

President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

Textiles to Technology



Grant amount: \$754,146

Leveraged amount: \$150,828 in-kind contribution from partnering businesses, educational institutions, the local Chamber of Commerce, and association representatives who serve on the project advisory board

Grantee: Forsyth Tech Community College

Key Partners: Syngenta, Targacept, Orthofix and Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM)

Location of Grant Activities: Piedmont Triad Region of North Carolina

Challenge

North Carolina's Piedmont Triad Region has experienced a severe economic downturn due to the decline of its traditional furniture, tobacco, and textile industries, which once supported economic growth and job development in the region. Large numbers of dislocated workers in the area lack the skills they need in order to transition into careers in the region's emerging biotechnology industry.

Addressing the Challenge

Forsyth Technical Community College (Forsyth Tech) will use its recent \$754,146 grant from the ETA and \$150,828 in leveraged contributions from business and education partners to implement a biotechnology associate degree training program for the region's dislocated workers. Forsyth Tech will retrain workers who have been dislocated from declining industries so that they are qualified for employment in the emerging biotechnology field. The Forsyth Tech curriculum will focus on training laboratory technicians in biotechnology and related pharmaceutical occupations.

Projected Outcomes

- The program aims to enroll 75 students annually and graduate at least 68 (90%) each year, potentially impacting 450 individuals laid off from the tobacco, furniture, and/or textile industries.
- A significant number of biotechnology companies in the Piedmont Triad area, including Syngenta, Targacept, Orthofix and Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM), have expressed direct interest in hiring Forsyth Tech biotechnology graduates.
- Since biotechnology workers are in high and growing demand in the region, the program anticipates very high retention rates for its graduates.
- Although this is a new program, it is expected that dislocated workers completing the biotechnology program will increase their earnings 15% - 30%.

