

CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD FULL BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

September 2, 2026

The full meeting is available to view on the CWDB YouTube channel.

[CWDB September Board Meeting - 9/2/2026](#)

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

Members Present in Sacramento:

- Chairperson Joanna Rees
- Alysia Bell
- Tyrone Evans
- Director Nancy Farias
- Brendalynn Goodall
- Secretary Kim Johnson, represented by designee Libby Abbott
- Secretary Stewart Knox, represented by designee Abby Snay
- Stephen Monteros
- Director Kimberly Rutledge, represented by designee Nancy Wentling
- Angel Sanchez
- Honorable Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo
- Jeremy Smith

Members Present in the San Francisco Bay Area:

- Hala Hijazi
- Gloria Young

Members Present in Southern California:

- Chancellor Sonya Christian, represented by designee Vice Chancellor Anthony Cordova
- Kamyar Amiri-Davani
- Dr. Angelo Farooq

- Larry Frank
- Jason Haider
- Jennifer Haley
- Hilary Lentini
- Magda Menendez
- Robert Redlo
- Mayor Rex Richardson
- Avin Sharma
- Amelia Tyagi

CWDB Staff:

- Kaina Pereira, Executive Director
- Michael Wiafe, Assistant Deputy Director, Workforce Policy and External Affairs
- James Hill, Regional Engagement Specialist
- Emily Sunahara, Deputy Director of Operations
- Ben McDonald, Deputy Counsel & Board Meeting Clerk

Regional and State Partner Presenters:

- Andy Stone, Director, Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board
- Chris Donnelly, Executive Director, Monterey County Workforce Development Board
- Dawn Boulanger, Director, County of San Luis Obispo Workforce Development Board
- Luis Servin, Executive Director, Santa Barbara Workforce Development Board
- Rebecca Evans, Executive Director, Workforce Development Board of Ventura County
- Angel Sanchez, CEO, Phenix Technology and CWDB Board Member
- Nancy Wentling, Assistant Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation

Agenda:

- A. Welcome & Opening Remarks
 - a. Roll Call
 - b. Call to Order
- B. Action Items
 - a. Approve July 8, 2026 Meeting Summary
 - b. Approve Establishment of Special Committee on Youth
- C. Briefing & Discussion
 - a. Central Coast Region Update
 - i. Overview of Tour from CWDB Executive Director
 - ii. CWDB Staff Report
 - iii. Regional Leader Report
 - iv. Board Discussion
 - b. Employment for People with Disabilities
 - c. Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Survey

- D. Updates & Discussion
 - a. Labor & Workforce Development Agency Report
 - b. Budget Report
 - c. Eligible Training Provider List Update
 - d. State Rehabilitation Council Report
 - e. California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Update
 - f. California Department of Education Update
- E. General Public Comments
- F. Adjournment

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks:

- A. Roll Call & Call to Order
 - a. Board Chair Joanna Rees called the meeting to order at approximately 10:06 a.m. CWDB Deputy Counsel Ben McDonald conducted a roll call and advised Board Chair Rees that a quorum of 22 members was present, with additional members joining later. Board Chair Rees welcomed and introduced newly appointed Board Members Brendalynn Goodall and Tyrone Evans.
 - b. No public comment.

2. Action Items:

- A. Approve July 8, 2026 Meeting Summary
 - a. Board Chair Rees moved to approve the July 8, 2026 Meeting Summary prepared by CWDB staff, and it was seconded.
 - b. Vote Taken: Approve July 8, 2026 Meeting Summary
 - i. Yes: Board Chair Joanna Rees, Alysia Bell, Chancellor Sonya Christian represented by designee Vice Chancellor Tony Cordova, Director Nancy Farias, Dr. Angelo Farooq, Larry Frank, Jason Haider, Secretary Kim Johnson represented by designee Libby Abbott, Hilary Lentini, Magda Menendez, Stephen Monteros, Robert Redlo, Mayor Rex Richardson, Angel Sanchez, and Avin Sharma.
 - ii. No: None.
 - iii. Abstentions: Kamyar Amiri-Davani, Tyrone Evans, Brendalynn Goodall, Secretary Stewart Knox represented by designee Abby Snay, Director Kimberly Rutledge represented by designee Nancy Wentling, Jeremy Smith, Amelia Tyagi, and Gloria Young.

- c. Motion to approve July 8, 2026 Meeting Summary passed.
- d. No public comment.
- B. Approve Establishment of Special Committee on Youth
 - a. Board Chair Rees motioned to approve the establishment of the Special Committee on Youth, and it was seconded.
 - b. Vote Taken: Approve Establishment of Special Committee on Youth
 - i. Yes: Board Chair Joanna Rees, Alysia Bell, Chancellor Sonya Christian represented by designee Vice Chancellor Tony Cordova, Kamyar Amiri-Davani, Tyrone Evans, Director Nancy Farias, Dr. Angelo Farooq, Larry Frank, Brendalynn Goodall, Jason Haider, Secretary Kim Johnson represented by designee Libby Abbott, Secretary Stewart Knox represented by designee Abby Snay, Hilary Lentini, Magda Menendez, Stephen Monteros, Robert Redlo, Mayor Rex Richardson, Director Kimberly Rutledge represented by designee Nancy Wentling, Angel Sanchez, Honorable Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, Avin Sharma, Jeremy Smith, Amelia Tyagi, and Gloria Young.
 - ii. No: None.
 - iii. Abstentions: None.
 - c. Motion to approve establishment of Special Committee on Youth passed. Board Chair Rees expressed her excitement for the committee. CWDB Executive Director noted that this model would be used to establish a committee on the aging population in the following year.
 - d. No public comment.

3. Briefing & Discussion:

- A. Central Coast Region Update
 - a. CWDB Regional Engagement Specialist James Hill provided a staff report on the Central Coast region, which is comprised of six counties: Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. He reported that the region has 2.3 million residents, with 45% living in disinvested communities. Hill highlighted priority sectors including precision manufacturing, aerospace and defense, healthcare, agriculture, and hospitality and tourism.

Key regional challenges include geographical barriers, rising housing costs, an aging population, and childcare shortages.

- b. A regional leader report followed, with presentations from local workforce development board directors from across the Central Coast. Andy Stone, Director of the Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board, presented on the North Central Coast sub-region. He described regional collaborations such as the Tri-County Apprenticeship Prep program and partnerships with Joby Aviation. Stone detailed Santa Cruz County's specific challenges, including extreme housing costs, an aging population, and a majority of jobs being in low-paying tiers. Stone also shared the Santa Cruz WDB's 2030 goals focused on job quality, employer engagement, and training alignment.
- c. Chris Donnelly, Executive Director of the Monterey County Workforce Development Board, reported that agriculture is the county's largest employer and that 63% of jobs are low-wage. He discussed initiatives to upskill farmworkers and address the high number of disconnected youth through "Cadre" programs focused on environmental stewardship, technology, and healthcare. He also noted the board's role in administering \$3.7 million in grants to businesses affected by the Pajaro River flooding.
- d. Dawn Boulanger, Director of the San Luis Obispo (SLO) Workforce Development Board, and Luis Servin, Executive Director of the Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board, presented jointly on the South Central Coast sub-region. They highlighted regional partnerships in education and described state-funded grant projects focused on digital literacy, justice-involved individuals, and construction careers. Boulanger then detailed SLO County's affordability crisis and efforts to develop local talent through career pathways and local hiring initiatives. Servin described Santa Barbara County's efforts to serve its agricultural workforce, many of whom speak indigenous dialects like Mixteco, through expanded access points, a youth summit, and deep collaborations with community colleges, including a new GED testing center located within the America's Job Center of California.
- e. Rebecca Evans, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board of Ventura County, presented on her region, noting its unique position bordering both Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties. She explained that Ventura County's low unemployment rate masks a shrinking labor force and declining population. Rebecca highlighted successful programs including the VC HEAL healthcare training initiative, the "Workforce on Wheels" mobile career center, and a job quality framework to assist employers. She also discussed systemic challenges, including funding formulas that are not well-suited for a shrinking labor pool and the difficulty of engaging small employers in apprenticeship programs.

- f. Board members inquired about best practices for regional employer engagement, strategies for serving women in non-traditional fields like construction, programs for the senior care workforce, and the potential impacts of autonomous vehicles. Board members also discussed the importance of engaging high-net-worth retirees in mentorship and deepening partnerships with community colleges to build apprenticeship pathways.

- g. No public comment.

B. Employment for People with Disabilities

- a. Board Member Angel Sanchez, CEO of Phenix Technology, and Nancy Wentling, designee for the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), delivered a presentation on employing people with disabilities. Wentling's presentation focused on dispelling common myths and misconceptions that create barriers to hiring, citing data showing that disability-inclusive businesses experience higher revenues and employee morale. Sanchez shared his personal and professional experience of hiring individuals with disabilities, stating that 40% of his workforce was hired through his "Opportunity for All" program. He provided powerful examples of employees who have thrived in his company and emphasized that inclusive hiring has significantly improved his company's efficiency, retention, and overall culture, making it a sound business decision.

- b. No public comment.

C. Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Survey

- a. CWDB Executive Director announced that a survey would be sent to board members to gather feedback on scheduling for future ad hoc committee meetings. He also announced that the October ad hoc committee meeting was rescheduled from October 14th to October 13th, 2026. Board Chair Rees noted the change was to accommodate guest speaker Reed Hastings, founder of Netflix, who will discuss the impact of artificial intelligence on the workforce.

- b. No public comment.

4. Updates & Discussion:

A. Labor & Workforce Development Agency Report

B. Budget Report

C. Eligible Training Provider List Update

- a. Due to time limitations, Items A–C were omitted.

D. State Rehabilitation Council Report

- a. Hilary Lentini, board member and State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) representative provided the following report:
 - b. "The SRC convened its quarterly meeting on July 22 and 23 where members received an in-depth briefing on the Department of Rehabilitation's resource challenges and the order of selection (OOS) process. OOS is a federal requirement for vocational rehab agencies that lack sufficient resources whether staffing and or funding to serve all eligible applicants. When OOS is in place, individuals with the most significant disabilities receive priority access to services. Under OOS, newly eligible applicants are placed on a waiting list before they can receive vocational rehab services. At the conclusion of the July meeting, the SRC formally recommended the DOR enter OOS as soon as possible in order to improve service quality, increase employment outcomes, and maintain the integrity of the vocational rehab program itself. Effective Monday, August 31, DOR implemented OOS and all three priority categories are now closed. During the July meeting, SRC members also learned about DOR's community resource navigators or CRNs. That's staff who helped connect individuals to critical community supports including housing, transportation, food assistance, mental health services, emergency aid, legal resources, health benefits, and expungement support. These connections will play an even more vital role under OOS. In addition to the work of CRNs, DOR will refer eligible applicants on the waiting list to community-based organizations and workforce partners for assistance while they await services."
 - c. No public comment.
- E. California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Update
 - F. California Department of Education (CDE) Update
- a. Due to time limitations, Items E-F were omitted.

5. General Public Comments:

- A. Board member Larry Frank stated that he been in touch with Joseph Williams, a former CWDB board member who championed for the creation of a youth council. Larry reported that Mr. Williams was "thrilled to death" to learn that the Special Committee on Youth had been approved. Larry thanked the board and relayed Mr. Williams's request that the community colleges have a seat on the new committee.
- B. No public comment.

6. Adjournment:

- A. All CWDB business having concluded, CWDB Executive Director thanked all board members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:08 p.m.