



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Social Service  
**Department No.:** 044  
**For Agenda Of:** October 12, 2021  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimated Time:** 60 Minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Daniel Nielson, Social Services Director 805-346-7101  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Raymond L. McDonald, WDB Executive Director 805-884-6830  
**SUBJECT:** **Workforce Development Board Presentation Report on Activities,  
Accomplishments and Recovery**

DocuSigned by:  
*Daniel Nielson*  
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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes  
Other Concurrence: Risk Management  
As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file presentation on the Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board, its work in assisting job seekers and county businesses, and plans as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- b) Determine that the proposed action is related to organization or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment, and is therefore is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378 (b)(5).

**Summary Text:**

The Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is the vehicle for the federal funding of workforce development, from the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), within the County of Santa Barbara. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities of the Workforce Development Board are of great importance; and today’s presentation is to inform the Board of Supervisors of those activities and its work in assisting job seekers and county businesses, and plans as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Page 2 of 3

The WDB as required by WIOA was designated by the Governor of California, and formally seated in January 2015. The WDB replaced the Workforce Investment Board, which was empowered by the previous federal legislation, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

The WDB is authorized to set workforce policy, oversee programs, select operators, and approve the budget utilizing approximately \$3 million in WIOA funds. The WDB provides services to job-seekers and businesses alike, and is required to partner with the local government. Specifically, the WDB serves adults, recently laid-off workers, and youth.

**Background:**

As a result of the economic and jobs impact of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 in the County, the WDB has had to modify its operations in serving the public, and has participated in a number of activities to assist and gauge the negative business impacts, and performed preliminary planning for recovery.

For job seekers, the WDB instituted online registrations, online workshops, online unemployment insurance information, and appointment-only in-person scheduled meetings. After temporarily closing the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) in Santa Maria, the AJCC re-opened in November 2020 in order to serve the seasonal agri-business workers. The AJCC in Santa Barbara also closed in March 2020 and re-opened in late September 2021 for walk-in service.

For the business community, the WDB participated in numerous webinars and online events, with groups such as the San Luis Obispo Regional Economic Action Coalition (REACH), University of California, Santa Barbara and the South Coast Chambers of Commerce, geared towards informing employers of services still available, obtain information about temporary workers, and refer them to appropriate health services portals.

Moreover, the WDB in preparation for the post-COVID era, commissioned a COVID-19 Impact (research) Report, and developed a broad set of guidelines for activities the WDB can focus on to best help the community rebound from job losses and decreases in private sector business operations.

The Impact Report revealed our County unemployment rate had spiked to nearly 15% (up from a pre-pandemic 5%), with lower-wage, minimal skill jobs being hit the hardest. By July 2021, the County unemployment rate had rebounded to 5.8%.

At the same time, the state and federal governments have and will continue to use the WDB to provide assistance; primarily by short-term funding opportunities; but also longer-range initiatives. Much of the future assistance is still in the pre-implementation stages.

These new resources will be in addition to the approximately \$5.2 million in Special Grants already received by the WDB to help with major layoffs as well as targeted populations: Veterans, Ex-Incarcerated adults, disabled youth, and funds to serve under-represented populations.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

There is no fiscal impact of receiving and filing this report

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – WDB Presentation to BOS

Page 3 of 3

**Authored by:**

Raymond L. McDonald, Executive Director, WDB