



## NEWS RELEASE

### Workforce Development Board

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## Regional Effort Increases Inland Empire Apprenticeships

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The San Bernardino County and Riverside County Workforce Development Boards (WDB) are working together to increase the number of apprenticeships available throughout the region. The initiative aims to educate all businesses as to the value of the apprenticeship model in securing much-needed workers and to help place individuals into work-based learning opportunities.

While the concept of an apprentice has been around for some time, it is a model mostly used by the building trades and military. The WDBs and Inland Empire community colleges want to change that mindset to create pathways for students and workers and to help more businesses and industries implement training to create a valuable skilled workforce.

“An apprenticeship is a highly effective way for a business to get new talent into their company, teach applicable skills and techniques and further develop their existing employees. The bonus is that students and workers can earn while they learn,” said Tony Myrell, San Bernardino County WDS Chair. “This collaborative effort combines resources and engages our regional business community to develop a workforce tailored to the needs of the Inland Empire economy.”

Unique to the regional collaboration is that the WDBs, community colleges, high schools and businesses are working together to develop a structured “plug and play” program for multiple industry sectors.

Currently, a number of colleges and high schools in Riverside and San Bernardino counties are working through a system-wide agreement that will offer apprenticeship pathways in every local area and industry sector, and will allow businesses to collaborate with multiple institutions and offer their employees a range of options for professional development.

“We’re introducing a structured formal apprenticeship system to businesses. In turn we can learn and respond more quickly to what industry needs because when someone’s an apprentice, they’re also a student in the community college providing us more feedback to ensure the program is responsive,” said Charles Henkels, Apprenticeship Director, Norco College.



“When you learn on the job, you demonstrate competencies for that job or craft. Companies find apprentices learn quickly. Businesses now have an advanced worker more quickly than traditional paths,” added Henkels.

“As technology, artificial intelligence and robotics find their way into the world of work, apprenticeships can upskill employees creating new opportunities for company growth and the ability to fill gaps that otherwise might exist,” said Stephanie Murillo, administrative supervisor, San Bernardino County WDB.

“The skills we need to enter the workforce don’t just come from four-year degrees. We need to change that thinking and apprenticeships allow us to do that,” said T. Kim Pham, Riverside County WDB.

With this ready-to-go apprenticeship system, businesses are provided another tool to attract and retain employees. “This is one of the many things the County WDBs are doing together in partnership with community colleges to better align the workforce to what’s ahead,” Murillo added.

### **About the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board**

The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. The WDB strives to strengthen the skills of the county’s workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is committed to providing County resources, which generate jobs and investment in line with the [Countywide Vision](#).

The Workforce Development Board, through the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, offers a variety of programs designed to help youth and adults identify career pathways and get the appropriate training and skills. Programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provide eligible youth, ages 16 to 24, access to a variety of career and educational services designed to help enhance job skills, develop leadership qualities, explore career options, participate in adult and peer mentoring opportunities, and take advantage of work experiences. In addition, the WDB operates San Bernardino County’s three America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC). The AJCCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life. The AJCCs also support and provide services to the county’s businesses, including employee recruitment and business retention programs.

Employers and job seekers who are interested in the Workforce Development Board programs may call: (800) 451-JOBS or visit [www.sbcounty.gov/workforce](http://www.sbcounty.gov/workforce). Also follow us on: Facebook [www.facebook.com/SBCountyWDB](https://www.facebook.com/SBCountyWDB); Twitter @InlandEmpireJob; LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sanbernardinocountywdb>; and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/SBCountyWIB>.