
President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

Orangeburg-Calhoun Area Biotechnology Consortium Project



Grant Amount: \$750,000

Grantee: Claflin University

Key Partners: Claflin University, Calhoun Technical College, South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech Prep Consortium (K-12 school districts), Zeus Corporation, SuperSod, Albermarle Corporation, Orangeburg County Economic Development Board, the Lower Savannah Workforce Development Board,

Leveraged Amount: \$375,000, including 187,500 in cash

Location of Grant Activities: Rural Lower Savannah Region of South Carolina

Challenge: Located in the rural Lower Savannah region of South Carolina, the Orangeburg-Calhoun Area Biotechnology Consortium is 72% rural, but within a few hours drive time of major biotechnology research areas. Employment in the region's biotechnology industry, which includes pharmaceuticals, medical devices and equipment, is projected to increase 20% by 2010. There are no entry-level programs for biotechnology workers in the area and only one established two-year biotechnology entry-level program in the state. Employer partners and other related biosciences industries have employment needs for skilled workers, but there are no formal targeted or specialized certificate and degrees for entry into biotechnology. Local biotechnology employers also face high rates of turnover.

Addressing the Challenge: Using the \$750,000 in grant funds awarded by ETA, Claflin University will create a formal, industry-supported education infrastructure that begins in the primary grades and continues through formal certificate and two-year degree programs, which will enable workers to qualify for 65% of the available jobs in the local biotechnology industry. Entry-level certificates will be established for Biotechnology Laboratory Technician, Biomanufacturing Technician, Forensics Technician, Radiography Technician, and Agricultural Biotechnology Technician. Training will include industry standard curriculum and job shadowing where possible. Claflin and its partners will also create specific paths to advance to higher education degrees. The project will target nontraditional labor pool of low-income individuals and women with earnings averaging less than \$12,000 per year in a high unemployment area.

Projected Outcomes:

- 100 students per year will be trained in biotechnology certificate or degree tracks;
- 100% of certificates and degrees will articulate fully between education partners;
- 100% of area two- and four-year colleges, universities, middle schools and high school biotechnology faculty will be qualified to teach courses taught by higher education and industry partners; and
- 100% of area high schools will incorporate biotech modules into the Health Science curriculum.

