National Dislocated Worker Grant Benefits

Lassen Community College

Severe weather in January and February 2017 created havoc on the grounds of Lassen Community College (LCC) and throughout many Northern California counties. Lassen County was declared a “State of Emergency” due to the devastation created by massive amounts of snow and rain. Alliance for Workforce Development Inc., (AFWD) received funding from the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) Storm Project- 2017 which was to assist with clean-up and repair, due to the storms of public or private non-profit facilities.

Because of the damage sustained to buildings, drainage systems and landscape at the college, AFWD staff where able to meet with LCC staff to ascertain the labor needs no only in manpower of a temporary crew but leadership to assist with directing these workers with the projects from start to finish.

The LCC temporary crews began in the second week in June working alongside of the college maintenance employees cleaning up debris, repairing landscaping, digging up drainage system pipe that broke and collapsed, repairing damage to hardscape such as sidewalks, stairs and retaining walls.

Twenty-one Lassen County residents were put to work throughout the course of this project, working 29 hours per week. All were exposed to labor skills beyond their previous work experiences which has added to their future employment opportunities.
Lassen Community College, entire hillside shifted due to the massive volumes of water, causing drains to collapse.

Repair of damage includes terracing hillside and engineering French drains before entering the storm drain system.

Landscaping was destroyed as hillside gave way, and campus lawns were greatly impacted.
Hello Nurse (LVN)!

Karissa came to the Business and Career Network office in Susanville to meet with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., intending to enroll in the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) Program at Feather River College (FRC). She met with a CCA to evaluate her need for assistance and to assess the probability she would successfully complete her training. She did not need assistance with tuition, but needed support with other required costs of the training as well as the background checks and LVN licensing exam fees.

Karissa had previous work experience as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and had a good understanding of the skills she would be required to learn and demonstrate in order to become a LVN. She had been working as a CNA, and was the sole source of support for her family. However, she was unable to find full-time employment earning a wage sufficient to support her household. Karissa was looking to upgrade her skills to make her more employable, with the potential to promote as well. CNA to LVN is a career pathway in the Healthcare industry. Assessments showed Karissa’s interests were in line with LVN positions in the healthcare sector, making her an excellent candidate for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult program.

Karissa completed the LVN program at FRC at the end of August, 2017. She went on to successfully attain her LVN licensure through the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians. She received her LVN License on November 28, 2017. Karissa is now in the process of applying for LVN positions within Lassen County. Her qualifications are highly sought after as there are very few LVN’s in the area for employers that need them. She is hoping to be able to work for the State of California as a LVN. Congratulations, Karissa! All of your hard work and sacrifices are making a true difference for your family.
MAKING A DREAM THEIR REALITY

After months and months of waiting and hard, hard work, 17 clients with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD), in Lassen County, Susanville, CA, accomplished a great milestone. These outstanding people from our local community have completed their training at Lassen Community College (LCC) in the Healthcare Sector as Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN). In speeches of thanks, one client Anjannette Dumlao-Feger, said, “I want to give a shout out to the Alliance for Workforce Development. Without them, this year would have been twice as hard.” Christi Myers, Director of Nursing for Lassen Community College also recognized the positive partnership AFWD has had with the LVN students, the college and the community. Assistance included necessary study materials, clinical materials and State of California certification requirements. The local community has waited a few years to welcome their skills and abilities as LVNs into the community. Lassen County and more specifically Susanville, CA struggles to find and retain LVN’s. An ongoing issue that is being resolved through partnerships and the coordination of the Healthcare Collaborative.

After the pinning ceremony enjoyed by family and friends, many of these new graduates have interviewed for positions as LVNs with local employers, including, Banner Clinic, Lassen Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and Northeastern Rural Healthcare Clinic. Throughout their training there were a few unexpected obstacles in their path either through their family life or personal tragedy, but they all persevered to meet a dream and to secure for themselves a career that will give them, and their families a means of self-sufficiency.

Through the outstanding guidance/instruction of Christi Myers and Emily Griffins, staff instructors at LCC, they built up existing personal qualities and work habits to another level in leadership, technical skills, and purpose. The clinical lab assignments got them into our local community, met with gratitude and thanks for their work in helping out around Susanville at various facilities and community health events. They played a critical role in our community when there was an outbreak of viral meningitis. They assisted to manage phones, speak with patrons, and to calm worries about the illness. Our clients could not have had better teachers. This brought the classroom learning together for a perspective of what it takes to work as an LVN for this rural Lassen County community. Such an amazing opportunity for AFWD to be able to assist these folks in something that will reach beyond them for years to come.
A Perfect Match

Tiffany was referred to the Business and Career Network (BCN) in Susanville after completing the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) program at Feather River College in August of 2017. Tiffany had been employed with Seneca Healthcare District as a Certified Nursing Assistant/Medical Assistant (CAN/MA) for several years. Seneca had supported her decision to follow her healthcare career path into that of an LVN. Tiffany performed well in her coursework, and was encouraged to apply for a position as an LVN at Seneca. Seneca was interested in hiring her in the LVN capacity, despite her lack of experience, as they felt she was a good fit in their facility in her previous CNA/MA capacity, and felt she had the potential to learn the necessary skills to be successful as an LVN. They offered her a position as an LVN in the Long Term Care Facility of Seneca Hospital, which was an area she was interested in specializing in.

Tiffany was referred to Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. for the possibility of partnering with Seneca through an On-the-Job Training (OJT) because of her need for additional training due to lack of actual work experience as an LVN. She met with a Career Center Advisor and completed several assessments which indicated a LVN position would be a good fit for her as a career. It was determined an OJT would be helpful in order for Tiffany to learn the specific and technical functions of the position and to be able to perform them independently. Job specific goals were created for her to determine her success over the length of the OJT. Tiffany started working in September of 2017. She showed great motivation, initiative, and compassion throughout the entire process and training. She successfully completed her OJT recently, and her supervisors have had only positive things to say about her. At the end of her training, she had achieved an overall outstanding average, which is no easy feat. Tiffany is currently working at Seneca Hospital as an LVN!

Great job, Tiffany!
Second Chance

In August of this year, Daniel Hurd came in to the Lassen Business and Career Network looking for employment. He was interested in the National Dislocated Worker Grant Storm temporary jobs program. After learning about the services offered through both the Storm and Youth programs, Daniel was interested in the Youth Program.

Daniel had come here from Tehama County with his older half-brother. He was homeless and staying with a friend of his brother’s. Daniel had worked in fast food, as a fish processor in Alaska, and also as an auto paint prep technician. He clearly had an affinity for hands-on work and his assessments concurred. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) assisted Daniel with obtaining interview clothing and a haircut. His Career Center Advisor transported him to Shasta County to help him remove a hold on his driver’s license. Initially, Daniel was placed in an internship with a local auto service station, but due to his coinciding sudden loss of housing, this placement did not pan out. Daniel and his brother left Susanville to stay with relatives in Westwood.

About this time, another internship for Daniel was being considered with the City of Susanville. Daniel would perform work as a maintenance worker alongside some of the temporary crews doing repairs from the winter storms and floods. AFWD assisted him with a bus pass so that he could travel from Westwood to the worksite in Susanville. Daniel started his internship in late October, being rated highly on many of his basic work habits. He’s also well-liked by his co-workers. Some of the skills Daniel is learning include woodworking in the repair of bleachers and fences in the city parks and use of hand tools to clear brush and limbs that have accumulated from the floods into the parks and streams. Daniel states that what he’s liked the most thus far is learning to drive the Bobcat skip loader to move debris. He added that he’s also learned how to properly clean and maintain equipment. Adding these new skills to his resume can only increase his appeal to the next prospective employer.
A POSITIVE SPIN ON THE INTERVIEW

At Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.’s (AFWD) Business and Career Networks, career exploration is a large component of the activities involved with helping Youth determine career pathways. One of the tools used for career exploration is the informational interview. After the Career Center Advisor’s (CCA) initial meetings with and assessments of the youth, different occupations and career fields are discussed. With the help of the Business Services Representative (BSR), individuals and industries are identified for the Youth to speak with and investigate. This has proved to be successful because this type of interview not only serves the purpose of investigating an occupation or profession, but it has helped our business partners in the community get to know our Youth clients. And, just the relaxed nature of an informational interview demonstrates to the Youth that an actual job interview can be just as comfortable and not the scary proposition that many Youth believe it to be.

Lassen Nursing and Rehabilitation
There have been several informational interviews conducted by Lassen AFWD Youth over the past few months. Kristi Eichensehr is a Youth client with an interest in helping people through the field of nursing. Her dream job would be that of a Registered Nurse. When the opportunity came up for her to train as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) through a collaboration between Lassen Nursing and Rehabilitation (LNR) and Feather River College, Kristi conducted an informational interview with LNR’s Administrator, Casey Garrard. Kristi’s CCA helped her to determine questions for topics she would like to learn from the administrator. They had a pleasant meeting where Ms. Garrard explained very thoroughly the role of the CNA in their facility. She stated that LNR encourages their nurses to further their education and move to the next levels of nursing as LVNs and RNs. At this writing, Kristi is working in an Internship as a Medical Clerk at LNR where she is learning all areas of the facility. She is slated to complete that internship in early January and then begin CNA training shortly thereafter.
Lassen County Adult Correctional Facility
Cherish Ortega is a recent high school graduate with a serious passion for becoming a sheriff’s deputy. Through collaboration with the Lassen County Sheriff, Cherish was able to conduct an informational interview with Sgt. Amy Foster at the Adult Correctional Facility. Again, Cherish worked with her CCA to determine some questions on various topics that she would like answered. Cherish was interested in learning Sgt. Foster’s background in law enforcement and information about dealing with stressful situations on the job. She was really hesitant to even speak with the Corrections Facility because she was certain that being a deputy sheriff should be her focus. The interview provided Cherish with a fresh perspective. Sgt. Foster explained that becoming a sheriff had once been her goal, but she found the work in the Correctional Facility to be more rewarding. She further explained that although she decided to stay in corrections, the job of Correctional Deputy is frequently a starting point for those who move to other occupations in law enforcement. Cherish came away from the interview with a new excitement toward the occupation of Correctional Deputy. She submitted an application to the county and the Sheriff’s Department is working with AFWD toward placing her in an internship to gain further insight into the occupation.

Lassen County Chamber of Commerce
A third interviewing opportunity became available for Youth Elizabeth Knigge. Elizabeth and her CCA are working on career fields that would be a good fit. She would prefer to work in a quiet environment where she can do routine work and help others. Lassen’s BSR approached the Lassen County Chamber of Commerce about the possibility of a clerical internship placement there. Chamber Director and NoRTEC Workforce Development Board Member, Patti Hagata, agreed to meet with Elizabeth to answer her questions about the Chamber and the work they do. Elizabeth asked questions about Ms. Hagata’s educational and work background and how she came to work at the Chamber. Ms. Hagata also asked Elizabeth a few questions about herself and her background. It was beneficial for Elizabeth to experience this type of comfortable, conversational interview. Elizabeth’s take-away: the importance and benefit of volunteering.
The Alliance for Workforce Development Inc.’s (AFWD) Youth Program and many partnering agencies were treated to an extraordinary training on the Ascend Program. The Ascend Program was developed by two criminal defense attorneys who were tired of watching their clients return to the criminal system because of a lack of effective rehabilitation programs. Attorneys Christine Morse and Toni White wrote the program for Ascend in 2010 based on knowledge gained from years of working with offenders. They took the program to psychologists and researchers at Sacramento State University for academic curriculum insight and research evaluation.

Ascend is a holistic, evidence-based, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and legal educational program that uses professionals to transfer social capital to offenders, so that they could get beyond “ditch-digging” jobs and into more satisfying and lucrative areas of work and life. Yoga and healthy eating are integrated into the program. The trainers explained that an important element of the program was giving the offenders an understanding of probation terms and the law, so that they could change their behavior and not get picked up on nonviolent and non-serious, but very common, violations and causes for recidivism. The program is action-based and uses guest speakers, activities, and role plays to teach valuable social skills.

The program participants were given helpful tools to apply to justice-system involved youth utilizing their methods and beliefs, such as identifying decision fatigue, utilizing trauma-informed treatments, the trigger-event chain, and criminogenic risk factors. They participated in role-plays and played games to teach clients a hands-on method to impart the importance of a pro-social network. Mainly they reiterated a fact that AFWD’s Youth Staff know only too well; a program must be implemented with love for it to make an impact.
Lassen County Department of Education recently reopened their continuation high school, Credence High School. Offering a small group educational setting for at-risk students, Credence fills a vital need in our community. When the idea to reopen the school was brought up, the Department of Education teamed up with the Lassen County Probation department to discuss innovative ideas to enhance the students’ educational experience. They invited Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Youth Program and other service providers to offer suggestions and to collaborate in the project. As the AFWD Youth Program addresses many of the same barriers these students face, it was a good partnership.

AFWD Youth Advisors have teamed up with Workability in presenting short employment-related workshops to the students once a week at Credence. The students get credit for participation and learn valuable employment skills in the process. Guest speakers have been invited to give the students personal knowledge of their professions. Chad Lewis, Automotive Director for Lassen College, and Sargent Brothers from the US Army gave presentations which encouraged the students to explore additional options to employment and to always strive to continue their education.
Lassen County

Total Visitors
8,875

Lassen County
Business Services

Businesses Served 38
Services Provided 183

AFWD
Total Clients
Enrolled
631

Unemployment Rate
(As of: November 2017)

Butte 4.8%    Nevada 3.4%
Lassen 4.9%    Plumas 7.5%
Modoc 7.1%    Sierra 4.7%

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