

# ON SITE

## The Grand LA Celebration Held for Achieving Hiring Goals

PVJOBS joined The Grand LA's subcontractors, unions and construction workers in July to celebrate exceeding the targeted hiring goals for the \$1 billion development project that recently opened in downtown Los Angeles. The Grand



Fox 11 News Reporter Christine Divine interviews PVJOBS Executive Director Mary Taylor at The Grand LA.



A KABC-TV newsman interviews Ronita Harper, a PVJOBS participant who worked at The Grand LA project.

LA's Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) required that 30% of the development project's workforce are local workers and 10% are targeted workers. PVJOBS served as the

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jobs coordinator for the development project to source qualified workers who met mandatory at-risk factors.

“We’re celebrating together because we’ve not only met but exceeded the goals of hiring local and at-risk individuals at one of the largest development projects in greater Los Angeles,” said PVJOBS Executive Director Mary Taylor.



The Grand LA Project Rendering

“Through our hiring success, The Grand LA is demonstrating to other development projects that hiring local and program participants is good for business and our communities.”

During the celebratory event, PVJOBS recognized program participants for their hard work as construction apprentices for The Grand LA development project. Several subcontractors and unions that hired program participants were also acknowledged for their hiring efforts. The event was held at the panoramic terraces of The Grand LA’s Conrad Los Angeles Hotel that opened earlier this month.

The Grand LA is a towering collection of Frank Gehry-designed residential and retail buildings constructed in the epicenter of downtown L.A.’s cultural district. Developed by Related Companies, the \$1 billion urban destination center spans three blocks, making it one of the largest development projects in Southern California. With such an ambitious development venture, Related Companies worked with the City of Los Angeles to ensure that the construction workforce largely represented local workers, including those who are considered at-risk. To that end, a DDA agreement was authorized prior to the development project breaking ground in 2018.

## Ernest Roberts Celebration of Life Memorial Held

PVJOBS held a Celebration of Life memorial in honor of Ernest Roberts, the original PVJOBS Executive Director, who passed away late last year. Held at Playa Vista’s



(From left) Two daughters of Ernest Roberts, Heather and Monica, accept a commemorative award on behalf of their father.



Pictured at the Ernest Roberts Celebration of Life event are (from left) James “Roc” Farmer, PVJOBS OSHA trainer; Michael Dieden, former PVJOBS board member; Brad Carson, PVJOBS board member; Jolly Mitchell, former PVJOBS staff member; and Brittany Carson, PVJOBS board member.

scenic CenterPointe Club, the event recognized Roberts for being a trailblazer in creating construction job programs that rehabilitate the lives of at-risk individuals. During the memorial, which drew more than 100 people, Roberts’ two daughters were presented with a commemorative award for their father’s transformative work for at-risk communities.

## Mother & Son Participants Graduate Together

Lashandra Bell and her son Jermaree Burge are shown together at a PVJOBS graduation ceremony in July. The mother and son duo celebrated their completion of the PVJOBS Construction 101 training course. Both graduates are looking forward to establishing their careers in the construction industry.



## PVJOBS Hosts Workshop for BSCC Partners

PVJOBS hosted a special workshop and mixer in August to bring together their partners who provide training and supportive services to the organization’s job programs funded by a \$6 million grant from the Bureau of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Representatives of contractors, developers, businesses and community partners



David Shands @sleepis4suckers, an entrepreneur as well as host of the Social Proof podcast, served as one of the presenters at the PVJOBS partnership event.

joined PVJOBS staff at Playa Vista’s CenterPointe Club to strategize their partnership plans for the year ahead. The event also highlighted several PVJOBS participants who shared their testimonials on how the job program has positively impacted their lives.

## Sun Commons Project Hires PVJOBS, Female Workers

The Sun Commons Project, an affordable housing development project in North Hollywood, has hired PVJOBS as its jobs coordinator. Through Measure HHH, the Sun Commons Project has been funded to develop a new multi-family residential building that will be reserved for low-income households and formerly homeless individuals. As the development project’s jobs coordinator, PVJOBS is providing referrals of local and at-risk individuals who are trained and qualified to work at the project.



PVJOBS participant Mildred Funes shown at work at the Sun Commons Project’s construction site.

Throughout its construction, the Sun Commons Project is mandated to hire 10% transitional residents, 50% local apprentices and 30% local residents to work at the development project. The project is being developed by two nonprofit developers, Abbey Road and Linc Housing, and the general contractor is Bernards.

Three PVJOBS workers who are women have worked at the development project: Mildred Funes, a floor layer, and Lorisa Douglas and Vanessa Ramos, both painters. All three workers were able to join unions due to them receiving construction experience through the PVJOBS program.

Funes leveraged her union membership by enrolling in classes through the union to learn worker safety protocol and advanced construction techniques. She’s grateful to PVJOBS for giving her the opportunity to start her career as a professional floor layer. “I appreciate everybody at PVJOBS for teaching me hands-on experience,” said Funes, a single mother of a teenage son. “Without PVJOBS, I’d be pretty lost right now because it’s nothing like being out in the field. PVJOBS gave me that push to do what I like doing, which is being a hands-on worker.”

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## New Partnership Offers Cannabis Biz Training

PVJOBS has partnered with the owners of a leading cannabis industry nonprofit and business to provide training programs for at-risk individuals who are interested in operating cannabis businesses. The partnership was made possible by a recent \$6 million grant awarded to PVJOBS from the Bureau of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) as part of the state's effort to break the cycle of violence, gang activity and recidivism in communities.

"PVJOBS has been known for being a pioneer of providing job training programs in the construction



industry. But we believe that it's essential to offer trainings in a diverse array of industries that disadvantaged individuals can choose from," said PVJOBS Executive Director Mary Taylor. "Given that our BSCC grant enables our job program to expand the industries in which we train, including the cannabis industry, PVJOBS is launching a new training program to instruct people how to operate their own businesses in this legalized field."

The National Diversity & Inclusion Cannabis Alliance (NDICA) and superbad inc. are the two cannabis companies that PVJOBS has partnered with to provide entrepreneurial training programs for disadvantaged individuals. The training sessions will have a duration of 90 to 120 days, and participants will be trained at cannabis licensed facilities in South L.A. as well as other areas throughout greater Los Angeles.

"Our partnership with PVJOBS via the BSCC grant allows NDICA to expand its programs and services to marginalized communities that have been affected by the war on drugs, poverty, unemployment, mass incarceration and over policing," said Bonita Money, NDICA Founder. "Through this partnership, it allows us to provide folks with training in the areas of technical assistance, licensing, entrepreneurial training and workforce development."

Carlos Dew, superbad inc. Founder and CEO, feels like the PVJOBS partnership gives him a platform to help provide entrepreneurship training to individuals like himself who come from underserved communities. "I think that second chance opportunities are needed in the cannabis industry," he said. "Everybody has a story, and we're here to assist them as much as possible."

The \$6 million grant was awarded to PVJOBS this past spring through BSCC's California Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (CalVIP). The CalVIP Grant Program was established by the State Legislature in 2017 to provide funding for cities and community-based organizations with the goal of reducing violence in their cities and adjacent areas. According to the Break the Cycle of Violence Act (AB 1603) that was signed by Governor Newsom in 2019, the Act specifies that CalVIP grants shall be used to support, expand and replicate evidence-based violence reduction initiatives that seek to interrupt the cycle of violence.

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Funes was incarcerated for 16 years before entering a halfway house, where she learned about PVJOBS. She enrolled in the Department of Labor funded program, and has since graduated from the Construction 101 course before landing a union job at the Sun Commons Project. "It's been fascinating, I've been learning so much. It's been a good opportunity for me," she said. "I'm happy that I'm doing something with my life. Staying focused and doing the right thing is what I needed."