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South Bay Workforce Investment Board  
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**FIRST TWO APPRENTICES COMPLETE SOUTH BAY  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD AERO-FLEX APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

**HAWTHORNE** – Edgar Ramirez and Lizbeth Rios became the first apprentices to complete the South Bay Workforce Investment Board’s (SBWIB) Aero-Flex Apprenticeship program earlier this year as employees of Gardena-based Impresa Aerospace. They received Certificates of Completion from the Federal Department of Labor. Rios then earned her California Department of Apprenticeship Standards Certification and Ramirez will receive his in the near future.

Ramirez, a 27-year-old Carson resident, was able to complete the related technical instruction and On-the-Job work processes within 12 months during his apprenticeship - a process that normally takes 1.5 to 2 years to complete. He had been interning at Impresa as a Quality Assurance Technician in 2018 while completing his BS Degree in Mathematics at CSU Dominguez Hills. Ramirez became the first Aerospace Quality Assurance Technician apprentice to graduate in the nation and be hired under the Aero-Flex apprenticeship program. “The apprenticeship and on-the-job training were great factors in contributing to my pursuit to continuously improve my skillset as an Engineer,” stated Edgar. “For anyone that is given the opportunity to join the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship or full Apprenticeship program, I highly recommend it; the Tooling U-SME curriculum and the support/resources provided by the SBWIB team are great resources to help propel anyone’s career to the next level,” he added.

Twenty six year-old Lizbeth Rios of El Monte began working as a Process Engineer at Impresa in 2018 and a year later had gained enough technical skill development to qualify for the Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship, which she completed in 17 months, making her the first Aero-Flex Aerospace Engineer apprentice graduate. She had previously earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from UC San Diego as well as receiving multiple hours of Tooling U-SME courses, which were credited toward her Related Technical Instruction competencies. “Receiving the aerospace engineering certification, it is hard work, it does take a lot of hours and dedication. Luckily, I had some good support in my workforce, and I do recommend it for anyone who wants to further their career in aerospace engineering,” Lizbeth commented.

The SBWIB developed the Aero-Flex Apprenticeship as an employer-centric earn and learn model in partnership with local aerospace manufacturing companies in 2017. It was designed from conception to validation by industry partners and employers who appreciate non-traditional earn and learn engineering apprenticeship training. “We are honored to have Edgar and Lizbeth be the first to graduate from the program, their dedication is a great example for future apprentices,” said SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel.

Initially championed by Northrop Grumman Corporation, the Aero-Flex employer/partner group now has more than 20 employer partners and associations involved and includes West Los Angeles College, El Camino College, Tooling U-SME, and Training Funding Partners (TFP) who helped to create the program. The program has expanded to include high school and postsecondary students, incumbent workers as well as veterans and other under-served or under-employed populations. Please visit [www.sbwib.org/aero-flex](http://www.sbwib.org/aero-flex) for more information.

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Photo caption: Edgar Ramirez and Lizbeth Rios became the first apprentices to complete the South Bay Workforce Investment Board's (SBWIB) Aero-Flex Apprenticeship program earlier this year as employees of Gardena-based Impresa Aerospace.