

## POLICY WATCH – September 2021

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As we enter fall, we remember a year ago when there were no vaccines, and a surge was predicted as life moved inside as the weather got cooler. The predictions were right – the pandemic surged. In winter of this year, vaccines became available, and people clamored to get their jabs. But in this past year, something went very wrong. Instead of being seen as lifesavers, some people saw vaccines, and the other protections against COVID like masking and social distancing, as political statements. So again, the virus has surged among the unvaccinated, overwhelming the healthcare system in parts of our state and many other states and causing far too many deaths and long-term effects for many people.

As an employer-led organization, North Bay Leadership Council urges all employers to mandate vaccinations of their employees. The only way we get our lives back, our children educated, our economy revitalized and our democracy strong is to do the right thing to protect ourselves and others by getting vaccinated.

We can be proud that so many North Bay residents have acted responsibly and followed the scientific recommendations. Now let's get the remaining holdouts vaccinated, get the recommended booster shots, and continue to see the viral infections drop and save lives. If we act now, we won't see a repeat of last fall and winter. Let's hope mandates move the needle where necessary!

Best,



Cynthia

### **NBLC Urges Mandatory Vaccinations**

#### NBLC Employer-Mandated Vaccination Policy

##### Preamble:

- We have effective, safe, free, FDA-approved vaccines widely available to the entire community, except for children younger than 12, with vaccines soon to be approved for the 5 – 12 year olds.

At this point, any employee who is not yet vaccinated has ample options and opportunities to get vaccinated.

- The longer we do not have a community that is as close to fully vaccinated as possible, the longer we put people's lives and the health of our economy at risk.
- The notion of requiring vaccines has long been accepted legally and medically – we receive vaccines to travel, to go to public school, to participate in athletic leagues, for employment in certain sectors, and in many other settings.
- We support the State's actions that all state employees, as well as staff of all childcare facilities and preK-12 schools statewide, must receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 9/27. Those who do not get vaccinated due to certain exemptions will be required to be tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis. We support local governments mandating vaccinations for their public employees. We applaud every employer who has educated, encouraged, and incentivized their employees to receive a COVID vaccine voluntarily.
- While we recognize there are potential legal questions, and potential workforce impacts, North Bay Leadership Council supports employers who require their employees to get vaccinated – or have employees take routine tests if a vaccine is not feasible. Further, we support our local government's efforts to strongly encourage and incentivize this of employers, and we support the State and Federal government's move toward requiring a COVID vaccine of everyone eligible.

#### NBLC Policy:

The rapid spread of the highly contagious Delta variant should be a clear and dangerous reminder that we continue to be in a race against the spread and constant mutation of this virus. Vaccination rates are not uniform across the country, and our region has done better than most, but high-risk areas remain and ongoing surges will eventually stretch or break through hospital capacity.

Interventions such as stay-at-home orders and social distancing can slow the tide of infections, but they are disruptive, difficult to sustain, and will further hamstring our economic recovery. Restarting mask mandates will help but cannot be as effective as vaccination. Testing, isolation, and contact tracing of infected individuals all have a role in reducing infections but our collective experience to this point clearly shows these approaches are not sufficient to stop the spread and mutation of the virus. We must continue to trust the science and public health officials and make sound, evidence-based decisions.

In the absence of a legal, public mandate to vaccinate, the next and necessary step is for employers in private businesses, and nonprofit institutions to require vaccination among employees returning to in-person work and customers for whom vaccination is a medically safe choice. Health care organizations like Kaiser Permanente and Sutter Health have taken this step, and private businesses such as Google, United Airlines, and Facebook have followed.

As leaders that have a stake in the health of our region and economy, it is time for us to stand unified and support requiring vaccination against COVID-19, excluding those with religious or medical exceptions, as a condition of on-site employment or receiving services. NBLC has been a leading and trusted voice in the community. While this statement does not represent an endorsement of specific legislation at any level of government, making such a recommendation demonstrates that employers across the region understand that a flourishing economy relies on a healthy population. The choice is ours, we can and must follow the example of prior leadership that led our nation out of harm's way through vaccination. It is the surest path to a return to prosperity, health, and security.



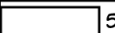















## The Kids Are Not Alright

Professor Scott Galloway has a blog, [No Mercy, No Malice](#), that I always find intriguing. In this month's edition, Back to School, ([Link](#)) he writes, "Miles of plexiglass, masks, and deranged parents. Back to school 2021 feels more like Stranger Things than the fall ritual we grew up with. Yet there's an eerie sameness between this fall and the previous most-unusual-back-to-school year of our lives ... last year. Classrooms are experiments on viral transmission rates, and school board meetings are proof that antipsychotic meds are dangerously underprescribed."

Galloway observes that given that children are our future, we are in trouble in American education. He says, "In my book, [Post Corona](#), I offered this thesis: 'The pandemic's most enduring impact will be as an accelerant.' And that's proving out in many areas. In health care, office work, food delivery, banking, and more, we are seeing 'decades happen in weeks.' In one sector, however, everything is moving slower. Education. Our elementary school kids are learning less, and some are nearly a full school year behind where they would have been pre-pandemic."

## NUMBER OF MONTHS BEHIND DUE TO PANDEMIC

GRADES 1-6, U.S.

SUBJECT	BY RACE	BY INCOME	BY LOCATION
MATH	BLACK  6	<\$25K  7	CITY  5
	HISPANIC  6	\$25K-\$75K  5	SUBURB  5
	WHITE  4	>\$75K  4	RURAL  4
READING	BLACK  6	<\$25K  6	CITY  4
	HISPANIC  5	\$25K-\$75K  4	SUBURB  4
	WHITE  3	>\$75K  3	RURAL  3

SOURCES: CURRICULUM ASSOCIATES I-READY ASSESSMENT DATA, MCKINSEY

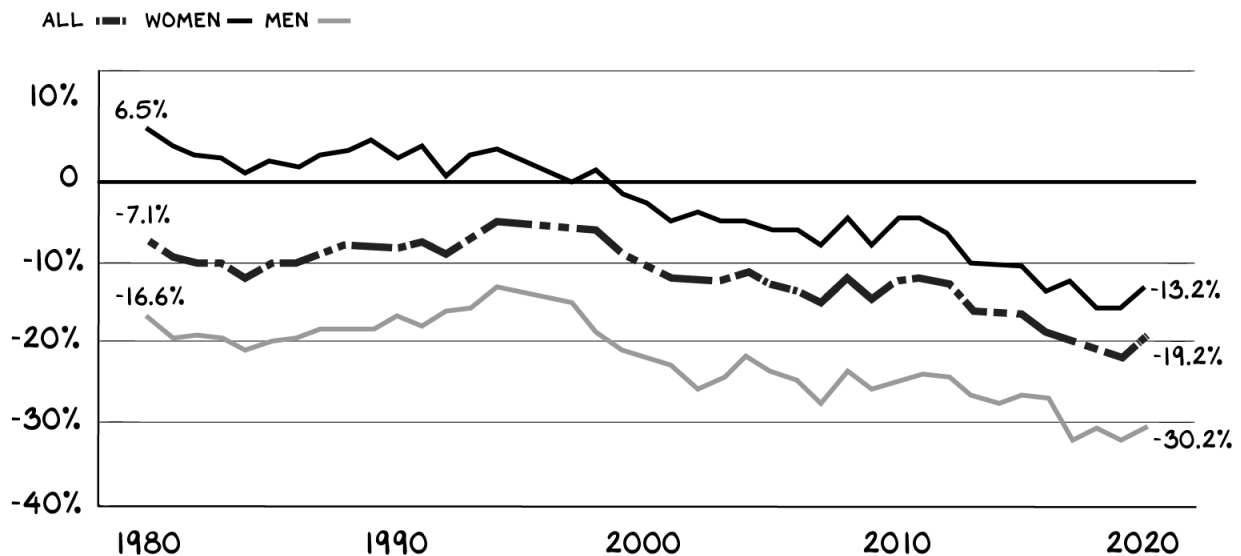
We have written about the learning gap before, but Galloway puts a sharp point on the problem. He says, "While their parents harass doctors at school board meetings and fight epic Facebook comment wars, our kids are not learning to read or count. McKinsey projects that this learning gap will reduce lifetime earnings for K-12 students by an average of \$49,000 to \$61,000. By the time the majority of these kids have joined the workforce in 2040, it's estimated we'll have lost as much as \$188 billion a year in GDP due to unfinished learning during the pandemic." Those are scary numbers!

More alarming, Galloway says, "As with most things, these ill effects are falling disproportionately on the poor and children of color. Black kids are six months behind in math and learning, whereas white kids are 'only' four and three months behind. Meanwhile, the U.S. educational system has been losing ground to those of our international peers for years. American students routinely score lower on tests of basic skills than students in other countries, a trend that isn't likely to reverse."

So, what's the solution? How can we get these kids back on track? Galloway says, "Don't count on teachers. It turns out that if you underpay, under-resource, and fail to accord equal respect to people for long enough ... they'll quit. Two-thirds of our school districts face a teacher shortage, and 28% of teachers are likely to retire or leave the profession earlier than expected." The North Bay is experiencing similar issues with teacher shortages.

Galloway underlines why teachers are leaving. He says, "Since 1980, their income relative to other college graduates has been in steady decline. Men have always taken a pay cut to enter the classroom, but it's gone from a 17% haircut to a 30% scalping. Teaching used to be an economically attractive profession for women, relative to their other options — though I'd guess that wasn't because we paid female teachers so well — but now a female college graduate makes 13% less than her peers if she goes into teaching. In addition to underpaying them, we're now asking teachers to stand in a room full of potential delta variant factories, and to referee QAnon vs. anti-vaxxer brawls on parent-teacher night."

### WAGE DIFFERENCE: TEACHERS VS. OTHER COLLEGE-EDUCATED WORKERS



SOURCE: ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Galloway says, "Teaching is arguably the most important job in society. Our future is in their care. And something has gone very, very wrong. We'll know the profession has hit a new low when we start referring to them as 'heros' or (worse) 'essential workers' — the lip-service labels liberals bestow on 'those we exploit to maintain our creature comforts through pestilence, poverty, and war.'"

Looking at higher education, Galloway describes another educational failure. He explains that college is "an integral part of the innovation and economic mobility at the heart of the American dream. College has become too expensive. It's morphed from the ultimate lubricant of upward mobility to the enforcer of the caste system. Every day, it becomes less American. I thought Covid would inspire partnerships with tech firms to dramatically expand access. I was wrong. Our elite universities have doubled down on exclusivity rather than embrace the opportunity for change. But while I and many others were worrying about rising costs, administrative bloat, and a lack of teaching innovation, another worrying trend was gathering momentum. Young men are opting out of college."

Galloway reports, "In 1970, men accounted for 60% of college enrollment. That number has decreased to 40%. This largely reflects a dwindling male applicant pool. Women now submit 35% more college applications than men, which is forcing some schools to quietly prop up male admission rates. Yes, you read that right. Men are receiving affirmative action for being men. This decline is a Rorschach test for pundits and comment-section warriors. People who think college is too woke declare that's what's driving men out. People who hate video games, THC, or feminism can blame them."

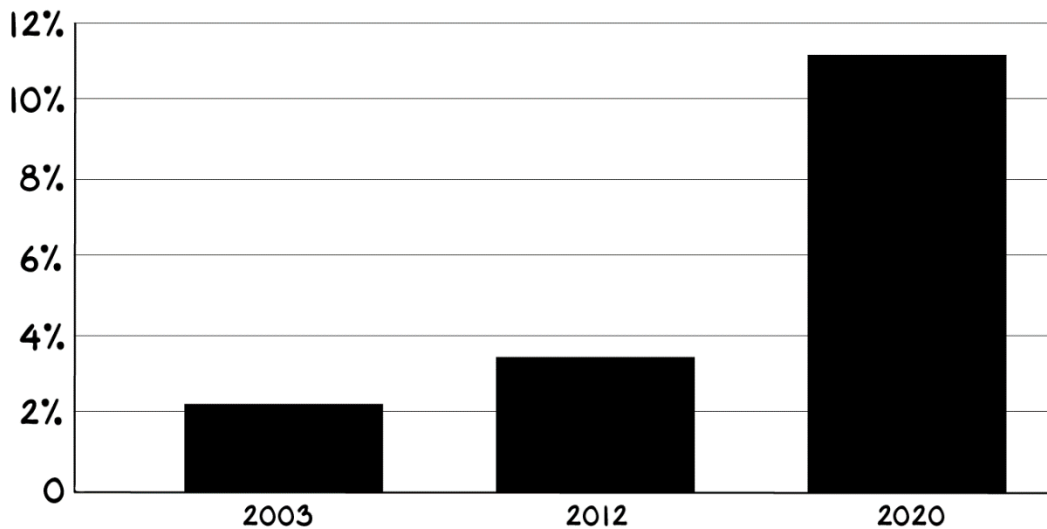
"Employment economics probably explains the trend to an extent," says Galloway. "Young men without college degrees have better options than young women. Many fields that don't require a degree are gender imbalanced, and the traditionally male-dominated jobs tend to pay better. Thus, as the value proposition of college gets worse (higher costs, worse experience), men opt out because they can. Women stick around because they have fewer choices. With traditionally male-dominated skilled labor trades in high demand, we should expect to see even more decline in male college attendance."

Galloway doubts that's the full explanation. He says, "UCLA has expanded its enrollment by 3,000 students since 2013, and 90% of that increase is attributed to women. The essence of this data is too much of a good thing. An overdue correction may have, as often happens in markets, inspired an overcorrection. We've lost young men in the shuffle, made them objects of our political arguments and targets of our algorithms. It's easy to shrug it off. 'Someone else's turn to eat,' so to speak. Sure. But hungry young men without role models or prospects are, to be blunt, dangerous. The wheel doesn't need to turn, it needs to be broken."

What can we do to reverse this trend? Galloway says, "Specifically, we need to dramatically expand enrollments at our great public universities and invest in vocational and apprenticeship programs (for young women and men)." NBLC is participating in the new Northern California Apprenticeship Network to expand apprenticeships. We also are very supportive of career technical education and creating more certificate programs at the community colleges.

Galloway dives deeper into what he sees happening. He says, "For a rapidly increasing number of American families, the answer to the problems with our schools is not to attend them. Home-schooling, growing in popularity for years, skyrocketed during the pandemic. Today, more than 1 in 10 kids are home-schooled. It may indeed be a solution for some families, but it's impractical or unappealing for millions of households who rely on public and private schools to teach critical skills." We are seeing a decline in student enrollment locally, and many students who studied remotely have not returned to the classroom.

## SHARE OF U.S. K-12 STUDENTS HOME-SCHOOLED



SOURCES: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

And Galloway closes with some optimism. He says, “There are real signs of hope and change, though. U.K.-based Multiverse offers non-college-bound kids apprenticeships at many of the world’s premier firms. Promising kids get an onramp to the American dream that bypasses the arrogance and debt of admissions departments and outrageous tuition fees, respectively. In addition, this summer, the University of California sent out more than 160,000 admissions offers for Fall 2021, a record high. And institutions like the UC system that are taking positive steps got a boost this week from, of all places, the college-ranking industrial complex. Forbes magazine changed its ranking system in a way that could inspire a huge shift back to where higher ed needs to be.”

Why are rankings important? Galloway says, “Rankings are devastatingly important to the demand a school registers. Young people are inexperienced and insecure, which are the pillars upon which margin from brand equity rests. The next time you see a ranking of the ‘world’s strongest brands,’ recognize that it’s left off the uber brands ... universities. If Apple were a school, it could have paid for its \$5 billion spaceship with naming rights across the side of the building, on each lecture hall, and over every urinal. Coke and McDonald’s don’t hold a candle to MIT and Michigan. Anyway, the most insidious input to these paramount rankings is the rate of admission. More accurately, non-admission. The more people they turn away, the higher the ranking, the more apps, the more margin power, the more student debt, the higher the pay of administrators, the more incentive to reject more students ... and the wheel turns.”

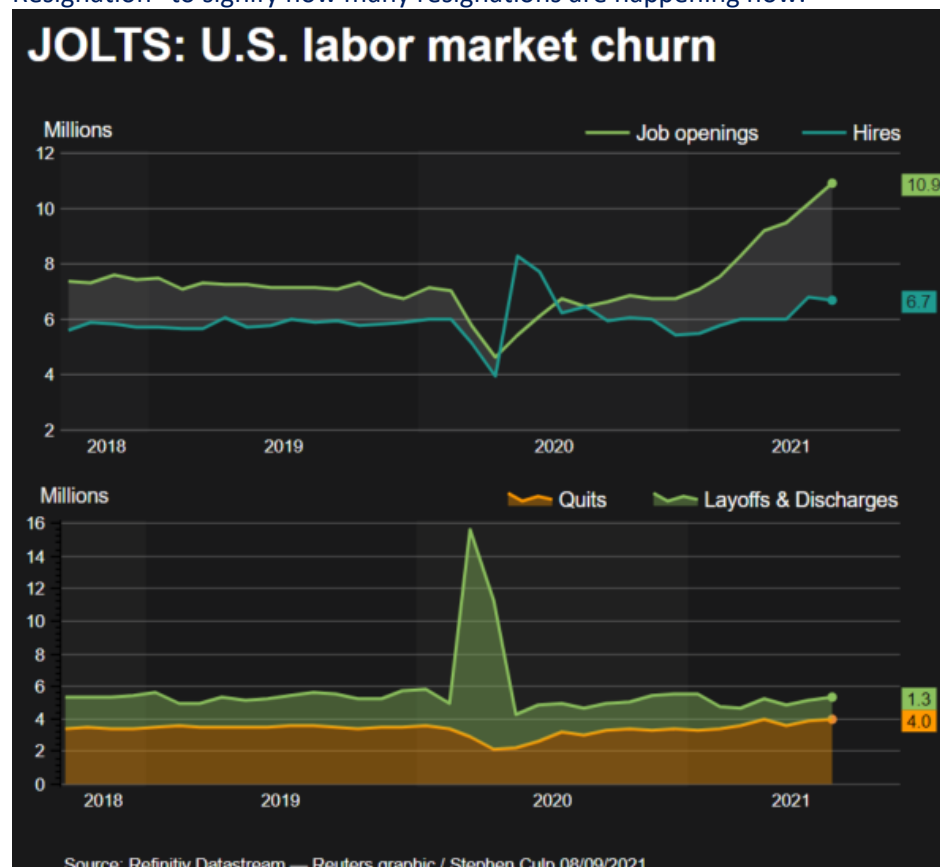
The good news is that “Forbes’s most recent ranking, however, includes ‘access’ as a factor (specifically, the percentage of kids at the school who received a Pell grant). When that essential element is taken into account ... UC Berkeley is the top-ranked school in America. Four UC campuses are in the top 25, as are five other public universities. This. Is. Big.”

NBLC championed modernization of the Cal Grant program in this year’s legislative session and some progress was made – more than 100,000 new students will now qualify. It is exciting to learn that

nationally our state colleges and universities are being prized because of greater access. Let's keep that trend going!

## Labor Shortage or Skills Mismatch?

In [U.S. job openings hit record high as employers struggle to find workers, \(Link\)](#), Lucia Mutikani writes, "U.S. job openings raced to a new record high in July while layoffs rose moderately, suggesting June's sharp slowdown in hiring was due to employers being unable to find workers rather than weak demand for labor. The Labor Department's monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS report, on Wednesday also showed a steady increase in the number of workers voluntarily quitting their jobs, a sign of confidence in the labor market." Some are describing the increase in resignations "The Great Resignation" to signify how many resignations are happening now.



Mutikani says, "The quits rate is viewed by policymakers and economists as a measure of job market confidence, and July's rise in the private rate suggested further wage gains, which could keep inflation high for a while. Annual wage growth topped 4% in August." With more than a million jobs available than workers, there is reason for that confidence.

Another trend that is occurring in the increase of power of the workforce. In [Geriatric millennials have the most power in the workforce right now, \(Link\)](#), Hillary Hoffower claims that geriatric millennials are the ones with the power in the workforce right now. Hoffower says, "By now, you've probably heard about the Great Resignation. Coined by psychologist Anthony Klotz, the trend involves millions of Americans dropping out of the workforce throughout the economy as it reopened more and more. Over 3.6 million people quit in April, May, June, and July, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But a certain cohort is leading the way."



Hoffower says, “According to a recent analysis by the Harvard Business Review that looked at 9 million employee records from more than 4,000 companies, midcareer employees are driving the quits. Resignation rates are highest among 30- to 45-year-old employees, increasing on average by more than 20% over the past year. That means it’s mainly older millennials and younger Gen Xers who are making the Great Resignation so, well, great. Other research backs this finding up.”

“In late July, a Bankrate survey found that more than half of Americans in the workforce — including a disproportionate number of millennials — planned to look for a new job in the coming year,” says Hoffower. “In August, a study by Personal Capital and The Harris Poll found that two-thirds of Americans surveyed were keen to switch jobs. More than a quarter (78%) of millennials felt that way, as did 47% of Gen Xers. Two-thirds of millennials agreed that ‘Now would be a great time to make a career move.’”

Hoffower says there are myriad reasons for the resignations including “employers may be less inclined to hire less experienced workers, creating more demand for mid-level workers; this cohort may have postponed switching jobs until some of the dust settled from the pandemic’s economic effects; and the pandemic has caused some to reevaluate what they want in both their job and in life.”

But she drills down that “Smack in the middle of this job-resigning cohort is the ‘geriatric millennial,’ a term popularized by author and leadership Erica Dhawan to describe those turning ages 36 to 41 this year. She said that geriatric millennials are unique because they straddle a digital divide between older and younger generations in the workplace, which enables them to serve as a hybrid role in the workplace by bridging communication styles — teaching traditional communication skills to younger employees and digital body language to older team members.”

Hoffower says, “For example, Dhawan said, a geriatric millennial would know to send a Slack message to a Gen Z co-worker instead of calling them out of the blue, which they might find alarming. But they would also know to be mindful of an older co-worker’s video background and help walk them through such technology. By straddling the generational divide, she said, ‘they can cater to the needs of different people and have different degrees of understanding of the digital world, but also they have a patience for the digital world that maybe future generations won’t because they don’t know a world without it.’”

Hoffower concludes, “The geriatric millennial ultimately holds a lot of sway in the workplace right now. Being able to act as a generational bridge gives them a unique toolset, making them an asset to any employer seeking to create a cohesive and communicative environment. And with many quitting in droves, they have the power.” This confirms what we are seeing – the talent can dictate terms in this world of labor shortages and skills mismatches. It also should be a strong message to employers that the talent wants to work remotely and won’t be coming back to the office unless they want to do that.



## Upcoming Events

Cryptocurrency: What are its Pros and Cons for Your Business?

Hosted by: Institute for Leadership Studies - Dominican University of California and NBLC

**Date:** Wed, October 6, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT

The recent growth and acceptance of Bitcoin and alternative cryptocurrencies have become too significant for businesses, consumers, and investors to ignore. Learn what cryptocurrency means for your business!

Location: Virtual

Ticket: \$25.00

[Register Here](#)

### Save the Date:

NBLC's Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon

Date: December 10, 2021

Time: 11:30 – 1:30

Location: Embassy Suites, San Rafael

Tickets go on sale October 15<sup>th</sup>!

## Members in the News

### Bank of America Awards Santa Rosa Junior College's Construction Center with a \$250 Grant

The region's new Construction Center project, led by Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) on its Petaluma campus, is one step closer to being fully funded thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

### Comcast NBC and AT&T Participate in the 2021 Forbes Thought Leader Summit

Comcast NBC's Darryl Hawkins and others to be panelists at the 2021 Forbes Thought Leader Summit.

### Dominican University is Ranked Top 15% in the Nation for Academic Excellence and Student Outcomes

According to the 2022 College Factual Best Colleges Ranking, Dominican University of California is ranked in the top 15% in the nation for academic excellence and student outcomes.

### Providence Health System Launches \$220 Million Nationwide Workforce Investment Program

Providence Health System — parent company to Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, Petaluma Valley Hospital and Queen of the Valley Medical Center in Napa — plans to spend \$220 million on recognition and referral bonuses for caregivers across its national 52-hospital network in seven states.

### **Becoming Independent's BI Buzz Cafe is Open for Business!**

The BI Buzz Cafe has reopened at the Kaiser location on Mercury Way in Santa Rosa!

### **Sonoma State University Awarded More Than \$4 Million to Help Low Income, Potential First-Generation College Students Access Higher Education**

The U.S. Department of Education has announced that Sonoma State University will receive more than \$4 million to continue helping low-income, potential first-generation students in Sonoma and Mendocino counties prepare for and enroll in college.

### **College of Marin to Hold Redistricting Meetings**

The Marin Community College District (MCCD) Board of Trustees is changing the way Trustees will be elected.

### **Arrow Benefits Group Strengthens Employee Benefits Capabilities with New Partnership**

Arrow Benefits Group (ABG), one of the largest benefits firms in the North Bay, announced a partnership with Aita and Associates, Inc., a highly respected insurance firm headquartered in Sebastopol, Ca. for over 35 years. This consolidation will allow the Aita team to build on its reputation of commitment to local community, personal attention to clients, and advocacy excellence in the benefits insurance industry.

### **Star Staffing Webinars Presents: 2022 OPEN ENROLLMENT COMPLIANCE AND BEST PRACTICES**

Benefits should NOT be a stressful topic to understand or share with current or potential employees. We'll share all our tactics and tips to maximize benefits adoption, entice potential candidates, and more.

### **Basin Street Properties Welcomes Every Man Jack Headquarters at Shoreline Office Center**

Basin Street Properties, a prominent northern Nevada and northern California real estate investment, development, and management firm, is excited to welcome Every Man Jack to Shoreline Office Center.

### **CannaCraft and Other Cannabis Brands Ramp Up for Hall of Flowers Cannabis Conference**

The innovative cannabis industry conference Hall of Flowers prepares for its Santa Rosa, California, event on September 22 and 23, 2021

### **Redwood Credit Union Helps Protect More than 3,150 People by Securely Shredding Documents**

This summer, more than 3,150 residents in Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties took action to protect themselves from fraud and identity theft by bringing old financial records and other paperwork to Redwood Credit Union's (RCU's) free Shred-a-Thons.

### **Nelson's Finance Chief Wins North Bay CFO Award**

Joe Prusko, senior vice president and chief financial officer for the Sonoma-based company, urges people coming up in the industry to "take advantage of every networking opportunity you have." He is a 2021 winner of the Business Journal's eighth annual North Bay CFO Awards.

### **Sonoma State University's Wine Business Institute Celebrates 25 Years**

This fall, the Wine Business Institute (WBI) at Sonoma State University, an intellectual and industry center for faculty, students, and the business community, is excited to celebrate 25 years as a pioneer in providing wine business education and research to advance the wine industry.

## **Dominican University of California Explores Understanding Pandemic Rebellion: Psychology of Mask-Wearing**

Research by psychology professor Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg examining the “pandemic rebellion” will be among the topics Dominican University of California students will be addressing in his classes this fall, including a Health and Motivation Lab devoted primarily to studying reactance theory.



### **Who We Are**

Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail [info@northbayleadership.org](mailto:info@northbayleadership.org)  
[www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org)