**Business Enterprises Program Report**

**August 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**

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.

**Central Office:**

As of May 10, 2024, Shelley Harris vacated the Procurement Officer position for a promotion within a different State agency. The BEP extends its best wishes to her in her future professional endeavors.

The Central Office has filled another crucial vacancy for the Location Development Officer position as of June 5, 2024. Brandon Birchell was promoted to the role after six months of serving as the BEP’s Central Office Technician, where he demonstrated a notable aptitude for reviewing and processing Permits and Vendor Agreements. We are confident that his diverse skills and professional background will significantly benefit our team.

BEP is currently reviewing applications to fill the Office Technician position in Central Office. The position filing date has closed, and interviews are scheduled to begin in the upcoming weeks. BEP anticipates filling this position by September 2024.

**Northern Field Office:**

As of June 3, 2024, Mandip Dhami rejoins BEP as a Business Enterprise Consultant. He looks forward to working with our vendors again to advise on best business practices.

To address staffing needs, Daniela Isquierdo currently fulfills the Procurement Officer responsibilities in addition to her daily duties. With her knowledge of purchasing for the office unit, issuing service orders, and overseeing service provider contracts, she will also ensure that the Program’s purchasing budget has effective oversight.

**Southern Field Office:**

On June 10, 2024, the Southern Field Office (SFO) team filled an Office Technician vacancy with the selection of Maisha Garner. Maisha brings a wealth of technical and administrative experience to the Program, and BEP is looking forward to her professional development in this role to support its office operations.

The Southern Field Office has a vacant Business Enterprise Consultant position resulting from Artin Aghakhani separating from State Service as of May 7, 2024.

Interviews have been completed and we anticipate having the new BEC in place by August 15, 2024.

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

April 20, 2024 – July 31, 2024

**Location Announcements:**

* Primary Location 869: San Quentin State Prison and Veteran’s Home of California, Yountville
* Satellite Location: Los Angeles County Superior Court - Compton
* Satellite Location: Los Angeles County Hall of Records

**Awarded Locations:**

* Primary Location: The United States West Coast Marine Corps (USMC) Regional Garrison Food Services, Department of the Navy – Awarded to Andrew Kilpatrick, Dave Carroll, Debbie Peart, Max Duarte, and Jerry Gann
* Interim Location 1059: May Lee Office Complex, Department of General Services – Awarded to Michael David Davis
* Satellite Location formally 827: Santa Clarita and Van Nuys United States Postal Office (USPO) – Awarded to Naresh Balani
* Interim Location 1035: California Health Care Facility (CHCF) and Stockton Training Center (STC) – Awarded to Mario Anthony Szi
* Primary Location 846: United States Postal Office Evans Station 1 (USPO) – Awarded to Annie Roche

**Pending Selections:**

There are no pending selections at this time.

**Procurement Section Overview**

April 20, 2024 – July 31, 2024

* 2 pieces of equipment totaling $3,399.67
* 131 smallware items totaling $19,648.09
* 26 Vending Machines totaling $201,492.31

Procurement total for all equipment is $224,540.07 for this period.

**BEP Training Overview**

**Current Students:**

There are currently four students that have completed the first four steps of the pre-requisite process, which include the World of Work Inventory assessment, an Informational Interview, attending Orientation Center for the Blind, and obtaining the ServSafe Manager certification. These students will be completing the 20-day pre-evaluation in the next month. The Business Enterprises Program has also received notice from a several vendors that are willing to host the 20-day pre-evaluations at their facility for the incoming students.

**New Students:**

There are three additional students that have begun the pre-requisite process towards joining the BEP and are in contact with their vocational rehabilitation counselor.

**Other Related Location Information**

The department submitted a proposal on behalf of vendor Daniel Salinas and his teaming partner, Blackstone Consulting Incorporated, on July 18, 2024, for the United States San Diego Cost Guard. The proposal is pending an award.

**Public Records Requests Overview**

The Northern Field Office handled two requests for public records this quarter.

The Southern Field Office handled two requests for public records this quarter.

**Other Key Activities**

BEP currently has 2 pending Full Evidentiary Hearings (FEH) in which 1 has been scheduled and 1 is pending scheduling.

BEP will be hosting a Statewide Vendor Training Conference in Sacramento December 13 to 15, 2024, for current vendors. 31 vendors plan on attending the upcoming December 2024 conference.