

A MANUFACTURING CASE FOR SUPPORT

Vermont Labor Market Information indicates as of February of 2021, Vermont employed 28,700 people in manufacturing, about the same number as one year earlier. However, much has changed in the labor participation rate, down about 30,000 or 20% from last year, due to the far-reaching effects of the pandemic. With unemployment again at around 2%, the shortage of skilled manufacturing workers demands a shared strategy.

Organizing the Manufacturing Collaborative

Vermont Talent Pipeline's Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative is comprised of ~60 makers of durable, non-durable and food-related products. The collaborative organized in fall of 2018 to address the shared needs for skills and talent. The largest demand, for Production Assemblers and Operators, provides high-wage entry points to manufacturing careers, leading to the next level of Team Leaders, CNC Machinists and Equipment Technicians. Also in demand are Design Engineers to develop new products, and Production Engineers to improve processes and reduce waste.

In 2018, the original 34 participating Manufacturers identified five critical roles representing the demand for new and replacement hiring between 2018-20. 100% of the employers responded to the demand planning survey forecasting 1380+ jobs as:

- Production Assemblers/Operators
- CNC Machinists
- Equipment Technicians
- Team Leaders
- Engineers (Design & Production)

The Supply-side

We provide this demand data to Vermont's educators. With required competencies and credentials for each role, they develop and align training to serve industry - and the labor force with job-ready skills. This was the initiation for industry recognition of short-term "stackable" credentials for high-demand skills and careers in Vermont manufacturing.

Target audiences includes youth and adult STEM and Manufacturing program participants, delivered at Career and Technical Education Centers, CCV and VTC. We also build awareness among High School and work-based learning students, and Vermont Department of Labor's job seekers and changers.

Outcomes

Today, we build awareness, exploration and preparation for manufacturing careers, through apprenticeship opportunities and a videoconference series called "Exploring Careers in Manufacturing" for students and adults engaged in Manufacturing or STEM credentials. Each of these sessions has drawn dozens of skilled participants to career planning dialogues direct with hiring employers. Each session is followed by job applications and interviews.

Public and Philanthropic training funds are in use by employers and individuals to braid available resources. Registered Apprenticeships, funded by Vermont's Department of Labor, delivered through sponsoring Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College make training accessible to business and labor participants.

When we began this work in 2018, there was no skill standard for manufacturing. Today, the Manufacturing Collaborative recognizes the MSSC Certified Production Technician (CPT) and Siemens Mechatronics as the gold standards for production hiring. These credential command a higher wage, yet result in work-ready skills, advancement opportunities and better retention.

Join the Collaborative

Part of the attraction to manufacturing jobs are high-wage salaries and career opportunities. Working together, manufacturers have developed incentives to join the industry including messaging valued career opportunities which feature paid-for training with college credit - a route to credential and degree completion without debt. We welcome your participation in the Manufacturing Collaborative. Please consider a 3-year tax-deductible, charitable contribution to the [VBR Research and Education Foundation](#) to support the Vermont Talent Pipeline.