

The Mercury News

The Newspaper of Silicon Valley

Nonprofit helps area's unemployed hone new job skills

By [APALA G. EGAN](#) | October 4, 2020 at 6:45 a.m.



Ron Lopez, right, of Work2Future speaks with a potential client in this undated photo. The San Jose-based nonprofit has seen an uptick in area residents seeking job training thanks to layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Courtesy photo)

Losing your job is tough enough, but for those who have been laid off during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding work might mean honing a new skills set.

That's where Work2Future comes in. The nonprofit, headquartered in San Jose's Almaden Valley, helps area residents obtain the skills and coaching they need to find a new job, get a promotion or start a new career. Director Monique Melchor says Work2Future has seen an uptick in clients during the pandemic, particularly in industries that are still mostly shut down.

“Retail and hospitality have been especially hard hit,” she says. “We try to retrain these individuals for another field where workers are in demand. In essence, we look at the skills people already have and help them transfer it to another industry.”

The areas of opportunity include finance, manufacturing, warehousing, administration and the medical field.

“In the area of finance, you could work as an account clerk for a local company; in the healthcare arena, you could be an entry-level hospital worker or train to be a home health aide,” Melchor says. “A number of companies need people with basic computer and office management skills. On the other hand, warehousing has opportunities for forklift operators.”

Work2Future partners directly with companies and organizations to provide free training and job opportunities. BenteK, an electronic parts supplier based in San Jose, needs manufacturing workers, while Valley Transportation Authority’s needs go beyond vehicle operators to include maintenance workers and those with computer skills.

In its 20-year history, Work2Future has partnered with local companies for clients to get training and possibly a job. The nonprofit accepts referrals from organizations including the Center for Employment and Training, ConeXion, Project Hired, Catholic Charities, Sacred Heart Community Services and Destination Home.

While its training facilities are in San Jose and Gilroy, Work2Future also serves residents of Campbell, Saratoga, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Los Altos Hills and San Martin, as well as unincorporated Santa Clara County.

In addition to causing a surge in its client base, the pandemic has also forced Work2Future to move its training programs online. Some training classes may be conducted in person if necessary, but Melchor emphasizes that during these classes, safety measures such as the usage of hand sanitizers and masks will be emphasized.

For more information, visit www.work2future.org.

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