



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 14, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER VIDES

**SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATION TO THE US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ADMINISTRATION (EDA) FOR FUNDING UNDER THE GOOD JOBS
CHALLENGE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000,000**

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the Department of Commerce created the American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge Program designed to help get Americans back to work by building and strengthening systems and relationships that bring together employers who have hiring needs with other key entities to train workers with in-demand skills that lead to good-paying jobs. Through the Good Jobs Challenge, EDA is allocating \$500 million to collaborative skills training systems and programs

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a grant application in the amount of \$5,000,000 for a Good Jobs Challenge grant.

DISCUSSION:

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Good Jobs Challenge program is designed to meet the needs of businesses and workers in each region and help develop or strengthen dynamic regional workforce training systems and the sectoral partnerships they implement. EDA anticipates funding the following three phases of regional workforce training systems/sectoral partnerships, as applicable to regional needs, under the Good Jobs Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

- System Development funding to help a System Lead Entity of a regional workforce system to establish and develop a regional workforce training system comprised of multiple sector partnerships,
- Program Design funding for sectoral partnership(s) to identify the skills needed by industry and workers, develop the skills training curriculum and materials, and secure technical expertise needed to train workers with the skills needed by businesses, including providing professional development and capacity-building to trainers and educators, and
- Program Implementation funding to deliver workforce training and wrap-around services that place workers into quality jobs through a new or expanded sectoral partnership(s).

The goal of a regional workforce training system is to create and support effective training programs that will connect the in-demand and emerging skill needs of employers with qualified workers and help workers find and keep quality jobs and advance along their chosen career path. This program is designed to get individuals back to work and increase wage growth and support them in securing and retaining quality jobs.

If awarded, the City will use the funding to bring back the Opportunity to Work (OTW) program. The OTW program will provide participants 18-25 years old with the skills necessary to be job ready and seek gainful employment in the public works field. As utility departments across the nation face a wave of employee retirements, now more than ever it is important to train, recruit, and hire residents from our local community to fill those positions. The OTW Program would provide individuals paid, hands-on job training in the following positions, such as Utility Worker I, Customer Service, Wastewater Operator, and Water Operator.

The program also offers individuals the opportunity to obtain the following licenses and certification during the one-year training:

- ✓ Forklift Certification
- ✓ Class B driver's license
- ✓ Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Grade I State License
- ✓ A.W.W.A. back flow certificate
- ✓ Participants will also learn the proper use of small hand and power tools

In addition, OTW participants will receive wraparound services, such as case management, counseling, childcare, and job placement assistance and transportation support. The City will collaborate with the County of Santa Cruz Workforce Development Agency and local non-profits to provide the services needed to help participants complete the program successfully. The OTW Program will increase the local talent pool and help individuals gain skills that will allow them to obtain careers with higher wages and benefits.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The project supports the following Strategic Plan Priority:
4-Economic Development

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to apply for the Good Jobs Fund program. If funding is not granted through the Good Jobs Challenge, the program would be funded from the ARPA funds.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

Council could elect not to apply for these grant funds.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None.