



MIND YOUR BUSINESS PRIMING OUR WORKFORCE

Will your business need more employees in the future? Do you have employees that may be ready to retire? San Luis Obispo employers may want to put some serious thought to whether or not they will have access to a workforce with the skills and attributes that are needed for their business to be successful.

A local organization is working hard to address these issues; The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of San Luis Obispo County. The WIB mission is to promote a skilled workforce that results in healthy and prosperous economic development for our community. The WIB is a local 31 member advisory, planning and policy body of local business, education, labor, government, economic development, non-profit leaders.

Recently, the WIB hired Scott Sheely and the Lancaster County Research Group to conduct an in-depth Industry Sector Analysis that revealed trends in our current job market and future challenges we should all be aware of. The full report can be downloaded at www.jobhunt.org/slocareers/wibindex.html or you may call 788-2600 to request a copy. The study provides information to help our community make optimal investments into workforce improvement strategies that support competitiveness of key industries in the local economy as they interact with the global marketplace.

The study reveals in depth statistics and characteristics of our county's workforce. It includes details about our current and future labor force, demographic dynamics such as age, race, ethnicity, nativity and language trends, geographic mobility, transportation and housing issues that affect our workforce. While general demographics are generally positive, specific issues related to the workforce are not as rosy.

Some of the SLO County trends that surfaced include:

- An older population and an older workforce than the State as a whole.
- A less diverse population and workforce than the State on average.
- Great numbers of our workforce commute to other counties, including LA!
- Housing is a major barrier to local economic growth.

The study also took a close look at major clusters of industrial activity and provided preliminary recommendations on how our County might support healthy industrial clusters. What are industry clusters you might ask, and, why are they important to you?

To understand the importance of these questions, first let's understand industry clusters: industry clusters have been defined as geographic groups of similar, related or complementary businesses that interact through business transactions, communications and dialogue, that may share specialized infrastructure, labor markets and services, and that are faced with common opportunities and threats.

SLO County leadership is working very hard to identify and develop the infrastructure and other related needs of industries within our area's clusters, to help our community businesses recognize the benefits of relationships with other industries, as well as to develop specific strategies that will help our local economy stay strong and competitive within the global economic arena.

As a member of the WIB, Mission Community Services is working hard to provide the small business community with relevant and timely information to help analyze the viability of business ideas; both for new and existing small business owners. We provide timely information on trends, demographics, market research and business advisory services to help you achieve success with your business goals. We work hard to know where the best opportunities are for developing small businesses in Central CA. MCSC's mission is to enhance opportunities and we stand ready to work individually with each client to assure businesses are planned and structured to thrive within the local, regional and global economic forces.

If you need help addressing any of these issues, be sure to call Women's Business Partners today!

Andrea Zeller, Executive Director of Mission Community Services, coordinates Women's Business Partners (WBP) to ensure all community resources are leveraged and optimized to support entrepreneurial women. WBP serves everyone interested in establishing self-sufficiency through small business ownership while primarily focusing assistance towards socially and economically disadvantaged women. WBP can take you step by step towards success and can also help those who speak only Spanish.

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