



September 5, 2012

MSCC Awarded \$2.5 Million for Job, Skills Development Training

Mid-South Community College has been awarded a three-year, \$2.5 million grant designed to promote skills development and employment opportunities in fields such as advanced manufacturing, science, technology, and engineering.

The grant is part of President Barack Obama's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) initiative. The U.S. Department of Labor is implementing and administering the program in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education.

"This grant gives our institution an unprecedented opportunity to enhance our ongoing efforts to build a world-class workforce in our region," said MSCC President Dr. Glen Fenter. "Industry experts have been telling us for several years that there is a serious skills gap within advanced manufacturing and related fields. The TAACCCT grant will give us the resources we need to help fill some of those gaps."

"We sincerely appreciate the support our grant application received from Shane Broadway (Department of Higher Education) and Dr. Ed Franklin (Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges) on the state level, the support we received from Congressman (Rick) Crawford and Chris Masingill with Delta Regional Authority, and the powerfully insightful work of Dr. "Sunny" Morris and The Manufacturing Institute in developing the proposal."



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“The culmination of this team approach, along with the benefit of yet another in our long series of indisputable examples of divine intervention, has created what in reality will be another very powerful asset for our region.”

Congressman Crawford said the grant “will give young people in the Delta the chance at a good-paying job and will also help fill a much needed skills gap in our local economy. I look forward to working with the leaders at MSCC to see the full potential of these federal dollars realized.”

Masingill said the work of MSCC is a proven model that supports developing the skills of the workforce in the Delta.

“Every day at the Delta Regional Authority we look for opportunities to bring the conversation about jobs back to the importance of education and developing a workforce that is competitive and relevant. This investment is a continued commitment to the Obama Administration’s priority of developing the skilled workforce needed for a 21st century economy.”

Broadway said the funding will help the state move forward in its efforts to meet global challenges.

“Gov. Mike Beebe has charged all of us in higher education to provide opportunities for Arkansans to advance their education in order to build a highly-skilled workforce that will be competitive for high-wage jobs, and this grant will certainly move us toward that goal,” Broadway said.

Dr. Franklin said the award will effectively help all of the community and technical colleges in the state.

“Two-year colleges in Arkansas are working hard to make sure that the courses they teach meet local and state business and industry needs. This grant will not only help MSCC, but as their work is shared with other AATYC colleges, we will make sure that all colleges move toward industry certification standards.”

MSCC will use the funds to hire additional faculty for machining, welding, mechatronics, and renewable energy programs and to solicit technical assistance from The Manufacturing Institute, an affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

The grant also includes funding that Mid-South can utilize to secure assistance from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) to help college personnel accurately and efficiently evaluate past experiential learning for credit award. In addition, dollars will be available to support external evaluation of the project.

“This is a significant effort by the nation to increase the capacity of community colleges to train workers,” said Dr. Gibson “Sunny” Morris, MSCC’s Liaison for Special Projects for the Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC), who wrote the grant proposal.

“With the support of The Manufacturing Institute, we will implement the ‘Right Skills Now: Bridge to Employment’ initiative to develop articulated education pathways which deliver the competency-based, stacked, and latticed credentials recognized by the production, welding, machining, and metalworking industries. Our goal is to develop and sustain a rich cross alignment between education and employers with third-party certifications as a bridge that validates the model’s effectiveness.”

Dr. Morris said the educational pathways will encompass both traditional and alternative, innovation-driven models and accelerated options, technology-based online learning, and expanded ‘on’ and ‘off’ ramps that support lifelong learning.

“With the skills gap in manufacturing at an all-time high, and 600,000 jobs going unfilled as a result, these grants will enable students to earn the skills they need to access and advance in manufacturing jobs,” said Jennifer McNelly, president, The Manufacturing Institute.

“It will also support schools in building quality, relevant manufacturing programs that offer individuals industry-based certifications.”

MSCC’s project will also support development of educational pathways for the renewable energy industry.

TAACCCT provides eligible institutions of higher education with funds to expand and improve their ability to deliver education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less. It is specifically focused on meeting the needs of workers eligible for training under the TAA for Workers program, and preparing program participants for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations.

Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, who visited the MSCC campus in June 2009, recently announced \$500 million in grants during her visit to a community college in Florida.

“These federal grants are part of the Obama administration’s ongoing commitment to strengthening American businesses by strengthening the American workforce,” Secretary Solis said. “This strategic investment will enhance ties among community colleges, universities, employers and other local partners while ensuring that students have access to the skills and resources they need to compete for high-wage, high-skill careers.”

“The beauty of this program is that all of our grantees have formed strategic partnerships with local employers. With these monies, schools can develop training programs that will help grow the most promising local industries. They can invest in staff and educational resources and provide students with access to free, digital learning materials.”

Solis said the program goal is simple.

“We’re supporting schools that will work directly with companies to develop training programs that respond to the real needs of employers. Over the next decade, nearly half of all job openings nationwide will be for ‘middle-skill’ jobs. These are positions that require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year college degree. These are white-collar, blue-collar and green-collar jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Actually, they’re more than just jobs; they’re pathways to better-paying careers.

MSCC has been working with The Manufacturing Institute, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, for many months to facilitate deployment of the National Association of Manufacturers-Endorsed Manufacturing Skills Certification System in Arkansas. The Manufacturing Institute has developed the Manufacturing Skills Certification System (SCS), endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), a system with a proven track record for student outcomes and a model for accelerating student learning and credential attainment.

On June 8, 2011, when President Obama announced key steps toward building the educated and skilled workforce U.S. manufacturers need to successfully compete in the 21st century economy, he cited The Manufacturing Institute's efforts.

The NAM-Endorsed SCS results from an ongoing collaborative effort involving industry, education, and credentialing bodies, that began in 2009 and has been sustained by the Gates, Lumina, Joyce, and Alcoa foundations.

For information about relevant, industry-driven training opportunities at Mid-South Community College, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis, call (870) 733-6728, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu, or see the website at www.midsouthcc.edu.