

CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AD HOC MEETING SUMMARY

February 18, 2026

The full meeting is available to view on the [CWDB YouTube channel](#).

Full meeting documents, public comments, agenda, and future meeting dates may be found on the [CWDB website](#).

Members in Attendance:

- Chairperson Joanna Rees*
- Alysia Bell*
- Jamil Dada*
- Diane Factor*
- Dr. Angelo Farooq*
- Leonard Gonzalez*
- Secretary Stewart Knox, represented by designee Kevin Matulich*
- Robert Redlo*
- Mayor Rex Richardson*
- Angel Sanchez*
- Avin Sharma*
- Superintendent Tony Thurmond, represented by designee Carolyn Zachry*

* indicates member participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom

CWDB Staff Participants:

- Marc Cowan, Regional Specialist
- Emily Sunahara, Deputy Director of Operations
- Michael Wiafe, Assistant Deputy Director, Workforce Policy and External Affairs

Regional and State Partner Presenters:

- Tamia Brown, Workforce Director, Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board
- Iowayna Peña, Workforce Director, City and County of San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- Jay Banfield, Chief Economic Mobility Officer, All Home
- Allison Joe, Deputy Secretary for Equity and Workforce, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)
- Jeremy Smith, Chief of Staff, State Building and Construction Trades Council (CWDB Board Member)
- Leonard Gonzalez, Executive Director, Laborers' Training and Retraining Trust Fund for Northern California (CWDB Board Member)

Agenda

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks
2. Bay Area Regional Update
 - a. Overview of Tour from CWDB Executive Director
 - b. CWDB Staff Report
 - c. Regional Leader Report
 - d. Board Member Discussion
 - e. Public Comment
3. Construction
 - a. Presentation
 - b. Board Member Discussion
 - c. Public Comment
4. General Public Comments
5. Adjournment

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks

CWDB's Deputy Director of Operations called the meeting to order at approximately 10:04 am. The Chairperson welcomed attendees and CWDB staff reviewed teleconference procedures and public comment instructions.

2. Bay Area Regional Update

CWDB staff provided an update on the Bay Area regional tour which highlighted workforce innovation in the Bay Area. The Bay Area is expanding healthcare programs, local accreditation, funding strategies, and evolving care models for emergency medical services (EMS) and paramedics. Staff facilitated a connection between Bay Area and Inland Empire partners interested in upgrading their EMS training.

The update also touched on the Working Waterfront Coalition's efforts in industry collaboration and workforce pipelines, including the electrification of the San Francisco Bay Ferry system. The tour included a visit with Viridi Mobile Energy Storage centered around its successful training model, GreenForce, and discussions on the connection between housing and workforce development, and the critical role of childcare in workforce development.

Regional leaders and partners discussed sector investments aligned with Bay Area California Jobs First priorities, such as healthcare, early childhood care, and education. The Bay Area collaborative aims to build a sustainable economy with carbon neutrality, good jobs, and equitable outcomes, and has distributed \$9 million in catalyst funding across 10 projects. Priority sectors for activation planning include advanced manufacturing, clean energy, transportation electrification, healthcare, and early care and education, with maritime and shipbuilding noted as emerging focus areas. Upcoming activities include completing activation plans, securing additional funding, and planning for regional work continuity beyond September 2026.

Board questions addressed nursing workforce pathways and potential impacts of shifting federal priorities on clean energy and electrification efforts. Presenters noted that healthcare activation planning includes nursing needs and that work is continuing while plans are developed.

No public comment was received on this item.

3. Construction

Jeremy Smith presented an overview of the CWDB's High Road Construction Careers (HRCC) program. HRCC training commonly utilizes the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum and provides essential supportive services such as stipends, childcare, transportation, and tools. This program supports 13 statewide pre-apprenticeship training partnerships aimed at preparing priority populations for apprenticeship opportunities in various trades. It collaborates with workforce development boards, community-based organizations, educational institutions, trades councils, joint apprenticeship training committees, and contractors.

CWDB Staff explained that the program's demand-driven approach has evolved through Proposition 39, SB 1, California Climate Investments, and the Resilient Workforce Fund, and is positioned to deepen and expand further through partnership with Caltrans under SB 150-originating investments.

Deputy Secretary for Equity and Workforce at the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), provided context on the agency's scope and its role in advancing equity and workforce efforts. CalSTA emphasized the lengthy timelines of transportation projects and the importance of aligning resources with district and regional strengths.

Building trades representatives discussed the importance of jobsite availability for apprenticeship capacity, the role of pre-apprenticeship in preparing candidates, and the value of supportive services for training completion and career retention. Discussions also covered efforts to increase women's participation in the trades and the joint labor-management structure of apprenticeships.

During Board discussion, presenters affirmed that training programs can be scaled as job opportunities arise, and agencies are continuing workforce initiatives while navigating federal guidance on disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) processes.

No public comment was received on this item.

4. General Public Comments

No general public comments were received.

5. Adjournment

All CWDB business having concluded, the Deputy Director of Operations adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:31 a.m.