

Business Services Overview

San Francisco's business environment supports more than 60,000 businesses and employs more than one-fourth of the region's total workforce. Our business community enriches the community as a whole, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development is dedicated to helping to ensure the ongoing success of these local businesses. The Business Services unit is charged with the development, implementation and oversight of initiatives and programs designed to ensure the workforce needs of San Francisco employers are being met.

Description of Services

Rapid Response. The Rapid Response Program is operated with federal funds under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The program provides aversion services when a business is considering a layoff or facility closure due to an inadequate workforce, having outgrown their current work space, or any number of other logistical challenges they may be facing. By creating an individual service strategy designed to address each employer's specific concerns, downsizing can often be avoided altogether. When a workforce reduction or plant closure is inevitable, the Business Services unit works with the employer to provide employees with information on services that will assist them in making the transition to new employment as quickly as possible such as unemployment insurance, COBRA, WIA services available at One-Stop Career Link Centers, etc. Orientations are conducted on site for the employees' convenience and involve participation from organized labor (when involving a unionized workforce), the Employment Development Department and the Department of Labor.

Federal Bonding. The Federal Fidelity Bonding Program is a tool to help job applicants get and keep jobs. Fidelity Bonds are issued by the California Employment Development Department directly to a business as an insurance policy to protect employers in case of any loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. The Business Services unit promotes this program within San Francisco to community based organizations and agencies who serve those with significant barriers to employment such as the previously incarcerated, public assistance recipients, etc.

Eligible Training Provider List. The Workforce Investment Act requires that training providers who wish to access WIA funds must be placed on the state training list, maintained in California by the Employment Development Department. The Business Services unit maintains local records for training providers in San Francisco, processes applications by new providers and works with existing providers to ensure that their program listings are kept up to date.

New Initiatives

Innovative Labor Exchange Program. For the last ten years, San Francisco's First Source local hiring ordinance has acted as a vehicle for making new, entry-level jobs created by many local companies available to clients of the public workforce development system. The Business Services unit is engaged in identifying a new, web-enabled system to streamline the process of screening, matching and referring clients to participating companies. This system will allow companies to source candidates from among a pool that has been more effectively screened for job-appropriate skills, providing more opportunities for workforce clients to gain employment.

Coaching Support. An assigned coach who will work individually with participants to monitor their performance, assist them with any challenges they are facing and connect them with outside support services as needed (e.g. childcare, transportation, substance abuse services, etc.).

Key principles of the RAMP program:

- Maintaining high standards and expectations,
- Acknowledging personal barriers to success
- Challenging negative behaviors,
- building up skills and competencies, and
- coaching and support throughout the process.

While many of the youth being targeted have never experienced success in school or the workplace, RAMP aims to break this cycle and show these young people what they are capable of.