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AB # 23-01  
Effective Immediately

**ACTION BULLETIN**

**TO:** All local area Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Funded Service Providers

**DATE:** February 23, 2023

**SUBJECT:** **Industry Sector and Occupational Framework Update (Climate Careers, High Road Employers and High-Quality Jobs)**

**PURPOSE OF BULLETIN:**

This action bulletin provides guidance to Alameda County Workforce Development Board’s (ACWDB) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) funded service providers regarding further operationalization of the ACWDB’s Industry Sector and Occupational Framework (ISOF).

**CITATIONS AND REFERENCES:**

- Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations 679.370 Functions of the Local Workforce Development Boards
- [ACWDB Action Bulletin #20-01](#)
- [Future of Work in California](#)
- [California Workforce Development Board High Road Framework](#)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics – Green Jobs](#)
- [Job Quality Toolkit](#)
- [Good Jobs Principles](#)

**BACKGROUND:**

In alignment with the federal WIOA, local workforce development boards undergo the study and analysis of the local labor market to highlight key industries and occupations that provide high-growth opportunity for local area job seekers. Emerging and high growth industries and occupations, when complemented by high-quality training and program support, can enhance job seeker career opportunity.

ACWDB staff engaged in the analysis of local area industries and opportunities and developed the ISOF to function as a tool and guide for WIOA service providers as they engage in career development activities with job seekers. The ISOF was initially approved in 2016 by the ACWDB and has also been used in planning efforts, grant development activities, and contract performance measures.

The ISOF consists of three tiers that aide WIOA service providers in their conversations with job seekers about local area opportunities, occupational training, and employment placement. Tier I in the ISOF model represents seven high-growth or emerging industries in Alameda County as follows:

1. Health Care and Social Assistance,
2. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
3. Constructions
4. Advanced Manufacturing
5. Transportation and Warehousing
6. Local Government
7. **Green Sector (NEW)**

Tier II in the ISOF model represents a sample of high growth occupations that exceed wages of \$19.20 per hour. A sample of those occupations include:

- Machinist
- Dental Assistant
- IT Support Specialist
- First-line Supervisor of Retail Workers

Tier III in the ISOF model represents participant choice. In Tier III job seekers may select an occupation of their choice if the occupation is emerging or growing and meets the ISOF wage requirement (>\$19.20/hour).

Contractually, ACWDB does not require local area WIOA service providers to place one hundred percent of job seeker participants into ISOF industries or occupations. This allows for local area program and job seeker participant flexibility. However, the goal of the ISOF remains the same, which is to help job seekers access and retain good high-quality jobs. The wage in the ISOF may change in the future but remains the same to accommodate job placements for those who need entry-level access to start their careers.

In 2019 or the second iteration of the ISOF expansion, ACWDB accepted staff's recommendation to elevate the local government as a priority sector due to the government sector's driving force and employment prominence in Alameda County.

### **ISOF UPDATE**

In the third iteration of the ISOF's expansion, which was approved by the ACWDB on May 12,

2022, the green sector was added to the ISOF's Tier I as a reflection of state and federal priorities associated with equitable climate transitions, clean energy, and infrastructure investments. A focus on high road employers and high-quality jobs, is also included in this third iteration of the ISOF's expansion.

The "high road" designation in Tier I is associated with high-quality jobs, in that, ISOF Tier I industries should align with high road employers who provide access to high-quality jobs. In many instances, Tier II occupations will also lead to high-quality jobs, if provided by a high road employer. The concepts of high road employer and high-quality jobs are therefore inextricably linked.

Conceptual definitions are provided below to aide in building context and clarification about the green sector, high road employers, and high-quality jobs. WIOA service providers may find the revised ISOF diagram in Attachment #1.

## **CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS**

### **GREEN SECTOR**

The green sector is dispersed across occupations and industries. For instance, construction projects are developed with sustainable materials and equipped to be energy efficient, while some automobile manufacturing companies have shifted to mass production of electric and hybrid vehicles. In other instances, advancements to improve water and air quality are underway.

Occupationally, the green sector contains a wide range of professionals, from Environment Engineers to Wastewater Technicians to Electricians. As the federal and state government continue to make investments and establish climate goals, additional green sector pathways will emerge.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), climate careers are distinguished and characterized along two dimensions:

1. Jobs that **produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve** natural resources, and;
2. Jobs in which **workers' duties involve making their establishment's production processes more environmentally friendly** or use fewer natural resources.

For more information about the green sector and climate careers, see Attachment #2.

### **HIGH ROAD EMPLOYER**

According to UC Berkeley Labor Center, "High Road firms compete on quality of product and service, achieved through innovation and investment in human capital, that enable the generation of family-supporting career-track jobs that facilitate worker agency and voice." Therefore, high road employers are essential facilitators in providing access to high-quality jobs.

## HIGH QUALITY JOBS

The concept of good/high-quality jobs has been in existence for decades, however, the Future of Workforce Commission, initiated by Governor Newsom in August 2019, called for an examination of the future of work in California and corresponding goals that align with the state's objectives around promoting equity and shared prosperity. Subsequent actions to catalyze the concept of high-quality jobs has also taken place through the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce.

A high-quality job is employment that happens in concert with a high road employer, where all members of the workforce are respected and valued as important to an organization's success. The organization's policies, practices, and environment ensure high levels of wellbeing, compensation, empowerment, and growth. High road employers also create systems to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.<sup>1</sup> See attachment #3 to learn more about high-quality job characteristics in the form of a checklist.

### **ACTION:**

All local area WIOA directors and/or program managers should engage in planning conversations with their respective teams (and sub-contracted teams, if applicable) about **striving to cultivate job placements with high-road employers who provide access to high quality jobs.**

WIOA service providers may engage with employers that are already in their respective networks and may engage in diplomatic conversations with human resource teams and managers to determine if an employer is high-road and offers access to high-quality jobs. WIOA service providers may also leverage employer websites to ascertain information about an employer's alignment with high-quality job characteristics. Based on this process of inquiry, WIOA service providers should diligently foster job and program placements with high-road employers that provide access to high-quality jobs, as outlined in this action bulletin.

In the future, targeted key performance indicators or performance measures related to high-quality jobs may be established, so starting and/or expanding on this work now will be critically important for future success.

Lastly, since the green sector is now included in the ISOF, all providers should strive to educate job seeker participants about green/climate careers and help to place them into climate careers. This effort to educate job seekers about climate careers may be done in collaboration with community-based organizations, training providers who offer green/climate careers, employers, and other stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> High-quality job characteristics and definitions used in this Action Bulletin were extracted from the Department of Commerce's (DOC) Quality Job Toolkit. The DOC's Quality Job Toolkit was developed in partnership with the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Once job seekers know about the opportunities, job developers, case managers, and other workforce practitioners should encourage job seekers to enter and train for high-quality climate careers, especially if aligned with their career goals. Specifically, service providers should strongly consider providing access to electrician training to support the state's growing need for trained electricians, as well as training in engineering, clean water and decarbonization.

**INQUIRIES:**

For inquiries about this Action Bulletin, please contact Latoya Reed-Adjei, Interim Assistant Director at the ACWDB at [latoya.reed-adjei@acgov.org](mailto:latoya.reed-adjei@acgov.org) or by phone at (510) 259-3833.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- [Attachment #1 - Revised ISOF diagram](#)
- [Attachment #2 - Climate Careers Definition and Occupations](#)
- [Attachment #3 – High Quality Jobs Checklist](#)