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Communications Workers of America District 9 Awarded \$4.6 Million California Workforce Development Board Grant to Expand Training and Job Opportunities for California Workers as Fiber Technicians

CWA District 9 has secured a total of \$10.4 million in state and federal funds this year to help prepare California workforce for new broadband jobs, with focus on job training for underrepresented communities

CALIFORNIA — As California prepares to invest billions of dollars in broadband deployment, from both the federal Infrastructure Act Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program and Governor Gavin Newsom’s historic 2021 [legislation](#), Communications Workers of America District 9 (CWA) is ramping up efforts to recruit and train workers to meet the growing need. CWA was recently awarded a \$4.6 million grant from the California Workforce Development Board to expand its fiber technician apprenticeship program in California, conducted in partnership with Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CLPCCD) in San Jose. Last year, the union was awarded a \$5.8 million grant for the program through the US Department of Labor, bringing total funds won for California workers to over \$10 million.

The funding will allow CWA and CLPCCD to equip more workers with the skills they need to secure these fast-growing broadband jobs, including by providing high quality training and certifications, financial support for apprentices, and expanding CWA’s labor-management apprenticeship program to multiple facilities across the state.

“California’s massive public investment in broadband will require a statewide workforce of well-trained fiber technicians, and CWA is ready to meet that demand,” said **CWA District 9 Vice President Frank Arce**. “With this funding, we’ll be able to significantly scale apprenticeship in the broadband sector, as well as focus on recruiting underrepresented and underserved communities to good jobs building communications networks serving California. Our workforce development programs raise labor standards in a fragmented labor market, in which broadband construction and maintenance is often subcontracted to low-road contractors that put worker safety and service quality at risk. Our goal with this grant funding is to increase opportunities for California families to benefit from the job creation of broadband expansion, and ensure the work is conducted by safe, highly trained professionals.”

Since its establishment in the early 1990s, CWA's telecom technician apprenticeship program has seen hundreds of workers trained and connected to good-paying jobs in the industry.

As a part of its investment in California communities and in creating opportunities for underrepresented communities, CWA will use a portion of the grant funding to provide participants in its job training and apprenticeship programs with wraparound services like childcare and transportation. Such support will remove the barriers many workers face to uptraining themselves and enable more workers to advance with skill sets needed to meet the state's broadband workforce demands.

Currently, CWA's apprenticeship program creates direct incentives for employers to invest in a well-trained workforce by covering critical training and equipment costs for apprentices they employ. This includes providing apprentices with required tools and protective equipment, as well as paying all instructional costs not covered by the state. In addition, CWA offers an employer recruiting tool, allowing prospective employers to experience and understand the scope of the apprenticeship program and the skill sets that workers who participate have to offer.

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About CWA: The Communications Workers of America represents working people in telecommunications, customer service, media, airlines, health care, public service and education, and manufacturing.

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