

More than a Job: Building Career Pathways in Transportation for Adult Workers

Introduction

The UVM Transportation Research Center, through a FHWA grant, explored four strategic interventions to attract new workers and enhance transportation career pathways in northern New England.

- Initiatives targeted new workers from traditional (e.g. high school students) and non- traditional sources (e.g. veterans, corrections, and women)
- Initiatives supported ongoing career development, partnering with employers, community colleges and professional networks.

These efforts addressed unique challenges by developing new tools and strategies that were flexible and adaptable to different audiences. Programs developed for youth were able to be modified to be effective career pathway tools to attract and open doors for adult learners.

Challenges

- Lack of awareness among the public regarding the opportunities in the transportation sector.
- Lack of trainings that prepare individuals for entry-level transportation jobs.



- Adult training efforts present their own set of unique challenges such as scheduling and funding.
- Minimal availability of qualified trainers and curriculum for entry level highway operations & maintenance positions.

Strategies

Utilizing a High School Career Training Program for Adults

The Transportation Systems Academy (TSA) was a breakthrough program modifying traditional technical education programs so that it directly related to jobs. The TSA was originally developed to be deployed in a high school setting but was then transformed for working adults.

Best practices

1. Deploy a systematic method for identifying, recruiting and training potential transportation workers.
2. Have strong buy-in and support from employers. Programs are stronger if they work with a diverse set of employers seeking the same skill sets.
3. Have hands-on instruction delivered from experts in the field.
4. Include internships and work experiences whenever possible.
5. Link training and employment programs to future advancement opportunities (e.g. community colleges, professional development).

- TSA Fundamentals
 Transportation 101
 Respectful Work Environments
 Citizenship and Community Participation
 Basics of a Good Road
 Winter Roads
 Project Planning & Selling
 Construction Math
 CDL Basics
 Internship
 Certifications:
 -First Aid/CPR
 -OSHA-10
 -Work Zone/Flagging

“The CDL instruction with the simulator was the most important part of the course for me because of the hands-on. And the flagging certificate really helped me out too when I got a job. I applied for my CDL and got my permit and got hired by a construction company. When I’m 21, my company will help me get my CDL and pay for it too. But learning about the log book and pre-trip inspection through the CDL course helps me on the job even now.” - TSA Graduate



Displaying Career Pathways to Raise Awareness



Best practices

1. Make them visual.
2. Use real life stories.
3. Provide up-to-date resources.
4. Create videos when possible!

Build a Career Pathways Network

An expanded Workforce Development Network is vital to insuring that resources are used effectively, potential workers are connected with employers, and training programs are developed for real life jobs.

Best Practices

1. Create opportunities to bring together private and public sector employers to develop specific trainings.
2. Establish a central entity to distribute information, connect partners, and insure limited resources are utilized properly.
3. Seek out and bring together individuals from all aspects of career pathways including trainers, employers, educational facilities, and labor organizations.
4. Build a set of skills that are valued across industries.

For More Information:
<http://www.uvm.edu/~transctr/workforcedev/>

