

Macomb Community College

American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) Grantee (2015) funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and H-1B training funds.¹

BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE GRANT AWARD GRANTEE OVERVIEW

Macomb Community College (Macomb), the largest community college in Michigan, is a multi-campus institution just north of Detroit that serves about 19,000 students every semester in approximately 200 degree and certificate programs, and another 12,000 in workforce development continuing education programs. Macomb has a 65-year history of work-based, on-the-job learning, with apprenticeship included in its original charter. The college's American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant supports Michigan Apprenticeship Program Plus (MAP+), a new program targeting apprenticeship pathways in manufacturing occupations, including a newly registered apprenticeship occupation in digital sculpting, which is a growing profession in the auto industry.

In partnership with Grand Rapids Community College (Grand Rapids), located on the west side of the state, the program seeks to enroll and serve a total of 510 apprentices in the two largest metropolitan areas in Michigan. North of Detroit, Macomb focuses on the auto industry, while Grand Rapids has expanded apprenticeship into the health care sector. Macomb and Grand Rapids have leveraged the AAI grant to increase outreach to employers, successfully engaging 57 new employers by promoting Registered Apprenticeship as an adaptable model that will solve many of their workforce needs. As of June 30, 2019, they had served 700 registered apprentices, exceeding their goal of 510.

KEY LEARNINGS

Despite Macomb's extensive experience with apprenticeship, they learned some new lessons as it worked to expand its model through MAP+. First, Macomb identified a need to create a bigger and more effective feeder system into apprenticeship by working with public high schools to market the idea of this education pathway to skeptical parents and students. Macomb has seen a marked shift in the perception of apprenticeship over the past few years as people increasingly embrace the idea that there are multiple career pathways to a good career. At the postsecondary level, the college has had significant success in establishing articulation agreements with state universities and other four-year schools. Macomb also found that it was necessary to adapt to meet the unique and ever-changing needs of each employer. The college works closely with companies of all sizes and keeps them involved by asking what they need from training programs to best equip workers for success.

IMPROVING TRANSITIONS ACROSS K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Creating an Apprenticeship Continuum from Pre-Apprenticeship to Post-Secondary Degrees

Macomb initially had difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill available apprenticeship slots. As a result, it created a pre-apprenticeship feeder program. Macomb and its partners used career fairs and social

¹ In 2015, building on historic bipartisan support from Congress for "earn and learn" training opportunities, the U.S. Department of Labor launched the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI), which awarded \$175 million to 46 public-private partnerships across the country. These grants are financed by a user fee paid by employers to hire foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program. This initiative is intended to provide a catalyst in supporting a uniquely American Apprenticeship system that meets our country's particular economic, industry, and workforce needs. American Apprenticeships (also referred to as Registered Apprenticeships) are innovative work-based learning and post-secondary earn-and-learn models that meet national standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor (or federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies).

media to spread the word about apprenticeship to over 2,900 high school students and their parents, starting with the Macomb Intermediate School District. Initially skeptical, parents and students alike have become increasingly convinced of both the financial and educational benefits of apprenticeship. When looking toward post-secondary education options, high school students had previously shown limited interest in Macomb's apprenticeship and applied technology programs, but now seek out its programs in large numbers at college and career fairs.

Macomb also works closely with Wayne State University (WSU), Ferris State University (FSU), and other four-year colleges and universities in Michigan to develop articulation agreements with each other that facilitate the recognition and transfer of apprenticeship-related credits. Both WSU and FSU offer "3+1" programs, where students can take three years of classes at Macomb at the community college tuition rate followed by one year taught by WSU or FSU faculty at locations convenient for the students. Macomb cultivated relationships with these postsecondary institutions and they now accept and understand where apprenticeship credits can be used. For students pursuing advanced degrees, this creates the freedom and flexibility to combine apprenticeship and continued higher education.

WORKING WITH LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Partnership Building

MAP+ has expanded into new sectors such as health care at Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids found it challenging at first to engage with employers in these industries, as they tended to view apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy for traditional trades. To assist with awareness and capacity-building, Grand Rapids leveraged its workforce development board, West Michigan Works! (WMW).

WMW already brings health care employers together to discuss workforce development and the development of new career pathways. By leveraging this partnership with health care employers, Grand Rapids developed the nation's first registered medical assistant apprenticeship program. WMW also helps Grand Rapids with candidate selection and documentation of standards. The college and the workforce board now have regular standing meetings to monitor progress and move the initiative forward.

The partnership between Grand Rapids and WMW has enabled the college to meet and exceed its goals with respect to serving underrepresented populations. Grand Rapids and West Michigan Works! hope to use a similar process to engage with the IT sector, which faces similar challenges.