

## Regional Workforce Boards Align Strategies to Serve Veterans

### *Workforce professionals convene at Front Line Conference*

**Long Beach, CA** - - According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), California is home to 1.8 million of the nation's 21.2 million veterans. While California's unemployment rate dropped from 9.4 percent to 9 percent last month, the unemployment rate among post-9/11 veterans hovers at 12 percent. Among the youngest of the post-9/11 vets (ages 18-24), nearly one-third are out of work. These trends were among the key reasons that prompted seven southern California Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to convene workforce professionals for the *Front Line Conference*. Approximately 300 workforce professionals attended the capacity-building conference which was designed specifically for workforce professionals and community-based organizations that are on the front lines serving veterans to help them transition to, and thrive in, civilian employment.

Conference partner and Division Chief, Los Angeles-Ventura Workforce Services Division, Employment Development Department (EDD), Michael Dolphin kicked off the conference. "Veterans often face unique challenges finding work when they leave the military," said Dolphin. "The overall intent of the conference was to better educate, inform and connect service providers to resources and solutions that lead to successful workforce development services, job training opportunities, and job readiness programs for our returning and existing veterans."

The seven participating WIBs included City of Los Angeles WIB, County of Los Angeles WIB, Foothill WIB, South Bay WIB, Southeast Los Angeles WIB and Verdugo WIB. These business-led WIBs are part of a national workforce investment system funded by the Workforce Investment Act, and oversee workforce development services through a network of One-Stop Career Centers.

Deputy Director, Workforce Services Branch, EDD, Dennis Petrie said, "The conference examined critical program models that prepare and connect veterans to quality employment opportunities, and offered a venue to explore strategies that connect and foster collaboration between organizations that serve veterans. This type of knowledge exchange will help regional workforce professionals better serve our veterans."

To locate local workforce experts that are dedicated to helping veterans, go to the conference website at [www.FrontLineConference.org](http://www.FrontLineConference.org).

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