

Community-Based Job Training Grants

Northeast State Technical Community College

Grantee: Northeast State Technical Community College

Industry Focus: Advanced Manufacturing

Key Partners: Alliance for Business and Training (Northeast Tennessee WIB); State of Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Science Hill High School; Sullivan County Schools; Unicoi County High School; Dobyns-Bennett High School; Johnson County High School; Washington County Schools; East Tennessee State University; American Water Heater Company; Domtar Corporation; Eastman Chemical Company; JTH Engineering LLC; Nuclear Fuel Services Inc.; City of Kingsport; Sullivan Partnership Networks; Regional Alliance for Economic Development; and the Tennessee Valley Authority

Grant Amount: \$1,946,563

Leveraged Amount: \$3,845,044

Location of Grant Activities: Sullivan, Washington, Carter, Johnson and Unicoi counties, Tennessee

Challenge: Manufacturing comprises 18% of Northeast Tennessee's economy and raises its per capita income by one-third. Employers are facing a critical shortage of trained workers as the workforce ages, with many nearing retirement. Moreover, current educational systems are not able to meet workforce needs in a timely manner. Specific in-demand skills include machine trades, electricians and maintenance mechanics. The need for skilled workers in these areas could be met by providing training to unemployed and underemployed residents and recent college graduates. Other barriers include poor public perception of modern manufacturing, misalignment of manufacturing shift operations with current training regimes, and increased operational and production costs facing smaller employers.

Addressing the Challenge: The Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing (RCAM) will be established to provide training for current and future manufacturing employees. Seventy additional class sections of 18 courses and labs will be offered using flexible schedules, adding space for classes and labs, and installing state-of-the-art equipment including simulators. New students will be recruited by offering grant funds to cover the costs of tuition and materials. This strategy will be combined with an outreach program, articulation agreements with four-year schools and dual credit learning opportunities.

Projected Outcomes:

- 516 incumbent workers and 699 students will enroll in training
- 410 certificates, degrees and/or apprenticeships will be awarded
- 353 completers (86 percent) will enter employment in advanced manufacturing industries or advance in an apprenticeship program.
- 88 percent of these hires will retain employment for nine months