



## NEWS RELEASE

### Workforce Development Board

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**CONTACT:**  
Sandy Harmsen  
Executive Director  
909-387-9862  
[sharmsen@wdd.sbcounty.gov](mailto:sharmsen@wdd.sbcounty.gov)

## Congress passes Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



### Bipartisan bill ensures effective workforce development

*San Bernardino, CA (September 5, 2014)—On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed H.R. 803, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a bipartisan bill that ensures funding for key education and job training programs.*

*The bill represents a compromise in both houses of Congress that will authorize \$58 billion over six years to strengthen education and workforce development programs while eliminating programs seen as redundant.*

*Since 1998, workforce investment boards have been operating under the Workforce Investment Act with a continuing resolution for the last ten years. WIOA reauthorizes and updates the act to reflect the changing needs of business and the economy across the nation.*

*The new legislation applies a single set of metrics for all federal workforce programs to streamline comparison and assessment of programs. It maintains local control of workforce investment boards which are made up of local businesspeople with ground-level knowledge of the workforce needs of their communities. The legislation also includes tenets of the business services model formulated by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board and calls for expanding it nationwide.*

*“The national argument for the last five years has been whether the federal government should continue to invest in workforce programs. With the authorization of this bill, the answer is a resounding yes.” said Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. “The bill’s passage also means decisions on workforce policy remain with the local businesses who know their communities best, and it expands components of the successful business services model from San Bernardino County to workforce investment boards nationwide.”*

*The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board is one of 20 out of more than 500 boards nationwide that has been actively engaged with members of Congress to discuss which business services are effective in workforce development and how the legislation should be structured to best serve local communities.*

*The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board discussed with legislators the success of using federal funds to support businesses through new-hire wage reimbursement, no-cost recruitment and financial support to retain workers. Targeted services for businesses are now included in the law and it emphasizes workforce boards’ active engagement with local employers as the key to improved employment in a given region.*

*“The authorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act represents a smart and strategic move by Congress to not only reinforce the value of workforce development, but to allow local businesses to continue to have a say in how federal funds are being used to retrain and employ people,” said Audrey Mathews, Board Member of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board.*

*“It’s nice to see Congress coming together to make this investment in the development of our nation’s workforce, and I look forward to seeing even more positive results from the programs and business services provided by the County’s Department of Workforce Development,” San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said.*

*Employers and job seekers who are interested in the Workforce Investment Board programs may call: (800) 451-JOBS or visit [www.csb-win.org](http://www.csb-win.org).*

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