



# SMART Workforce Center Community Coordinator Report



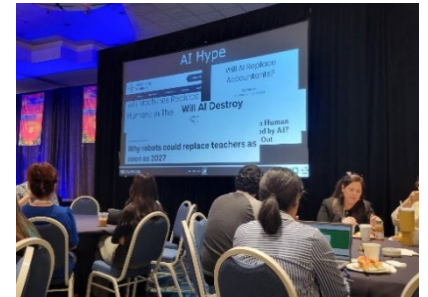
## Q2-2024

SISKIYOU COUNTY EDITION



## CWA WORKCON Conference- Bridging the Gap 2024

On May 29-31, CWA (California Workforce Association) held the WORKCON 2024 Bridging the Gap Conference at Omni Rancho Las Palmas, Palm Springs CA. This event provided a rich opportunity for learning and brainstorming. Conference coordinators invited participants to stretch and deepen their understanding of workforce trends and strategies. Several SMART managers and staff from the Shasta & Del Norte offices attended. Much valuable networking happened organically all throughout the three days of conference. Professional development workshops abounded, offering a chance to thoughtfully engage and expand horizons. Many interesting topics were covered in the workshops that the SMART staff attended, including Harnessing Innovation for Workforce Resilience in a Changing Climate, The Apprentice Voice: Real Stories from the Valley, Multigeneration Workplaces, Charting the Course from Incarceration to Employment, and The Five Big Ideas of AI; Leading And Learning in an AI-Infused World.



The climate change workshop was compelling in its' statistics, showing how \$100 billion annually is lost globally from heat-induced drops in productivity. The presenter stressed that meaningful action to reduce emissions/and adapt to extreme heat is crucial in trying to keep a handle on any increasing warming. Renewable energies, carbon storage, rebuilding power grids, and advanced technology in Fire prediction were all worthy topics up for discussion in the class. Job growth in response to climate changes continues to progress in green technologies such as solar. "Resilience grants" are being offered through WIOA in the US.



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## **CWA WORKCON Conference-** *Continued from Page 1*

There has been a drop in recent years for people moving into the construction trades. The Apprentice Voice workshop featured men and women who share their journey through WIOA and are now union workers, as Roofers/Water proofers, Plumbers & Pipefitters, and IBEW Electrical. They got their start by attending the WIOA sponsored Valley Build MC3 Pre-apprenticeship program and now work as union apprentices across the CA Central Valley.

They received the support of WIOA with wraparound services such as mileage, childcare, and even a gym membership to stay physically active and ready for the demands of the occupations. The three speak to new classes with the goal of encouraging people to consider construction trades in their career futures. The union jobs pay well and include pensions and medical insurance.

And finally, one of our SMART staff had the opportunity to attend the Ventura County Bridges 2 Work workshop, a program dedicated to preparing inmates for life after release. Designed for individuals 20 to 180 days from release, the program equips them with the skills, training, and resources needed to secure employment immediately upon reentry. This proactive engagement, starting well before release, maximizes the time available for inmates to develop necessary skills and secure employment opportunities, thereby reducing recidivism rates and supporting successful reintegration into society. Through partnerships with the Del Norte County Probation Department and an upcoming meeting with the Sheriff, her SMART goal is to establish similar services that prepare inmates for transitional jobs upon release.

## **Community Partner: Goodwill Job Connection & Training Center**

In addition to our location in Weed, SMART now has a North Siskiyou office located within the Goodwill Job Connection & Training Center in Yreka! This move puts us right where the action is, allowing us to better serve individuals in our community who are seeking employment and training opportunities.

Being situated within the center means we can work more closely with the Goodwill team to provide comprehensive support for our community members. Together, we're focused on breaking down barriers and creating brighter futures for everyone.

Thank you, Goodwill, for being such a great and welcoming partner!



## Adult Success, Mariah's Story

Being a woman in the fire service comes with its own set of challenges, and navigating through the academy with financial struggles adds another layer of difficulty. With the SMART Office's help not only did my dream start to become reality, but I was made to feel like I now had a financial support system to help take my career off the ground. Despite all my obstacles, perseverance and determination become the guiding principles. Every step forward is a testament to resilience and a commitment to breaking barriers. SMART office gave me all the tools and resources to be able to do just that. The journey through the academy, marked by rigorous training and demanding physical tasks, is fueled by passion for service and a drive to prove one's capabilities. It's about proving not only to others but also to oneself that gender and financial constraints do not define one's ability to excel in this demanding profession. Each obstacle overcome is a step closer to achieving the dream of serving the community with courage and dedication, and with the many resources provided by SMART I truly feel like I'm ready to go out and properly serve my community with more ease. Thank you from the bottom of my heart SMART for making my little kid's dream become reality. – Mariah



## Fire Fighter Academy Report

College of the Siskiyou's Fire Technology Program cadets graduated on May 3, 2024. SMART assisted cadets through Quest and Adult grants with the cost of uniforms, boots, and other training related costs to help cadets through this intensive program. During the Fire Technology Program, cadets learned to protect all life, property, and their communities through the development and application of fire prevention, engineering, training and education, and enforcement. By showing up to class every day and giving it 100%, these cadets graduated with all their certifications needed to become firefighters. These graduates will be entering their career this June with CalFire or with their local City Department. One of the cadet's assisted by SMART was awarded the "Allegiant Axe". This cadet earned the award due to his hard work, his commitment to learning and growing as a firefighter, and pushing himself to the best he can be.



# Young Adult Highlight: SMART Young Adult Program

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One of the hidden gems in the workforce is the young adult population—students, recent graduates, and young parents eager to grow but often unsure where to start. These young people are now faced with the pivotal decision of determining what they want to be in the world, a decision that can feel daunting and overwhelming. It takes just one person in their corner to help forge a pathway, and that's where the SMART Young Adult Program comes in. Through partnership,



teamwork, and an encouraging push of accountability, SMART youth have found success in a variety of ways.

### Peter's Journey

Peter, at 18 years old, had no idea what he wanted to do. He had never held a job and struggled with nerves. Working with his career advisor, Peter discovered a love for the gym, which led to a work experience at the YMCA. He went from being unable to work an eight-hour shift due to nerves to now working full-time and attending Shasta College.

### Jordan and Taylor's Story

Jordan and Taylor, two young parents, came to SMART looking for an opportunity to do more for their son. Through career exploration and supportive services, Jordan obtained her driver's license and an AA from Shasta College. She now works as an Environmental Service Specialist.

Taylor received assistance through IOT and became an HVAC technician. Both parents have created a positive generational impact by showing their son that dreams are possible with hard work.

### Micheal's Achievement

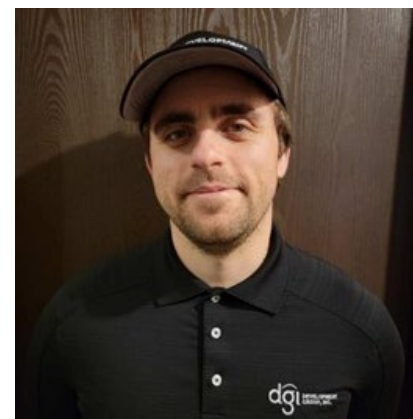
Micheal had always dreamed of working in IT but had no idea where to start. With resume and interview assistance from SMART, he landed his dream job as an IT specialist.

### Sophia's Success

Sophia, through obtaining her first job, was able to afford her first apartment for herself and her daughter.

For many young adults, the journey to discovering their place in the world begins with a single step—guided by the support of a dedicated career advisor. From resume assistance to job searches, interview tips, referrals, and being the supportive voice on the other end of the phone, these are the stories and impacts of our career advisors.

Every day in the youth program is a great day to change a life!



## On the Job Training and Work Experience Partners:

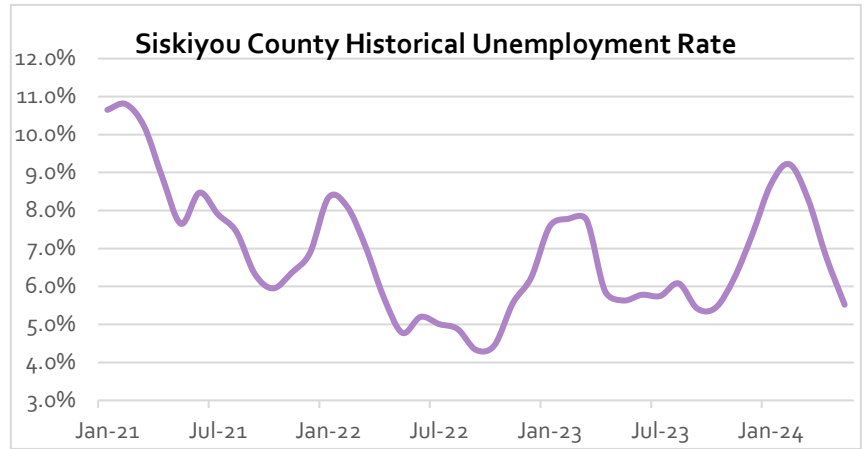
- US Forest Service
- Cary's Redding Tire and Auto
- Emerald Ridge Construction
- County of Del Norte
- Plotzke Ace Hardware
- Mayers Memorial Hospital District
- Fasteners Inc
- Sunseekers
- County of Trinity Animal Shelter
- Burney Water District
- Berry Curtis Insurance
- US-Offsite Holdings, Inc.
- ALC Gifts & Antiques
- Western Valuation Services
- Renewed Life Medical Group
- Hat Creek Lumber
- Turtle Bay Exploration Park
- Del Norte Senior Center
- Los Compadres Mexican Restaurant
- Shasta Public Library- Redding
- Shasta YMCA
- Boundary Waters
- Shasta Regional Transportation Agency



# Siskiyou County Labor Market Update:

As of May 2024, In Siskiyou County, the civilian work force contracted slightly over the quarter to 16,390 this includes everyone that is working, and everyone that is looking for work. Of those, 15,480 are currently employed.

The unemployment rate is 5.5% for May, this is down from 5.6% in the same time last year, but down since a peak earlier in the year.



Source [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov)

## Fastest Growing Occupations Siskiyou County

Cooks, Restaurant
Physical Therapist Assistants
Bartenders
Medical and Health Services Managers
Public Relations Managers
Soil and Plant Scientists
Occupational/Physical Therapist Assistants/Aides
Nurse Practitioners
Coaches and Scouts
Physician Assistants
Plasterers and Stucco Masons
Solar Photovoltaic Installers
Material Moving Workers, All Other
Chefs and Head Cooks
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors
Dining Room, Cafeteria, and Bartender Helpers
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers
Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Other
Millwrights

In raw numbers

there are approximately 910 people currently considered unemployed in Siskiyou County. This is slightly lower than the same time last year.

With the labor force currently shrinking, and the unemployment rate being low, businesses may find it difficult to fill labor needs. Fortunately, SMART offers assistance to businesses, in the form of On-The-Job training reimbursement and training programs for their employees.

Through SMART’s funded On the Job Training programs we can help reduce risk when hiring a new employee. As this labor shortage creates complications for employers in the county, SMART can be there to help employers navigate it.

Employers may also need to rethink how they recruit and fill their labor needs. There are untapped labor pools not traditionally counted in the unemployed numbers. Retirees looking for something to do, college students just about to enter the labor pool, parolees who have just completed their prison terms, and homemakers thinking about reentering the work force are not included in the unemployed numbers. Businesses can tap those resources but will likely need to adjust their thinking of what the job demands. Retirees or students may not want or be able to accommodate a 40 hour a week position. Perhaps someone lacks the skills needed to perform the work but has strong motivation to learn.

This is where SMART can help. We can connect businesses to candidates that employers may not have had access to, or even knew were options. SMART clients come from all walks of life and are looking for careers today. As the county’s pool of candidates to hire continues to shrink, SMART can assist businesses filling their labor needs.

<https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/>

# NoRTEC Summit: Remember Your Why

Last month, SMART had the opportunity to attend the first annual NoRTEC Workforce Summit, an engaging all-day event that provided opportunities for networking with our incredible partners, including the Alliance for Workforce Development and Job Training Center. The day was filled with remarkable presentations, including:



- **How to Incorporate and Grow Apprenticeship Programs** by Eric Flora
- **Where the Agencies Are Going and a Celebration of Success** by Wendy Zanotelli, Kristine Zuazua, and Carrie Ferchaud
- **Using AI to Advance Our Job Centers** by Jeffrey Harrington
- **Making Our AJCCs Accessible to the Communities We Serve** by Connie Ocampo

Attendees also had the chance to hear inspiring remarks from Michael Cross, Executive Director of NoRTEC.

One of the most impactful presentations of the day was given by SMART's very own Rachelle Guevara. Rachelle serves as the Program Supervisor for Shasta County and has been instrumental in the growth of the young adult program due to her heart for youth. Her presentation provided attendees with an overview of the young adult program and brought focus back to the "WHY" behind our work. During her presentation, Rachelle highlighted both seasoned individuals who had worked in this field for 15 years and newcomers, including an employee who had started just three days prior. She asked each of them their "why," and almost all answered with a call to serve and a desire to make a difference in those around them.

With changing requirements, mountains of paperwork, and working with populations facing barriers, it can be easy to forget why we do what we do and the incredible ripple effect that can occur by just believing in one person. One of the standout moments of the presentation was a picture of a youth wall, showcasing the various "whys" that young adults had for participating in SMART programs and highlighting where these youth are today. The presentation also included humor, highlighting areas of growth the young adult program has experienced through trial and error in adapting to the youths' needs.

Overall, attendees were left with a renewed sense of the "why" behind their work and the overarching belief that if you firmly and wholeheartedly believe in what you do and who you are serving, success will follow.

Thank you to NoRTEC for putting on an incredible and inspiring event!

## SMART Professional Development:

- California Workforce Association/WORKCON
- SMART April Safety Training- Participating in a Positive Work Culture
- SMART May Safety Training- Computer Workstation Safety
- SMART June Safety Training- Heat Illness Prevention
- NORTEC- Equity & Access Committee
- Shasta Adult School- Lunch & Learn Event
- North Valley EAC-Cal/OSHA Workplace Safety: Avoiding the Fines
- Simpson University- Healthcare Programs
- CA Dept. of Rehabilitation- Pathways to Success
- Best Practices- LMI & Occupational Data- NORTEC
- NORTEC Workforce Summit
- AFWD/SMART Best Practice
- SMART/in house cross training/California Indian Manpower Consortium
- Essential Communication Skills Training

## Welcome New Staff!

What did the gold prospector say? "There's gold in they/them hills!"

Erika recently started at SMART as the Community Workforce Specialist for the Yreka office. Erika graduated with a BA from Sacramento State and has extensive experience in case management. With over six years in the social work field, they bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and resources. Their diverse background includes working in STRTP's (aka group homes) where they provided therapeutic care to youth with severe behavioral and mental issues which included foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system, and juvenile sex offenders. In recent years, Erika has focused on providing housing services and support to transitional age youth, LGBTQ individuals, and military veterans experiencing homelessness or housing instability. They played a key role in creating Siskiyou County's first homeless shelter program by developing policy and procedures and managing the shelter's day-to-day operations. Erika is also a certified trainer in Trauma-Informed Care and Crisis Prevention & Intervention, applying these principles in their daily work to ensure that everyone is met with dignity, kindness, and respect in a non-judgmental environment. Taking another social service field turn, Erika is excited to be providing workforce support in the community, offering individualized support for folks to break through the adversity they face by meeting them where they are at and reaching goals at the pace they serve them. Erika is ready to help all community members figure out what they want to do when "they grow up" and build skills to have long-term success.



The SMART Workforce Center is a 501c3 non-profit committed to providing job seekers with resources, training, education, job development, and job placement to help them not only receive living wage jobs, but to grow in their careers. We also help businesses grow by educating employers about available tax credits, alternative labor pools, and helping with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring, as well as offsetting wages for work experience and on the job training programs. SMART is a proud partner of America's Job Center of California and the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board. We have locations in Crescent City, Redding, Weaverville, and Weed. For more information visit the SMART website at <http://www.thesmartcenter.biz>.

Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities. TTY 711.

Del Norte County:  
707.464.8347  
875 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Crescent City, CA 95531

Shasta County:  
530.246.7911  
760 Cypress Ave Suite 210  
Redding, CA 96001



Trinity County: 530.623.5538  
30 Arbuckle Ct  
Weaverville, CA 96093

Siskiyou County:  
530.657.0139  
800 College Ave  
Weed, CA 96094