

Southwest Wyoming Manufacturing Partnership

Regional Meeting Summary

August 4, 2021

Overview

Following updates from members from the Executive Team on B-to-B, Marketing, and Training, meeting attendees focused on (1) prioritizing jobs in most demand, (2) prioritizing sources of job candidates, and (3) identifying actions to match workforce supply and demand. After organizing actions into seven categories, attendees volunteered as “champions” to help identify specific next steps for each action area.

Prioritizing Jobs in Most Demand

Attendees were asked to identify a critical job for which they or their business clients are facing the biggest shortage of workers. The largest group of responses were in the “technician/trades” category, followed by high-level professionals such as engineers, managers, and instructors.

Technicians/Trades (examples)

- Telecommunications technicians
- Engineering technicians
- Electricians/instrument technician
- Construction technician
- Process control/instrument technician
- Heavy equipment mechanic
- Welders
- CDL driver
- Certified trade positions (e.g., electrician)

High-level Professionals (examples)

- Process control engineer/manager
- Computer engineer
- Electrical engineers
- Facilities/physical plant director
- Industrial maintenance instructors
- Manufacturing and industrial faculty
- Finance
- Marketing

Prioritizing Sources of Job Candidates

For the purposes of this meeting, we focused on the technician/trades category to identify the most promising sources of talent. Five categories of talent were identified:

- *Youth/students*—including those in high school and community college, or those who have just graduated, and especially first-generation community college students.
- *Adults in transition*—including those transitioning from the oil and gas and coal sectors, layoffs from other sectors, and other individuals with key core qualities looking for a new career path and willing and able to train.
- *Veterans*.
- *People looking to relocate from other places*.
- *Disadvantaged individuals*—including low-income parents, adults in poverty, high school dropouts, and WIOA qualified.

Actions to Match Workforce Supply and Demand

Many actions were identified, falling into seven major categories. These are the categories, along with the individuals who signed up to help champion those action areas:

- *Demand analysis*—including quantifying industry needs for specific jobs and the core skills required. Champions: Mary Orr and Tosha of DWS will do demand analysis; Kendra.
- *Talent pipelines*—including greater alignment now of K-12 to community college to University of Wyoming, flow of eligible youth and adults through the WIOA system to community college and university, and long-term expansion of technician/trades pathways from K-12 to community college to university. Champions: Alex Nelson will identify students to join the pipeline to receive short-term certificates; Jim Adrianos; Steve Hickerson; Sheila; Brandt Lyman; Kelly Brink; Tosha.
- *Teaching capacity in the trades*—including tapping recent retirees and current experienced industry experts as instructors, and employing other creative strategies to enhance capacity. Champions: Megan will develop exit interview questions for tech teacher recruitment; Jim Adrianos; Kendra; Shane Durgin; Carlton DeWick; Kylie Vase.
- *Short-term certifications*—including high-volume, short-duration training through WWCC and BOCES, and expansion of internship and apprenticeship opportunities. Champions: Matt; Jed; Liane; Leisa.
- *Marketing and communication*—including more awareness-building advertising and events (e.g., regional job fairs, networking events), reaching out to past WWCC graduates, and better matching of students to businesses by college placement office. Champions: Jessica; Carl; Kendra; Mike; Rick Lee; Kelly Brink.
- *Funding*—including advocating for more state funding of grants for post-secondary students this coming session, and tapping federal funding for training and infrastructure

especially in telecommunications. Champions: Kim Dale; Wendy Schuler; Jim Adrianos; Matt; Tony

- *Talent attraction*—including promoting Wyoming to out-of-state audiences and using funding to encourage relocation of those with in-demand skill sets. Champions: Craig; Brandt Lyman; David; Kelly Brink.