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**Contact:** Lisa Richardson, 213-361-6980

**Email:** [lrichardson@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:lrichardson@bos.lacounty.gov)

**or**

**Contact:** Sharita Moon, 213-974-2222

**Email:** [smoon@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:smoon@bos.lacounty.gov)

## **Board of Supervisors Greenlight the Expansion of the Workforce Investment Program**

Training the workforce of tomorrow starts today and to that end, Los Angeles County consistently provides employment and on-the-job training to thousands of young people during the summer months. More than 15,000 young people have profited from the experience over the years, and now Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Don Knabe are seeking to offer year-round job opportunities to youth ages 16-19.

Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved their joint motion, which seeks to use resources available within the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to fund the jobs program expansion. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 allows state and local officials to establish broad-based labor systems using federal job training funds for adults, dislocated workers and youth.

The supervisors' action comes at a time of particular economic crisis for the region's youth; the unemployment rate in L.A. County among 16- to 19-year-olds has reached an all-time high of 35%.

The County already has had success on this path, however, having obtained a one-time waiver from the U.S. Department of Labor to use \$1.1 million in WIA youth funds to supplement employment for 2,200 youth this summer. From June through August, teens worked at offices, schools and businesses throughout the

County, including: Longo Toyota, CVS Pharmacies, Golden State Engineering, Junior Blind of America, Paramount Day Camp, and the Special Needs Network.

“For many young people, these jobs are their first experience with the work world -- the demands of working in an office, collaborating with colleagues and gaining exposure to the professional world,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “If we are to have a qualified and well-trained workforce in L.A. County, even in trying times, we must continue to invest in our young people”

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