

EMPOWERING MANUFACTURING:

BUILDING THE NATION'S
WORKFORCE TO UNLEASH
POSSIBILITY AND
OPPORTUNITY

One question that continues to be top of mind in the manufacturing industry: how to attract, train, and retain high performers. The Tooling U-SME team is fortunate to work with communities, employers, and educators across the country on workforce development. The national talent crisis in manufacturing requires unprecedented collaboration, and we have always embodied collaboration as a core value. Now, more than ever, we are working hard to find like-minded partners to innovate, collaborate, and accelerate effective solutions to take bolder steps toward greater impact.



Jeannine Kunz
Chief Workforce Development Officer

As the workforce development division of SME, Tooling U-SME recognizes the dynamic nature of manufacturing and is constantly adapting our programs to align with the ever-evolving talent development needs of the industry. For Tooling U-SME to make the biggest impact on a national challenge, we need to think nationally and act locally. We also need to see locally — and share and scale nationally. That means discovering local programs that are successful at building a strong workforce and determining how to bring them to other areas.

Countless programs throughout the country show excellent results; however, sometimes those programs are geographically bound to strictly serve a local area or don't have the ability to scale nationally. These programs are helping reach existing and new audiences such as high school and college students, dislocated workers, under-employed individuals, transitioning military personnel and veterans, at-risk youth, and others who are seeking new employment in high-demand manufacturing jobs.

So much learning is available. We need to create a network so that best practices are adopted by others and conversations happen. There is no time to waste. Manufacturing is a critical engine of North America's economic growth and prosperity. The industry and nation are at risk if we don't revitalize the industry's industrial base, grow the talent pipeline, and enhance the skills and productivity of our workforce.

At Tooling U-SME, we are focusing on actively bringing together partners to make this happen. As we have been involved in workforce development for decades, this is a natural imperative.

The following are some of the new partnerships, programs, and initiatives that have begun to build the nation's new workforce.



GOAL OVER THREE-YEARS

25
COLLEGES

75,000
INDIVIDUALS INTO
MANUFACTURING

The Manufacturing Imperative – Workforce Pipeline Challenge

In 2023, SME announced a new initiative, **The Manufacturing Imperative – Workforce Pipeline Challenge (MI-WPC)**, involving a partnership with 25 community and technical colleges to address the urgency of revitalizing manufacturing's industrial base, growing the industry's talent pipeline, and enhancing the skills and productivity of manufacturing workers.

MI-WPC builds awareness of careers in manufacturing, optimizes workforce systems, and accelerates the education and skill development needed to place individuals in jobs making family-sustaining wages. Each school has a goal of enrolling 1,000 individuals per year, with pathways that lead to jobs in manufacturing

This will have an immediate and positive impact on the industry with our collective three-year goal across the 25 schools to bring 75,000 more individuals into manufacturing.

“There is not a more critical time to be actively involved in igniting the manufacturing workforce pipeline.”

Dr. Vicki P. Karolewics,
president of Wallace State Community College



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Goodwill Toward All Manufacturing Men and Women

You may know Goodwill Industries International for its retail thrift shop store fronts BUT, 85% of store revenue goes directly toward supporting community-based programs—including employment training and job placement services.

As a part of this training initiative, Tooling U-SME and Missouri Enterprise teamed up with Goodwill Industries to offer manufacturing certification classes, including Certified Manufacturing Associate (CMfgA) certification, to underprivileged residents of Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas (MoKan Goodwill).

The CMfgA program lasts three weeks, during which students attend “blended learning” classes. The mix includes hands-on training in a lab in partnership with Missouri Enterprise (part of the MEP National Network to strengthen U.S. manufacturers) and in-person classroom instruction.



“If we can help them earn their certification, we can put them on the fast track to promising full-time jobs that pay a livable wage, which is something they wouldn’t necessarily have access to otherwise.”

- Katherine Maloney,
MoKan Goodwill’s vice president of workforce development



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Training for Success: Breaking Down Barriers to Employment

Overcoming homelessness, language skills, basic education, disability, poverty, and childcare needs can be monumental tasks for a significant portion of America’s job-seeking population. No one should have to face these challenges alone. That’s why organizations like The Jane Addams Resource Corp. (JARC), is helping alleviate these obstacles for underrepresented populations.

By connecting people to resources like job training, English language courses, career counseling, and childcare assistance, JARC, is creating a more equitable and prosperous future in America. And with employers increasingly recognizing the value of a diverse workforce, these resources offer a powerful opportunity for individuals to find meaningful, life-sustaining work.

JARC provides two main services — Careers in Manufacturing program, which provides job training in and placement fields such as CNC machining for unemployed adults, and the Business and Workforce Services segment which designs and executes worker training for manufacturers and their employees. Participants are also eligible to receive an industry-recognized credential such as the Certified Manufacturing Associate (CMfgA) through Tooling-U SME’s certification program.

“Our mission is to ensure that people who work don’t live in poverty, and we use the advanced manufacturing sector as a mechanism to basically transition people from poverty into the middle class because manufacturing has such a wealth of middle-skilled career pathways.”

- Regan Brewer, JARC’s president



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Creating a Rosier Future for Women in Manufacturing

During World War II, the iconic “Rosie the Riveter” campaign spurred women across the nation to join the workforce in support of America’s defense and aviation industries.

Rosie has been a cultural phenomenon ever since, inspiring and empowering generations of girls and women in all walks of life. Despite an initial 65% surge in the female workforce and subsequent successes, women still only account for 29% of manufacturing labor in the United States. As a result, Rosie is being called upon to redouble her efforts in a new program launched earlier this year by MACNY, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY).

MACNY’s “Real Life Rosies” initiative provides critical training and support services for women interested in pursuing manufacturing careers. It also connects them with top manufacturers in New York— and the potential for good-paying jobs. Backed by a grant of nearly \$1 million from Empire State Development’s Office of Strategic Workforce Development, the 12-week program features a mix of in-person and virtual classes. Participants must be at least 18 years old—the oldest Rosie to date is 68— eligible to work in the U.S. and able to attend classes.

“We’ve been hearing for years that manufacturers have struggled to fill middle-skilled positions, including skilled trades, due to factors like baby boomer retirements and a focus on college education as the only viable pathway to a rewarding career,” Blagg says. “MACNY’s workforce development strategy addresses this challenge through registered apprenticeships, helping employers build a skilled workforce by upskilling entry-level employees and providing opportunities for on-the-job training and college classes.”

Real Life Rosies has graduated 23 women with another dozen currently enrolled. The majority of students have little or no experience in manufacturing.

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Unlocking Post-Prison Workforce Potential

- **More than 1.6 million Americans are currently incarcerated** (The World Prison Brief)
- **There are 505 inmates for every 100,000 citizens in the U.S.** (Statista Research)
- **Nearly half (44%) of former inmates are rearrested within the first year of their release; and 68% are rearrested within three years** (U.S. Department of Justice)



Second chances and redemption are instrumental to the national ethos—instilled in the American dream and our way of life. But a significant part of the population has too often been left out or not given the same opportunities: people serving or who have completed prison sentences.


Nashville-based Hamilton-Ryker is changing the trajectory for incarcerated individuals by providing access to vital resources that can help them succeed and become rehabilitated as free, educated, and contributing members of the workforce upon release. Hamilton-Ryker has partnered with Tooling U-SME to offer Industrial Manufacturing Maintenance Technician, and Maintenance Technician programs, as well as a two-year Welding program, and apprenticeships in Dock Working and Metal Fabrication.

Learn, Work, Earn, Live

The program includes a mix of classroom-style training called related-technical instruction (RTI)—provided by Tooling U-SME—and on-the-job training/learning (OTJ/OTL). Tooling U-SME’s Apprenticeship Frameworks support nationally recognized Department of Labor apprenticeship programs and are easily incorporated into existing programs or used as a foundation for new apprenticeship programs. Read more about how this partnership was able to provide job seekers with the skills employers want and a second chance for those to have a successful career in manufacturing.



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