

Collaboration Award Nomination Workshop –

Slide Presentation Narrative

Slide 1: Title Page

Narrative: We each introduce ourselves. (One) introduces the title of our presentation

Slide 2: Outline

Narrative: Welcome to our “Streamlining Collaboration” workshop. In this presentation the three of us will give you a brief overview of the Manufacturing Skills Initiative (MSI) workforce training partnership, and present 4 partnership-building challenges we encountered and collaborated on as the training evolved. Our focus is to share with you the streamlining solutions we developed over the past seven years to create a more efficient and effective collaboration between agencies to produce stronger program outcomes and a better customer experience for our trainees and employer partners.

Slide 3: What is the Training Partnership?

Narrative: The Manufacturing Skills Initiative (MSI) is a program designed to recruit unemployed and under-employed adults – primarily adults living or working in Franklin & Hampshire counties -- who demonstrate aptitude and motivation to pursue manufacturing employment; to provide them with training in basic and advanced manufacturing skills; and to provide them with work readiness skills, employment coaching and job placement support. It aims to help residents in our region secure and maintain employment in manufacturing while building skills for rewarding careers, and to help local manufacturing employers recruit and retain qualified employees.

Slide 4: MSI Programs

Narrative: **Foundational Manufacturing (FM):** is a 4-week classroom training offered 3 times per year. FM provides participants with 80 hours of training in Blueprint Reading, Metrology, Shop Math, OSHA-10, Lean Manufacturing and Work Readiness using classroom instruction, Tooling U online homework and Work Readiness consults. Graduates can get hired in entry level assembly, production and warehouse work – jobs that range in pay from \$13 - \$17 an hour - and/or qualify for admission to the CNC Operator training.

CNC Operator Training: is an 8-week hands-on training offered 2 times per year at the Franklin County Tech School machine shop, CNC trainees learn basic manual and CNC mill and lathe operations and receive an introduction to CAD/CAM, G & M code and heat treating while programming and machining a final project in a 160-hour program. Entry level CNC Operators in our region typically earn \$15 - \$20 per hour, depending on shift, company and prior experience.

Recruiting & Funding: The entry point for applicants is a 1-hour monthly information session after which participants may apply to GCC for admission to FM and take the steps needed to qualify for state or federal job training funding. Other possible funding sources include GCC scholarships, employer sponsorship, Mass Reab Commission funding and private pay. Those seeking other career paths or training options can consult 1-1 with FHWB staff at no cost.

Slide 5: GOALS of the MSI Partnership

Narrative: MSI works to maintain full enrollment in Partnership trainings while helping participants achieve high completion and job placement outcomes that satisfy employer partners. MSI trainings are maintained in the state TrainingPro database of workforce training offerings, a requirement to enroll WIOA customers. To meet TrainingPro requirements, job placement outcomes must exceed 50 – 70% depending on the state unemployment rate at the time.

Slide 6: Challenge #1:

Narrative: The MSI partners have congruent but differing recruitment goals that sometimes pull in different directions:

- **GCC** is a community college with an “open enrollment” ethos. It needs to meet minimum enrollment thresholds to run trainings and seeks full enrollment to meet program income goals.
- **MassHire FHCC’s** career center WIOA program is mandated to serve unemployed participants and those with barriers to employment while also achieving Training Pro-required job placement outcomes.
- **MassHire FHWB** is the partner most closely engaged with Employer Partners and strives to recruit and train program participants who are motivated to seek employment in manufacturing and precision machining occupations and are likely to meet employer expectations.

If the recruitment process is not well managed to ensure that most applicants are academically prepared, work ready and likely to transition into training-related employment, the cohort job placement rate can run the risk of falling below the TrainingPro threshold. A lower ratio of job-ready and employment seeking candidates also risks eroding employer engagement and support.

Slide 7: Streamlining Solution #1

Narrative: MSI started in 2013 as a 15-week semester long CNC Operator training program. After 2 years, GCC took the initiative to split off the first part of the program as a separate 4-week classroom training in Foundational Manufacturing (FM). This created an entry portal for a broader spectrum of students and allowed the 4-week FM training to be used for career exploration, work readiness preparation, quick entry to basic manufacturing jobs, and qualification for the (streamlined) 8-week hands-on shop training in CNC machining.

Outcome expectations could be relaxed for FM to approximate GCC's "open enrollment" goal while using the 4 weeks of training to allow motivated participants to demonstrate readiness and fit for the CNC Operator training if they choose to aim for more advanced manufacturing training. Inserting this motivational hurdle created better job placement performance outcomes for the CNC training to meet the goals of MassHire and the employers.

The 4-week FM training also allowed GCC to use its own classroom space, requiring less time in the FCTS machine shop. And the career center and workforce board were able to invest tuition resources in the students they recruited in a more efficient and effective way. Rather than investing \$5 – 6,000 in a semester-long training up front, they could now invest \$1,200 in a 4-week training and let student performance and motivation determine further training investment.

We discovered that student performance in the FM training provides stronger indicators for career fit, work readiness and CNC job placement outcomes than assessment testing. And, as we explore developing other advanced manufacturing trainings like machine maintenance and industrial automation, the FM training can potentially serve as a foundational platform for multiple career pathways.

Slide 8: Streamlining Solution #2:

Narrative: As the partner providing the majority of tuition funding and with the strongest mandate to achieve high job placement outcomes, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board (FHWB) developed a formal MOU with all partners this year assuming lead responsibility for training cohort formation. This was one of the more politically sensitive streamlining solutions, as the program structure did not begin with the Workforce Board simply hiring the college as a training vendor. Because GCC took the lead in developing the curriculum, the shift to centering control over cohort formation in the Workforce Board and Career Center required six years of trust building, strong program performance and some personnel changes.

Recruitment has evolved over time as a collaborative process requiring a close working partnership between FHWB with the WIOA program to co-enroll students. It also required a high trust level by GCC to formally outsource recruiting for its courses to its MassHire program partners, although in many ways the college was simply acknowledging the reality that most of the recruiting had been happening at MassHire all along.

Slide 9: **Challenge #2:**

Narrative: A second challenge we faced is how to streamline the Recruitment process while meeting the requirements of all three partner institutions.

GCC is responsible for enrolling students in an academic program and conducting CORI checks.

MassHire FHCC is responsible for enrolling eligible participants in WIOA, a process that requires multiple meetings and extensive documentation.

MassHire FHWB is responsible for qualifying eligible participants for EOHEE state job training funds (and other grant sources) – a process that overlaps with and duplicates parts of the WIOA enrollment process - while building a cohort that will achieve high job placement outcomes.

The problem that results from all of these separate requirements is that applicants must attend multiple meetings in different locations with different agencies to apply for training and qualify for funding.

Confusion and frustration can result in higher enrollment attrition.

While a few hurdles offer a good way for applicants to demonstrate commitment, too many create needless bureaucratic barriers.

Slide 10: Recruitment Streamlining Solutions:

Narrative: GCC and FHWB now offer joint monthly Information & Application Sessions at the **same time** (on 1st Mondays) in a **single location** (FHCC) As a result, advertising is simplified, as are referrals from Career Center counselors, front desk staff and partner agencies.

GCC provides the main **online** Info Session registration portal on its Manufacturing Training web page – registrations are shared electronically with FHCC and FHWB. Information sharing permission forms have been created to notify applicants and obtain their consent.

FHCC provides the main **in person** and **phone** registration portal at its front desk – all prospects fill out Job Seeker Forms and are entered into MOSES.

FHCC supports recruiting unemployed applicants by allowing FHWB to pitch **Career Center Seminar participants** at weekly CCS meetings.

Nearly all application steps now take place at a single location (FHCC)

While this seems like an obvious approach, for most of the past 7 years Info Sessions have alternated between GCC and the Career Center on an irregular schedule. Agency “turf” and individual egos can sometimes get in the way of good customer service, particularly when multiple agencies are trying to collaborate.

Slide 11: **Challenge #3:**

Narrative: A third challenge has been figuring out how to streamline the funding eligibility assessment process, which includes a complex WIOA process, assessment testing requirements by both the college and WIOA, and many potential funding sources.

Funding options for MSI trainings include:

- Federal WIOA funding for dislocated and disadvantaged workers
- State EOHED job training funds for unemployed and under-employed adults. These two sources comprise 90% of tuition funding support. State and federal job training funds currently pay 100% of training costs for each eligible participant.
- GCC Foundation grants - these can be used more flexibly to support people who live out of state or earn higher wages than state and federal job training programs allow.
- Employer sponsorship of incumbent workers.
- Mass Rehab Commission training stipends for people with disabilities.

The MSI program also uses **assessment testing** as part of the application and eligibility process:

Bennet Mechanical Comprehension Test (BMCT)

AccuPlacer arithmetic & reading comprehension

For many years applicants were required to test in one location (GCC) and then attend multiple funding eligibility meetings at FHCC and FHWB and repeat the same information on different forms to determine which funding source would pay their tuition.

Slide 12: Streamlining WIOA and funding eligibility

Narrative: Although MSI began in 2013, a committed and sustained effort to co-enroll unemployed and economically disadvantaged WIOA job seekers in the workforce board-funded MSI trainings began in earnest in January 2016. Before that time, there were only a small number of WIOA customers served by our region's advanced manufacturing training: sometimes fewer than 12% of each training cohort. This was due to both the lengthy process of WIOA recruitment, assessment, and enrollment and rigid scheduling of the WIOA intake process that was not well-aligned with the MSI enrollment timelines.

Basically, our region had two excellent programs— the Career Center's WIOA Disadvantaged/ Dislocated Worker program, and the Workforce Board's MSI program--running side by side, with little communication, collaboration or success in capitalizing on the unique and valuable assets each program had to offer, including expanded training dollars, increased marketing funds, experienced and credentialed counseling professionals, and an industry specialist with significant and ever-expanding knowledge and contacts in the manufacturing sector.

Job seekers lost out, and the two organizations (MHFHCC and MHFHCB) lost out. WIOA didn't reap the benefits of the increased enrollment and high placement rate achieved by the MSI program. And MSI had to spend extra resources trying to duplicate or re-create the extensive case management expertise and readiness/referral services already available on the Career Center side of the house.

Needless to say, employers lost out as well, since enrollments were largely dependent on new recruits to the workforce system (via expensive radio, billboard and print advertising, for ex.), rather than our region taking full advantage first of the job seekers and dislocated workers already coming through Career Center doors.

The changes we have put in place have rebuilt, strengthened and enhanced the connection between our two programs, providing a model for Career Center and Workforce Board coordination.

MSI now designates WIOA eligibility as the first screen for all program applicants seeking job training funds. Other options are then offered to WIOA-ineligible applicants or when WIOA funding is exhausted.

Applicants begin with the most comprehensive and time consuming funding eligibility process and are then triaged to other more flexible funding options.

When the program began 7 years ago, WIOA required participants to attend the 3-hour WIOA general eligibility seminar and a 3-4 week enrollment process which resulted in fewer WIOA enrollments.

WIOA now provides a Manufacturing-specific 30-minute WIOA orientation which is now offered monthly on the same day and in the same location (FHCC) as the Bennett test. Applicants can accomplish both steps in about an hour, one week after the Info Session. Prior to this change, applicants would have to register for a 3-hour WIOA orientation offered once a month, hope they got a seat and the timing still matched the course start date.

FHWB and FHCC staff now follow up together on that brief WIOA orientation with a joint eligibility intake meeting for both WIOA and EOHEE funding (which provide over 90% of tuition scholarships). That can often happen on the same day or week as the WIOA orientation and testing combo. WIOA co-enrollments now often capture 30 – 40% of each training cohort.

Slide 13: Challenge #4:

Narrative: How did we integrate Work Readiness training into GCC's academic program?

Work readiness tools (Resume, Cover Letter, References, Interview Skills, Soft Skills Training) are crucial to job placement success, yet many applicants have limited computer skills and equipment and only a few are proficient in formatting resumes. Work readiness is only slowly coming to be viewed within colleges as a topic to be integrated into academic courses and college workforce development departments often struggle with academic bias against workforce training. GCC closed its Career Services Center over a decade ago and has since come to rely on FHCC and FHWB to provide work readiness skills and document strong job placement outcomes for its manufacturing trainings. The 80-hour FM program focuses nearly all class time on Shop Math, Blueprint Reading, Metrology, OSHA-10 and Lean Manufacturing. The Workforce Board and Career Center have provided out-of-class services through workshops and 1-1 consulting to ensure that students graduate with work ready resumes and cover letters, and very slowly over time, have embedded these skills and products as graduation requirements, giving them academic standing.

Slide 14: Streamlining Work Readiness Solutions

Narrative: MSI applicants are strongly encouraged to take FHCC resume & cover letter workshops during the application process, BEFORE classes begin. Early engagement in work readiness demonstrates motivation, improves enrollment competitiveness and improves job placement success.

FHWB staff schedules Individual resume consults right at the FM orientation, several days before the training begins. Students then meet with staff to review resume and complete a manufacturing resume in Week 1 of FM. Final drafts of Cover letter and References are completed with WIOA & FHWB consults by the end of the 4-week FM program. GCC requires a Letter of Intent and Resume to apply to the CNC Training, which provides motivation for students to complete these documents.

The FHCC Workshop Coordinator (that's me) offers a 2-hour Resume & Cover Letter workshop as the first FM class to embed work readiness as a key training goal.

Work Readiness finished products (Resume, Cover Letter, References Page) are now a GCC graduation requirement for FM, even tho GCC does not provide the instruction. Although this also seems like a no-brainer, this requirement took 7 years to embed in the program.

FHWB staff also organizes a manufacturing shop tour for each FM class, and a "meet the employee" Q&A for CNC trainees with past program grads to provide real-world career exploration. FHWB is now in discussion with employers about strengthening Work Readiness education in FM, with more focus on learning and understanding "soft skills". An employer panel of HR Managers may be introduced to pilot direct discussion between trainees and prospective employers on these topics.

Slide 15: The Results?

Narrative: Over the past 7 years of the MSI Partnership:

242 participants have enrolled in 22 FM training cohorts (the average age of participants is 37)

90% completed Foundational Manufacturing

56% went on to enroll in CNC Operator training

12% secured manufacturing employment after FM training

177 participants enrolled in 13 CNC training cohorts (with an average age of 36)

94% completed CNC Operator training (166 students)

85% job placement rate in training-related employment (150 participants)

Slide 16: The WIOA Results

Narrative: These results are a win for the Career Center and a win for more co-enrolled customers, who have access to more funding and staff resources to improve their career success outcomes.

Slide 17: The REAL Results (Photo of CNC grads)

Narrative: Statistics are the fodder that drive agencies and sustain funding for programs. What really matters is the people we serve and how successful we are in helping them to their next career step. This photo is one of our last CNC Training Cohorts to graduate before the COVID pandemic.

Slide 18: Key Take Aways

Narrative: Here are the key ingredients we discovered for collaboration success in building a strong training partnership:

- **Shared Ownership** The MSI partnership began as a GCC curriculum funded by MassHire. It has evolved over 7 years to be proudly “owned” by all of its partners as measured by their investment of time and resources, their willingness to collaborate and iterate new program improvements, and their commitment to strengthening our local manufacturing sector.
- **Mutual Interests** While each partner may have different emphases (open enrollment, serving people with barriers) all have a strong mutual interest in helping job seekers and employers succeed.
- **Trust** Delegating core program functions like recruitment to another agency, and making the effort to modify your own program process, as with the WIOA changes and joint scheduling efforts, requires trust built on strong program performance and partner reliability.
- **Teamwork across agencies** Strong working relationships reduce the friction that can arise when working across multiple agencies.
- **An Experimental Mindset** Drawing on the perspectives of multiple agencies makes partnership a strength and creates a larger learning community that can build on the experience of each training cohort.
- **Customer Focus** Keeping all eyes on participant outcomes makes making change worthwhile.
- **Flexibility** Partnerships must continuously adapt to new personnel, new funding environments and job market conditions to survive and stay relevant.

Slide 19: Flexibility is key

Narrative: It's often the case that programs end or change dramatically just when you start to get really good at running them. If we recognize the paradox that change is a constant, we should not be surprised that Flexibility is the key to our ability to adapt, to innovate and survive.

Over the past few months, the COVID shutdown required a swift shift to move our June 4-week Foundational Manufacturing training online.

- All recruiting - monthly Info Sessions, funding eligibility meetings and applications moved online.
- Assessments were temporarily waived (we are exploring Work Keys as an online option).
- We are now setting up secure email drops for private personal information (PPI) to streamline applications and funding eligibility intakes.
- Spring CNC Operator training was cancelled when schools closed (we are still waiting on the Fall re-opening plan at the Franklin County Tech School and on the Legislature to pass a state budget)

But... machine shops are adapting too – pivoting to new medical equipment markets in some cases. Skilled machinists continue to age into retirement. The aerospace supply chain took a big hit but hiring demand for CNC Operators is still there in the broader machining sector.

We hope to continue CNC training and are also exploring other options for meeting manufacturer skill needs with hybrid and remote training options.

Slide 20: Questions

Narrative: Thanks for your time and attention. We have some time now for your questions or your comments and reflections.