



## Strengthening Working Families Initiative

### March 2018 Industry Expert Call on Advanced Manufacturing: Summary

The March 2018 Industry Expert Call on Advanced Manufacturing provided an opportunity for Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees to hear from Kristina Szcrybak, Executive Director of West Virginia Women Work. During the call, Kristina discussed two broad topics of interest to SWFI grantees that target advanced manufacturing opportunities for their participants. First, Kristina described strategies for helping her [Step Up for Women](http://www.womenwork.org/stepupamp) (<http://www.womenwork.org/stepupamp>) participants move onto and along a career pathway towards a career in advanced manufacturing. Kristina then described effective outreach and recruitment strategies for “selling” advanced manufacturing to potential participants. This document outlines key takeaways from the call; please contact your TA coach to discuss how these key takeaways can be implemented in your program. In future TA resources and activities, we will continue to address grantee questions related to career pathways and outreach and recruitment.

#### Career Pathways

Kristina shared information about the pre-apprenticeship career pathway model used by the Step Up for Women advanced manufacturing training program. This model is described in Department of Labor [Training and Employment Notice 13-12](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_13-12.pdf) ([https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN\\_13-12.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_13-12.pdf)). The pre-apprenticeship model is designed to prepare under-represented workers with the skills and competencies needed to enter Registered Apprenticeship programs. Here are some key takeaways from that portion of the discussion:

- The Step Up for Women pre-apprenticeship model pairs classroom education with job training.
- Step Up for Women administers the Test of Adult Basic Education assessment at intake to identify participants’ math and reading levels.
- Step Up for Women participants are generally very low skilled, and start with math skills at the 5th or 6th grade level. The program provides remedial math to bring participants up by 2 or 3 grade levels. Once participants have reached an 8th grade math level, they move to “Shop Math” where they use hand tools to work through math problems. This allows participants to use math in a practical setting as they would on the job.
- Participants face other challenges, including a need for child care and work supports. Many participants (40 percent) are single mothers, care for aging parents, and most (75 percent) earn less than \$10,000 per year on entry to the program. Step Up for Women provides work supports while participants are in training, such as appropriate work attire, bus passes, and tools.
- Step Up for Women shows participants that jobs in advanced manufacturing lead to higher wages and a long-term career path.
  - The program does a side-by-side comparison between careers in Advanced Manufacturing and other industries typically accessible to entry level workers with lower skills and no training.
  - The program offers participants certificates in skills, such as machine operator, that can be used as a first step on a career pathway to higher-skilled jobs in advanced manufacturing, such as a welder.



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- Step Up uses [ToolingU \(https://www.toolingu.com/\)](https://www.toolingu.com/) to supplement hands-on classes. ToolingU uses a competency model framework that divides performance into a specific set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities. It includes 9 functional areas and 60 competency models to help identify gaps, define requirements, and provide specific guidance for development.
- Step Up for Women's model has been successful in preparing participants for a career pathway in advanced manufacturing: 86 percent of participants have graduated from the program, and 87 percent of graduates found employment in the field.

More information on [career pathways and competency models for advanced manufacturing \(https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/blog/general/2018/03/19/16/49/Connecting\\_SWFI\\_participants\\_to\\_opportunities\\_in\\_advanced\\_manufacturing\)](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/blog/general/2018/03/19/16/49/Connecting_SWFI_participants_to_opportunities_in_advanced_manufacturing) can be found on the SWFI CoP.

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## Outreach and Recruitment

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Kristina Sczrybak presented several strategies for outreach and recruitment in advanced manufacturing:

- Consider what prevents an individual from seeking career opportunities or training in advanced manufacturing. For example, try to understand why people do not apply and what the barriers are.
- Identify the barriers the outreach and recruitment need to overcome. For West Virginia Women Work the four main barriers are:
  - The target population is less likely to have skill-building opportunities;
  - The target population lacks confidence and fears unfair treatment;
  - The target population has limited exposure to career opportunities; and
  - Career pathways are not typically marketed to the target population.
- West Virginia Women Work surveys participants to find out why they DO apply to the program and four themes have emerged: family, income, pride in career, and belief that they can succeed. This ongoing assessment helps the program design outreach materials and target recruitment to address motivators and barriers to participation. To address identified barriers and motivators, Kristina's team developed outreach and recruitment materials that use intentional wording, show the benefits of the careers accessible through training, and portray successful, realistic pictures of participants.
- Develop outreach and recruitment materials that help to motivate potential participants. Focus these materials on the three "Is":
  - **Inspiration.** Why do your potential participants want these careers? Provide reasons why SWFI is beneficial for them. For West Virginia Women Work, Virginia geared her materials towards participants' motivation to build a better life for themselves and their families, and to be a role model for their children.
  - **Income.** What can a career help participants achieve? Income is a great motivator for participants. When marketing the benefits of the program in increasing income, focus on the career not the job, and the ability to start a career without adding student loan debt.
  - **Imagery.** What draws participants' attention? "You can't be what you can't see." Show images of your target population on the job.
    - The images need to tap into motivators to encourage applicants. Purposefully show clean manufacturing environments. Materials can also positively compare the advanced manufacturing environment to those of home health care and child care workers, which are among the options typically available to low-skilled participants.



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- The Women's Equity Initiative has an [image library](http://womensequityinitiative.org/image-library/) (<http://womensequityinitiative.org/image-library/>) of women working in advanced manufacturing that is a helpful resource for SWFI grantees' own marketing materials.
- Language in marketing materials should be straightforward and accessible to potential participants. Don't be afraid to use bold language and graphics that will catch people's attention. Don't use imagery or professional jargon associated with other professions.
- For the Step Up program, the most fruitful advertising approaches are Facebook, print ads in the employment sections of local newspapers, and word of mouth.
  - Because Step Up program participants are typically women in their late 20s/early 30s, Facebook is more widely used by potential participants than Twitter or other social media platforms.
  - Craig's List ads in sections of job postings typically viewed by women have been useful.
  - [Examples of Step Up marketing materials](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/03/28/15/29/Peer-shared-examples-of-advanced-manufacturing-marketing-tools) (<https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/03/28/15/29/Peer-shared-examples-of-advanced-manufacturing-marketing-tools>) are on the CoP.