

Q & A

a conversation with

Carlos Fonseca, Instrument Technician

Q **What's your job at Chevron?**

I am an Instrument Technician. We are part of the Maintenance and Reliability group at the refinery. My team maintains the operating equipment throughout the plant. Instrumental Technicians like me are part of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union (IBEW).

Q **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Richmond. My family has been here a long time. My great-grandmother and great-grandfather lived on Pennsylvania Avenue. My great-grandfather worked at the Chevron Chemical Plant on Hensley Street. My family grew up in San Pablo and I graduated from Richmond High School.

Q **How did you get interested in working with electronics?**

Richmond High has great "Academy" programs for students who are interested in learning special skills. I have always been a mechanical person. I enjoy working with electronics and fixing things. So I joined the robotics team, which is a program that Chevron supports.

Q **Has that experience been helpful to you at the Refinery?**

Hands down, yes. At the refinery, I work with power tools I learned how to use at Richmond High. On the robotics team we had specific jobs, just like we have at the refinery. Both revolve around electronics and making sure everything works right. We also had a strong focus on safety which is something that I apply at the refinery.

Q **What did you do after high school?**

I studied Culinary Arts at Contra Costa College, which is another program that Chevron supports. I worked in the food industry for about eight years. But I was barely making enough money to pay for the tolls on the way to my job in Marin. And I did not find the work very fulfilling. I was looking for something to change my life and found the Regional Occupational Program (ROP).

Q **How was ROP helpful in preparing you for life at Chevron?**

The ROP instructors always told us, "This is really an 18-week job interview." That is correct. What you learn at ROP is really a preview of what you learn as a trainee. ROP helps you apply what you learn at the refinery. I highly recommend that anyone who is interested in working at the refinery take ROP. It's a great opportunity to get your foot in the door. And the best part is it's totally free.

Q **What did you do after ROP?**

I worked as a contractor working on a project at the refinery because I wanted to see if this is something that I would like. The first day at the plant, I felt at home. So I told myself that I was going to keep applying, and applying until I got hired as a full-time Chevron employee. I was a contractor for six months.

Q **What would you want people to know about Chevron?**

This is my community too. I have family here. I still live in the area. And I feel a sense of responsibility to make sure that everything is running reliably at the refinery. And working in maintenance gives me the opportunity to do that. Safety is not just something we say, it's something that we practice every day.