
President's High Growth Job Training Initiative

Virginia Bio/Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Project

Grantee: Virginia Biotechnology Association

Key Partners: Virginia Manufacturers Association, Alcoa, Boehringer Ingelheim Chemicals, Eli Lilly, Honeywell, Merck, Micron Technologies, Novozymes Biologicals, Philip Morris, Qimonda, Virginia Community College System, Maryland Biotechnology Association, Virginia Department of Business Assistance, Virginia Career Education Foundation, Capital Area WIB, Northern Virginia WIB, and Richmond WIB

Grant Amount: \$1,494,369

Leveraged Amount: \$1,192,500

Location of Grant Activities: Virginia and Maryland

Challenge: Virginia and Maryland are each experiencing significant growth of their bio-manufacturing clusters, which face growing shortages of skilled workers. For example, Virginia will lose 45,000 technically skilled manufacturing workers to retirement over 10 years, such that it needs to replenish these kinds of workers to meet new challenges. Without a competency-based certification and assessment system, existing programs are inadequate to meet the needs of firms in advanced pharmaceutical, biotech, biomedical, chemical, advanced materials, plastics, and semiconductor manufacturing. Employers in these states' life science-based clusters need new, more efficient, and larger scale mechanisms to train and certify manufacturing technicians.

Addressing the Challenge: This project will establish an advanced manufacturing certification system and integrate it with Virginia's existing Skills Bank and framework for registering certificate holders. Specifically, the project team will develop an industry-recognized, multi-level competency model for the life sciences and high-tech industry cluster in the greater Richmond region. Training will be delivered through the innovative use of online production simulations, and will be replicated statewide in Virginia as well as in Maryland. Virginia also will implement an employer-led outreach, recruitment, and screening initiative with Virginia Workforce Centers and Workforce Investment Boards to raise awareness of career opportunities in advanced manufacturing.

Projected Outcomes:

- Certify 60 Manufacturing Specialists, and 120 Level 1 Manufacturing Technicians
- Recruit, assess, and employ 250 additional workers (with 600-800 more workers annually once the recruitment and screening program goes statewide)
- Conduct 50 outreach, demonstration, recruitment and screening visits to Virginia community colleges by a mobile biotechnology laboratory to promote careers

