Collaboration is Key

Lassen County Probation recently took over the facilitation of the Independent Living Program (ILP) in Lassen County and were interested in collaboration. Having worked closely with Probation and ILP for many years, Alliance for Workforce Development’s youth staff were excited to assist. ILP works with eligible youth ages 16-20 to assist them in areas such as housing, employment and education. Lassen Youth staff organized two workshops to assist the students with a variety of job search topics.

In the first workshop, the students learned about different job search strategies and technics to utilize to improve their chances of success. Things such as when to go into a business to ask for an application, what to wear for job search and how to follow up with an application were reviewed. The students also had an opportunity to complete a standard job application and learn about how to complete a resume. As they were all students and under the age of 18, child labor laws were discussed.

In the second workshop, the students reviewed how to prepare and ace an interview. It was suggested to research not only the business that they were interviewing with but also the job duties that the employer were asking them to do. The importance of keeping their social media professional was also discussed, as well as the topic of first impressions. Common questions were reviewed and the students were then broken into small groups to practice what they had learned. The staff were impressed by how well they did. The students were rewarded by ILP for their hard work by receiving a $10.00 gift card.
Eager to Gain Experience

Greysen came to the Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) office in Susanville, hoping to get assistance with finding fulltime work. He had been seriously underemployed, working only 9 hours per week as a Cook and Waiter, and really needed to find a job where he could support himself. He was also interested in becoming a small business owner in the future, which would require him to gain experience in order to make his dreams come true. He met with a Career Center Adviser for assistance with applications, resumes, and interviewing. He applied and interviewed for a position with Lassen True Value Hardware as a Retail Sales Clerk and Yard Worker. He felt this would be a good place to work to learn aspects of how a small business is run.

The AFWD Business Services Representative contacted Lassen True Value Hardware to let them know Greysen would be eligible to participate in an On-the-Job Training (OJT), were he selected for the position. The employer wanted to hire Greysen, as they were impressed with his interest in business and wanted to help him gain the skills he needs to become successful in the future. They also recognized that Greysen would need extensive training to perform the duties of a Retail Sales Clerk and Yard Worker, since he had no previous experience with that type of work. Lassen True Value contacted Greysen to offer him the position and encouraged him to participate in an OJT.

Greysen met with his Career Center Advisor and developed a training plan that would allow him to train to become a successful Retail Sales Clerk and Yard Worker. Once Greysen began working in this OJT, it was noted how eager he was to be successful in his training. His supervisor said, “Greysen is continuing to learn new tasks and initiate regular daily tasks without requiring directives, which provides time to train him in new tasks and responsibilities.”

Greysen successfully completed his OJT recently, and is pleased with all he has learned so far. He feels he is gaining a lot of useful experience and has found a great place to work. Congratulations, Greysen!
Supporting Entrepreneurs & Small Business Development

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of Northern California was instrumental in putting together a Small Business Workshop in Lassen, Modoc and Plumas counties. This workshop included presentations by the Small Business Administration (SBA), California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), US Bank, and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD). Small businesses and those interested in starting a new business were welcome to attend this free informative workshop. Whether a start-up just beginning a new venture or a small business looking to expand, this free workshop was designed to provide the business owner with a variety of resources.

Those in attendance ranged from people starting a gluten free bakery, a businessman who developed a special utilization of GPS software, to an outfit with outdoor biking tours and a new restaurant with unique Latin American cuisine. All businesses are well suited to our rural Northern California communities. Each agency presented an overview of their services. PTAC gave a lengthy overview describing the free services available to assist small and new business owners to navigate Federal, State, and local government procurement process. There are many websites posting requests for bids on Federal, State, and local contracts. James Aldea, Procurement Counselor explained, “When you know the website and learn the process, bidding on lucrative contracts is not so daunting. We are here to help you every step of the way.”

The local representative from US Bank went over the how banks make their decision on new business owners requesting credit, loans, and in some cases, grants. There are many funding sources available for every type of business. Several business owners in the audience asked questions about who and where to apply for funding, including grants.

The SBA representative for Northern California, David, spoke about various Federal services available to small businesses and start-ups. The SBA works with many different business agencies and will help the business owner by recommending the appropriate agencies. Many business owners stayed for question and answers specific to their business. The presenters were happy to share their insights with this diverse group of business owners and entrepreneurs.
Summer Boot Camp – the Adventure Continues

The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.
—Confucius

Lassen Alliance for Workforce Development held a Summer Boot Camp for Youth in July of this year. One of the graduates was a Youth Program participant named Zoe Boyd. Due to family circumstances, Zoe had left high school the second semester of her junior year. Her goals through the Youth Program included returning to school to graduate and working part time.

Through Boot Camp, Zoe learned about herself and careers that suit her, developed a resume, honed her interviewing skills, and delved into life skills like healthy eating and budgeting. Once Boot Camp was over, Zoe needed to re-enter high school in order to earn a diploma and obtain a work permit for employment. Zoe had contacted Diploma Gold Adult Education, but she was not eligible due to her age. AFWD helped Zoe by contacting local high schools and obtaining her high school transcripts. Zoe had been enrolled her sophomore year at Mt Lassen Charter School. The School Director coordinated with Diploma Gold and re-enrolled Zoe to begin her coursework at Mt Lassen and then transfer to Diploma Gold to finish when she turned eighteen.

Once Zoe was enrolled and moving forward with classes to obtain her diploma, she began her job search. AFWD assisted her with documents and the process for obtaining a work permit. Within a month, she was offered a position as a Crew Member at McDonald’s. AFWD further assisted Zoe with work clothes and a state ID so she could open a bank account.

At the time of this writing, Zoe is working steadily at McDonald’s and earning A’s in all of her classes. She has been taking three semesters of coursework simultaneously and her teacher reports she’s turning in school work to the point where she is going to be finished far ahead of schedule. There will be no need to transfer to Diploma Gold. Zoe’s career goal is to enter the medical field. She’s well on her way.
The Rough Path to Success

Tim had been working for the Sheriff’s Office as a Correctional Deputy for approximately three years, where he excelled in his position. The Lassen County Sheriff’s Department was actively recruiting for individuals interested in becoming a Deputy Sheriff. Tim’s long-term career goal was to become a law enforcement officer. He applied, tested and interviewed for this opportunity.

Once he had proven he was the ideal candidate for attending the Police Officer and Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) program, he was selected to be sent to the Butte College Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Lassen County Sheriff’s Department offered Tim the opportunity of becoming fully employed as a Deputy Sheriff Trainee during the P.O.S.T. Academy training.

Tim was thrilled to have this opportunity, but he was unsure how he could afford to cover all of the expenses of the P.O.S.T. Academy. Tim met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) at Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD), who assessed his need for training assistance. Tim was determined eligible, and a plan was developed to help him successfully complete the program. He received assistance from AFWD in purchasing required uniforms for the training. This offered him the chance to attend the P.O.S.T training at Butte College. Tim did extremely well in his courses at the P.O.S.T. Academy, and completed the program on December 6, 2019, with an A average. He wore the Lassen County Sheriff Deputy uniform to his P.O.S.T. Academy graduation.

This training has given Tim the opportunity he needed to advance in his law enforcement career. Now that his P.O.S.T. training is complete, Tim plans to return to work as a Sheriff Deputy with Lassen County Sheriff’s Office. Tim told his CCA, “It was one of the hardest things I’ve had to do. I stayed focused and dedicated to make it through, and I made it through. I’m thankful for the opportunity to have been sent. It was rough.”

With all of your perseverance, you have shown you can overcome even the roughest challenges, Tim! Congratulations, and good luck in the future!
With 2020 on the horizon and new laws effecting California employers the first Labor Law Update Workshop was held at The Training Place/Butte College in Chico on December 4, 2019. This presentation was filled with many new rules and laws impacting employers as of January 1, 2020. Ann Wicks, the presenter, is a Labor Law attorney whose practice includes all aspects of employment law. Her experience includes start-ups, venture capital firms, and other large and small businesses. In recent years, her focus has been on growing businesses in Northern California.

This year’s workshop covered the new wage and hour changes, various issues surrounding the independent contractors, training requirements for firms on harassment, discrimination and retaliation, the new lactation accommodation rules and other newly enacted laws for 2020. One of the unusual laws passed was the Crown Act which dealt with hairstyles. This new rule creates a respectful and open workplace for natural hair. California is the first state to ban discrimination against natural hair styles. Ms. Wicks suggested, “Employers should update their dress/grooming policies to comply with the CROWN Act and review their handbooks to make sure all of their policies comply with the newly enacted laws.”

Another new rule of interest is the Lactation Accommodation. Employers with 5 or more employees must provide a lactation location - other than a bathroom, in close proximity to the employee’s workplace and allow employee to express milk in private. The employer must also provide a sink with running water and a refrigerator or other cooling devise suitable for storing milk.

Each year, the Labor Law Workshop presents an overview of the changes employers can expect for the new year. This year is particularly challenging, as there were a broad spectrum of rules including organ donation leave of absence, the Sexual Harassment Prevention training requirements, and the ‘No Rehire’ clause for workers who sue their employer and settle their case. Again, Ms. Wicks cautioned employers to review their HR policies.

This year was no exception to the realizing that doing business in California presents its challenges. With the lower unemployment rates, many employers are currently offering higher wages and better accommodations in order to attract better qualify employees. This early 2020 Labor Law workshop saw new employers attending for the first time. Collectively, the participants agreed the information shared was very informative.
Lassen County

One-Stop Visitors: 8,394

Businesses Served: 81

Business Services: 528

AFWD Clients Enrolled: 674

Unemployment Rate
(As of: November 2019)
3.6%