



NEWS

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Compton College Offers ‘Careers for a Cause’ Earn to Learn Program *Participants Receive Paid Training to Compete for Jobs in Social Services*

Sometimes the best qualified individuals to help marginalized communities or people in need are the ones that have also walked in those shoes.

Compton College recently held a graduation ceremony for its first cohort of individuals who participated in Careers for a Cause, an eight-week pre-employment training program that prepares Los Angeles County residents to compete for one of many jobs available in the social services and homeless services sector.

The program prepares students for a career in social services, matching these individuals with homeless service providers for employment at the end of the program. Careers for a Cause was developed by the Los Angeles County Supervisor’s Office (District 2), in partnership with Los Angeles County’s Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services Department (WDACS), Los Angeles Southwest College, St. Joseph’s Center, and the South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone (SLATE-Z) to expand the County’s homeless services industry.

The eight-week program offers career exploration and assessment, job shadowing, skills training, on-the-job coaching, and job retention support. Among other resources, participants receive training from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Human Resources, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Fathers and Mothers Who Care, Inc., and the Rancho Dominguez-America’s Job Center of California. In addition, students receive wrap-around support services and a stipend.

With the passage of Measure H, social services agencies in Los Angeles County have funding to hire more social workers but are struggling to fill the many vacant positions. In addition to degreed social workers, the agencies are now considering individuals whose experiences are more aligned with the people they would be helping.

“Many of us come from or may have a questionable background,” said Caster Crawford, during his graduation speech after completing the Careers for a Cause training at Compton College in June 2022. “However, with those real-world experiences and our choosing to be better people, to learn from our mistakes, and to give back in a special way to our communities, well, then those poor choices we made can no longer define who we are.”

Years ago, substance abuse took over his life. He lost his family and was in and out of the justice system; he didn't recognize the person staring back at him in the mirror. "I have overcome these life challenges," Crawford said. "Someone gave me an opportunity to gain my life back and I believe it is only fair that I do the same and pay it forward. I want to show others in my community who are facing similar life situations that challenges can be overcome."

Crawford recently landed in Los Angeles after moving around and living in several different states in recent years. He took advantage of social services during his job hunt and was referred to a community healthcare worker training program which he completed and received several certifications. "I saw a flyer in the county vocational services department about the Careers for a Cause training and it was just what I was looking for in terms of my desire to give back to my community," he said. As a recent graduate of Careers for a Cause, he is now working as a case manager intern at Fathers and Mothers Who Care, Inc., a nonprofit access center that provides services to the homeless and those with housing insecurity.

"After I complete my 600 internship hours and based on my work performance, I have a very good chance of being offered a full-time position with this organization, he said. "I thoroughly enjoy working at Fathers and Mothers Who Care, Inc. because I get to give back, I get to help those in need, and I get to help myself by continuing to learn and grow. In the future, I hope to move up through the ranks here and step into an operations manager role."

Compton College's Careers for a Cause training is administered through its Business and Industrial Studies Guided Pathway Division in conjunction with its agency partners and is funded by the American Recovery Act via Los Angeles County. "Compton College had 20 students participate in our first cohort of the Careers for a Cause training during the spring 2022 semester," said Lynell, Wiggins Compton College director of workforce development and adult education. "Compton College uses non-credit ESL courses to embed social services based content into the curriculum, and works with St. Joseph's Center to coordinate the interview and selection process. A host of agency partners provide the specialized training for skills needed in this field, such as trauma informed care, dealing with those with mental health issues, occupational therapy, technology training, and soft skills."

Of the 20 students who graduated from Careers for a Cause at Compton College in June 2022, 19 completed the training and approximately 70 percent have been placed in internships/jobs to date. Anyone interested in doing social work is welcome to apply. In addition to Crawford, Compton College's first cohort included a student enrolled in the college's Formerly Incarcerated Students in Transition (F.I.S.T.) program and a recent UCLA graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and wanted to secure work in social services due to lack of field experience.

Compton College has filled its cohort for the next Careers for a Cause training beginning in late August 2022. Interested individuals should keep an eye out on the Compton College website later this year for the spring 2023 Careers for a Cause training application period. For additional information about the training and the recruitment process, please visit <https://www.compton.edu/academics/CTE/c4c.aspx>.

Questions may be directed via email to workforce@compton.edu.

Photos Available Online:

https://www.compton.edu/adminandoperations/communityrelations/images/2022/spring-2022_C4C_graduates.jpg

Caption 1: Careers for a Cause June 2022 graduates at Compton College received paid training to prepare for careers in social services.

https://www.compton.edu/adminandoperations/communityrelations/images/2022/crawford-caster_spring-2022-C4C-graduate.jpg

Caption 2: Careers for a Cause graduate Caster Crawford is now working at Fathers and Mothers Who Care, Inc. in Los Angeles.

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About Compton College

Compton College is the community's education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Compton College is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.