

# Cal-Liope



MESSAGE FROM THE CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE CONNECTION **PRESIDENT**



PRESIDENT DR. JAMES THOMAS

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*By Dr. James Thomas, President, Silicon Valley member*

In times of crisis, CWC chapters played a vital role in extending financial assistance to the fire victims, offering a beacon of hope amid devastation. Our dedicated chapters swiftly mobilize our resources, providing essential funds for immediate needs such as shelter, clothing, and medical care. Our support not only helps families rebuild their lives but also fosters a sense of community resilience. We stepped in during moments of hardship, demonstrating the power of compassion and collective action. We believe that giving back reinforces the belief that together, we can overcome even the most challenging circumstances. In times of crisis, the chapters play a vital role in extending financial assistance to fire victims, offering a beacon of hope amid devastation. We hope that our support will

help families rebuild their lives but also foster a sense of community resilience. We can overcome even the most challenging circumstances together.

CWC is always focused on empowering careers and inspiring leaders. Our primary focus is on career development and exceptional educational training. Through our dynamic programs and opportunities, we equip aspiring leaders with the vital tools needed for professional growth and career success. Our dedicated leaders actively contribute their expertise, reinforcing our shared vision of achievement.

Every challenge presents a valuable opportunity to learn, grow, and refine your leadership skills. The steps you take are a powerful move toward greater achievements, serving as a crucial milestone in your journey as a leader. Your dedication and perseverance embody the heart

of true leadership development. Embrace bold decisions with confidence, knowing that CWC stands behind you, recognizing your boundless potential. We can make this a true testament to transformative growth and trendsetting innovation.

**Mark Your Calendar!**  
**Our Annual Educational Conference is set for May 2, 2025 — Register Now**

CWC membership should take advantage of the Karl E. Bybee Educational Grant. The grant has eligibility criteria for members who are interested. If you have been a CWC member

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## Keeping You Informed of EDDNext Projects

*By Dr. James Thomas, President, Silicon Valley member*

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPLICATION SIMPLIFIED**

“California’s new application for unemployment benefits is easier and faster to complete. Californians already grappling with the challenges that come with unemployment will no longer have to decipher a lot of jargon when applying for unemployment benefits, thanks to a simpler online application the state rolled out Monday.

The Employment Development Department acknowledged that unemployment insurance is one of the “more complex public benefit programs, with detailed state and federal requirements,” making the application “complex and confusing.”

Responding to feedback from consumers, employees and advocates, the department simplified the online application to help consumers understand the questions and supporting information needed to apply for

unemployment benefits.

In an effort to make the process easier for consumers, the state department has revised the online application to clarify the terms and instructions as well as reorganize the questions.

For example, a question on the previous form that often confused applicants was, “Are you ready and willing to accept work that matches your work skills and educational background?”

The question has now been clarified by the department to

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## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

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**Our association is dedicated to bringing education, opportunity, and innovation to all individuals with a common interest in workforce development**

# Know Your Brand and How to Market It

By B.J. Sims, CWC Marketing Chair, Website Administrator, and Silicon Valley Chapter member

## Why is defining your personal brand important?

Your brand is how others perceive you and networking is how you spread the word to other of your attributes and what you can bring to the table. If you are looking for promotions, new opportunities or expand your circle of influence, your brand is very important. So, the first question for you is to understand yourself, what you want others to know about you, and how you can share that personal brand.

Self-assessment is key to understanding both your assets and liabilities along with willingness to hone your abilities and minimize your liabilities. Personal branding

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FROM PAGE 1

in good standing for 1 year, and recently completed training from an accredited training facility within a fiscal year. You can apply for reimbursement for some of the cost or all your costs up to \$750 in a fiscal year.

We hope our members read and enjoy the Cal-Liope Newsletter for activities and event from the Executive Board, District Directors, Chapter Presidents, and members. Some of the information provided is the President Message, CWC Website, Retirement Message, Legislative Update, Personal Message, Activities throughout the state.

The website gives current information on upcoming events, Zoom presentations, new program developments, Chapter calendars, and District events. Visiting the website will keep you informed of events throughout the state.

Join us at the  
CWC Annual  
Conference  
May 2, 2025 in  
Ontario, CA

> [Click here for details](#)

is intentionally shaping how others perceive you. By establishing your expertise, you will enhance your credibility, and set yourself apart. You need to define what you stand for, build a good reputation, and be known for specific qualities.

Since a personal brand

### EDDNEXT PROJECTS FROM PAGE 1

say, "If offered, are you able to accept a full-time job or work full-time hours?"

Another part of the form that confused applicants was the one asking them to categorize their reason for being unemployed.

The department said that many applicants were using the "laid off" label for experiences that may not accurately fit that category. If an applicant potentially uses the wrong label, the department has to reach out for further information, and that delays payment.

The categories now come with descriptions and have been expanded to consist of laid off (no fault of your own), fired or terminated, still employed (reduced hours), left job, or on strike.

Updating the application is in line with the state's plain language equity standard under Gov. Gavin Newsom's executive order on equity and

is how others see you, you may need to look at prior performance evaluations to gain insights on your strengths and weaknesses. Also ask trusted coworkers for feedback on your work and ways you can improve.

## Why networking is important?

To attract projects, promotions, and job opportunities that correspond with your skills you need to seek out opportunities. Being proactive by networking and meeting other professionals is important in sharing the knowledge of your unique skills, abilities and experience so you're sought out for them. Connect with people with common personal and professional interests.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

discrimination. Plain language makes instructions easier to understand (and translate into languages other than English) and makes forms easier to complete.

The application is now translated into the languages spoken most frequently in California: Spanish, Armenian, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The department has a call center, where staff who speak these languages can assist people in their preferred language or help with translation.

So far the department has updated benefit applications, contact centers, the claims process, policies, procedures and forms as part of its modernization program, dubbed EDDNext." EDD is constantly making changes for a smoother process for the customers.

## RETIREE CORNER

By Nanette Bowman,  
Orange Empire Member

Thank you to all retirees who renewed membership for 2025. The Membership Coordinator sends a reminder to your home address so please keep us up to date with your mailing address and email. Let me know if you want to have a hard copy of the *Cal-Liope* mailed to you. Retiree dues are just \$36 per year. You can pay by sending a check to CWC, P. O. Box 7858, Oxnard, CA 93031. The form is included in this newsletter. Contact me when you plan to retire so we can stay connected. Dues can be paid directly from your bank if you use Zelle by adding my cell number to your contacts – 714-269-0612. Staying healthy is almost like a job – just keeping up with all the appointments. Remember to have your annual wellness check even if you feel great. Stay hydrated: choose foods with high water content, keep water with you always, change it up with other options, and build it into your routine. I hope to see you at the annual Educational Conference on May 2, 2025.

You are so welcome to send me ideas for articles or share what you are up to – you know my email: [cwcsecretary2023@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsecretary2023@gmail.com).

Stay well and stay in touch.



NANETTE BOWMAN

## INVENTING YOUR LIFE

### “Milestone Moments”

By Rob Claudio, Orange Empire

As we journey through life, we often reflect on the many chapters that have shaped us. Some bring such immense joy that we wish we could linger in them forever. These moments of growth, happiness, and fulfillment stay with us long after they pass, and we look forward to experiencing similar ones again in the future.

The milestone moments that define our lives bring countless smiles, transporting us back to times of positivity and boundless energy. When I think about my own joyful milestones, they often mark new beginnings – welcoming a newborn into the family, forming meaningful relationships, or achieving personal and professional accomplishments.

I still recall the thrill of graduating from high school and the excitement of knowing I had been accepted into college, filled with hopes and dreams for the future. Later, graduating from college became another incredible landmark, bringing a sense of pride and eager anticipation for what awaited me in the professional world.

As the oldest of five siblings, I vividly remember the births of my brothers and sisters, each bringing a buzz of excitement and joy to our growing family. The day I bought my first car was another unforgettable milestone – something as simple as running an errand became exhilarating, with that unforgettable new car smell accompanying every drive. Purchasing a home brought its own mix of emotions, from the challenges of navigating the paperwork to the pure joy of finally holding the keys in my hand.

I'm sure many of you have your own milestone moments that bring back similar feelings of joy and pride. For me, one of the most recent and profound milestones is reaching the conclusion of a career that I have loved for so long. After years of contemplation, I finally made the decision, guided by what I can only

describe as divine whispers growing louder over time. Though I had envisioned this transition for years, the reality of the moment feels completely different.

Looking back on my career, I see a timeline of achievements shaped by hard work and dedication. It makes me reflect on the legacy I leave behind and fills me with immense pride for those who will carry on the important work ahead. This July, after 34 years of dedicated state service, I plan to retire. Though this decision took time, I now embrace it with a deep sense of fulfillment and gratitude.

Over these years, I have built countless friendships and cherished relationships with my work family. Retirement always seemed like a distant chapter, yet here I am, overwhelmed with gratitude for the opportunities I've had to serve and support communities in need. While I continue processing this transition, I find comfort in knowing that, though this chapter is closing, my story is far from over.

New adventures await that include precious moments with family, exploring new places, and the joy of not having to rush back to work. To all of you who have been part of my journey, I extend my heartfelt thanks. I treasure the conversations, ideas, laughter, and camaraderie we have shared.

With that, I simply say, "Gracias." I look forward to this next chapter with excitement, and I hope our paths continue to cross. Wishing each of you happiness, joy, laughter, and good health in the years ahead!

***“We have reached milestones that are far beyond what I expected.”***

*– J-Hope*

Remember to follow the blog at:  
[inventingyourlife.logspot.com](http://inventingyourlife.logspot.com)



ROB CLAUDIO

## KNOW YOUR BRAND

FROM PAGE 1

### Best Practices to Maintain Your Network Personal Brand

- Attend networking events such as the California Workforce Connection meeting, training opportunities and Annual conference.

- Host events by volunteering for leadership roles within your neighborhood, church, a professional organization or as part of your job to gain both skills and experience.

- Stay updated with the industry trends is important to maintain and grow your brand and skills. Regularly read about your industry, market, and current events in general from media, professional websites, and Online news sources.

- Follow leaders and influencers and watch your competition.

- Acknowledge each small achievement resulting from your hard work, and celebrate your ability to connect with others and effectively communicate your message.

Collaborate with other professionals to establish your brand, align with other brands. Position yourself in the places where you want to be noticed, such as conferences, where you can express your views and connect with other leaders.



# UI State Performance Excellence Awards

By Mary Jane Van Loon, Legislative Chair, East Bay Chapter

The UI state gives Performance Excellence Awards to state workforce agencies.

“Unemployment Insurance State Performance Excellence Awards are given to the top performing state workforce agencies (SWA) nationwide in key areas of unemployment insurance (UI) operations.

The awards criteria reflect the breadth of the UI system and the performance areas most critical to its success. In the 2008 performance year changes were made to the UI Performance Recognition system allowing for recognition of the top-performing agency from small states, medium-sized states, and large states. Current state size categories are updated annually based on the criteria for state size calculation. Most recently, Data Validation was added as a factor to be considered in assessing SWA performance to demonstrate the UI program's commitment to maintaining excellent data quality.

The Honorees recognized this year have demonstrated top performance in the following categories:

- Timely, proper, and high-quality nonmonetary determinations and benefit payment;
- Timely and high-quality Appeals decisions;
- High quality Tax operations; and
- Excellence and significant improvement in Program Integrity.

FY 2020 Performance Awards Categories and Awardees

**Performance Excellence in Benefit Payments**

**Performance Excellence in Appeals Decisions**

**Performance Excellence in Tax Operations**

**Performance Excellence in Integrity Significant Improvement in the**

**Improper Payment Rate**

State employees continue to provide outstanding work for our customers. It is only proper to recognize their hard work, dedication and their readiness.

# Love It, or Loose It!

By Raymond Cabrera District IV Director

When you first join and get involved with an association, you do so with enthusiasm and high expectations. The opportunity to learn from others, collaborate with like-minded professionals, and contribute to a meaningful mission excites you. You align with the organization's vision and want to be part of its growth and success.

The more you engage and contribute, the more rewarding your experience becomes. Your creativity, dedication, and teamwork help shape the association's progress, making a lasting impact on both your colleagues and the industry as a whole.

However, as time passes, it's natural for that initial excitement to fade. But just as a fresh spark can reignite a flame, a renewed sense of purpose and energy can revitalize both individuals and organizations. Keeping an association vibrant requires continual investment – not just from long-standing members but from new members ready to carry the torch forward.

A challenge many associations face – including CWC – is ensuring that new members embrace the same dedication and passion as their predecessors. Some may lack motivation or a clear sense of purpose, which can create a gap in continuity. The solution? A revitalization of the core reasons we all joined in the first place. A strong sense of community, mentorship, and shared commitment can inspire emerging leaders to step up and drive the association forward.

CWC is at a crucial juncture, but we have the resources to ensure its longevity. We still have a strong base of experienced EDD participants ready to guide the next generation. Additionally, our retirees remain actively involved, providing invaluable mentorship and wisdom. It's time for our younger members – talented, intelligent, and creative – to take pride in this organization and step up as the next wave of leaders.

Having been a member of this organization for 28 years, I truly believe in its potential. With renewed commitment and active participation, we can elevate CWC to new heights. The future of our association is in our hands – let's make it stronger, together.



You are cordially invited to attend the upcoming 6th Annual

## CWC EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

**Ontario Airport Hotel & Conference Center**

700 N. Haven Ave, Ontario, CA 91764

**MAY 2, 2025**

For the price of a ticket to experience the conference you will:

- Gain information and updates from Nancy Farias, EDD Director
- Experience the magical words of Carol Marzouk, Executive Lion Tamer motivational speaker extra ordinaire.
- Learn how to Avoid Identity theft with a presentation by Dr. Tobi West, Professor and Department Chair at Coastline's Cybersecurity.
- Enjoy a delicious lunch while celebrating an awards presentation and picture taking.
- Receive a swag bag valued at over \$25.

- Sign up before March 31, 2025, to get the early bird price, (a \$15.00 savings) Eventbrite is currently available to make your reservations.

Sign up before March 31, 2025, to get the early bird price (a \$15 savings)

Eventbrite is currently available to make your reservation.

The CWC Conference Team is looking forward to seeing you at the conference.

We think you will be pleased at all the events and presentations we have planned for you.

# 2025 CWC State Award Nominees

By Arlene Bautista, CWC State Chapter 2nd Vice President

Below is the list of nominees submitted by staff and management. Do you see your name? Don't forget to register for the conference. Early registration ends March 31, 2025.

Keep in mind, for those awards that are only given to CA Chapter Members, CA Chapter membership is required in both the year during which the activity occurred (2024) and the year in which the nomination was submitted (2025).

## Individual Nominees

- Ryan Almeida
- Faraz Aqil
- Pleshette Burrell
- Ngocchau "Chau" Cagle
- Jacqueline Cardenas
- Catherine Cruz
- Bianca Espindola
- Thomas Flynn
- Leann Graessley
- Brandon Hooker
- Kaci Love
- Justin Norman
- Tommy Ortiz
- Jennifer Petraitis
- Janette Prado
- Juanita Renteria
- Stephanie Rodriguez
- Charlotte Roybal
- Connie Sanchez
- Thomasina Sanders
- David Uyematsu
- Leticia Zarco
- Breanna Zuvia]

## Group Nominees

- DIB Van Nuys ARU 218 Support Staff
- DIB Chino Hills ARU 222 Appeals Group
- DIB Riverside ARU 223 CSC Managers
- DIB Chino Hills ARU 222 Money Network Project
- DIB Sacramento ARU 208 Launch Team



MAY 2, 2025

9 AM - 5 PM

ONTARIO AIRPORT HOTEL

700 N. HAVEN AVE.  
ONTARIO, CA

## REASONS TO ATTEND THE CWC CONFERENCE

1

**Networking Opportunities** – Expand your professional circle  
What's the most impactful lesson you've learned in your career so far?

2

**Learning New Skills & Knowledge** – Stay ahead with the latest industry trends  
How did you navigate early career challenges that others should avoid?

3

**Career Advancement** – Increase your career visibility and growth potential  
What skills should someone focus on to level up in our industry?

4

**Personal Growth** – Enhance leadership, communication, and decision-making skills  
Can you share a turning point that shaped your career?

5

**Mentorship Opportunities** – Connect with mentors who can guide your journey  
What's one thing you wish more people knew about your profession?

6

**Fun & Relaxation** – Engage in enjoyable activities while networking  
What's the best career advice that also had a personal impact on you?

- DIB Sacramento ARU 209 Training Team
- UIC Carnegie ARU 857 EDET Trainer Group
- UIC Anaheim ARU 017 Language Project Team
- UIC Anaheim ARU 017 OP Pandemic Team
- UIC Pacific Center ARU 019 EDET Training Team
- UIC Brea ARU 857 Claim Filing Mentor Group

- UIC Brea ARU 857 EDET Trainer Group
- UIC Inglewood ARU 006 Rapid Response Team
- WSB Hemet & Indio ARU 161 Customer Svc Team
- WSB Sacramento ARU 307 Local Info Svcs Grp (LISG)
- WSB Oxnard/Santa Maria ARU 136 & 072 MSFW Team

- WSB Brea ARU 042 The Brea Team
- WSB Region 3 RESEA Staff
- WSB Anaheim Upward Mobility Team



FROM LEFT: ATIF KHAN, JUAN GARCIA, ANA OWENS, NICOLE PALOMINO, JESSICA ESCOBEDO, SOPHIA ESCOBEDO, BELLA SCHAEFER, JONIE GALLERANI, PETER GALLERANI, AND JOHN SZEIBERT

## INLAND EMPIRE CHAPTER

By John Szeibert, IE Chapter President

The Inland Empire CWC Chapter has been actively involved in the community, and we are excited to share some of our recent activities and upcoming plans with you.

The chapter hosted a heartwarming volunteer day on Saturday March 1, 2025, at the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda. A team of 10 dedicated volunteers, including myself, gathered to cook and prepare lunch for the families staying at the house. On the menu were delicious pizza and pasta dishes, accompanied by fresh salad and delightful desserts.

The Ronald McDonald House is a special place, and it has become one of my favorite charities. Its mission is to provide a home-away-from-home for families of children who are receiving treatment at nearby medical facilities, such as Loma Linda Children's Hospital. The house helps keep families close during challenging times, offering them a sense of normalcy and support.

The interior of the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda is set up like an extremely large home, designed to provide comfort and convenience to its residents. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, creating a nurturing environment for families in need.

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the Ronald McDonald House. By preparing meals, we help ensure that families have access to nourishing food throughout their stay. Whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner, these meals are available to everyone in the house, offering a sense of community and care.

We are excited to announce that our local awards and election will be held in April, with the exact date still to be determined. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who submitted nominations. Your participation is invaluable, and we look forward to recognizing the outstanding contributions of our members. More information will be provided through our newsletter or flyer announcement, so keep an eye out for updates.

As we approach the election, we encourage all members to get involved in the voting process. Your voice matters, and together we can continue to build a vibrant and supportive community. Please remember that participation in the voting process is limited to members only, so if you are not yet a member, we invite you to join us. Your membership is crucial to our success, and we welcome your support.



## ORANGE EMPIRE CHAPTER

By Nanette Bowman, Orange Empire member

The Orange Empire Chapter gave trophies to all 70 of their award nominees on February 21, 2025, at a dinner held at the Anaheim North Embassy Suites. Jeremy Tom, a veteran from Workforce Services

Brea office, led the Pledge of Allegiance to open the program. Master of Ceremonies, Michael Kane, Employment Development Administrator from Anaheim UI 017, introduced presenters. In addition, he shared some of his own career experiences and the benefits enjoyed by members of the California Workforce Connection. Rob Claudio, Deputy Division Chief of Southern Workforce Service Branch, also elaborated on benefits of CWC membership. The chapter extends sincere thanks to CWC State Chapter President, Dr. James Thomas, for attending and presenting opening remarks. The room was filled with high energy and obvious joy to once again meet in person since the last Orange Empire Awards dinner was held on March 1, 2019. Orange Empire sincerely thanks all the nominators. A program was distributed that included each complete written nomination of the following:

Unemployment Center Anaheim ARU 017 presented by Michael Kane, EDA: Individual Customer Service Jonathan Celio; Claim Filing Mentors Group Claudia Calderon, Glenda Centeno, Christi Trinh, and Jill Wilson; E-DET Trainers Team Shannon

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UNEMPLOYMENT CENTER ANAHEIM ARU 017



UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PACIFIC CENTER ARU 019



DISABILITY INSURANCE FIELD OFFICE DIVISION



ROB CLAUDIO, DDC AND INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMER SERVICE MARIA CRESPO



Crucil and Carolyn Alcivar-Alonzo; Overpayment Mentors Team Vanessa Ho, Parul Patel and Jonathan Celio; Pandemic Overpayment Project Team Enrique Duenas and Michelle Zalazar; Language Project Team Kathy Tran, Winna Hui, Christi Trinh, Phoebus Hon, and Felicia Wong

Unemployment Insurance Pacific Center ARU 019 presented by Tam Granflor, EDA : Individual Employee Performance Quynh Vo and Jacquelyn West; Individual Customer Service Michelle Granger; Overpayment Group Cynthia Chapman, Thomas Canal, Krystal Leal, Denise Espinosa, Sandra Chavez, Pamchal Golchinzadeh, and Jennifer Ho; Clerical Team Cynthia De Los Santos, Alexis Salazar and Tiffany Beihl; Claim Filing Mentors Betty Orozco, Jessica Gallardo, Chi Kha, and Jessica Castaneda; Appeals Trainers Juan Martinez and Karina Sierra; and E-DET Trainers Cynthia Chapman, Michelle Loayza-Alcala, Jonathan Toek, Vincent Chang

Disability Insurance Chino Hills ARU 222 presented by Sherry Santos, EDA: Individual Employee Performance Ryan Almeida and Leticia Zarco; Individual Customer Service Lean Graessley; Group Appeals Unit Cashmere Haywood, Berenice Wright, Laura Garay, Glenn Fletcher, Grisela Padilla, and Chelsea Ponce

Disability Insurance Field Office Division ARU 309 presented by Sherry Santos, EDA: Group Employee Performance Mayte Escobar-Kelley, Yolanda Perez, “Rosa” Hoi-ki Tsui, Prutha Suthar, Mateo Manegdeg and Claudia Vasquez

Workforce Service Branch ARU 042 presented by Rob Claudio, DDC: Individual Customer Service Maria Crespo and Chau Cagle; Group Fostering Partnership Award Maria Crespo, Chau Cagle, Trinh Do, Faviola Hernandez, Joleen Le, Tommy Le, Courtney Newsom, Huy Pham, Milena Recinos, Gurjeet Rehal, Chhaya Samtani, Lesley Sediva, Andrew Tsai, Glory Turcios, Minhtriet Vu, Jenny Wang.

Congratulations to the winners of the 4 X 4 opportunity drawing Maribel Rivas, Sheree Speed, Jill Wilson, and Quynh Vo.

Welcome to Orange Empire new members: Shannon Crucil, Claudia Vasquez, Nancy Awad, Desiree Valdes, Saul Madrigal, Guy Witherspoon and Christopher Adriano.

## ■ ■ ■ ■ PUERTO DEL SOL CHAPTER CHAPTER PROVIDES LA FIRE RELIEF

*By Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, Puerto Del Sol Chapter President*

In response to the recent devastating fires in January 2025 in Los Angeles, the California Workforce Connection (CWC) Puerto Del Sol Chapter has donated \$100 to the American Red Cross to support relief efforts. This donation will provide emergency shelter, food, and supplies to those displaced.

“Our chapter is deeply moved by the impact of the Los Angeles fires,” said Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, Puerto Del Sol Chapter President and Los Angeles native. “We wanted to help, knowing that even small contributions can make a big difference when combined with the efforts of others.”

A special thank you goes to CWC President, Dr. James Thomas, for his leadership in driving this important initiative.

His commitment to supporting those in need and mobilizing the CWC community has been invaluable in making this donation possible.

This act of giving reflects the values of the CWC organization, which strives to make a positive impact in the community. As Bruce Springsteen’s “The Rising” reminds us, “Come on up for the rising, come on up, lay your hands in mine.” These powerful lyrics encourage us to rise together in times of crisis, offering our hands and hearts to support those who need it most.

Puerto Del Sol encourages all members to seek ways to support those in need, whether through monetary donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness of relief initiatives. As we continue to face challenges like natural disasters, the chapter remains committed to supporting our communities and fostering empathy and action.

We thank the American Red Cross for their unwavering dedication to helping individuals and families in crisis.

For more information on how to help, visit the [American Red Cross](https://www.americanredcross.org).

## FROM SEED TO SUCCESS: CAREER ADVANCEMENT INSIGHTS — “ASK AN AGPA” WEBINAR SERIES

*By Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, Puerto Del Sol Chapter President*

What started as a simple idea blossomed into a powerful career growth opportunity. The Puerto Del Sol Chapter (PDS) initiated a webinar series called “Ask an AGPA,” designed to raise awareness about EDD Career Ladders within the Workforce Branch. Held on February 13, 2025, the virtual panel provided valuable insights from seasoned professionals and was attended by California Workforce Connection (CWC) members and guests. The one-hour Lunch & Learn session focused on three key questions, where four distinguished panelists shared their experiences and advice for career advancement in the AGPA role.

### Panelist Insights:

Carolina “Care” Aldaco, AGPA, Assistant to the Central Valley Region Deputy Division Chief, shared how volunteering during the pandemic, when 11 staff members were reassigned, expanded her skillset. Her advice? “Take on new challenges, document your contributions, and always maintain professionalism.” She stressed that multitasking and adaptability are vital skills in her AGPA role, where she balances multiple tasks and supports a diverse team. Aldaco recommended organizational and analytical training, as well as leadership roles, to enhance AGPA qualifications.

Clinton Wager, former AGPA, now SSMI with Division,



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discussed the importance of clear communication with management and his success in volunteering for new projects. By taking on independent data analysis, he gained confidence and exposure across departments. His key advice for AGPA candidates: master tools like Microsoft Excel and understand how to present data through visualizations. Wager also suggested Microsoft 365 proficiency and specialized training, like the “EDDU Analyst Prep School,” to further one’s career.



Alexa Navarro, AGPA with EDDNext, highlighted her transition from EPR to AGPA, emphasizing transferable skills like communication. “Whether presenting or analyzing data, the key is to convey information clearly and concisely,” she said. Navarro encouraged AGPA hopefuls to focus on skills like time management, multitasking, and effective communication, which can be highlighted in interviews and Statement of Qualifications (SOQs).

Lynn Lam, AGPA with EDDNext, provided practical advice for aspiring AGPAs, stressing Excel proficiency as critical, with 70% of her work relying on it. She also recommended getting familiar with tools like Visio, Canvas, and SharePoint, which are essential in EDD. Lam emphasized the importance of ongoing training and hands-on experience with systems like EDDNext.

**Looking Ahead:**

Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, PDS Chapter Board President, noted that “Serving as a Division Trainer directly impacts succession planning.” She encouraged attendees to explore growth opportunities and career pathways within the organization.

We invite you to join us for future “Ask an AGPA” sessions, explore mentorship through the MVP Program. Special thanks to CWC State Board President Dr. James Thomas and Treasurer Phil Dwyer for their support.

**Next Steps:**

Join us at the [CWC Annual Educational Conference](#) on May 2, 2025. PDS members will have their conference fees and mileage reimbursed. Email [puertodelsold@gmail.com](mailto:puertodelsold@gmail.com) for reimbursement information. Stay tuned for more insights about our next “Ask an AGPA” webinar series, visit the [CWC Events](#) page frequently!



**SILICON VALLEY CHAPTER  
SPRING FORWARD! BE A CHAPTER OFFICER!**

*By Fred Ruibal*

Spring is finally here. As I write this article, the spring equinox will make its debut on March 20th. For all you science lovers out

there, spring starts when the sun moves directly over the equator, which is that line on globe in the center between the North and South Poles. This will cause daylight and darkness to be equal in minutes all over the planet.



FRED RUIBAL

But most of us probably equate springtime with blooming flowers, more daylight hours to experience, and for some of us important religious holidays to observe. The weather seems to be warming up a bit, with a lot of us starting to plan summer vacations and other fun activities.

For the Silicon Valley Chapter, this is the time when we start planning our chapter elections, which first consists of a nominations process, and then elections for new officers. With the election of the new officers, it means that we have the chance for new beginnings within our chapters. This means new activities and events for our members.

If you have never been involved in your local chapter as an officer, this may be a good time to consider being one. Especially if you like being involved in community activities. Because the organization is driven to help individuals with their career objectives, being a chapter officer could also help you develop skills apart from the workplace.

As an experienced chapter officer, I encourage you to spring forward and take the plunge into being a chapter officer! A good experience to add to any resume!



**BLAST FROM THE PAST: DISTRICT III AWARDS 2023**





**Membership Application**

New    Update    Renewal    Cancellation

Date:

Mail application and payments to: **CWC Membership Coordinator**, P.O. Box 7858, Oxnard, CA 93031  
or email application to [cwcworkforceconnection@gmail.com](mailto:cwcworkforceconnection@gmail.com) (mail payment, if applicable)

*Full Name:	First	Last		
*Local Chapter:	Select chapter you want to join	Telephone:		
*Personal email:				
*Address:				
*Employer:		*Location:		
*Job Title:		ARU#		*Bargaining Unit #:

*Type of Member	Annual Dues	*Payment Option
<input type="radio"/> Employment Development Department (EDD) Employee (Bargaining Unit 1 or 4)**	\$48.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$4.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> EDD Supervisor/Exempt Employee**+	\$0.00	*SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Other State Employee (Non-EDD)** <i>Refer to your Bargaining Unit Contract for possible reimbursement</i>	\$98.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$8.17) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Partner (Non-EDD)	\$98.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check
<input type="radio"/> EDD Student/Youth Assistant**	\$36.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$3.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Retiree	\$36.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check

I recognize that the processing of this form/payment may take 1-3 months. If I have selected the **Automatic Deduction** option, I hereby authorize the State Controller's Office (SCO) to automatically deduct from my salary each month the amount listed above and transmit, as designated, an amount for membership dues to the CWC; I understand that processing may take 2-3 pay periods. If I have selected the **cash or check** option, I hereby agree to be sent annual dues renewal invoices (**make check payable to: CWC**). I agree to provide my full social security number, which will be kept confidential. I certify that I am now a member of the CWC and allow the organization to establish, change, and/or cancel my deduction, as applicable. I understand that this authorization will remain in effect until I submit a written request to the CWC Membership Coordinator to terminate my membership and cancel any deduction, as appropriate. I also understand that the CWC organization does not issue refunds for unused dues or the months taken for processing.

\*Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ \*Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Recruiter (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\* Required

\*\* If you do not wish to provide your Social Security Number (SSN), then you must pay the full membership dues for that type of member by cash or check.

+ For this membership type, if you do not wish to supply the SSN, then the amount due is \$98.00.