

COMMUNITY COORDINATOR REPORT

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SHASTA COUNTY

3rd Quarter Update
JAN | FEB | MAR | 2026

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Growth & Success in the New Year

In Quarter 3, SMART Workforce Center continued to strengthen workforce connections across Shasta County through strategic partnerships, community engagement, and hands-on training opportunities.

From supporting justice-involved individuals through Second Chance efforts to connecting job seekers with local employers, our work remains focused on creating pathways to sustainable employment and a stronger local economy.



Proud Partner of:  NORTEC

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: REALM | WAF 12



Across our four-county region, staff have been working diligently on the Workforce Accelerator Fund 12.0: Rural Access for English Learners in Manufacturing (REALM). This grant ended on March 31, 2026, and had an enrollment goal of 40 participants.

Originally, REALM focused on developing work-based training opportunities with manufacturing employers. The primary objective was to connect English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrants to career pathways in manufacturing through On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities. Through these OJTs, SMART monitored participant progress and reimbursed employers 50% of trainee wages during the training period, helping offset costs and encourage employer participation.

Initial grant guidelines proved restrictive, resulting in a slower-than-anticipated start for enrollments and OJT development. However, in early fall 2025, the state broadened the guidelines to allow more education-based training opportunities and additional employment industries other than manufacturing. This shift created new momentum, and the regional programs team quickly mobilized to expand outreach, increase enrollments, and connect participants to relevant training programs.

A major catalyst for success emerged in Tulelake (Siskiyou County)—a small, rural agricultural community in far northeastern California with a strong Spanish-speaking population. A SMART staff member who grew up in the area and now works out of the SMART Job Center in Yreka leveraged deep community connections to coordinate group orientations and streamline enrollment into the REALM grant.

Many participants brought strong agricultural work experience and transferable skills. One pathway was supporting participants in obtaining their Commercial Class A driver's licenses—an in-demand credential that builds on their existing experience and opens doors to higher-wage employment opportunities.

The success of REALM is a testament to the dedication, adaptability, and community commitment of SMART staff. By pivoting strategically in the final six months of the grant, the team accelerated enrollments, expanded training access, and ensured that participant funds were effectively invested. REALM reflects the strength of SMART's regional collaboration.

Client Services:

Dedicated Job Center Support in Action

Our incredibly dedicated Job Center Coordinator, Lori, provides essential support to hundreds of individuals each day at the SMART Career Center. From résumé development and job referrals to mock interviews, workshop coordination, and assistance with registration, Lori ensures every client receives thoughtful, hands-on guidance. She also offers practical support with online applications, résumé uploads, and unemployment systems—while consistently providing something just as important: a listening ear and genuine encouragement.

This quarter, one success story stands out. A client who visited the center daily for two months faced significant barriers due to prior justice involvement and experienced multiple rejections along the way. With persistence—and Lori's steady support—he remained committed to his goals. He has since secured employment with a local landscaping supply company and is now successfully navigating his new role. With reliable transportation and a supportive employer who recognizes his strong work ethic, he is building a positive path forward.

This story reflects the power of consistency, compassion, and dedicated service in helping individuals overcome barriers and achieve meaningful employment.

Client Services:

Michelle's Journey from Setback to Stability

Michelle came to us in early January 2026 with a strong background in the medical field. She has worked in medical offices and is a certified CNA, holding additional certificates as a Clinical and Clerical Medical Assistant, along with current CPR, First Aid, and AED credentials.

Michelle is also a certified Office Administrative Assistant and brings experience in retail, customer service, front desk operations, administration, scheduling, and management. Between January and February, Michelle actively applied for jobs and received interview offers but was unable to attend due to unsafe vehicle conditions—her car's tires were completely worn, her spare tire already in use. SMART was able to assist in covering the cost of car repairs.

After receiving this assistance, Michelle regained the ability and confidence to pursue employment opportunities, knowing she could make it to interviews safely. By mid-March, her efforts paid off—she received multiple job offers from various medical offices and accepted an exciting new offer. She has now been employed for over a month!

Recently, Michelle sent an email expressing her heartfelt gratitude to the SMART team for helping her through a challenging time, saying she was truly thankful for the support that allowed her to get back on the road and back to work.

Client Services:

Scott's Transition into Skilled Trades

In October 2024, Scott S. faced significant challenges after a misdemeanor DUI resulted in the loss of his career as a car salesman. Shortly after, complications from a previous heart surgery required him to go on disability for nearly six months. As he worked to recover, Scott encountered additional barriers to employment due to his criminal record and limited work experience outside of sales.

Seeking a new path forward, Scott connected with SMART Workforce Center and enrolled in the MC3 training program in April 2025. During this time, he developed foundational skills in résumé building, basic math, and construction, while earning key certifications including OSHA 10, Forklift Safety, and his MC3 certificate.

Through support from SMART staff, Scott was connected to an on-the-job training opportunity with a local plumbing company. The program also provided critical supportive services during his transition, including assistance with rent, utilities, and transportation needs—ensuring he could remain focused on building his new career.

While completing his training, Scott gained hands-on plumbing experience that prepared him for the UA Local 228 Plumbers Union apprenticeship exam, which he successfully passed. He was accepted into the apprenticeship program and has since worked on multiple job sites, including the Good News Rescue Mission Day Center in Redding, the Bio-Lab at Butte College in Chico, and an upcoming project at the PG&E Powerhouse in Maxwell.



Scott credits SMART Workforce Center, the MC3 program, and dedicated staff support with helping him transform his career path and create a more stable future. His journey highlights the power of second chances and the impact of workforce training programs in changing lives.

Client Services:

Britt L. to Britt, LVN

Britt L., a graduate of the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) program at Shasta College, credits SMART Workforce Center with providing critical support throughout her educational journey. While completing the program, Britt faced challenges and moments of uncertainty, but with the assistance and encouragement she received, she was able to stay focused and persevere. With that support, Britt successfully completed her LVN program and graduated with honors—an achievement she is incredibly proud of. Today, she is employed as an LVN with Kaiser Permanente, where she has found meaningful and rewarding work.

Britt shares that the support she received played a significant role in helping her achieve stability and build a better future for herself and her family. Her story is a powerful example of how dedication, combined with the right support, can lead to lasting success.

Employer Highlights:

Maro Noodle House

SMART partnered with a local restaurant, Maro Noodle House, to provide on the job training opportunities under the REALM grant. Through these training opportunities, SMART provided two new hires with On-the-Job Trainings and two Skills Upgrades to promote skills advancement opportunities for two of their current employees.

Under the REALM grant and in coordination with Maro Noodle House, SMART helped support English Language Learners in the hospitality pathway including Line Cook and Supervisor positions. These training programs successfully completed and the employees were retained in employment. Through the REALM grant and these training opportunities SMART was able to assist participants with work clothing and translation assistance devices to help streamline communication across multiple languages (English, Thai and Mien) and help ensure success in the training programs.

Employer Partnerships

Work based trainings are an important tool in strengthening our community. They help remove barriers to employment, open doors to new career pathways, and support local businesses in finding and developing talent across Shasta County and our other SMART regions:

- Macy's Flying Service
- Emerald Ridge Construction
- Coast Cuts Barber Shop
- All Good Hardwood Floors Inc.
- Del Norte Mission Possible
- Tiny Mighty Strong
- Blink Optometry
- County of Trinity
- AGT CPA's and Advisors
- Professional Tile & Granite
- Zach Bay State Farm
- US Forest Service
- First and Last Coffee Lounge

Community Engagement: Spring Shasta Job Fair

The energy was unmistakable on March 20th as the SMART Workforce Center, in partnership with Shasta College, Employment Development Department, and Reach Higher Shasta, opened the doors to the Spring 2026 Shasta Job Fair, and what a turnout it was!

From the moment doors opened to the public, the room buzzed with conversation, opportunity, and anticipation. Job seekers came ready, not just with resumes in hand, but with ambition and curiosity. Employers, in turn, were eager to engage, interview, and connect with local talent. Despite slightly lower attendance than previous years, the quality of engagement more than made up for it, creating a focused and meaningful experience for everyone involved.



The numbers tell a powerful story. A total of 68 businesses participated, representing key industries like healthcare, education, and manufacturing, and collectively offering more than 900 open positions across Shasta County. Even more impressive? A striking 92% of employers reported finding candidates they plan to interview, clear proof that the event delivered where it matters most.

Students from Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and Shasta College showed up in force, reinforcing the importance of building a future-ready workforce right here at home. These emerging professionals stood shoulder-to-shoulder with seasoned job seekers, creating a dynamic mix of experience, fresh perspective, and potential.

Behind the scenes, thoughtful improvements made a noticeable difference. With a streamlined event layout, reduction of excess noise, and an environment where genuine conversations could thrive, the result was stronger connections, better interviews, and a smoother experience overall. And while the job fair spotlighted opportunity, it also reflected the broader economic landscape.

Shasta County currently sits at a 5.2% unemployment rate slight decrease that signals steady progress, even as the region continues navigating a shifting job market.

Perhaps the most telling feedback came directly from attendees:

“This event gets better every time.”

“Great flow, runs smoothly, lots of job seekers actually looking for work!”

“Wonderful to see this available to so much of our community.”



In the end, the Spring 2026 Shasta Job Fair wasn't just an event, it was a reminder of what's possible when community partners come together with a shared mission. From first handshakes to future careers, the day was filled with momentum, connection, and promise for what lies ahead.

Community Engagement: STOPP Reentry Services in Action

Each month, on the second Monday, SMART proudly joins community partners at the Successful Transition on Probation and Parole (STOPP) meeting at the IOOF Hall, a collaborative effort led by the Probation Department and CDCR Adult Parole Division.

Designed to support individuals in the early stages of reentry, this event connects participants—within their first 30 days of release or supervision—with vital resources including mental health services, education, and employment opportunities. Attendees actively engage with multiple service providers and take an important first step by enrolling in programs that support their success.

At the heart of this effort is the Community Corrections Center (CCC), a “one-stop shop” where agencies work together to provide guidance, assessments, and evidence-based support to help individuals rebuild their lives.

SMART is honored to be part of this impactful work, helping connect motivated individuals with meaningful

employment while partnering with local employers who believe in second chances. Together, these efforts are creating pathways to stability, opportunity, and a stronger community for all.



SMART Staff ready to engage
with our community members!

Staff Development: Department of Rehabilitation

SMART Workforce Center and CA Department of Rehabilitation have begun working together to serve DOR clients through a special partnership grant. SMART Workforce Center staff participated in a Professional Development session to learn more about serving individuals with disabilities.

In February representatives tuned into the webinar “Neurodiversity and the Workforce”. Topics covered by Natalie Aguilar, presenter from Loyola Marymount University included Sensory Integration and Neurodivergence. Highlighted were the importance of heightening awareness and understanding of natural variation in human neurocognitive function; and to help to shift organizational thinking towards improved belonging and inclusivity.

Continued: Department of Rehabilitation

The very important Neurodiversity Movement was discussed, in seeking to further explore related rights and equality. The overall goal was to inform and improve organizational work climate and culture, recognizing acceptance in diversity. The sessions were interactive and well grounded in practical suggestions for all workforce settings. Accommodation suggestions for employers included: flexible work hours & schedules, physical accessibility and sensory equipment, assistive technology, requesting precise instructions, and Job/Executive Function job coaches or therapists. SMART Workforce Center is looking forward to further collaboration with our local DOR.

SMART Staff bringing the
Smiles to Sacramento

Kyle E. Hard at work in the kitchen,
demonstrating his skills as Cook
Assistant.