

TO: Workforce Investment Board

DATE: 7/26/01

FROM: Planning & Policy Development

For Action

For Information

Meeting Notes

For Consent

SUBJECT: H1B Grant Proposal

PROPOSED MOTION: That the Board pursue the below described grant funding and authorize the Chair to execute such documents as may be required to do so.

DISCUSSION: It is proposed that the Merced County Workforce Investment Board partner with the Madera County, Stanislaus County, and Mother Lode Workforce Investment Boards, as well as Merced College, UC Merced, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the purpose of pursuing a Technical Skills Training Grant from the Department of Labor. The Merced County WIB will be the primary applicant for this grant. The target date for completion of the grant proposal is August 15, 2001, with notification of awards expected in October, 2001. The grant period is 2 years, with the possibility of a 3rd year extension.

The grant program is designed to be a long-term solution to local skill shortages in high skill and high technology occupations. The grant program provides funding for training programs that prepare local workers to take advantage of new technology- related and high skills employment opportunities, thus helping businesses reduce their dependence on skilled foreign professionals working in the U.S. under the H-1B visa program.

The Merced County WIB and regional partners intend to apply for \$3 million from the H-1B program. A non-federal match of at least 50% will be contributed by Merced College. Additional match in the form of in-kind support and supportive services will be contributed by the various partners. The funds will be used to expand, develop, and support high-technology and health care training programs at Merced College. Both unemployed

individuals and employed individuals seeking to gain new skills will be encouraged to enroll in these programs. The Merced, Madera, Stanislaus, and Mother Lode Workforce Investment Boards will refer One-Stop users from their areas to the program and will provide supportive services to those individuals, as well as monitor the participants' progress through the program.

Outreach efforts to target minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, older workers, workers from rural areas, and bilingual workers will be implemented. Over the course of the 2 year grant period, it is expected that nearly 1000 students would be enrolled in training programs funded in part by the H-1B Technical Skills Training grant.

The occupations specifically targeted by this program are:

- **Certified Network Associate and Professional**
- **Laser Electronics Technician**
- **Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician**
- **Biotechnician**
- **Registered Nurse**
- **Sonographer**

Local demand for all of these occupations is on the rise due to many factors, including the development of the UC Merced campus, the effects of population growth on health care demand, and the diversification of the Central Valley's economy. Training local individuals in these fields will not only satisfy existing and potential demand, but will provide initiative for new business development throughout the region.