

Verdugo Workforce Development Board

Serving Burbank, Glendale and La Cañada Flintridge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VERDUGO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD IS AWARDED \$178K TO TRAIN INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AS CNC MACHINISTS

GLENDALE, CA (June 13, 2016) - The Verdugo Workforce Development Board (VWDB) announced today that it has been awarded \$178,571 by the State of California Employment Development Department in coordination with the California Workforce Development Board and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. This is the second Disability Employment Accelerator Grant that has been awarded to the VWDB. It is funded by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Grant Title I Governor's Discretionary fund.

The grant will train people with autism as Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machinists and local employers have committed to hiring the trainees upon graduation. The training was designed by employers in partnership with Uniquely Abled and instruction will be provided by Glendale Community College (GCC). The first training is scheduled to be launched June 20, 2016. *"Glendale Community College and VWDB share a long history of collaboration in addressing local workforce needs,"* stated Jan Swinton, Dean of Workforce Development at GCC, *"With the shortage of CNC Operators, and GCCs state-of-the-art high tech manufacturing program, it made sense to come together on this Uniquely Abled Project endeavor. We feel this training of Uniquely Abled individuals will provide an excellent match of individual skill sets to employer needs"*.

The program is a career pathway designed for people diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Training will be conducted in a cohort style to teach teamwork skills and create a supportive environment for the trainees. The classroom training consists of 240 hours of instruction including: Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) Basic Milling and Practice, CAM Basic Lathe, and Engineering Print Reading for Industry. An additional 60 hours of classroom training will also be provided focused on workplace readiness and retention skills to ensure employment success. Trainees will be interviewed by employers prior to graduation so that offers can be extended before graduation day. New hires will begin on-the-job training program for the first few weeks of hire to ease the transition to the workplace and the VWDB will provide salary reimbursements to the employers during this period. Extensive support will be provided to trainees throughout the program, including individual job counseling, job coaching and follow up services for 12 months after hire.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 68 children are diagnosed with ASD in the United States. *"In Los Angeles County, the unemployment rate is 16% for people with disabilities and almost 60% for people with cognitive disabilities. For those that are working, only 10% are working full-time. Young adults with ASD have the lowest employment rate across disabilities,"* said Judith Velasco, Executive Director of the VWDB, *"It is these alarming statistics that created the call to action to work with our partners and launch one of the only vocational training programs in L.A. that is tied to full-time employment for people with autism."*

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The VWDB has been serving the tri-city consortium for more than 30 years with innovative employment and training services that create the competitive human capital required for sustained growth and industry leadership. It provides services out of the Verdugo Jobs Center site, a proud member of the America's Job Center of California, located in the City of Glendale, and its satellite office, Burbank Workforce Connection. The VWDB has earned recognition for its specialized programs that successfully train and employ people with disabilities, veterans, English language learners, low income individuals, and youth.

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