

NCATC Newsletter • Volume 19, no. 1 • 1st Quarter, 2018



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MoManufacturingWINS Named Finalist for Bellwether Award

A statewide program aimed at preparing workers for careers in modern manufacturing in Missouri was honored as a finalist for the 2018 Bellwether Award.

The Missouri Manufacturing Workforce Innovation Networks (MoManufacturingWINS) Consortium, led by NCATC member St. Louis Community College, was selected as a finalist for the prestigious award in the Workforce Development category. The project was presented during the Community College Futures Assembly January 28-30 in Orlando, Florida.

The Bellwether Awards annually recognize outstanding and innovative programs and practices that are successfully leading community colleges into the future. Other categories include Instruction Programs and Services, and Planning, Governance and Finance.

The award in the Workforce Development category recognizes public and/or private strategic alliances and partnerships that promote community and economic development.

MoManufacturingWINS was one of three Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) grants from the U.S. Department of Labor that enabled Missouri's community colleges to pilot a statewide job training network with hundreds of Missouri's employers engaged. The \$14.9 million grant received in 2012 created a new approach to training for advanced manufacturing, benefiting more than 3,300 Missourians who were unemployed, underemployed or required additional technical training for high-demand careers in production, industrial maintenance, welding, machining, transportation and logistics.

"These TAACCCT grants truly challenged Missouri's community colleges to innovate to better serve Missourians in advanced career pathways while earning stackable industry credentials aligned to a high-wage industry," said Brian Millner, president/CEO of the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA). "The consortium model that was developed and perfected allowed our colleges to increase capacity through collaboration beyond what was previously possible."

MoManufacturingWINS changed the way adult workers were trained. The new curriculum and structure moved away from a traditional job-training approach to an education model with career pathways to fill employer needs for workers with specific skills. The accelerated instruction allowed students to get short-term training while earning credit hours that could be applied toward a degree. The industry-recognized credentials and certifications were endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

"The MoManufacturingWINS grant was pivotal for St. Louis Community College," said Don Robison, associate vice chancellor for STLCC's Workforce Solutions Group. "Five new accelerated high-demand programs were launched, providing students the opportunity to earn credentials and get jobs with a living wage. We forged many new lasting employer partnerships that informed curriculum development and bolstered job placement."

Robison noted that STLCC served 585 participants who earned more than 1,200 industry-recognized credentials endorsed by NAM.

"These credentials represent marketable technical skills that help put graduates to work in the local manufacturing industry," Robison said.

In addition to STLCC, the MoManufacturingWINS consortium included Metropolitan Community College, North Central Missouri College, State Fair Community College, Ozarks Technical Community College, East Central College, St. Charles Community College, Mineral Area College and Linn State Technical College. Other key partners, led by MCCA, included the United Auto Workers Labor Employment and Training Corporation, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Missouri Department of Economic Development, and local workforce investment boards.

"The grant specifically allowed the colleges to experiment with innovative student-support services and redesign some 44 programs of study that delivered a highly skilled workforce to Missouri-based employers," said Dawn Busick-Drinkard, MoWINS grant director from MCCA. "The grant directly resulted in training 4,500 adult students, with a 72 percent completion rate, possessing some 8,873 industry-requested credentials. No other higher education program has attained such high performance results that met employer's immediate workforce needs." ♦

