**Business Enterprises Program Report**

**November 2022**

**Vision:** The California Business Enterprises Program (BEP) is the preferred food service of choice. This self-employment option expands the economic opportunities for the blind while providing an enjoyable experience for the customer. The program’s advances affirm that people with disabilities are integral to the social and economic success of our world.

Below are significant updates that have occurred since the last Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting.

**BEP Staffing**

Our new Central Operations Manager, Susanna Bishop, joined us in August. She comes to us from the California Public Employees Retirement System.  She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Stanislaus State University. Prior to her state service, Susanna worked as a corporate restaurant manager and Meals on Wheels. We are excited to have her join our team.

The Training Officer position remains vacant and will be announced once Susanna becomes acclimated in her new role as the Central Operations Manager.

The Southern Field Office has two new appointments. RyAnn Bustillos was selected as the new Office Technician effective September 1, 2022, and Jaime Iglesias was promoted to a Business Enterprise Consultant for the San Diego Area effective October 1, 2022. Jaime’s promotion left a vacant Staff Services Analyst (SSA). Applications for the vacant SSA have been reviewed and interviews are scheduled for November 1, 2022. We are aiming to have the new hire by December 1, 2022.

The Northern Field Office continues to be fully staffed.  All staff are working with the vendors and stakeholders to keep the locations running smoothly.

**Location Announcements, Awards, and Selections**

July 21, 2022 – October 24, 2022

Note: Due to COVID 19, BEP is temporarily utilizing phone interviews and video calls for critical location selections.

**Location Announcements and Selections**

Primary location 1015 Fort Irwin was awarded to Max Duarte.

**Pending Selections:**

Interim location 844, Long Beach Vending Route

Interim location 428, Metro State Hospital & Norwalk Superior Court.

Satellite location East County Regional Center Courthouse

Interim location 1035 California Medical Health Facility

**Procurement Section Overview**

BEP Procurement July 21, 2022 – October 24, 2022

7 Vending Machines: $45,238.00

Total amount spent on 126 pieces of other equipment: $72,109.00

Total: $117,347.00 for this period.

\*The procurement of certain types of vending machines continues to be on hold pending compliance by vending machine manufacturers due to the new refrigerant regulations in California. Also, due to manufacturer supply chain issues resulting from labor shortages, BEP is challenged with getting timely delivery from vending machine distributers.

While BEP has seen some increase in equipment purchases over this reporting period, the growth has been slow as many locations continue to have reduced operating hours or remain closed as most state employees prefer to continue to telework.

**BEP Training**

BEP training continues to be postponed until a trainer can be hired. The future of the BEP training program was discussed at the recent CVPC meeting. BEP is looking into utilizing resources from Hadley School combined with onsite training with current BEP vendors.

**Other Key Activities**

BEP staff met with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to receive training on completing the Financial Relief and Restoration Payments Final Report. This report will provide RSA with how vendors used the payments to offset their losses during the pandemic.

On October 26, 2022, RSA met with BEP vendors and staff from across the country to discuss and respond to questions regarding the newly released RSA notice Lowering the Per-unit Acquisition Cost for Equipment Acquired by State Licensing Agencies for the Benefit of the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program. This new interpretation of the Randolph Shepard Act considers any equipment costing under $1,000 to be a supply and Federal dollars cannot be used to purchase supplies for existing locations. This will have serious consequences for vendors as this will be an extra financial burden for those already struggling to come back from the pandemic.