



NEWS

South Bay Workforce Investment Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Bay Workforce Investment Board
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OVER 5,600 WORKERS SECURE HIGH-DEMAND JOBS THROUGH WEST LA COLLEGE AND SOUTH BAY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD'S PIONEERING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FUNDED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

HAWTHORNE, CA – In a significant nationwide workforce achievement, over 5,600 workers have been placed into pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship roles through the innovative collaboration between West Los Angeles College (WLAC) and the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB). This milestone was reached under a \$12 million U.S. Department of Labor grant awarded in 2019, as part of the Growing Advanced Manufacturing Apprentices Across America (GAMAAA) program.

Supporting Non-Traditional Apprenticeships.

The initiative not only met, but exceeded its goal of enrolling 5,000 workers in high-demand sectors like aerospace and bioscience, training a new generation of workers through non-traditional apprenticeships. These non-traditional apprenticeships differ from the usual trades-based programs by focusing on industries like advanced manufacturing, biotech, and aerospace, offering opportunities to diverse participants, including mid-career professionals, veterans, and those without prior work experience. The programs cater to individuals looking to pivot careers, retrain, or upskill, allowing them to gain hands-on experience in emerging sectors while earning a wage.

More than 1,532 workers in the Southern California region alone completed apprenticeships, with the SBWIB playing a key role in generating awareness and fostering collaboration across workforce development organizations nationwide. The effort also contributes to California's broader objective of serving 500,000 apprentices by 2029, aligning with national workforce priorities to address skills gaps in critical industries.

Real-Life Impact

One such success story is Torrance resident Shawn-Patrick Kunane Amorin, a 46-year-old student at West Los Angeles College. Through SBWIB's Aero-Flex program, Amorin transitioned

into aircraft manufacturing despite having no prior experience. Reflecting on his journey, Amorin said, "The SBWIB/WLAC Aero-Flex apprenticeship was the key for me to get into this field without prior work experience. I strongly urge anyone wanting to get into the aviation industry to take advantage of the SBWIB programs and the WLAC Aircraft Structures Mechanic Assembler apprenticeship training." While Amorin was completing his training, he impressed his supervisors with his enthusiasm and skill set and earned a promotion to Shop Manager.

The Aero-Flex and Bio-Flex models are designed to provide customized, flexible learning pathways for students and workers, allowing them to advance in specialized fields while meeting the specific needs of local employers.

A Collaborative Effort.

A key component of the success was the involvement of high-profile industry partners like Northrop Grumman Corp., alongside educational institutions such as El Camino College and workforce development experts like Training Funding Partners, the Institute for American Apprenticeship, and the Aero-Flex consortium of employers.

"We are incredibly proud of the collaborative team effort that enabled us to exceed the goals set by the Department of Labor grant," said SBWIB Director Jan Vogel. "Our Aero-Flex and Bio-Flex pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship models, developed here in the South Bay, are now being implemented nationwide, offering a blueprint for other regions to build upon."

For more information about apprenticeship opportunities and how to participate in these programs, visit www.sbwib.org or call 310-970-7700.

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Photo caption: Shawn-Patrick Kunane Amorin, student at West Los Angeles College, through SBWIB's Aero-Flex program, transitioned into aircraft manufacturing.



Pictured left to right to congratulate Shawn-Patrick are; Matt Liknaitzky, Co-CEO of Sling Pilot Academy; Jan Vogel, Executive Director of SBWIB; Shawn-Patrick Kunane Amorin, Aero-Flex Graduate; Chris Cagle, Business Services Director at SBWIB; Alex Cabalu, Special Projects Coordinator at SBWIB.