

America's **JobCenter**
of CaliforniaSM

COMMUNITY COORDINATOR REPORT

April - June 2025

DEL NORTE COUNTY EDITION

WORKCON 2025 – Strength in Change: Resilience for the Future



SMART staff was proud to attend WORKCON 2025, the California Workforce Association's Annual Workforce Practitioners Conference, held from April 29 to May 1 at the Hilton Costa Mesa in Orange County. The conference theme, *Strength in Change: Resilience for the Future*, resonated deeply with our mission as we joined workforce development professionals, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and WIOA partners from across the state. This dynamic event provided an outstanding platform to engage with innovative programs and strategic collaborations that are shaping the future of workforce services in California.

Throughout the three-day event, our team participated in a range of workshops and sessions focused on emerging trends, including the integration of AI and technology in the workforce, the use of WIOA and other strategic funds, statewide advocacy efforts to improve accessibility of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and other best practices in program design to bring our client services to the next level. The conference's four dedicated tracks—Youth Workforce Services, Administrative Services, Case Management, and Business Services—allowed us to tailor our learning and bring back actionable insights to improve our services and outcomes.

We're excited to apply what we learned and continue building resilient, inclusive programs that help individuals thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.

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THANKING OUR AMAZING STAFF!!



SMART hosted an Employee Appreciation Day to recognize and celebrate the hard work, dedication, and contributions of our incredible team. The day featured a meal on SMART, games, personalized thank-you notes and small tokens of appreciation. It was a great opportunity for everyone to relax, connect with colleagues, and feel truly valued for the work they do each day.

Each county had a tailored Employee Appreciation Day. Del Norte staff enjoyed activities together such as exploring the beautiful nature of Crescent City, a game night of Bingo, a community drum circle, and a shared meal on SMART.



The day served not only as a thank-you, but also as a reminder of the positive and collaborative culture we strive to maintain. By setting aside time to celebrate our team, we reinforce our commitment to fostering a workplace where employees feel seen, supported, and motivated.

Thank you Del Norte Staff for your incredible impact on SMART and the Del Norte Community!



SMART Professional Development

- Protecting Against Wage & Hour Disputes
- Wage and Hour – Most Common Violations
- Workplace Safety- Avoiding the Cal/OSHA Fines
- Best Practices -LMI & Occupational Data
- Shasta County CalWorks Employment Services
- Redding Area Bus Authority
- Nation's Finest Veteran Services
- REALM Grant Planning Workgroup
- Shasta College A\$ET Program
- Regional Data Report from EDD
- Data Analyst Back Safety in Office Environments
- Fire Prevention & Fire Extinguisher Use
- Situational Awareness
- And More!



Del Norte Spring Job Fair Shines Through Rainclouds!



The much anticipated Del Norte Spring Job Fair returned on Thursday, April 10, 2025 at the Del Norte Fairgrounds. SMART Workforce Center in partnership with Del Norte Health and Human Services Expanded Subsidized Employment Program hosted 42 employer booths. The range of employers represented a span of industries including healthcare, early childhood education, government, and manufacturing. Job seekers were able to connect with their next potential employer, connecting one-on-one to discuss open positions and make impactful connections.

SMART Workforce Center staff were happy to connect with the over 200 job seekers who walked through the doors. Whether connecting at the registration table to welcome them into an event full of opportunity, sharing contact information at the SMART booth to connect individuals to specialized SMART programs available for qualified individuals, or helping in the on-site application assistance room.

Throughout the week staff helped prepare job seekers back in the Job Center by helping job seekers pre-register for the job fair and offering free career services such as interview preparation, resume building, and printing services.

"Thank you for the wonderful experience thankful to be part of the community job fair"
-Addie Meedom House



Storm Recovery Efforts Deliver Big Results in Del Norte

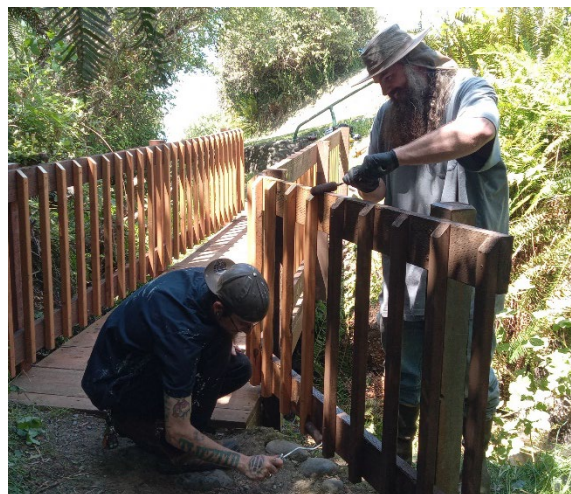


After the devastating winter storms that swept through Northern California from late December 2022 to early 2023, a powerful recovery effort emerged with a dual mission: restore damaged public lands and reconnect long-term unemployed individuals with meaningful work. The 2023 Severe Winter Storms Workforce Recovery Program served multiple counties, but Del Norte County stood out as a leader in both impact and participation.

Enrollment in Del Norte began on May 30, 2023, and quickly gained traction thanks to strong partnerships with the County of Del Norte and the Del Norte Sheriff's Office. The program provided temporary employment opportunities that helped clean up storm-impacted areas while giving workers the chance to build new skills, gain recent job experience, and prepare for long-term employment success. Out of 68 total participants enrolled—well above the original target of 44—Del Norte County accounted for the majority, with over \$511,000 invested directly in participant wages and employment costs.

The grant funded not only wages but also critical pre-employment screenings and \$41,750 in supportive services, ensuring participants were job-ready with essential safety gear such as hard hats, gloves, boots, and rain gear. In total, 63% of the grant's funds—nearly \$700,000—went directly to supporting participants, with Del Norte County leading in both expenditure and engagement.

This program proved to be more than just a recovery initiative—it was a catalyst for personal and community transformation. In Del Norte County, residents didn't just restore public lands—they restored their futures, one job at a time.



On-The-Job Training and Work Experience Partners:

- CGI Technical Services, Inc.
- Cinders Woodfired Pizza
- County of Del Norte
- County of Trinity
- Dee Stover State Farm
- Del Norte Child Care Council
- Del Norte County Fairgrounds
- Del Norte Mission Impossible
- Emerald Ridge Construction
- Frank Johnston Upholstery
- Joy's Yard & Ground Maintenance
- Kindred Hearts
- Los Compadres Mexican Restaurant
- Mama Llama Eatery and Café
- Orcas Heating & Refrigeration
- Pro Garage Doors
- Rumiano Cheese
- Rural Human Services
- Shasta Caverns
- Shasta Family YMCA
- Shiloh Flower Farms
- Southern Oregon Goodwill
- Steve's Custom Upholstery
- Summit Lofts
- Taste & See Creamery
- Trinity County Fairgrounds & Events
- Turtle Bay Exploration Park
- US Forest Service
- Zephyrs Books and Coffee

Yurok Tribe Job Fair in Klamath

The Yurok Job Fair on May 2, 2025, was a collaborative effort led by the Yurok Tribal Government and Yurok Tribal Corporations to connect community members with dozens of good-paying employment opportunities across a wide range of fields, including river restoration, telecommunications, hospitality, and retail. Held at the Ada Charles Community Center in Klamath, the fair featured tribal staff on hand to share detailed job descriptions and assist attendees with on-the-spot applications. SMART staff connected with job seekers and businesses alike to share the word about all of SMART's free workforce services.



2025 Economic Summit

On April 16th, Del Norte's business leaders, elected officials, local youth and community members gathered for the 2025 Economic Summit, hosted by the Crescent City – Del Norte Chamber of Commerce. Chamber Executive Director, Cindy Vosburg, described the Economic Summit as a vital opportunity to unite the business community and highlight ongoing progress across the region.

That spirit of connection and optimism was echoed by SMART Program Supervisor, Christy Hernandez, who hosted a table at the event. "I think it's great," she said. "I love coming to these economic summits every year. The student panel is my favorite. Just hearing from the youth—their wants and their wishes, what their future is going to be like, what they want from us in the community...it's wonderful."



Eric Wier, City Manager, also praised the event's collaborative energy. "It's good for everybody to get together and network and collaborate," he said, capturing the sentiment that the summit continues to serve as a catalyst for community-driven progress.

E3 Program Returns with Highest Participation Ever!

The week of June 16th marked the launch of the 2025 E3 (Experience, Education, Employment) Summer Youth Program, led by SMART in collaboration with the Del Norte County Office of Education. This year, 59 high school students participated in Workshop Week, with an impressive 52 youth placed in internships—the highest number in the program’s history. These milestones highlight the strength of our community partnerships and the collective investment in supporting young people.



The program began with a high-impact Workshop Week, where students earned two industry-recognized certifications in Productivity and Problem Solving. Over the course of just two days, each student completed approximately 12 interviews with local employers, community leaders, and professionals. Throughout the week, partners delivered interactive presentations on essential workplace skills, including first impressions, conflict resolution, customer service, financial literacy, punctuality, and accountability.

The continued success of the E3 Program is a testament to SMART’s leadership in securing funding, coordinating logistics, and providing dedicated staff. Yet, at the core of the program’s impact is a passionate network of partners and champions. A special thank you goes to Tony Fabricius, Principal of Sunset High School, who has been a tireless advocate for the program for the past eight years. His year-round efforts to prepare and support students have helped make E3 a cornerstone of youth development in Del Norte County.

Del Norte’s cross-sector collaboration has captured attention across California, with other counties now looking to replicate the E3 model. What sets this program apart is not just its results, but the spirit of unity and shared purpose that drives it. Together, we’re equipping young people with the tools, confidence, and real-world experience they need to thrive—and to give back to their communities.

Over the next four to six weeks, 52 interns will gain meaningful, hands-on experience at businesses and organizations throughout Del Norte County. For many, this opportunity is more than a summer job—it’s a pivotal first step into the world of work.



To everyone who contributed to the success of the 2025 E3 Summer Youth Program: thank you. Your dedication is not only shaping careers, but transforming lives and strengthening our community for generations to come.

Rico's Success Story

When Rico connected with SMART Workforce Center (SMART) through a probation referral, he was eager to turn a new page and rebuild his life. Recently released from incarceration, he faced challenges common to many returning citizens—unstable employment history, financial hardship, and limited support. Despite these obstacles, Rico brought a strong work ethic and diverse experience to the table, having worked as a cook, firefighter, landscaper, and glazier. While incarcerated, he continued to develop his skills by serving as a Wildland Firefighter, gaining discipline, resilience, and teamwork experience. With the guidance and support of SMART, Rico received personalized job search assistance, resume help, and encouragement every step of the way.

Today, Rico is proud to be working with a local family-owned cheese manufacturing company, Rumiano Cheese Co. This is a major milestone in his journey toward stability and independence. His determination and persistence paid off, and his new position not only provides steady income but also a renewed sense of purpose. Being employed has allowed Rico to take meaningful steps toward self-sufficiency. His success is a testament to the power of second chances and the impact of community programs like the HIRE grant in helping individuals like Rico build brighter futures.



Elijah Powers Forward with First Steps to Success

Elijah came to SMART seeking support in finding his first full-time job. As a justice-involved youth experiencing homelessness, Elijah faced several barriers, including lack of work experience and reliable transportation. Though he had held some part-time and volunteer positions, he had never held a full-time position. His goal: secure stable employment in HVAC or the general labor field. SMART, thanks to the HIRE grant, was able to enroll Elijah to help make that goal a reality.

After completing a comprehensive assessment, SMART staff identified Elijah's needs and began building a tailored plan for his success. He received interview prep materials and was scheduled for a mock interview. With guidance and encouragement, Elijah began building the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the workforce. SMART also ensured that he was aware of the supportive services available through the HIRE grant, such as help getting work clothing or addressing transportation barriers.

Elijah is now actively engaged, committing to his goals, and well on his way to launching his career. His story reflects how with the right support, challenges both internal and external can be overcome!





SMART Workforce Center is a
Proud Partner of:

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Proudly serving our community since 1979, SMART Workforce Center is a 501c3 non-profit committed to helping job seekers find jobs, increase training and skills, and increase earnings. We also invest in our local economy by helping businesses grow. To learn more, visit our website: www.thesmartcenter.biz

SMART Workforce Center is an equal opportunity employer.

Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities. CA Relay TTY 7-1-1

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