

COMMUNITY COORDINATOR REPORT

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DEL NORTE COUNTY

4th Quarter Update
APR | MAY | JUN | 2026

- Program Spotlight
- Client Services
- Employer Partnerships
- Community Engagement
- Staff Development

Growth, Change and New Beginnings

This season we reflect on a year marked by transformation, new leadership, and a renewed commitment to serving our communities.

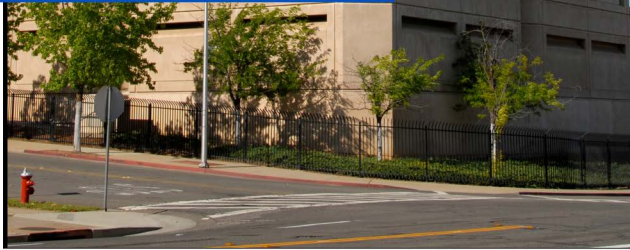
Throughout this period of growth, SMART has remained steadfast in its mission to connect individuals with meaningful employment, strengthen partnerships with local employers, and expand access to workforce development opportunities.

This quarter showcased the dedication of our staff, community partners, and stakeholders as we continued to invest in the people and businesses that make our region strong. From preparing youth for their first jobs and supporting individuals pursuing healthcare careers to helping justice-involved participants rebuild their futures and connecting employers with qualified talent, SMART remained focused on creating pathways to long-term success.

As we look ahead, we do so with a clear vision and renewed purpose. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient workforce—one that empowers individuals, supports local businesses, and ensures workforce services remain accessible to those who need them most, both now and into the future.

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PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: HIRE 2.0 | DOR



Earlier this year, SMART welcomed a new Career Advisor, Andrew, to the Shasta County office to support the continued success of the HIRE grant following a period of staffing shortages. Since joining the team, Andrew has made an immediate positive impact by building strong connections with participants and further strengthening SMART's partnerships with Shasta County Parole and Probation.

SMART continues to actively participate in the monthly Successful Transitions of Probation & Parole (STOPP) meetings, where staff share information about SMART services available to individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community.

In addition, Andrew has expanded outreach efforts by joining the Shasta County Mobile

Probation Vehicle, helping bring services directly to participants in rural and outlying areas who may otherwise face barriers to accessing support.

SMART recently had the opportunity to host representatives from Shasta County Probation at the Redding office. The visit provided a valuable forum for collaboration, allowing both organizations to celebrate successes, discuss opportunities for continued improvement, and strengthen their shared commitment to serving participants effectively. These collaborative efforts have resulted in a steady flow of referrals from Shasta County Parole and Probation, helping SMART successfully achieve its HIRE grant enrollment goals.

As the grant moves into its final phase, SMART remains committed to providing participants with critical supportive services, including interview attire, work clothing, transportation assistance, and work-based learning opportunities. With strong partnerships, consistent referrals, and ongoing participant support, SMART is well-positioned to fully utilize grant funding over the coming months while continuing to help individuals achieve meaningful employment and long-term success.

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Grant

SMART is partnering with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to provide co-enrolled participants with work-based learning opportunities, employment-focused services, and supportive assistance. SMART continues coordination efforts with DOR, including participation in collaborative training sessions such as the DOR-AJCC Capacity Building: Serving Veterans through the AJCC system training in May. Referrals are beginning to be received across the four-county region.



"When we invest in future healthcare professionals, we invest in healthier communities and stronger local economies."

SMART Workforce Center provides training assistance, career development, and personalized support to help individuals complete healthcare education, achieve professional licensure, and launch rewarding careers serving our communities. Every graduate represents a life changed, a workforce strengthened, and a brighter future for the region.

Client Services: Registered Nursing Success

In the month of May, SMART proudly supported a cohort of 10 Registered Nursing (RN) students as they successfully completed their nursing program. Through training assistance, SMART helped reduce financial barriers by covering eligible education-related costs, allowing participants to remain focused on completing their studies and preparing to enter the healthcare workforce.

Many of the graduates have already successfully passed the NCLEX examination, obtained their Registered Nurse licenses, and are transitioning into careers within the healthcare field. The remaining graduates have scheduled their licensing examinations and are actively preparing to complete the final step toward becoming licensed Registered Nurses.

Participants expressed sincere appreciation for the support they received throughout their educational journey, noting that SMART's investment helped ease the financial burden of training and allowed them to focus on achieving their career goals.

This accomplishment reflects SMART's ongoing commitment to investing in workforce development opportunities that prepare individuals for meaningful, family-sustaining careers while helping meet the growing demand for skilled healthcare professionals throughout our communities.

Employer Partnerships

SMART partnered with CalPortland to provide Rapid Response services following a layoff that affected 55 employees in May. Two Rapid Response events were held at the SMART Redding office to connect impacted workers with available services. Staff are currently assisting several individuals with job search activities and training opportunities, including Class A driver training, and will continue outreach to affected workers who have not yet enrolled in services.

Emerald Ridge Construction

During this quarter, SMART Workforce Center continued strengthening partnerships with local employers committed to providing second-chance employment opportunities to justice-involved participants. Emerald Ridge Construction, owned by Russ Olson in Crescent City, remained a strong partner by offering transitional job opportunities and continued employment to participants exiting the program.

Through the partnership, participant Michael was placed with Emerald Ridge Construction under the HIRE grant. He demonstrated strong work ethic and reliability during the transitional job placement, which resulted in continued employment with the company after successful completion of the program.

Employer Russ Olson shared positive feedback regarding the partnership and the impact the program has had on his business growth. Mr. Olson expressed appreciation for the support provided by SMART Workforce Center staff and acknowledged the value of the program in assisting small businesses with workforce needs and labor costs while also creating meaningful employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals.

Participant Michael also shared his experience regarding the support he received through SMART Workforce Center and the impact the program had on both his employment journey and personal growth:

"I can't express enough how much SMART Workforce Center has helped and influenced me with not only employment, but personal growth. The amount of support I received was unexpected and had an effect that I am tremendously grateful for. The services offered and assistance provided were top notch and beyond appreciated. Staff went above and beyond to help me get a job and set me up for success. I am forever grateful and appreciative of the help and services provided."

This partnership continues to demonstrate the success of collaborative employer engagement efforts and highlights the positive outcomes that can be achieved when local businesses are willing to invest in second-chance employment opportunities. SMART Workforce Center values employers like Emerald Ridge Construction who recognize the potential of participants and provide opportunities for long-term employment and stability after program exit.

Community Engagement: E3 Summer Youth Program Kick Off

The 2026 E3 Summer Youth Program is officially underway! The program started off with an exciting and productive Workshop Week, welcoming an average of 85 teens per day.

Throughout the week, participants took part in a variety of interactive workshops facilitated by community members, partner agencies and SMART staff. These sessions focused on essential workplace skills, including work readiness, what it means to be a great employee, interview techniques, conflict resolution, and financial literacy.

One of the week's most important parts, was the Speed Interview Event, where youth had the opportunity to interview with more than 20 participating employers. Each interview lasted approximately six minutes before participants rotated to the next employer, allowing them to meet with multiple worksites while gaining valuable real-world interview experience and building confidence. Following the interviews, employers ranked the candidates they believed would be the best fit for their available positions, while the youth selected their preferred worksites. Using those rankings, we successfully matched and placed 55 participants into paid summer employment through the program.

In addition to earning a paycheck, participants have the opportunity to earn up to 10 high school elective credits while gaining meaningful work experience and, hopefully, positive professional references that will benefit them in future employment opportunities.

The E3 Summer Youth Program is made possible through a partnership between SMART Workforce Center and the Del Norte County Office of Education, with additional support from Klamath Promise Neighborhood's Summer Bridge Grant.

It was an exciting and busy week, and we are incredibly grateful to the SMART staff, participating employers, partners, facilitators, and community members whose support helped make E3 Workshop Week such a tremendous success. We look forward to seeing our youth grow and thrive throughout the summer!



Through E3—Experience, Education, Employment—young people are developing the confidence to succeed in school, work, and life!

History of E3 Summer Internship Programs



The E3 Summer Internship Program has been operating in Del Norte County since 2017 and is now entering its ninth year, with a two-year pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program serves current high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, providing valuable career exploration and workforce development opportunities.

The program originated from an idea by Superintendent Jeff Harris after discussions with local employers at an economic summit revealed concerns about students' preparedness for the workforce. He asked Tony Fabricius from Del Norte County Office of Education to develop a solution, which became the E3 program. Since then, the program has continued this year with more than 100 student applications, the highest number in its history.

Funding for the program is provided by the Del Norte County Office of Education, Klamath Promise Neighborhood, and the Del Norte Indian Career Pathway Program. SMART Program Supervisor, Christy Hernandez had been overseeing this program since its initiation.

Summary update for the 2026 Program

The program officially begins with Workshop Week on June 15, followed by internships that start primarily during the week of June 22. During the first week, students participate in

Continued: History of E3 Summer Internship Programs

work-readiness workshops led by community partners such as local educators, nonprofits, and workforce professionals. A key event is the Speed Interview Day, where participating employers interview students, rank their preferred candidates, and students rank their preferred worksites. Organizers then match students with internship placements.

This year, the program is looking to offer 53 internship opportunities across 20 businesses, organizations, and public agencies, representing industries such as agriculture, healthcare, nutrition and food services, public agencies, nonprofits, recycling, and small businesses.

Participants receive either 80 or 120 hours of paid work experience, depending on the employer's needs, typically resulting in internships lasting four to six weeks.



Big dreams begin with small steps. Week one of E3 is all about building confidence, connections, and career-ready skills.

Staff Development: Regional Collaboration

During the quarter, SMART Workforce Center staff members Emily and Bradley attended the Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) Job Fair at the organization's headquarters in Chico. The event provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen regional partnerships while observing how neighboring workforce agencies engage employers and job seekers.

Hosted by AFWD staff and Business Services Representatives, the visit offered valuable insight into the similarities and unique

Staff Development Continued: Regional Collaboration

approaches used across workforce development organizations. The experience highlighted the scale and diversity of employment opportunities available in Butte County while providing ideas that can be adapted to support employers and job seekers throughout SMART's service area.

Unlike larger community job fairs, the AFWD event featured a smaller group of participating employers in a more personalized setting, allowing meaningful interactions between businesses and job seekers. Participating employers included organizations representing security services, housing and human services, workforce development, and other local industries. Several employers were already familiar with SMART Workforce Center, further reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong regional partnerships.



One notable aspect of the event was AFWD's organized approach to participant engagement. Registered job seekers checked in upon arrival, and staff had resumes prepared in advance, creating a streamlined and welcoming experience for both employers and attendees. A significant number of participants were youth enrolled in AFWD programs, demonstrating strong engagement in career exploration and workforce readiness activities.

The visit provided valuable ideas and best practices that will help inform future employer outreach efforts and the planning of SMART's upcoming job fairs. Experiences like these strengthen regional collaboration, encourage innovation, and support SMART's ongoing commitment to connecting employers with qualified talent while creating meaningful employment opportunities throughout the communities it serves.