**Business Enterprises Program Report**

**November 2024**

**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 Overview**

**Central Office:**

As of August 2024, Marc Leyva vacated the Training Officer position, transferring to another State agency. The BEP extends its best wishes to Mr. Leyva for his future professional endeavors. The program is currently reviewing applications for this essential role for a second time and anticipates scheduling interviews in the coming weeks.

In October 2024, Vicki Lim was appointed as the new Office Technician for the BEP Central Office, marking her entry into State service. The BEP looks forward to supporting her growth and contributions in this role.

**Northern Field Office:**

As of September 2024, Business Enterprises Consultant Mandip Dhami separated from State service. The BEP extends its best wishes to Mr. Dhami in his future pursuits.

As of October 2024, Meghan Johnson transferred to another State agency, vacating the Office Technician position at the Northern Field Office. The Program is actively recruiting to fill this vacancy and expects to post the position in the upcoming weeks.

**Southern Field Office:**

The Southern Field Office (SFO) has completed the selection process for the

Business Enterprises Consultant (BEC) vacancy. Jose Mendez was selected

effective August 2024. Mr. Mendez was a Staff Services Analyst (SSA) with the SFO

and did an exceptional job in his role, but he took this well-deserved promotional

opportunity.

The SFO is currently understaffed with one vacant SSA resulting from Jose Mendez promoting to BEC and an Office Technician that is currently on extended medical leave.

Interviews to fill the SSA vacancy are scheduled for October 31, 2024, and we anticipate having the new hire by December 1, 2024.

To continue with BEP Southern Region’ critical daily functions and avoid

interruption of services to our BEP vendors, BECs are currently taking the roles

and responsibilities of the vacant SSA and Office Technician, in addition to their duties.

**Public Records Requests Overview**

The Northern Field Office processed one (1) requests for public records this quarter.

The Southern Field Office did not receive any requests for public records this quarter.

**Location Announcements, Awards, and Selections Overview**

August 1, 2024 – October 31, 2024

**Location Announcements:**

* Satellite Location: San Jose United States Postal Service and Santa Rosa Veteran’s Affairs Clinic
* Interim Location, 760: West Sacramento Mail Processing Center, United States Postal Service

**Awarded Locations:**

* Primary Location, 896: San Quentin Rehabilitation Center and Veteran’s Home of California, Yountville Campus – Awarded to Anthony Szi
* Satellite Location: San Jose United States Postal Service and Santa Rosa Veteran’s Affairs Clinic – Awarded to Annie Roche

**Pending Selections:**

* Interim Location, 760: West Sacramento Mail Processing Center, United States Postal Service

**Other Related Location Information:**

In October 2024, the Department requested to initiate direct negotiations with the United States Marine Corps West Coast locations, collaborating with the Arizona Department of Economic Security. This negotiation effort is on behalf of the selected blind vendors: Andrew Kilpatrick, Dave Carroll, Debbie Peart, Jerry Gann, Maximino Duarte, Tim Mead, and their teaming partner, Sodexo.

**Procurement Section Overview**

August 1, 2024 – October 31, 2024

* 3 pieces of equipment totaling $26,206.06
* 25 Vending Machines totaling $257,881.36

Procurement total for all equipment is $284,087.42 for this period.

**BEP Training Overview**

Effective September 5, 2024, all BEP vendor classroom and on-the-job training activities have been temporarily postponed due to the recent vacancy of the BEP Training Officer position. Consultations by the Training Officer for counselors and consumers seeking program entry have also been deferred. The BEP will issue an update when the Vendor Training Program resumes. The program appreciates the patience of all the stakeholders involved while it works diligently to fill this critical position. Currently BEP have reviewed applications and soon will be scheduling the top candidates in a second round of interviews as we look for a qualified individual to fill the Training Officer position.

**Other Key Activities**

BEP currently has three (3) Fair Evidentiary Hearings (FEH), two (2) of which are still pending.

BEP will be hosting a Statewide Vendor Training Conference in Sacramento on December 13-15, 2024, for current vendors. Thirty-one (31) vendors are scheduled to attend. We will have a packed agenda of guests from across the food service industry presenting on various topics. The National Association of Blind Merchants will provide a presentation on national issues of interest that affect the future of the BEP program. We look forward to a conference that offers something for everyone.

BEP has received year-end figures from DOR Accounting and has worked with DGS Office of Risk Management (ORIM) to provide actuarial studies on the Workers Compensation, Liability and Liability Reserve Accounts to ensure proper funds are received by DOR to pay for these account expenditures.