Community Outreach

Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) had the opportunity to partner with Butte Environmental Council and Richard Heath Associates for their Community Resource Fair at the local Arc Pavilion in Chico. This event centered on energy efficiency programs for residents in the community. Alliance for Workforce Development took the opportunity to spread information on a temporary employment program received through special storm related funding for the area. This program allows for AFWD to assist organizations with flood related projects by sending qualified temporary workers to assist in repairs. Butte Environmental Council is an example of one of the organizations with storm related projects AFWD is partnering with.

This event was a great way for Alliance for Workforce Development to reach out to the community and distribute information to residents on how to apply and become eligible for the program. Residents were pleased to get this information and either apply for themselves or tell their friends and family about. The event was a great way for AFWD to reach out to the public and connect with them to offer information they may not have otherwise known about.

Alliance for Workforce Development has made plans to attend future events like these with Butte Environmental Council and Richard Heath Associates throughout the community. This demonstrates AFWD’s willingness to reach out to community members with opportunities that can benefit them or someone they know.
Terri Blessing opened her business after realizing how many locals were going through tough times. “Show Love Thrift” is located on Park Avenue, in Chico and serves dozens of locals in need. Finding little time for her business duties, Terri turned to volunteer programs for extra help. When offered our Skills Training Employment Program (STEP), she instantly knew who she wanted to hire as an employee. The STEP program offers employers 100% reimbursement of wages for hiring through STEP, over a six month period.

Chelsea, who had been a volunteer, gladly accepted the position, eager to begin her path to self-sufficiency. The STEP placement went smoothly over the months and came to an end in mid-August. When our Business Service team approached both the employer and employee, they were excited to share their experience. Chelsea notes that her favorite aspect of working at Show Love Thrift is the unique people she interacts with. This variety ranges from traveler’s, seniors, and regulars looking for deals they can’t refuse!

*Why did you choose Chelsea to bring on as an employee over other volunteers?*
“Chelsea started volunteer hours through ROP’s Career Discoveries Program. Showing confidence, maturity, and calmness, she easily rose to the top. When the opportunity arose to hire her through AFWD’s STEP program it was a blessing and I didn’t give it a second thought.”

*What role did she play at the start of her employment and how has that evolved into her responsibilities today?*
“To be honest, Chelsea was the first person besides myself and my son to work the front counter. The front counter takes a special person with sternness yet politeness, which Chelsea displayed within the first two weeks. Now she is a key holder, a pricer and has the authority to make decisions when I am unavailable. I rely on her quite a bit. She is just wonderful!”

*How has our STEP program impacted your business?*
“Oh gosh, it has been tremendous! It has enabled me to have more volunteers as well as offer 30 hours per week to my employees instead of 20 which make a big impact on them as well.”

*Where are you headed as a business?*
“My goal is to grow two additional locations in order to help more people. One hopefully on the North end of Chico and the second in Vacaville. Vacaville is in need of an affordable thrift store where people who genuinely need things can afford them.”

Alliance for Workforce Development in Butte County applauds Terri and Chelsea for their dedication to our common goal of assisting people to their unique pathways to success!
The Business Service Team along with Team Chico conducted a Business Walk in the Rio Lindo and Cohasset areas promoting the Community Safety meeting that occurred at the PG&E offices on August 24th. The Safety Meeting was well attended by businesses and residents in the area and was a great opportunity for collaboration with the Chico Police Department. Attendees learned about the new Chico PD and NextDoor Apps and how they work as an integral part of community policing.

As Business Service Representatives work closely with businesses throughout the City of Chico, these meetings are crucial to connecting business owners, property owners, and service providers with the proper tools to continue successful and safe operation of their business.
This year's annual fundraiser and address to the economic development stakeholders was held September 21, 2017 at Riffles Resort along the beautiful Feather River in Oroville. The attendance and mood were high with 150 local members and guests. Business Service Representatives from Alliance for Workforce Development Mary McConville and Wendy Sweeney were amongst those in attendance. Wagon Wheel Market catered the event. There were several vendors present and the sponsorship was diverse.

Oroville Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Sandy Linville, Phd’, presentation focused on “Paving the Road to Shared Prosperity.” Sandy expressed the need to band together with a common goal to better overcome some barriers the Oroville community faces. Most notably is the homeless population and local crime rate with the goal to promote the beauty and attributes of our area for business attraction, retention and expansion. She ended her short address with a positive affirmation that together we are “Oroville Strong!”

Each week, an Oroville Chamber member hosts the event and everyone is invited, not just Chamber members. On Thursday morning, August 8, 2017, AFWD Oroville hosted Coffee Connection. We look forward to this event because it’s an opportunity to sip coffee, show off our resources and introduce our dedicated staff. Several of our employer partners attended as well as a few newer chamber members giving us plenty of opportunity to learn about each other. Thank you Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring this event and thank you to Northwest Lineman College, Roplast, Mt. Mike’s Pizza, Roseleaf Cares, and many others for taking the time to visit with us.
Craig May entered the Chico America’s Job Center on July 7, 2017. He was referred to a Career Center Advisor by Front Line Resource as a USN Veteran for priority of service. He shared that he and his wife had relocated to Butte County to escape the high cost of living in Southern California after he was Honorably Discharged from 10 years of service in the US Navy in 2017. He included that his work experience in the US Navy included 4 years as a Senior Medical Office Manager, 3 years as a Command Career Counselor, and 3 years as a Department Career Counselor. Craig was asked if he had reached out to any Veteran’s Service Organizations or any other resources. He shared that he had already made contact with the Veterans’ Office in Chico, and that he has a Vocational Rehabilitation application pending to make sure he is using all available tools. Registering on Cal Jobs was discussed, along with making sure Craig was aware that as a Veteran he would see new job listings 24 hours before non-veterans. Craig was also added to the Job Applicant Pool database, his resume forwarded to the Business Service Representatives for job development, as well as added him to an email tree of filtered leads in the Medical Office and general jobs in Butte County, so he may be able to receive job leads on a daily basis. The OJT program was also discussed with Craig, and how it benefits both employers and clients for developed jobs, and the fact that as a veteran, he could also offer employers the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Craig was very familiar with WOTC and shared that employers can access WOTC information through a hyperlink at the bottom of his resume. It was reviewed how to utilize tagcrowd.com to assist with isolating key words from job descriptions to make sure he has several in both his resume and cover letter. Craig’s resume was very impressive. It included hyperlinks to documents confirming his skills, as well as a QR icon that had a digital business card imbedded in it. As a job seeker, Craig was one of the most prepared individuals, as he made use of all available self-serve resources, and made contact with any services that could prove to be beneficial in his job search. To his benefit, he left no stone unturned. Craig maintained contact with his career center advisor, as he would continually receive emailed job leads every day from both Indeed.com as well as Butte One Stop, and was great with responding on a daily basis as to which jobs he applied to. It was reminded that interview assistance was also an available resource, in the form of a panel, or one-on-one attention through mock interviews, if he felt he could benefit from practice ahead of a real interview. On August 7, 2017, Craig notified his career center advisor that with the job search assistance he had received, he had accepted a position as a Case Manager/Outreach Specialist with the Chico Veterans Resource Center, with full benefits. A Veteran helping other Veterans, is a wonderful ending to his job search, and a new beginning to a fulfilling career.

“We thank you for your service Craig!”
Rafael Cisneros attended the Job Readiness Workshop through Butte County Probation which was facilitated by Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., Career Center Advisors. Due to Rafael’s background issues, he felt securing full time permanent employment was “unattainable”. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. had the opportunity through special funding to assist Rafael through the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG). Rafael had been unemployed since April 19, 2016 and was unable to find an employer who would accept his felony. Rafael resides in Butte County which was listed as a disaster affected area; therefore, eligible for WIOA services and enrolled in NDWG Storm TJC program. Rafael was then selected for a 16 week NDWG TJC Temporary Maintenance Worker position with Caltrans based out of Oroville/Pulga CA.

Caltrans protects State highways and property against the collection of debris in waterways and increases environmental health through cleanup, repair, and maintenance efforts, invasive plant management and eradication, and other duties associated with storm damage related projects. Rafael assisted with digging to widen and backfill trenches, weed abatement, brush removal and traffic control duties. He was responsible for daily clean-up and the necessary maintenance of tools. The temporary work provided through this program enabled Rafael to earn an income while adding to his skill set and closing the gap in his work history. The end results is to make him more marketable for future permanent employment. Which is exactly what has transpired for Rafael, the NDWG Storm TJC program was the opportunity Rafael needed. Rafael worked hard and proved himself, he earned the respect of his supervisor (Clay Hemstalk-Maintenance Supervisor District 2) through his hard work and dedication to the job. Supervisor Hemstalk stated he was unable to hire Rafael at this time “So I did the next best thing” and referred Rafael for a full time permanent position with BCM Construction, Inc. and provided Rafael a letter of recommendation.

BCM Construction, Inc. based here in Chico serves a wide range of clients throughout the Western United States since 1995. BCM works closely with City, County, State and Federal agencies to build public spaces that bring value to their clients and the communities they serve. Some of BCM’s local projects consist of V.A Suite based in Chico along with the City Plaza, the Health & Human Services in Quincy, and the Chester High School.

Rafael was hired as a General Laborer with BCM Construction, Inc., and is currently working on an Agriculture project based in Vina, California. Rafael states he is working six days a week and learning many new skills in the area of the proper way to position and dismantle forms for pouring concrete and has started being trained with framing to build the forms that hold the concrete. Rafael contributes his success to AFWD, Inc. and Caltrans for looking past his prior indiscretions and believing in him. Rafael stated the Job Skills Workshop with AFWD, Inc. showed him how to prepare for employment. The NDWG/Storm 2017 funding provided him the opportunity to work with Caltrans where he was able to build skills in his area of employment interest and was certified as a Qualified Flagger. Rafael stated “I feel without this program and the people who work for AFWD, I would still be searching for work”. “Thank you AFWD and Caltrans for taking a chance and believing in me, I look forward to every day and my new life”.
COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTIONS

Alliance for Workforce Development partner with supportive agencies to provide services for the improvement of each community; it was through these associations we were connected with Donny who was referred by his Advisor in the AB109 program for employment assistance. Due to his background, Donny had been having many challenges trying to obtain full time employment and it was time to utilize all available resources.

Thorough, in-depth interviewing determined Donny had some basic experience working as a ‘Grounds guy’ for a roofing company. For approximately one year, he was responsible for loading and unloading materials and tools from work trucks prior to incarceration and really enjoyed working outside in the construction sector. Donny’s advisor suggested connecting with AFWD for possible training opportunities and referred him to our On the Job Training (OJT) Program.

Assessments were completed and determined Donny had the interest, transferrable skills, as well as the knowledge and motivation to successfully complete this OJT to become self-sufficiently employed with Crane Exteriors, Inc. Donny preferred work activities that involved practical, hands-on problems and solutions as well as following set procedures and routines. An objective assessment revealed Donny’s transferrable skills are a good match for this OJT training, however, he is lacking many of the core capabilities and will need to be trained in the roofing process and materials used as well as how to estimate materials and labor required to complete roofing jobs.

Donny applied and interviewed with a local Roofing company who, in spite of his barriers, was interested in hiring him to be trained as an actual ‘Roofer’. The employer felt Donny’s transferable abilities would be an asset to the position where he could utilize some past skills as well as develop new capabilities. Donny was the perfect candidate for an On the Job Training, providing an opportunity for him to have the necessary training and feedback for a successful outcome, obtaining self-sufficient, long term employment with a stable company.

Way to go Donny!
From the USS Ronald Reagan to About Trees

Walter Cubero was a US Navy veteran who was once stationed on the USS Ronald Reagan in San Diego. Walter was awarded the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and served over eight years defending the United States as an Aviation Warfare Inspector. Soon after his discharge he relocated to Texas and was employed in various occupations. He stated he had no fulfillment at these jobs and wanted to seek employment with a future and an opportunity to work outdoors. Walter moved to Butte County where he had family to provide support as he job searched. Walter walked through the doors of the America’s Job Center in Chico one day after arriving to Butte County. Walter stated he needed a job and immediately created a new resume. He was very polite and enthusiastic about his new home. Walter created a new resume in the computer lab and requested editing assistance. Walter had sales and installation experience, but he emphasized he desired full-time permanent employment. Walter met regularly with a CCA until he was recruited for a full-time position at ‘About Trees’ in Chico. Walter researched the company and immediately stated he wanted his resume forward to the Human Resources at About Trees.

Walter’s resume was forwarded to the employer and he was scheduled an interview. Walter met with his Career Center Advisor to prepare for his interview. He was given potential interview questions and guidance in creating improved answers for the questions. Walter explained his excitement to work for About Trees as a result of his research. He stated the employer had many opportunities for growth and he wanted an opportunity to show his work ethic and model his work ethic to co-workers. He stated his eight years in the US Navy ingrained a strong work ethic and ability to work as an important member of a very large team.

Immediately after interviewing with About Trees, Walter was hired. The Business Services Representative providing recruitment services to About Trees explained the On the Job Training program due to Walter’s lack of experience in this industry sector. Walter completed THE NoRTEC Job Specific Skills Customized Competency-Preliminary Evaluation. His scores indicated an On the Job Training opportunity would benefit him and the employer.

Walter began his new position late August 2017 and has been performing well. He has learned to use the proper equipment and how to safely implement the equipment. He stated his team reminds him of his years in the US Navy and was glad to be play an important role once again. Walter has stated many times that this opportunity has allowed him transition to Butte County as his new home.
Nicholas came to Alliance For Workforce Development in Chico on December 2016 to participate in an Internship program with Stapleton Spence Packaging in Gridley, as a Case Packer Operator. He had recently been laid off from his temporary, entry level, job through Express Professionals, and was receiving unemployment benefits. Nicholas had some legal barriers that, not only kept him out of the workforce for several years, it also made his job search difficult. His other barrier to employment is that he didn’t complete high school. These two factors greatly inhibited his ability to find and keep sustainable employment. Through the Internship, Nicholas learned work ready skills, along with gaining knowledge of the food packaging process in the Manufacturing Sector.

At the end of the Internship, the employer was very impressed with Nicholas’s great attitude, ability to learn quickly and retain what he learned, as well as his desire to work. The employer wanted to retain Nicholas and train him to become a Tray Ejector Machine Operator. Due to the size of the company and the time to train Nicholas on a new machine, the employer was able to achieve this by entering into an On the Job Training program. Nicholas will complete this phase of his training the end of September. To date, the employer has continued to praise Nicholas on his great work ethic, always striving to learn and grow, and his enthusiasm for his work. He has quickly moved up the ranks in operational seniority.
Breanna Valdovinos was a past enrollee in the Youth Program. At the time she was working full-time at a local restaurant, and she knew she wanted to better herself. Breanna had always had an interest in the medical field and knew one way of getting started in the profession was to take the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program through Oroville Adult Education School. Breanna came into our office for assistance with the CNA Program. Her ultimate career goal is to become a Registered Nurse.

We were able to assist Breanna with the CNA Program through Oroville Adult, she was able to complete her course along with her clinical exams. Breanna passed her state exam and got her certification. We assisted Breanna with her resume and prepared her for her interview with a local nursing care facility. Breanna aced her interview and was hired and she continues to be employed full-time.

Breanna is a very motivated individual. She works hard at everything she does. She is excited about this career and is an inspiration to her younger siblings who look up to her. Breanna definitely is on a path in continuing with her education in the medical field. Her next step has been to enroll in the Emergency Medical Technician Program through Oroville Adult Education School. There’s nothing stopping Breanna from continuing to better herself; she has big dreams and is working hard to continue to achieve them in this prospering healthcare career pathway.

Angelica (Angel) Abrahamian joined AFWD, Inc.’s Youth Program in July 2017. She had been out of work for over a year and wanted to rejoin the workforce. Her previous work experience includes 11 months working with the California Conservation Corps in San Luis Obispo. She loved the work there and was looking to find similar work. Her ultimate goal is working for California State Parks, preferably at the coast.

An opportunity arose for Angel to join the team at Terra Fuego, a local research foundation committed to improve the quality of life for residents in fire prone areas by utilizing sustainable land management practices, education and training. This was a work site for the NEG TJC Storm program. Her resume was submitted and was immediately asked to join the work crews. Her previous experience made an impression on the team at Terra Fuego, and her work ethic and enthusiasm has only cemented that impression. After working there for three weeks, she has been given a raise and more responsibilities.

Angel is a great example of finding the right ‘fit’ at a work site. Her love of hard labor, working with her hands, and getting dirty has made her a valuable member of her crew. Her supervisor and the director of Terra Fuego are constantly giving her rave reviews. She enjoys going to work every day and is proud of what she is teaching her son through her success.
AFWD is once again partnering with Youth Build in Chico. Youth Build is a Butte County program seeking to break the cycle of troubled youth who find themselves in and out of jail, on and off the streets, or battling substance abuse and addiction. This program is a collaborative effort with Butte County Office of Education, Come Back Butte Charter, and Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. The focus is on youth ages 16-26 that are working towards their high school diploma, wanting experience in the construction and welding fields, or both. The youth also get trained on job preparedness including how to search for jobs, perfecting their resumes, and also getting practice with mock interviews.

Youth Build is a nationwide program that has immense success preparing disadvantaged youth to become successful in the construction and welding fields. Besides assisting the youth enrolled in the program, the program also helps out the local communities through beautification projects. The participants reach out to local schools and businesses to help build such things as benches and storage sheds, all the while gaining construction and welding experience. The participants gain job skills while the community is improved which makes it a win-win situation.
Sustainable Employment with “Sustainable Seed Company”

Butte County Youth Advisor met Sadie at a workshop presentation at Ridgeview High School in 2015. Sadie was attempting to finish enough credits to graduate high school. Needing “elective credits”, her school principal agreed Sadie could earn school credit for completing the Alliance for Workforce Development’s (AFWD) youth employment workshops. Sadie was also interested in receiving assistance with attending college and possibly part-time work. Shortly after being enrolled in the program, Sadie completed the workshops and obtained her high school diploma from Ridgeview. She was excited she received the cash incentive award from AFWD for obtaining her diploma.

Sadie then applied for FAFSA and registered for Butte College with the assistance of her Youth Advisor. She started Butte College and asked for assistance in finding a part-time job. By December, Sadie decided it wasn’t the right time for college and pursued employment. Her Youth Advisor assisted her with reworking her resume and Sadie did an intensive job search. Then Sadie decided to job search on her own and left the program. Her Youth Advisor continued contact with her through follow-up, providing her with job leads. Although communication faltered, it was a tragedy that brought her back into the program. Unfortunately, in February, 2016, one of Sadie’s friends passed away and the Youth Advisor was able to reach out to her and communication resumed. Later, Sadie requested help to obtain interview clothing and her Youth Advisor assisted her with obtaining a clothing voucher from the local Salvation Army store. While there, Sadie picked up a job application. In April, Sadie was hired by Salvation Army. She really liked the job and the skills she was learning. By late summer, 2016, Sadie had saved enough money to move into an apartment. Sadie lost her job at Salvation Army but was able to quickly get hired at Dollar Tree. In October, Sadie’s hours had been drastically reduced at Dollar Tree. She received assistance through her Youth Advisor in putting together a plan for her to search for a job that would provide full-time employment. In December, an Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. Business Service Representative shared information about a job opening that her Youth Advisor thought would be a good fit for Sadie. The job would allow her to attend college and work with her Youth Advisor on work retention skills. Sadie submitted her resume to Sustainable Seed Company in Chico, completed several interviews and was selected for an internship which went well. The internship went so well that it was decided Sadie would benefit from an on-the-job training to expand her skills and learn the process of shipping and receiving that was involved in the company’s online Amazon sales. Sadie is doing well at her job and is making plans to return to Butte College part-time. She is focused and driven to fulfill her plan.
Butte County
Total Visitors
14,214

Butte County Business Services
Businesses Served 135
Services Provided 322

AFWD Total Clients Enrolled 491

Unemployment Rate
(As of: August 2017)
Butte 6.3% Nevada 4.7%
Lassen 5.9% Plumas 6.7%
Modoc 6.6% Sierra 5.8%