

Trident Technical College

* Describe your organization's role in the project (300 words or less):

The Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) through SC Works Trident is the administrative entity for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program. SC Works Trident shares a unique relationship with Trident Technical College (TTC) one of its Eligible Training Providers (ETP). The two entities work collaboratively to address workforce development issues in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. Through its Division of Continuing Education and Economic Development, TTC offers a number of approved occupational trainings.

One of the trainings offered is the Certified Production Technician (CPT) training which provides certification through the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC). This training was added to the ETP list after SC Works Trident and TTC staff met with regional employers and the Low Country Manufacturers Council (LMC) and because of a steady increase in manufacturing sector jobs.

Staff developed a 'CPT Training Schedule' establishing six annual graduations to distribute to tri-county employers. A CPT orientation was developed for those WIA participants interested in opportunities within this field. Staff pre-screens candidates through WorkKeys testing also insuring they have a high school diploma/GED and clean drug screen/background check. Staff conducts intensive interview and soft skills preparation sessions and assists candidates with resume creation prior to training completion. Staff further insures each candidate has the appropriate business attire to wear on graduation day.

What is so unique about this training is that approximately two weeks prior to graduation, TTC staff sends an invitation to approximately 60/70 employers to attend the graduation, partake in a brunch, and conduct on-site interviews following graduation. Staff explains the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program available to further the skill sets of graduates while their wages are subsidized through the WIA program for a pre-determined amount of time. Graduation has been well attended and received by tri-county employers.

* The project's accomplishments

The SC Works Trident's WIA program was recently monitored by the SC Department of Employment of Workforce (SCDEW) who was so impressed with the collaborative approach taken with the CPT program; they suggested it be shared as a best practice. Inviting employers to graduation and offering them the opportunity to conduct interviews immediately following is a unique approach supported by an increasing number of tri-county manufacturers. Creating a skilled pipeline of individuals has gained momentum with employers and those who have participated in this process have been impressed with the quality of the candidates.

A training program to address the needs of the tri-county manufacturing sector started in 2004 with just 36 hours of training. Through the years this training, which continues to evolve, has morphed into the CPT program comprised of 184 hours. TTC is always tweaking the CPT curriculum in response to meeting the needs of employers. Staff is working to garner increased interest in the training amongst WIA participants by bringing awareness to the changing environment of manufacturing as a high-skilled, technologically advanced workplace and by encouraging this non-traditional career path for women.

This CPT program is an example of an effective collaboration with TTC creating a curriculum, which addresses the needs of regional manufacturers while working hand in hand with WIA staff on recruitment to the training insuring well-vetted qualified candidates. SC Works Trident has considered applying this same approach to various other specialized trainings offered by TTC such those in the biomedical/medical and logistics/distribution fields. This endeavor is a win on multiple fronts - SC Works assists WIA participants in securing employment; TTC's mission is to provide training; employers need candidates who possess basic manufacturing skills; and WIA participants need jobs, which lead to lifelong careers with sustainable wages.