



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

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**MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA, L.A. AREA CHAMBER
ANNOUNCE NEW 'WORK READINESS CERTIFICATION' PROGRAM**

***Vons to become title sponsor of program
connecting youth to entry-level jobs
in partnership with the Mayor's HIRE-LA 18-24 campaign***

Los Angeles, CA— Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce today announced that Vons will become the title sponsor for the new Work Readiness Certification (WRC) program. Developed in partnership with the Chamber and the Los Angeles City Workforce Investment Board Youth Council, the WRC program helps prepare youth for employment by equipping them with a credential showing they've mastered basic skills for entry-level jobs. As the title sponsor, Vons will partner with the Chamber and Mayor Villaraigosa's HIRE-LA 18-24 campaign to provide over 1,000 job opportunities to L.A. youth through the program.

"Youth employment plays an important role in helping to prepare the next generation workforce for long-term job success," said L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "That's why I created HIRE-LA, which prepares young adults for the 21st Century workforce in the City of Los Angeles. I commend Vons for sponsoring the Work Readiness Certification program, which will help prepare young people for entry into the workplace and provide quality jobs for young adults in our communities."

The WRC program engages businesses and youth to simulate the interview and hiring process using market-defined standards of work-readiness and competency. For youth, the successful completion of the program results in a Work Readiness Certificate, a credential certifying to potential employers that an applicant possesses the basic skills necessary to obtain and retain employment. Participating employers help to prepare the future workforce and gain access to a qualified pool of youth candidates for open positions.

"Large and small businesses in L.A. need to know that incoming employees have the core skills needed to meet workforce demands and to ensure worker success," said Gary Toebben, president and CEO of the L.A. Area Chamber. "The WRC program provides valuable experience to young Angelenos seeking employment, and helps to ensure that L.A. businesses can count on a prepared pool of workers in the years to come."

According to a recent study from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, one out of five young adult residents of L.A. is out-of-work and out-of-school. The

WRC program is designed to bridge that gap by connecting the growing number of L.A. youth seeking employment with area employers seeking candidates with entry-level skills.

“Vons is proud to be a partner in this important community program and provide valuable training, skills and work experience to young adults throughout Los Angeles,” said Tom Keller, President of Vons. “Through innovative programs such as this, we can make a positive impact in their lives and help prepare the next generation of workers.”

More information on the WRC program is available at www.lachamber.org/WRC_Flyer.pdf.

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The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org.