**Business Enterprises Program Report**

**August 2023**

**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**

Like much of the public and private sector, BEP is not immune to high employee turn-over, staff shortages and a limited hiring pool. To meet these challenges the BEP team is working hard to support one another to provide quality and timely services to keep our equally hard-working vendors in business.

The BEP Central Office team is currently fully staffed. The newer team members are still in training learning their roles and responsibilities.

The BEP Southern Region has two vacancies for Business Enterprises Consultant (BEC) resulting from Luke Outland accepting a promotional appointment with another state agency, and Cheryl Kidd transferring to another section of DOR. BEP is in the process of hiring two BECs to fill these vacancies.

The BEP Northern Region completed the selection process and filled two positions for the Business Enterprises Consultants (BEC). Melissa Solorio was selected as the new BEC for the Central Valley area effective June 1, 2023, and Daniel Bertsch was selected as the new BEC in the Sacramento area effective June 12, 2023. The BEP Northern Region is still understaffed, Nancy Abila retired, and her last day was July 7, 2023, and Business Enterprises Consultant Mandip Dhami is transferring to another State Agency and his last day is August 1, 2023. We are currently working with Personnel to try and fill these two positions within the coming months. All staff are working with the vendors and stakeholders to keep the locations running smoothly while we work expeditiously to fill these positions.

The Northern Field Office handled one Public Request (PRA) this month.

**Location Announcements, Awards, and Selections**

April 26, 2023 – July 24, 2023

**Awarded Locations:**

Satellite location Caltrans LARTMC was awarded to Gloria Blanco.

Satellite location Municipal Traffic Courts was awarded to Steve Alford.

Primary location 793 Ironwood and Chuckawalla Valley State Prison’s first selection was completed with Rocio Fonseca and Reynold Chen declining the opportunity after selection. A second selection is pending.

Satellite location Alhambra Courthouse was awarded to Steve Alford.

Satellite location San Diego Border Route was awarded to Francisco Flores.

Satellite location Van Nuys was awarded to Gloria Blanco.

Primary location 898 Mule Creek State Prison and Sierra Conservation Center was awarded to Rocio Fonseca.

Interim location 876 California Men’s Colony was awarded to Andrew Gonzales.

Interim location 863 Folsom State Prison and California State Prison, Sacramento was awarded to Debbie Peart.

Satellite location 706 Sacramento Vending Route was awarded to Nasir Aqbal.

**Pending Selections:**

Satellite location United States Coast Guard Alameda.

Primary location 1008 United States Coast Guard San Diego.

Primary location 793 Ironwood and Chuckawalla Valley State Prisons.

**Procurement Section Overview**

April 26, 2023 – July 24, 2023

No equipment was purchased last quarter.

\*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.

**BEP Training**

The new BEP Training Program is on track to begin January 1, 2024. The curriculum will be offered in a hybrid environment with some classes taking place in person and some learning offered virtually.

**Other Key Activities**

The Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB) held an open house on July 14, 2023. The open house gave Northern Field and Central Office staff an opportunity to learn about the services, take a tour, and meet and greet OCB staff and residents.