

Investment in Workforce and Competency

The continued success of LA County as a global freight gateway not only depends on the quality of the multimodal freight infrastructure and the connections among its industries, gateways, and supply chain service providers, but also on the quality, quantity, and mobility of the regional workforce. The workforce required to support the goods movement sector is diverse and evolving in order to fulfill many roles required within myriad supply chain activities. Moreover, changes in technology and supply chain strategies to respond to ever-changing delivery expectations are increasing the complexity and sophistication of logistics operations, thereby creating new demands on and expectations of worker skills and knowledge. As a result, cultivating and supporting this workforce requires careful coordination across many partners, from workforce development entities and academic institutions that identify and train workers, to employers who hire them. Training goods movement workforce with right skills to meet evolving industry needs is critical to maintaining Los Angeles area's competitiveness as the gateway of choice and sustaining the region's economic vitality. Further, investing to nurture local workforce is an effective tool to correct disparities witnessed in race, income and education attainment through targeted pathway provisions toward underserved communities within LA County.

As a transportation planner and coordinator, designer, builder and operator for LA County, Metro takes the importance of investing in workforce development to heart. Metro has institutionalized training programs, developed career pathways, and instituted targeted hiring policies in public transit field. Specifically, Metro established Workforce Initiative Now-Los Angeles (WIN-LA) program; the Expose, Educate & Employ (E3) initiative and associated Metro Transportation School; and the Project Labor Agreement and Construction Careers Policy (PLA/CCP) to provide exposure, educational programming, and career pathways in construction, operations/maintenance, administration, and professional services both within Metro and throughout the transit industry. Many of the skills developed as part of Metro's programs – particularly related to project management, data visualization, forecasting, and compliance – also apply broadly across industry sectors, particularly goods movement and logistics. The undeniable connections and parallels between Metro's workforce development efforts in the transportation sector and other agencies in the logistics sector are ripe to be paired together to create overlapping and mutually reinforcing efforts, all in support of regional equity and economic growth.

There is also a growing recognition on impact of mobility and accessibility to jobs and one's economic and social upward mobility. In LA County, only 3.3 percent of goods movement jobs are accessible within one-hour transit trip. In making mobility investment decisions, this is an important fact for Metro to reference to as it strives to close the equity gaps through transportation means.

A well-trained and competent labor pool is a foundation for a region that embraces innovation and desires to be competitive. While it is not Metro's core purpose to provide goods movement-specific workforce development training, Metro serves important roles as an employer, workforce development partner, a regional mobility provider and a policymaking body. Several opportunities were highlighted for Metro through stakeholder dialogue as a regional leader and partner in advancing workforce competency goals. Metro should:

Key Strategies & Actions

1. Partner with academic and research institutions to pursue applied research to understand gaps in skills and competencies of the region's logistics workforce and sought after by employers.
 - a. Inventory existing regional workforce development and training programs managed by regional stakeholders, like METRANS, the ports, Long Beach City College, and others to identify institutional resources in this effort.
 - b. Work with the partners mentioned in 1.a. to further Metro's understanding on workforce skill and competency gaps in detail, e.g., at job classification levels.

- c. Fully understand transferrable skills between transit and logistics industry and their benefits to articulate Metro's workforce investment priorities.
2. Expand Metro's partnership with trade schools and community colleges, and major employers to offer opportunities to experiment and validate existing workforce development programs.
 - a. Assess whether existing workforce development programs meet the worker and employer needs, and draw suggestions to Metro's workforce development programs for improvements.
3. Expand Metro's local and targeted hiring policies to benefit historically disadvantaged community members.
 - a. Evaluate existing Metro policies on local and targeted hiring to gauge areas of enhancements to ensure that Metro's hiring policies are designed to close equity gaps. These considerations may include CalEnviroN disadvantaged communities' designation, criminal history, income, race and education attainment.
4. Expand Metro's current training programs with a foresight of training workforce of the future who will be equipped to respond to changing technologies in the transportation and transit industry.
 - a. Define skills and competencies needed to operate and maintain clean technology trucks, in conjunction with the Countywide Clean Truck Initiative.
 - b. Institutionalize training and apprenticeship programs to build a consistent pipeline to fulfill regional workforce needs.
 - c. Join Metro's Workforce Development Working Group led by the Human Capital and Development Department to ensure gaps in skills and competencies in logistics industries are integrated as opportunity areas for Metro's workforce development initiatives
5. Advocate for regional, state, and federal funding programs for building and enhancing workforce development and competency to ensure that workers in LA county will be able to capitalize on employment opportunities.
 - b. Understand existing policies surrounding workforce development investment to set a foundation for creating funding focused policies.
 - c. Establish a regional partnership around funding for workforce investment to develop local and regional revenue streams to provide LA county's match contribution for any regional/state/federal grants opportunities.
 - d. Establish a regional funding advocacy campaign in coordination to call for increased/targeted funding for goods movement workforce development programs.
 - e. Define workforce skills and competencies needs to support the LA Metro Countywide Clean Truck Initiative to maintain supporting infrastructure.
6. Improve the Metro transit service network and ancillary regional services to meet the needs of the goods movement workforce and enhance their ability to access desirable jobs.
 - a. Understand disparities in access to jobs for workers who use transit services, with a focus on logistics jobs through a gap analysis of Metro's transit service to identify opportunities to better serve future populations of workers
 - b. Develop recommendations to improve access to jobs throughout the day. For example, assess Metro's ability to provide "third-shift" service and other nontraditional commute services for the goods movement workforce.
 - c. Partner with regional municipal operators to address these mobility issues in areas that are wholly or partially served by other transit agencies