

Community-Based Job Training Grants

West Kentucky Community and Technical College

Grantee: West Kentucky Community and Technical College

Industry Focus: Energy

Key Partners: Shawnee Community College; Murray State University; Southern Illinois University Carbondale; West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (WIB); Southern Fourteen WIB; Southern Illinois WIB; Greater Paducah Area Economic Development Council; Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce; Metropolis Chamber of Commerce; Marshall and McCracken Co. Public School Districts; McCracken County Community Career Endowment, Inc; United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC); Paducah Remediation Services; Swift and Staley; Uranium Disposition Services; Honeywell; and West Kentucky Career Service Systems.

Grant Amount: \$1,931,913

Leveraged Amount: \$1,495,403

Location of Grant Activities: Paducah, Kentucky and Metropolis, Illinois

Challenge: Several major plants whose products support nuclear energy production throughout the U.S. are located in Paducah, Kentucky and Metropolis, Illinois. The USEC-Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant has more than 1,200 employees and contributes significantly to the local economy. However, the need for highly trained, highly skilled workers, the aging population of the existing workforce, and increasingly sophisticated technology has limited the pipeline of qualified workers. Local companies determined that addressing these concerns will require partnerships with local community colleges and implementation of a comprehensive training model.

Addressing the Challenge: The New Energy Workforce Systems model (Project NEWS) will focus on preparing workers for critical positions within the nuclear sector. Training will include a variety of delivery methods including easily accessible, web-based training, accelerated face-to-face instruction, and blended training of the two. The program will also have multiple entry and exits points to training along career pathways. Students will have the option of using virtual (web-based) labs and/or hands-on learning. Project NEWS will also provide training directly to teachers and counselors about career opportunities. The program will significantly increase the availability of qualified workers for local energy providers to fill highly skilled, highly compensated, and highly regulated positions.

Projected Outcomes:

- 830 participants will enroll in education and training activities.
- 250 new hires will enter employment.
- 75 incumbent workers will receive promotions and/or wage gains.
- 210 participants will receive credentials.

