

✓ CF Employment 5-23-91 RP

# Laid-off Green Giant workers to be helped by 2 new grants

Two big grants have been announced that will assist the 270 laid-off Pillsbury-Green Giant workers.

The U.S. Department of Labor has allocated a \$500,000 grant to keep the job-training program for the workers going through September 1992. The money will continue to be administered by the Santa Cruz Private Industry Council.

And the private Greater Santa Cruz County Community Foundation has awarded its largest grant ever — \$35,000 — to provide a housing-assistance program for the laid-off workers who are enrolled in the retraining program. Pillsbury has agreed to match that amount, for a total of \$70,000.

The foundation is scheduled to

formally announce the grant at a meeting of the Private Industry Council today.

While laid-off workers are studying new trades, going back to school or looking for work, they are living on unemployment and having trouble meeting their rents and mortgage payments, said Kathy Zwart, a county job-training specialist coordinating the retraining program at the plant. The housing fund will make it possible for them to keep studying.

“Both the foundation and the company should be commended for their efforts to assist these very motivated workers to be retrained in new occupations,” said Jim De Alba, director of the county’s Careerworks program.

Workers’ eligibility for the housing assistance will be tied to income and performance in training, Zwart said. The fund will be available to workers in early July.

The Department of Labor money will go toward continuing the English classes, basic education, job-search assistance, on-the-job training and job counseling the laid-off workers are eligible to receive, some of it in classrooms and offices provided by Pillsbury-Green Giant. The money will also pay for “supportive services,” such as child care and gasoline to get to classes or job interviews.

The job-assistance program’s organizers had applied for the grant to keep the training going after June.

—Susanna Heckman