

Kansas Awarded \$1.2 Million Additional Grant Funding

The Kansas Department of Commerce been awarded \$1.2 million in additional grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship to help grow the statewide Registered Apprenticeship Program. This new funding follows an initial \$1 million in grant funding the agency earlier received. The funds are being used to offset training costs for employers, apprentices and training institutions.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program is built upon an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related technical instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. It is a proven model for businesses to recruit, train and retain highly skilled workers.

"Since the reinvigoration of the program two years ago, we have observed a marked increase in advanced manufacturing, medical, electrical, plumbing and other high demand occupations in need of trained employees," says Gary Westerman, State Manager of the Registered Apprenticeship Program. "The Registered Apprenticeship Team has taken several steps in identifying needs of Kansas employers and determining which fields are in the greatest needs of a workforce trained through the Registered Apprenticeship Program."

There are presently 1,743 registered apprentices in Kansas, receiving both on-the-job training and paid employment with 393 apprentices achieving "Journeyman" status within the past 18 months from ---246 employers. Through this program, apprentices receive on-the-job training from an experienced mentor for at least a full year, providing a living wage while training for a career position. They also earn credentials which can be carried forward throughout their careers. At the same time, employers benefit by meeting their growing need for a trained workforce, experience lower turnover costs and higher productivity and reduce their costs for recruiting personnel.

"Registered Apprenticeship can improve a company's workforce situation dramatically, including staff retention, skill knowledge, and safety, along with reducing training costs and increasing a company's ability to develop their own talent pipeline," said Westerman.

Currently the Kansas Department of Commerce staff, the Registered Apprenticeship Team and Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) partners are working with local high schools and military installations across Kansas to demonstrate that receiving technical training and certification is a valid option to a traditional four-year college path -- especially in meeting today's

workforce needs.

For more information on the Registered Apprenticeship Program, visit ksapprenticeship.org.