



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Helping Humboldt Works on Project to Help Staff Return to Work Safely

After months on hold, Helping Humboldt participants started back up in July and are helping build partitions to minimize employees' exposure to each other in the workplace.

Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Social Services Deputy Branch Director Kelly Hampton said, "When the order to shelter in place was executed in March, some of the Social Services offices, which house programs that were not considered immediately essential, closed to the public. When we were given the go ahead to open our offices back up, it became clear that in order to provide the safest work environment, and allow for social distancing, we had to make some changes."

When a quote for eight plexiglass partitions came back at more than \$1,500, Social Services Employment Training Division Program Manager Connie Lorenzo said she came up with a design, purchased the materials and the Helping Humboldt Work Crew Leader got busy working with program participants to make partitions for staff.

The Helping Humboldt program was launched by DHHS in August 2018 and gives participants, many of whom have little to no work histories, opportunities to learn work skills while helping beautify the community. Lorenzo said this project is not only benefiting staff, participants are also learning a variety of carpentry skills. And so far, the eight partitions they made and installed have cost about \$300.

"Anytime we can do something with our participants where their activity is clearly helping others, they feel good about being able to contribute," Lorenzo said.

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Helping Humboldt participants helped build partitions for staff at Social Services to help them return to their workspaces safely.