



South Bay Workforce
Investment Board
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South Bay Workforce Investment Board

Update Report for April and May 2026

Prepared for the South Bay Cities Council of Governments

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board continued its regional workforce development efforts throughout April and May by connecting youth, young adults, job seekers, schools, and employers to career pathways across the South Bay. During this period, SBWIB focused on expanding access to employment opportunities, strengthening sector based Pre Apprenticeship programming, and deepening partnerships with cities, school districts, community colleges, employers, and industry leaders.

Regional Highlights

A major highlight was the 26th Annual Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth and Young Adult Job Fair, hosted by SBWIB in partnership with El Camino College and the City of Torrance. The event welcomed 1,751 young job seekers ages 16 to 24 and featured 110 employers offering 4,123 job openings across multiple industries. A total of 27 local high schools and colleges participated, with SBWIB helping expand access by donating buses to 25 high schools so students from throughout the South Bay and greater Los Angeles area could attend.

1,751

young job seekers

110

employers

4,123

job openings

508

direct hire offers

The event produced strong immediate outcomes, including 539 youth receiving on the spot or second round interviews, 508 youth securing direct hire job offers, and more than 201 job applications submitted during the event.

In addition to employer recruitment, students participated in career readiness workshops designed to help them prepare for interviews, strengthen workplace confidence, and better understand career options. Workshop presenters included representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Space Kinetic Corp, and SBWIB's Blueprint Curriculum team, with 84 participants attending the workshops. The event continued the long tradition of the Blueprint Job Fair as one of the region's most visible youth employment events, helping young people gain firsthand access to employers while building the skills and connections needed for long term career success.

General Updates

DEO H RTP Grant Application Submitted

SBWIB submitted a \$2.325 million grant application to the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity for a DEO High Road Training Partnership grant focused on the Arts, Media and Entertainment sector.

The proposed program aims to reach more than 600 youth, displaced workers, and justice involved individuals interested in entering AME careers and related apprenticeship pathways. The application builds on SBWIB's broader effort to prepare a stronger regional workforce ahead of major upcoming events, including the Olympics and Super Bowl, both of which are expected to create increased demand for skilled workers in entertainment, hospitality, live events, production, logistics, and related career areas.

Through the proposed HRTP effort, SBWIB would support outreach, career readiness, sector training, employer connections, and apprenticeship enrollment for participants who are ready to pursue sustainable employment in the AME workforce.

SBWIB also continued advancing its sector based Pre Apprenticeship and apprenticeship strategy across the region. Current pathways include Aero-Flex and Sky-Flex for aerospace and aviation, Space-Flex for aerospace and space economy careers, Bio-Flex for biotechnology and life sciences, and advanced manufacturing and engineering pathways. These programs provide students and young adults with industry exposure, career readiness, employer connections, and practical learning experiences that help build a stronger workforce pipeline for the South Bay.

Torrance

SBWIB continued to expand hands on aerospace career exploration through its Aero-Flex programming. In April, 32 Aero-Flex Pre Apprentices from South and Torrance High Schools participated in an immersive field trip to FlightWave Aerospace in Torrance, gaining direct exposure to the growing unmanned aircraft systems industry. The visit offered students a behind the scenes look at a local aerospace company working in advanced drone technology, including long endurance drones, hybrid propulsion systems, vertical takeoff and landing capabilities, and aircraft systems designed for defense, disaster response, mapping, surveillance, and commercial applications.

During the visit, students were welcomed by FlightWave President Shawn Webb, who also serves on the SBWIB Board of Directors. Students rotated through technical stations and observed real world workflows such as new product introduction, prototype assembly, avionics integration, infrared imaging systems, modeling software, and live flight testing. FlightWave engineers and technical staff shared their career journeys and helped students understand how classroom learning connects to mechanical, electrical, and software engineering careers.

Student feedback reflected the value of the visit. Several students described the experience as eye opening and noted that it helped them better understand how computer science, engineering, drone testing, manufacturing, and prototype development can lead to future internships and careers. Others highlighted FlightWave's supportive workplace culture and the opportunity to ask questions directly of professionals working in the field.

Hawthorne

From its headquarters in Hawthorne, SBWIB continued coordinating regional youth and adult workforce initiatives, employer outreach, apprenticeship development, and program planning across the South Bay. Staff continued to support sector based pathways including Aero-Flex, Sky-Flex, Space-Flex, Bio-Flex, and advanced manufacturing and engineering programs.

Hawthorne also remained central to SBWIB's broader regional coordination, including planning, partner communication, outreach, and technical assistance tied to Pre Apprenticeship and apprenticeship development. This work continues to position SBWIB as a regional convener for education, industry, and workforce partners.

El Segundo

SBWIB continued to support youth and young adult career pathway development that benefits students and employers connected to the aerospace, aviation, technology, and advanced manufacturing sectors serving the El Segundo area. Through regional programming such as Aero-Flex, Sky-Flex, Space-Flex, and related employer engagement activities, SBWIB helps students better understand the skills and work readiness expectations required for careers in high growth industries.

SBWIB will continue working with school, employer, and community partners to identify opportunities for students to participate in career awareness, work readiness, and hands on learning experiences connected to the South Bay's aerospace and innovation economy.

Gardena

SBWIB continued supporting employment and business services through its regional network of One Stop Business and Career Centers, including services available to Gardena residents and employers. Activities during this period included ongoing job seeker support, employer engagement, recruitment assistance, and coordination with community partners to help connect residents to training and employment opportunities.

SBWIB also continued to explore opportunities to align local employers with youth and adult workforce programs, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, public infrastructure, and other industries that remain important to the South Bay economy.

Inglewood

SBWIB continued providing workforce services to Inglewood residents through the Inglewood One Stop Business and Career Center and youth focused programming connected to the Inglewood Teen Center. These services support job seekers with career planning, work readiness, job placement assistance, and access to training opportunities.

Inglewood remains an important hub for SBWIB's efforts to serve young adults, adults, dislocated workers, and individuals facing barriers to employment. Staff continued working to connect residents with supportive services, employment resources, and pathways into long term careers.

Lawndale

SBWIB's April and May activities continued to benefit Lawndale students and young adults through regional youth programming and access to career events such as the Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth and Young Adult Job Fair. The event included participation from local high schools and helped students connect directly with employers, submit applications, interviews, and explore first time employment opportunities.

SBWIB will continue supporting Lawndale youth through work readiness training, career exploration, employer connections, and sector based Pre Apprenticeship opportunities as programming expands across the region.

Carson

SBWIB continued supporting workforce services for Carson residents and businesses through its Carson One Stop Business and Career Center. These efforts include job seeker assistance, employer recruitment support, career pathway navigation, and connections to training opportunities.

SBWIB also continued developing and strengthening regional partnerships tied to public infrastructure, utilities, construction, logistics, and related career pathways. These efforts are intended to create more accessible training and employment opportunities for residents while helping employers meet workforce needs.

Redondo Beach

SBWIB continued to support regional career pathway development connected to aerospace, advanced manufacturing, engineering, and technology sectors that are important to the broader South Bay economy. Through employer engagement, Pre Apprenticeship planning, and education partnerships, SBWIB is working to ensure students and young adults have access to career awareness and work based learning opportunities tied to high demand industries.

These efforts remain flexible and responsive to employer needs, allowing SBWIB to continue identifying new opportunities for Redondo Beach area students, residents, and businesses as partnerships evolve.

Lomita

SBWIB continued to provide regional workforce services that are available to Lomita residents and businesses through its One Stop Business and Career Center system. These services include job seeker support, employer services, youth programming, training referrals, apprenticeship and Pre Apprenticeship information, and access to no cost workforce resources.

As regional partnerships continue to develop, SBWIB remains positioned to support Lomita through business engagement, career readiness programming, youth employment opportunities, and connections to emerging industry pathways across the South Bay.

Regional Youth Workforce Development

Together, the Blueprint Job Fair and the FlightWave Aerospace field trip reflect SBWIB's broader strategy of moving young people from career awareness to real opportunity. The Blueprint Job Fair connected nearly 1,800 youth with employers and resulted in hundreds of interviews and direct hire offers, while the FlightWave visit gave high school Pre Apprentices a deeper understanding of aerospace, drone technology, and advanced manufacturing career pathways. Both efforts show how SBWIB is aligning education, employer partnerships, and work based learning so students can explore high demand industries before entering the workforce.

SBWIB will continue building on these activities by expanding employer partnerships, supporting city based workforce priorities, and strengthening pathways that connect young people, adults, displaced workers, and individuals facing barriers to employment with meaningful careers throughout the South Bay.



NEWS

South Bay Workforce Investment Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Bay Workforce Investment Board
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April 10, 2026

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**South Bay Workforce Investment Board Facilitates Field Trip for
High School Aero-Flex Pre-Apprentices to FlightWave Aerospace in Torrance**

HAWTHORNE – Thirty-two Aero-Flex Pre-Apprentices from South and Torrance High Schools were hosted by FlightWave Aerospace in Torrance to gain firsthand exposure to the fast-growing unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) industry. The field trip, coordinated by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), provided students with an immersive look into one of the region’s most innovative aerospace companies.

Founded in Torrance, FlightWave Aerospace has established itself as a leader in advanced unmanned aerial systems, specializing in long-endurance drones designed for defense, intelligence, surveillance, and commercial applications. Its platforms are known for their hybrid propulsion systems, vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) capabilities, and rugged design, allowing them to operate in challenging environments where traditional aircraft may not be practical. The company’s work spans mission-critical operations, from border surveillance and disaster response to infrastructure inspection and mapping, placing it at the forefront of next-generation aerospace technology.

During the day-long visit, the junior and senior students were welcomed by FlightWave President Shawn Webb, who also serves on the SBWIB Board of Directors. Webb detailed how advanced drone technology is conceived, engineered, tested, and deployed, emphasizing the collaborative nature of aerospace innovation across mechanical, electrical, and software engineering disciplines. Students rotated through multiple technical stations, observing real-world workflows such as New Product Introduction (NPI), prototype assembly, avionics integration, and live flight testing.

FlightWave engineers and technical staff provided hands-on demonstrations and candid insights into their career journeys, offering students a clear understanding of how classroom learning translates into real-world applications. Students explored drone components up close, examined infrared imaging systems, and observed how modeling software evolves into fully functional prototypes. The experience highlighted not only the complexity of aerospace systems, but also the accessibility of career pathways for motivated students.

“These kinds of opportunities that we provide for students enrolled in our pre-apprenticeship programs help them bring their classroom learning to life in a meaningful and inspiring way,” noted Jan Vogel, SBWIB Executive Director. “As they engage with professionals in high-demand industries, they are inspired to explore future career pathways in aerospace and advanced manufacturing.”

Student reflections underscored the impact of the experience. Many described the visit as eye-opening and influential in shaping their future goals:

“I really enjoyed seeing a more intimately sized aerospace company and getting an in-depth understanding of all the little aspects. I hope to be able to intern at your company one day,” wrote Lilly Mueck.

Adrian Luna highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of the work: “I really enjoyed talking to your team and gained valuable insight on how to apply computer science to aerospace engineering, alongside tips on how to build my resume and pursue an internship at FlightWave.”

Hands-on exposure stood out as a key takeaway for several students. “My favorite part was the drone testing and how the infrared cameras worked,” shared Jonah Kim, while Andrew Dysim noted, “Seeing firsthand how employees flight test and manufacture new drone prototypes was very interesting to see each individual’s specific job.”

Others emphasized the broader learning environment and company culture. “The atmosphere and people were amazing, and we noticed how FlightWave seems like a healthy and supportive work environment,” wrote one student group. Another added, “The presenters were passionate and open to our questions, which made it a safe and engaging place to learn.”

The overwhelmingly positive feedback highlighted not only student enthusiasm for aerospace careers, but also the importance of industry partnerships in workforce development. By opening its doors, FlightWave Aerospace provided students with a rare, behind-the-scenes look at cutting-edge innovation—bridging the gap between education and industry.

SBWIB’s sector-focused Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship pathways were established to respond to employer demand and evolving labor market needs. Current offerings include Aero-Flex/Sky-Flex (aerospace and aviation), Space-Flex (space economy careers), Bio-Flex (biotechnology and life sciences), Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Pathways, and Water-Flex (water utilities and infrastructure careers).

For further information about apprenticeships and the no-cost services and programs provided by SBWIB for individuals and businesses, visit www.sbwib.org.

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Photo caption: Thirty-two Aero-Flex Pre-Apprentices from South and Torrance High Schools explore the future of aerospace during an immersive, hands-on visit to FlightWave Aerospace field trip, facilitated by South Bay Workforce Investment Board.







FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Bay Workforce Investment Board
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April 30, 2026

Contact: Jan Vogel 310-970-7700

**26th Annual Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth & Young Adult Job Fair Connects
More than a Thousand to Career Opportunities**

HAWTHORNE, CA - The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), in partnership with El Camino College and the City of Torrance, proudly hosted the 26th Annual Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth & Young Adult Job Fair, bringing together students, educators, and employers for one of the region's most impactful workforce development events.

This year's job fair welcomed 1,751 young job seekers, ages 16 to 24, and featured 110 employers offering a total of 4,123 job openings across a wide range of industries. A total of 27 local high schools and colleges participated, with SBWIB providing transportation support by donating buses to 25 high schools, ensuring broader access for students throughout the South Bay and greater Los Angeles area.

The event delivered immediate, tangible results:

- 539 youth received on-the-spot or second-round interviews
- 508 youth secured direct-hire job offers
- 201+ job applications were submitted during the event

In addition to employer engagement, attendees had access to career readiness resources through three workforce development workshops, attended by 84 participants. Workshop presenters included representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Space Kinetic Corp, and SBWIB's Blueprint Curriculum team, which provided pre-event preparation to help students maximize their success.

"This event continues to demonstrate what's possible when business, education, and community partners come together with a shared commitment to youth success," said SBWIB Executive Director, Jan Vogel. "We are not only opening doors to employment, but also equipping young people with the confidence, skills, and connections they need to build lasting careers."

Students echoed the event's value and impact. Light Philips, twelfth grader from Lawndale High School shared, "Today was a fantastic day, I met a lot of people from different fields, different careers. It's a wonderful way to not only build networking skills but also get yourself a career and get a head start."

For 26 years, the Blueprint for Workplace Success Job Fair has remained a cornerstone event in Southern California, consistently connecting young people to career opportunities while fostering long-term economic growth in the region.

For further information on programs provided by SBWIB, visit www.sbwib.org.

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Photo caption: The South Bay Workforce Investment Board, in partnership with El Camino College and the City of Torrance, proudly hosted the 26th Annual Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth & Young Adult Job Fair





Photo caption: The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), in partnership with El Camino College and the City of Torrance, proudly hosted the 26th Annual Blueprint for Workplace Success Youth & Young Adult Job Fair. Pictured left to right: Superintendent/President of El Camino College, Dr. Brenda Thames; City of Torrance Mayor Pro Tem, Sharon Kalani; and SBWIB Executive Director, Jan Vogel.





