

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**EDD Awards \$6.1 Million to Assist Workers Impacted by
Farmer John Plant Closure**

Sacramento –The California Employment Development Department (EDD) today announced approval of a \$6.1 million funding grant to facilitate specialized employment training and services to assist approximately 2,500 workers impacted by the closure of the Farmer John meatpacking plant in Vernon.

This funding allocation was accomplished through ongoing collaboration between the EDD, the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity, the City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department; the Los Angeles County and City Workforce Development Boards; California Labor Federation, and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 770.

“The majority of these workers have been long-term employees of Farmer John and now face barriers to finding new employment,” said EDD Director Nancy Farias. “This coordinated partnership will provide the needed rapid response support to ensure the needs of these workers are addressed swiftly to avoid the risk of long-term unemployment.”

The partnership group has established a team of Rapid Response coordinators to build a well-resourced program that will be highly responsive to the urgent needs of this population of workers. The team will provide workers with workforce and training services, including career counseling to identify services needed for workers to successfully transition into new careers that leverage their skillset.

A series of job and resource fairs will be provided to these workers, including job search assistance, information about employment services, training programs, unemployment insurance, CalFresh, Covered California and other supportive services and assistance available to them. Workers will be referred to training programs to support a smooth transition into new careers and connected to new union job pathways with job placement and retention.

(more)

“Farmer John workers sacrificed their own health and safety throughout the pandemic to keep food on our tables. We thank the State of California for swift action in support of Farmer John workers,” said UFCW 770 President Kathy Finn. “As part of the collaborative partnership, the UFCW 770 is working closely with the Hospitality Training Academy to provide training opportunities to the impacted workers. In addition to pipelining Farmer John workers into pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and training programs, workers will have access to union employers who are hiring and seeking workers with similar skill set to those impacted by the plant closure.”

On June 6, 2022, Smithfield Foods, Inc. announced plans to permanently close their Los Angeles based Farmer John processing plant after more than 90 years in the community. Approximately 2,500 workers will be laid off by March 2023.

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

For more information about this partnership, please contact Bertha Rodriguez, Communications Coordinator, UFCW 770 at 1-213-453-6276.

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