

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**EDD awards \$650,000 to help bioscience companies in the Los Angeles Basin address worker shortage**

SACRAMENTO – The California Employment Development Department (EDD) today announced it has awarded \$650,000 to the Verdugo Workforce Development Board (VWDB) to help bioscience companies, including biopharma, meet the industry’s urgent need for qualified technicians and provide regional job seekers with new careers.

“The pandemic has fueled an urgent demand for skilled technicians in the biotechnology manufacturing field,” said EDD Director Nancy Farias. “These funds will go toward providing specialized career education and supportive services for prime biotech employment candidates, and toward expanding regional partnerships with bioscience companies.”

During Phase I of this partnership, an assessment tool was developed to ensure that candidates acquired the core competencies needed for bio-manufacturing technicians, biotechnology technicians, or lab technicians. Students graduating from a bioscience Career Technical Education (CTE) program in the Los Angeles Basin are eligible to take the assessment, and those that score a 70 percent or higher earn the BioTC.

These funds will be used towards Phase II, the full implementation of the project and expansion across the region as the BioTC Collaborative focuses on meeting the needs of the bioscience companies for a qualified workforce. The project aims to serve priority populations that experienced a greater impact from the pandemic than other groups, including: English Language Learners, refugees, the less educated, people with disabilities, and other workers laid off as a result of the pandemic.

The VWDB has partnered with seven bioscience companies to develop an industry-valued credential that assists employers in identifying qualified candidates for their job openings. The VWDB helped organize a team led by Grifols Biologicals (Grifols) that included Biocom California Institute, Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Valley College and the Verdugo Jobs Center). Together, these partners formed and branded the Biocom Institute Technician Certification (BioTC) Collaborative.

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Funding for this grant is provided through discretionary funds made available by Governor Gavin Newsom in accordance with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act administered by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the EDD.

For more information about the Verdugo Workforce Development Board and the BioTC Collaborative, please contact MaryAnne Pranke ([mpranke@glendaleca.gov](mailto:mpranke@glendaleca.gov)) at 818-937-8051.