

January 7, 2022

The Honorable Alejandra Castillo
Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

RE: San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development's American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge proposal, Bay Area Good Jobs Partnership for Equity

Dear Assistant Secretary Castillo:

Each year, hospitals invest hundreds of millions of dollars in training California's next generation of health care providers but closing what has become a persistent workforce gap requires additional solutions. For that reason, Hospital Council — Northern & Central California supports the application by the Bay Area Good Jobs Partnership for Equity (BAGJPE) for funding through the American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge.

This project, led by the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, will expand and strengthen health care workforce development, give more workers access to career pathways and paid work experience that leads to employment at self-sufficiency wages, and help hospitals to fill open positions now and in the future.

The acute shortage of health care professionals in California affects every aspect of care. Statewide, more than 11 million people live in an area without enough primary care providers, and according to a UC San Francisco study of the state's nursing shortage, it will take until 2026 to close the state's current nursing gap. All told, California needs to add 500,000 new allied health care professionals by 2024 in order to provide needed care.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated health care staffing shortages. Many front-line health care workers have reached their breaking point; hundreds of thousands of health care jobs have been lost since the pandemic began. To ensure Californians can continue to receive the care they deserve, we must develop new strategies to ensure a long-term, robust health care workforce.

The BAGJPE proposal to recruit, train, and upskill workers with funding from the Good Jobs Challenge is such a strategy, with potential to provide a worker pipeline by helping to develop essential skills. The training will also leverage existing regional workforce structures and relationships with health care employers to facilitate job placement for workers.

An investment of Good Jobs Challenge funding in support of the BAGJPE proposal will also help to address inequities as we recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural and low-income communities are disproportionately affected by the state's depleted health care workforce, and although people of color will be a majority of Californians by 2030, they are severely underrepresented in the workforce.

Funding of the BAGJPE proposal offers an outstanding opportunity to strengthen the workforce system throughout the Bay Area, expand equitable opportunities for vulnerable populations, and provide our hospitals with access to thousands of new job seekers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan J. Bucklew". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bryan" being the most prominent part.

Bryan J. Bucklew
President & CEO