Second Chance Job Fair

In November, for the second year in a row, Alliance for Workforce Development 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 Representatives from AFWD 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.

During that time, Career Center Advisors from AFWD also assisted those planning to attend the job fair with job-readiness training such as interviewing skills, creating resumes, and learning how to talk about their criminal record.

Over 150 participants attended the job fair and 27 employers participated by hosting a table and meeting with candidates. Six candidates were offered jobs that day and more continue to be hired as employers staffing needs increase. The event was so successful that employers and sponsoring agencies agreed that another job fair should be held in the Spring time to make it a bi-annual event.

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.
Manufacturing Expo

In November, AFWD staff participated in the CSU Chico Manufacturing Expo for the third year in a row. Manufacturers from all over the Northstate set-up interactive exhibits and informational booths to share with attendees. Over 5,000 job seekers, K-12 students, and Chico State students attended the event.

AFWD staff spent the day meeting with exhibit employers and job seekers sharing information about workforce development services available in Butte County, particularly within the manufacturing industry. Assembly Member James Gallagher’s office also stopped by to present AFWD with a Certificate of Appreciation for participating in the event.
Alliance for Workforce Development went to the North State Agriculture Expo to network with businesses in the agriculture industry in October. The event brought businesses together from all around the North State to focus on promoting family businesses, discuss common concerns, share solutions, learn best practices, educate and prepare for the future.

A Business Services Representative was able to attend and network, as well as learn about the sector for our community and their workforce needs. Although many positions are seasonal, employers were delighted to hear about the recruitment and training opportunities Alliance for Workforce Development offers. Many exchanged contact information for assistance with filling positions.

Currently Alliance for Workforce Development is working with a special grant targeted for businesses in the Agriculture industry. This event was great timing as it allowed for a Business Services Representative to spread this information to these businesses as well as learn the types of challenges they face. The relationships that were developed will assist in getting our services out to this crucially important industry for California’s economy.
Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. received a request from Northwest Lineman College to assist with a Cover Letter and Resume Workshop for their graduating students. AFWD staff Petra Quiroz – Business Service Representative and Veronica Moreno – Service Coordinator prepared and conducted a workshop for each class at the Lineman College, for a total of 176 students! They reviewed the importance of both a Cover Letter and Resume and how to write each one. The students were given tips and resources to use before presenting their resumes for their final grading and mock interview.

Career Center Advisors Cathie Tirri, Sandra Wangberg, Stephanie Larrish and Brian Moebs, Business Service Representative Catherine Madsack along with Petra Quiroz and Veronica attended the mock interviews to critique and review the final Resumes and Cover Letters. Each staff member was given a rubric to grade both the cover letter and resume for basic formatting and content. In addition, time was set up with each student to do a one on one review of their documents. This proved to be very valuable for the students as most of them had not written nor presented a cover letter or resume in an interview before.

The students were able to ask questions regarding formatting, content, hiring processes and interview feedback. Feedback and assistance was provided by the AFWD staff to the students with getting them ready for the workforce. It was an all-around great experience for everyone who participated, and we received great feedback from the NLC staff.
WOTC—EDD Informational Seminar

Staff members from all six AFWD counties attended the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) seminar in Chico on September 13, 2016. The information that was provided will assist in furthering AFWD’s goal to increase employment and assist local businesses. The WOTC for employers varies from $2400.00 to $9600.00 per qualifying employee, depending on which Eligibility Group the employee falls in.

The WOTC has two purposes:

- To promote the hiring of individuals who qualify as a member of a target group.
- To provide a federal tax credit to employers who hire these individuals.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

- Veterans
- TANF Recipients
- SNAP (Cal Fresh) Recipients
- Designated Community Residents
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referral
- Ex-Felons
- Supplemental Security Income Recipients
- Summer Youth Employees

It was announced that a new eligibility group had been added to the program on December 18, 2015, which is “Qualified Long-Term Unemployment”.

The WOTC Program has been re-authorized to continue through December 31, 2019 and new online processing has been introduced via eWOTC at [https://www.dolea.gov/wotc](https://www.dolea.gov/wotc). All employers with an emphasis on smaller employers with 24 employees or less, without agent/consultant representation, are also encouraged to submit new applications online. In addition, they still have the option to mail in the applications.

**THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE WOTC:**

- Reduces an employer’s cost of doing business
- Requires little paperwork
- Applying for WOTC is simple
- WOTC can reduce an employer’s federal income tax liability by as much as $9,600 per eligible employee hired
- No limit on the number of new employees that can qualify for the tax credit, if the employees are eligible
- 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.

The Employment Development Department is the WOTC certifying agency for California employers.
Downtown Chico Business Association

Annual Awards Reception

AFWD Business Service’s attended the reception on Thursday, November 10, 2016 held at the Chico Event Center. In addition to the state of the downtown address presented by CEO, Melanie Basset, other guest speakers included Chief Michael O’Brien of the Chico Police Dept. & Assistant City Manager Chris Constantin.

Melanie spoke of the many positive events and movement towards making downtown Chico the true gem of our community. Many of these items included a Team Chico approach of which AFWD is extremely involved with as a partner. Attracting new business, safety of the streets and a common goal of economic growth were top of the list.

Police Chief Michael O’Brien kept the topic lighthearted about antics from his day on bike patrol in Downtown Chico but kept a serious tone as he spoke of the ever changing environment of downtown. Updates on the hiring of new officers was the upswing of his presentation.

Downtown Chico Businesses Association then presented outgoing board members gifts of appreciation for their dedication and efforts. Impressive information in regards to the DCBA’s hard work this year as noted below.

**DowntownChico.com** - Launched in November of 2015, this new custom built website has (According to Google Analytics) doubled the average site traffic, since it launch.

“Everyone Loves Downtown Chico” – This video is featured on the homepage of the new website and had gained immense popularity with over 480,000 views, 4,200 likes and 8,100 shares as of November 2016!

**Downtown Chico Directory** – This is a comprehensive list of unique restaurants, shops and services available in the Downtown Chico area. Many are highlighted as event holders and attractions to visitors and locals alike.
**Labor Law: Commissioner Update**

In September, Alliance for Workforce Development was able to send the Business Service Team to the Labor Commissioner Update in Redding. Eric Rood, Assistant State Labor Commissioner presented to the Northstate Society for Human Resource Management about the updates in 2016.

Because wage and hour compliance regulations impact businesses small and large, this presentation was especially important to the Business Service Representatives, and allows them to better serve Butte County businesses. Eric shared best practices and common pitfalls to avoid, regarding the new Overtime Regulations, Meal and Rest Periods, Exemptions and California Paid Sick Leave.

After Eric’s presentation he answered “hypothetical” scenarios for the group. This gave all the attendees the chance to address questions and concerns within their own company as well. Overall, there was some great dialogue and learnings amongst the Business Service Representatives regarding Labor Law 2016.

**Chico Air Terminal “Take Off”**

On Friday October 27th, AFWD Business Service Representatives attended the unveiling of the proposed new Chico Airport terminal renovation and expansion plan. This event brought in CSU, Chico President Gayle Hutchinson, Congressman Doug LaMalfa, City Manager Mark Orme and other civic leaders in support of this community collaboration, highlighting the power and effectiveness of public-private-partnerships. Also in attendance were community members, as well as Team Chico members to show partnership support.

Chico State University and the Department of Construction Management, alongside JetChico, and in partnership with the architectural firm of Nichols, Melburg, and Rossetto, and Slater & Son General Contractor opened with the presentation of the plans that seeks to provide a superior level of service to our community, while attracting and securing a prospective air carrier. Chico State students were ready and proud to show their expertise and details of the expansion plan from construction to travel scheduling software programs. To the student’s surprise, they were all awarded with plaques from Congressman Doug LaMalfa as well as City Manager Mark Orme for their contribution to the efforts that can launch Chico Airport on the path to success. AFWD will continue to show support to community endeavors by representing Team Chico and the dedicated efforts towards moving Chico forward.
Healthcare Sector Success!

Workforce Development has been focusing on industry sectors thus shifting our Butte Business Service Reps towards developing relationships with those companies not only in hiring mode but with positions that serve a purpose for use of our funding. With plenty on the job seeker side, it would seem to be an easy match making task. However, that is not always the case. An amazing success warms the heart and shows just how making connections and dedication can move mountains.

Angelique was in a tough place when we first were introduced. She showed a passion for helping people, and we were determined to find just the right work environment. Being a single parent with no transportation and housing assistance about to come to an end, time was of the essence in assisting her find the job that would fit her needs. With previous work experience as a CNA; Certified Nursing Assistant, a local long term care facility took the opportunity to see what Angelique could bring the residents as an Activity Assistant. This OJT (On the Job Training) seemed like a natural fit and was also eligible to our National Emergency Grant funding. Angelique re-secured housing just in time, figured out the bus system as well as childcare and was determined to make everything work to her benefit.

At her two week monitoring, Angelique’s supervisor had nothing but praise about what a wonderful addition she has been in such a short time. Over the few months, her comfort level with residents, co-workers and families took even upper management by surprise. Not only did she fit the role with quite a flare, she was also identifying opportunities where improvement could be beneficial and finding solutions to resolve the issues. Towards the end of the six month training contract Angelique had not only risen to the top at work, but she had also been able to save for a car. To her surprise, Angelique’s supervisor had been watching for just the right person to take her place so that she could go back to school. Needless to say, Angelique was top of the list and gladly accepted the role of Life Enhancement Coordinator as soon as her OJT contract was complete. Not only is this a big role, but the wages are substantially higher thus making a huge difference in her everyday life. AFWD is proud of the hard work and determination Angelique has demonstrated and wishes her the best of luck in her new role.
In May, Shawna was using Alliance for Workforce’s Resource Center. She came in looking for assistance job searching. Shawna had worked at various Seasonal and Temporary jobs but was lacking some basic experience working with customers, co-workers and cash handling. Shawna is currently going to Butte College and hopes to graduate in the Spring with her AA in Social Services. With that in mind, Business Service Representative, Petra Quiroz reached out to Heel and Sole to participate in AFWD’s Youth Program in which Shawna was enrolled in.

Heel and Sole is a small shoe store business located in Chico, CA. They were very happy to participate in the Youth Program and accepted several youth resumes including Shawna’s. Shawna was chosen to interview and shortly after was offered the position of Sales Associate. Both the worksite and Shawna knew that the focus was to increase her customer service skills and interactions with both her co-workers and customers. At each review Shawna was given constructive criticism and working on her personal development.

Shawna’s Work Experience contract was successfully completed with outstanding remarks. She worked on her development each month and at contract’s end, Heel and Sole offered her a permanent position.

Dolores Padilla inquired about enrollment in the youth program in February, 2016. She was a high school dropout, married, with two young children and living with her in-laws. When she met with her Career Center Advisor she was upfront about how she had started the process of enrollment into the youth program once before but didn’t follow through. She said “I’m ready to commit and get serious about finishing school.” After enrollment, Delores quickly completed the GED practice tests with results reflecting she would need the assistance of a tutor to improve her test scores. Her Career Center Advisor completed a tutor contract and Dolores met with her tutor on a regular basis. After two months of tutoring, Dolores passed and obtained her GED Certificate. After completing her GED, Dolores wasn’t sure what she wanted to do. Her long term goal was to be a Registered Travel Nurse and work in Africa. During assessment however, Delores decided that rather than becoming a Certified Nurse’s Assistant she wanted to focus on becoming a Physical Therapy Aid with a long term goal of becoming a Physical Therapy Assistant. Her Career Center Advisor arranged an interview with a local Physical Therapist. Prior to her interview, Dolores, through AFWD and her Career Center Advisor, was able to obtain interview clothes. She then completed a mock interview with a Business Service Representative. Dolores went to the job interview with the Physical Therapist and was offered the job. Today she is working as a Physical Therapy Aid for Oroville Hospital. She still meets with her Career Center Advisor through follow-up as she is making plans to attend college to become a California licensed Physical Therapy Assistant.
Kyle Mills has been enrolled in AFWD’s Youth Program since May of this year. From the start, Kyle has been very interested in working outdoors and working hands-on. He was placed on a crew with the City of Chico, and assisted with park improvement under the Temporary Job Creation, Drought Project. He quickly became an integral part of the crew, and eventually was the crew lead. When that contract ended, he was placed at a business in the manufacturing industry. Though he was looking forward to the opportunity to learn something new, the job wasn’t the right fit for him.

Never one to be discouraged, Kyle moved forward and was placed with California State Parks as a member of a Park Maintenance Crew. From the beginning, he enjoyed all aspects of his job. He was able to fit right in with the crew and picked up the job quickly. His supervisors were happy with his work ethic and enthusiasm. As the end of his contract neared, his supervisor asked for a short extension so he could work on a permanent placement for Kyle. We were able to extend his contract and the day after his contract ended he became a permanent employee with California State Parks. Kyle has expressed his appreciation for all of the opportunities he has had, and is very thankful that he is now an employee of an agency he had always been interested in working for.
**One Step At A Time!**

Edgar Sanchez came into the youth program June 2013. He was a job seeker looking for additional assistance with his job search. Shortly after his enrollment with the youth program he enrolled at Butte College and began his first semester. He was interested in Criminal Justice and took his first class. From that point forward he knew he wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement. Edgar took the necessary classes for his Associate of Arts Transfer degree and graduated from Butte College June 2015. He transferred to California State University, Chico where he is working on his bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice. The AFWD Youth program assisted Edgar in getting his security guard license to better support his plan and make him more employable in his area of study. Edgar earned his guard card December 2015 and got a job with Armed Guard Private Protection shortly after.

Edgar was asked what he learned while being in the program, college, and/or as a security guard. He said, “I’ve learned while being in school and a security guard is to take one step at a time, no matter how long the road ahead seems. You have to start from the bottom to appreciate getting to the top. You have to be patient and have faith in yourself and overcome any obstacles. Also, don’t let your past define who you are. You have to know that you’re going places in life and you have to actively pursue your passion. Academically, I’ve learned from the bottom up of the justice system, both legally and enforcement wise. The justice system is far from perfect.”

The AFWD, Inc. Youth Program is very proud of Edgar’s accomplishments! We wish him nothing but success as a future cadet through the Police Academy and as a future law enforcement officer!
The Discovery ChalleNGe Academy is located just south of Stockton, CA and is a partnership between the California National Guard and San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE). It is designed for youth between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of high school, are at-risk of dropping out, or are credit deficient. This is the first ever ChalleNGe Academy for Northern California and they are set to be just as successful, if not better, than its sister academies located in Southern California. Butte County AFWD staff invited the Academy to visit our office in Oroville and give a presentation at the November 29th Youth Employment Forum on what their Academy can offer for our local youth. It was a very informative presentation and gave us another resource to share with our clients. Participants of the “military style” academy can receive up to 60 High School credits in only 5 ½ months, along with obtaining leadership and job skills and improving their self-esteem. During the academy, young people attend academic classes, participate in occupational and work readiness skill training, as well as life skills education and team building activities. After successful graduation from the academy, the program includes a one year mentoring component wherein the student’s personally assigned mentor contacts them at least monthly to ensure that the graduate enrolls in school or obtains employment and also to stay on the right path.

Some of Butte County’s AFWD youth team, along with one interested client, went to the Academy on December 15th to receive a tour of the facilities. While the classrooms were close to being completed, the dorm building was finished and awaiting the January arrival of the first students to this academy. While this program is operated by the National Guard, joining the military afterwards is not pushed. According to the Academy, only 14% of their graduates join the military while more than 85% of graduates return to High school and earn their diplomas. That is a great success rate and they are certain that the Academy here in Northern California will be just as successful. We look forward to working with the Discovery ChalleNGe Academy in the future and sharing the opportunity to attend with our Butte County Youth!
Their Journey to Nursing Excellence

AFWD assisted approximately 91% of the Registered Nurses who recently graduated from the Butte College RN program, December 15, 2016.

Two of these students, Polly Davis and Raelene Yang met while working at a local hospital prior to their layoffs and became close friends. Bringing them together were their similar passions working in the healthcare sector providing a service that would make a positive impact on people’s lives.

Polly was employed approximately 2 years as an Office Coordinator and prior to that she was employed by various doctors managing their private practice offices providing front and back office support. Polly had over 14 years of Administrative support experience and although she enjoyed her work, she felt she could be more effective working hands on with patients and felt the time was right to resume her career pathway.

Raelene had been working towards her career pathway in the healthcare sector approximately 4 years, initially as a Care Giver, subsequently training as a Medical Assistant earning Certification and working in the field, gaining experience while applying numerous times to be accepted into the Butte College Registered Nursing program.

Both ladies were accepted into the RN program January 2014 and were referred to AFWD by EDD regarding California Training Benefits. Although it has been a struggle and challenging at times, these ladies have successfully completed all AFWD training obligations as well as all training requirements and responsibilities related to their Registered Nursing coursework.

They are extremely grateful for the financial assistance provided to them by AFWD and feel their success was a consequence of this support. They participated in NEG funded short-term-pre-vocational services to improve time management and interviewing skills to enhance employment opportunities upon completion of their training. In addition, AFWD assisted with training required items in order to be successful in completing their course.

Congratulations Polly and Raelene!
Hard Work Leads to May Trucking Company

David Garibay had been employed in the seasonal agriculture sector most of his adult life and he wanted to change that. He’s a single father and he realized he had to work more to sustain his family. The Chico native completed a referral to speak to a Career Center Advisor at the Chico America’s Job Center office. David was collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits at the time of his visit and was receiving other social services. David stated he wanted to work full-time all year long in order to support his family. When he was job searching he realized there were opportunities with a Class “A” driver license. He didn’t possess a Class “A” license and he inquired about training assistance to obtain the license.

David was very persistent about his training and he came to his first appointment prepared. He had done his research utilizing the computer lab and printed training brochures at local Truck Driving schools in the surrounding areas. He had narrowed his search from six sites to three and he decided he would like to attend American Truck School in Redding. David had scheduled an appointment with the owner and visited the training site. His desire to succeed was very evident in his enthusiasm and research.

David attended his weekly appointments and completed career assessments. A training plan was developed for David and AFWD Inc. provided funding to pay his tuition. American Truck School provided housing to David which was very helpful for him. David was approved for California Training Benefits and continued to receive his Social Services benefits. David completed his training and passed his Class “A” exam. His trainer called and shared how pleased they were with David’s dedication to his training. His trainer stated David was a model student and was going to be very successful. David soon passed his Hazmat exam and recently passed his TSA Hazmat Clearance. David obtained a Long Haul Truck Driver position with May Trucking Company in Oregon. David said he’s never received any type of support and assistance until discovering AFWD Inc. David will now be able to support his family with year round employment and health insurance!
From Maintenance Man to Firefighter

John had been employed at Foothill Mobile Community as a maintenance man until December of 2013. He then went without employment until he was referred to and chosen by Terra Fuego for a Fuels Crew position in the TJC program. John’s duties entailed the clearing of green waste and debris, replanting and irrigation of drought tolerant plants and the removal of ladder fuels to reduce the possibility of wildfire. While working at Terra Fuego, he approached the supervisor of the About Trees division asking for additional work hours. He was impressed enough with John that he offered him a full time job once his TJC contract was completed. John then expressed interest in the FireStorm division and was hired as a seasonal firefighter. John has continued to work with both FireStorm and About Trees and is doing very well. John has stated that being chosen to work in the TJC program has completely changed his life and is very grateful that he has been given the opportunity to accomplish what he has in the past year.
AFWD Provides a “Path” for Client Katherine Green

Katherine (Kate) had been working as an independent contractor Consultant since January 2016, and prior to that, Kate worked in the restaurant industry at Red Lobster, Italian Cottage and The Old Spaghetti Factory. When Kate came to us in July 2016, she had been presented with an opportunity to work full time for SafePath Products through our OJT program and earn a wage closer to self-sufficiency. She interviewed with SafePath and they felt her personality fit in well with the company culture, but she had no experience with “cold-call” telephone sales, nor any knowledge of the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the products required to make businesses and homes ADA compliant.

SafePath™ Products have been in business since 1994, and were the first company to patent and produce recycled transition products for the architectural door hardware industry. Over the past 18 years, SafePath™ has developed hundreds of transition products, becoming one of the largest suppliers of transition products in the industry today. All products are made from either 100% recycled rubber or 100% recycled composite materials of the highest quality, and are 100% made in the USA and meet or exceed ADA compliance requirements.

After Kate’s WIOA eligibility was completed, she was enrolled into our Adult program. Kate was provided an orientation of WIOA services, participated in an objective assessments consisting of an interest profiler, transferrable skills analysis and a job specific skills (JSS) preliminary evaluation. Kate began her OJT and has been hard at work learning all she can. The employer is completely satisfied with her ability to learn the job to date, and says she inspires him to work the phones when he listens to the cheerful, welcoming manner she presents to potential and repeat customers. The employer felt Katherine was extremely compatible with existing staff, (a trait that employer felt cannot be taught) so they committed to devote more intensive training to bring her up to speed and develop her abilities into a self-sufficient employee. In a recent OJT monitoring, the employer stated that Kate is doing really well with her out-going calls and order entry. Kate shared that she enjoys challenging herself to continually make more sales calls every day, and stated that she has made well over 100 calls per day, and the business has made over 4000 calls since she joined the SafePath team.
**Butte County**

**Total Visitors**
29,171

**Business Services**

- Business Served: 643
- Service Provided: 2456
- Positions Filled: 297

**AFWD**

**Total Clients Enrolled:** 504

**Unemployment Rate**
(As of: 11/30/2016)

- Butte: 5.9%
- Lassen: 6.2%
- Modoc: 7.9%
- Nevada: 4.5%
- Plumas: 8.7%
- Sierra: 6.5%