



Chairperson: Leslie Abasta

Director: Erick Serrato

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Prospero (Formerly Worknet) Workforce Board Meeting

Thursday, March 26, 2026; 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

(Lunch available at 11:45 a.m., meeting begins promptly at 12 Noon)

Meeting Location:

Garcia Brothers Trucking

511 Ivett, Dr.

Planada, CA, 95348

No virtual option available

Follow signs for parking and meeting location

Public Comment: If you wish to speak on a matter that does NOT appear on the agenda, you may do so during the Public Opportunity to speak. Please state your name and address for the record. Each speaker will be limited to three (3) minutes.

Agenda Items: Public opportunity to speak on items on the Workforce Development Board WDB Agenda will be heard following announcement of each section or subsection of the Agenda. In order that interested individuals have an opportunity to speak, any person addressing the WDB will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per section or subsection of the Agenda.

Agendas and Minutes: All supporting documentation is available for public review at 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 95301 or visit our website at www.worknetmerced.com during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Except holidays). Any material related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the WDB, after distribution of the Agenda packet, is available for public inspection at 1900 Airdrome Entry, Atwater, CA 95301.

Reasonable Accommodations: Persons, who require accommodation for disability in order to review an agenda, or to participate in a meeting of the WDB per the American Disabilities Act (ADA), may obtain assistance by requesting such accommodation in writing addressed to Merced County Workforce Development Board Admin Office or telephonically calling (209) 724-2000 or Erick Serrato (209) 724-2041. Any such request for accommodation should be made at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting for which assistance is requested.

Committee Quorum and Action: A Quorum of the WDB shall consist of nine (9) members. Actions by the committee shall require a majority vote (9 votes or more) of the total membership of the Committee. When there is no Quorum present at the scheduled start time of the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and agenda items will be discussed at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

All regular WDB meetings are held in-person quarterly on one Thursday of the month at 11:45 a.m. and locations are hosted at Industry/Employer/Training sites throughout the County.



Agenda		
1. Call to Order	<i>Roll Call of Members of the Board</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
2. Public Opportunity	<i>Public opportunity to speak on any matter of public interest within the Board's jurisdiction, including items on the Board's agenda</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
3. Host Welcome Statement	<i>Garcia Brothers Trucking</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
4. Approval of Minutes	<i>Approval of WDB Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2025</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
5. Open Announcements	<i>Updates and announcements from members of the Workforce Board</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
6. Chair Comments	<i>Comments from the Chair of Merced County Workforce Development Board</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
7. Director's Comments	<i>Synopsis of Meeting Agenda, comment on non-Agenda items, legislative updates, and other areas of interest</i>	<i>Erick Serrato, Director</i>
Workforce System		
8. Board Membership Transitions	<i>Recognition of Board Members Steve Hobbs (Adult Education), Jack Mobley (Business), Dale Johns (Business) and Joe Perez (DOR) as their retirements and job changes complete their terms on the Workforce Development Board.</i>	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>
9. Legislative, Policy and Funding Update	<i>Update on relevant funding, legislation, and policy changes from the US Department of Labor, and CA EDD, including funding and reauthorization of WIOA.</i>	<i>Erick Serrato, Director</i>
Industry & Labor Market		
10. Introduction of the Manufacturing Council of the Central Valley (MCCV)	<i>Presentation of the Manufacturing Council of the Central Valley (MCCV) in preparation for a formalized partnership between MCCV and the Workforce Development Board to support and engage manufacturing employer.</i>	<i>Stacey Kollmeyer Johnson, Executive Director, MCCV</i>
11. Updated Jobs Priority Framework	<i>Updated Jobs Priority Framework to assist in the prioritization of employment placement and programs.</i>	<i>Robert Theurer, Business Services Manager</i>



12. Regional Small Business Development Challenges and Opportunities	<i>Discussion regarding potential impacts of two small business-facing program and policy areas: COVID-era small business loans and repayment; and recent changes to SBA lending for non-citizen entrepreneurs.</i>	<i>Susie Pryor, Regional Director, SBDC</i>
13. Focus on Westside Commuters/Opportunities	<i>Discussion of future research request regarding Los Banos-Gustine-Santa Nella-Dos Palos (“Westside”) commute patterns and planned commuter service strategies.</i>	<i>Erick Serrato, Director</i>
14. March 2026 Agri-Tech Tour	<i>Recap of the Agri-Tech business development tour, hosted in partnership with North Valley THRIVE and GO-Biz, on March 19 & 20.</i>	<i>Erick Serrato, Director</i>
Adult and Youth Career Services		
15. WIOA Local Policy Updates	<i>Approval of local WIOA and other programmatic policies to reflect name change from “Worknet/Merced County Workforce Development Board” to “Prospero Workforce Board.”</i> Action: <i>Approval of WIOA and other local policies.</i>	<i>Stacie Tury, Program Manager</i>
16. Facilities Update and Opening Schedule	<i>Update on completion of Prospero Job Center renovations and respective grand opening events.</i>	<i>Erick Serrato, Director</i>
Other Items for Discussion		
17. Adjournment	<i>Adjourning of the Workforce Development Board Meeting.</i> Next Meeting: June 25, 2026 – New Prospero Office	<i>Leslie Abasta, Chair</i>