

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**\$900,000 state training grant offers a path to a brighter future for  
180 workers who have lost their jobs in Merced County**

**SACRAMENTO** – Thanks to a \$900,000 grant from the state Employment Development Department (EDD), 180 unemployed workers in Merced County will learn the skills to move quickly into new careers in growing industries.

“The unemployment rate in Merced County has spiked to as high as 20 percent in the past year, as some business have closed and other employers have cut jobs,” said EDD Director Pam Harris. “Layoffs have hit workers in local governments, school districts, manufacturing, retail, distribution and other sectors. This grant offers these workers a ray of hope in this depressed economy and sets them on the path to a brighter tomorrow.”

In partnership with Merced College, the Merced County Workforce Investment Board will use this funding to provide career counseling, skills preparation services, job search assistance and training for laid-off workers. Participants will gain the skills to transition into positions in food processing, agricultural technology, biotechnology, health care, renewable energy and other growing industries.

Funding for the program is drawn from the Governor’s 25 percent portion of Dislocated Worker Funds from Title I of the federal Workforce Investment Act and is under the administrative authority of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency’s EDD.

For more information about this project, please contact the Merced County Workforce Investment Board at (209) 724-2028.

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