



## RICHMOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Xavier Abrams, Chairperson  
Thursday, September 11, 2025  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

### AGENDA

- I. Procedural Items
  - a. Call to Order and Roll Call
  - b. Review and Approval of Minutes: May 8, 2025
- II. Director's Report
- III. Action Items
  - a. Approve the development of a Business Engagement Action Plan for PY 2025–2026, including the formation of sector partnerships, quarterly employer listening sessions, and integration of work-based learning models.
  - b. Approval of Ongoing Authority to Process Training Funds (ITAs) and Execute On-the-Job Training (OJT) Contracts
  - c. Approval of Richmond Workforce Development Board Participation in *East Bay Works Forward* Regional Nonprofit Workforce Intermediary
- IV. Information Items
  - a. Board membership and Bylaw Committees Discussion
  - b. Make America Skilled Again (MASA)
  - c. America's Talent Strategy: Equipping American Workers for the Golden Age
  - d. Workforce Pell Grant
  - e. AI Action Plan
- V. Public Forum
- VI. Announcements
- VII. Closing Remarks & Adjourn

**Next RWDB Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 6, 2025**  
**11:30 a.m. to 1:00 pm**  
**In-Person**  
**330 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Richmond, CA 94804**

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION: This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact Nickie Mastay at (510) 620-6609 at least three business days before the meeting date.

RichmondWORKS is an equal opportunity employer/program. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for our programs, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.



## Richmond Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes – May 8, 2025

On May 8, 2025, the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) convened at 11:45 a.m. under Vice-Chair Uche Uwahemu to discuss various workforce development initiatives and updates. The meeting included a roll call of members and a vote to approve the minutes from the previous meetings on March 15 and March 24, 2025, which was carried out successfully.

### Director's Report

Tamara Walker, the director, introduced new board member Gina Baker and provided an overview of the federal budget for 2026, which includes significant cuts to workforce funding. The proposal includes a 29% reduction in federal workforce investments through the consolidation of grants into the "Make America Skilled Again" (MASA) initiative. The report also noted that current WIOA funding levels will remain until September 20, 2025, while Congress develops its budget during the summer.

In response to funding challenges, the James Irvine Foundation suggested transforming East Bay Works into a nonprofit to enable access to additional foundation grants, which could enhance community funding opportunities. Furthermore, the board plans to implement place-based services starting July 1, 2025, by sending staff to the Nevin Center.

### Resource Fair Discussion

The AJCC One-Stop partners have been discussing the organization of a resource fair focused on identifying services provided by AJCC Workforce partners. However, the location for the event has yet to be determined.

### Presentation on Richmond Green Blue New Deal

Yahna Williamson presented updates on the Green Blue New Deal (GBND), including a survey conducted to prioritize projects based on feedback from city staff, the Economic Development Commission, and the Workforce Development Board. The top seven projects identified are as follows :

| Port Upgrades | 80% | | Building Electrification Retrofits | 50% | | Brownfield Research and Innovation | 50% | | Destination Downtown | 50% | | Transition to Zero Emission Vehicles | 40% | | Offshore Wind Manufacturing | 40% | | Green Accessory Dwellings | 40% |

Additional considerations included addressing gaps in workforce development and emphasizing the need for meaningful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for local residents.

### Action Items

Several motions were made during the meeting:

- Approval of amending the One-Stop Operator contract with Cheryl Maier, not exceeding \$30,000, which was carried.
- Approval of the RWDB Local Plan for Program Years 25-28, which also passed.



## **Richmond Workforce Development Board Meeting**

### **Minutes – May 8, 2025**

- Creation of an Ad Hoc Youth Committee, which was approved, with volunteers Gregory Brooks, Gina Baker, and Xavier Abrams stepping forward.

### **Conclusion**

The meeting concluded without any announcements and adjourned at 1:00 p.m. .

**RICHMOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**AGENDA ITEM**

**To:** Richmond Workforce Development Board

**From:** Richmond Workforce Development Board Staff

**Date:** September 9, 2025

**Action Item:** Approval of Business Engagement Action Plan – Program Year 2025–2026

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) approve the development and implementation of a Business Engagement Action Plan for Program Years 2025–2026.

**BACKGROUND**

The Richmond WDB Local Plan (PY 2025–2028) identifies Expanding Business Engagement as a top system priority. Stronger partnerships with employers and industry sectors are essential to ensuring Richmond residents are prepared for in-demand jobs, while businesses gain access to skilled, job-ready workers.

The Action Plan is designed to:

- Launch at least one new sector partnership in a priority industry (e.g., clean energy, healthcare, construction, logistics).
- Host quarterly employer listening sessions to capture emerging workforce needs. Integrate work-based learning models (apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training) into at least two existing workforce training programs.

This initiative directly aligns with the state’s “High Road” strategies and the Richmond Local Plan’s commitment to equity, quality jobs, and economic growth.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Businesses are experiencing workforce shortages and rapid changes in technology, requiring closer alignment between employer needs and workforce preparation. The Business Engagement Action Plan will create structured opportunities for industry input, ensure local training programs remain demand-driven, and strengthen the role of the RWDB as a business-led board.

Board members will serve as ambassadors and advisors, leveraging their business networks to connect employers with RichmondWORKS, providing guidance on industry priorities, and monitoring progress on the Action Plan.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with approving the Action Plan. However, expanded employer engagement is expected to improve WIOA performance outcomes, strengthen partnerships, and position RichmondWORKS for future funding opportunities.

**RICHMOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
**AGENDA ITEM**

**To:** Richmond Workforce Development Board

**From:** Richmond Workforce Development Board Staff

**Date:** September 9, 2025

**Action Item: Approval of Ongoing Authority to Process Training Funds (ITAs) and Execute On-the-Job Training (OJT) Contracts**

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend that the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) approve and authorize the Employment and Training Director, or designee, to:

- Process payments for tuition and training expenses through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and other training mechanisms using all available training funds (WIOA, discretionary grants, state, federal, and other workforce-related funding sources);
- Execute contracts with local employers to partially reimburse expenses for On-the-Job Training (OJT) and hiring of eligible participants; and
- Contract with training vendors not on the ETPL when they deliver programs in the Workforce Development Board's priority sectors (Healthcare, Construction, Green Economy, Transportation and Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing, and Information Technology) or Local Educational Agencies (LEAs).

This authority will be ongoing and apply to all training fund sources, ensuring maximum flexibility to meet the needs of both participants and employers.

**BACKGROUND**

WIOA and other workforce funding streams require that qualified providers deliver occupational skills training. For WIOA Title I, training services delivered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) must be provided by vendors listed on the California Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), per 20 CFR §§ 680.410–680.430 and California EDD Directive WSD21-03. ETPL listing serves as the procurement mechanism, eliminating the need for a separate local RFP.

The RWDB's local workforce development policy also authorizes contracting with non-ETPL vendors when they provide training in Board-approved priority sectors or are LEAs, ensuring responsiveness to regional industry demand.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, authorized under 20 CFR § 680.700 et seq. and other state/federal workforce program rules, reimburse employers between 50% and 75% of participant wages during training.

Historically, the City used an outside vendor to process training and OJT payments. By bringing this function in-house, administrative service fees will be eliminated, allowing all training funds—not just WIOA—to be maximized for participant training and employer reimbursements.

Expanding the authority to include all training funds and making it ongoing ensures that the RWDB can respond quickly to workforce needs, leverage multiple funding sources, and align with sector priorities. Eliminating third-party vendor fees allows more dollars to be reinvested directly into training services and employer reimbursements.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This action authorizes the ongoing use of all training funds (WIOA, discretionary grants, state, federal, and other workforce-related sources) for ITAs, training programs, and OJT reimbursements. Funding is program-specific and 100% supported by available training fund allocations. For Example:

WIOA Dislocated

CAREER

WPA

Org	Object	Project	Amount	
12572541	400813	27G06	\$ 54,907.00	ITA
12573241	400843	27G06	\$ 5,490.00	ADMIN FEES
12572341	400813	22903	\$ 100,000.00	ITA
12573241	400843	22903	\$ 10,000.00	ADMIN FEES
12572541	400813	NO PROJ	\$ 100,000.00	ITA
12573241	400843	NO PROJ	\$ 10,000.00	ADMIN FEES

**RICHMOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
AGENDA ITEM**

**To:** Richmond Workforce Development Board

**From:** Richmond Workforce Development Board Staff

**Date:** September 9, 2025

**Action Item: Approval of Richmond Workforce Development Board Participation in East Bay Works Forward Regional Nonprofit Workforce Intermediary**

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend that the Richmond Workforce Development Board (RWDB) approve Richmond's participation as a partner in the *East Bay Works Forward* initiative.

**BACKGROUND**

The Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board (WDBCCC), as the lead agency, is submitting a regional grant proposal on behalf of four Workforce Development Boards: Contra Costa County, Alameda County, Oakland, and Richmond. The proposal seeks funding to establish East Bay Works Forward, a regional nonprofit workforce intermediary.

The nonprofit intermediary will:

- Align cross-jurisdictional workforce strategies across Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and the Cities of Oakland and Richmond.
- Improve coordination of resources, services, and employer engagement to better serve low-income and underrepresented job seekers.
- Establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to attract diversified funding, institutionalize shared strategies, and build durable infrastructure for long-term systems change.

RWDB's participation ensures Richmond's priorities—including youth employment, green jobs training, and equitable access to family-sustaining careers—are represented in the governance and implementation of the regional entity.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Although the East Bay Regional Planning Unit (RPU) provides a structure for regional coordination, collaboration has often been fragmented. Creating a nonprofit intermediary built on the RPU framework, offering a dedicated backbone organization to support strategic alignment, employer responsiveness, and innovation across all four

boards.

This action affirms RWDB's role as a full partner, ensuring Richmond residents benefit from expanded pathways into the clean economy, public sector careers, healthcare, and other high-growth industries.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with RWDB's approval of participation. All project funds will be managed under the grant. Approval positions RWDB to leverage regional funding, expand employer engagement, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of workforce initiatives.

# Richmond Workforce Development Board

## Board Member Roles in Expanding Business Engagement

### Purpose

The Richmond WDB's Local Plan (PY 2025–2028) identifies **Expanding Business Engagement** as a top system priority. As a **business-led board**, members play a critical role in connecting RichmondWORKS with employers, industries, and the broader community.

### 1. Provide Strategic Leadership

- Share insights on industry trends and hiring needs.
- Guide the Board on which industries to prioritize for sector partnerships.
- Align strategies with the Local Plan's workforce and equity goals.

### 2. Act as a Business Ambassador

- Promote RichmondWORKS to peers and networks.
- Recruit employers to engage in programs, hiring, and training partnerships.
- Participate in quarterly employer listening sessions.

### 3. Advise on Work-Based Learning

- Shape internship, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training models.
- Offer opportunities within your company or industry for Richmond residents.

### 4. Ensure Accountability & Oversight

- Monitor progress on the Business Engagement Action Plan.
- Review outcomes to confirm employer and job seeker needs are met.
- Promote investments that lead to good jobs with career pathways.

### 5. Champion Equity & Access

- Support strategies that include under-resourced populations: youth, justice-involved individuals, English language learners, older workers, and people with disabilities.
- Encourage businesses to commit to family-sustaining wages and advancement opportunities.

### Your Commitment

As a WDB member, your voice and networks are vital. By serving as **leaders, ambassadors, and advocates**, you ensure that Richmond residents connect to good jobs and that businesses access the skilled workforce they need.

## Make America Skilled Again (MASA)

### Overview

MASA, short for Make America Skilled Again, is a workforce development framework proposed in the FY 2026 President's Budget. It consolidates multiple federal workforce programs into a single flexible block grant to streamline funding, reduce bureaucracy, and expand apprenticeship and credential-based training.

### Purpose

The initiative seeks to reduce mismatches between job seekers and employer needs, particularly in advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, clean energy, and healthcare. It prioritizes apprenticeships and employer-driven training pathways to strengthen U.S. competitiveness.

### Key Features

- **Consolidation:** Combines 11 existing federal workforce programs into one block grant.
- **Apprenticeship Emphasis:** At least 10% of MASA funds directed toward apprenticeship activities.
- **Flexibility:** Increased authority for states and localities to tailor workforce delivery.
- **Employer Alignment:** Training designed with direct input from industry partners.
- **Equity:** Expands access to underserved populations.

### Impacts on the Workforce System

- Greater flexibility for workforce boards to allocate training resources.
- Improved alignment of training with industry demand.
- Potential reduction in WIOA-specific funding streams, requiring adaptation by local systems.
- Strengthened partnerships with employers for curriculum design and credential recognition.
- Expanded apprenticeship pipelines in high-demand sectors.

### Conclusion

MASA represents a bold restructuring of federal workforce policy. However, it remains a proposal within the FY 2026 budget and requires Congressional approval before implementation.

## **America's Talent Strategy: Equipping American Workers for the Golden Age**

### **Overview**

"America's Talent Strategy: Equipping American Workers for the Golden Age" is a federal workforce vision document released on August 12, 2025. Developed by the Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education, it frames workforce modernization as key to U.S. economic leadership.

### **Purpose**

The strategy highlights lifelong learning, flexible career pathways, and strong public-private partnerships. It seeks to modernize workforce systems to keep pace with rapid technological change and global competition.

### **Key Features**

- **Lifelong Learning:** Investment in continuous reskilling and upskilling opportunities.
- **Employer-Led Ecosystems:** Stronger collaboration between employers, educators, and government.
- **Technology Integration:** Use of digital tools, data, and AI for workforce training and job matching.
- **Equity:** Commitment to expanding access for historically underserved groups.
- **System Modernization:** Streamlined and consolidated approaches to funding and accountability.

### **Impacts on the Workforce System**

- Reinforces the role of workforce boards in coordinating multi-sector strategies.
- Encourages adoption of AI and labor market data for career navigation.
- Promotes short-term training and rapid credentialing to meet employer needs.
- Aligns workforce policy with local and regional economic priorities.
- Provides a guiding vision, though not backed by legislation.

### **Conclusion**

The Talent Strategy sets a national framework for adapting to the future of work. As a guidance document, it is not legislation but will shape federal workforce actions and investments moving forward.

## Workforce Pell Grant

### Overview

Workforce Pell, also known as Short-Term Pell, is a federal policy initiative designed to expand access to Pell Grants beyond traditional college degree programs. Currently, Pell Grants—need-based federal financial aid that does not require repayment—are limited to programs of at least 600 clock hours (about 15 weeks). Workforce Pell seeks to make shorter, high-quality workforce training programs eligible for Pell support.

### Purpose

The goal of Workforce Pell is to align education funding with labor market needs by enabling students, job seekers, and working adults to quickly access in-demand skills training. By removing financial barriers to short-term training, the program is expected to accelerate pathways into family-sustaining careers and support economic mobility, particularly for underrepresented populations.

### Key Features

- **Eligibility Expansion:** Pell Grants apply to short-term, career-oriented credential programs, often 8–15 weeks in length.
- **Quality Standards:** Programs must lead to industry-recognized credentials with strong earnings outcomes, validated through federal and state workforce systems.
- **Target Audience:** Adults seeking to reskill or upskill, dislocated workers, and recent high school graduates pursuing non-traditional postsecondary options.
- **Implementation Timeline:** Authorized in 2024 federal budget legislation, with full implementation set for July 1, 2026.

### Impacts on the Workforce System

- **Expanded Access for Participants:** Local workforce boards and AJCCs can now connect clients to short-term training with Pell coverage, reducing reliance on limited WIOA training funds.
- **Stronger Partnerships with Community Colleges:** Increased demand for short-term credentials will deepen collaboration between boards, colleges, and training providers.
- **Resource Leveraging:** Workforce Pell frees up WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) dollars for individuals not eligible for Pell, creating greater overall training capacity.

- **Improved Employer Engagement:** Employers benefit from a more rapid pipeline of job-ready candidates trained in industry-aligned programs, supporting regional economic growth.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Expands opportunities for low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and workers of color, directly advancing WIOA's equity goals.

### Conclusion

Workforce Pell represents a major policy shift in federal financial aid. By supporting both degree pathways and short-term, career-ready training, it empowers workforce boards and their partners to scale impact, close skills gaps, and ensure more residents access quality jobs in high-demand industries.

# The AI Action Plan (Executive Order 14179) – Implications for Workforce Development

## Background

On January 23, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14179, directing the development of The AI Action Plan to 'remove barriers to American leadership in artificial intelligence.' Released on July 23, 2025, the Plan outlines 90+ federal actions across three pillars: Innovation, Infrastructure, and International Leadership. While the plan is national in scope, it has direct implications for workforce systems funded under WIOA and related programs.

## Workforce Implications

### 1. Skills & Training Priorities

- Federal agencies will expand AI literacy, education, and training initiatives.
- Creation of an AI Workforce Research Hub to track in-demand occupations and guide program investments.
- Workforce boards will be expected to align training pathways with employer needs in AI-enabled industries (logistics, health care, construction, public sector).

### 2. Funding & Regulatory Conditions

- Federal AI workforce funds may be tied to state regulatory climates.
- States with restrictive AI rules could see reduced access to funding.
- Workforce boards will need to monitor state policy alignment to ensure continued eligibility.

### 3. Job Displacement & Reskilling

- Acknowledgement that AI will disrupt administrative, manufacturing, and service jobs.
- Strong emphasis on rapid reskilling and transition supports (transportation, childcare, digital access).
- WIOA programs expected to serve as primary vehicles for retraining displaced workers.

### 4. Employer & Sector Partnerships

- Expansion of apprenticeships, internships, and AI sandboxes in collaboration with industry.
- Boards encouraged to formalize sector strategies with tech firms, colleges, and employers in priority industries.

## 5. Shift Away from Equity Mandates

- The Plan removes explicit references to DEI and climate/social factors from AI workforce frameworks.
- This may reduce federal emphasis on equity initiatives.
- Local boards may need to leverage state or philanthropic funding to continue inclusive strategies for women, youth, and underserved communities.

## Strategic Considerations for Workforce Boards

- Position the board as a critical intermediary linking federal AI priorities with local training providers and employers.
- Prepare for rapid program pivots as federal guidance and funding streams evolve.
- Strengthen partnerships with colleges, industry councils, and employers to scale AI-aligned training.
- Safeguard equity strategies by diversifying funding sources.

## Recommended Board Actions

1. Assess Local AI Labor Market Needs: Identify industries adopting AI and impacted occupations.
2. Develop AI Training Pathways: Partner with colleges and employers to align curricula.
3. Expand Apprenticeship/Internship Models: Focus on AI-complementary skills.
4. Secure Supplemental Equity Funding: Pursue state and philanthropic grants to sustain inclusive access.
5. Monitor Policy & Funding Shifts: Track federal guidance tied to state regulatory climates.

## Conclusion

The AI Action Plan emphasizes speed, deregulation, and U.S. competitiveness. For workforce boards, this means new opportunities in AI training and sector partnerships—but also challenges around funding conditions and equity priorities. Proactive alignment will ensure local systems remain at the forefront of this national workforce transformation.