



## NEWS RELEASE

### Workforce Development Board

**CONTACT:**

Bradley Gates, Director  
Workforce Development Department  
909-387-9856

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## WDB partnership provides career exploration

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A partnership between The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) and Career Institute is providing Christine Cox something she has always yearned for – a chance to prove herself.

After an unsettled childhood, Cox entered adulthood with plenty of distractions and little direction.

Today, she is attending community college and building a diverse set of skills that she and her career mentor are confident will open the door to new opportunities for the rest of her life.

"I can see myself doing, maybe, five different things. I'm excited about that, and know that it ultimately falls on me," says Cox, now 20 and in her second semester of studies at Riverside City College.

Her inspiring academic and career exploration began after she heard about Career Institute, which helps young people make the transition to adulthood through the framework of the federally funded Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and under the direction of WDB.

The program helped Cox, who lives in Fontana, get into community college, navigate financial aid and helped secure work experience with an animal rescue operation. The latter is a career path she is interested in pursuing – possibly as a veterinary technician. But through college, she has uncovered an interest in – and aptitude for – the arts.

"I started college to be a vet tech, but I took a ceramics class and fell in love with it. I'm in a drawing class right now, and I would like to take up welding too," Cox says.

Caryn Payzant, Cox's career mentor at Career Institute, says the program supports this kind of career exploration.

"Christine loves everything she is doing right now. We encourage that, while also keeping a main goal ahead of you," Payzant says.

Curt Hagman, Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, describes the WDB/Career Institute partnership as a vital career pathway initiative that helps job seekers and

businesses.

"Through partnerships such as this, young adults are able to explore different career opportunities and, in many cases, transform their lives. At the same time, we're building a talent pool that encourages business growth and shows the world how much San Bernardino County has to offer," Hagman says.

Cox agrees that the program has been transformative. In and out of foster care most of her adolescence, she was living with friends in Fontana while finishing her studies at Sultana High School in Hesperia. Her teenage years were marked by a number of traumatic experiences, including the suicide of her foster dad.

She persevered, however, and graduated with her senior class.

"I was kind of lost from there. I wanted to get a job and that cash flow of money, but it was really hard," Cox says. "Caryn (Payzant, from Career Institute) did so much for me."

"That's what our purpose is," Payzant says. "We give at-risk young adults an opportunity, in a free zone, to explore. That could be a career track, or a post-secondary education track."

Phil Cothran, WDB Chairman, praises Cox's resiliency.

"Christine's story is an inspiration to all of us, and we are committed as a Workforce Board to providing these kinds of opportunities," Cothran says.

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### **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](https://twitter.com/InlandEmpireJob); LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sanbernardinocountywdb>; and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/SBCountyWIB>.  
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