

*** NOTE: TO RETURN TO THIS PAGE, CLICK ON THE COUNTY SEAL ***

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT PROVIDED TO THE BOARD BY COUNTY COUNSEL ON MARCH 3, 2025

[CLICK HERE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY'S REPORT DATED
MARCH 7, 2025](#)

department of economic opportunity

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hilda L. Solis
Holly J. Mitchell
Lindsey P. Horvath
Janice Hahn
Kathryn Barger

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Kelly LoBianco
Director

Jessica Kim
Chief Deputy

Leila Lee
*Assistant Director, Business
and Economic Development*

Kate Vacanti
Assistant Director, Workforce

Krystin HENCE
*Assistant Director, Capital
Development*

GET IN TOUCH

510 S. Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90020
opportunity.lacounty.gov
deo@opportunity.lacounty.gov
844-777-2059

America's Job Centers:
(888) 226-6300
Office of Small Business:
(800) 432-4900



March 7, 2025

TO: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn

FROM: Kelly LoBianco, Director 

SUBJECT: **SUPPORTING A SKILLED AND TRAINED
WORKFORCE FOR FIRE RECOVERY (ITEM
NUMBER 41-A, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 18,
2025)**

On February 18, 2025, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion, introduced by Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, directing County Counsel, in collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to report back in writing in 14 days on the feasibility of allocating \$10 million in emergency grant funding received from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for disaster relief jobs and training services to the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council (Building Trades). The Motion also called for DEO to look at alternative sources of funds should the Building Trades be found ineligible for the DOL emergency grant funding.

This motion came in the wake of the devastation resulting from the January 2025 wildfires in Los Angeles County (County), which were unparalleled in scale and scope: over 50,000 acres burned, over 16,000 structures destroyed, and almost 30 lives lost to date. This motion was intended to support the current phase of cleanup and debris removal efforts. Basic physical debris removal, combined with harmful environmental factors, require skilled and trained workers to safely complete the work so that rebuilding can begin.

As a starting point, applicable federal procurement and eligibility requirements for dislocated workers limit the use of the federal grant funds DEO recently received for general disaster relief jobs and training. These funds cannot be earmarked for, or provided as a set-aside to, the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and/or Building Trades, or other similar entities. County Counsel has issued a separate confidential memo to your Board on this matter.

While it is not possible to provide a direct set-aside for the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and/or Building Trades from these federal grant funds, as considered in the motion, in this report DEO outlines our commitment to working closely with our labor partners and workforce development ecosystem to access these DOL opportunities for dislocated workers, where applicable, as well as to identify and unlock a range of applicable funding sources that address both our short-term and long-term needs in building a skilled and trained workforce to safely perform cleanup and debris removal work and help the County and our communities rebuild.

DEO Plan for Federal Emergency Grant Funds

In total, the Los Angeles Region was awarded \$20 million through two grant programs to support dislocated workers from the windstorm and wildfires: the [National Dislocated Worker Grant \(NDWG\)](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor, and an [Additional Assistance \(AA\) grant](#) from the California Employment Development Department (EDD). DEO, and its Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board, was awarded \$9 million in AA funds and \$5.2 million in NDWG funds with an additional \$2 million pending State approval. These are federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds administered by EDD, which are the base funding for the County and region's Local Workforce Development Areas and public workforce system or America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs).

NDWGs provide funding to create temporary employment opportunities for dislocated workers to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts when an area impacted by a major disaster is declared eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or another federal agency. AA grants are available to areas that experience sudden and large increases of unemployment due to natural disasters, mass layoffs, or other events, and provide direct services to dislocated workers when local resources are inadequate to meet the demand for increased career and training services in the local AJCCs, including 18 operated by DEO. The LA County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has received and implemented these grants in past disasters, such as the 2020 Bobcat Fire.

The NDWG and AA grant funds were awarded to the Los Angeles County Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and the Los Angeles City LWDA following a joint application. In addition to the County and City of Los Angeles, grant-funded services will be coordinated across the remaining five Workforce Development Boards in Los Angeles County, ensuring countywide reach for impacted workers through roughly 40 AJCCs and WorkSource centers. Workforce Development Boards and AJCC-contracted providers will administer grant funds, recruit, screen and enroll eligible participants, provide workforce and training services, and connect individuals to temporary employment.

Los Angeles County's allocation of NDWG funds will provide temporary employment to 174 disaster impacted dislocated workers to support disaster relief and recovery efforts and another 126 through the City of Los Angeles. Jobs will include cleanup and debris removal roles and humanitarian assistance roles and will last 3-5 months. Temporary positions include Laborers, Crew Supervisors, AJCC Intake Specialists and Service Navigators, Call Center Representatives, Community Health Support Workers, Program Support staff, Logistics Coordinators, Food Packers, and more. DEO is developing worksite agreements with County departments and other partners where the work will be performed.

AA grant funds will provide an estimated 1,000 disaster impacted dislocated workers with skills training, stipends, and supportive services. Training will focus on credentials required for the NDWG-funded temporary disaster relief jobs, such as the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) certification and Community Health Worker certificates. Additionally, AA funds will provide skills training and job placement services to assist participants with transitioning to permanent employment and pursuing career pathway opportunities offering family-sustaining wages in various sectors, including in-demand and fire impacted construction trades, green jobs, leisure and hospitality, government, and healthcare and social assistance.

DEO and the City of LA plan to roll out their collective programs in late March with an announcement and application at the AJCCs. DEO is actively engaging in communication with partners to identify dislocated workers for potential enrollment and to host worksites for dislocated workers as part of their workforce or as standalone cohorts throughout the duration of the grants.

Meeting the Needs of the Building Trades for Fire Recovery

DEO is working closely with the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and the Building Trades to address their immediate needs for surge capacity to build a skilled workforce for fire response and cleanup, while also collaborating with them on broader needs for rebuilding. In 2023, DEO invested \$2 million in the Building Trades' Apprenticeship Readiness Fund through our High Road Training Partnerships, serving 200 pre-apprentices, and is committed to continued partnership.

The Building Trades have provided an early estimate of \$2.5 million over the next two years to serve 300 new pre-apprentices annually with their Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program to meet the needs for cleanup and rebuilding. This funding would enable the Building Trades to enhance regular programming to offer HAZWOPER 40 certification, which includes lead and asbestos removal training, as well as other stackable credentials to ensure a skilled and trained workforce countywide. DEO will work with the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and Building Trades to address this need by assessing and unlocking applicable workforce funding sources that may include:

- **Leveraging the AA and NWDG Grants to Serve Eligible Union Members.** While the

grants do not allow a direct earmark to the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund or Building Trades from these funds, the Building Trades can access these funds by partnering with AJCCs and WorkSource Centers as they roll-out the AA and NWDG funding. Building Trades union members who lost employment because of the windstorm and wildfires will have access to the AA and NWDG funded job placement assistance, upskill trainings, and supportive services throughout the County.

- **Up to \$1 Million in WIOA Innovation Funds.** DEO and its predecessor agency hosting the LA County WDB established an annual \$1 million Innovation Fund, using discretionary WIOA funding, to support promising workforce program models that help residents with barriers to employment access jobs and careers in in-demand sectors and occupations. DEO will present a proposal at the next Los Angeles County WDB Meeting on March 21st to use up to \$1 million in existing Innovation Funds to support the Building Trades with upskilling current members for cleanup and debris removal and training new pre-apprentices. This funding is additive to the \$1 million allocation provided to Building Trades members through Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 300 by LA City's Economic and Workforce Development Department to meet the surge capacity need of an estimated 1,000 workers over 18 months for clean-up and debris removal. While these are WIOA funds and must be allocated through the AJCCs, they are not limited to dislocated workers.
- **WIOA funding through the California Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).** All public workforce systems leverage an ETPL for workers in a region to increase customer choice and access to tuition free or offset in-demand job training by local training providers through an Individual Training Account (ITA). Training programs on the ETPL have been vetted and approved for the cost per individual or cohort to be covered by WIOA funds. The Building Trades' MC3 Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program in the Los Angeles Area is on the ETPL at a cost of approximately \$3,000 to \$5,500 per participant. By State requirement, DEO dedicated 30 percent of its annual WIOA training funds across its AJCCs for training, and ITAs can be leveraged by individuals seeking MC3 Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Training and further aligned with supportive services provided by the job centers. The Building Trades can also leverage these funds through the other six WDBs and their AJCCs/WorkSource Centers across Los Angeles County.
- **Employment Training Panel (ETP).** ETP is a State agency that provides funding to offset the cost of employer-driven job skills training for incumbent workers and funding training needed by unemployed workers to re-enter the workforce. ETP prioritizes training for industries key to the State's economic health, including construction. For the past two years, both LIUNA Local 300 and the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund have had two active contracts in the amounts of \$390,477 (ends September 2026) and \$499,857 (ends September 2025). Funding remains in these contracts that can help meet current workforce training needs, and they will be eligible to apply for additional ETP funding in May. Additionally, DEO is in conversation with ETP to explore a [Rapid Employment Strategies on Natural Disasters \(RESPOND\)](#) grant opportunity for up to \$850,000 for disaster recovery workforce training needs. DEO will provide an update on the viability of this opportunity to the Board.

- **High Road Training Partnership Grant Program.** On March 4th, DEO announced the upcoming launch of a High Road Training Partnership Grant Program with \$17 million available in funds from Care First Community Investment (CFCI) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) to fund innovative, high-quality workforce training models delivered by worker-centered organizations and employers. Applications open on March 31st, 2025, and this is an option for training providers, labor partners, educational institutions, and employers and industry associations to consider fire recovery workforce pipelines, including construction. DEO will share additional information and materials with Board offices prior to the application launch. Awards are anticipated in May of 2025.
- **Long-Term Needs and Other Funding Opportunities.** DEO is committed to ongoing collaboration with the Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and Building Trades to identify and address their needs in developing a skilled workforce for long-term recovery. DEO will work to identify additional state, federal and local funding made available for long-term recovery, as well as explore opportunities to collaborate on applications for federal grant programs from the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Economic Development Agency, as well as private philanthropic grants as applicable.

Collaboration with Other Labor Partners

In addition to the Building Trades, DEO will explore opportunities to collaborate with and invest in partnerships with other labor unions and training partnerships to provide opportunities for impacted workers from the sectors hit hardest by the wildfires and develop the workforce needed for other disaster recovery jobs. According to a recently published report from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), five industries account for 58% of the affected workforce: (1) Educational Services, (2) Health Care, (3) Retail Trade, (4) Accommodation and Food Services, and (5) Other Services.

For example, with many restaurants destroyed in the fires, DEO is exploring a partnership with the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA) to help dislocated restaurant and hospitality workers who lost their jobs due to the fires upskill and connect to new employment opportunities through UNITE HERE Local 11. DEO is working with the AJCCs to identify dislocated workers interested in the HTA Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Programs through the AA grant and will leverage other training funds to provide pathways for impacted workers into hospitality careers with family-sustaining wages. DEO will also collaborate with other organizations preparing individuals for cleanup and rebuilding jobs, including Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER) and the Carpenter's Union.

CONCLUSION

NDWG and AA Grants are federal funds to which federal procurement and eligibility requirements apply and limit their uses. These funds cannot be earmarked for, or provided as, a set-aside to the Building Trades or other similar entities.

In this report back, DEO lays out its plan for rolling out the NDWG and AA grants in collaboration with our regional workforce system and its commitment to collaboration with the

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

March 7, 2025

Page 6

Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and Building Trades to meet their current and ongoing funding needs to provide a skilled and trained workforce to safely perform cleanup and debris removal work, as well as help the County rebuild once the cleanup phases are complete.

As the region continues to understand the full direct and indirect economic impacts to workers and businesses, DEO is also committed to coming back to the Board with its plan ensure a local and targeted worker and local contracting pipeline sufficient to meet the needs of the rebuild and ensure dollars invested in the rebuild benefit impacted communities.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or Kate Vacanti, DEO's Assistant Director of Workforce Development, at KVacanti@opportunity.lacounty.gov or 213-738-2765.

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 Chief Executive Office
 County Counsel