

5/31/2023

U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC, 20210

RE: SUPPORT for UCSB PaCE's Response to the "Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program" RFP

To Whom It May Concern:

The Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce would like to express our full support for the proposal submitted by the University of California, Santa Barbara Professional and Continuing Education (UCSB PaCE) in collaboration with sister UC Extensions at Riverside and Merced, in response to the "Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program" offered by the Department of Labor. As the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that UCSB PaCE's programs have had on our local business community, and I firmly believe that their involvement in this grant program will greatly benefit our local businesses across various sectors.

What a lot of people outside the area don't know about the Santa Barbara region is that in addition to being one of the premier tourist destinations, we also have a very prominent presence of high-tech industry. We have several semiconductor, solar, and infrared manufacturers that have in-house chip manufacturing, and are struggling due to a shortage of skilled local workers. We also have a significant number of aerospace and defense businesses, as well as those engaged in energy efficient technologies, that too are affected by the shortage of a skilled local workforce. UCSB PaCE is already actively engaged with several of these industries in various capacities, and this proposal to offer worker-centered sector strategy training programs is precisely the type of initiative that will help our region meet the growing demand for skilled workers. It has the potential to be immensely successful in our community, bridging the gap between education and industry, while simultaneously addressing the shortage of skilled workers.

UCSB PaCE has a well-deserved reputation for delivering excellent training programs. Their curriculum is designed in close collaboration with industry experts, ensuring that students acquire the relevant knowledge and skills needed to excel in their chosen fields. Moreover, UCSB PaCE's commitment to student support is exemplary. They offer a range of resources, including career counseling, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities, which contribute to the success of their students and the overall workforce readiness in our community.

The Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce is committed to supporting UCSB PaCE in this endeavor by inviting them to attend events and host workshops related to the grant. We will also include them in our regional job fairs, and other events, where apprenticeship opportunities can be highlighted and prospective apprentices can be identified. I strongly believe that by supporting UCSB PaCE's proposal, we are investing in the future of our businesses and in our region as a whole. The partnership between UCSB PaCE and the local business community has been mutually beneficial, and this grant is an excellent opportunity to further strengthen this collaboration. With UCSB PaCE's expertise, resources, and commitment to excellence, we can ensure that businesses have access to a well-prepared workforce that will contribute to their growth and success.



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Thank you for considering UCSB PaCE's proposal for the "Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program." I firmly believe that their involvement in this program will have a profound impact on our business community, and I wholeheartedly support their efforts to develop, implement, and scale worker-centered sector strategy training programs. If there is any additional information or support that I can provide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miller
President & CEO
Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce