This October, Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) visited Downtown Chico with Team Chico in an effort to support local businesses and obtain first-hand data on what the business community needs, what is working well, and what suggestions they can offer to help improve the business climate.

Team Chico is a collaboration of community partners including the Chico Chamber of Commerce, City of Chico, AFWD, Butte Community College, Butte College Training Place, Butte College Small Business Development Center, CSU Chico, Downtown Chico Business Association, Explore Butte County, North State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, North State Planning and Development Collective, and 3Core.

Walking through beautiful Downtown Chico, we visited several well-established businesses and saw some new and exciting stores. We surveyed store owners and management staff. Most Businesses were doing well and were looking forward to the upcoming Treat Street event. When asked for suggestions to improve the community business climate, the most suggested item was more frequent networking opportunities with the Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA) and inter-business communication. One business even suggested creating a map of downtown businesses for stores to know what goods and services are available and where in order for Businesses to send each other customers. Many Businesses were worried about the homelessness situation and petty crime in the area. One business mentioned supply-chain issues causing problems for his restaurant. This is all great information for Team Chico to be able to plan for business-community improvement in Chico.

Team Chico will continue to sweep through the city to network with community businesses and assess their needs. With this highly skilled and diversely resourceful group of organizations intent on assessing actual business needs and collaborating on ideas to meet those needs, there should be no realistic goal we cannot meet. AFWD is proud to be a part of this effort!
This November, Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) had the honor of being present for the ribbon cutting ceremony for an amazing and impactful new addition to Chico’s manufacturing sector: Nanotech Energy! Nanotech is a global company, focused on changing the world through means of energy storage technology. This company uses graphene, a graphite allotrope bonded in a single-atom honeycomb layer that is virtually two dimensional. As Bill Brouhard stated during his opening remarks at the ceremony, graphene is “…the most conductible material known to man, is one million times thinner than human hair, is 200 times stronger than steel and 6 times lighter than steel, and is flexible.” Graphene also carries electrons at 1 million meters per second, making its energy potential superb. The company uses this material to manufacture advanced CES Innovation Award-winning batteries, which COO Scott Laine describes as “…the world’s first non-flammable lithium-ion battery.” Nanotech Energy is revolutionizing energy storage right here in Chico and is creating 140 new jobs to do it! AFWD is working to advertise and fill these job openings, support Nanotech Energy with an array of business services, and help get this company fully staffed and in production. Nanotech plans to become operational by January 2023 and there is so much work to be done. AFWD is proud to be a part of the effort to bring this economy-driving, innovative and exciting manufacturer to our community!

FOOD TRUCKS TO FIBER OPTICS

Mischa was laid off from his position working with a local food truck business. He was searching for employment and came to Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) for job search assistance. He was enrolled into the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) due to the lay off from his job. During the initial assessment by the Case Manager, Mischa stated that he would like to follow his long-term goal of working in the technology field with security system installation and telecommunications. Mischa was referred to a local telecommunications company for a position working as an installer and was offered the position. Due to his lack of skill set and inexperience in the field, AFWD was able to assist with an On-The-Job Training (OJT) opportunity, where both the business and the client benefit from Mischa learning a new line of work. Through the OJT Program, Mischa has been learning what it takes to become a successful telecommunications and security installer. In the 2 months he has been in training he has been acquiring new skills such as the ability to install cabling in new and old construction, troubleshooting, and even the ability to appraise and recommend improvements to customers. Once Mischa completes the training process he will have the skills necessary to be a successful Telecommunications and Security Installer and will have permanent, full time employment doing what he has always dreamed of.

A NEW CAREER PATH

Alishia was a self-employed photographer who was looking to change her career path after her business closed. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) was able to assist by placing her at Paradise Animal Control, working as an assistant. Alishia LOVES her new career and through this work experience she now has the skills and qualifications to qualify for permanent employment in her new chosen career path!
Hi, my name is Lisa Camilleri. I moved to Chico from Roseville in 2019. After working in Accounting and Human Resources for 20 years, I decided with a new hometown I wanted to work in a different field. Specifically, the non-profit sector making a difference in the lives of the community. Despite having no experience, a local non-profit took a chance on me. I ran the TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) program and dove into the role enrolling in an online Brain Sciences course through Butte College learning about brain health, nutrition, ways to ground oneself, and understanding behaviors. I conducted educational yet fun support groups with art therapy and set independent living goals such as employment, social, housing, and self-care. Over time I also ran other programs - Community Information & Referral, VOPS (Voice Options) with communication iPads through DOR for non-verbal clients, Cares-Act at the onset of Covid, and during the Oroville Bear fire a temporary program assisting evacuees with various needs. I saw client's lives transform and self-esteem rise achieving the goals we worked on together. My decision to change my career path was a great one because it was the most rewarding job! My former colleague and friend gave me a personal experience testimonial about Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD). He was in a very challenging life position and AFWD assisted him in gaining employment which made other things possible for him; he's now thriving. I'm excited about working with clients in the Youth program, no challenge is too great with resources and people who genuinely care.

Welcome Lisa Camilleri - Youth Career Center Advisor

Hello, my name is Soraya Mahmoud. I was born and raised in Orange County, CA. I moved to Paradise in 2013 to enjoy all the beautiful aspects that mountain life has to offer. While there, I decided to go to school to obtain a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Career and Life Planning. I have always had a passion for helping others and my heart knew that was the path to take. While at Butte College, I had the pleasure to work at the Safe Place and Wellness Center. It was such an amazing experience working with a vulnerable population of students that were enduring a variety of hardships. It made me truly realize that hard times come and go, but having a strong community where we can uplift one another makes all the difference in the outcomes. Eventually, I graduated from Chico State and found myself here at Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) pursuing my dreams. I plan to use my knowledge and experience to empower individuals and help them accomplish their personal, educational, and work goals. Together, anything is possible.

Welcome Soraya Mahmoud - Youth Career Center Advisor

Hanin Nijim came to Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) in October of 2020 as a single parent of 3 who hadn’t worked in over a decade. When she started her first semester of the Registered Nursing, ADN program at Butte College she was excited to begin the journey to her dream job. It was a challenge juggling school with family life as well as maintaining finances. Hanin heard about our services from other students and contacted our office for assistance with her program costs. Hanin has gone through every obstacle imaginable due to the ongoing pandemic and being a single mother, however, with the help of AFWD she persevered through the program and graduated with honors. Now, Hanin is in her first nursing job at Enloe Medical Center and is loving it! She continues to grow in knowledge and passion for taking care of others and is looking forward to the rest of her career.

Defeating the Odds

Hanin Nijim came to Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) in October of 2020 as a single parent of 3 who hadn’t worked in over a decade. When she started her first semester of the Registered Nursing, ADN program at Butte College she was excited to begin the journey to her dream job. It was a challenge juggling school with family life as well as maintaining finances. Hanin heard about our services from other students and contacted our office for assistance with her program costs. Hanin has gone through every obstacle imaginable due to the ongoing pandemic and being a single mother, however, with the help of AFWD she persevered through the program and graduated with honors. Now, Hanin is in her first nursing job at Enloe Medical Center and is loving it! She continues to grow in knowledge and passion for taking care of others and is looking forward to the rest of her career.
Freedom Bowman and his family were temporarily displaced due to the Camp Fire disaster. Shortly after the disaster, he was laid off due to his work relevance relying on the now disaster affected area. Freedom was struggling to secure permanent employment and was referred to the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Recovery Office by a friend familiar with the services offered. He requested assistance with finding self-sufficient employment so he could continue to provide for his family. After reviewing his skills and experience, Freedom was selected to participate in a Temporary Job Creation (TJC) as a Crew Laborer with the Town of Paradise, where he would assist with the clean-up and repair work within the town limits. This opportunity would provide an income while Freedom continued to search for permanent employment. From the beginning, Freedom’s supervisor quickly noticed his strong work ethic and leadership skills and submitted his recommendation to promote him to the Crew Labor Lead, only 2-months into his participation.

As he grew in his role with the Town of Paradise worksite, Freedom continued to showcase his exceptional leadership skills. He participated in the hands-on Chainsaw safety training and consistently demonstrated his “safety-first” mindset when utilizing this highly sought-after skill. With Freedom’s transferrable skills from his previous employment, along with his goal-oriented determination, he became an excellent candidate for numerous positions available within the Paradise community.

When the Worksite Supervisor position became vacant, multiple referrals flooded in suggesting Freedom would be a great fit for this role. He interviewed for the position and graciously accepted the offer from AFWD. Knowing this Town of Paradise worksite is temporary, Freedom continued his search for permanent employment and has been extended an offer from the Town of Paradise Public Works Department. While moving through the pre-employment checklist, he continues to serve his Worksite Supervisor position with the AFWD Recovery Office and has quickly caught on to the specific processes involved. Freedom quickly gained the respect of his worksite crew as he shares his down-to-earth, good-hearted nature with individuals in similar situations as his. His crew has expressed their gratitude and thankfulness for his patience and willingness to teach no matter what level they are at.

Freedom is beyond grateful for the opportunities that have opened up to him since he first walked in the door at AFWD. He is passionate about assisting his community with the post-disaster repair work and he is proud to play such a substantial role during this time of need.
Alia Cox came to Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) at the beginning of March 2022 seeking help to get into her dream career and start a new adventure! She found herself stuck in minimum wage jobs that had no opportunity of advancement and felt like she would not be able to break out of this without some assistance. Alia has always desired getting into an Over the Road driving position ever since she experiencing a family member work in a similar industry. She had began performing her own research on Class A Driver programs but found herself coming against several barriers, one being a single mom and the sole provider for her daughter. However, once she was introduced to AFWD, the possibility of becoming a Class A Driver didn’t seem so unachievable. AFWD was able to assist Alia in enrolling with Truck Driving Academy to receive the training she needed in order to pass the tests to obtain a Class A Drivers License. Alia was able to over come the obstacles that came up during her time in the program, including relocating her daughter and herself to Roseville, CA. She successfully completed the truck driving program and received her Class A Driver’s license in August.

Recently, after receiving some assistance from AFWD for her resume and interview practice, Alia has successfully gained employment as a Class A Driver with Combined Transport in Oregon where she will be handling specialized transportation, especially flat glass and over-dimensional heavy hauls, throughout the states of Washington, Oregon and California. One of the best parts? Alia will be able to spend every weekend with her favorite person, her daughter. We are so excited for Alia and proud of the determination she had to get out of her previous situation. Good luck with your future endeavors, Alia!

PERSEVERANCE IS KEY

James came to Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) in January of 2022. He had had been laid-off from his previous job and had been diligently searching for a new career. Over the course of several months, James continued to look for work with the assistance from AFWD. Together AFWD helped James create and revise a winning resume, navigate the labor market, apply for jobs, and attend interviewing skills workshops. Though James had work experience in his previous job as a FEMA Worksite Supervisor, he did not have all the skills needed to change to a new career as an Insurance Agent – a goal he had set for himself early on.

With perseverance and collaboration with AFWD, James landed an interview with Mark Trumm Insurance Agency as an Insurance Customer Service Representative which aligns with his chosen career pathway to one day be an independent agent. James was selected for the position, however, due to James’ lack of experience in the insurance world he needed additional hands-on training to be successful. AFWD was able to assist by facilitating an On-The-Job Training (OJT) opportunity with James and Mark Trumm Insurance. James started his first day of work in November 2022. In the short time that James has been employed, he has earned his insurance license and is well on his way to learning the trade. James stated, “It’s great to put yourself out there and try something new. I am enjoying the job, we are busy all the time and everyone here is so nice.” James will continue on this OJT for the next several months. With more perseverance and hard work, James will soon have the career he always knew was possible.
CELEBRATING ONE YEAR

Grocery Outlet owners, Wayne and Livia Kurtz, celebrated one year of their grand re-opening with their team on October 28th in Paradise and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc (AFWD) was proud to be a part of their celebration. Currently, AFWD has 7 Work Experience and On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program Participants at the store. Over this past year AFWD has helped the Paradise Grocery Outlet with over 20 placements and has continued to help Wayne and Livia keep their doors open. Wayne Kurtz said, "AFWD has helped us with labor costs, focused us on the quality of training and given us the opportunity to hire employees we wouldn’t normally consider. Usually it takes owners at least a year to break-even but it only took us 6 months, thanks to AFWD. We have kept 100% of the Work Experience and OJT training placements and look forward to expanding our team next year." Congrats to Wayne and Livia and the entire Paradise Grocery Outlet team for a very successful year, we look forward to seeing what is in store for years to come.

HELPING OF HEAVENLY HANDS

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) has had the pleasure of working with a new business in Butte County, Heavenly Hands Services LLC. Heavenly Hands Services is a cleaning and handy service business who provides their awesome services to residential and commercial buildings around Butte County and surrounding areas. Hands Services LLC learned about AFWD and the assistance we provide through networking in our local community. While reaching out to our Business Services team they were provided with excellent customer service and were able to explain all of the services that are available to them. One of those services we mentioned was access to untapped labor pools through our Skills Training Employment Program (STEP). Our STEP Program is a partnership between AFWD and Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS). Through the STEP program we are able to provide employers a 100% wage reimbursement for participants they hire through our program. Heavenly Hands Services LLC decided to bring on one of our awesome STEP participants and is working toward another participant. Through community networking and connecting to local resources Heavenly Hands Services LLC, now has a new dedicated employee that is doing well and providing excellent service for their business. This is a great example of how AFWD helps our local businesses and job seekers and connecting them in a way that benefits both parties.

HERE TO HELP

Brandon contacted the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Recovery Office requesting assistance with his employment needs. He lost his home in the Camp Fire in 2018 and due to some barriers was finding it challenging to obtain full-time permanent employment. Brandon was assisted with a resume update, interview assistance, as well as employment options in the community. When he obtained his full-time self-sufficient employment, Brandon was assisted with procurement of required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help him maintain this new job.
HELPING FIRE SURVIVORS

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) was provided another opportunity to participate in a Bear Fire Resource Event. This time the event was held in the town of Feather Falls, an often under-served and over-looked mountain community. Our friends at Society of St. Vincent de Paul Disaster Services invited AFWD and other community partners to show the residents of Feather Falls that they were not forgotten by providing them with some much-needed resources.

Many local business donated items such as food, clothing, tarps, caulkimg, caulking guns, comforters, blankets, bungee cords, and dog food. The event served over 70 fire survivors in just over 2 hours. The event was held at the Gold Lake Saloon, a local restaurant, gathering place, and watering hole. The owners opened the kitchen, allowing us to enjoy lunch after the event, which also provided us the opportunity to support a local business.

One fire survivor said she found a quilt that was identical to one she had before the fire and made her feel like she “got a piece of home back”. Listening to heartwarming stories, supporting a local business, and sharing our information and resources, is what allows AFWD to remain committed and connected to our communities and our community partners. We can’t wait for another event!

HELPING HIS COMMUNITY

Toby has been familiar with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) and the services provided through the Recovery Office because he was assisted with his employment needs after losing his home as well as his business as a result of the North Complex fire 2 years ago. When he was laid off from his most recent job and needed employment quickly he returned to AFWD for assistance.

Toby was enrolled in the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) MegaFire Temporary Job Creation (TJC) program and showed a strong interest in working with Butte County Public Works. Although temporary, he knew he would be increasing his skill set while earning an income to help support his family as he continued the search for full-time, permanent employment. In his Crew Labor position, Toby has been performing work such as clean up and repair on areas affected by the wildfires like patching potholes on the roadways, running a jackhammer to excavate, cutting fire-damaged brush and trees as well as operating a chainsaw when necessary.

The assistance provided by AFWD and the NDWG MegaFire TJC program has enabled Toby to train and be certified in various safety requirements necessary to do the recovery work in his community. In addition, the supportive services available for appropriate work attire and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ensure he is working as safely as possible.

This temporary work enables Toby to earn an income while increasing his experience and adding to his skill set making him more marketable for future full-time, unsubsidized, permanent employment opportunities all while assisting his community in the process.
Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) always enjoys learning with the long-established relationship with Butte College’s The Training Place! AFWD Staff have the frequent opportunity to take training courses for many different topics. Most recently, 4 team members from AFWD attended a Conflict Resolution training along with many other local employers. The instructor delivered a thought provoking lecture offering interactive coursework.

Located in Chico, The Training Place is an adult learning facility focused on providing our community with valuable vocational and personal conduct classes to improve our local workforce. Their curriculum is available to any employer that can find value in investing in their workforce. A few courses offered include Communication & Conflict Management, Diversity Equity Inclusion & Anti-Racism, Emerging Leaders, and Manager Development. The Training Place also offers direct function courses like Food Safety and OSHA 30 classes.

Please consider these courses as you continue to develop your business. AFWD would be happy to connect you to these resources directly!

TURNING CIRCUMSTANCES INTO SUCCESS

In December, Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Youth Staff participated in a 2-day training, provided by Ascend Program, INC., hosted by The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC). The training, Effectively Helping Clients with a Criminal History, is designed to give Youth Staff the tools to teach their Prison to Employment (P2E) clients life skills that will enable them to approach their life with a ‘non-criminal’ thought process. The training highlights the top 6 reasons clients reoffend and provides the life success tools to help the client change their circumstances. Empowering the client to take back control of their lives and allowing the Youth Staff to work along side them to develop a plan and goals to retain gainful employment and to live more independently. The Youth Staff sends thanks to NoRTEC and Christine Morse and Toni White, the Co-Founders of Ascend.
A GOOD PAIR OF WORK BOOTS

While participating in a Back-2-Work program, a gentleman named Frank overheard a conversation between two people about Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) and that the services they received through the program have helped them advance professionally and personally. Frank interrupted their conversation and got our contact information to see how our services might help him. After being recently released from prison, Frank was offered a job clearing debris along the roadside through the local Back-2-Work program. Frank enjoyed his new position not only because it was outdoors but also because it provided him with the opportunity to give back to his community. After about a week on the job, Frank quickly realized that his current footwear was not only uncomfortable but also dangerous because of the sharp objects hidden between the jagged rocks that he balances on while he walks the roadways providing this valuable public service. Frank needed durable weather-resistant boots with protective reinforcement on the toe, sole, and sturdy ankle support for dangerous terrain. AFWD assisted Frank with the purchase of new work boots and he was able to complete his job duties safely and effectively, allowing him to gain more responsibilities in his current position. Having the appropriate work attire has also made applying for job opportunities easier for Frank. He is no longer concerned that he will miss out on jobs because he can’t work safely on his feet all day. Today Frank is still employed with the Back-2-Work program and continues to gain more duties as he advances. Frank has also

BUTTE COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL AND AFWD

The Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) has partnered with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) in the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. BCFSC’s relationship along with AFWD, and new career opportunities for AFWD clients that have resulted from it, are the perfect examples of the relationships we build with our employer partners. This is one of many positive effects we have on the community.

The OJT program is able to provide essential wage reimbursement to BCFSC during the employee training period. The workers cross training provides additional skills that are needed in the field. Some of these techniques included proper use of chainsaws, along with the mandatory safety knowledge of hand tools. The outstanding training they receive allows them to recognize potential fire hazards and perform the proper maintenance to reduce potential fire danger. Other duties include the clearing of green waste debris, and removal of ladder fuels to eradicate the possibility of more wildfires.

“Alliance For Workforce Development has helped The Butte County Fire Safe Council improve wildfire safety by finding individuals who can work cutting brush and trees for defensible space in our Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities. We have an opportunity to give back to people who may not otherwise consider applying for roles with us; as a result, we have been able to build a wonderful team of hard-working, community-focused individuals who spend each day making Butte County more Fire Safe. They are the face of our organization in many ways, and we couldn’t have built the team we have today without AWFD. Because of the programs offered by AWFD, and the nature of our programs being grant-funded, these placements allow us to stretch our funding even further than we otherwise would.” – Jade Huston at Butte County Fire Safe Council.

The workers are thankful for their new careers as well as the pride they take along with them. They recognize they are able to carefully and properly fulfill their duties, with the assistance of the OJT skills they acquired. The new employees are a vital part of the Butte County Fire Safe Council.
Butte County AFWD Q2 Statistics

Unemployment Information
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AS OF 12/22:
CALIFORNIA: 4.0%
BUTTE COUNTY: 4.3%

TOP 3 AFFECTED INDUSTRY SECTORS:
1. CONSTRUCTION
2. AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING
3. ADMINISTRATIVE, SUPPORT, WASTE MGMT., & REMEDIATIVE SERVICES

Butte County Q2 Statistics

ONE STOP VISITORS: 2,277
TOTAL AFWD BUSINESSES SERVED: 1,499
TOTAL AFWD CLIENTS ENROLLED: 63

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