Exciting things are happening for the Chico community! Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., a proud partner of America’s Job Center of California, has moved to a new location! Loyalty and increasing demand for services from our customers has fueled continued growth, making a move to a new facility necessary. Our new Chico office opened to the public July 02, 2018.

We continue to offer the same friendly, customer oriented services at our new address at 500 Cohasset Road, Suite 30, in addition to providing onsite assistance at the Chico Employment Center with Butte County Department of Employment & Social Services. AFWD’s goal of providing pathways to success to job seekers with access to employment and training opportunities as well as connecting employers with a qualified workforce continue throughout Butte County.

The new Chico location will carry on its partnership services with agencies such as Butte County Department of Employment & Social Services, the Employment Development Department, Veterans Services, Behavioral Health, Probation and Community Services, as well as the local Career and Technical Education programs, amongst others, in order to provide core services focused on meeting the needs of job seekers and employers throughout Butte County.

Clients and employers can continue to take advantage of the following services, which are available free to everyone!

- Job Leads and Referrals
- Resumes and Interviews
- Workshops
- Computer Lab
- Career Planning
- Job Fairs and Hiring Events
- Recruiting
- Interviewing
- Training and Retention
- Incentive Programs
- Downsizing and Layoffs
- Labor Law Interpretations

In an average year we:

- Work with over 1,500 businesses
- Provide over $1 Million in wage subsidies through our OJT programs
- Provide layoff assistance to about 1,000 individuals
- Help fill about 2,500 positions
On July 11, 2018, AFWD staff joined several community and business partners in celebrating the grand opening of the newly expanded Veteran’s Resource Center at 110 Amber Grove Drive in Chico.

The Chico VRC, which originally opened in a smaller facility in 2013, provides an aggregate of services for local veterans and their families. AFWD collaborates with EDD Veteran’s Services, housed locally in the VRC, in providing employment and training opportunities to vets.

Veterans in search of jobs, or vocational training, are able to utilize both the services provided by the VRC and AFWD. Communication between both agencies’ staff helps make sure that these services complement each other and do not duplicate efforts. The VRC’s “Winning the Employment Game” (WEG) program focuses on personalized career exploration and job-search strategies. A motivated veteran enrolled in this program can concurrently receive additional resume writing skills, job leads, and even a WIOA On-The-Job-Training placement with AFWD.

The Veteran’s Resource Center in Chico provides a host of services to local veterans in need: homelessness prevention, transitional housing, behavioral health treatment, nutrition services, legal services, transportation services and more.

The Grand Opening event was attended by a wide selection of community leaders: the Chico Chamber of Commerce, The Jesus Center, Alliance for Workforce Development, KNVN Action News, multiple local businesses, Chico mayor Sean Morgan, Assemblyman Jim Gallagher, and the office of Congressman Doug LaMalfa. Highlights included a meet-and-greet mixer, breakfast hors d’oeuvres, a raffle, and a ribbon cutting ceremony.
The July heat was no match for the “cool factor” emanating from ThirdLove’s new Customer Care Center in Chico on July 18, 2018.

140 local ThirdLove employees, co-owners Dave Spector and Heidi Zak, Chico mayor Sean Morgan, Congressman Lamalfa’s office, the Chico Chamber of Commerce, Alliance for Workforce Development, and hundreds of community members attended the event at 275 Airpark Blvd, in the Chico Airport Complex. Styled as a summer block party, the event featured food trucks, free popsicles and cold soft drinks, adult beverages from British Bulldog Brewery, a live band, and a tour of the facility.

ThirdLove originally came to Chico in 2017, setting up shop in a smaller space in downtown Chico. The move to the 17,000 square foot space in the Airport Complex is part of the company’s larger plans for growth. Currently, ThirdLove employees 140 in Chico, and plans to double that number by 2019. The company is headquartered in San Francisco, and has locations in Argentina and Asia. When Spector and Zak first considered another California location for a call center, the choice was between Fresno, Bakersfield and Chico. The welcoming attitude of Chico officials, and the quality of applicants that applied here, lead them to their final decision.

AFWD has supported 20 employees with the company through On-the-Job training (OJT) placements, and continues to assist the company’s growth. ThirdLove uses many of AFWD’s One Stop services, from online recruitments, hiring events, candidate screening, promotion of open positions on social media, and other training and recruiting functions. AFWD OJT participants learn industry leading sales, customer service, logistics, and communication skills, while helping drive the engine that powers ThirdLove’s growth: customer service that exceeds all expectations.

AFWD is proud to assist employers looking to tap the wealth of talent Butte County has to offer. Companies like ThirdLove stand as a testimonial to how much Butte County and rural Northern California as a whole, have to offer the e-commerce economy.
On July 12th, for the 4th year in a row, Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. partnered with multiple state and local agencies in sponsoring the Second Chance Job Fair that connected job seekers with criminal records to employers.

The Second Chance Job Fair was designed to bring participants who are under supervision and want to better themselves by returning to work the opportunity to connect with employers. For several months leading up to the job fair, Business Service Representative Catherine Madsack met with employers to discuss the benefits and challenges of hiring individuals with background issues. Employers learned that many of these job seekers qualified for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit as well as Federal Bonding that would help protect their business if they hired these candidates.

Over 150 participants attended the job fair and 16 employers participated by hosting a table and meeting with candidates. Five candidates were offered jobs that day and more continue to be hired as employers staffing needs increase.

Participating agencies included the Butte County Sheriff’s Office, Butte County Probation, Butte County Office of Education, Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services, and the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation hosted a Second Chance Job Fair specifically for individuals re-entering the workforce after incarceration.
More than 130 workforce development staff from all areas of the state attended the Business Engagement Training put on by California Workforce Association (CWA) Thursday July 26th. AFWD Business Service Program Manager Amy Velazquez, and Business Service Reps Gary Besser and Wendy Sweeney were fortunate to be able to attend the all-day training which was held at the Holiday Inn Express in downtown Sacramento. The goals of the day were;

- To create community leadership through business engagement
- To build towards true collaboration
- To identify gaps and partnerships that need to be created to achieve the larger goals of the system
- To break away from task-oriented work and towards true engagement
- To highlight a best practice that truly puts employers at the center of industry engagement

In order to do our best work, we must be viable partners. We must be necessary to the fabric of the economy in our local areas, regions, and the state.

One of group activities allowed for a 45-minute discussion between regional representatives at each table. This enabled us to share successful business strategies and their implementation allowing for some good ideas that could work in other regions. This was a time to communicate, understand and focus on results.

Presenters Nick Loret de Mola and Josh Davies kept the training engaging and informative.

The outcome of the event; to ensure that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employer’s economic development entities, and service providers.
Social Media, good food, and a desire to network and rebuild connections seemed to be the right recipe for the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce’s first “Lunch Mob” on August 30th.

The first ever “Lunch Mob” invite read:

Build the relationships key to your business success at lunch mob, where you'll eat lunch and connect with other local businesses.

Everyone eats lunch, so you may as well connect with others in the meanwhile. This casual event fits perfectly in many schedules since it's only an hour, no reservation required, and tons of fun while supporting fellow Chamber members.

We'll meet at Tabletop Restaurant (formerly The HofBrau), where new owners Rich & Patricia recently opened up with a great menu. Read the Yelp Reviews, we promise the food is delicious, homemade, and plentiful.

The above post was seen on social media repeatedly for a month prior to this well attended lunch time event and it served its purpose well. Over 40 chamber members converged at the new restaurant in town and enthusiasm was the catch phrase of the lunch hour. Tabletop Restaurant owners were only slightly startled by the unexpected turn out and took it like champs and provided a great timely meal and venue for the mob.

The new CEO of the Oroville Chamber of Commerce, Eric Smith introduced himself and spoke about his enthusiasm to bring great customer service and efforts to build up the chamber again.

AFWD Business Service Reps Mary McConville and Wendy Sweeney attended the Lunch Mob and made some very good new and old connections.
Alliance For Workforce Development participated in a recent job fair sponsored by California State University, Chico.

Numerous local employers attended the event searching for potential employees to support their available opportunities. They met with job seekers from the community as well as university students searching for employment.

In attendance to provide information regarding beneficial services were AFWD representatives from the Business Service Department as well as a Career Center Advisor. Together the team spoke with job seekers who stopped by our table to determine possibilities as well as exploring the various businesses present.

This was an opportunity to tell people about employment services and the resources available to the community. We discussed On the Job Trainings, our close relationships with employers as well as individual services for job seekers.

Paradise Ridge Chamber of Commerce—Business Bites

In an effort to culminate business relationships and support our local chambers, Business Service Representatives frequently attend community and local Chamber of Commerce events in our area. In August the Paradise Ridge Chamber of Commerce hosted the first of what we hope will continue “Tasty Lunch Networking” events. This first event was called “Business Bites” and was held at Casa de Paradiso.

Several business owners, primarily retailers and hospitality attended this first event.

This first Taste, although not a large group, was very successful. It allowed for a very good exchange of information from business to business. A lot of good question and answer opportunities in a relaxed environment assisted the networking.

This particular lunch resulted in the employment of a STEP (Subsidized Training Employment Program) client with the Gold Nugget Museum in Paradise. It’s very cool to assist this not for profit, historically important establishment in Paradise with a motivated client and one whose wages will be reimbursed for a period of time. This process works for everyone!
When Craig Communications, a Bay Area company, contacted AFWD to see about assistance with recruitment for a project awarded to Eleven Engineering by PG&E, we jumped at the opportunity to offer competitive wages to locals working with the Bay Area based employers. The project kick off date was August 6, 2018 and is expected to last 6 months.

The local project consisted of construction on the Oroville downtown parking lot. The lot used to be the site of a manufactured gas plant that operated from 1867 to 1926. PG&E/Eleven Engineering was tasked with the removal of 10,000 tons of soil – amounting to approximately 430 truckloads – under the oversight of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. The parking lot will be returned to its original purpose upon completion of the project.

Eleven Engineering, needing to hire one or two local residents for Flagger positions during this project, looked to Alliance for Workforce Development at the Oroville One Stop for assistance. We met with the Craig Communications representatives to determine their specific needs, followed by scouring our applicant pool for qualified job seekers and were able to present 6 resumes for interviews with Craig/Eleven Engineering. In the final moments, one individual was selected.

The work experience gained for the individual selected is valuable. Before starting the new position, an 8 hour DOT Flagger training is provided. The hourly wage offered is $18.00 for this full-time, temporary position. And there may be other opportunities available down the road.

Six months of solid training and work experience under the supervision of 2 reputable, professional companies with the possibility of long term opportunities at a strong wage for our area is a good start.
RAPID RESPONSE TO THE RESCUE

Alliance For Workforce Development Business Service Department coordinated Rapid Response workshops late August and early September to accommodate approximately 28 employees who are affected by the closure of a longstanding, well known and loved, major hardware store in Chico, Orchard Supply Hardware.

OSH was originally founded in San Jose as a farmer’s co-op in 1931, eventually becoming for-profit in the 1950’s. Lowe’s acquired the company in 2013, after it filed for bankruptcy.

It is unfortunate, but all too often the community experiences the necessary changes and adjustments local business have to make due to finances and the economy. Fortunately, AFWD provides appropriate services to assist Dislocated Workers in the transition. Some employees have been with the company over 15 years and were in total shock when they initially heard the news. During our workshops, it was obvious many were still dealing with the inevitable situation. However, the employees were grateful to hear the resources available to them during this alteration and were very engaged in the process.

The Rapid Response Team consists of a Business Service Representative, Career Center Advisor and an EDD Representative. All of whom witnessed firsthand the hardships of a business closure and understand the impact a job loss can have on people. Our workshops typically begin with the Business Service Representative providing empathy and an introduction of the ‘Team’, followed by the EDD Representative with instructions regarding Unemployment Benefits, and closing with beneficial support available at the AFWD Employment Centers regarding re-employment services. It is a challenging time however concluded on a positive note with individuals showing appreciation for the support available.
The Partnership between Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. and Butte County Probation has been growing strong with every new year. AFWD Career Center Advisors started providing Job Readiness information to the defendants attending the workshop three times a month every other month; with full time job success for some of the participants.

California Workforce Association (CWA) Los Angeles Conference in May 2017 provided many different and interesting workshops. The one workshop that sparked an interest was “New Beginnings”: “Pathways to Employment for the Justice Involved Individuals” presented by KRA Corporation San Diego Metro Region Career Center. The main objective is to reduce recidivism by focusing on “Employment” without duplicating services. During the five day workshop series which is designed to address soft skills in work related settings i.e. how to complete an application, prepare a resume, searching for a job, what to say at an interview and how to navigate the labor market with a criminal background.

AFWD, Inc. adopted San Diego’s five day workshop adding our own twist by incorporating “Adaptability & Resilience” modules from 21st Century Skills. Butte County Probation welcomed the change to the Job Skills Workshop which started November 2017.

In the four workshops since November 2017 employment opportunities presented themselves for 20 participants. Keri Flux (pictured to the bottom right) attended the April Workshop. Keri struggled with finding work because of her type of felony. Keri never gave up, she used the information provided in the Job Readiness Workshop and secured full time employment.

As a single parent, Keri relied on public services to assist with meeting her basic housing needs. Keri often used the services provided from Butte County- 211. Keri was familiar with Butte County- 211 and connected with them at the 2nd Chance Job Fair July 2018. Keri was provided an interview on the spot and hired as the 211-Liaison. Keri now provides information through community outreach. She recently attended the Probation And Community (PAC) meeting held the last Tuesday of each month for Probationers. Keri presented her story including her new employment opportunity, telling those in her same situation not to give up, there is hope for their own future.
Adapting to a New Career

Gabriel Pacheco had been occupied as a Fabricator for the last 11 years. In those 11 years he experienced one business closure and two lay-offs. When he first enrolled into the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, he was very pessimistic about the local labor market utilizing his current skills. He was a single father and his roots were in Butte County and he strongly stated relocating wasn’t an option for him. His initial assessment determined Gabriel was a skilled worker and his skills could transfer to a new occupation. Again, Gabriel was pessimistic about obtaining a new job that would provide self-sustainability.

Gabriel had to be shown how skilled he was and how those skills could transfer to a new occupation. His first step in his job search journey was to create a new resume that highlighted his certifications and training. After meeting several times to edit his resume an opportunity had presented itself via a full-time Appliance Installer-Apprentice Appliance Technician position at Hudson’s Appliance Center. Gabriel had shown his skill set and ability to earn certification through training made him a viable candidate for the position. He was unsure about applying for the position, but he agreed to apply.

Gabriel was hired by Hudson’s Appliance Center and he was enrolled in the On the Job Training (OJT) program. His skill set had shown him he had the ability to adapt to a new career path. Gabriel has successfully completed the OJT and was quickly given a raise. Gabriel stated he is happy with this new career and has shown the ability to learn a new skill set in the Appliance Sales sector.
Michelle came to Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD), in July 2017 after attending a Rapid Response when her employer Christopher Banks closed the doors on its Chico location, ending her Store Manager position of 3+ years. Michelle also had retail management experience from Check-Into-Cash and Vanella Oil. Prior to that, she had worked as a Wedding Consultant for David’s Bridal. Michelle was enrolled into our program as a Dislocated Worker and was assisted with filling out her unemployment paperwork. She also indicated an interest in occupational training so that she could move away from the uncertainty of retail sales in a downturned economy. With our assistance, her Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim was successfully “flagged for training.” Healthcare is one of our priority sectors and has been considered a top industry by ONET online for several years. Michelle chose the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Medical Assistant (MA) program where she could learn both the front and back office making her much more desirable to a new employer than other programs that only focus on one aspect of the trade. Michelle’s past work history as a Store Manager gave her transferrable skills and real world experience that would help her successfully complete her MA training. In order to be accepted into the program, Michelle successfully completed a written application explaining her past work history and why she feels she would be a good fit for the program. She also successfully participated in an in-person interview. Once accepted, a training plan was developed that included resume development and job seeking assistance after successful completion of the program. When Michelle began her training, she was assisted with changing her status with Employment Development Department (EDD) from “job seeker” to “enrolled in training, allowing her to be considered for California Training Benefits (CTB). A Training Enrollment Verification (TEV) was completed on her behalf stating she was enrolled in a State approved training on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and was being overseen by AFWD. Once her training was successfully completed, she was scheduled to take her state exam to give her an advantage with certain employers. The state exam is not required by all employers in CA for Medical Assistants, but is required by a few select ones. The employer she was currently doing her required internship with offered her a job contingent on her successful passage of the state exam. Ampla Health is one of the employers that require certification as a condition of employment. When Michelle’s classroom training was completed, her UI status changed again back to job seeker and her CTB benefits ended. She came to AFWD to request assistance with the cost of the state exam. She was assessed and found to be in need. AFWD assisted her with the cost of the exam and Michelle went on to successfully pass. She has been working at Ampla Health since March of 2018 and states that she loves her job. She is grateful for the assistance that both EDD and AFWD gave to her that allowed her to successfully make a career change to a growing nationwide industry.
Desmond was an attendee for the Daily Reporting Center (DRC) Work Readiness Workshop in July. After the last workshop and speaking to the Career Center Advisor (CCA), Desmond came in to the America’s Job Center/One Stop to receive assistance with his resume. Desmond’s past offenses made it where he had not worked in over a year, as well as having gaps in his employment history. But, he did have many transferable skills. He met with the CCA who introduced him to the Business Service Rep (BSR), who was very impressed with his previous skills, honesty and willingness to put himself out there in the world to find employment.

As it turned out the BSR was working with a local Electric Company, and the employer was needing employees. Ronnie, the owner, was open to the possibility of an On the Job Training program. Desmond was sent to this employer for an interview, and the employer was willing to give him a chance and hire him through an OJT.

Desmond is now working full time, and at a self-sufficient wage. He has been able to purchase a vehicle and is working on moving out of his transitional housing and finding his own place. He took the first steps in helping himself get on his feet by putting into practice the Job Seeker information, as well as coming into the AJCC for further one on one assistance.

From Rags to Riches
Youth Success Updates

Rauny Green is happily employed at Klean Kanteen through the AFWD, Inc. youth internship program. Rauny is being trained as a Digital Print Technician. Rauny rides his bike to work every day, after receiving assistance from A.F.W.D. to replace his worn out bicycle tubes. His first pay day he requested his CCA assist him with opening his very first checking account. While at the bank, he decided to open a savings account as well to begin saving for an apartment. Rauny is very appreciative of the support and assistance he has received from all of the staff at AFWD.

Katlin Coleman recently forwarded a photo to her Career Center Advisor at AFWD, Inc. to update her on her new training. Katlin, as you may remember, started the fire academy at Butte College but was unable to finish, so she returned home to continue working as a Volunteer Fire Fighter, going out on some very large fires during fire season. With her department in San Joaquin County, she received other training opportunities and was able to earn needed certifications. Her most recent assignments: helping on the Yosemite fire, traveling to Redding, CA, to assist with animal evacuations for the Carr fire, and then returning back to the Yosemite fire where she is training to learn how to make fire breaks using a large dozer.
This summer Alliance for Workforce Development Inc., (AFWD) was awarded with a Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS) grant. The grant is geared toward youth enrolled in school and eligible for or receiving special education services. LaShawn had an active Individual Education Plan for a learning disability and was enrolled in Come Back Butte Charter School, which made him eligible for the STEPS grant. LaShawn expressed that he wanted to work with “his hands outdoors” and had “always wanted to work for the State Parks”. LaShawn had never had a job before. He attended our Summer Youth Employment Bootcamp that was held in June. He was able to obtain pre-employment training; focusing on the soft skills necessary for employment. While attending boot camp, we were able to determine that in order for LaShawn to be successful at his placement for work, he would need a job coach. LaShawn is also a Far Northern Regional Center participant. Far Northern provides a variety of services and supports persons with developmental disabilities to live productive lives. We reached out to his case worker there. AFWD, Far Northern, and LaShawn all met and came up with a game plan. AFWD provided pre-employment skills and work placement. Far Northern provided transportation and a job coach. LaShawn is currently working in an internship at State Parks as a Park Maintenance worker and is applying all he has learned through the STEPS program.

Way to go LaShawn!
Oscar was enrolled in our Youth Program in 2017. At the time, he was struggling with finding full-time employment to provide for his family. He and his Youth Career Advisor created a resume and he was able to obtain employment in March of 2017 with a local company. Oscar was on probation during this time. Oscar made some poor decisions and was sentenced for a probation violation. He spent five months in jail. Once released, he contacted his Youth Career Advisor and was able to be re-enrolled in the Youth Program. Oscar had a great work ethic and was able to obtain a Youth On-the-Job training with a local employer willing to give him the opportunity to learn a trade. While completing his monthly performance evaluations, the employer had nothing but good things to say about Oscar. This goes to show all Oscar needed was second opportunity. Oscar has since completed his probation and continues to be employed in construction. He can now focus on his family and continue to be a productive member of the community.

From Employer:
“We have been highly impressed with the ability that Oscar has been able to pick up on the drywall process. He’s been attentive and learned quickly making our job easier to take him on construction sites. Thank you for working with Oscar!”
Butte County
Total Visitors
8,156

Butte County
Business Services
Businesses Served 312
Services Provided 1,405

AFWD
Total Clients
Enrolled 620

Unemployment Rate
(As of: August 2018)
Butte 4.7%  Nevada 3.4%
Lassen 4.4%  Plumas 5.3%
Modoc 5.9%  Sierra 5.1%