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**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM TO BE USED
AS BEST PRACTICE FOR INDUSTRY**
*U.S. Department of Labor selects Workforce Investment Board Summer Youth
Employment program for independent study*

San Bernardino, CA (February 16, 2012) – The U.S. Department of Labor Employment Training Administration selected the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board Summer Youth Employment Program to participate in a study of youth training innovators. Findings of this study will be used to inform workforce investment boards nationwide of best practices.

The study investigated how youth were assisted in San Bernardino County after the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program. During the program, the Board paid the wages of nearly 2,000 youth in the region to gain work experience in the industries they were interested in. Participants also received soft-skills training and mentoring to help them find jobs and succeed in those positions.

After the ARRA funding ran out, San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board used its regular funding streams to continue the training of older youth in the program and mentored them through its three Employment Resource Centers.

San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board's 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program has since received seven national awards.

Mathematica Policy Research conducted the independent study for the Department of Labor. The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board is one of eight sites studied.

"The youth who participated in the 2009 summer program were given an opportunity to gain work experience and learn valuable life lessons," said Josie Gonzales, Chair and Fifth District Supervisor. "Many of the youth remained with their employers or enrolled in vocational training institutions and colleges."

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program is a year-round program that gives eligible youth access to services designed to increase

educational opportunities, develop better job skills, explore career options, develop leadership qualities, participate in adult and peer mentoring and counseling and obtain valuable work experience.

Students in the program receive career counseling, reading and math remediation, tutoring, alternative secondary schooling, vocational training, leadership development and job placement. They also complete workshops that teach work readiness, problem solving, life skills and computer literacy.

"The key to the success of this program is that students receive intensive follow up services and many come to our County's three Employment Resource Centers to find jobs," said Sandy Harmsen, executive director of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. "This program is aligned with our county's vision to develop a vibrant economy and skilled workforce."

To learn more about the San Bernardino County WIA Youth Program, call or visit one of the youth providers listed at <http://www.sbcountyjobops.com/youthservices.html>.

About the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County

The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. The Board strives to strengthen the skills of the County's workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations.

The Workforce Investment Board, through the County's Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, operates the County's Employment Resource Centers (ERCs) and Business Resource Centers (BRCs). The ERCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life. The BRCs support and provide services to the County's businesses including employee recruitment.

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