

MEMORANDUM

TO: Workforce Development Board

FROM: Christopher Donnelly

SUBJECT: Approval to Extend Equus Youth Agreement

DATE: June 26, 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) concurs with the June 12, 2025, Executive Committee recommendation to approve extending the existing agreement with Arbor E&T, LLC, dba Equus Workforce Solutions, to provide WIOA Title 1 Youth case management services in the northern portion of Monterey County for an agreement term of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$650,000 to serve 66 youth.

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enacted a comprehensive youth employment program to serve eligible youth, ages 14 through 24, who face barriers to education, training, and employment. The Monterey County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) WIOA youth program provides counseling, training, work experience, and placement services, and focuses primarily on out-of-school youth ages 18 through 24.

Equus was selected to provide WIOA Youth services following an Request for Proposal (RFP) process in early 2022 in which only one proposal was received, and based on a sole-source recommendation, Equus was approved to provide WIOA services to youth in the northern portion of Monterey County from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. The 2022-23 agreement executed with Equus was amended for 2023-24 to provide \$750,000 for case management services for 97 youth.

Last year, Equus and Turning Point case managers worked closely together to support several MCWDB initiatives. The Youth programs collaborated to provide the Green Cadre program using CaliforniansForAll funding until September 2024, then used WIOA funding to provide a similar program to continue assisting the residents of Monterey County in the areas of Climate and Food Insecurity. In addition, the programs also provided aerospace manufacturing internships for young adults through Joby Aviation and two Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) courses through Central Coast College. Finally, in May 2025, the two programs enrolled participants for a Hospitality training cohort.

DISCUSSION:

For the coming year, Equus Youth North will need to focus primarily on direct job placements for youth that have completed Work Experience (WEX) or Occupational Skills Training within the MCWDB's priority sectors, in addition to providing increased outreach in their service area and working with CBOs and other stakeholders to increase enrollments based on low enrollments in PY 2024-25. Equus will also need to work with local businesses to obtain additional on-the-job training (OJT) placement opportunities and WEX locations. MCWDB expects Equus to increase the level and quality of services

to youth participants, including new, in-person workshops and online trainings for priority industry sector and demand jobs.

In addition to providing enhanced WIOA programming, the Youth programs will need to develop new, Green Cadre programming with CaliforniansForAll (CA4ALL) funding to serve the communities within Monterey County, based on the recent receipt of a \$1,998,840 grant. Equus Youth North will receive \$128,104 of CaliforniansForAll funding to serve 24 Green Cadre youth participants in FY 2025-26, for a total combined (WIOA + CA4ALL) funding amount of \$778,104 to serve 90 participants.

Staff recommends executing an amendment to the WIOA services agreement with Equus in the amount of \$650,000 to provide case management services to 66 youth in North Monterey County during FY 2025-26.

NEXT STEPS:

If the recommendation to extend the WIOA Youth services agreement with Equus is approved by the MCWDB, staff will develop an amendment to extend the existing agreement.