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South Bay Workforce Investment Board Becomes the First Workforce Board in the U.S. to Register Non-Traditional Apprenticeship Program Nationally

Hawthorne, CA – The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) has made history by becoming the first workforce board in the nation to register their non-traditional apprenticeship programs for national use. This milestone will allow SBWIB to support companies with apprenticeship programs that are scalable and transferable across all 50 states, helping businesses expand their skilled labor pool wherever they operate.

SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel hailed the achievement, stating, "We are excited to be at the forefront of this national effort. By registering our apprenticeship programs for nationwide use, we're empowering businesses to develop their workforce more effectively and efficiently. This is a game-changer for companies that have operations in multiple states, as it allows them to implement consistent, high-quality training across the board."

SBWIB partnered with California employers—Northrop Grumman, Joby Aero, Magnetika, Inc.—and the Institute for American Apprenticeship to launch three registered apprenticeships: Electronic Assembler, Aerospace Systems Assembler, and Aerospace Systems Technician. These partners recognize the value of an apprenticeship model that is flexible, scalable, and capable of meeting the dynamic needs of various industries. Partial funding for this initiative across California was provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant awarded to SBWIB.

What is a Non-Traditional Apprenticeship?

Unlike traditional apprenticeship programs, which focus on skilled trades in construction or in public safety, non-traditional apprenticeships expand the model into high-growth sectors such as healthcare, information technology, aerospace, energy, and advanced manufacturing. These programs offer hands-on, industry-specific training that equips individuals with the practical skills needed for a wide variety of fields.

"Non-traditional apprenticeships provide customized, flexible training that addresses the specific needs of businesses," Vogel explained. "By offering a broad range of apprenticeships across different industries, we help companies develop their workforce in a way that aligns with their unique business goals while also creating meaningful career pathways for workers."

Benefits for Apprentices and Employers

Apprentices benefit from hands-on training that prepares them for real-world challenges, allowing them to develop skills that are directly applicable to their chosen careers. Upon completing the program, apprentices earn a nationally recognized certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor, opening doors to better job opportunities and higher earning potential.

For employers, non-traditional apprenticeship programs offer a cost-effective way to train both new hires and incumbent workers. They provide an opportunity to build a loyal, skilled workforce while improving productivity and retention rates. Companies also have the flexibility to tailor training to their specific needs, ensuring their employees stay ahead of industry trends.

One notable success story is the Aero-Flex and Space-Flex apprenticeship programs developed by SBWIB. Originally designed to serve the aerospace sector, these programs have become a template for expanding apprenticeship models nationwide. Northrop Grumman has been a key partner, utilizing Aero-Flex to address the skills gap in advanced manufacturing and engineering. Through the program, participating companies receive access to a pipeline of talented job seekers ready for immediate employment.

Non-traditional apprenticeship programs offer a unique and effective way to develop skilled labor. By investing in non-traditional apprenticeship programs, employers can develop a skilled and productive workforce that can help them achieve their business objectives.

National Reach and Strategic Partnerships

The SBWIB's decision to register their apprenticeships for national use was driven by the needs of local California businesses, many of which operate across multiple states. "Companies told us they wanted to implement apprenticeships, but needed a solution that would work across state lines. Now, the apprenticeship programs we help them develop in California can be used wherever they do business across America," Vogel said.

This effort was further supported by SBWIB's work under a White House Initiative which aims to develop a skilled technical workforce for the space industry. This effort began two years ago and from this initiative the national Space Workforce Coalition (SWC) was formed.

[<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/08/fact-sheet-vice-president-kamala-harris-launches-call-to-action-to-bring-the-benefits-of-space-to-communities-across-america/>]

The SWC brings together regional programs from across the country to collaborate on addressing workforce needs, particularly for underrepresented groups in STEM careers; especially for those that may not otherwise have access to these types of career paths and opportunities. SWC members lead regional programs in California, Colorado, Alabama, Florida's Space Coast, the Gulf Coast of Louisiana and Mississippi. [<https://www.spaceworkforcecoalition.org/>]

The Southern California HUB is led by Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation (NGC) and the South Bay Workforce Investment Board. Coalition members, which includes NASA, collaborate with community colleges, employers, and many other partners on replicable and scalable approaches to attract, train and create employment opportunities.

Earlier this year, the work being done in California attracted the attention of the White House and the National Space Council, leading to a visit by Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff during Women's History Month. He hosted the first-ever National Space Council Roundtable on Women in Space at the South Bay Workforce Investment Board's corporate offices in Hawthorne. [<https://www.nasa.gov/image-article/second-gentleman-douglas-emhoff-participates-in-women-in-space-roundtable/>]

These partnerships with NASA, Northrop Grumman, and other industry leaders are part of a larger strategy to make the U.S. a global leader in space exploration and technology. The SBWIB's nationally registered apprenticeship programs support this work.

The Future of Workforce Development

With the additional reach and flexibility provided by their nationally registered programs, SBWIB is poised to expand apprenticeships in a range of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, energy, and the arts. The board's continued focus on non-traditional apprenticeship programs is set to shape the future of workforce development across the U.S.

"Workforce development is key to economic growth," Vogel emphasized. "Our nationally registered apprenticeship programs not only help companies stay competitive, but they also provide individuals with the skills and opportunities needed to succeed in today's evolving economy."

About South Bay Workforce Investment Board

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting workforce development in Southern California. Through its apprenticeship programs and partnerships with businesses, SBWIB offers no-cost services that help both individuals and companies thrive in an ever-changing economic landscape.

For more information about SBWIB and its training programs, visit [www.sbwib.org], [www.spaceworkforcecoalition.org] or [www.sbwib.org/space-flex]. You can also contact SBWIB at (310) 970-7700.

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