

President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

*The OC Partnership for
Regional Biotech & Healthcare Occupations*



Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

Grantee: Orange County Workforce Investment Board

Key Partners: Orange County Business Council, Coast Community College District, University of California at Irvine, Orange County Department of Education, Life Science Industry Council, Central Labor Council – Local 441, One-Stop Centers, Beckman Coulter Inc., Edwards Lifesciences Inc., Allergan Inc., and Saint Joseph Health System

Leveraged Amount: \$80,000 in cash and \$720,000 in-kind

Location of Grant Activities: Orange County, California

Challenge: The biotechnology medical device industry in Orange County has more than 3,000 firms and employs over 300,000 residents. It is one of the fastest-growing and highest-paying industries in the county. The healthcare industry is also among the fastest-growing industries. Retention of incumbent workers due to deficient workforce skills in low-level occupations and a lack of clearly defined career ladders in mid-level occupations are major challenges. Additionally, workforce challenges exist in recruiting new employees, in classifying industry occupations and developing core skills competencies, and in basic attributes required for entry-level biotechnology positions.

Addressing the Challenge:

The Orange County WIB will implement an innovative project that will leverage the strengths of its partners to: 1) target untapped labor pools; 2) establish standardization and sharing of curricula; 3) define biotech career ladders; and 4) develop career lattices for trainees to transition to biotech occupations and biotech-related occupations in the healthcare industry. Through outreach and trainee selection, training opportunities will be targeted to dislocated workers, minorities, and entry-level workers. Technical training curricula will be integrated into the academic curriculum of Orange County schools. Once established, this project will serve as the engine for creating a skilled workforce and a pipeline of qualified workers to fill the high growth biotechnology and biotech healthcare occupations now and in the future.

Projected Outcomes:

- 75 incumbent employees from partner businesses will be trained;
- 75 dislocated workers from the county's declining industries will be trained;
- 75 entry-level workers will be trained;
- 80% to 90% of incumbents will receive 4% to 7% salary increases, with 5% advancing careers; and
- Career lattices and standardized requirements for career ladders will be established.

