Community Partnerships Team Up

Wendy Sweeney, an Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) Business Service Representative, has accepted the opportunity to serve on the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors! This opportunity to directly support businesses in Oroville will be an excellent tool to promote AFWD’s mission and contribute toward the economic success and wellbeing of our community. Wendy’s Board of Director term began in January of 2022 and will be in effect through December of 2025.

The Board of Directors for the Chamber is generally comprised of business leaders and partners from the community. The Chamber Board of Directors is instrumental in the creation and implementation of the Chamber’s mission and initiatives and is intentionally designed to empower and entrust a diverse representation of the business community with its most important decisions. It is a great honor to accept the privilege and responsibility of serving on this important committee.

The Chamber’s January meeting kicked off with a visit from the Oroville Pastoral group. They presented each new board member with a beautiful plaque of blessing. AFWD is very proud to become an even more integral factor in the development of our communities’ workforce and businesses! What an amazing collaboration this will be!
Homeless Hiring Tax Credit

There is more information coming down the pipeline regarding California’s Homeless Hiring Tax Credit (HHTC) and Alliance for Workforce Development is spreading the word to our local employers. California’s Governor recently signed AB150 which establishes the HHTC for the next 5 years, this bill is one of the many efforts California is taking to help aid the growing homeless population.

Through this tax credit, employers can claim up to $30,000 per taxable year as an incentive to hire someone from the homeless population. There is a minimum criterion for any employer who wants to take advantage of this great new tax incentive:

- Employers must first get certified by a local certifying organization. (Continuum-of-Care programs, Community-Based service organizations, etc.)
- Employers must pay wages equal to or greater than 120% of California’s minimum wage
- Employers must make tentative credit reservations within 30 days of completing the New Hire Reporting requirement with the EDD

While we are in the midst of this battle against homelessness, the Homeless Hiring Tax Credit is a big swing in the effort to get a marginalized populace back into the job market and build a better life for themselves. If you are interested in more information on this program, please contact your local AFWD office!
Prison-to-Employment (P2E) Program Impact Study

After working on the Prison to Employment Program (P2E) for the past eighteen months, the Alliance for Workforce Development staff is busy helping to make sure that enrolled clients have the available resources they need to be successful when the program ends. During the program, staff worked with previously incarcerated individuals on probation and parole to help them balance the demands of their conditions and terms with the effort it requires to job search and readjust to society. The program was a collaborative effort between California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and California Workforce Development Board.

Going into the program, staff were well prepared, having worked with law enforcement closely for many years. Still, they acquired tons of knowledge during the program to make them “experts in the field”. Which is why AFWD staff had so much to say when researchers from the University of California, Riverside called to conduct interviews for their program evaluation study.

Staff and participants were interviewed by phone and the process was entirely voluntary and anonymous. Participants earned a $25.00 Visa Gift Card. Staff were asked their opinion on what worked and what might be improved if the program was reintroduced state-wide. Having worked closely with these participants, staff were eager to share what they learned and they all agreed that it was a program that was vital to this population of job seekers, ...and that it worked! The vast majority of the participants got jobs, and good jobs too! The University of California, Riverside’s study won’t come out for eighteen months, but staff will continue to apply what they learned to assist justice involved clients.
Introducing Business Service Rep - Janine Gomez

Hi, my name is Janine Gomez. I was born and raised in Petaluma, CA. I moved to Chico to attend CSU, Chico where I got my bachelor’s degree in Organizational Communications and a minor in Marketing. After graduation, I moved back to Petaluma to work at CHI International where I found jobs for international students on their J1 work and travel visas. During my work there, I got to see 18 countries and 34 states. After my travels, I wanted to move back to Chico where life was at a slower pace. I worked at Build, Auctiva/11Main/OpenSky, Work Truck Solutions, and recently True North Housing Alliance. At True North Housing Alliance, I was the donation Engagement Manager and Housing Locator for the CSU, Chico Basic Needs program, and the Kitchen Manager. As a Business Service Representative at Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD), I plan to use my experience in helping businesses get the help they need. I love and care for the community and look forward to continuing to make a difference.

On the Watch

Tamara was referred to AFWD in March 2021 from her high school at Las Plumas. She was homeless at the time and was looking for support and guidance while she was trying to finish up her senior year. Tamara regularly met with her Career Center Advisor while she was attending school and received job search assistance for part-time work while completing her diploma. Tamara’s career center advisor let her know of a position working part time with Wyandotte Elementary school as an after-school program leader and helped her apply. She then received assistance with creating a resume and interview preparation, along with interview attire. Tamara was accepted for the position and worked part-time while she completed her high school diploma.

Upon completion of her diploma, Tamara received job search assistance obtaining full-time employment. Her Career Center Advisor informed her of a position with a security company called V Force Private Security where, in instead of overseeing the care of children, she was would be overseeing equipment and assets for private companies such as PG&E. After applying, she received an interview and was offered the position as a private security guard. Tamara is now traveling to different areas of California, such as San Francisco to supervise and guard expensive assets. She is loving her job and is continuing to thrive.
Never Too Late

Shawn Robertson is currently a student at Butte College in the middle of his second semester of the Heavy Equipment Program. Things were not this easy for Shawn, he made some bad decisions that ended with him going to prison for a couple of years. Shawn knew this was not the kind of life he wanted for himself or his children.

Shawn, following all the programing needed in CDCR, had the opportunity to finish his term at the Male Community Reentry Program. This voluntary program is for eligible males who have two years or less of their prison sentence left to serve. After completing the requirements of the program, the participants will have the opportunity to become employed or continue with their education.

Alliance for Workforce Development is proud to announce that Shawn is only months away from receiving his Heavy Equipment Certification and becoming employed.

Shawn is a perfect example of is never too late to better yourself!

Love Paradise - Work Experience Program

Love Paradise has been connecting and working with the community in Butte County to help bring aid to the Camp Fire survivors and organizations. Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) has partnered with Love Paradise to assist workers to satisfy these efforts through the Work Experience (WEX) program.

The Work Experience Program (WEX) funding provides 100% of the wages for the site workers through the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG). AFWD has been able to channel assistance through Love Paradise in the form of employees, which has been designed to reach out to survivors first. AFWD has provided labor to Love Paradise since June of 2019 and this labor opportunity has been a huge benefit to many survivors.

Love Paradise and AFWD, along with previous campaigns, have worked as a team to build 452 sheds for our survivors. This, “Camp Fire Shed Project” was a huge success, and very much appreciated. Multiple AFWD employees have assisted throughout this amazing project which spanned over a year and a half. Love Paradise was involved in the form of dispersing food and water and has distributed close to three-quarters of a million pounds of food to help meet the devastated area's needs. There is also a furniture program to aid Camp Fire Survivors. To date, Love Paradise has given out over $750,000 worth of furniture.

It has taken many hours of organization, time, labor, and hardworking hands from Love Paradise and AFWD to make such a helpful and successful impact on the Ridge Community.
This January, Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) had the opportunity to foster a great partnership with the Butte College Training Place! The Training Place offers courses that meet the demands of our community and industry for affordable training to improve employee performance and success. They offer a variety of customized training courses that can be easily registered for online. Training Topics include Supervisor Development, Customer Service, Employee Development, Human Resources, Leadership, Lean Principles, Sexual Harassment Prevention, and Workplace Safety. The Training Place also offers funding, by case, to alleviate the paid time employees are spending in training.

The Training Place's mission and goal are to respond to community needs by providing performance improvement solutions resulting in economic development, sustainability, and growth. The benefits of the training place are enormous. They can help determine your company’s path to success with a Training Needs Assessment and provide customized training both at The Training Place or in your business establishment. What an awesome community advocate!

AFWD’s mission of providing pathways to success and meeting the needs of job seekers and employers is fully fortified by the efforts of The Training Place. Our two organizations are strategizing to marry the concepts of classroom and on-the-job training to provide comprehensive services to our professional community to improve hiring and retention rates and provide economic relief to help cover some of the costs incurred to meet professional goals.

AFWD is proud to partner with The Training Place. We very much look forward to the opportunity to fast track our community recovery efforts by fostering workforce development for employers and employees alike!
Bacio Chico and Alliance for Workforce Development Partnership

Bacio Chico is a grab-and-go eatery on Park Ave in Chico. They cater for weddings and various social & business events. Erika Montañez took new ownership of Bacio Chico six months before the pandemic. She is a mother of twins and wanted to offer healthier food options, made from scratch, for families that dine out. Bacio Chico works with many local businesses such as Llano Seco, Lundberg Rice, Chico Chai, Sierra Nevada cheese, and Pyramid farms. Bacio Chico also donates to the Torres Shelter all of their leftovers at the end of the day. Erika said, “operating a business during the pandemic is not for the faint of heart. Everyone has to be open to change.” She had to adapt & reinvent both herself and her business model during this time.

Ericka's biggest challenge has been staffing. Janine Gomez, a Business Service Representative (BSR) from Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) reached out to her in January. Erika said, “Working with Alliance for Workforce Development has been a true blessing, [Bacio Chico] has three open positions and AFWD expects to fill them very soon. AFWD has made it possible to get people through the door and brought awareness to [my] business." AFWD is happy to report that the business has since picked up and has also received an OJT wage reimbursement contract since the partnership has blossomed.

Academics Achieved!

Monica was referred to Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) by a current client and student of the Butte College Nursing program. Monica was in her fourth and final semester of nursing school when she came to AFWD seeking assistance with the final requirements of her training program.

Monica worked very hard every semester, maintaining a 4.0 GPA, supporting herself as best as she could. When she realized the expense of the Licensure, she was uncertain how she could make that happen until she heard about AFWD. Once determined eligible, Monica was assisted with the costly requirements necessary for her to obtain her Registered Nursing License.

With the help of the NDWG-WD program, Monica was able to complete her Associate's Degree in Nursing and obtain her RN license, and secure permanent full-time employment working at a local hospital serving her community as a Registered Nurse.
Introducing Walter Ford - Start of a New Chapter

Some kids grow up knowing exactly what they want to be. They know by age 12 they will one day be a police officer, or a firefighter, or a mechanic, or a chef, or a doctor.

Not me, and that is obvious to see with one look at my resume. Throughout my professional life I’ve been a bit of an occupational nomad. I spent years in the restaurant industry, working my way up from dishwasher to head cook and kitchen manager. I later became a telemarketer, a property manager, a hotel manager, a life insurance salesman, a retail store manager, and a sports journalist.

I didn’t recognize it as I navigated my now more than 20-year employment odyssey, but all along I was developing the skills necessary for a career as a Youth Career Center Advisor with Alliance For Workforce Development. Whether it was attending resume writing workshops in college, developing successful interview skills or simply learning from the opportunities I didn’t land – I was gathering a cache of knowledge that I can now pass on to my clients. Clients who are trying to figure out where they fit in today’s workforce. With my years of experience, many of which were spent working with young adults, as well as being a father of two teenagers, I believe I have found the perfect fit for me. And, I look forward to finding the perfect fit for my clients.

Klean Kanteen – Employing Butte County Residents

Klean Kanteen is a Chico-based, family-employee-owned business that specializes in reusable water bottles and coffee mugs. They have become an international brand and have inspired dozens of other companies to make reusable stainless-steel products. There were numerous Klean Kanteen workers that were affected by the Camp Fire. Some of their homes were partially burned or lost altogether, while others had to drop everything to help their family and friends who were affected. Klean Kanteen had 18 staff displaced by the Camp Fire and a few others that were displaced by those that were affected, moving them out of their homes. Some have chosen to leave the area, leaving gaps in the organization.

Through the Human Resources group, which has multiple businesses meet once a month, Klean Kanteen became aware of Alliance for Workforce Development’s (AFWD) no cost programs and services for employers and job seekers. Partnering with AFWD, employees were found and trained at Klean Kanteen through the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. The OJT program provides partial reimbursement of the new employees’ wages back to the worksite, while the worker is learning the duties of the position. The funding is provided by the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG). Klean Kanteen credits AFWD with the fact that the process was easy and a smooth transition to bringing on the new employees. During this difficult time, AFWD helped alleviate the stress of recruiting, allowing Klean Kanteen to focus on the needs of their staff and the community at large.

Through the OJT program, there have been several successful placements that have been trained by Klean Kanteen and now have full-time employment.
Order of Draw: From Phlebotomy to Registered Nurse

Joshua Rothey was a 2nd semester Registered Nursing student, attending Butte College when he was referred to Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in late January 2020. A Career Center Advisor (CCA) completed an eligibility intake and Joshua was enrolled into the Adult WIOA program. Joshua had been employed at Enloe working as a Phlebotomy Technician while he awaited his acceptance into the RN program. Joshua continued to work while attending his Registered Nursing program as he was providing for his family and new baby. Joshua knew in order to grow into his career pathway and fulfill his dream of becoming a Registered Nurse he would need to successfully complete his training program. It is tough going to school fulltime and working to maintain and provide for your family. So, Joshua reached out to AFWD for possible assistance after being referred by one of his 1st semester instructors.

During his enrollment with AFWD, Joshua received classroom training assistance, individual and career guidance counseling, and assistance with his training materials and costs. Joshua far exceeded his own expectations nearly obtaining straight A’s his entire program. Joshua worked incredibly hard facing many personal life changes and continued to persevere. Joshua finally graduated the Butte College nursing program obtaining his Associates Degree in Nursing (Registered Nurse) in December 2021. Joshua then, applied and took his state NCLEX exam, passing on his first try; obtaining his California state RN licensure. Joshua began applying for different positions at Enloe Medical Center, not as a Phlebotomist Technician, but now as a Registered Nurse. Joshua recently accepted a position on the Cardiology floor and is excited to begin his new adventure in the healthcare sector as a Registered Nurse.
Electrifying Futures in the Manufacturing Sector

Amie Brannon came to Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in early November 2021. Amie was looking for employment opportunities as she had just relocated back to Chico from Oregon. Amie met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) whom determined eligibility and she was enrolled into the Adult WIOA program as a Job Seeker and assessed for services. Amie’s previous experience included the medical field, customer service and her most recent position was an Assembly Operator for a manufacturing company in Oregon. Amie really enjoyed her previous position in manufacturing and was hoping to find another employment opportunity like it.

Amie worked with her Career Center Advisor to update her resume, interview preparation, career guidance/planning and individual counseling. The CCA referred Amie over to the business services team for additional assistance with her job search assistance. A Business Services Representative was recruiting for an Operator I position with Joy Signal. Amie was very interested as this position was much like her previous manufacturing position in Oregon. Amie was referred over to the employer, Joy Signal and received an invite to interview.

Amie interviewed and received the job offer on the spot, which she accepted. Amie required assistance with supportive services for work attire which her CCA assisted with in addition. Amie began her position in November 2021 as an Operator I with Joy Signal. This position has given her full-time, self-sufficient employment with benefits for herself and children. Amie is responsible for the manufacturing of high-density custom electronic connectors and wire harnesses supplies required for the medical, computer, electronic, communications, audio, security, and gaming industries. Amie loves what she does and has room for career advancement in this manufacturing occupation.
Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) and Gill's Motorworks recently teamed up to assist the business with staffing an office admin position. Patrick Gill, the owner of Gill's Motorworks, had been affected by the Campfire and lost both his home and his employment when the business had closed its doors for good. Patrick then took a leap of faith and started his own business.

As his business flourished he found that he needed some office help. Patrick reached out to a Business Service Representative (BSR) at AFWD to see if we had anyone that may be a good fit. The BSR was aware of a new job seeker named Amanda that seemed like a perfect fit as she had previously worked for a local auto parts store. She had some of the necessary skills but did not possess the office component of skills necessary for this opportunity. After speaking with Patrick and the prospective job seeker, both the employer and the client were open to the Work Experience Program (WEX) so that she could work on gaining the additional skills required for the position.

The WEX program is designed to assist an employer with the added training time incurred when training an employee in a new position via an agreed-upon wage reimbursement rate. The WEX program allowed the owner to pass off some of his knowledge, office duties, and workload to Amanda, thus enabling the employees and employer to mutually benefit in this situation. The WEX Program is 100 percent funded by using WIOA funds, there are no out-of-pocket wage expenses for the employer.

At the two-week check-in at Gills Motorworks, both the employer and the client were excited to be a part of the program. Patrick appreciates the opportunity to help upskill a member of his community and the added help in the office while Amanda is grateful for the opportunity to build her skillset while earning an income.
I came aboard Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in May of 2016 as a participant in the Youth work experience program (WEX). Here, I was able to gain some knowledge and skills to use in the workforce while temporarily working at the career one stop in our Oroville office. I developed a passion for helping people find employment by identifying with those in similar situations as me.

With my temporary WEX position at the Career One-Stop soon to end, I decided to apply for a permanent position with Alliance for Workforce Development as a Receptionist at the same Career One-Stop office. I practiced for my interview and with the support of many, my confidence grew. I was offered the permanent receptionist position and continued my journey with Alliance for Workforce Development.

For the next three years, I continued to learn about the programs and services AFWD provides. I enjoyed my time as a receptionist and made it my goal to provide the same great service I received the first day I walked in as a job seeker. With a strong drive and eagerness to do more, I decided to apply for AFWD’s Business Service team as a Service Coordinator.

In March of 2019, I was offered the position of Service Coordinator. As a Service Coordinator, I was able to take on more responsibility with assisting our Business Service Representatives and helping businesses in the local area. About two years in I obtained my Certified Business Service Consultant Certificate. This gave me the credentials as well as the confidence needed to begin my journey towards becoming a Business Service Representative.

With a lot of hard work and dedication, it finally paid off and I was offered the role of Business Service Representative starting in January 2022. Alliance for Workforce Development has played a crucial part in my strides towards success. My goal as a Business Service Representative is to provide the same type of opportunity for success I’ve been given to our clients and businesses.
Spencer was job seeking, he did not have very much experience and was seeking a position that would be fulfilling. He decided he wanted to be in the food industry where he would have room for advancement. He has experience as a Bar Back and assisting a Bar Tender but did not have any training working with food. He would need training to be proficient and an On-the-Job Training would be the best way to accomplish that and gain the experience needed. He interviewed with Déjà vu Breakfast Company for their line cook position and they were pleased with his interview but due to the lack of his experience they needed him to go through training. Alliance for Workforce Development was able to assist with the training by way of an On-the-Job Training (OJT) and monitoring his progress. A contract was drawn up and he was enrolled for an OJT.

He started as a line cook on September 6th 2021. He was monitored during his training and his scores were always good, and his supervisor had nothing but great comments on his work ethic and personality. They really enjoyed Spencer being a part of their team. On December 20th, he was promoted to a Head Cook. This came with more responsibility and a higher wage. He stepped in to this new role gracefully and was able to catch on quickly to his new duties. His OJT ended on December 27th, and he was doing great in him new position. His supervisor stated that he learned quickly, had great leadership skills, and exceeded his responsibilities. Without the opportunity of this OJT Spencer would not have been hired with Déjà vu Breakfast Company. Spencer stated that this opportunity has changed his life, and he is really enjoying his new position as a Head Cook.
AFWD - America’s Job Center of California

Statistics

Unemployment Rates
(As of: Feb. 2022)
California 4.8%
Butte County 5.1%

Unemployment Information

AFWD Region County UI Claims

Weekly Initial Claims by Industry Sector

Top 3 Affected Industry Sectors - Butte County
- Food and Accommodation
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade

Butte County - Through 3rd Quarter
One-Stop Visitors: 4,499
Businesses Served: 555
Business Services: 8,291
AFWD
Clients Enrolled: 902