AFWD Sierra staff are always on hand to help our customers to navigate the nuances of applying for and reaching out to representatives of EDD. Due to the many businesses that were lost during these tumultuous times, many people have questions about benefits that were approved during the Pandemic and the Summer 2021 Wildfires.

America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC) and the Employment Development Department (EDD), have come together to assist those that are reaching out to get answers to their important questions. This is where the AJCC and EDD teamed up for Monday Zoom’s 2-hour virtual office appointments, going from 9 AM – 11 AM, providing virtual services to those who may not near, or able to access, an AJCC office.

Together staff from Alliance For Workforce Development (AFWD) and EDD are online to help with job search, resume, and other related questions, while EDD is right there ready to provide guidance regarding EDD services, benefits, and UI questions. Registering for this service is super easy and it can be done right from AFWD’s main web page. Just reach out to any of our staff here in Sierra or any other office, including Live Chat, and they will be more than happy to guide our customers through.
OPEN SEASON FOR JOBS GALORE

Here in Sierra County, the mountain destinations are getting ready to open and they’re sending out the call for their summertime staff. Alliance For Workforce Development (AFWD) is busy sharing that information across all of our represented counties, besides Sierra, these include Nevada, Lassen, Plumas, Butte, and Modoc. With the many college students getting ready for Summer break, AFWD is here to help them find their perfect Summer job. Summer jobs can be very beneficial in building up work experience, networking for future opportunities, and of course, saving money to cover those essentials of summer! Not to mention putting some aside for school costs.

Now that our world has re-opened from the very trying lock-downs of 2020 -21, employers are ready to build up their Summertime staff and many are offering incentives along with the current wage increases. Summer jobs offer invaluable exposure to real-life experiences. The staff of AFWD- Sierra are here to help our customers/clients build up their resumes, conduct mock interviews, and help with understanding dress codes and the all-important employment soft skills.

Summertime jobs are also a great way for our customers/ clients to build upon their skillset and bolster their resumes for future career choices. AFWD staff will take the time to help get our customer’s resumes into top condition and make sure all their past work experience, degrees, qualifications, and achievements are listed. Presenting skills and relevant experience in a way that makes them easy to read for a potential employer. AFWD staff is here to assist our customers in building the stepping stones to success.
This March, AFWD had the opportunity to witness the first ever Small Business Administration’s Women’s Business Summit! The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a cabinet-level federal agency dedicated to igniting change and sparking action so small businesses can confidently start, grow, expand or recover. This first annual event featured prominent Women in business, such as Assistant SBA Administrator, Natalie Madeira Cofield; SBA Administrator, Isabella Casillas Guzman; Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior; Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, and so many more.

Day one of the event was full of inspiring and eye-opening discussions. Executive Director Nicola Corzine with the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center delivered stellar statistics on women in business. She reported, “there are 114% more women entrepreneurs today than there were twenty years ago”. Also, 64% of businesses started last year are owned by women of color. Additionally, women-owned US businesses generate $1.8 trillion each year and employ 9.4 million people.

VP Kamala Harris spoke as well on day one. She addressed the challenges of women in business, particularly minority-women-owned businesses, in terms of wealth disparities, access to capital loans and banking services, and the like. VP Harris talked about the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to protect women-owned businesses of Asiatic, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander descent. One quote from VP Harris that stuck with me was a tribute to those who have “the ambition to see what can be without the burden of what has been”. She revealed plans to expand access to banking services, community lenders, business development funds, affordable childcare, paid leave, and more.

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Day one culminated with excellent discussions. Mellody Hobson, Co-CEO and President of Ariel Investments, discussed the 3P’s of investment: People, Purchasing, and Philanthropy. A panel discussion on Building an Equitable Recovery Framework for Women Entrepreneurs featured strategies to mend the disproportionately female-affected economic recovery from business closures and job loss. Another panel discussion, “From Essential Worker to Essential Entrepreneur: CARE Economy Entrepreneurship Opportunities” addressed issues and opportunities in the caregiving industry and revealed a goal to secure $1 billion in funding for childcare for moms. Other important topics included Innovation and Investment, Contracting Opportunities for Women-led Firms, Exporting & E-commerce, and the Changing Landscape of the Entertainment Industry.

Day two of the Women’s Business Summit featured excellent “Ask An Expert” sessions on several topics, including Innovation and Investment, Certification and Contracting, Accessing SBA Resource Providers, International Trade, and Accessing Loans & Micro Finance.

The entire event was recorded and is available online, along with resource links and relevant information. Visit https://thecenter.nasdaq.org/womens-business-summit-sba-nec/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery to watch this epic event.

AFWD’s mission of providing pathways to success and meeting the needs of job seekers and employers is fully aligned with the mission of the SBA, and women in business has long been a focus of our efforts. AFWD is proud to partner with SBA and was honored to attend this wonderful conference.

Photo top left: Vice President Kamala Harris; Photo bottom left: Natalie Madeira Cofield, Assistant Administrator of SBA’s Office of Women’s Business Ownership
This May, Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) had the opportunity to attend the largest annual workforce development event in the state of California, the California Workforce Association’s WorkCon. After being virtual for two consecutive years, everyone was very excited to attend the conference in person this year. And what an incredible conference it was!

Shawna Wright, Principle and Chief Possibilities Officer for We Are Growing Big Dreams, presented the Pre-Con session: “How Workforce Boards Can Advance Race, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REDI-B).” REDI-B approaches to fostering equity and inclusion can be adopted in the workplace, with partners and clients, and in our communities. In the words of Shawna Wright, “As the hub of the system, workforce development boards are uniquely positioned to connect and fuse institutions towards creating a movement towards a more anti-racist and equitable community.”

Mohammed Bilal, Diversity Consultant, Assistant Dean & Director of DI Programs at Stanford University, provided the Opening Keynote Presentation: “Reimagining Work and Equity – 12 Steps to Appreciating Diversity.” His riveting performance of various poems and raps was captivating while opening our eyes to how we possess such commonality as a collective species. Bilal’s message resounded with a theme: True change starts from within.

Motherlode Workforce Development Board Director Dave Thoeny, CDWB’s P2E & CWP Lead, and colleagues presented the remarkably successful P2E program titled: “Prison to Employment – Changing the System”. Motherlode’s challenge with applying for P2E funding in their area: almost all of their eligible population are in custody and will leave once released. They strategized to create a plan to foster reentry of its two-state prison populations by introducing CalJOBS into prison facilities for the first time, working with participants to holistically prepare them for success after release, and creating short videos to familiarize participants with AJCC services by playing them throughout facilities regularly. Great work, Motherlode!

CA Secretary of Labor, Natalie Palugyai, and CWA Executive Director, Bob Lanter presented “Reimagining California’s Workforce Development System – Vision from the Labor & Workforce Development Agency”. Secretary Palugyai discussed her vision for CA workforce development: “to re-constitute the workforce system so that it leaves no one behind, that we truly break cycles of inequity and articulate to our communities’ pathways that lead individuals and families to economic self-sufficiency”.

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CWA WORKCON—REIMAGINING THE WORLD OF WORK

David Shinder, Workforce Development Consultant, and Bradley Williams, VP of Operations at Equus Workforce Solutions presented: “How the Marketplace of the Future will Drive the Workforce System.” This seminar discussed worker shortages and what the future may bring. They argue that the factors contributing to worker and talent shortage include low birthrate, decreased immigration, early retirement age, climate change, inadequate workforce preparation, and changing perceptions about work.

Chief Executive Director of Business U, Christine Bosworth, presented “The Employer Lens to Demonstrate Business Services’ ROI,” a thought-provoking session on approaching business services not from a features perspective but a benefits perspective. Bosworth discussed the importance of considering what is of value to businesses to meet current and future talent needs to sustain competitiveness and expand opportunities for job seekers.

On the final morning, some of the greatest in CA workforce development joined in a panel discussion about what is possible as we look to reimagine the world of work and, more specifically, the public workforce development system. Panelists addressed calls for income and gender equity, racial reckoning, the need for clear pathways out of poverty, and the demand by our labor force for higher wages and better working conditions. This discussion was both engaging and inspiring.

“Putting CA on the High Road: A Jobs & Climate Action Plan for 2030”, presented by CWDB’s Interagency Policy Specialist Shrayas Jatkar, Program Analyst Kerry Chang, and High Road Field Specialist Rafael Aguilera, was an interesting session on California’s plans for transitioning to carbon neutrality and how it will affect our economy and workforce.

In the final presentation, Tressa Dorsey talked about “time.” She discussed the obsessive relationship our society has with time and how it can be a focal point of stress in our daily lives. She challenged us to think about what we’re doing with the limited moments we have to make our time or someone else’s time better. She stressed the idea that we should both be present and be of service to ourselves and actively let go of the little things that can wreck our daily lives.

In the hustle and bustle of this three-day conference, AFWD colleagues had the opportunity to team-build, reflect on the conference, share laughs, and ponder the idea of reimaging the world of work. This was a
AFWD-America’s Job Center of California

Statistics

Sierra County

One-Stop Visitors:
 90
Businesses Served:
14

AFWD
Clients Enrolled:
1,009

Unemployment Rate
(As of: June 2022)
California 4%
Sierra 3.2%

Sierra Business & Career Network
305 South Lincoln St.
Sierraville, CA 96126
530-994-3349