

APPRENTICESHIP

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“This project is a testament to the St. Louis region’s unique position to build a robust, inclusive talent pipeline to fuel future pandemic response and recovery while creating new economic opportunity, diversifying the local economy, and advancing health and economic equity,” BioSTL Director of Regional Workforce Strategy Justin Raymundo said. “We look forward to leveraging the local, national, and international expertise of the BioSTL Coalition to support the impact of the Gateway Hub by convening industry, aligning workforce needs, and delivering on an inclusive strategy for St. Louis’ bioscience workforce.”

Local institutions of higher education, including Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Southwestern Illinois College, Lewis and Clark Community College, St. Louis Community College, Jefferson College, and Kaskaskia Community College also will play a vital role in the project by connecting apprentices to quality education and training programs.

In addition to the workforce partners, the Gateway Hub will bring together industry and employer groups, educational institutions, and community organizations designed to support the creation and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Some of the partners include BJC HealthCare, Cortex Innovation Community, Gateway Regional Medical Center, Hospital Sisters Health System, Jersey County Hospital, MilliporeSigma, OSF Healthcare, Alton, Belleville, Collinsville, and Madison School Districts, and community organizations such as Rung for Women, the Urban League of Metro St. Louis and the YWCA of Metro St. Louis.

“We are proud to collaborate with the Gateway Hub consortium to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities for the betterment of our workforce and our region,” BJC HealthCare President and CEO Richard J. Liekweg said. “We look forward to the impact this effort will have on the health and well-being of the region.”

MCETD is already taken an active leadership role in developing apprenticeship opportunities for those who are part of a sometimes “overlooked” part of the potential workforce as well.

Fuhrmann and MCETD Work-Based Learning Coordinator Justin Jackson recently shared details about the growing competency-based apprenticeship program launched for Collinsville High School students with developmental disabilities and the partnership that continues to evolve between Madison County, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Department of Commerce and Economic

Opportunity (DCEO), and municipalities like the City of Collinsville.

“Currently, we have four student apprentices are working with the City of Collinsville’s parks and recreation department and the Gateway Convention Center. These students are working through a one-year competency-based apprenticeship, with the city as their employer. They work 20 hours a week at \$12 an hour,” said Fuhrmann. “On-the-job training funds are provided to the city for this training, at 50 percent of the apprentice’s pay.”

“At the convention center, they are learning technical aspects and developing skills in event planning, such as house-keeping needs and setup, which are an essential part of hosting events. With the parks and recreation opportunities, they are learning landscaping maintenance skills,” Jackson added. “With each apprenticeship opportunity, these students are learning valuable transferable skills, including professionalism, interpersonal communications, and time management.”

“The partners signed documents to launch this innovative apprenticeship program at the September 2021 Construction Roundtable,” Fuhrmann said. “We’ve got four students enrolled at this time. The Regional Office of Education and STEP program help screen the students to ensure a good fit with the apprenticeship opportunities being offered. We are about to see one of the enrolled apprentices finish their landscaping certification in January. And the city has already agreed to keep the apprentice as a part-time employee.”

“We started our Apprenticeship Program in 2021, and we’ve had a student who has been here for nearly a year. We are excited for him to graduate with his Apprenticeship Certificate, and we are even more thrilled he will be staying on with the city after his program ends,” noted Collinsville’s Human Resources Director Payton Drury. “We currently have four students that started this Fall working at our Gateway Convention Center and our Parks and Recreation Department.

“They handle a variety of tasks, including cleaning restrooms, following floorplans, and setting up conventions such as Archon and the Gateway Wedding Show. They also get to learn landscaping skills and help keep our parks clean and beautiful for our residents,” Drury explained further. “We are thankful to be a part of this program. Not only does it affect the students but our staff as well. We’ve seen leadership growth in our staff and a more positive work environment.

Student apprentice Myah McDaniel, 17, said she enjoys that the program has

helped her learn valuable life skills, such as cleaning and vacuuming. “It gives me exercise and helps me become an independent person,” McDaniel said.

“I like that it’s different every day,” said student apprentice Dylan Rick, also 17. Rick is responsible for taking care of some of the equipment used to put on events, such as curtains.

“The student apprentices are also expected to comply to policies and procedures related to their positions as laid out by their employer as any other employee would be,” Jackson said. “The City of Collinsville has developed an employee handbook specifically for these student apprentice positions, and the students are expected to follow what it outlines.”

“When a student completes their apprenticeship, they receive certification of their skills from the Department of Labor, just as any other completed apprenticeship program. The student can take their apprenticeship completion certification anywhere they want and seek related employment, or other opportunities, just like any other apprentice-now-journeyman,” said Fuhrmann. “They can go anywhere in the country and present this certification to a potential employer. The fact that this is a DOL-certified program is incredibly significant.”

“What we’re doing here is already turning the spotlight,” Fuhrmann added. “Other high schools and districts, such as Township High School Dist. 214 and Wheeling High School up north, are looking at how this partnership is working and want to know more about how they can replicate it for their students. For this group of students, the possibility of becoming a viable and vital part of the workforce is beyond financially rewarding. They are being given the chance to make a difference in the world on terms they never knew they could have.”

And for adults with learning disabilities, MCETD has a similar apprenticeship partnership now in place with the City of Highland and Holly’s House of Hope.

As part of this competency-based apprenticeship, young adults above the age of 24 with Holly’s House of Hope in Highland become DOL-certified with their highly developed skills upon successful completion of the program.

These apprentices are learning on-the-job technical and transferable skills by working with the Highland Police Department and at Korte Recreation Center.

“Through this partnership with Madison County and the City of Highland, Holly’s House of Hope is working to build skills and provide opportunities

that guide young adults who are uniquely able toward more purpose-filled lives through service to our communities. We focus on enhancing employment, social, and service opportunities for people who are uniquely able,” noted Holly’s House of Hope’s Eric “Duff” Wrobbel.

“Holly’s House of Hope is providing job training services for these individuals to grow, learn and discover their purpose in life; a purpose within the community that will bring themselves and those around them much hope and joy,” Wrobbel added. “We meet with our area business and professional partners to identify part-time job opportunities that align as closely as possible with the skills and aspirations we have identified in our clients. Once we have identified a potential position, we work with Madison County to develop the formal apprenticeship for that position.”

The Madison County Employment and Training Department’s primary responsibilities are to administer employment and training programs under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other state and federal funding sources. A focus of Madison County Employment and Training is to create partnerships between business and government that will establish services that prepare customers for employment.

All services offered by MCETD are designed to help employers, businesses or job seekers. These services include job listings, employment training, skills assessment, career counseling, job search assistance, vocational training, on-the-job training, recruitment assistance, youth employment and training, job and career fairs, referral services and many other types of employer/employee assistance.

The Madison County Employment and Training Department has offices in Madison, Bond, and Jersey Counties that comprise the Southwestern Illinois workNet as a part of the AmericanJobCenter network.

The Wood River workNet Center and MCETD administrative offices are located at 101 E. Edwardsville Rd. The Bond County workNet Center/ Kaskaskia College-Greenville Education Center, is located at 209 North Third Street, Suite C, Greenville. The Job Center/workNet Center located in Jerseyville, servicing Jersey and Calhoun Counties, is at 120 W. Pearl St.

For more information about any of the services and programs available through the Madison County Employment and Training Department, visit online www.co.madison.il.us/mcetd or call (618) 296-4445.



Bridge Project on MCT Nickel Plate Trail over Little Mooney Creek in Rural Madison County

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