

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

August 4, 2020

Creating Educational Opportunities and Career Pathways with Local Community Colleges

Community colleges and their students are dealing with profound uncertainty as they plan for classes in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and a shuttered economy. Community college enrollment has been in decline nationally since peaking in 2010.¹ However, past recessions have indicated that a high unemployment rate and declining economy are critical drivers of increased community college enrollment.² With limited employment opportunities and a high unemployment rate during the current economic crisis and pandemic, we may see a similar surge of unemployed workers returning to college to better position themselves for employment when the economy recovers. Additionally, community colleges are facing an ongoing challenge in positioning their programs to help students secure stable employment for the long-term while facing

¹ American Association of Community Colleges, *Historical Trends in Community College Enrollment, 2018*, p. 3

² United States Census Bureau, *Postsecondary Enrollment Before, During, and Since the Great Recession, April 2018*

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income uncertainties in the near term.

As COVID-19 recovery efforts underway attempt to address the challenges of today's work environment, there is an increasing demand to provide access to education and career training programs that will uplift students during and beyond this pandemic. One County department, the Office of the Assessor, has developed formal classroom training for its professional staff that focuses on creating pathways to climb the ladder in the Assessor and other County departments. Due to COVID-19, the Assessor has reconfigured its training curriculum to successfully incorporate distance virtual learning; however, the demand for additional Assessor training will eventually outpace resources currently available.

As the largest employer in the region – and one that provides quality, family sustaining jobs – the County has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in providing career path job opportunities to community college students. Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) has established partnerships with community colleges such as Rio Hondo and East Los Angeles College to leverage and develop a wide range of degree and certificate programs to prepare tomorrow's workforce.

The Office of the Assessor's formal training program could be adapted to fit existing community college distance learning programs in order to create a pool of qualified candidates for County job opportunities. With the assistance of community colleges, the County can offer this career development program to the general public. This partnership with the local community colleges would create career pathways in targeted sectors adversely impacted by COVID-19, including the County workforce and related private sector businesses.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Acting Director of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), in collaboration with the Assessor, the Director of the Department of Human Resources and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to develop and report-back in 45 days with a comprehensive review of training programs and curriculums currently offered by the Assessor and feasibility analysis of establishing new pilot training programs and curriculums at the Rio Hondo and East Los Angeles Colleges to prepare students for careers with the Assessor and other County Departments. The report should, at a minimum, consider:

- a. Proposing new training programs and curriculums at Rio Hondo and East Los Angeles Colleges to enhance students' competitiveness for real estate and appraisal employment opportunities and successful careers in the Assessor's Office and in other County Departments. These programs should be readily adaptable for implementation at other community colleges and institutions of higher learning;
- b. A timeline to implement the training programs;
- c. A funding plan inclusive of the anticipated program costs and potential funding sources; and
- d. A review of DHR selection criteria to ensure future job opportunities reflect consideration for those successfully completing the training program who are therefore more job ready for careers with the Assessor and/or other County Departments.

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