



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

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CONTACT:
Sandy Harmsen
Executive Director
909-387-9862
sharmsen@wdd.sbcounty.gov

Human resources free hotline offers help to local businesses



A free Human Resources Hotline is available to all local businesses in San Bernardino County seeking consultation on personnel issues.

The hotline is one of many free services offered by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board.

"A large percentage of the local economy in San Bernardino is comprised of small businesses that may not be able to afford to take on their own HR manager. This service enables them to receive the advice they need to ensure they are meeting new regulations and therefore avoid the threat of fines and litigation," said James Ramos, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

A recent change in legislation regarding sick pay prompted a peak in calls to the hotline.

The Healthy Workplace, Healthy Families Act of 2014 (AB 1522) became law on July 1. All companies employing from one to more than 1,000 people are affected by the change, which requires employers to provide at least three days paid sick leave each year to every member of their staff.

The Human Resources Hotline typically receives about 300 calls a year, but in June alone, almost 600 calls were received from business owners unsure of the new law's implications.

"A lot of companies thought it would not affect them if they have a small number of employees, but this is not the case," explained Mari Bradford, Regional Director of the California Employers Association, which operates the Human Resources Hotline.

Bradford further explained that the advisors at the hotline deal with a variety of inquiries including questions on wages and hourly rates, leave laws, hiring and termination procedures, handbooks and policies, attendance and attitude and discipline problems.

"We encourage companies to take advantage of our free business services, such as the Human Resources Hotline, which has already saved several businesses a great deal of expense," said Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board.

One company that is grateful for the free service is Colorado River Medical Center in Needles. Staff has used the service on several occasions, most recently for advice on an employee's breach in confidentiality.

"I was able to bring in our human resources manager and have a three-way conference call to talk through the problem. We were provided with great advice on what direction to take. It is a very valuable source for our company," said Pamela Barrett of Colorado River Medical Center.

Businesses can access the free Human Resources Hotline by calling 1-800-399-5331 or visiting www.employers.org.