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Year 1 Report Reveals Progress for Regional SWP Projects

LOS ANGELES—Los Angeles and Orange Counties have a combined \$18 trillion economy and play a major role in the global economy. Industries such as entertainment, logistics, tourism, international trade, and technology power our economy and require a stable pool of skilled workers. State investments to the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) are designed to cultivate a strong labor pool and ensure California's future economic success. The Los Angeles Orange County Regional Consortium for career education highlights early Strong Workforce Program successes this week, with the release of its *Year 1 SWP Regional Projects Report*.

This report tracked the progress of 37 community college projects funded by California's Strong Workforce Program, a multi-partner initiative focused on workforce access and preparedness. The program's first year saw \$22.7 million in funding directed to dozens of career education projects, spanning 28 community colleges in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The LAOCRC member colleges serve 848,490 students, which is more than one-third of the students in the California Community College system. More importantly, the colleges serve one-third of the disadvantaged students across all programs in the State of California as well as one-third of the under resourced students in career education for which Strong Workforce investments are serving.

"This report demonstrates clearly the value that community colleges in the Los Angeles-Orange County region bring to workforce development. It's the product of unprecedented collaboration between the colleges, employers, and the state. Across the board, we're working to see that California's needs are being met," said Dr. John Weispenning, Chancellor of Coast Community College District who is also on the LAOCRC CEO Executive Committee and Governance Council.

According to LAOCRC Executive Director Dr. Adriene Davis, the success of the initial regional projects have sounded an encouraging tone for the future of career education in the state. "Career education is integral to the upward social and economic mobility of California residents who seek access to higher education," said Davis. "The LAOCRC, in partnership with the state, is helping to lay the foundation for ongoing prosperity and equality for all."

The 194-page report summarizes regional efforts to raise the profile of career education, create clearer classroom-to-career pathways, and respond to critical gaps in college and career readiness. For each funded project, the LAOCRC report lays out the initial goals, as determined by college and workforce partners, and evaluates progress based on completion of those goals.

"Los Angeles has one of the most dynamic and diverse economies in the world. High-tech, entertainment, aerospace, manufacturing, construction, transportation, hospitality and health care are booming," Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., said. "Strong Workforce investments by LACCD and all of the region's community colleges in career education are at the core of training a robust workforce that meets our burgeoning needs for skilled talent, and, in turn, provides quality paying jobs to change lives and promote equal access to prosperity for all." Chancellor Rodriguez chairs the LAOCRC CEO Executive Committee and Governance Council business meetings.

Successful regional SWP outcomes in Year 1 include:

- Hired staff and developed curriculum to support basic skills "boot camps," which have already served more than 700 L.A. County students through Mt. San Antonio College's pilot program.
- Boosted the profile of community college career education with a marketing and communications campaign that unified regional CTE providers in Orange County under the "Future BUILT" brand.
- Connected educational leaders with regional businesses to develop a plan to create K-12-to-college pathways to keep pace with workforce demand in the burgeoning Biotech industry.
- Addressed critical gaps in the fast-changing Automotive industry through faculty training, community outreach, and classroom upgrades, as part of Orange County's Automotive Collaborative Project.
- Expanded the scope and quality of career education courses in the high-demand IT/Cybersecurity sector, and updated lab facilities for Los Angeles colleges offering NetLab, Cybersecurity and CISCO programs.
- Collaborated with community and workforce partners (including LA Metro) to build a framework for career readiness in the "priority" Advanced Transportation industry.

To read the report, visit LAOCRC.org.

About LAOCRC

The Los Angeles Orange County Regional Consortium (LAOCRC) is a partnership of, business, community, and higher education leaders focused on bridging career skills gaps and providing greater access to career education opportunities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. For more information, visit LAOCRC.org.