



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SBWIB Awarded \$1 Million via California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) Grant to Expand Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways for Disadvantaged Youth**

**HAWTHORNE** – The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) has been awarded a \$1 million California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) implementation grant from the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and its Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). This funding will support 125 disadvantaged youth ages 16–24 through paid pre-apprenticeship training, wraparound services, and direct entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs across multiple high-demand sectors.

The grant is part of a statewide \$15.4 million investment awarded to 29 programs through COYA, designed to align opportunity youth—often disconnected from school or employment—with career pathways in high-demand industries. This is the second round of COYA funding, following an initial \$31 million that supported 51 projects across California.

Local Youth will prepare for careers in healthcare, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, bioscience, automotive, aviation, education, and digital media through the SBWIB’s pre-apprenticeship programs called, Aero Flex, Space Flex, Bio-Flex, AME Flex and others, with training for occupations like Aerospace Assembly Technician, Production Technician, and Digital Media Editor. Each participant will receive industry-aligned training, an educational stipend, and supportive services. Funding will be invested in sector-based technical skills training.

“Our goal is to deliver high-quality, accessible career pathways for youth,” said SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel. “The COYA grant enables us to embed equity and support services into every aspect of the program, ensuring that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can succeed.”

The project leverages 15 core partners including the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC), OSI Systems, and Oak Crest Institute of Science, with major employers and institutions such as Northrop Grumman, El Camino College, and West Los Angeles College also engaged.

The COYA initiative prioritizes youth from historically underserved groups—foster youth, youth of color, justice-involved youth, young parents, low-income individuals, and youth with disabilities—who meet criteria such as Pell eligibility, WIOA status, Title I school enrollment, or residence in high-poverty areas.

California’s broader apprenticeship expansion is part of Governor Newsom’s Master Plan for Career Education, which sets a goal of serving 500,000 apprentices by 2029.

The SBWIB Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship offerings are employer-driven training programs that have proven to be successful in developing and upskilling current employees while increasing the pipeline of a future workforce.

For more on SBWIB's no cost job preparation, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship programs for young adults, visit [www.sbwib.org](http://www.sbwib.org).

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