

PROJECT AND NEED

Opportunity Junction (OJ) envisions a community where everyone has the opportunity to find meaningful, family-supporting careers. Yet in East Contra Costa County, low-income job seekers often face stagnant wages, limited mobility, and systemic barriers that one-time job placements do not address.

To meet this need, we propose expanding our Career Advancement Project (CAP), an innovative coaching initiative designed to support job seekers beyond initial employment, guiding them toward long-term career mobility. Launched in 2021 through a pilot, CAP has demonstrated success among our Certified Nursing Assistant alumni, showing a 15% average salary increase, improved job search effectiveness, clearer career goals, and vital social-emotional support.

With funding from **Impact 100 East Bay**, we will:

1. **Expand CAP** to serve 80 additional alumni annually, including graduates of our Administrative Careers Training (ACT) program and our Medical Assistant training program;
2. **Implement a monitoring system** to manage caseloads while maintaining high-quality support; and
3. **Develop and distribute a CAP Toolkit** for replication by other organizations across the region and beyond.

This project redefines workforce development, not as a single job placement, but as a continuum of support that drives participants toward economic independence.

TARGET POPULATION AND COMMUNITY NEED

OJ serves over 750 low-income residents annually in East Contra Costa County, a region disproportionately impacted by displacement, poverty, and unemployment. Here, only 27% of low-wage workers without a college degree escape low earnings over a decade. Racial and gender disparities further compound the issue. Our CAP model provides sustained, personalized coaching to address these entrenched challenges, building the confidence, career planning skills, and momentum necessary to escape the low-wage trap.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded in 2000, Opportunity Junction helps motivated job seekers develop the skills and confidence to launch sustainable careers. We offer no cost, wraparound services through programs including Administrative Careers Training (ACT), Healthcare Career Pathway (HCP), and Career Counseling and Placement Assistance (CCPA). To date, we have served more than 7,500 Contra Costa residents and helped launch over 1,780 new careers. Highlights include:

- Named a Top 10 Global Poverty-Fighting Nonprofit by ImpactMatters (now Charity Navigator)
- Featured in MDRC research and California's Master Plan for Aging as a replicable model
- 89% of our participants are people of color; 91% are women; 100% are low-income

TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT

CAP fills a critical gap in the workforce system by providing *ongoing* career support. Through personalized coaching and structured benchmarks, participants develop the skills and strategies needed for true upward mobility. With this expansion:

- We will serve **80 alumni per year**, helping them move into higher-paying, career-track jobs
- Our **CAP Toolkit** will enable replication statewide, extending our reach to **225–250 job seekers annually**
- Through our role on the **Governor's Master Plan for Aging Leadership Committee**, we will advocate for and support the **adoption of CAP in additional counties**, scaling impact across California

By shifting the paradigm from one-time job placement to long-term economic mobility, **CAP offers a sustainable, scalable solution to poverty and inequality.**

PROJECT FINANCES

The two-year CAP expansion budget is **\$205,000**, covering a CAP coach (\$140,000), data Analyst to implement benchmarking (\$25,000), benefits (\$35,000), and toolkit development (\$5,000). The balance will be paid with Employer Training Panel funds and unrestricted support, with long-term sustainability from public and philanthropic investment.