



AB 1111: Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative

Interim Report for Evaluation of Workforce Development Programs submitted pursuant to Supplemental Report of the 2018-19 Budget Act, Item 7120-101-0001

Introduction

In 2018, the California legislature approved Assembly Bill (AB) 1111 (Garcia, Chapter 824, Statutes of 2017), establishing the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative, to be administered by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB).¹ The purpose of the initiative is to supplement existing workforce and education programs by offering individuals with significant barriers to employment an array of services to enable them to gain and retain employment at wages that can lead to economic security. AB 1111 appropriated \$15 million in state general funds for this purpose. Services are delivered through a collaborative partnership between local workforce development boards (Local Boards) and community-based organizations (CBOs) with expertise in providing services to one or more special populations targeted by the statute. Eligible activities included basic education, job training, and supportive services. The legislation required CWDB to submit an interim report on the progress of the Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative 18 months after initial grants were awarded, and CWDB submits this report in fulfillment of the statute. The report presents an overview of the AB 1111 initiative, aggregate participation and preliminary outcome data, and a summary of grantee projects and target populations.

¹ The AB 1111 statute is available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1111.

Overview of the AB 1111 Initiative

California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan prioritizes the promotion of equity for California through increased economic opportunity.² This means providing high-quality workforce services—like job search assistance, skills training, and basic needs assistance—to unserved and underserved communities in California. The barriers to employment these individuals face include poverty, racism, health problems, and many others. These same barriers have also traditionally limited individuals' access to workforce services. Individuals with high barriers are less likely to receive referrals to workforce services. They cannot often travel to a job center, even when they do receive referrals. And even when individuals with high barriers have made it to a job center, service providers may not know the best way to communicate and engage with them.

In early 2019, in preparation for developing a Request for Applications (RFA), the CWDB and the California Workforce Association (CWA) hosted a series of stakeholder engagement meetings across the state to inform potential applicants of the initiative and solicit feedback on its design. An RFA was subsequently issued, and a total of 130 applications were received. A formal review process resulted in 26 CBO/Local Board partnerships (with either a CBO or Local Board lead organization) receiving funding in amounts ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000. A technical assistance provider (California Workforce Association) and an evaluation team (Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Social Policy Research Associates) were also selected through the RFA process.

Funding awards were announced in December of 2019, and grantees were assisted in developing contract documents. Since most of the grantee lead organizations were CBOs with limited experience contracting with the Employment Development Department, this phase of the project took longer than it might have had local workforce boards been the grantees. Many grantees had to revise their budgets to correspond with the actual amount awarded; most also had to revise their work plans to provide a sufficient level of detail for program monitoring. Most contracts began on April 1, 2020, during the tumultuous beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This meant that AB 1111-funded programs were some of the first social services in California to begin in a mostly virtual service delivery environment.

AB 1111 target populations face a diverse set of barriers to employment, and AB 1111 grantees take an equally diverse approach to assisting participants in overcoming those barriers. Grantees begin by assessing participants' needs. Then, they prescribe and administer an individualized array of services according to what would best enable each participant to succeed in the workforce. Some individuals require assistance with a job search, while others require assistance with meeting their basic needs. Some require assistance with upgrading their job skills, and some need all of the above. One example of "all of the above" service provision is known as "earn-and-learn," which combines training with wages, enabling participants to meet their basic needs while gaining marketable skills and job leads at the same

² California's 2020-2023 State Plan is available at https://cwdb.ca.gov/plans_policies/2020-2023-state-plan/.

time.³ CWDB measures the effectiveness of these services with the ability of AB 1111 participants to (1) transition from AB 1111 into the broader workforce and education system, (2) obtain employment, and (3) earn higher wages. These data are tracked using the Employment Development Department’s CalJOBS case management system.⁴

Enrollments, Services Provided, and Preliminary Outcomes

AB 1111 services are currently scheduled to end in March 2022, and it is too early to reach firm conclusions about their effectiveness. However, grantees have made considerable progress in enrolling participants from the target populations, and early indicators of service effectiveness are promising. These results are outlined below.

Table 1. AB 1111 Enrollments by Target Population

<u>Target Populations</u>	<u>Enrollments</u>	<u>Percentage of Enrollments</u>
Disconnected Youth (Unemployed & Out-of-School)	223	16%
Women in Nontraditional Fields	32*	2%
Displaced Workers	103	8%
Long-Term Unemployed	471	35%
Unskilled/Underskilled Low Wage Workers	248	18%
English Language Learners	212	16%
Economically Disadvantaged	1114	82%
CalWORKs Participants	69	5%
Ex-Offenders	443	32%
Armed Services Veterans	10	1%
Native Americans	36	3%
Migrant/Seasonal Farm Workers	0	0%
Persons with Disabilities	149	11%
Displaced Homemakers	7	1%
Native Hawaiians	15	1%
Homeless Individuals	391	29%
Foster Youth	49*	4%
Single Parents	103	8%
Transgender/Gender-Nonconforming Individuals	43*	3%
Immigrants	103*	8%
Persons over 50 Needing Retraining	97	7%
Total Enrolled Participants	1364	

Note: Data current as of June 1, 2021. Grantees set a total enrollment goal of 2751 participants for the program. The eligibility categories are not mutually exclusive, and most AB 1111 participants fall into more than one eligibility category. Thus, the percentages do not sum to 100. Enrollment figures marked with * are current as of March 31, 2021. These numbers come from grantees’ quarterly reports to CWDB and are not tracked in the CalJOBS case management system.

³ Earn-and-learn strategies generally involve a participant learning job skills while earning wages from an employer.

⁴ CalJOBS is available at <https://www.caljobs.ca.gov>.

Table 1 reports enrollments as of June 1, 2021, broken down by the target populations outlined in the AB 1111 statute. With the exception of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, grantees have enrolled participants from every target population.⁵ Virtually every participant falls into more than one target population. Target populations with the greatest representation include economically disadvantaged Californians (82% of participants), long-term unemployed Californians (35%), ex-offenders (32%), Californians experiencing homelessness (29%), unskilled/underskilled low wage workers (18%), disconnected youth (16%), English language learners (16%), and Californians with disabilities (11%). To date, 1364 participants have enrolled in AB 1111 services. Grantees set a final enrollment goal of 2751 participants, so they are about halfway towards that goal. The Pandemic initially slowed enrollment along with challenges associated with onboarding CBOs with no previous experience in the workforce system. However, these challenges have mostly passed, and enrollments have sped up in recent months.

Beyond the barriers to employment targeted by the statute, many AB 1111 participants may face barriers due to race, especially since approximately three-quarters of them are nonwhite. Table 2 breaks down the racial and ethnic demographics of AB 1111 participants. It also presents the racial and ethnic demographics of California workers as a whole for comparison. These data come from the U.S. Census Bureau, and they highlight both the disproportionate barriers to employment faced by people of color along with the efforts AB 1111 and CWDB are undertaking to mitigate these disparities.⁶ AB 1111 has enrolled a disproportionately greater share of African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders than their percentages of the overall worker population. We also present enrollment data for participants served under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (i.e., WIOA Title I and Title III programs) to show that AB 1111 participants generally represent greater racial diversity than the populations served by some other workforce programs.

Table 3 reports the mix of workforce services that AB 1111 participants have received. Nearly all have received individualized career services, including career counseling, resume guidance, and interview coaching. Over 40 percent have enrolled in education/training of some type, including adult basic education, forklift operation, food handling safety, truck driving, and construction code compliance.⁷ Many AB 1111 participants have received on-the-job training (OJT), often used as part of an earn-and-learn curriculum. Nearly one-fifth were placed in work experience (WEX), often a critical

⁵ As shown in the AB 1111 Grantees table at the end of this report, multiple grantees plan to serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Grantees report that they have experienced considerable challenges recruiting participants from the population due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, grantees report the greatest obstacles being prohibitions on face-to-face meetings and the population's lack of access to technology and virtual meetings. As restrictions ease, grantees anticipate improvement in their enrollment targets.

⁶ Data from the Census are available at <https://qwexplorer.ces.census.gov/static/explore.html#x=0&g=0>. The numbers reported here are from third quarter 2020, the latest available at the time of this report.

⁷ A full list of grant-funded activities classified as "Education and Training" is available at https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/pubs/wsd19-06att2.pdf.

Table 2. AB 1111 Enrollments by Race and Ethnicity

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Enrollments</u>	<u>Percentage of Enrollments</u>	<u>Percentage of CA Workers</u>	<u>Percentage of WIOA Enrollments</u>
African-American	389	28.5%	7.0%	11.7%
Asian-American	119	8.7%	16.8%	9.3%
Hispanic/Latinx	506	37.1%	35.2%	43.7%
Native American	36	2.6%	1.5%	2.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	15	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%
White	353	25.9%	70.7%	35.3%
Multi-Racial	33	2.4%	3.3%	2.0%
Total Enrolled Participants	1364			

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as participants may fall into more than one racial/ethnic category. Data for WIOA enrollments are from Program Year 2019-20.

component of a participant's transition from homelessness or successful reentry from incarceration. Finally, over 350 participants have received supportive services, including clothing, housing, food, and childcare assistance. CWDB has found these services to be an integral part of successfully serving individuals with significant barriers to employment.⁸

Table 3. AB 1111 Services Provided

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>Participants Served</u>	<u>Percentage of Participants</u>
Career Services	1277	93.6%
Education/Training (any type)	584	42.8%
On-the-Job Training	44	3.2%
Work Experience	229	16.8%
Supportive Services	369	27.1%
Total Enrolled Participants	1364	

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as participants may receive more than one type of service.

⁸ The critical role that supportive services play in serving individuals with significant barriers to employment is outlined in CWDB's final report to the legislature on AB 2060.

Tables 4 and 5 present cross-tabulations of AB 1111 services provided and participants' gender identification and race/ethnicity, respectively. These tables provide a sense of the AB 1111 Initiative's efforts to promote gender and racial equity, as participants from historically marginalized populations have generally received services in proportion to their makeup of AB 1111 participants as a whole.

Table 4. AB 1111 Services Provided and Participant Gender Identity

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Not Provided</u>	<u>Total</u>
Career Services	571	700	6	1277
Education/Training (any type)	236	344	4	584
On-the-Job Training	16	26	<4	44
Work Experience	95	130	4	229
Supportive Services	199	167	<4	369

Note: On-the-Job Training and Work Experience are subsets of Education/Training (any type). Gender identity in this table is limited to Female, Male, and Not Provided because the data come from CalJOBS, which does not ask about transgender and gender-nonconforming identities. See Table 1 for data on AB 1111 transgender participants.

Table 5. AB 1111 Services Provided and Participant Race/Ethnicity

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>Asian-American</u>	<u>Hispanic/Latino</u>	<u>Native American</u>	<u>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Multi-Racial</u>
Career Services	356	116	471	36	13	336	29
Education/Training (any type)	182	31	219	23	5	160	12
On-the-Job Training	13	<4	12	<4	<4	12	<4
Work Experience	60	4	79	13	<4	95	7
Supportive Services	105	31	155	12	5	84	11

Note: On-the-Job Training and Work Experience are subsets of Education/Training (any type). There is no total column or row because none of the columns or rows are mutually exclusive.

Table 6 reports AB 1111 participants' preliminary outcomes. Recall that the vast majority of participants have yet to exit the program and are still receiving services. To date, 177 participants have co-enrolled into a broader workforce and education program, such as WIOA programs, secondary and post-secondary education programs, and other state-funded workforce programs. Co-enrollments are a major goal of AB

1111, as they considerably increase the resources available to participants and thus increase their chances of success in the workforce. Here we highlight WIOA Title I co-enrollments as that workforce program is the broadest in California. Additionally, many AB 1111 participants have earned an industry-recognized credential, granting them access to a range of careers that require such certifications as a prerequisite for employment. Finally, at least 91 AB 1111 participants have already exited the program and been placed in unsubsidized employment. The number is at least that high due to the voluntary nature of reporting requirements—the actual number of employment placements is likely higher and will be reported in the AB 1111 final report after CWDB has received final wage data from the Employment Development Department’s Tax Branch.

Table 6. AB 1111 Preliminary Outcomes

<u>Preliminary Outcomes</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Co-Enrollments: All Programs	177
Co-Enrollments: WIOA Title I	151
Credentials Earned	23
Employment Placements	91

Note: Wage data was only available for less than 10 participants at the time of this report, so it is not reported here. Co-Enrollments: WIOA Title I is a subset of Co-Enrollments: All Programs.

Lessons Learned

AB 1111 has provided several early lessons for CWDB regarding how to best serve individuals with significant barriers to employment and how to bring new CBOs into the workforce system. Regarding how to best serve individuals with high barriers, grantees are finding that supportive services can go a long way towards ensuring participant success. Similar to what CWDB found with justice-involved individuals, individuals with other significant barriers to employment are less likely to benefit from career services and job training when they lack the means to cover their basic needs. For that reason, CWDB encourages AB 1111 grantees to dedicate funds for supportive services to assist participants in meeting their basic needs.

Secondly, onboarding new CBOS into the workforce system is not a straightforward process, as CBOs must familiarize themselves with the contracting process, allowable uses of funds, and data management requirements. The AB 1111 approach to overcoming these challenges required CBOs to partner with a local workforce board to help them navigate the workforce system. But importantly, CBOs retained significant control over their service strategy and general approach to the program. Both local boards and CBOs benefit from this process. Local boards more easily serve individuals with high barriers in their area, and CBOs develop new funding streams to expand their operations.

Finally, AB 1111 has shown that California's workforce system can better serve individuals with significant barriers to employment through partnerships between CBOs and Local Boards. CBOs have longstanding relationships with marginalized communities that have historically been unserved and underserved by the workforce system. A major explanation for this inequity is a lack of familiarity between marginalized communities and the workforce system. Many members of marginalized communities are unaware of the existence of the workforce system, and many Local Boards have trouble effectively reaching out to those communities. AB 1111 overcomes this challenge by requiring partnerships between CBOs and Local Boards, and the result is individuals with high barriers enrolling in the workforce system in historically high numbers.

Conclusion and Next Steps

While it is still too early to reach firm conclusions on the effectiveness of AB 1111, CWDB is pleased with the progress grantees have made in recruiting participants from the target populations as well as the early indicators on co-enrollments and employment placements. Final data on outcomes, including employment rates and wages, will become available one year after the last participant exits. CWDB will present these data to the legislature in the AB 1111 final report. CWDB has also partnered with Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Social Policy Research Associates to conduct an in-depth program evaluation of AB 1111. The evaluation team will dive deep into the quantitative and qualitative effects of AB 1111, providing a clearer picture of how to best serve individuals with significant barriers to employment and improve workforce services in California. In the 2021-22 Budget, the California Legislature appropriated \$25 million in additional funds for the Breaking Barriers Initiative. Accompanying legislation sets out several requirements for how CWDB will use the funds to expand the Initiative's efforts. CWDB expects to award the additional funds to grantees in 2022.

AB 1111 Grantees

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc. Riverside	\$200,000	Riverside County WDB	Inland Empire	Displaced Workers, Long-term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, Ex-Offenders, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians	Manufacturing, Logistics, Renewable Energy, Hospitality/Tourism
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc. Solano	\$168,075	WDB of Solano County	North Bay	Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, and Ex-Offenders	Food Service
Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)	\$500,000	City of Los Angeles WDB	LA Basin	Ex-Offenders	Construction, Advanced Transportation and Logistics

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
County of Orange Community Investment Division	\$500,000	Orange County WDB	Orange	Individuals with Disabilities	Healthcare, Manufacturing, Information and Communication Technology, Energy, Construction, Utilities, Advanced Transportation, Business and Entrepreneurship, Advanced Manufacturing Biotechnology, and Hospitality/Tourism
Foothill House of Hospitality	\$366,550	Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium WDB	North State	Ex-Offenders and Homeless Individuals	Hospitality and Tourism
Goodwill Southern California	\$250,000	Los Angeles County WDB	LA Basin	Economically Disadvantaged Individuals and Ex-Offenders	Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation, Warehousing

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
Hospitality Training Academy (HTA)	\$500,000	City of Los Angeles WDB	LA Basin	Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, Unskilled Or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, CalWORKs Participants, Homeless Individuals, Ex-Offenders, Immigrants, Women Seeking Nontraditional Training/Employment, and Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals	Construction, Hospitality/Food Service/Leisure & Tourism, Public Service/Government
Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program (IVROP)	\$500,000	Imperial County WDB	Southern Border	Ex-Offenders, Migrant or Seasonal Farm Workers, Homeless Individuals, and Foster Youth	Health Science and Medical Technology, Public Services, Law Enforcement and Correctional Science
Jewish Vocational & Career Counseling Service	\$365,468	Contra Costa County WDB	East Bay	Women Seeking Nontraditional Training/Employment, Disconnected Youth, Unskilled Or Underskilled Low- Wage Workers, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, and Ex-Offenders	Transportation and Logistics
Los Angeles Brotherhood Crusade	\$500,000	City of Los Angeles WDB	LA Basin	Disconnected Youth, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, CalWORKs Participants, Ex-Offenders, Homeless Individuals, Foster Youth, and Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals	Construction and Infrastructure, Selected Manufacturing, Trade and Logistics, Entertainment and Infotech, Health Services, Leisure and Hospitality

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
Martha's Village and Kitchen Inc.	\$498,859	Riverside County WDB	Inland Empire	Disconnected Youth, Displaced Workers, Long-Term Unemployed, Unskilled Or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, CalWORKs Participants, Ex-Offenders, Individuals With Disabilities, and Individuals over 50 Years of Age Needing Retraining	Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Health Care, Renewable Energy, Construction
Merced County WDB	\$500,000	Merced County WDB	San Joaquin Valley	Displaced Workers, Long-term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, Ex-Offenders, Migrant or Seasonal Farm Workers, Immigrants, and Homeless Individuals	Manufacturing, Logistics and Transportation, Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction
Mission Hiring Hall	\$350,000	San Francisco County WDB	Bay Peninsula	Disconnected Youth, Women Seeking Nontraditional Training/Employment, Displaced Workers, Long-term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, CalWORKs Participants, Ex-Offenders, Returning Veterans, and Individuals over 50 Years of Age Needing Retraining	Construction

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
Nile Sisters Development Initiative	\$275,174	San Diego WDB	Southern Border	Displaced Workers, Long-Term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, CalWORKs Participants, and Immigrants	Education & Human Development, Health Care, Public Administration, Energy, Construction, Utilities
North Central Counties Consortium (NCCC)	\$500,000	North Central Counties Consortium WDB	Capital	Ex-Offenders and Homeless Individuals	Construction, Healthcare, Transportation, Welding
Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE)	\$500,000	Los Angeles County WDB	LA Basin	Displaced Workers, Long-term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, and Immigrants	Health Care and Construction
Rubicon Programs	\$500,000	Contra Costa County WDB	East Bay	Displaced Workers, Long-term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, Ex-Offenders, and Returning Veterans	Transportation & Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing, Construction
Safe Place for Youth	\$248,573	City of Los Angeles WDB	LA Basin	Disconnected Youth, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, and Homeless Individuals	Hospitality and Tourism
San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development	\$500,000	San Francisco County WDB	Bay Peninsula	Disconnected Youth, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, and CalWORKs Participants	Healthcare

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
San Francisco Goodwill	\$253,864	North Valley Job Training Consortium	Bay Peninsula	English Language Learners	
Southeast Los Angeles County WDB	\$386,000	Southeast Los Angeles County WDB	LA Basin	Disconnected Youth, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, CalWORKs Participants, Ex-Offenders, Individuals with Disabilities, Single Parents, and Immigrants	Construction
The TransLatin@ Coalition	\$249,745	City of Los Angeles WDB	LA Basin	English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, Ex-Offenders, Immigrants, Individuals over 50 Years of Age Needing Retraining, and Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals	Hospitality and Tourism
Transitions-Mental Health Association	\$468,616	San Luis Obispo County WDB and Santa Barbara County WDB	South Central Coast	Economically Disadvantaged Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities	Food & Beverage, Tourism & Hospitality, Business Support Services

Grantee Name	Grant Size	Local Board	RPU	Target Populations	Career Pathways
Vision y Compromiso (VyC)	\$353,836	Santa Barbara County WDB	South Central Coast	Women Seeking Nontraditional Training/Employment, Displaced Workers, Long-Term Unemployed, Unskilled or Underskilled Low-Wage Workers, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged Individuals, Migrant or Seasonal Farm Workers, Immigrants, Individuals over 50 Years of Age Needing Retraining, and Single Parents	Healthcare
Whole Systems Learning	\$500,000	Los Angeles County WDB	LA Basin	Disconnected Youth, Women Seeking Nontraditional Training/Employment, Ex-offenders, Foster Youth, Homeless Individuals, and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals	Leisure & Hospitality, Construction, Information and Communications Technology
WDB of Solano County	\$319,250	WDB of Solano County	North Bay	Individuals with Disabilities	Healthcare, Manufacturing, Construction, Food & Beverage Chain