

MACNY Apprentice Program Is Beginning

As I reported a couple of months ago, MACNY has been successful in obtaining funds in this year's State Budget for the creation of a New York State Manufacturers Alliance Apprenticeship Program (NYSMAAP). We are currently putting together the Steering Committee that will guide the development of the various programs we will design and implement. The Steering Committee's first task will be to identify up to five apprenticeable occupations that are in high demand with manufacturers. The Committee met in late June to review the results of a survey, look over New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) training outlines, and examine relevant college curricula.

Just prior to writing this article, Roberta Reardon, the new NYSDOL Commissioner and Karen Coleman the Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Development visited with Randy and me to discuss the program and offer their full support in getting it up and running. Initially the Steering Committee will be composed of manufacturers but as we progress educators, subject matter experts, and relevant NYSDOL representatives will be added. Once the three to five apprenticeable trades are selected, subcommittees will be formed to guide the development of the individual programs.

The fact that MACNY has obtained approval to function as a single "program sponsor" acting on behalf of small and medium sized manufacturers will save both time and money for all involved. And it will dramatically reduce the administrative burden on individual manufacturers and greatly streamline apprenticeship program registration. The Steering Committee will guide MACNY in setting up the on-the-job (OJT) training outlines and obtaining the related instruction from surrounding schools and colleges. We expect that the majority of the training outlines will meet the needs of most manufacturers but that further customizations will be made to meet individual employers' needs.

The program will utilize some of the curricula designed as a result of the recent SUNY TAACCCT grant in advanced manufacturing for the related instruction. We will also articulate the related instruction with associates degree programs wherever possible. Employers will be expected to shoulder the major portion of the OJT responsibilities along with contributing some proportion of the related instruction costs. OJT outlines will mirror national models and incorporate industry recognized credentials where possible. We have also secured the cooperation of Tooling U – SME who may assist us in putting elements of the programs in an on-line format. Where possible we will utilize existing NYSDOL apprenticeship outlines, but will remain open to developing new programs as needed.

All program registration with NYSDOL will pass through MACNY but each company can personalize its program to meet company needs. Registered apprenticeships require apprentice selection criteria, apprentice registration, wage progressions, and affirmative action plans. MACNY will work with employers to meet these requirements. MACNY will also work with NYSDOL and SUNY to centralize and coordinate services and make sure all program essentials are completed.

There are two key elements of the MACNY apprentice programs that bear mention. Traditional apprenticeships have been time-based, in other words, the overall program duration was measured in months or years and individual competency areas were measured in clock hours. The MACNY programs are expected to be "hybrid" programs and will incorporate competency based advancement to accelerate the progress of persons who enter the program with experience, or are able to master the competencies more quickly. Also in the MACNY programs, supervisors who train the apprentices will not only receive special preparation for their role, but will be recognized in other ways for their significant contributions to program success.

Activities to get this up and running this year have already begun. We have been notified that funding is ready to be released and we are negotiating the government contracts as this article goes to press. Manufacturers interested in becoming involved in the pilot program can contact me at MACNY by calling 315-474-4201 or emailing bhamm@macny.org. This will be your program and will help to fill your needs for skilled workers. Please consider participating and having your voice heard.