

MassMEP Training Program Featured at White House Jobs Summit

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP) today had one of its most successful job training initiatives featured at President Barack Obama’s White House Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth. The Mobile Outreach Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) program, which trains unemployed workers for existing manufacturing jobs using a state-of-the-art mobile training unit, was presented as an example of the kind of innovative initiative needed to put Americans back to work.

Today’s White House jobs summit was intended to showcase for the President and his team some of the nation’s leading initiatives to revitalize the economy.

“We’re very pleased that MassMEP’s innovative mobile training program was presented at the White House jobs summit,” said MassMEP Executive Director Jack Healy. The training program has been a success here in Massachusetts and has provided unemployed workers with opportunities for careers in manufacturing. I’m delighted that the White House recognized our efforts and provided an opportunity to showcase our mobile training program.”

The M.O.S.T. program is a fast-track training initiative that utilizes a mobile classroom. Outfitted with cutting-edge computer-numeric controlled (CNC) equipment, the mobile unit delivers an intensive skills training program that consists of hands-on curricula utilizing computer-based 3-D simulations and training modules. Participants who successfully complete the program not only gain job training, but receive interviews with employers ready to hire qualified applicants. The MassMEP’s effort to identify employers with job openings and connect those employers with the trainees differentiates the program from many other training programs and contributes to the M.O.S.T. program’s high level of successful job placements.

Two additional features of the program also contribute to its success. First, the M.O.S.T. program trains workers for entry-level jobs that have a career ladder, higher earning potential and opportunities for advancement. Second, MassMEP’s role doesn’t end when trainees graduate from the program. MEP project managers continue to work with employers months after the end of the training program to ensure that trainees have mastered the required skills. This follow-on feature of the program reflects MEP’s mission of training employees so that their improved skills drive company growth.

“One of the unique features of the M.O.S.T. program is the opportunity it creates for trainees to embark on a career in manufacturing. The program qualifies trainees for entry-level manufacturing jobs as computer-numeric control operators, but these CNC positions are not dead-end jobs. In Massachusetts and many other parts of the country there is a real shortage of trained CNC operators. We identify manufacturers with job openings before the training begins, so that individuals who complete the training program have a good chance of successfully competing for these jobs. We believe in giving individuals more than job skills; we want to train them for a career in the high-tech future of American manufacturing,” Healy stated.

In conjunction with the Jobs Summit, the MEP mobile training unit traveled to Washington, D.C., and received permission to set up on Capitol Hill so that members of Congress and congressional aides could tour the unit. MEP trainers spent yesterday giving guided tours to congressional visitors, explaining how the high-tech mobile classroom operates and trains workers.

“With a stubbornly high unemployment rate, we must be creative in developing innovative programs to ensure displaced workers are trained and able to reenter the labor force. The M.O.S.T. program accomplishes this by delivering the full continuum of services needed for long-term success – recruitment, assessment, training and job placement,” Healy explained. “This program is a win-win situation for manufacturers and workers. If initiated nationwide, the program could have an even more substantial impact.”

The M.O.S.T. program was developed and launched in Massachusetts with support from the U.S. Department of Labor. For more information on Massachusetts MEP and the M.O.S.T. program, visit www.massmep.org.