



SMART Workforce Center Community Coordinator Report



Q3-2023

DEL NORTE COUNTY EDITION

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SMARTS 4 County Quest

SMART is on a Quest throughout our 4-county region to support employment equity and individual, community and industry resilience.

The Quest grant is a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) awarded by the Secretary of Labor, under Section 170 of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Department of Labor funds two types of NDWGS. The first is Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery which provides funding to create temporary employment opportunities to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts, when an area impacted by disaster is declared eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or otherwise recognized by a federal agency with authority or jurisdiction over federal response to the emergency or disaster. The second is Employment Recovery NDWGs temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers and to meet the increased demand for employment and training services following a qualifying event such as major economic dislocations or mass layoffs.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in substantial effects on the health and prosperity of the nation, its people, and its businesses. While these impacts were widespread and varied, they were not evenly distributed across populations. Women, immigrants, lower-wage workers, people of color, people with disabilities, individuals who were formerly incarcerated, veterans and other workers from historically marginalized communities were impacted in their employment due to the pandemic.

SMART will be working in our 4-county region including Del Norte County, Siskiyou County, Shasta County and Trinity County to assist those who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs through structured and paid work-based learning opportunities as well as approved industry demand educational programs.



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SMARTS rings in the 'Noon Year'

SMART Staff started off the new Fiscal year by commemorating the old to ring in the new! We took time to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the SMART Workforce Development team across all four counties. "Noon Year's Eve" marked the culmination of a truly outstanding year in workforce development,

where SMART invested more than \$4.6 million in our communities to create opportunities, change lives, and build a brighter future for all.

SMART's commitment to community development shone brightly throughout the fiscal year. With initiatives ranging from paid on-the-job training to work experiences, individual training services, NDWG Temporary Jobs, and over 650 individual client support services, SMART invested not just funds, but also time and effort into making a tangible difference where it matters most—our communities.

One of the most significant accomplishments this year was the support provided to 278 adult job seekers. These individuals found themselves on a path to success, with average wages exceeding \$25 per hour. SMART's dedication to not only finding jobs for clients but supporting them as they secure long-term, full-time employment has a lasting impact on the lives of these job seekers and their families.

Equally impressive was the guidance provided to 115 young adults, who were able to participate in career exploration through SMART's programs. With an average wage of more than \$16 per hour, these young individuals are not just earning a living; they're building the foundation for promising futures and starting their journey into the future of the workforce.



In total, SMART's job centers extended their reach to more than 5,000 people, proving that the impact of workforce development is substantial and far-reaching. By assisting job seekers, SMART is not only changing lives but also contributing to the growth, prosperity, and economic development of the entire community.

SMART also led the way in several special grants, putting individuals to work alongside established partners such as the US Forest Service, Whiskeytown National Park, County of Del Norte, Ruth Lake Community Services District, Trinity County Resource Conservation District, CalTrans, Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, The Watershed Research and Training Center, and others, in a collaborative effort to clean up from natural disasters such as Storms and



Fires throughout our region. Through SMART, these grants infused several millions of dollars into our communities while also helping to restore the unique beauty and accessibility of our North State natural resources.

SMART's commitment to excellence was further exemplified by the successful participation in 15 performance audits throughout the year. The impressive feat of achieving ZERO findings speaks volumes about the meticulous check and balance system in place, ensuring that every resource is used efficiently and effectively.

The work that SMART does extends far beyond mere numerical data and statistics. It's about the cultivation of trust within strong teams, creating profound and meaningful connections with job seekers, fostering relationships with community partners, and engaging in close collaboration with local employers to create opportunities for all. SMART is not just an organization; it's a force for positive transformation in our regions.

As we celebrate "Noon Year's Eve" and bid farewell to a fantastic fiscal year, let's also look forward to the promising opportunities and challenges the new year will bring. With SMART leading the way, we can be confident that the future holds even more success stories, brighter futures, and stronger communities.

E3 (Experience, Education, Employment) Summer Youth Program



The E3 Summer Youth Program, a partnership between the Smart Workforce Center and Del Norte County Office of Education, was a huge success this summer! This summer, E3 was able to put 46 teens to work in the community over the summer, thanks to our local businesses/agencies as well as our partners DNCOE and,

new this year, Klamath Promise Neighborhood. After interviewing with the E3 participating worksites, the youth were selected and placed in a paid internship. Worksites this summer included Crescent City Harbor, IT Department at the School District, City of Crescent City, County of Del Norte, Del Norte Association for Cultural Awareness (DNACA), Del Norte Fairgrounds, Family Resource Center, Del Norte High Music Department, Elk Valley Rancheria, Hambro Forest Products, Open Door Health Clinic, Redwood National and State Parks (Redwoods Parks Conservancy), Resighini Rancheria, Sutter Coast Hospital and Tri County Independent Living.

The following is a quote from one of the worksite supervisors, "Giving local young people the opportunity to experience different careers can help them remain in our community."

The majority of students in the program returned to high school after the summer, and a small portion went off to their first year of college. Also, after showing what great employees our teens can be, some of the worksites chose to hire E3 participants after the program.

Overall, the 2023 E3 Summer Youth Program was a great success! We are looking forward to next summer and growing the program even more! This program was funded by the Del Norte County Office of Education and Klamath Promise Neighborhood.

On the Job Training and Work Experience Partners:

- Pro Garage Doors
- Cascade Circle
- Fasteners, Inc.
- Redding Fashion Alliance
- Magnolia Homes
- Walgamuth Painting
- McEntire Landscaping
- FYRBX
- Polytek of Redding
- County of Trinity DOT
- Angela's Bead Art
- Solano's Inc.
- Mountain Valley Health Center
- Watershed Resource Center
- TCRCD
- Dr. Kristi Davis OD
- Haven Humane Society
- City of Weed
- Berryvale Grocery
- Trindel Insurance Fund
- Papa Dogs Taphouse & Deli
- Kaleidoscope Coffee
- Bright Futures Children Center
- Tri-County Independent Living
- Lil Smiles Daycare



LET'S GET SOCIAL

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TheSMARTCenterBiz/>

LinkedIn

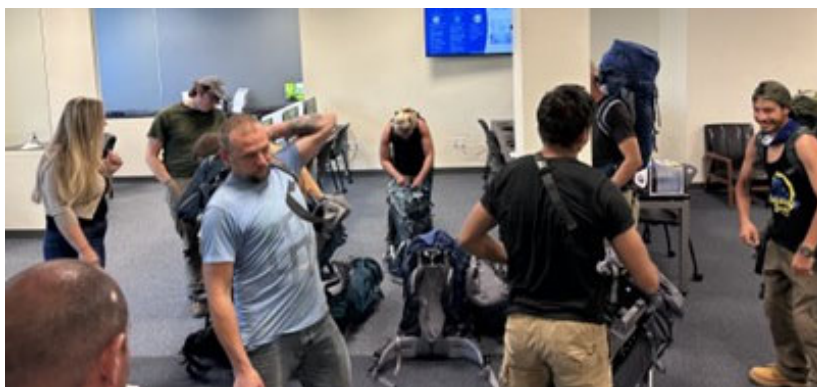
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/SMART-business-resource-center>

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/the_SMARTcenter

Storm & Fire Grants Pack Up and Head Out

SMART Workforce Center has several special work projects through NWDG (National Dislocated Worker Grant). These temporary employment opportunities include recovery efforts from the effects of recent fires and storm. Work duties are as follows: ash and waste cleanup, roads and trail repair, waterway cleanup and restoration, and burned tree and brush removal. A supervisor and their crew hike in for several miles a day, and camp overnight for multiple nights, packing in their gear and food. SMART is able to supply their camping gear through these NWDG sponsorships. In this photo you can see the work participants excitedly trying on their new gear as they prepare for their 'jobs in the woods' providing forest restoration in the beautiful wildlands of Northern California.



Dustin's Story

The special grants SMART facilitates directly benefit people like Dustin. Here is a look into that impact, in his own words.

"Hello, my name is Dustin. Over the course of the past few years I've found employment through the NWDG/Special Grants Program, completing fire cleanup projects, under the directive of Danielle of the Smart Workforce Center. Danielle and SMART have greatly attributed to the quality of my life.

In 2020, when I was first employed to assist in a fire cleanup project, I was ready for a career change. I'd worked as a Horticulturist, on and off, for the twelve years prior to coming to SMART. I no longer wanted to work in that line of work, and was greatly interested in forest work, at whatever capacity that I might qualify as.

SMART gave me that opportunity to break into that new line of work, without having to acquire another degree. At the end of next month, I will begin my new career as a backcountry trail maintenance worker, for the Forest Service, based out of a location that's only six miles from my house, working in the most beautiful portion of wilderness that I have found.

Prior to coming to SMART, I'd travelled all over the West Coast, hiked each of the mountain ranges and most of the National Parks. Trail work had always been an option that I had considered, but not something that I had known how to break into.

Thank you, Danielle, and SMART for putting in the effort to make these grants happen and for providing me with the opportunity to network and develop my skills in new and interesting ways!"



SMART OUTREACH ILP

In September, Del Norte staff presented to Department of Health & Human Services - Family Connections Independent Living Program (ILP). The audience consisted of Youth and Young Adults that were or have recently been in the Foster Care system, ages 15.5 to 21 years old. ILP services provide training and programs to assist current and former foster youth achieve self-sufficiency prior to and after leaving foster care. Some of the services provided through ILP include:

- Money management
- Daily living skills
- Decision making
- Building self-esteem
- Financial assistance with college or vocational schools
- Educational Resources Housing (Transitional Housing)
- Employment

Staff talked with the young adults about work readiness workshops, SMART's Young Adult program, resume assistance, job search plans, and possible WEX opportunities. Thank you Family Connections for inviting us to talk to your Independent Living Program!



SECOND CHANCE GRANTS

SMART Workforce Center has been given special funding through the State of California to assist Justice Involved individuals on active parole or probation. There are two grants that we are utilizing to assist our clients. The P2E (Prison to Employment) is for those seeking employment and the RERP (Regional Equity and Recovery Plan) is for those clients that are seeking education and training for a career. These grants provide much needed job seeking assistance, work-based

learning opportunities and educational opportunities to those that are transitioning from incarceration and back into the workforce.



The grants were rolled out in June and since then several clients have gained employment in the food service, retail, and community outreach industries. We have also been able partner with the Step-Up program and assist students with clothing needed for the heavy equipment program at Shasta College. 4 clients recently completed the Forklift Certification training at Shasta Builders Exchange, adding to their resume for more opportunities to secure employment.

Smart looks forward to assisting the many clients that will be served with these Second Chance grants!

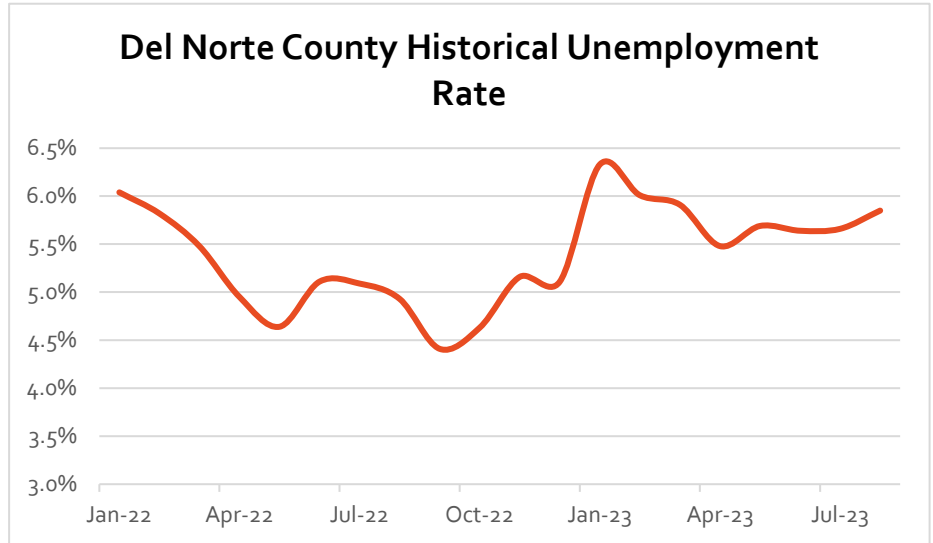
Del Norte County Labor Market Update:

As of August 2023, In Del Norte County, the civilian work force is 9,480 this includes everyone that is working, and everyone that is looking for work. Of those, 8,920 are currently employed.

The unemployment rate is 5.9% for August, this is up from 4.9% in the same time last year.

In raw numbers there are approximately 560 people currently considered unemployed in Del Norte County. This is an increase of 90 unemployed since August of 2022.

While this is a minor increase in unemployment over the last year, most economists consider a 5% rate to be at or near full capacity. This may mean we've reached an end to the unusually low unemployment rates near 4% seen through much of the last year. We can continue to say that the unemployment rate is low. As the total number of participants in the labor force remains smaller than in years past, and as unemployment remains low, it will remain difficult to fill labor



Source www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov

needs. With a smaller pool of experienced and knowledgeable candidates, some businesses will have difficulties filling their labor needs. Fortunately, SMART offers assistance to businesses, in the form of On-The-Job training reimbursement and training programs for their employees.

Through SMART's funded On the Job Training programs we can help reduce risk when hiring a new employee. As this labor shortage creates complications for employers in the county, SMART can be there to help employers navigate it.

Employers in Del Norte County may also need to rethink how they recruit and fill their labor needs. There are untapped labor pools not traditionally counted in the unemployed numbers. Retirees looking for something to do, college students just about to enter the labor pool, parolees who have just completed their prison terms, and homemakers thinking about reentering the work force are not included in the unemployed numbers. Businesses can tap those resources but will likely need to adjust their thinking of what the job demands. Retirees or students may not want or be able to accommodate a 40 hour a week position. Perhaps someone lacks the skills needed to perform the work but has strong motivation to learn.

This is where SMART can help. We can connect businesses to candidates that employers may not have had access to, or even knew were options. SMART clients come from all walks of life and are looking for careers today. As the county's pool of candidates to hire continues to shrink, SMART can assist businesses filling their labor needs.

Major Employers Del Norte County

Alexandre Dairy
Best Western Plus Northwoods
College of the Redwoods
Crescent Elk Middle School
Dahlstrom & Watt Bulb Farms
Del Norte County Health Dept
Del Norte County High School
Del Norte County Unified Sch
Del Norte Sheriff's Office
Elk Valley Casino
Hambro Forest Products
Harbor View Grotto
Home Depot
Joe Hamilton Elementary
Lucky 7 Casino & Hotel
Mary Peacock Elementary School
New Dawn Support Svc
Port O'Pints Brewing Co
Redwood Elementary School
Reservation Ranch
Safeway
Sutter Coast Hospital
Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation-Tribal
Walmart Supercenter

<https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/>

Success Story - Kiani

Kiani first heard about SMART back in 2019 when we were advertising the Summer Youth Program, E3. She had moved out of the area during the latter part of her high school years, and recently returned to Del Norte in February of 2023. She came into SMART during the Spring of 2023 to inquire about job search assistance. Kiani had no work experience and was having difficulty securing employment. There happened to be an opening on the National Dislocated Worker - COVID project with the County of Del Norte as a Sanitation Worker, and after participating in a mock interview with the Business Services team was able to land the temporary position. Although Kiani was gaining work experience and earning a paycheck, her interests were in gaining experience in an office setting. Towards the end of her temporary job with the County, Business Services and her Career Advisor were able to work with her to secure a WEX placement at the City of Crescent City as a Human Resource Helper. It was with the City that she was able to gain a ton of office skills. Shortly after the WEX with the City ended, Kiani moved back to Grants Pass, Oregon where she is now working at a middle school as a Life's Skill Teacher Assistant and going to school to pursue her career as a Dental Hygienist. Kiani stated, "My experience with the SMART staff was amazing! They were all super friendly, knowledgeable, and great at their jobs. They took my requests for the kind of job I was looking for and made it happen!" SMART staff wish Kiani all the best in her future endeavors!



2023 Regional Economic Summit

SMART Professional Development:

- Connection Café-Help Me Grow
- Del Norte Regional Economic Summit 2023
- NVEAC-Wage & Hour: Most Common Violations
- Trinity County Workforce Roundtable
- Trinity County Economic Dev Workshop
- Shasta County Veterans Services Training
- LMI & Occupational Data- NORTEC
- Equity & Access Committee- NORTEC
- AFWD/SMART Best Practice
- Accounting Software Training- MIP
- SMART/in house Best Practices- ETPL, Supportive Services
- Essential Communication Skills Training

On September 21st and 22nd, the Regional Summit Planning Committee held their first in person Regional Economic Summit. The State of the Redwood Coast Region Conference took place at the Ukiah Convention Center and attendees from various organizations within Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Lake Counties were in attendance. The line-up for the 2023 Conference, titled Our Elemental Economy, did not disappoint! Attendees were able to hear State highlights from Senator Mike McGuire, as well as from regional speakers on various topics including climate and disaster resilience, project pipelines, and renewable energy projects. There was also plenty of economic data from Dr. Robert Eyler. SMART's Program Supervisor, Christy Hernandez, served on a Workforce panel in one of the breakout sessions to discuss the power of partnerships and creating a talent pipeline. A huge thank you to Arcata Economic Development Corporation, Humboldt Area Foundation, Redwood Region RISE and North Coast Opportunities for a great conference!



The SMART Workforce Center is a 501c3 non-profit committed to providing job seekers with resources, training, education, job development, and job placement to help them not only receive living wage jobs, but to grow in their careers. We also help businesses grow by educating employers about available tax credits, alternative labor pools, and helping with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring, as well as offsetting wages for work experience and on the job training programs. SMART is a proud partner of America's Job Center of California and the NoRTEC Workforce Development Board. We have locations in Crescent City, Redding, Weaverville, and Weed. For more information visit the SMART website at <http://www.thesmartcenter.biz>.

Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities. TTY 711.

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