

ITEM VIII.F. – REPORTS

BUSINESS SERVICES UNIT REPORT FOR JANUARY 1, 2026 – JUNE 30, 2026

BACKGROUND:

The Business Services Unit (BSU) provides an update about business services and relationships built to engage employers as a core aspect of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program. This report includes an overview of services provided from January 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026, to employers by the BSU, which consists of engaging the business community and leveraging relationships with Career Service Providers.

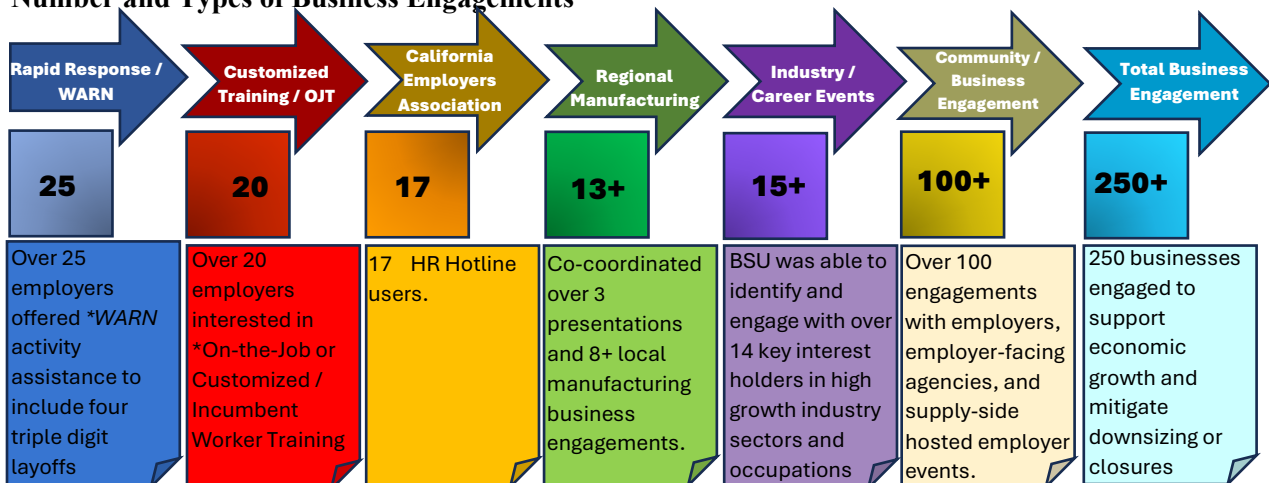
The BSU works within the Business Engagement Model (BEM) and Business Engagement Plan (BEP) to support economic growth, resiliency, inclusivity, and talent development with the goal of serving our business customers and forging connections between job seekers and employers, and other system interest-holders. BSU objectives are achieved by helping employers access reimbursement training programs (i.e., On-the-Job Training and Customized / Incumbent Worker Training), obtain hiring and recruitment assistance, navigate the process of downsizing and/or closing, find and locate new business resources, and bridge opportunities for apprenticeship development.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

Employment activity has remained steady during the last two quarters, keeping pace with the Business Engagement Plan goals. The BSU continues to make progress toward strengthening employer partnerships, expand work-based learning opportunities, and advance regional workforce priorities.

The illustration below reflects a high-level overview of the various types of business engagements and number of employers engaged during the specified timeframe:

Number and Types of Business Engagements



ADA Caption:

High-contrast seven-column table showing employer engagement activity across Rapid Response/WARN, Customized Training/OJT, California Employers Association, Regional Manufacturing, Industry and Career Events, Community Business Engagement, and Total Business Activity. Columns use distinct colors, include clear text with no merged cells, and present headers, numeric counts, and short achievement statements in accessible Aptos Black font. Definitions: WARN = Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification; OJT = On-the-Job Training.

Projected Achievements Met

During the January–June 2026 reporting period (Quarters 3 and 4), the Business Engagement Plan was used as a guide to advance employer-focused strategies, refined outreach tools, and strengthened regional collaboration through data-informed decision-making. These quarters emphasized enhanced outreach effectiveness, deeper insight-gathering, and expanded employer engagement aligned with ACWDB priorities.

Quarter three (January–March) accomplishments included:

- Updated employer outreach strategies, materials, and tools, including exploring newsletter outreach options and storytelling campaign alignment;
- Assessment of Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) activity to gauge feasibility of applying for additional assistance funding from the state to assist Dislocated Workers;
- Continuing to strengthen regional partnerships through targeted presentations and participation in community engagement events;
- Maintaining the 20% increase in employer engagement activity achieved in the last two quarters while continuing to expand employer outreach.

Quarter four developed business insights for partner and strategy development by:

- Conducting targeted employer outreach to assess talent development and recruitment needs;
- Continuing to improve and update the employer hiring survey for future re-launch;
- Engaging employers to align actionable insights into business talent and acquisition needs;
- Facilitating a high-impact employer roundtable on apprenticeship pathways.

Together, these accomplishments strengthen employer engagement, deepen regional collaboration, and enhance data-informed outreach that position the Business Engagement Plan for continued progress.

BUSINESS SERVICES ACTIVITIES:

Described below are the various types of employer engagements and number of employers engaged during the specified timeframe, along with highlights of Business Engagement Plan activity achievements.

Businesses Served:

Engagement can take on several forms including, but not limited to, attendance and participation in: job fairs, hiring events, employer spotlights, sector symposia, industry events, career panels, surveys, and employer hotline information. Through these engagements the BSU achieves a better understanding of which employers are hiring and what type of employees they hope to attract. Over 200 businesses were engaged during the first half of calendar year 2026 (January 1 – June 31), representing a steady workforce partnership effort across the service area. These businesses engagements supported economic growth and mitigated downsizing or closures.

BSU engagement continues to include coordinating onsite and virtual Rapid Response orientations, participating in career fairs, attending chamber events, meeting with economic development partners, supporting entry employer activities, and collaborating with employer-facing organizations and community agencies.

California Employers Association:

California Employers Association (CEA) continues to provide access to and on behalf of the Alameda County Workforce Development Board, a free Human Resources (HR) hotline provided to local area employers and HR Managers. Over 17 employers used the free HR Hotline, an increase of five new employers over the last reporting period. The description of issues addressed ranged from termination issues, benefits, policy questions, safety, wages, and other business operations related concerns.

One service that was provided by CEA, which was popular among employers, was the Do-It-Yourself Handbook, a digital template that allows businesses to personalize their own employee handbook. Due to its popularity, a new webinar series is in progress to include an updated Do-It-Yourself Handbook, and set to launch in the second- half of the calendar year 2026.

Advanced Manufacturing Sector:

The Regional Manufacturing Careers Specialist engaged at least 13 businesses and supported the business services team in co-coordinating presentations to economic development councils to help bridge opportunities in advanced manufacturing.

Rapid Response / Layoff Aversion Report:

Over 25 new employers were engaged as triple-digit layoff activity continues to increase. Targeted rapid-reemployment efforts were deployed to quickly match displaced workers with businesses experiencing immediate hiring needs.

Open Rapid Response Orientations:

In response to the rise in layoffs and the need to support potential Dislocated Worker participants, Open Rapid Response Orientations are offered monthly. Since May 2023, the Rapid Response Coordinator has consistently facilitated these sessions to ensure accessible service delivery. Open Rapid Response Orientations provide individuals not connected to a WARN event with the same tools, resources, and employment services offered during employer-specific Rapid Response presentations coordinated by the BSU. This approach ensures equitable access to reemployment support for all displaced workers, regardless of their layoff circumstances.

Customized Training / On-the-Job Training:

Over 20 employers expressed interest in On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized/Incumbent Worker Training (C/IWT), prompting the BSU to share information and prepare for future training contract opportunities. New York Wired, one of the Board's contracted providers, continues to offer worker upskilling support through the Metrix Online Learning platform, which offers over 7,500 virtual training courses for job seekers and businesses seeking to strengthen their workforce. Employers exploring C/IWT also indicated interest in OJT, generating new leads for work-based learning opportunities.

Recent updates to the OJT maximum reimbursement thresholds have further expanded the potential to attract new employer partners by offering higher wage reimbursement incentives.

These efforts demonstrate strong system coordination, increased employer engagement, and continued alignment with Business Engagement Plan goals to broaden work-based learning strategies and address regional workforce skill gaps.

Industry / Career Events:

The BSU supported local hiring and inclusivity of formerly incarcerated and unhoused individuals by coordinating and participating in re-entry job fairs and resource events working in collaboration with the Re-Entry Coordinator. BSU staff also supported economic resiliency and sustainability within the local service area by attending industry events to engage employers and industry leaders in potential matches for impending dislocated workers, and to connect businesses to training and talent recruitment services.

In alignment with the Industry Sector and Occupational Framework, the BSU engaged key interest-holders across high-growth sectors and facilitated employer discussions on emerging technologies and their workforce implications. Staff also participated in community and industry events to promote workforce programs, strengthen partnerships, and expand opportunities for employers and job seekers. These efforts broadened outreach, deepened collaboration, and supported the region's commitment to aligning talent development with evolving business needs.

Community / Business Engagement:

The BSU referred businesses to both internal and external service providers, as necessary. Examples of referral agencies included the Chambers of Commerce, California Employment Development Department's Employer Advisory Council, Small Business Development Center, local education agencies, community collaboratives (i.e. East Bay / Inter-Agency Training Council), local public economic development departments, and various employer-facing agencies.

The BSU leverages resources and convenes at both the local and regional level to coordinate service delivery. The Rapid Response Coordinator participates in the Greater Bay Area Rapid Response Roundtable which is one of over 50 regularly attended convenings by Business Services Unit staff.

Multiple industry and career events were attended by the BSU that led to multiple new connections with key interest holders in high growth industry sectors and occupations.

Total Employer Engagement:

More than 250 employers were engaged from January 1 through June 30, 2026. During this period, businesses were referred to Career Service Providers for onsite hiring events, and the Business Services Unit promoted career fairs, employer roundtables, and workforce resources across social media to support employer needs.

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