

Annual  
Report

# IT'S GAME TIME!



2022

Fresno County  
**EDC**



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## Published by the EDC:

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## Coordinated by:

Lance Cardoza & Austin Sinatra  
Business Street Media Group

## Publication Designed by:

Professional Print & Mail

# ROBERT J. "BOBBY" FENA



What can I say about my friend, Bobby?

Robert J. "Bobby" Fena is the Senior Vice President for Colliers International. With 47 years of commercial real estate experience, Bobby has earned a reputation throughout the industry as a dependable expert working diligently on behalf of his clients.

During my time at the EDC, my board members have proven to be incredibly passionate about the work we do. They give up early mornings, nights, and weekends for meetings, strategic planning, and are often in the trenches with us doing the work because they are committed to seeing the EDC grow.

EDC Board Chairman, Nick Audino says of Bobby, "Bobby is a legend in commercial real estate. He has been a mentor to me throughout my career and an epic factor in my involvement with the EDC. He is a cherished member of the community serving tirelessly with the EDC and other non-profits and charities." Serving on boards such as the American Heart Association, YMCA Indian Princess Program, and Hinds Hospice Foundation, Bobby has been active in many community organizations. For **20 years** Bobby was a dedicated EDC



Board Member, serving in many roles from Secretary to Vice-Chair. On the board, Bobby was a real thought partner and I know the EDC was always top of mind for him. In fact, Bobby was our very first Master of Ceremony for Fresno County EDC's Annual Real Estate Forecast in 2004 and had continued his legacy up to 2014.

Bobby's colleague at Colliers International, Buk Wagner declared that "Bobby's heart is always in the right place. He is the first in the office and the last to leave... and then he comes in for a full day on Saturday. Bobby is always willing to help others succeed in what they are trying to accomplish. Based on how many olive branches he hands out; he must have a HUGE olive tree."



On behalf of the EDC staff, Bobby, we thank you for being a problem solver and being willing to do whatever it takes for us to be successful. Your wisdom and experience have been invaluable! We will see you around, friend!

**Lee Ann Eager**  
EDC President & CEO



# PRESIDENT & CEO

As we began our work in 2021, the staff at the EDC had great expectations for the year ahead. We had amazing successes at our John R. Lawson Truck Driving School, helped hundreds of companies navigate COVID-19 and subsequent hiring woes, we received notification from the Federal Government that Congressman Costa had procured \$1.9 million in funds to support the West Fresno Campus of the Central Valley Training Center, and our special projects team was designing the Fresno Impact Economy project which would take Inclusive Economic Development to a whole new level through business and public outreach. To that end, our EDC Team provided a safe place for the first ever resident leadership advisory group—a 3-day event where we received feedback from local community members regarding economic development, but we knew we wanted to do more. We then received word of a federal grant that was going to be released through the Department of Commerce and Economic Development Administration (EDA) which would pair Economic and Workforce Development. Here at the EDC, we had been doing that work for quite some time through our partnership with the County of Fresno Department of Social Services for our New Employment Opportunities (NEO) Program, but the kind of dollars this new grant proposed would be a game changer for the entire region.

In September of 2021, we met with numerous partners through the DRIVE committee process about potential collaboration to undertake such a long shot. We knew it would take hundreds of hours of work and countless meetings with diverse community-based organizations to design a project fit for our region's unique needs. But as usual – we said, “let’s go for it”. And boy did we, living up to every bit of the word “Challenge”. We decided to go all in and write for the highest amount possible—\$25,000,000. Even as we said that number out loud, we would shake our heads and say, “No way,” but we persevered. With our Vice President of Business Services, Will Oliver, and our Director of Special Projects, Chris Zeitz, at the helm—they jumped in full speed ahead.

The next nine months were a whirlwind of activity. We met with hundreds of potential partners and had community meetings to look at local and national best practices. The sprint to the finish line was invigorating, exhausting, and insane, but we got it done. And then we waited...

Since there were close to 600 applicants across the country, we assumed our chances were slim that we would be selected as one of the chosen few, but in our hearts, we knew we had a good proposal. At one of the meetings in Washington DC with the EDA, I told them that even if we didn't receive the grant,

the process was well worth our time. We met with so many amazing partners throughout our region doing fantastic work, and we would continue to foster those relationships no matter what. Of course, I didn't REALLY mean that we would be 'okay' with not receiving the grant, but I did want them to know that we all appreciated the exercise, and the region was better for the process.

Beginning in May of 2022, the EDC started to receive requests from the EDA for edits to our proposal. We didn't want to jinx it, but we started to think, this certainly 'sounds good' that they are contacting us. Then for the next two months, Fresno EDC and the EDA went back and forth to fine-tune our proposal. We received 4:00 am texts and emails asking for quick turnaround changes. Our team was up for the challenge and responded to every task they threw at us. Then, again—we waited.

On August 2nd, we got the call. The EDC was awarded \$23,000,000!!!! Yes, I said TWENTY-THREE MILLION DOLLARS. We were all in shock. Even though we knew we had produced an amazing grant proposal, we were still astonished that we were only one of two organizations in California to receive the award and that ours was one of the highest awards in the entire country.

As we looked at what this meant for us, we realized that we will forever be a part of history. The continued good work that the staff of the EDC do were broadened to levels we never thought possible. I always tell the staff that there are not too many jobs that people have where they can go home at night and say, “I changed someone's life today.” We do that at the EDC. Now with this new infusion of Economic and Workforce dollars into our region, we can reach heights we only imagined. This is a new era of assisting those who have historically been left behind, helping the business community get qualified workers, and ensuring that companies who are thinking about coming to Fresno County to expand or start their businesses here will have access to workforce and supportive services like never before.

Our ever-present goal of making Fresno County a better place to work and live has just been given the impetus we have been waiting for. We are ready to take on the many challenges and opportunities ahead.

**IT'S GAME TIME!**

**Lee Ann Eager**  
EDC President & CEO



it's only human to know  
stronger communities create  
greater possibilities

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# CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

It is my incredible honor to serve as Board Chairman for the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. This year marks my fourth year serving as the board chair, and the time has flown by. During my time with EDC, I have learned much about economic development, local politics, and the aspirations of our community. It has been an eye-opening experience that has allowed me to focus on the “big picture” and the greater good when considering economic development and progress in our region. I take great pride in being part of the EDC’s tireless efforts to champion the interests of Fresno County, its citizens, and community. The EDC staff, under the continued leadership of Lee Ann Eager, have written the book on best practices in economic development. With business attraction, retention, and expansion as its primary goals, the EDC offers a wide range of services from the development and implementation of programs such as the Central Valley Training Center and the John R. Lawson Truck Driving School to promoting Fresno County as a great place to work, live, play, and do business.

As we wrap up 2022 and COVID-19 no longer captures the headlines, we face a new set of opportunities and obstacles. Economic indicators point to a looming recession, with statistics on inflation and rising interest rates affecting consumer confidence and spending. In addition to macroeconomic challenges, many businesses are facing new hurdles on projects that continue to drive up costs and drive out timelines which is making delivering goods and services to California’s 30 million people, and keeping the world’s fifth largest economy moving, an ever-growing challenge. However, I trust the resilience of the best state in the country (personal bias noted) to prevail, even during recessionary times.

The Fresno County EDC continues to adapt to the changing environment and positions itself as the tip of the spear targeting economic growth and opportunity for Fresno County. Capitalizing on the fastest growing sector of our economy right now, the EDC is working with the County of Fresno in the creation of a much needed fully entitled +/-3,000 acre planned industrial park. Understanding challenges, the EDC is developing a project scorecard that considers community outreach, environmental impact mitigation, community-based hiring, and more to promote equity among the community along with economic growth.

In addition, the EDC has been awarded a multimillion-dollar federal grant in the form of the Good Jobs Challenge. This grant will expand job training education not only for the general trades but will also be specifically tailored to incoming industries in Fresno, Madera, Tulare, and Kings counties. These programs will offer job training free of charge to anyone who is interested in gaining the necessary skills to stay competitive in tomorrow’s job market.

A capable, educated, and motivated workforce has always been the key to economic development in Fresno County. Financial opportunity is the catalyst which drives progress in our communities and pushes us forward.

*Nick Audino*

**Nick Audino**

Chairman

EDC Board of Directors

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER



# BRANDI CHASTAIN

**B**randi Chastain is an iconic U.S. sporting figure. Brandi and her U.S. teammates brought women's soccer to the masses during the 1999 Women's World Cup finals. That's when Brandi scored a goal on a penalty kick after the second overtime of the U.S. versus China match and struck her famous pose. She was photographed on her knees, mouth wide open, eyes closed, fists in the air, wearing a black sports bra, and white soccer shorts. Her celebration pose was featured in magazines and newspapers around the world. After that, Brandi became a household name. People knew her for her sports bra, but she's much more than that. She is a devoted wife, a mom, coach, an author, philanthropist, and more.

Brandi has been one of the best ambassadors for soccer during her playing and post playing career. She has

faced adversity while winning Two World Cups, Two Olympic Golds, One Olympic Silver, the Inaugural WUSA Championship, and recorded 192 caps in her International Career. In 2018 she was elected into the US Soccer Hall of Fame. 2019 marked the 20th Anniversary of her iconic Penalty Kick.

Brandi is now the Director and a Coach of the California Thorns Soccer Academy and also devotes her time to a non-profit she started called **BAWSI** - [www.bawsi.org](http://www.bawsi.org)



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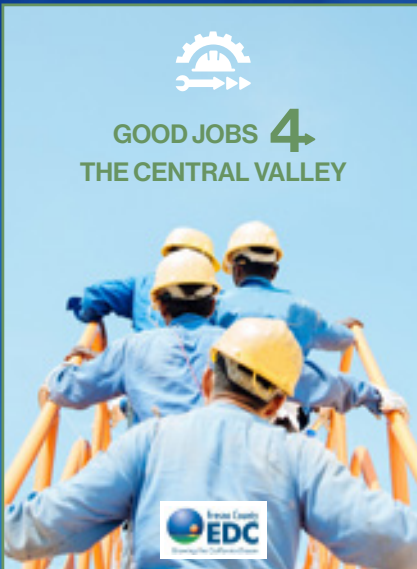
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# GOOD JOBS



In early August 2022, Fresno County EDC was awarded just over \$23 million from the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce for workforce training through the Good Jobs Challenge. Most of this funding will go to provide training and wraparound services for job seekers. This multiyear project, which will launch in early 2023, will place at least 2,500 individuals into full-time positions in the four-county region of Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties, across four focus sectors: Business Services, Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation/Distribution.

Fresno County EDC and its partners have identified existing training providers that offer career pathways to higher-skill and higher-wage employment. Funds from the Good Jobs Challenge will scale up these programs, allow for programs to operate in new areas and/or different times of the day, and increase the coordination of these programs. Additionally, flexible new training programs—many of them short term or part-time—will be made available to job seekers and employees in our region to further increase their skills and deliver productivity gains to their employers.

At the time of our application in February, more than 50 employers provided 900 hiring commitments. *If you are an employer and are interested in learning more about training programs, want to recommend a training provider, and/or would like to discuss skills needed in your industry, please use the QR code on the next page to reach out to EDC.*

Good Jobs 4 The Central Valley has enlisted the support of more than a dozen community-based organizations, with the goal of continuing to expand this network to ensure a broad access to services such as place-based recruitment, case management, career navigation to the underserved and underrepresented in the region, and wraparound services such as childcare, transportation, and translation services.



# CHALLENGE

The Workforce Development Board of Madera County will lead the training programs and job placement efforts in the Transportation/Distribution sector and the San Joaquin Valley Manufacturing Alliance, will be the lead organization responsible for these programs in the manufacturing sector. Support in this sector will include partners such as Neighborhood Industries and The Manufacturing Institute. The Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board will be the lead agency in Construction, with program partners including Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, the Fresno Madera Kings and Tulare Counties Building Trades Council, Habitat for Humanity, and TradesWomen, Inc. The lead organization in the Business Services sector will be the Fresno-Madera K-16 Collaborative. Partners in this sector include CareerNexus and Valley Center for the Blind.

Fresno County EDC's proposal included training pathways both for entry-level workers and incumbent workers, with an understanding that our regional economy needs both mid- and high-level skills to facilitate further growth. These resources will significantly bolster our regional competitiveness and support all Fresno County EDC's departments.



*Employers: Use this QR code to show your interest in the Good Jobs Challenge. You can help inform training curriculum and identify the most in-demand occupations for your business.*



# GIRAFFE AWARD

## CHANCELLOR GOLDSMITH



An evangelist for education and an advocate for social justice and radical inclusivity, Dr. Carole Goldsmith embodies the spirit of the "Giraffe Award". She has spent over 25 years "sticking her neck out for the county" in both secondary and post-secondary learning organizations and is the newest Chancellor of State Center Community College District (SCCCD), previously serving as President

of Fresno City College. As President of Fresno City College, she helped lead the efforts for the West Fresno and Southeast First Responder Centers to ensure that all residents of Fresno County have equitable access to education and career training. Prior to joining SCCC, Dr. Goldsmith served as President of West Hills College Coalinga, held the office of Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Workforce Development during her 13-year tenure with West Hills Community College District in rural West Fresno County, and served as Vice Principal at César Chávez Adult Education Center of Fresno Unified School District.

Dr. Goldsmith is recognized nationally as an expert on workforce development and has appointments to regional, state, and national-level committees, working with other equity and workforce development champions who share the goal of creating a vibrant, inclusive economy that values all cultures and communities. Understanding the importance of fostering relationships to create opportunities for our colleges and students, she currently chairs the Fresno Regional K-16 Collaborative. She also serves as a member of the Executive Committee for the DRIVE initiative, the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, and the Board of Directors for the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. At the state level, she has served on the

California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Advisory Committee on Economic & Workforce Development, the CCCC Police Reform Taskforce, and as a Board Member for the Research and Planning (RP) Group. Nationally she has served on the Education Advisory Board's (EAB) Research Advisory Council for Community Colleges, which is composed of 15 higher education leaders from around the nation.



Dr. Goldsmith has been recognized locally and statewide, receiving numerous awards for her service to her community. Most recently, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, the 2022 Ronald M. George Equal Justice Award by the Central California Legal Services, the 2020 California 8th District Woman of the Year by Senator Andreas Borgeas, the 2021 Diversity Champion Award by the California Law Pathway, the 2019 Harold Haak Award by Fresno K-16 Compact, and the 2019 Community Leadership Award by the League of Women Voters.

Dr. Goldsmith is also a champion of the LGBTQ+ Community. She was the first College President to fly the pride flag at Fresno City College and was one of the people who shared a personal story with Mayor Dyer helping to influence his support for flying the pride flag at Fresno City Hall.

As a resident of Fresno County for nearly four decades, Dr. Goldsmith earned a bachelor's degree in history from CSU, Fresno, a master's degree in educational administration from National University, and a doctorate in higher education leadership from the joint doctorate program at CSU Fresno and UC Davis. Dr. Goldsmith has two adult children and lives in Fresno with her wife, Melissa, a local real estate professional. Dr. Goldsmith enjoys spending time with family, friends, and her dogs.

## PAST GIRAFFE AWARD RECIPIENT'S

2021 - Cook Land Company

2020 - Community Medical Center,  
St. Agnes Medical Center &  
Kaiser Permanente

2019 - John Lawson

2018 - Diana Gomez

2017 - Delfino E. Neira

2016 - Joseph I. Castro, Ph.D., M.P.P


2015 - John Navarrette

2014 - Florence T. Dunn

2013 - Darius Assemi

2012 - Preston Prince

2011 - Steve Geil




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**EDC**  
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**Congratulations  
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**A Good Jobs  
Challenge Winner**

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

Fresno City College | Reedley College | Clovis Community College  
Madera Community College | Madera Community College at Oakhurst



# INCENTIVE SPOTLIGHT

## LOCAL - PG&E Economic Development Rate (EDR)

PG&E's EDR offers eligible businesses who may be considering relocating within California, relocating from California to other states, or closing their existing California operations the opportunity to lower their costs through a reduced electric rate as an incentive to stay in Fresno which is available to eligible customers with high energy loads.

PG&E OFFERS TWO EDR OPTIONS FOR QUALIFIED CUSTOMERS:

STANDARD	ENHANCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 percent rate reduction for 5 years</li><li>• Applicable throughout PG&amp;E's service territory, with the exception of the enhanced areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 18 or 25 percent rate reduction for 5 years</li><li>• Applicable in cities and counties where the annual unemployment rate exceeds the state average</li></ul>

## STATE - California Competes Tax Credit

The California Competes Tax Credit is an income tax credit available to businesses that want to relocate or grow in California. Businesses of any industry, size, or location may compete for over \$180 million available in tax credits by applying in one of the application periods each year.

APPLICATION PERIODS	ABOUT THE CREDIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• January 3, 2023, to January 23, 2023 \$120 million available</li><li>• March 6, 2023, to March 20, 2023 \$99.7 million plus any remaining unallocated amounts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open to business of all sizes</li><li>• Online application</li><li>• No fee to apply</li></ul>

## FEDERAL - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit available to employers who invest in American job seekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment. Employers may meet their business needs and claim a tax credit by hiring an individual who is in a WOTC targeted group. Employers hiring from the New Employment Opportunities (NEO) program are automatically eligible to receive the tax credit for each employee hired.

INFORMATION	TARGETED GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The WOTC reduces an employer's cost of business, requires little paperwork, and applying is simple</li><li>• There is no limit to the number of individuals an employer may hire to claim the tax credit</li><li>• Certain tax-exempt organizations may take advantage of the WOTC by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer's share of social security taxes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Veterans</li><li>• TANF Recipients</li><li>• SNAP Recipients</li><li>• Designated Community Residents</li><li>• Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals</li><li>• Ex-Felons</li><li>• Supplemental Security Income Recipients</li><li>• Summer Youth Employees</li></ul>

# BUSINESS RETENTION

As Fresno County worked to bounce back following the COVID-19 pandemic, Fresno EDC made continuous efforts to assist local businesses. Shifting from video conference calls to in-person visits, Fresno EDC staff reconnected with businesses working to bounce back from the pandemic. Rejuvenating relationships with local businesses was the focus as we sought available resources to support them. This year, Fresno EDC was able to connect local companies to resources such as the Microbusiness Grant, California Venues Grant Program, and California Competes Tax Credits.

In partnership with the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation, Fresno EDC assisted in promoting and assisting microbusinesses in the application process for the Microbusiness Grant Program. Fresno EDC promoted the grant using existing relationships with city leaders, social media, and direct outreach to local business owners. By doing so, 162 businesses were contacted and resulted in 35 applications submitted. EDC assisted 14 businesses that received \$2,500 in grant funding for a total of \$35,000.

Also available this year was the California Venues Grant Program (CVGP) for venues that did not apply for the previous Shuttered Venue Operators Grant. Fresno EDC researched venues that would qualify for the remaining



The poster for the Small Business Relief Grant Program features the Fresno County and Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation logos at the top. A large circular graphic on the right contains a hanging sign that says "OPEN". The main title is "SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM". Below the title, a paragraph states: "THE FRESNO AREA HISPANIC FOUNDATION IS COLLABORATING WITH THE COUNTY OF FRESNO IN A RELIEF PROGRAM TO PROVIDE \$1,007,500 IN GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19. THIS PROGRAM OFFERS GRANTS OF \$2,500 TO SMALL BUSINESSES WITHIN THE COUNTY OF FRESNO. GRANTS AWARDED ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS." A section titled "BUSINESS ELIGIBILITY:" lists six criteria in numbered boxes: 1. Has NOT received the CA RELIEF GRANT; 2. Be ACTIVE & OPERATING or PLAN to REOPEN in the COUNTY OF FRESNO; 3. Had less than \$50,000 in GROSS REVENUE in 2019; 4. Operating since at least DECEMBER 31, 2019; 5. Currently have FEWER than 5 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES; 6. Must have been IMPACTED by COVID-19. Below the eligibility list, a green banner says "APPLICATIONS CLOSE APRIL 8, 2022". At the bottom, it says "TO APPLY VISIT: WWW.FRESNOAHF.ORG/FRESNOCOUNTY OR CALL 559-222-8705" and includes the Fresno County EDC logo.

**SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM**

THE FRESNO AREA HISPANIC FOUNDATION IS COLLABORATING WITH THE COUNTY OF FRESNO IN A RELIEF PROGRAM TO PROVIDE \$1,007,500 IN GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19. THIS PROGRAM OFFERS GRANTS OF \$2,500 TO SMALL BUSINESSES WITHIN THE COUNTY OF FRESNO. GRANTS AWARDED ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

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3. Had less than \$50,000 in GROSS REVENUE in 2019
4. Operating since at least DECEMBER 31, 2019
5. Currently have FEWER than 5 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES
6. Must have been IMPACTED by COVID-19

**APPLICATIONS CLOSE APRIL 8, 2022**

**TO APPLY VISIT:**  
[WWW.FRESNOAHF.ORG/FRESNOCOUNTY](http://WWW.FRESNOAHF.ORG/FRESNOCOUNTY)  
OR CALL  
559-222-8705

Fresno County EDC

funds and assisted with the application process. Through those efforts, \$272,351 in funding was brought to venues in Fresno County to help keep their doors open and prepare for future operations post-pandemic.

The California Competes Tax Credit was another incentive we were able to assist local businesses apply for. A total of 175 new jobs were created for the seven businesses who were awarded the tax credit.

## BLUE WHITE ROBOTICS

The Central Valley is a dominant force in the agricultural sector, producing one-quarter of the nation's food with only 1% of the nation's farmland and producers are constantly searching for innovative, sustainable solutions to keep pace with demand. Foreign Direct Investors (FDI), such as Blue White Robotics, facilitate the exchange of innovative technologies and ideas which provide invaluable support to our growers. FDI capital and technology help address sector-specific challenges, such as food security and labor scarcity. Consequently, Blue White Robotics is committed to providing the safest, most reliable and productive solution—the autonomous farm.

Blue White Robotics (BWR) was founded in 2017 by Ben Alfi, Yair Shahr, and Aviram Shumeli, former Israeli Armed Forces pilots and engineers with over 20 years of operational experience in autonomous air and ground technologies. BWR supports cutting edge technology with services to revolutionize industries.

Focused on launching operations in the breadbasket of the world, BWR began working with EDC in 2019. Fresno EDC has provided a myriad of services, ranging from site selection for their U.S. headquarters (HQ), occupational wage and skills data to inform their job descriptions, development of a California Competes Grant application, and introductions to key local partners, such as Dean Dr. Ram Nunna of the Lyle School of Engineering and Dean Dennis Nef of the Jordan School of Agricultural Sciences. These partnerships have allowed collaboration and initial hiring between BWR and Fresno State, providing students a clear pathway to the jobs of the future. Blue White Robotics formally commenced Fresno operations in 2021 and has already created 35 good paying jobs that pay well above industry averages.



BWR is committed to delivering the highest levels of worker safety and operational productivity to California agriculture using increased efficiency while using technology to transition agricultural labor to a digital workplace. A major safety concern is tractor “roll-overs” which contribute to 150 driver injuries or deaths nationally each year, the leading cause of fatalities in the sector. BWR's Central Valley HQ has allowed them to develop a solution that automates a farm's existing fleet, controlling them remotely by operators in the comfort of an air-conditioned vehicle or office. They provide integration, service, training, and support for autonomous tractors and farms, which is already being used by many industry-leading growers of almonds, pistachios, wine grapes, and citrus. Blue White Robotics is putting cutting edge agricultural technology in the hands of today's farm workers.

BWR currently has 35 employees in field operations and anticipates significant growth in line with the needs of its growing clientele. The EDC is proud to assist the company's pursuit of strategic resources to rapidly scale up job creation to 150 positions, through a permanent campus in Fresno County, including an end-to-end manufacturing facility housing their assembly line, research & development, and a 100-acre test site to examine the latest technologies under development. Highlighted by the company's values of fellowship, innovation, and love of the land, Blue White Robotics' success demonstrates Fresno County's prominence and potential as a formidable hub for advanced agricultural technology.



# CENTRAL VALLEY TRAINING CENTER

The EDC is grateful for its partnership with the California High Speed Rail Authority and the City of Selma. By creating the Central Valley Training Center (CVTC) in Selma, we are bringing a quality training program to our residents in the rural communities.

In the classroom, the students receive pre-apprenticeship and hands-on construction training from professional carpenters, cement masons, electricians, and other specialists. Students also receive essential skills training that covers topics such as conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication. Our students graduate with more than five industry-specific certificates, including Confined Space, Hazmat, and Forklift certifications.

Since its opening in October 2020, 95 students from various cities in the Central Valley have graduated from this 12-week pre-apprenticeship training program, completing more than 43,000 hours of classroom time. The CVTC Program is definitely changing lives. In fact, recent Cohort 6 graduate Joseph Avalos stated that he enrolled in the program because “he wants to be more than he was before.”

CVTC is equipping our Valley workers with the tools necessary to get a job and stay employed. From electricians and construction laborers to highway maintenance workers and roofers, it is projected that 1,700 new construction jobs will be added to the Central Valley by 2026. CVTC will be there to meet that need.





# NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (NEO-ESE) EXPANDED SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

## Real Life Business Solutions

The NEO-ESE program was created to respond to the needs of enrolled job seekers while providing an incentive to employers that create and retain full time jobs in Fresno County.

For every NEO-ESE hire, the employer shall be reimbursed only for actual wages paid in accordance to the table shown below:

Initial Placement	Wage Reimbursement
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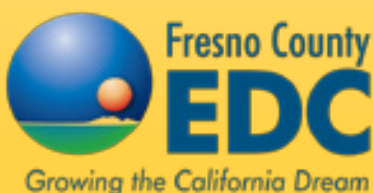
Weeks 1 - 13	100%
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Weeks 14 - 26	75%
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*\*Two possible 13 week extensions upon approval*



[www.ready2hire.org](http://www.ready2hire.org)



For employer requirements or to begin to take advantage of this Fresno County Hiring Incentive, all employers need to register:

[www.ready2hire.org](http://www.ready2hire.org) or call the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation at 559-233-2568, email [bear@fresnoedc.com](mailto:bear@fresnoedc.com)

**Funded by the County of Fresno**

# NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The **New Employment Opportunities (NEO)** program was developed in partnership with the Fresno County Department of Social Services (DSS) and Fresno County EDC to employ eligible Welfare-to-Work participants with the goal of long-term, full-time employment. As an incentive to hire NEO candidates, qualified companies receive wage reimbursements and job retention support. By prioritizing NEO job seekers, companies are decreasing Fresno's unemployment rate, fulfilling much-needed workforce demand, and promoting self-sufficiency by addressing barriers to work faced by Fresno County's most vulnerable populations.

Various industries are represented in the NEO program and reflect the skills of the Welfare-to-Work job seekers. Fresno County EDC conducts data-driven outreach to companies looking to hire candidates that reflect the skills or backgrounds of clients enrolled. Identifying the need for specific skills in the private sector has sparked conversation about the development of future vocational training programs.

Another training program available for NEO clients focuses on construction trades. In partnership with Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, Valley Apprenticeship Connections provides hands-on training for jobs in the construction trades. Students are exposed to training from various trade professionals allowing them to determine which area of the construction field they would like to pursue.

The NEO program also provides training to DSS clients interested in pursuing transportation related careers. For those interested in earning their Commercial Driver's License (CDL), the John R. Lawson Truck Driving School is another option. In partnership with West Hills Community College, the program provides a comprehensive course that gives students appropriate behind-the-wheel training and an understanding of the testing requirements to secure their Class A license. Recently, JD Food has graciously donated space at their facility to house the program. Their generosity has allowed for an upgraded training site, room for more students, and a dedicated area for truck maneuver skills training.

## BUSINESS TESTIMONIAL

### EXHIBIT SUPPLY

*"The NEO program has been great for us! As a growing small business, we were stuck at the point where we needed to hire employees but just could not afford it, and this was stopping us from maximizing our potential growth. With the help of the NEO program, we now have 2 full time employees and are looking to hire a 3rd by the end of the year."*

”

**Jeffrey De Ponte**  
CEO

# ATTRACTIONS

The Attractions Team at Fresno County EDC is dedicated to promoting Fresno County as the premier location for core industries to grow and expand. Home to the fifth largest city in the fifth largest economy in the world, Fresno County has something to offer every industry. Our marketing efforts are aimed at strengthening and expanding our national and global competitiveness, by attending trade shows and missions, and by cultivating business relationships. The Attractions Team helps facilitate site selection, provides information on business incentives, and helps businesses navigate the regulatory and permitting process. We use data to market the region, spark new investment, and attract new and exciting companies to Fresno County. Our passion for Fresno County is evident in the positive outcomes we achieve through extensive marketing of the region and by serving as a key resource for businesses seeking to make Fresno County their home.

## ATTRACTION NUMBERS

In fiscal year 2021-2022, the Attractions Team responded to 70 Site Selection leads and 18 Requests for Information, leading to:

- Economic Impact - \$104,261,861
- Total Jobs - 373
- Top Industries - Manufacturing, Food Processing, Electric Power Generation, and Distribution

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## PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT.

For the past 35 years, Measure C has provided local funding for Fresno County's transportation projects that make roads safer, reduce congestion and improve air quality, including:

- ✓ Filling potholes, completing road safety projects and constructing bridges and bikeways
- ✓ Keeping public transit fares low for students, seniors, veterans and those with disabilities
- ✓ Building over 1,200 miles of local streets, county roads and state highways
- ✓ Replacing 115 school buses with cleaner fueled and safer buses for school children
- ✓ Removing over 42 tons of trash alongside urban freeways



Learn more at **MeasureC.com**

In association with JSA.

## There's more going on beneath the surface.



Ever since local voters created this special district in 1956, we have worked year-round to protect people and property in the Fresno/Clovis area from flooding. But because our system is completely unique, it contributes so much more to our community than flood control. It's part of your community—around the corner and just beneath your feet!

Visit our website to learn more about the ways FMFCD serves your community

FresnoFloodControl.org  
(559) 456-3292



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# IMPACT STUDY

The Fresno County Economic Development Corporation's program outcomes include jobs created from business attraction, New Employment Opportunities (NEO), and successful applications of federal and state incentives, including CalCompetes Tax Credits, the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, and the California COVID relief grant. The data presented below reflects fiscal year 2021-2022 program activities.

## EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	155.0	135.5	82.2	372.7
BEAR	190.7	76.2	62.6	329.5
NEO	28.3	9.0	7.3	44.5
TOTAL	374	220.7	152.1	746.7

**Business attraction** efforts led to the creation of **373** new jobs, **\$23.8 million** in labor income, and produced a total output impact of **\$104.3 million**.

## LABOR INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$10,856,253	\$8,886,454	\$4,081,280	\$23,823,986
BEAR	\$11,005,373	\$4,067,322	\$3,106,727	\$18,179,423
NEO	\$1,269,565	\$465,864	\$361,869	\$2,097,298
TOTAL	\$23,131,191	\$13,419,640	\$7,549,876	\$44,100,707

**Wage reimbursements** provided by the New Employment Opportunities program led to **\$2.1 million** in labor income, the equivalent of **45** new full-time jobs, and produced a total output impact of **\$6.6 million**.

## GDP SUPPORTED

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$17,923,624	\$12,833,442	\$7,912,869	\$38,669,935
BEAR	\$15,930,514	\$6,205,393	\$6,021,913	\$28,157,821
NEO	\$1,910,986	\$764,357	\$701,235	\$3,376,579
TOTAL	\$35,765,124	\$19,803,192	\$14,636,017	\$70,204,335

The **EDC** assisted businesses with **CalCompetes** applications that led to the creation of **175** new jobs in Fiscal Year 2022 alone. In addition, the EDC helped secure over **\$300,000** in Shuttered Venues and COVID Relief grants for businesses in Fresno County.

## TOTAL IMPACT

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$65,743,310	\$25,159,054	\$13,359,498	\$104,261,861
BEAR	\$49,641,972	\$12,318,278	\$10,168,006	\$72,128,255
NEO	\$3,894,905	\$1,539,315	\$1,184,175	\$6,618,395
TOTAL	\$119,280,187	\$39,016,647	\$24,711,679	\$183,008,511



# AUDIT REPORT

## ASSETS

20:22

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,411,196
Accounts receivable	\$427,698
Other receivables	\$496
Prepaid expenses	\$14,932
Deposits	\$7,500
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>\$1,861,822</b>

Property and Equipment, Net	\$35,482
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,897,304</b>

**Fresno County**  
**EDC**

### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$175,756
Accrued payroll and related taxes	\$76,500
Due to other agencies	\$31,821
Deferred revenue	\$185,016
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>\$469,093</b>

### LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Accrued interest	\$8,250
U.S. SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan payable	\$150,000
<b>Total long-term liabilities</b>	<b>\$158,250</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$627,343</b>

### NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$1,269,961
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$1,269,961</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,897,304</b>
---	--------------------

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>			
Grants and Contracts	\$(199,483)	\$2,483,303	\$2,283,820
Membership Fees	280,000	0	280,000
Fundraising Event	210,995	0	210,995
Payroll Protection Program loan forgiveness	209,830	0	209,830
Interest Income	2,616	0	2,616
Gain (loss) on disposal of capital assets	(7,883)	0	(7,883)
Net Assets Released From Restrictions			
Satisfaction of Acquisition Restrictions	2,483,303	(2,483,303)	0
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,979,378</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$2,979,378</b>

### EXPENSES

<b>Program Services</b>	<b>\$2,318,018</b>
<b>Management and General</b>	<b>285,396</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>174,033</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,777,447</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>201,931</b>
<b>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>1,068,030</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$1,269,961</b>

# SPONSORS



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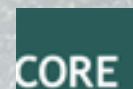
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