

22 March 2021

TO: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

FR: Jude Thilman, MOVE2030 Apprenticeship Team and MCA, Mendocino Cannabis Alliance

RE: Support for Agenda Item 4a, recommendation to continue funding MOVE2030 and identify County staff coordinator

Honorable Chair and Supervisors,

My name is Jude Thilman and I speak today in support of an opportunity presented to this County that will cast us as a leader in workforce development across the state and around the country.

I am referring to the Cannabis Apprenticeship Program, developed under the guidance and support of the state of California's Division of Apprenticeship Standards and working specifically with Don Merrill, the State Administrator of Workplace Standards.

Ours is the state's first, premier Apprenticeship Program designed for all sectors of the cannabis industry. Within MOVE2030, MCA is playing a central role in crafting a cannabis-specific workforce development strategy that will take two years to complete, will be science-based and will serve every sector of our industry.

This Apprenticeship Program will help retain our young people who often leave the county seeking education and jobs in large urban areas. Because of our reputation here in the Emerald Triangle, the program has the potential to draw students from around the country coming here to learn about the craft and magic behind producing the finest cannabis in the world.

While not yet fully launched and operational, the state is already referring other local jurisdictions to us for guidance as we are the furthest along and can help others start similar apprenticeship programs in their counties.

What we've accomplished so far is solid:

1. A formal, codified, partnership with Mendocino Community College to provide science-based classes;
2. Created an initial draft Curriculum that outlines four pathways -- Cultivation, Manufacturing, Processing, and Distribution/Retail – each requiring 120 class hours;
3. Initiated regular meetings of stakeholders from within the cannabis industry to secure business interest in mentoring interns with on-the-job training;
4. We are negotiating a trade union partnership that will ensure high levels of pay and benefits, thus raising the standard for similar jobs in other industries;
5. We secured interest from two local banks, CFCU and North Bay Credit Union, to serve the project; and have commitments from large lodging facilities to provide housing for our interns that travel from afar to enroll in this program.

MCA and MOVE2030 share a vision of benefitting the whole county “through sustainable economic development, education and public policy initiatives.” – to quote MCA's Mission statement.

This shared goal can also benefit from a recent opportunity in the form of a promotional tourism video that MCA, in partnership with Visit Mendocino, will produce and distribute this year.

We are on the cusp of a tremendous step forward for Mendocino County's economic development. We urge robust and effective resourcing of MOVE2030's Cannabis Apprenticeship Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jude Thilman, Vice Chair

Mendocino Cannabis Alliance