



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2022

Contact: Samantha Garcia

media@shfcenter.org

\$2,000,000 Awarded to Eleven Community- Based Organizations Statewide for Outreach to Limited English-Speaking Workers to Maximize Access to Unemployment Benefits

Sacramento, CA – The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, in partnership with the Employment Development Department (EDD) announced the award of \$2 million to 11 community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout California to help limited English-speaking (LEP) communities and the deaf and hard of hearing communities to better access unemployment insurance (UI) and other EDD services and benefits.

The Unemployment Language Opportunity Program (ULOP) is supported by an EDD state budget appropriation enacted last year. The initiative builds on the critical services provided by CBOs during the pandemic in order to reach the nearly five million LEP adult Californians through trusted messengers with deep roots in their communities.

The ULOP program currently supports community leaders who are reaching LEP communities who face barriers when applying for and accessing UI benefits due to more limited multilingual services. The program will continue to build on partners' existing operational and programmatic infrastructure to further strengthen their ability to fulfill their mission and have a positive impact on their communities.

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation was brought on board by EDD to administer the grant program as a partner due to their expertise and reach into underserved communities. Funds will be used to support outreach and education to the major LEP communities across the state, including Cantonese and Mandarin speakers, Asian Pacific Islander communities, indigenous language speakers, the deaf and hard of hearing and other LEP communities who have had challenges navigating the UI system. Organizations will receive awards ranging from \$90,000 - \$196,000 for local, regional or statewide outreach efforts to be conducted over two years (June 2022 through December 2023).

“Having access to the state’s most critical services in a time of need and in the language of their choosing is vital,” said Chet Hewitt, CEO and President of the Sierra Health Foundation. “For the most vulnerable and underrepresented in our communities across California, this is a solid step toward equity and inclusion.”

“EDD is proud to partner with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation on this vital initiative, and we are fully committed to supporting the CBOs to expand and improve our multilingual services to ensure equitable access to EDD services and benefits, said Nancy Farias, the Department’s Director.

“This bold new grant program will help empower our local communities to deliver useful information about California's vital benefit programs," said Andrea Salazar, EDD’s Language Access Office Director. "EDD is deeply committed to serving every Californian, including the one in five Californians who speak languages other than English."

A full list of organizations that received awards can be found at: www.shfcenter.org/programs-and-initiatives/unemployment-language-opportunity-program/

###