



### **For Immediate Release**

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## **San Joaquin County Awarded \$6 Million For Farmworker Jobs Program**

**Stockton, CA** – San Joaquin County’s Employment and Economic Development Department (EEDD) was recently awarded a \$6 million grant from the United States Department of Labor for a highly competitive National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Career Services and Training grant.

“This NFJP grant will enable our County to diversify the skill set of farm laborers so they qualify for family sustaining wage jobs during off-agriculture seasons or should they transition out of farm work,” said Patricia Virgen, Director of the San Joaquin County Employment and Economic Development Department (EEDD). “Our department is excited to support this segment of our labor force that has contributed so much to the region’s agriculture industry.”

The grant will be used to support migrant and seasonal farm workers and their dependents in developing skills to pursue a career of their choice in the agriculture sector or non-agriculture sectors. The NFJP objective is to prepare program participants for good quality jobs in a variety of careers in high-demand work sectors. The program takes a worker-centered approach that incorporates diverse workers’ voices from underserved communities to ensure that training and other activities are relevant to the experiences and perspectives of participants.

EEDD received confirmation of their grant award in October 2024 and had a soft program launch late last year. To date the NFJP has helped more than 100 local families.

Individuals who have performed seasonal agricultural work in the last two years may qualify for employment and training services and are encouraged to apply.

Short term training is available in the following fields:

- Heavy Equipment Operation
- Commercial Truck Driving
- Agriculture
- Health Care
- Welding

The grant will fund program operations through 2028 and to date, has conducted six recruitment events, and begun enrolling participants. For more information on the program including eligibility criteria and details on how to apply contact Armando Ayala at [aayala@sjcworknet.org](mailto:aayala@sjcworknet.org) or call (209)

468-3660. Interested individuals can also visit any San Joaquin County WorkNet Center located in Stockton, Lodi, Manteca, or Tracy for in-person assistance and additional support.

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