



Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board

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Humboldt County to Receive \$500,000 for Newcomers Center

Eureka—The Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board and Eureka Adult School will receive \$500,000 to prepare limited English speakers for jobs and integration into the North Coast economy and community.

“We’re seeing a number of new families arriving in Humboldt County each day. They find work, but usually have limited ability to fully integrate into the community or the workplace,” explained Kim Kellenberg, Director of the Eureka Adult School. “The Newcomers Center helps them not only gain language skills, but also enroll their children in school and integrate into our community productively.”

“It’s great to have state support for our efforts to meet local needs as defined by industry leaders on the North Coast,” said Bonnie Neely, Humboldt County Supervisor and WIB member.

The grant will fund expansion of Eureka Adult School’s pilot Newcomer’s Center now serving the many new immigrant families arriving in Humboldt County, and replicate the Center in Northern Humboldt and the Eel River Valley.

“While this program specifically targets limited English speaking workers, it is important to note that employers describe a huge need to improve work-readiness and literacy skills for *all* workers,” explained Jacqueline Debets, WIB Executive Director.

The Newcomers Center provides English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for workers and their families at the Eureka Adult School, and on-site for several employers. Work readiness will now be integrated with language skills training.

This grant award is part of \$17.9 million in grants that the state Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Victoria Bradshaw, announced last week. The grants fund special programs statewide that will help new workers find jobs and retrain existing workers in high-need and high wage sectors of the economy.

“The programs funded through this grant will focus on four specific areas,” said Bradshaw. Humboldt County WIB’s grant comes from “the second group [that will] provide customized services and training to help workers with special needs overcome employment barriers.”

In addition to the \$500,000 grant award, the Adult Schools pledged \$233,206 in match to the program.

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