

Los Angeles Basin Region

Los Angeles County

San Gabriel Valley Workforce Services – America’s Job Center of CaliforniaSM, West Covina

Sometimes an unemployed job seeker walks through the doors at the San Gabriel Valley Workforce Services, America’s Job Center of CaliforniaSM (AJCC) in West Covina, and needs just a little help – like an updated résumé. Other times, they need much more.

When Omar Rodriguez walked into the AJCC, he had a number of barriers to employment including no reliable transportation.

San Gabriel Valley Workforce Services AJCC Manager Rebecca Garcia was there to help. “With all these barriers, I assisted him with updating his résumé, bus tokens for transportation, job leads, job coaching, and referrals to supportive services from our workforce agency partners,” said Garcia.

Omar took advantage of all of the coaching and supportive services available at the AJCC, and ultimately found a job that opened a new chapter in his life. Omar was hired as a maintenance worker at Mitchell Rubber Products, a manufacturing company in Mira Loma. It’s the highest salaried job Omar has had so far, and one he’s very happy and grateful to have.

**Los Angeles County
Community Career Development, Inc. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County**

Fernando Ceja was unemployed and needed help finding a job. He found help – and fast - when he walked into the office of the Community Career Development, Inc., an America’s Job Center of CaliforniaSM (AJCC) in Los Angeles.

Fernando wanted “to earn a competitive wage in the workforce in order to take care of his family,” AJCC Manager Rhonda Rose recalled. To get him there, the AJCC provided Fernando with career counseling that helped him developed an IEP – Individual Employment Plan. He also received comprehensive security training and job search assistance.

What helped him the most? “The most important thing EDD did for me is give me direction in regards to getting all my required permits in order very quickly,” said Ceja, who at the time was unemployed for about four months.

“I did all my certifications in a period of two weeks, which was great for me and my job search. Without those certifications, I would not have been considered for my current position.” Finalizing the paperwork was key too, Ceja said. “The biggest obstacle we overcame was really finalizing all the paperwork once I had found a job,” Ceja recalled.

Today Ceja works as the Director of Security at 651 Management, LLC in Los Angeles.

“I’m very happy with my new job because I’m doing what I love to do,” said Ceja. “I lead a security team and that’s something that I enjoy doing. I love the responsibility of creating a great team.”

Los Angeles County Cerritos America's Job Center of California

Mike Ponce had been laid off twice before, a few months each time, but the third time was different. Unemployment stretched out for 13 months after he lost his job as a mechanical engineer at a global environmental company in Santa Ana.

First, Mike took to the internet in search of a job. He landed ten interviews but no job. And the months dragged on. Then he turned to the Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (SELACO) - Cerritos America's Job Center of California. "That's when I learned online is not the way to go. Networking is what you need to do."

"At SELACO, I learned about resume writing and how to answer difficult interview questions," he says. "They paid for me to go to the project management boot camp at Cal State, Long Beach. That experience helped build my confidence during job interviews."

The most valuable experience, though, was participating in the *Experience Unlimited* job club with other unemployed people at SELACO. "We would all get together for two hours on Friday," he says. "We'd ask each other, 'What did you do this week? Where did you apply?' It was a fun environment. We had coffee and doughnuts and shared our stories. It got me motivated, prepared me mentally."

With his focus on networking, Mike decided to turn to former colleagues at Parsons, an engineering and consulting firm in Pasadena, where he worked years earlier. "It worked," he says. "They were hiring. I went to work in June."

The people at SELACO gave him a big assist. "They were fantastic," Mike says. "They showed me that 80 percent of jobs come from networking. They helped with resume writing and interview skills. Most of all, they helped me stay mentally positive all those months."