

TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 5/08/08

FROM: WIB Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: Regional Innovation Grant (RIG)

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: The Merced County Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA), in partnership with the LWIAs of San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties, under the name of Northern San Joaquin Valley Biotech Initiative, have been awarded a \$238,434 Department of Labor (DOL) grant. The grant will be used to connect education, economic development, and workforce development in order to develop career pathways to prepare individuals for careers in all levels of the biotech industry. Under the grant, a consultant will be hired to conduct a thorough analysis of the existing state of biotechnology activity in the region and the potential for future growth.

Developing a biotechnology cluster in the region offers a means of methodically transforming the economy while leveraging the existing resource base such as the laboratories already operating here in support of food processing, which have also developed a baseline of training programs with local institutions. Other factors supporting this transition include the region's proximity to major biotech companies in the San Francisco Bay Area, and a new University of California campus in Merced.

The grant will run from April 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009.

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A