



America's **JobCenter**  
of California<sup>SM</sup>

## COMMUNITY COORDINATOR REPORT

October - December 2024

DEL NORTE COUNTY EDITION

### SMART Bridging the Gap in Rural Healthcare

In the rural communities of Del Norte, Siskiyou, Shasta, and Trinity counties, healthcare represents a critical gap. There is limited access to trained professionals and quality care. SMART is dedicated to closing this gap by building a pipeline of skilled, “home-grown” healthcare professionals who can meet local needs both now and in the future.



SMART is proud to lead a range of healthcare initiatives that help achieve this goal. Through dynamic partnerships with educational institutions, healthcare providers, and employers, SMART tackles this challenge on multiple fronts. We work to spark interest in healthcare careers early by engaging high school students in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and participants in our Experience, Education, Employment (E3) Summer Internship Program. For adults pursuing healthcare education at institutions like West Harbor Training Center or within the California Community Colleges system, SMART offers tuition and supportive services to alleviate financial barriers and ensure their success.

SMART also supports job seekers entering the healthcare workforce by partnering with employers such as Trinity Hospital and Mayers Memorial to facilitate recruitment through NorthStateJobs.com, in-person Job Fairs, and targeted outreach. Additionally, our On the Job Training Program helps healthcare facilities like Copper Ridge Care Center equip new hires with the skills they need to thrive in their roles, creating lasting solutions for rural healthcare staffing needs.

Read this quarter’s edition to discover more about the California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) Grant, which will open new pathways for individuals to build rewarding careers in healthcare.

#### Inside This Issue

COYA Healthcare Grant

Page 2



## Multilingual Manufacturing Employees Supported Through REALM

Through the Rural Access for English Language Learners in Manufacturing (REALM) grant, SMART provides English language learners with essential digital literacy training and pathways into manufacturing jobs. This initiative builds foundational technology skills crucial for success in manufacturing roles, helping participants transition into high-demand positions within priority sectors. REALM also fosters partnerships with manufacturing employers who value a multilingual workforce, ensuring SMART's programs are tailored to local industry requirements.

SMART also expands career pathways in non-traditional sectors like trades, accounting, and logging through strategic pre-apprenticeship workshops. By partnering with local agencies, SMART offers pre-apprenticeship training that prepares participants for hands-on learning in trades such as electrical work and carpentry, which are in high demand. Additionally, the program supports Accounting Apprenticeships and Logging Apprenticeships to meet the unique workforce needs of the region, providing structured entry points into these specialized fields.

## California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) Grant

To address the high demand for certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and meet California Apprenticeship standards, SMART is working in our NoRTEC region on a planning grant called California Youth Opportunity Apprenticeship (COYA) initiative. This planning grant is focused on creating a sustainable pipeline of CNA professionals by aligning training with regional needs and apprenticeship standards. By closely collaborating with healthcare providers, training institutions, and youth referral partners, SMART ensures participants gain the practical skills and certifications essential for healthcare careers in Northern California, effectively supporting the rural population's needs.

SMART is committed to support this career path and assist individuals with training related costs and supportive services to help cover minimal costs associated with scrubs and state licensing fees to become a state licensed CNA. In addition, we partner with these local facilities hiring CNAs to do structured On the Job Trainings for individuals needing the skills to work as a CNA. This enables more people to enter the healthcare field without facing significant financial barriers, facilitating their transition into stable employment in a critical industry.



As mentioned above, programs that provide in-house industry training alongside employment opportunities play a crucial role in encouraging individuals to pursue independent career pathways, such as becoming licensed Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). This integrated education and training model not only equips individuals with essential skills but also allows them to gain hands-on experience while earning a paycheck.

This model has been successfully implemented in our serving region and is foundational to our efforts in establishing apprenticeships for youth (18-24) CNAs in the NoRTEC region. By integrating training with employment, we provide them not only with the necessary skills but also with valuable work experience that enhances their employability in the healthcare sector.

## Redwood National and State Parks Partnership



Redwood National and State Parks has partnered with SMART Workforce Center and Redwood Parks Conservancy to create a unique and impactful Work Experience opportunity. This collaboration provides SMART clients with an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a stunning and meaningful environment. Participants are able to build valuable skills, explore career options, and prepare for future employment opportunities.

One of our Young Adult program participants, River, is currently benefiting from this partnership by gaining practical experience in a Work Experience doing park maintenance. His work focuses on maintaining trails and cleaning up litter, contributing to the park's preservation and accessibility.

This partnership between Redwood National and State Parks and SMART Workforce Center exemplifies the power of community collaboration. It not only helps young individuals like River develop essential skills but also supports the preservation of one of the nation's most iconic natural landscapes. It's a shining example of how teamwork can foster career growth, environmental stewardship, and youth empowerment.

## Charmaine's Comeback After Layoff

After dedicating 14 years of her life to working as a housekeeper, Charmaine faced an unexpected and difficult challenge: she was laid off from her job. Losing her long-held position was not only a shock but also a major hurdle. With limited experience in other fields, particularly those involving technology, she faced significant challenges in securing new employment.

Despite these obstacles, she refused to give up. With determination and the support of SMART Workforce Center, she discovered an incredible opportunity that marked the beginning of a new chapter in her life. Through our paid On The Job Training program, she was able to join the Del Norte Senior Center as a Dishwasher and Prep Cook. This role gave her the chance to develop new skills, build confidence, and find a stable path forward. The job was more than just a paycheck; it was a second chance. For the first time in years, she felt hopeful about her future. The team at the Del Norte Senior Center quickly embraced her, recognizing her dedication, reliability, and positive attitude. In less than a month on the job, her supervisor and coworkers couldn't say enough good things about her. They were thrilled to have someone who brought both hard work and a great spirit to the workplace.



This new position is not just a stepping stone—it's a place where she can grow, thrive, and eventually retire. What seemed like a devastating setback has turned into an inspiring success story. With the right support and opportunities, she proved that it's never too late to start over and find a fulfilling career.

## Veteran Eric's Journey Leads to CalVet Job

Eric, a veteran of the United States Air Force, walked through the doors of the SMART Job Center looking for help with his job search. SMART staff helped him to update his resume and apply for local openings that met his skills and interest. He eagerly started a part time job with CalVet doing security at the CalVet Cemetery, but continued to seek further employment to make ends meet. Not long after starting with CalVet, Eric was recognized for going above and beyond. His supervisor encouraged him to apply for a full-time position. Eric returned to SMART to share the good news and ask for another mock interview. Confident after further interview preparation from SMART, Eric applied for a full-time position. After nailing his interview, Eric received a full-time position with CalVet. Eric expresses his gratitude to SMART for all the help!

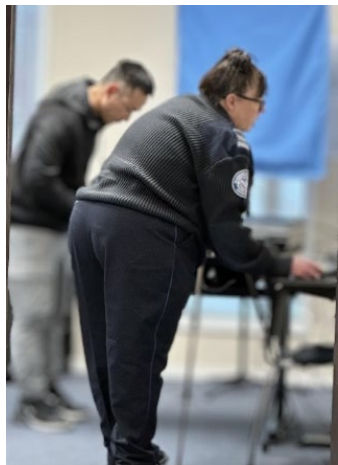
### On the Job Training and Work Experience Partners:

- County of Del Norte
- Turtle Bay Exploration Park
- County of Del Norte
- Kimes & Foutch Construction
- Fasteners Inc.
- The UPS Store
- Los Compadres Mexican Restaurant
- City of Weed
- Shasta YMCA
- Rural Human Services
- US-Offsite Holdings, Inc.
- Redwood Park Conservancy
- New Life Discovery Center
- Sharrah Dunlap Sawyer
- Copper Ridge Care Center
- Baez Childcare
- Dr. Staszal
- The Watershed Research and Training Center

## TSA Recruitment Event at SMART

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently hosted another successful recruitment event at the SMART Workforce Center office in Del Norte County, drawing local residents interested in pursuing careers in transportation security. The event aimed to connect job seekers with

information about the vital role of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) and the career pathways available within the TSA.



Attendees had the opportunity to meet directly with TSA representatives, who provided detailed insights into the responsibilities and qualifications required for TSO positions. Participants also received step-by-step guidance on the application process, ensuring they had a clear understanding of how to begin their journey with TSA.

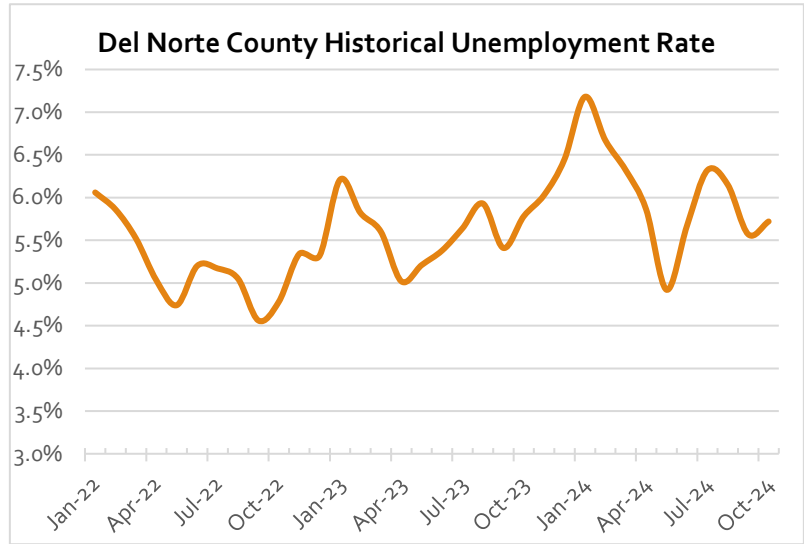
The collaboration between TSA and SMART Workforce Center reflects a shared commitment to fostering a strong local workforce and connecting residents with meaningful employment.



## Del Norte County Labor Market Update:

As of October 2024, the civilian workforce in Del Norte County was to 9,390. This includes everyone that is working, and everyone that is looking for work. Of those, 8,850 are currently employed. The overall size of the workforce recovered from lows early in the year.

The unemployment rate is 5.7% for October. This is down from 5.8% at the same time last year, and down from the 7.2% peak in January of this year. In raw numbers there are approximately 540 people currently considered unemployed in the county. This is slightly lower than the same time last year.



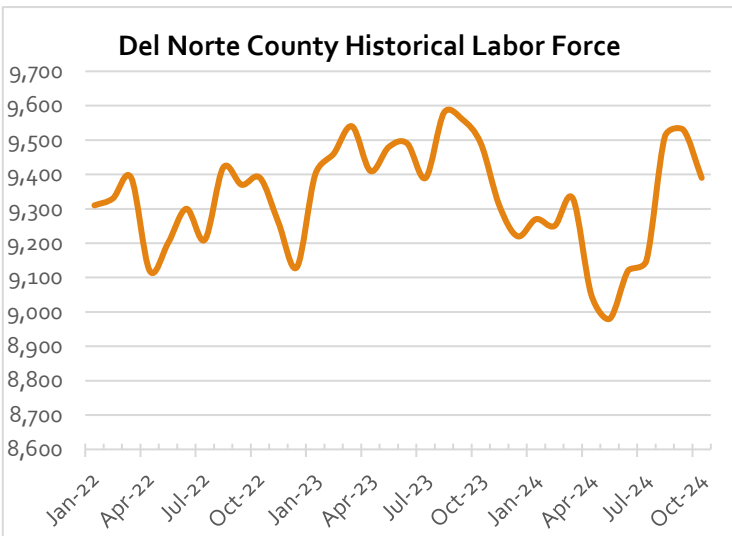
Source [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov)

With unemployment being only slightly higher than last year, businesses may find it difficult to fill labor needs. Fortunately, SMART offers assistance through funded On The Job Training reimbursements and employee training programs. Through these programs, SMART helps employers reduce the risks associated with hiring new employees and establishes a strong foundation that promotes the long-term success of a new hire. As this labor shortage creates complications for employers in the county, SMART is here to help them navigate these challenges.

Employers may also need to rethink their recruitment strategy. There are untapped labor pools not traditionally counted in the unemployment numbers. Retirees looking for something to do, college students just about to enter the labor pool, parolees who have just completed their prison terms, and homemakers thinking about reentering the work force are not included in the unemployed numbers. Businesses can tap into those resources but will likely need to adjust their thinking of what the job demands. For example, retirees or students may not want or be able to accommodate a 40 hour a week position. Similarly, perhaps

someone may lack the skills needed to perform the work but possess strong motivation to learn.

This is where SMART can help! We can connect businesses to candidates that employers may not have had access to, or even knew were options. SMART clients come from all walks of life and are looking for careers today. As the county’s pool of candidates continues to shrink, SMART can assist businesses in meeting their labor needs.



Source [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov)

## Cultural, Acceptance, Respect, Equity (C.A.R.E.) Training for All Staff

SMART Staff gathered for a half-day virtual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) training on December 10th that reflects SMART's commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable work environment.

This session presented via The Training Place at Butte College was titled *C.A.R.E. (Cultural, Acceptance, Respect, Equity)*. It focused on understanding and addressing unfair treatment in the workplace, while promoting respect for the diverse backgrounds and experiences that shape our team and the clients we serve.

The training, facilitated by HR Professional Desiree Sadler of Saddler Consulting Group, Inc. explored a range of topics, from the impact of biases and assumptions to the ways we can better support marginalized individuals. It's an opportunity for us to learn and grow together, ensuring we continue to build a culture of acceptance and respect for all.

SMART is proud to support the continuous growth of staff through trainings like this one!

### SMART Professional Development:

- North Valley Employer Advisory Council-2025 Labor Law Updates
- Best Practices- LMI & Occupational Data- NORTEC
- AFWD/SMART Best Practices
- SMART/EDD cross training
- Essential Communication Skills
- Anti-Harassment Training for Employees-CA
- Ethics in the Workplace
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Cultural, Acceptance, Respect & Equity in the Workplace
- Office Workstation Ergonomics
- Watching Out for One Another
- Workplace Stress
- On the Job Training webinar
- SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) Conference
- Information Security

## Hmong New Year Celebration

At the Annual Celebration of the Crescent City Hmong New Year, SMART Workforce Center staff were proud to be part of the community festivities, hosting a resource table to connect with local residents. Staff members talked with attendees, sharing information about the workforce services available to support career growth and job readiness. They highlighted resources like job training, skills workshops, and career counseling, all designed to help community members navigate today's job market. This was SMART's second year attending the Hmong New Year celebration and staff are looking forward to attending for the third time next year!



## Congratulations LVN Graduates!

SMART is proud to celebrate the graduation of 11 dedicated and hardworking students who have just completed the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) program at College of the Redwoods. This milestone represents the culmination of months of rigorous academic coursework, hands-on training, and an unwavering commitment to the nursing profession. Over the course of three challenging semesters, these students demonstrated their passion for healthcare and their determination to make a meaningful impact in their communities.



Throughout the program, the students engaged in a variety of learning experiences designed to prepare them for the complexities of modern nursing. They attended in-depth courses covering essential nursing concepts, participated in simulations to develop practical skills, and gained invaluable hands-on experience during clinical training at local healthcare facilities. This comprehensive approach ensured that they not only acquired the technical skills required of vocational nurses but also developed the compassion and critical thinking necessary to excel in patient care.

Now that these students have completed their program, they are preparing for the next step in their journey: taking the NCLEX-PN (National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses) exam early next year. Successfully passing this rigorous licensing examination will enable them to officially begin their careers as licensed vocational nurses, serving patients in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and other healthcare settings.



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## ***LVN Grads Continued...***

The success of these graduates is a testament to their hard work, the guidance and expertise of their instructors, and the supportive learning environment at College of the Redwoods. The program's resources and mentorship have played a crucial role in shaping these future nurses, equipping them with confidence and competence to navigate the demands of their profession. Additionally, the financial assistance provided by SMART Workforce Center has been instrumental in supporting the students throughout their educational journey, allowing them to focus on their studies without the added stress of financial burdens.

As they embark on this exciting new chapter, the LVN graduates carry with them the knowledge, skills, and determination to make a positive impact in the nursing field. Whether providing compassionate care at the bedside, advocating for patient well-being, or contributing to their healthcare teams, these graduates are well-prepared to uphold the highest standards of their profession.

Congratulations to the LVN graduating class of College of the Redwoods! Your dedication and achievements inspire us all, and we look forward to the incredible contributions you will make in the world of nursing.

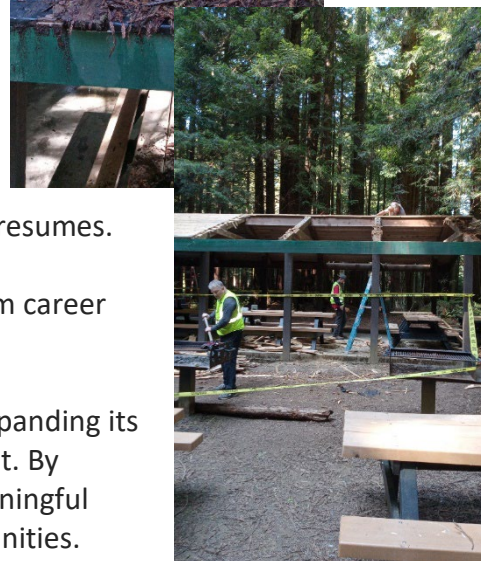
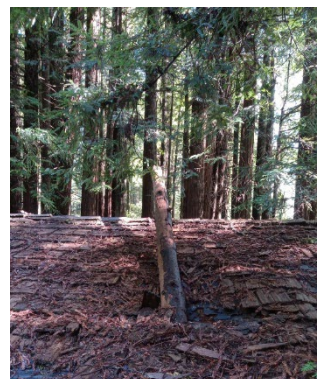
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## **2023 Severe Winter Storm Response Continues with Additional Funding**

The 2023 Severe Winter Storm National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) has had a profound impact by creating temporary employment opportunities for unemployed individuals. These roles play a vital part in rebuilding damaged infrastructure while providing critical support to dislocated workers and those facing unemployment. The program focuses on tasks such as debris removal, infrastructure repair and a wide range of storm cleanup and repair tasks.

Under the Severe Winter Storms grant, the County of Del Norte Parks and Maintenance Department has excelled in training individuals to develop valuable skills while contributing to the storm clean-up efforts. Participants have gained hands-on experience in critical areas such as storm debris removal, infrastructure repair, and general maintenance, ensuring local parks and facilities are restored to safe and functional conditions. This training not only provides immediate employment opportunities but also helps participants build a diverse set of skills that significantly enhance their resumes. The department's dedication to workforce development under the grant has empowered individuals with the tools and experience necessary for long-term career growth in various fields.

With the additional funding recently secured, SMART Workforce Center is expanding its outreach to additional organizations across the counties covered by this grant. By leveraging these resources, SMART Workforce Center is proud to create meaningful employment opportunities that empower individuals and strengthen communities.





## A Message From Our CEO Wendy Zanutelli:

As we close out another year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible honor it has been for our SMART Workforce Center team to be able to help our community in so many ways.

This year, we successfully completed several major initiatives, funded through 21 grants (an all-time high for SMART) that helped to address some of the most pressing workforce needs in our region. We facilitated several National Dislocated Worker Grants focusing on helping our communities recover from localized disasters, including multiple storms and wildfires. We initiated second-chance grants focusing on helping our justice-involved population re-enter the workforce and reduce recidivism. We also had additional grants responding to the specific needs in each of the four counties we serve. We are extremely grateful to our partners in those grants in every county and are very proud of the impact we have made together.



I want to recognize each member of the SMART team for making this all possible. SMART passed all audits and monitorings with flying colors, meeting or exceeding performance metrics for every program for the fiscal year. This demonstrates SMART’s unwavering commitment to excellence, while never losing focus on why we do this important work or who we serve.

This year we continued our commitment to the power of collaboration. Co-location with Southern Oregon Goodwill in Yreka, College of the Siskiyous in Weed, and Shasta College in Weaverville and Redding continue to be integral to our success. Our community and County partners in all four of our counties have been gracious hosts that have enabled us to reach our most rural job seekers through pop up job centers, job fairs, and resource events.

To the community members and businesses we serve, thank you for trusting SMART to be your partner in workforce development. Together, we’ve built pathways to opportunity and growth, and we look forward to continuing this vital work in the coming year. Here’s to another year of collaboration, innovation, and making a positive difference in the NorthState.



SMART Workforce Center is a Proud Partner of:



Proudly serving our community since 1979, SMART Workforce Center is a 501c3 non-profit committed to helping job seekers find jobs, increase training and skills, and increase earnings. We also invest in our local economy by helping businesses grow. To learn more, visit our website: [www.thesmartcenter.biz](http://www.thesmartcenter.biz)

SMART Workforce Center is an equal opportunity employer.

Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities. CA Relay TTY 7-1-1

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