

# President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

## Regional Lean Manufacturing Training in Food Processing

**Grant amount:** \$3,199,709

**Grantee:** Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)

**Key partners:** Idaho Tech Help (Idaho MEP), Washington Manufacturing Services, Nevada Management Assistance Partnership (MAP), affiliated with the MEP program of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. The Northwest Food Processors Association will assist in connecting workers to food processing manufacturers.

**Location of grant activities:** Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Nevada

**Leveraged amount:** \$2,043,110

**Challenge:** The food processing industry is one of the United States' largest manufacturing sectors and has maintained steady growth over the last several years. Due to increased global competition and a rise in production costs, it is imperative that U.S. manufacturers produce quality food products by increasing efficiency. By implementing a system of continuous improvement, lean manufacturing techniques directly address these challenges and can assist food manufacturers in streamlining their operations. Furthermore, such training must be available to all groups of manufacturing employees, especially those of Hispanic ethnicity, because this group composes approximately 30 percent of the region's food manufacturing workforce.

**Addressing the Challenge:** The Idaho, Oregon, and Washington MEPs along with the Nevada MAP have formed a partnership to provide lean manufacturing training for at least 2,000 workers in 48 value-added food processing companies. Because a large proportion of workers in the food processing industry have limited English speaking skills, the project includes a strong English language component. Employee training will take place on the worksite during work hours. At least one bilingual "lean champion" will be identified within each company to provide leadership and ongoing support to Hispanic workers. Each company will receive customized training based on its needs, including theory and application of fundamental lean manufacturing principles and techniques and a cultural awareness component for all employees.

### Projected Outcomes:

- At least 48 food manufacturing companies will implement lean manufacturing techniques and be able to more efficiently compete in the global marketplace.
- The project will produce a replicable curriculum for English language training in lean manufacturing for food processing.
- Those trained, including Hispanic and Latino workers, will have increased job security, be on the track to promotions, and receive higher wages.