounds of surplus fruit from local trees, preventing waste and donating it to the food bank. These efforts provided nutritious food to those in need while reducing food waste and promoting sustainability.

And in Partnership with California State Parks and the City of Monterey, Green Cadre participants

- Removed 44,500 cubic feet of dead and downed material to support the regeneration of Monterey pine and cypress trees.
- Installed 490 feet of new fencing as part of a trail maintenance project, enhancing public safety and protecting sensitive plant habitats.
- Processed 9,000 cubic feet of downed and dead material, which was hauled, chipped, and repurposed as mulch.
- Hauled and removed 57.78 tons of dead eucalyptus from the site, improving safety and ecological balance.
- Conducted weed management across 125 acres of State Park lands, targeting non-native species such as French broom, mustard, sweet alyssum, Bermuda buttercup, ice plant, riggut brome, Pride of Madeira, eucalyptus, and panic veldt grass through hand-pulling, cutting, and mechanical removal techniques.
- Planted over 1,000 native plants to restore and enhance local ecosystems.
- Cleared multiple abandoned homeless encampments to create safer and cleaner environments at local parks and beaches.

**From 2022 through 2024*



From Fields to City Parks: Fabian Lopez's Path to Career Growth Through the Green Cadre Program

Fabian Lopez came to Monterey County Works in search of stability and a brighter future. In January 2024, Fabian was balancing two part-time jobs—working as a strawberry picker in the mornings and at Round Table Pizza in the evenings. Although hardworking and committed, he dreamed of a more stable career path, ideally working as a city landscaper or even starting his own landscaping business. The Green Cadre program caught his attention, promising to equip him with valuable skills such as OSHA 10, HAZWOPER, Power Tool training, and CPR.

From January to May 2024, Fabian immersed himself in the Green Cadre program, gaining hands-on experience and building skills that would support his career ambitions. His dedication and growth did not go unnoticed, and he was invited back as a Lead in the program, serving from June to September 2024. Today, Fabian is working part-time as a Park Maintenance worker for the City of Monterey—a role that exemplifies the positive, tangible impact that the Green Cadre program has on individuals seeking stability and career growth.

Reflecting on his journey, Fabian encourages others to “put in the work and effort. Show people you want to be here with a purpose and make the most out of the programs the workforce has to offer.” Fabian’s journey is a testament to the opportunities the program provides for skill development, career advancement, and community impact.



Building Futures: Green Cadre Program Helps Young Father Turn Challenges Into Opportunities

At just 18 years old, Isaac Lovato found himself facing a new chapter in life—he was about to become a father and needed to provide for his growing family. Fresh out of high school, Isaac knew he had to find a job that not only paid well but also offered opportunities for growth. However, as a young parent, he also needed a program that would understand the unique challenges he was facing. That’s when Isaac discovered the Green Cadre program.

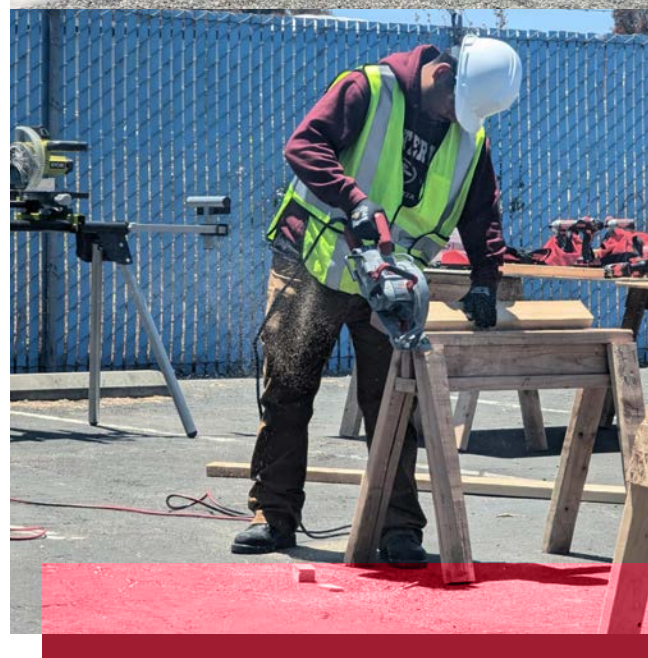
The Green Cadre, powered by Monterey County Works and the #CaliforniansForAll Youth Jobs Corps, turned out to be exactly what Isaac needed. This program supports young adults aged 18 to 24 by offering paid job training while helping to improve the community.

For Isaac, it was more than just a paycheck—it was a pathway to a career in construction, a field he was eager to enter. With the support of the Green Cadre, Isaac took essential courses like OSHA 10, Hazwoper Safety, and Power Tool training, which helped him prepare for the demands of the construction industry.

Isaac’s girlfriend’s father had offered him an entry into construction, but Isaac knew he had to prove himself. Thanks to the certifications he earned through the Green Cadre, he was ready to do just that. Isaac put his new skills to use at the Pacific Grove Adult School, where he helped build a new Garden Training area. This hands-on experience not only strengthened his abilities but also boosted his confidence.

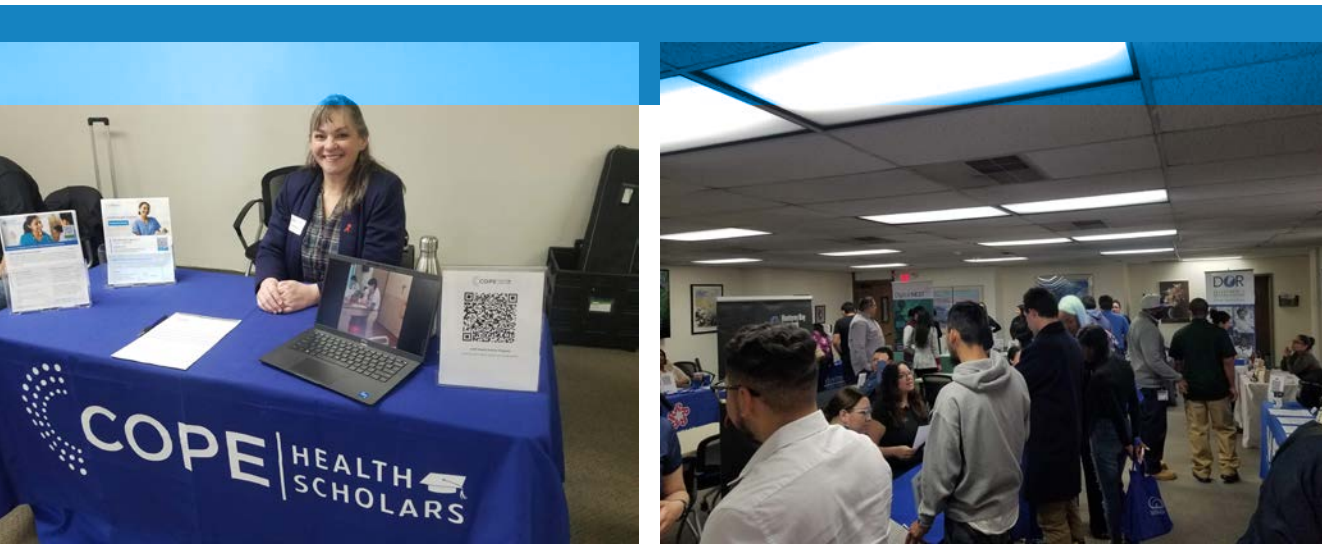
In mid-July 2024, Isaac’s daughter was born, marking a new beginning for both his family and career. Today, Isaac works as a construction worker, earning \$1.50 more per hour than he was initially offered—thanks to the valuable training and certifications he gained through the Green Cadre program. Reflecting on his journey, Isaac shares a key piece of advice: “Certifications really do help. Stay open-minded—there are multiple opportunities out there that you may not even know about.”

Isaac Lovato’s success story is just one example of how the Green Cadre program is empowering young adults to overcome obstacles and build fulfilling careers—all while making a positive impact on their communities.



Strengthening Businesses and Workforce Connections: Monterey County Works in Action

Monterey County Works serves as a strategic partner for businesses and industries, driving the creation of a high-performing workforce. By prescreening candidates, crafting effective job descriptions, and leveraging an extensive talent network, the Board simplifies and streamlines the hiring process for employers. Additionally, the Board provides valuable labor market insights and collaborates with the California Employers Association to offer an HR Hotline for expert guidance on human resources matters.

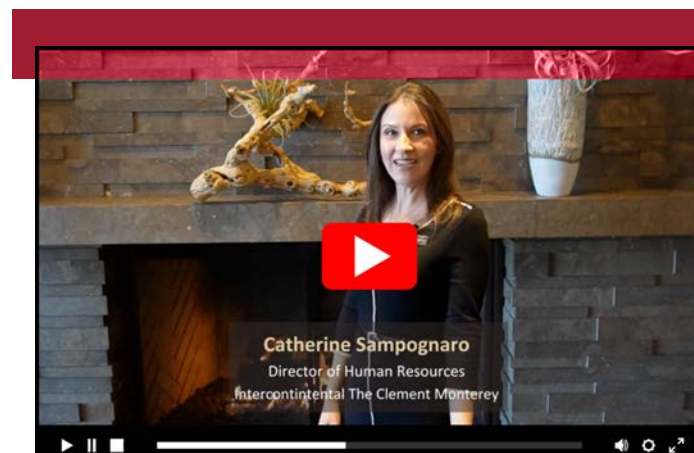


Job Fairs and Recruitment Events

One of Monterey County Works' key contributions is its role in connecting businesses with potential employees through recruitment events. These include job fairs and customized recruitment events. In 2024, Monterey County Works hosted 31 job fairs that connected more than 1,100 job seekers with 250+ employers, averaging 33 job seekers and nine employers per event. By organizing and hosting these events, the Board creates opportunities for businesses to showcase their vacancies, company culture, and overall operations to a wide pool of job seekers. These events facilitate initial interviews, resume collection, and the establishment of a talent pipeline, making the hiring process more efficient and effective.

Recruitment Videos

Monterey County Works also offers small businesses well-produced recruitment videos to enhance their visibility and appeal to job seekers. These professionally crafted videos highlight job opportunities, workplace culture, and the unique aspects of each business, helping local employers attract the right talent.



On-The-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training

In addition to recruitment support, Monterey County Works partners with businesses to cultivate a skilled workforce through on-the-job training (OJT) and incumbent worker training programs. These initiatives offer financial incentives to employers who invest in hiring and training new employees or enhancing the skills of their existing staff. By providing funding and resources, Monterey County Works helps businesses adapt to industry changes, remain competitive, and retain their most valuable asset—their employees.

HR Support Available for Monterey County Employers

Monterey County employers have access to expert HR guidance at no cost, thanks to a partnership between Monterey County Works and the California Employers Association. The HR Hotline, available by calling 1-888-217-6899, offers professional advice on a wide range of topics including hiring and termination practices, wage and hour laws, paid sick leave, employee handbook policies, workplace accommodations, and overall HR compliance.

The service is available to all Monterey County employers Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM. Whether addressing a specific employee concern or seeking clarity on labor regulations, the HR Hotline provides reliable support to help businesses stay informed and compliant.

Commitment to Monterey County Businesses

Through its comprehensive services and strategic initiatives, Monterey County Works is committed to fostering economic growth and ensuring businesses have access to the skilled workforce they need to succeed.



Tristan Williams and Diego Cortes, Joby Summer Internship Participants

Joby Aviation and Monterey County Works: A Sky-High Partnership for Workforce Growth

Joby Aviation, a Santa Cruz-based company, is pioneering the development of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft designed for commercial air taxi services. Joby established a 120,000-square-foot research and development facility at the Marina Municipal Airport in 2019.

Over the past two years, Joby Aviation and the Monterey County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) have forged a transformative partnership, creating valuable training opportunities for individuals in our Adult and Young Adult programs through work experience and on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities.

Through this collaboration, 20 young adults (ages 18–24) participated in a summer internship program with Joby, yielding impressive outcomes: eight participants secured positions at Joby, and 10 pursued post-secondary education. Additionally, over 65 adults have benefitted from on-the-job training opportunities and most of them are still working at Joby.

The roles that these OJT participants hold include as Manufacturing Technicians, Quality Inspectors, Operations Specialists, Equipment Technicians, Manufacturing Technicians, Quality Inspectors, Equipment Technicians, and IT Specialists.

Working with Joby, the Board will play a crucial role in providing Joby with a skilled professional workforce across a variety of positions so that they can meet their current and future growth needs in Monterey County.

These positions will offer competitive wages, comprehensive benefits, and opportunities for career advancement, providing a positive impact on the region's workforce. Beyond direct job creation, Joby's growth is expected to generate indirect economic benefits, including strengthened local supply chains and increasing demand for services in surrounding communities.

Looking ahead, the partnership between Joby Aviation and MCWDB is poised to grow stronger. With Joby's expanding need for skilled talent and MCWDB's ability to identify and train local workers, this collaboration will continue to deliver meaningful opportunities for Monterey County residents while driving economic growth and innovation in the region.

Reviving Pajaro: How Local Grants Helped Businesses Rebuild After the Flood

In the spring of 2023, a series of powerful storms pounded the Monterey Bay Area and led to a 120-foot-wide breach of the Pajaro River Levee. The levee breach flooded the unincorporated community of Pajaro, resulting in 3,000 residents being evacuated and businesses being shuttered due to flooding.

Due to the scale of the immense damage, federal, state and local governments mobilized to help Pajaro residents and businesses. As part of that overall relief effort, the Monterey County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) partnered with the Department of Emergency Management to administer the Pajaro Small Business Assistance Program. This program assisted businesses with grants to replace lost or damaged inventory, equipment, and loss of revenue with funding up to \$85,000 per business. Pajaro businesses were also able to apply for beautification grants for painting, landscaping and other projects to enhance the interior and exterior appearances of their businesses, with funding up to \$15,000 per business.

A total of \$4,000,000 was set aside for businesses out of the \$10,000,000 for both residents and business from California Assembly Bill 102.

A total of 92 businesses applied for assistance, with 90 businesses requesting assistance through Phase 1 and 60 businesses through Phase 2. By the end of 2024, 38 businesses had received \$1,505,713 for Phase 1, and 42 businesses had received \$662,658 for Phase 2.

What began as an opportunity for the MCWDB to help businesses eventually turned into witnessing a community being rebuilt first-hand. These grants have made a difference as Pajaro has recovered from the flood: first, by helping businesses mitigate their losses, fix flood damage, purchase new equipment, restock their inventories, and generate new revenue; and second, by making beautification investments in the community with freshly painted and landscaped commercial properties bearing new signage. Now, when residents drive through Pajaro every day, they see the re-emergence of vibrant and revitalized local businesses with proud business owners in a thriving community. While no amount of money can replace all the precious memories and belongings, the financial assistance reaffirms that the community of Pajaro is seen and heard, and that they are not alone.

Feedback From the Pajaro Disaster Relief Grant

A familiar dream motivated my immigration to United States in the 1980s: to build a better life for my wife, children and myself. I decided that my way to contribute was to create a business and that led to the founding of H&R Tools.

H&R Tools refurbishes tools and heavy equipment, and I also sell new equipment. When I first started in the late 1980's, I mainly sold at flea markets throughout northern California. As word of mouth started to spread about our excellent services, I decided to rent a brick-and-mortar location. Since 2009, I have been proudly serving the Pajaro community.

The devastating floods of 2023 interrupted that service but Monterey County—through the Monterey County Workforce Development Board's Pajaro Small Business Grant program—provided crucial financial support to help us get back on our feet.

Due to the MCWDB's funding I have been able to paint both the interior and exterior of our business, giving it a fresh and updated look. Their funding also helped us improve our signage and install an awning. Due to these changes, our customer foot traffic has increased, which has increased our sales and given us a fighting chance to recover.

I deeply appreciate the MCWDB's support during this difficult period. Their caring and supportive staff helped us during every step of the application process and provided constant support. Words cannot express how much we appreciate the funding and technical support that we've been provided, and we are looking forward to serving the Pajaro community for many years to come!

Sincerely,

Heriberto Romero
Owner, H&R Tools



Before



After



Monterey County Works
344 Salinas Street
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