



The

DREAM TEAM

23

FRESNO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Annual Report

2023



Planning



Civil Engineering



Land Surveying



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Our History

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We are proud to participate in these efforts and support Fresno County EDC.

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LEE ANN

Thank You

FOR THE MEMORIES!





PRESIDENT and CEO



As we step onto the court for our 2023 Annual Investors Meeting, it's with great pride and excitement that we reflect on the past year's achievements. This year's theme, "The Dream Team," is a reflection of the incredible talent and dedication that defines the staff and Board of Directors at the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation.

First and foremost, we want to acknowledge the significance of this moment—a bittersweet leadership transition and passing of the torch. Working together over the past ten years, we have witnessed the growth, the challenges, and the triumphs of the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. And as we look forward, we are confident that this exceptional team is well-prepared to lead us into a new era of innovation, economic growth, and progress.

The FY22-23 fiscal year has been remarkable. We've celebrated major milestones, embraced new opportunities, welcomed brilliant new teammates, and delivered valuable services to our business community.

Our business attraction and expansion/retention teams focused their efforts on new companies that will enable the long-term economic diversification and growth of our region. As an example, H2B2 will soon plant its flag in Fresno County as one of the premier hydrogen producers on the West Coast, creating jobs and producing the clean, emission free energy of the future. As you will see from the client testimonials included in the Report, our business expansion and retention team has gone above and beyond in making sure our businesses have the resources to thrive and jobseekers have the support needed to achieve success. On page 19, learn about Elizabeth Gonzalez, who as a single mother, enrolled in our New Employment Opportunities program to help her attain employment and a career that will enable her to provide for her family. Stories like Elizabeth's strengthen our resolve to find more ways to assist people in Fresno County.

During FY22-23, our hard work and dedication paid off when we were awarded a historic \$23 million Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. This investment will enable us to place 2,500 individuals into high-demand, well-paying occupations. Notably, in July, we celebrated the graduation of our first Good Jobs Challenge-funded training—a five-week Manufacturing Generalist program at Reedley College. This program stands out as one of the first to be conceived and implemented nationally among GJC grant recipients.

Our new team members have played a pivotal role in engaging both companies and community-based

organizations, ensuring that our residents, who stand to benefit the most, gain access to these life-changing opportunities.

As we contemplated where to focus our future efforts, we knew we wanted to hear from the community. We appealed to residents to take part in economic development decision making and successfully launched a community-based group named Resident Leaders for Equitable Economic Development (RLEED). Through over a dozen focus groups and three resident leader summits, we have aligned exciting new initiatives with the needs and aspirations of our local resident stakeholders.

As a result of our collective efforts, we have generated over \$170 million in total annualized impact, supporting hundreds of jobs. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our EDC Investors – you are our sixth man, providing our team with the creative license to design programs and services that benefit our companies, communities, and residents.

A decade ago, neither of us could have foreseen the unique position we find ourselves in today – one as the predecessor, and the other as the successor. However, it's clear that the very qualities that define championship teams – teamwork, collaboration, trust, and vision – have not only supported the EDC's mission but have also propelled it to even greater heights. We have full faith in this unstoppable "Dream Team" to persevere, carry forward the vision to "Grow the California Dream," and guide the EDC towards an even more prosperous future for Fresno County.

Sincerely,

LEE ANN EAGER

Immediate Past President/CEO

WILL OLIVER

EDC President/CEO





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CHAIRMAN *of the Board*

It is my incredible honor to continue serving as Board Chairman to the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. This year marks my fifth year serving as the Board Chair, and the time has flown by. I have learned much about economic development, local politics, and the aspirations of our community during my time with the EDC. It has been an eye-opening experience that leads me to a focus on the “big picture” and the greater good when considering economic development and progress in our region. I take great pride in being a part of the EDC’s tireless efforts to champion the interests of Fresno County, its citizens, and community. With business attraction, retention, and expansion as its primary goals, the EDC offers a wide range of services, including the development and implementation of programs such as the new \$23 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce for the Good Jobs Challenge, the Central Valley Training Center, training employees in the trades, the John R. Lawson Truck Driving Training Program, training new commercial drivers, and many more including California Competes, NEO Job placement, PG&E EDR Benefits, soft skill training, research, and opportunity analysis.

Earlier this year our President and CEO, beloved community leader and personal friend, Lee Ann Eager announced her retirement. Saying thank you isn’t nearly enough to express my gratitude on behalf of the organization and Fresno County. Lee Ann served at the EDC for 14 years and during her tenure expanded the organization from 8 employees to 22 and grew the annual budget from \$900,000 to \$11,200,000. An amazing accomplishment by an amazing woman.

After Lee Ann’s announcement, the EDC Board of Directors went into immediate action to find a new President and CEO. We hired a local “C” Suite retained search firm, Sierra HR, to conduct an exhaustive national campaign. The process resulted in almost 100 qualified applicants from across the United States. With Sierra HR’s help the applicants were narrowed to the four top candidates.

The search committee made up of seven members of the Board then conducted 2-hour interviews with each of the finalist before coming to a decision.

The EDC was blessed to have had a great cross section of candidates, all of whom brought interesting perspectives on economic development and Fresno County during the interviews. The final choice among the elite group of finalists became abundantly clear. We were excited to announce Will Oliver as the new President and CEO of the EDC.

Will was the only internal candidate who applied for the position. He brings 10 years of experience within the organization to the position. Will is a third-generation valley resident, has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Fresno State and recently earned an Executive Master of Science in Social Business and Entrepreneurship from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Along with a decade of multidisciplinary experience at the EDC involving business services, economic development and public policy, Will spearheaded the \$23m Good Jobs Challenge grant application which will provide a training pathway for 2,500 people. Will is the right person at the right time to continue the successes of Lee Ann Eager and take the organization to the next level.

As the Fresno County EDC turns the page, it will continue to adapt to the changing environment, face head winds fearlessly, and position itself as the tip of the spear targeting economic growth, prosperity, and opportunity for Fresno County. 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 and pushes the communities forward.

Nick Audino

NICK AUDINO

**Chairman
EDC Board of Directors**



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Bruce Bowen

Three-time NBA Champion and eight-time NBA All-Defensive Team, former Spurs forward Bruce Bowen made a name for himself in the NBA with his ability to stop the league's best scorers. A 12-year NBA veteran, Bowen ranks sixth on the Spurs all-time list in 3PT-FG made and is just the fourth San Antonio Spur to earn all defensive honors three or more times joining David Robinson, Tim Duncan and Alvin Robertson. In 2012 his jersey #12 was retired.

With a strong desire to aid those less fortunate, especially youth and young adults, Bowen established The Bruce Bowen Foundation, which is committed to supporting and enhancing the lives of youth in underserved communities. The Bruce Bowen Foundation focuses on promoting programs that build character, nurture self-respect, confidence, responsibility, and camaraderie. Additionally, The Bruce Bowen Foundation awards scholarships to youth who

need assistance in their quest for a higher education.

A role model and a leader on and off the court, Bowen Bruce and his wife Sarah Bowen have 4 boys Ojani, Ozmel, Max, and Bruno.



ACCOLADES INCLUDE:

- *3× NBA champion (2003, 2005, 2007)*
- *5× NBA All-Defensive First Team (2004–2008)*
- *3× NBA All-Defensive Second Team (2001–2003)*
- *No. 12 retired by San Antonio Spurs*
- *First Team All-Big West (1993)*
- *Second Team All-Big West (1992)*
- *Inducted to San Antonio Sports Hall of Fame*
- *Inducted to Cal State Fullerton Hall of Fame*
- *No. 25 retired by Cal State Fullerton*
- *He holds the Spurs franchise record of consecutive games started at 500. Bowen did not miss a game from February 26, 2002 to March 14, 2008.*



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We are proud to support the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation

By working together with communities and organizations we are helping to close the digital divide and unlock the opportunities of connection.

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Growing the California Dream

Congratulations to the EDC!



A Good Jobs Challenge Winner

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GOOD JOBS CHALLENGE



Fresno County EDC recently marked the one-year anniversary of receiving the **\$23 million Good Jobs Challenge grant** from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. This multiyear project funded by the grant will train and place 2,500 (or more) individuals into high-quality careers in Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties across four focus sectors: Business Services, Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation/Distribution.

During the past year, the Good Jobs team has worked with dozens of partners, including many of the region’s institutions of higher education, workforce boards, and community-based organizations both large and small. The first stage of the program was spent in the design phase, the second stage in deploying this historic federal investment, and the third and final stage, implementation, is expected to begin as soon as Fall 2023.

As an employer-driven workforce development project, employer engagement has been especially important and will only increase as the level of direct training and



Manufacturing Generalist trainees and Reedley College Adjunct Estevan Arreguin evaluate project work in Summer 2023

job placement services increases. The Good Jobs team has assisted their colleagues at Fresno County EDC by supporting multiple job fairs, either centered on a single training program, or providing an employer with acute hiring needs in a fast-paced environment to screen and select job-ready candidates. Employer support has grown to 55 businesses and counting, with more than 900 hiring commitments. If you are an employer interested in learning more about available training programs and/or you would like to discuss hiring needs for your business, please use the QR code in this section to reach out to Fresno County EDC.

In March 2023, Fresno County EDC began working with more than 20 community-based organizations (CBOs) to assess their strengths and prepare them for participation in the Good Jobs participant recruitment and support components. Seventeen CBOs participated in a one-hour, one-on-one interview to discuss their organizations and how the Good Jobs project and



A Manufacturing Generalist trainee works on a project part. Employers stressed the importance of applied learning and hands-on experience for the course.

their organizations could be mutually supportive. The CBOs shared valuable insights into their services, the challenges they encounter, and their capacity to participate in the project.

In June 2023, the first cohort funded by this project began training on employer-specified skills for in-demand manufacturing careers. This training program, the Manufacturing Generalist course, exemplifies the sector partnership strategy envisioned by EDA. Employers worked with the program's instructor to design a curriculum responsive to their needs. Reedley College provided an instructor and facilities. Community Based Organizations, Higher Education Institutions, Adult Schools, and Employers assisted with recruitment. During the training program, experienced case managers worked with instructors daily to ensure participants were supported. Employers visited the classroom on multiple occasions to provide encouragement and guidance. Fresno County EDC, Reedley College, and the San Joaquin Valley Manufacturing Alliance hosted the graduation ceremony in late July 2023.



In the last year, Good Jobs Challenge partners have also gone on to secure **\$3 million** in state funding as part of United Way's **\$10 million** Community Economic Resilience Fund Economic Development Pilot grant. These funds will provide additional supportive services to help address employment and training barriers and incentivize participants to re-engage and succeed in the workforce and educational ecosystems.



Fresno County EDC and partners celebrate the \$10 million in state funding that United Way obtained for a CERF Economic Development Pilot, of which \$3 million will go to Good Jobs related projects.



The first cohort of graduates from the Manufacturing Generalist course pose with their instructors, former Fresno County EDC President/CEO Lee Ann Eager, and Dr. Jerry Buckley, President of Reedley College.



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

Tara Lynn Gray

Tara Lynn Gray was sworn in on April 26, 2021, as the 5th Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate. She serves as the voice for California's 4.2 million small businesses in the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

Under Director Gray's leadership, the California Office of the Small Business Advocate focuses on helping to bring about Governor Newsom's California for All vision through further development of the state's small business ecosystem and by ensuring that questions about equity and inclusion are the starting point for all of the state's small business programs.

Gray's first model of economic development was learned in her grandmother's beauty shop. Her grandmother instinctively understood that her patrons needed credit as well as beauty services and she let them pay after services were rendered. This way, she kept the money circulating in the Black community and built a community of trust. She also imbued her granddaughter with her sense of compassion and indelible determination.

Running her own business for two decades, working with two small business development centers, and running a business association and a foundation has given Director Gray the requisite experience and expertise to advocate for small businesses.

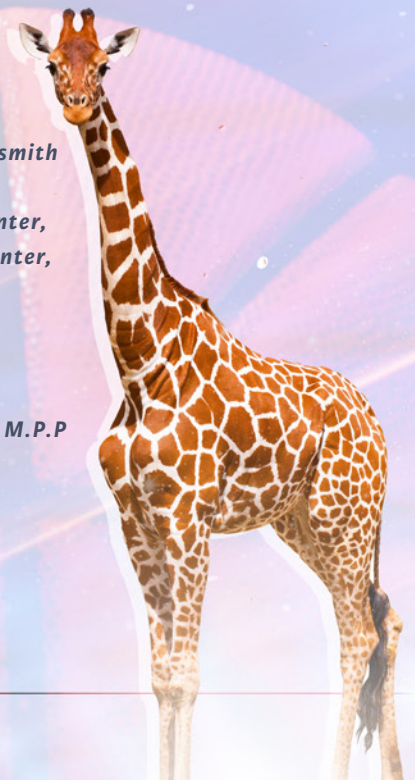
Immediately prior to her appointment by Governor Newsom, Director Gray led the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce (FMBCC) and Chamber Foundation (FMBFC) as CEO. In her adopted city of Fresno, Director

Gray engaged, educated, and empowered small businesses across California's Central Valley. At the same time, she became deeply engaged in community service, leading the initiative "Betting Big on Small Businesses Owned by Women and People of Color" on behalf of the DRIVE Investment Plan, with the goal of increasing economic mobility for entrepreneurs in disinvested neighborhoods.

Closing opportunity gaps, the role of women and BIPOC business leaders, and diversity in procurement opportunities are recurrent themes in her advocacy work. She has also led green economy initiatives, employment & training programs, and working to advance electric vehicle ownership.

PAST GIRAFFE AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 2022-** *Chancellor Carole Goldsmith*
- 2021-** *Cook Land Company*
- 2020-** *Community Medical Center, Saint 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*



In Memory of
Dave Jones
1941-2022



An incredible EDC teammate whose contributions will always be valued and remembered.

Progress is seeing how a bright future starts with a great community.

A thriving community creates more opportunities for everyone. At Chevron, we partner with people and local organizations where we operate. We're committed to supporting the businesses around us, and we're making investments where we work that will benefit the whole community — including us. Learn more at [chevron.com](https://www.chevron.com)

Chevron is proud to support and sponsor the 2023 Fresno County EDC Annual Investors Meeting.





INCENTIVE *Spotlight*

LOCAL • PG&E Economic Development Rate (EDR)

PG&E's Economic Development Rate (EDR) offers eligible businesses the opportunity to lower their costs through a 20% rate reduction. This reduced rate is available for eligible customers with high energy loads, qualifying small businesses that are considering locating within California, or eligible small businesses considering relocating from California to other states or closing their existing California operations.

ELIGIBILITY

- *Commercial and Industrial businesses considering locating or expanding out of California*
- *Existing businesses that would cease operations in CA without the EDR*

STATE • California Competes Tax Credit

The California Competes Tax Credit is an income tax credit available to businesses that want to locate or stay and grow in California. Businesses of any industry, size, or location compete for \$492 million available in tax credits by applying in one of the three application periods each year.

APPLICATION PERIODS

Remaining Application Periods FY 23-24:

- **January 2, 2024, to January 22, 2024**
\$164 million available
- **March 4, 2024, to March 18, 2024**
\$164 million plus any remaining unallocated amounts

ABOUT THE CREDIT

- *Open to business of all sizes*
- *Online application*
- *No fee to apply*

FEDERAL • The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire American job seekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment. Employers can meet their business needs and claim a tax credit when they hire 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

- *WOTC reduces an employer's cost of business, requires little paperwork, and applying for WOTC is simple*
- *There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to claim the tax credit*
- *Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of WOTC by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer's share of social security taxes*

TARGETED GROUP

- *Veterans*
- *TANF Recipients*
- *SNAP(food stamp) Recipients*
- *Designated Community Residents*
- *Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals*
- *Ex-Felons*
- *Supplemental Security Income Recipients*
- *Summer Youth Employees*

BUSINESS *Retention*



Throughout 2023, Fresno County EDC has been committed to supporting local businesses by connecting them to essential resources. We assist local companies with participation in several key programs that retain or create jobs, such as the PG&E Economic Development Rate, New Employment Opportunities (NEO) program, California Venues Grant Program, and California Competes Tax Credits.

One example of this support is Garlish, LLC., a garlic spread manufacturer founded in 2015. Garlish's products are gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan, cholesterol-free, sugar-free, nut-free, and completely natural with no preservatives. Their delectable garlic spreads elevate culinary experiences, serving as dips, condiments, spreads, sauces, or cooking ingredients. Garlish, LLC., originally based in Sacramento, CA, has achieved remarkable growth, with its products now available in over 70 grocery stores across the state. Recognizing the strategic advantages of Downtown Fresno, the company decided to relocate in early 2022. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed financial challenges and operational limitations.

Fresno County EDC worked closely with Karla Lugo, the owner of Garlish, LLC., to successfully secure the PG&E Economic Development

Rate (EDR), resulting in a 20% reduction in their electricity costs over five years. This substantial reduction was pivotal in helping the business not only recover but thrive. "The journey was challenging, but with the exceptional support and guidance provided by Economic Development

Specialist Cody Laird at EDC, it became much more manageable. We express our deep gratitude to EDC for making these vital programs accessible to small local businesses like Garlish, LLC."



Another beneficiary of EDC's support is Mezcal Lounge, an event venue located in Downtown Fresno. The COVID-19 pandemic presented Mezcal Lounge with numerous hurdles and challenges. However, with the assistance of EDC, Mezcal Lounge was awarded \$195,000 in Round 2 of the CA Venues Grant. Maria Garcia, Mezcal Lounge Administrator, expressed her gratitude, stating, "This funding will allow us to make improvements to our facility, maintain our payroll, and create new jobs."



EDC remains committed to empowering local businesses and fostering their success in our dynamic region. Together, we continue to build a thriving and resilient community.



BUSINESS *Spotlight*

HANDSON CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

For over six decades, HandsOn Central California (HOCC) has stood as a beacon of community engagement and volunteerism in the heart of the Central Valley. Their mission, unwavering since their founding in 1962, is to unite passionate individuals with powerful causes, fostering tangible change within our community. HandsOn firmly believes that every small effort, when multiplied, has the power to transform lives and reshape our world. Their journey began with a call to action inspired by national leadership: “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.” HandsOn started small, with candy strippers in hospitals and aides for Head Start programs. Today, they proudly oversee the management of over a million volunteer hours annually, spanning across Merced, Mariposa, Stanislaus, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kings counties.

One of their proudest achievements lies in the successful utilization of the New Employment Opportunities (NEO) program with the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. Hiring from NEO has not only diversified their team but has also made them more aware and engaged in delivering services that truly transform lives and build a stronger community. Many NEO staff members have become invaluable assets to their organization and have been retained for more than a year. One employee who joined the organization in July 2021 has since taken on the role of Court Referral Manager. She has proven to be an invaluable member of the team, and her role extends beyond her job title as she also serves as a mentor to other NEO recruits.

Without hesitation, HandsOn recommends other business owners to participate in the New



Employment Opportunities program. It not only diversifies their workforce but also fosters an inclusive and compassionate workplace culture, ultimately contributing to the business’s success.

HandsOn Central California is committed to promoting positive change in the community. HOCC isn’t just an organization; it’s a movement driven by the belief that individuals, when empowered, can shape a brighter future. They invite you to join them on this transformative journey, where every action, no matter how small, has the potential to make a significant impact. Together, we can continue to be a force for change that transforms the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HANDSON CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONTACT:

Fresno County EDC 559.476.2500 • HandsOn Central California, Carole Davies 559.237.3101

PARTICIPANT *Success Stories*



MANUFACTURING GENERALIST PROGRAM GRADUATE SUCCESS STORIES

Erik Cebellos

Erik's previous employer informed him that his role in Fresno would be eliminated and that if he wanted to continue his role, he would need to relocate out of state. That would mean uprooting his family, which he did not want to do. To keep his family in the Central Valley, Erik had to start over again.

He returned to school, earned his High School Diploma from Sanger Adult School, and was referred to the Good Jobs Challenge Manufacturing Generalist Program from Sanger Adult School's Principal. Erik's dedication shone through, making him a standout student during the five-week program. Not only did Erik receive employer-specified, hands-on training in the program, he also received assistance in revamping his resume to highlight his broad range of skills and experience.

Erik's perseverance paid off when he secured a role as a Back Shop Supervisor for the 2nd Shift at Borga Steel. His new employer recognized his exceptional potential, crafting the position specifically for him and dedicating his first two months at the job to continued professional development.

Joel Gatica

Joel previously worked as an intern at Career Nexus, a Good Jobs partner that places job seekers into internships to develop their skills across multiple industry sectors. Through this program, he found a part-time job, but was interested in full-time work. Career Nexus referred Joel to the Manufacturing Generalist program at Reedley College as a result.

Joel was also enrolled as a student during the summer break at Reedley College to work on his education and long-term goals.

Prior to completing the program, Joel was offered a position at PNM Company as a machinist, and he started work at the company not long after graduation. As a full-time worker now, Joel is also continuing his education and training with his employer's support. He is pursuing an A.S. in Mechanical Engineering at Reedley College. Joel is on track to graduate by May 2024.

CVTC SUCCESS STORY

Miguel Vasquez

Huge congratulations to our Central Valley Training Center (CVTC) student, Miguel Vasquez. Miguel was hired at our CVTC Job Fair by Dragados-Flatiron JV, CP 2-3, subsidiary of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Dragados will also sponsor him in LIUNA Local 294.

Miguel first connected with Javier Herrera, a Superintendent for Dragados, at a previous CVTC job fair. Miguel explained that having an employment opportunity in the construction trades would fulfill his dream of owning a home. After seeing Miguel's potential and drive, Javier promised that he would hire him upon graduation from our Central Valley Training Center program. Fast forward 12 weeks: Miguel has graduated, and his dream is coming true!

Thank you to Dragados and our other partners for empowering our graduates to achieve their goals!





READY TO HIRE JOB-READY EMPLOYEES?

Find Candidates with the New Employment Opportunities (NEO) program

For every full-time employee hired,
the employer will receive wage
reimbursement for up to a year!

CONTACT:

Fresno County Economic
Development Corporation

559.476.2500 • bear@fresnoedc.com



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 demands, and promoting self-sufficiency by addressing barriers to work faced by Fresno County's most vulnerable populations.



NEO CLIENT TESTIMONIAL



Raised by a single teenage mother, **Elizabeth Gonzalez** faced adversity from a young age. As an adult she found she was continuing the cycle; she was an unemployed single mother, but she was determined to break this cycle. During this challenging period the Department of Social Services (DSS) referred her to the NEO program, which links job seekers and employers in order to achieve family self-sufficiency.

Motivated by a desire to rewrite her story and not be defined as another statistic, Elizabeth embraced the opportunity presented by NEO with unwavering determination. NEO provided her with essential resources, including guidance on mental health, educational support, and assistance with work-related expenses, such as clothing and transportation. NEO program employer, Carol Davies, Executive Director from HandsOn Central California, saw Elizabeth's potential to grow with the organization and hired her.

In July of 2021, Elizabeth began her journey at HandsOn Central California as an office administrator. During this time, she was balancing her roles as a parent, a full-time employee, and a part-time student. She worked diligently in her

role at HandsOn Central California and showed up consistently, both professionally and academically. Her efforts resulted in her promotion to her current role as Court Referral Manager with a remarkable 20% increase in program performance. Elizabeth is immensely grateful for the opportunities provided by the NEO program and is determined to continue her growth within the HandsOn organization.

Elizabeth is still employed with HandsOn Central California and is pursuing a Business Management Degree, with a focus on Social Work. She aspires to develop her skills further and continue mentoring other NEO hires at HandsOn Central California. She helps new NEO hires with coaching and provides guidance to them when they are facing challenges similar to those she went through, encouraging them to seize opportunities and utilize available resources with the NEO program. Elizabeth acknowledges the pivotal role played by Carol Davies from HandsOn Central California, whose support and flexibility were instrumental in Elizabeth's success. Elizabeth is a testament to the fact that, with determination, support, and a commitment to growth, **people can rise above challenges and achieve their dreams.**

ATTRACTIONS

H2B2 ELECTROLYSIS TECHNOLOGIES

In the heart of California's Central Valley, where agriculture dominates and innovation thrives, H2B2 Electrolysis Technologies, has taken a monumental step towards a greener and more sustainable future. Fresno County, known for producing one-quarter of the nation's food with only 1% of the nation's farmland, constantly seeks innovative, sustainable solutions to meet growing demand. H2B2, a leader in green hydrogen technology, has embraced this challenge. The SoHyCal project, located between the cities of Mendota and Kerman, is set to become one of the largest green hydrogen production facilities in the United States.

H2B2 is a global, vertically integrated provider of green hydrogen energy systems, services, and equipment. Their vision centers on building a more sustainable and equitable planet, where technological advancements in renewable hydrogen serve as a driving force for total decarbonization across all industries.

H2B2's proprietary water electrolysis technology and comprehensive range of products and services cover the entire hydrogen production and transportation process, from initial design to ongoing operations, making possible hydrogen applications across various sectors including industrial, energy storage, mobility, and residential.

As California strives to achieve its clean energy goals, projects like SoHyCal play a pivotal role in granting local communities access to clean energy and fuel, thereby enhancing their environment, improving their quality of life, and ultimately garnering support for similar initiatives. The production of green hydrogen contributes significantly to reducing carbon emissions and advancing sustainability, aligning seamlessly with



the region's commitment to addressing sector-specific challenges, such as food insecurity and labor scarcity.

The Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has been a key partner of H2B2 since 2019. The EDC has provided valuable assistance, from site selection for H2B2's U.S. headquarters to support during the permitting process of H2B2's 40-acre photovoltaic solar farm. Fresno County EDC's involvement extends to guiding H2B2 through the California Competes Grant application process, ensuring the project's progression.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects, such as H2B2's SoHyCal project, play a critical role in stimulating economic growth, fostering innovation, and creating job opportunities. FDI facilitates the exchange of innovative technologies and ideas, providing invaluable support to Fresno County. It strengthens the bond between global expertise and local needs, showcasing the power of international collaboration.

As H2B2 leads the way in green hydrogen technology, its SoHyCal project represents a significant step towards meeting California's hydrogen needs and contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future. The EDC is proud to assist H2B2 in building Fresno County's global competitiveness which will usher in a new era of job generating clean energy projects for the future.

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IMPACT Study



The Fresno County Economic Development Corporation's program outcomes include jobs created due to business attraction, New Employment Opportunities (NEO) Program, and successful applications of state and local incentives, including the California Venues Grant and Fresno Facade Grant. **The data presented below reflects program activities from the 2022-2023 fiscal year.**

EMPLOYMENT

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	144.0	106.9	60.2	311.1
BEAR	15.1	4.6	3.0	22.7
NEO	139.0	55.1	37.4	231.5
TOTAL	298.1	166.6	100.6	565.3

- Business attraction efforts led to the creation of **311 new jobs**, **\$19.6 million** in labor income, and a total annual impact of **\$122.4 million** in our regional economy.

- The **New Employment Opportunities Program** generated over **\$12 million** in labor income and a total annual impact of **\$45.3 million** in our regional economy.

LABOR INCOME

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$8,520,000	\$7,723,260	\$3,360,735	\$19,603,995
BEAR	\$586,044	\$237,292	\$169,822	\$993,157
NEO	\$7,066,183	\$2,975,476	\$2,087,938	\$12,129,597
TOTAL	\$16,172,227	\$10,936,028	\$5,618,495	\$32,726,749

VALUE ADDED (GDP SUPPORTED)

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$22,617,968	\$14,124,663	\$5,923,202	\$42,665,833
BEAR	\$626,500	\$346,481	\$299,301	\$1,272,282
NEO	\$13,196,755	\$4,530,629	\$3,680,066	\$21,407,450
TOTAL	\$36,441,223	\$19,001,773	\$9,902,569	\$65,345,565

- The **EDC** assisted local businesses with job recruitment events and incentive applications that led to the creation of **23 new full-time positions** and **\$1 million** in labor income. The EDC helped secure over **\$220,000** in California Venues and City of Fresno Facade grants for Fresno County businesses.

OUTPUT (TOTAL IMPACT)

PROGRAM	DIRECT	INDIRECT	INDUCED	TOTAL
ATTRACTIONS	\$81,378,777	\$30,893,407	\$10,110,480	\$122,382,663
BEAR	\$1,316,091	\$718,382	\$510,867	\$2,545,340
NEO	\$29,436,547	\$9,603,663	\$6,282,091	\$45,322,301
TOTAL	\$112,131,415	\$41,215,452	\$16,903,438	\$170,250,304

- The EDC's departments have combined to create over **\$170 million** in total annual impact.

AUDIT REPORT

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,443,453
Accounts receivable	\$804,403
Other receivables	\$1,272
Prepaid expenses	\$39,850
Deposits	\$7,500
Total current assets	\$ 2,296,478

Operating Lease Right-to-Use Assets, net	\$160,448
Property and Equipment, Net	\$54,490

TOTAL ASSETS | \$2,511,416

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$2,995,093
Management and General	300,546
Fundraising	172,250
Total Expenses	3,467,889
Change in Net Assets	210,668
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	1,269,961
Net Assets at End of Year	1,480,629

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$453,805
Accrued payroll and related taxes	\$115,340
Due to other agencies	\$35,182
Deferred revenue	\$130,392
Lease liability, current portion	\$22,384
U.S. SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan payable, current portion	\$4,106
Total current liabilities	\$ 761,209

LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Lease liability, long-term portion	\$141,423
U.S. SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan payable, long-term portion	\$128,155
Total long-term liabilities	\$269,578
Total liabilities	\$1,030,787

NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$1,480,629
Total net assets	\$1,480,629

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$2,511,416

SUPPORT AND REVENUES

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	TOTAL
Grants and Contracts	\$426,862	\$2,804,028	\$3,230,890
Membership Fees	224,250	0	224,250
Fundraising Event	222,006	0	222,006
Interest Income	2,657	0	2,657
Gain (loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(1,246)	0	(1,246)
Net Assets Released From Restrictions			
Satisfaction of Acquisition Restrictions	2,804,028	(2,804,028)	0
Total Support and Revenues	\$3,678,557	0	\$3,678,557

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