



WNY
MANUFACTURING
AND TECH
**Workforce
Coalition**

**Annual
Progress Report**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

March 2025



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.
FOUNDATION



University at Buffalo
Regional Institute
School of Architecture and Planning



**Empire State
Development**

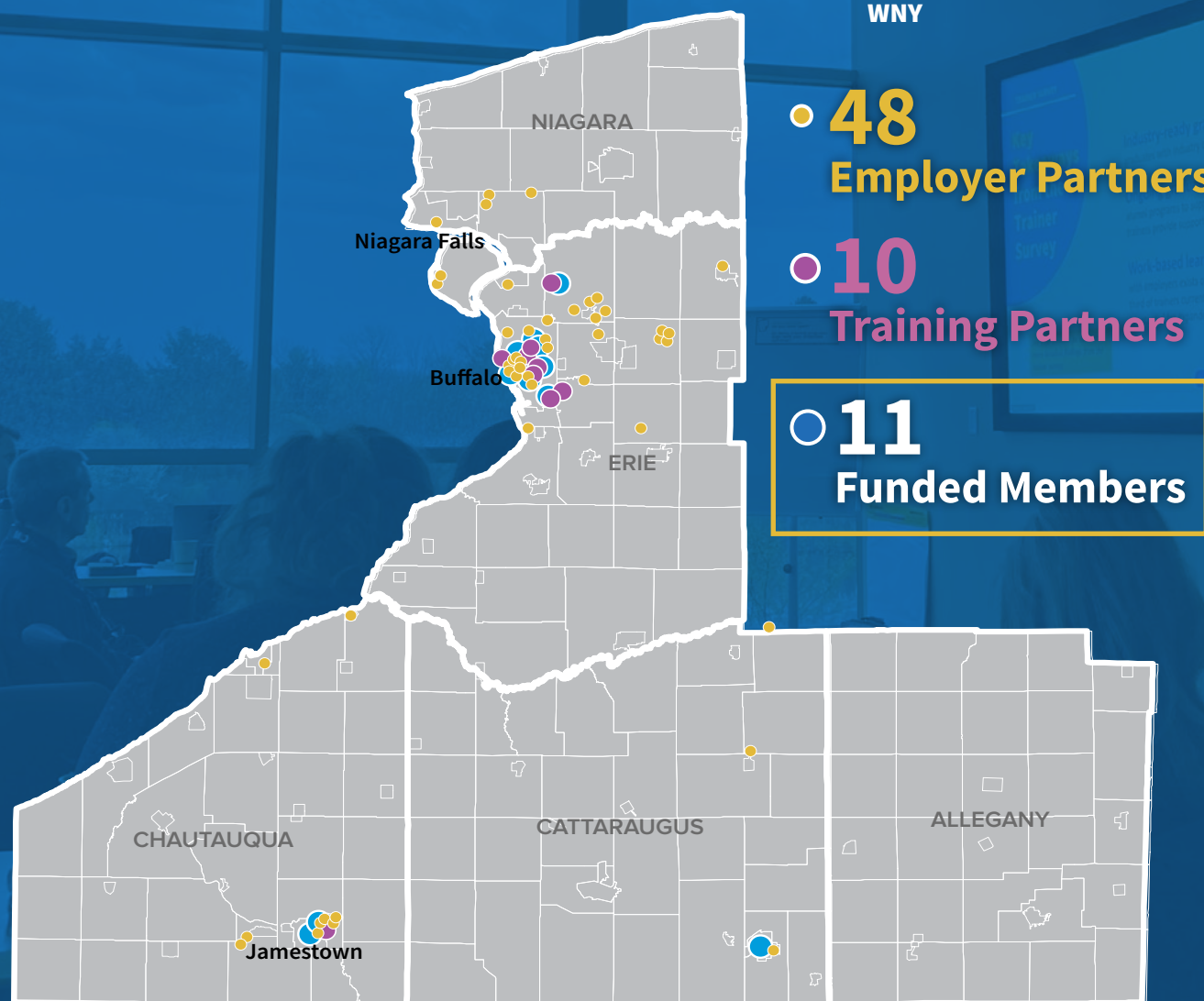


**Center for
Regional
Strategies**

The WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition (“the Coalition”) is a collaborative effort designed to address the skills gaps in the manufacturing and tech sectors in Western New York (WNY). The Coalition emerged from partnerships that were forged around two U.S. Economic Development Administration grants that included the Good Jobs Challenge and the Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

As our region’s grant applications received some but not all of the funding we sought, the stakeholders that united around these initiatives recognized the value of their collective work and the proposed strategies that emerged. They committed to working together to leverage the groundwork that was laid, establishing a foundation for a stronger regional workforce.

With support from Empire State Development (ESD) and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (RCWJF), this early work culminated in the official formation of the Coalition in 2023 with 11 funded members and 10 interconnected projects. This report showcases the Coalition’s achievements in 2024, its first year of implementation, both as individual Coalition members and collectively across the Coalition.



• **48**
Employer Partners

• **10**
Training Partners

○ **11**
Funded Members

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About the Coalition



The WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition (“the Coalition”) officially launched in late 2023 with a unique ecosystem approach that prioritizes aligning training with industry needs, facilitating careers in manufacturing and tech, and connecting local businesses with a qualified workforce.

In 2024, 1,493 employers across WNY posted 10,409 openings for manufacturing jobs while 1,756 employers posted 6,057 openings for tech jobs, all requiring skills but less than a four-year college degree. Despite the evolving economic landscape in both industries, demand for skilled talent remains strong and a lack of qualified candidates can significantly hinder operations and impede growth for businesses.

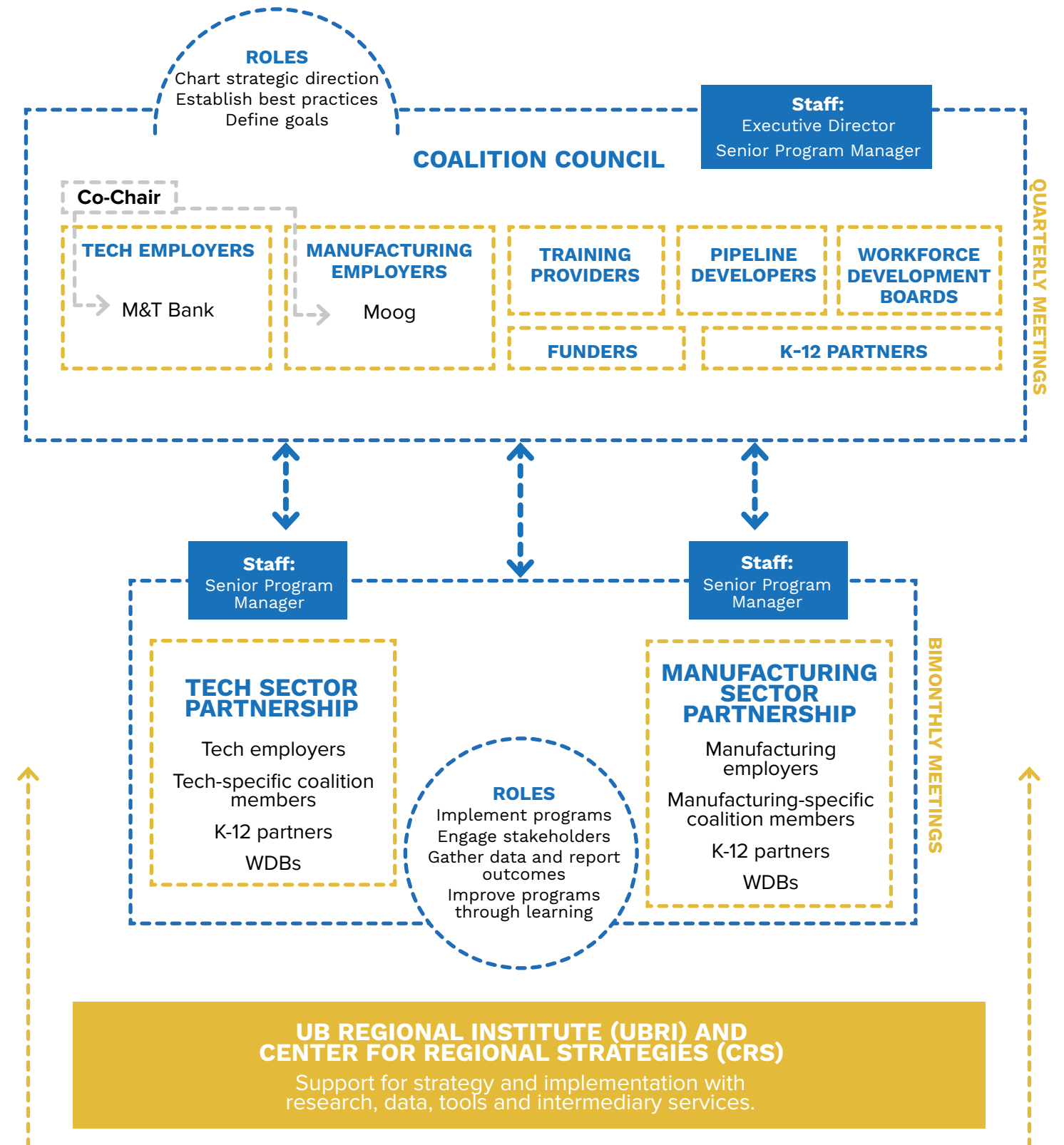
To address employer demand for talent, the Coalition brings together workforce trainers, industry, employers, pipeline developers, workforce development boards and community-based organizations. Coalition work is fueled by intermediaries that play a key role in connecting the dots across the ecosystem, assessing needs, identifying solutions, tracking progress and ensuring resources provided to the Coalition reach communities in need across the region.

The Coalition has funded members and funded projects, which are detailed in this report. It also encompasses a broader network of members with more than 40 employer partners. The Coalition operates under the framework of an employer-led Coalition Council (see the organizational chart on the next page). Led by co-chairs from M&T Bank and Moog Inc., the Coalition Council is responsible for charting strategic direction, establishing best practices, and defining goals. In addition, two interconnected employer-led sector partnerships are responsible for implementing programs, engaging stakeholders, and reporting on program outcomes.

This report highlights the Coalition’s accomplishments in 2024, the Coalition’s first full year of existence and program implementation. It presents strategic priorities for 2025 that will contribute to growing outcomes and collective impacts for years to come.

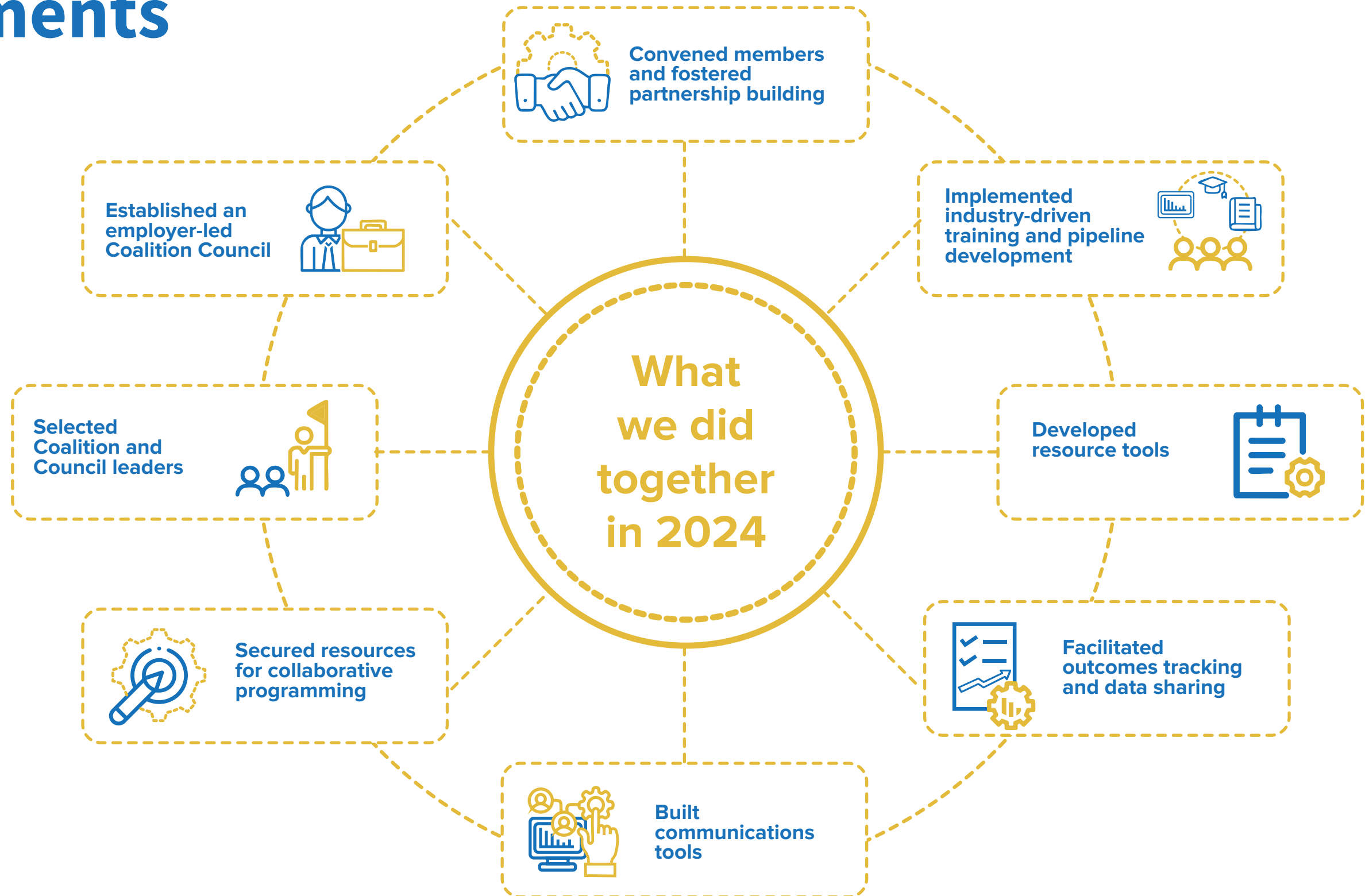
“This was an exciting year for the Coalition... and it will continue to grow. The more impact we have, the better our ability to ramp up our efforts.”

Stephen Tucker, *President and CEO of Northland Workforce Training Center and Executive Director of the WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition*



Coalition Accomplishments

The Coalition made significant strides in advancing its mission of developing a skilled workforce for the manufacturing and technology sectors in WNY. Key accomplishments include the launch and expansion of industry-driven training programs, the forging of strong partnerships through regular convenings, and the successful securing of multi-year funding for member initiatives. Additionally, the Coalition developed valuable resources, including communication tools, research tools, and a data-sharing framework, to enhance collaboration, track progress, and inform future strategies.



What we did together in 2024

Selected Coalition and Council leaders

Stephen Tucker, President and CEO of Northland Workforce Training Center, was appointed as the Coalition's executive director. His role involves developing strategic direction, convening members, forging employer partnerships, and cultivating training programs that address employer needs.



To enhance and support these efforts, the intermediary team added a staff member dedicated to expanding the Coalition Council employer base, convening members and fostering partnerships across the Coalition.

The Coalition Council is co-led by Mike Wisler, Sr. Executive Vice President & Chief Information Officer at M&T Bank, and Paul Wilkinson, Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at Moog. Mike and Paul also provide leadership for the tech and manufacturing sector partnerships, respectively.

Established an employer-led Coalition Council



The Coalition Council was formed in the first quarter of 2024. It brings together funded members, along with manufacturing and

tech employers, pipeline developers, workforce development boards, K-12 partners and funders. Membership grew throughout the year. By December 2024, the Coalition Council included more than 80 member organizations, including nearly 50 employer partners. This collaborative framework and ecosystem building approach ensured that workforce strategies and programs were holistic and centered around industry needs for talent.

Convened members and fostered partnership building

The Coalition held regular meetings to facilitate communication, build trust among members and foster collaboration among diverse



workforce stakeholders. The Coalition Council met three times in 2024 with a kickoff meeting held at Moog in Elma, a second meeting held at Cutco in Olean and a third meeting held at M&T in Buffalo. The two sector partnerships met three times, with bimonthly meetings held throughout the year. Two funded members meetings were also held in August and October 2024. These meetings fostered open communication and information sharing among members, spurred new programs, and fostered more than 100 Coalition connections.

Implemented industry-driven training and pipeline development



The Coalition supported funded members in launching and/or growing 10 interconnected training and pipeline development programs leading to jobs in manufacturing and tech. These funded Coalition programs included:

- Advanced Manufacturing Training at Jamestown Community College
- Clean Technology Training Lab at Northland Workforce Training Center, in addition to a 12-week CNC certification program
- Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Program
- Entry-level Manufacturing Technician certificate led by UB Center for Industrial Effectiveness
- Goodskills Career Builder led by Goodwill of WNY
- IT Training at Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology
- IT Training at Per Scholas
- Jumpstart Plus II at Trocaire College
- Manufacturing and Tech Talent Pipeline Initiative led by Workforce Development Boards of Cattaraugus-Allegany and Chautauqua Counties
- Tech Intermediary Programming led by TechBuffalo

In addition, the Coalition spurred the creation of a new Finishing and Deburring training program to meet employer demand and address the lack of training available in the region for this crucial manufacturing role. The development of this program is documented in this report within the Lessons Learned and Promising Practices sections.

Developed resource tools



Research tools created for the Coalition include a comprehensive online mapping portal, enabling trainers, hiring employers and wraparound service providers to connect more effectively. Research completed for the Coalition also includes three surveys – one each for employers, trainers and pipeline developers, to better understand their programs, hiring needs, workforce challenges and strategic priorities for the Coalition. Findings have been shared with Coalition members at meetings of the Coalition Council and sector partnerships. More information about these and other research tools can be found later in the Coalition Resources section of this report.

Facilitated outcomes tracking and data sharing



The Coalition is focused on tracking progress and impact and sharing promising practices. To support this, the Coalition developed an online portal for members to share outcomes data and project updates, facilitating collective outcomes analysis across the Coalition.

In addition, the Coalition signed a data sharing agreement between UBRI and New York State (NYS) Department of Labor (DOL). The agreement will enable funded Coalition members to track wage outcomes using public data maintained by NYS DOL.

Built communications tools



A variety of communications tools were developed to promote the Coalition, highlight its work, expand the base of potential partners and attract additional investment. This included a Coalition logo, letterhead, website, mini-book, marketing package, and shared contact information for all Coalition members.

Secured resources for collaborative programming



The Coalition successfully competed for and secured public and private funding to support Coalition programs and activities. Coalition funders include NYS Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD), Empire State Development (ESD), New York Power Authority (NYPA) and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (RCWJF).

Coalition Outcomes Across Funded Programs

Eight out of 10 funded coalition programs launched successfully in 2024. The remaining two—UB TCIE’s entry-level manufacturing technician certificate program and Manufacturing and Tech Talent Pipeline Initiative being implemented by the Workforce Development Boards of Cattaraugus-Allegany and Chautauqua Counties—are slated for implementation in 2025.

Some training programs just completed at the tail end of 2024 and others will continue into 2025. These early results highlight the significant impact of these collaborative efforts aimed at training individuals for in-demand jobs in manufacturing and tech and moving them into jobs that offer career pathways with living wages.

By working closely with hiring employers, pipeline developers, workforce development boards and training organizations, the Coalition is fostering a robust ecosystem for talent development. Outcomes of this ecosystem approach, designed to generate growth over time, demonstrate the power and potential of these training initiatives to address critical workforce needs.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

OUTREACH 3,075

PARTICIPATION IN PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 697

ENROLLMENT IN TRAINING 293

TRAINING COMPLETIONS 239

CERTIFICATES 205

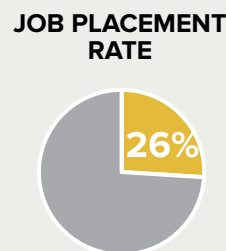
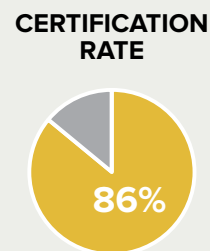
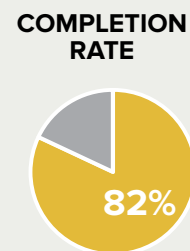
JOB PLACEMENT 63

AVG ANNUAL WAGE \$43,713

AVG HOURLY WAGE \$21.02

\$2.75 M Economic Impact
(average wages earned across 63 job placements)

+36%
Compared to minimum wage



Source: UBRI analysis of outcomes data provided by funded members.

Hiring Employers:

WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition Member or Coalition Council Member

- Amazon E-Commerce
- Buffalo Botanical Gardens
- Casey Machine
- Catholic Health
- Centene Corporation
- Centivo
- Cimolai-HY
- Cummins JEP
- Dresser Total Piping Solutions

- FedEx
- Indian Marble
- Kaleida Health
- Keller Technology
- Liston
- Lornamead
- M&T Bank
- Maclean-Fogg
- Moog

- National Fuel
- Neighborhood Health Center
- Northwest Bank
- NSC Global
- Odo
- Peerless
- Rosina Foods
- Seneca One
- Servotronics

- Spectrum
- Tesla
- Treehouse Foods
- Trocaire College
- Univera Healthcare
- Williamsville Central School District

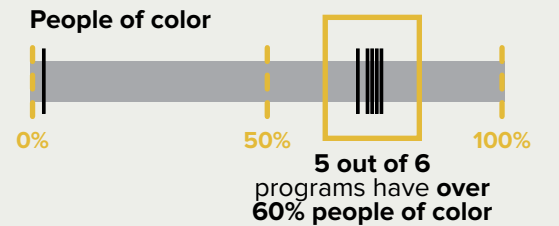
Over 3,000 individuals received information about a coalition training program, and/or career opportunities in manufacturing and tech. This includes individuals who attended workshops, information sessions, or were contacted directly through outreach efforts. Nearly 700 individuals participated in career awareness activities implemented by DIDIWNY and TechBuffalo.

63 students who completed training were placed in a job, filling roles that included Welders, Machinists, Finishers, Mill Operators, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operators, Industrial Maintenance Technicians, and Postsecondary Computer Science Teachers. A tech job hiring event hosted on February 19, 2025 facilitated hiring for additional tech and tech-aligned roles such as IT Support, Help Desk Call Center Specialist, Hardware and Network Support, and Tech Customer Service.

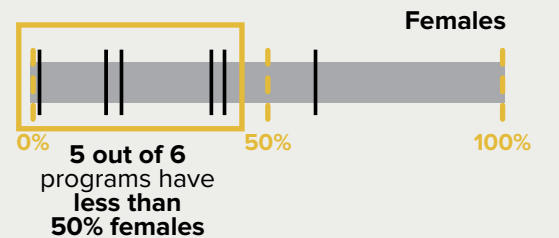
In 2024, **293 individuals enrolled in a coalition training program** to prepare for a career in manufacturing or tech. Nearly 240 individuals completed these programs by the end of January 2025.

IN MOST COALITION TRAINING PROGRAMS...

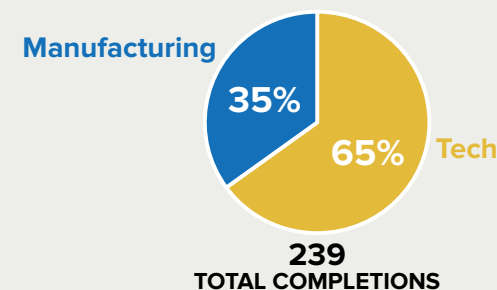
...individuals of color accounted for at least 7 out of 10 participants.



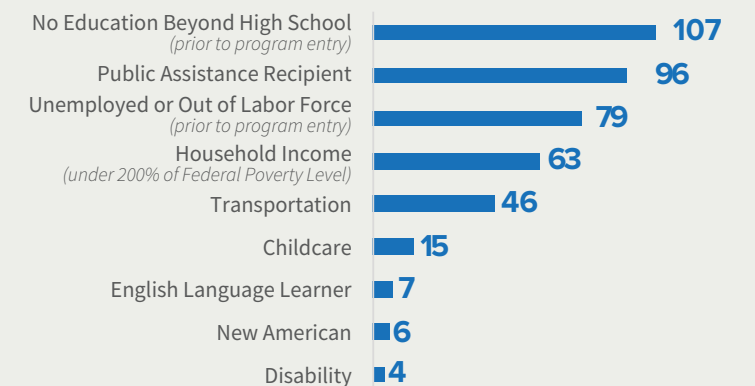
...females accounted for less than half of participants.



Manufacturing programs at JCC and NWTC accounted for 35% of completions, while tech training programs at BCAT, Goodwill, Per Scholas and Trocaire accounted for 65% of the total.



Many individuals enrolled in coalition training programs faced barriers to training and employment. The most common barriers reported by Coalition members for their participants included:



Progress on Funded Programs

TRAINERS

BUFFALO CENTER FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY (BCAT)	P. 13
GOODWILL OF WESTERN NEW YORK	P. 15
JAMESTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (JCC)	P. 17
NORTHLAND WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTER (NWTC)	P. 19
PER SCHOLAS BUFFALO	P. 21
TROCAIRE COLLEGE	P. 23
UB - THE CENTER FOR INDUSTRIAL EFFECTIVENESS (UB TCIE)	P. 25

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

WDBS-CATT-ALLEGANY AND CHAUTAUQUA COUNTIES	P. 26
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PIPELINE DEVELOPERS

DREAM IT DO IT WNY (DIDIWNY)	P. 27
TECHBUFFALO	P. 29

Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology (BCAT)

In 2024 BCAT expanded its IT training to meet growing demand for work-ready IT candidates. Tech training at BCAT leads to CompTIA certification in four areas including IT Fundamentals, IT Technical Support, IT Networking and IT Security. Training includes instruction, certification fees, wraparound services, job placement coaching, and a participant stipend. With funding from OSWD and RCWJF, BCAT is preparing over 100 Buffalo residents annually for careers in tech and tech-aligned roles with career advancement opportunity.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

CURRICULUM: Developed and implemented four core training classes in 2024, including IT Fundamentals, IT Tech Support, IT Security and IT Networking.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS: Implemented a new, progressive pathway to address limited fundamental skills among incoming students. Currently, a seven- to eight-week program with a CompTIA credential provides a strong foundation for advanced training. High-quality instructors, including one with a Teach for America background, contribute to strong programs and student success.

CERTIFICATION: Provides students with the opportunity to earn industry-recognized CompTIA certifications at the end of each course. Up to four credentials are possible. Time for study and practice have been incorporated into the program to support student success.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT: Established an IT Corporate Council to foster partnerships with local tech employers and create employment and internship opportunities for students.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

IT Fundamentals

This seven- to eight-week program prepares individuals for an entry-level job in tech or a tech-enabled role. Students may also pursue additional study in the programs below.

Certifications: IT Fundamentals

IT Tech Support

This program prepares students for IT support specialist roles.

Certifications: IT Tech Support

IT Networking Pro

This program prepares students for roles as a network specialist.

Certifications: Network+

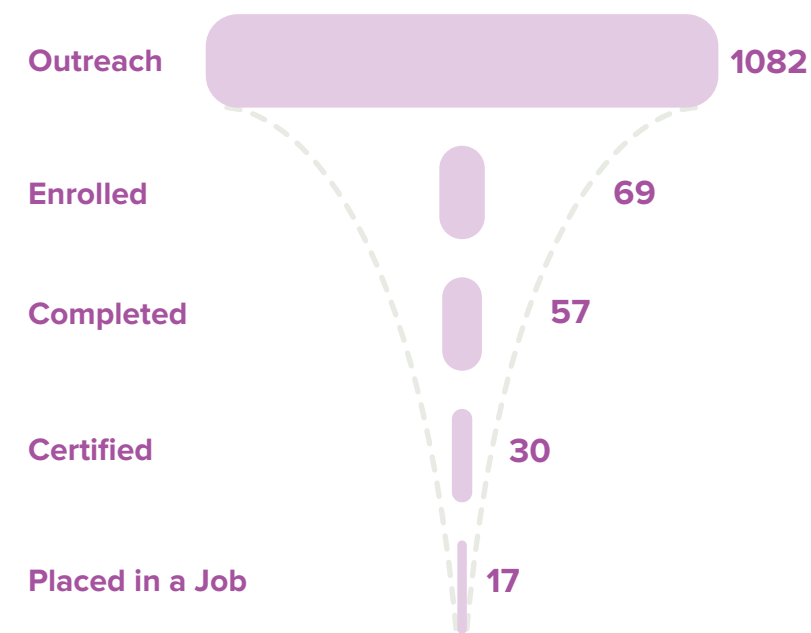
IT Security

This program prepares students to work in cybersecurity roles.

Certifications: IT Security

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of December 31, 2024



IT training at BCAT reached 1,082 potential participants in 2024, with 69 enrolling and 57 completing training. Individuals of color account for nearly 70% of participants in BCAT's training programs. More than 40% of participants are female.

Thirty-seven participants earned certifications in 2024, including 20 certified in IT Fundamentals, four certified in A+ and six certified in IT Security.

Seventeen graduates secured employment, with three in tech roles, two in tech-adjacent roles, and nine actively seeking a tech role. The average reported wage for graduates was \$42,000/year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Curriculum Enhancements: Ongoing improvements beyond IT Fundamentals will address declining demand for step-up classes. Additional professional development opportunities will focus on interview readiness and job market navigation. Incorporating additional study time and practice modules into the curricula will help more students earn difficult certifications.

Incentives for participation: Progressive stipends will encourage continued engagement with the program and positive outcomes.

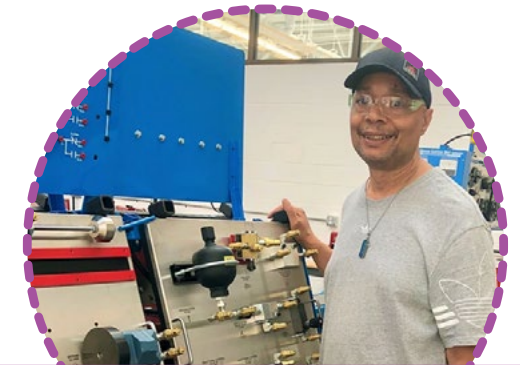
Tech Job Fair: BCAT participated in a tech job fair being led by TechBuffalo in February 2025, bringing together tech-enabled employers and recent graduates seeking IT and tech-enabled roles.

Industry Partnerships: BCAT will continue to leverage the Coalition and a newly formed IT Corporate Council to create employment and other opportunities for participants.

Student Portfolios: BCAT will create a comprehensive portfolio that showcases student accomplishments to highlight their skills and achievements to potential employers.

Goodwill of Western New York

Goodwill of WNY is expanding Goodskills Career Builder with a focus on training in Erie County. Goodskills Career Builder is an industry-driven program with sector specific recruitment, career readiness training, an experiential work environment, support services, and technical and job training. It includes placement assistance and career coaching for up to three years. The program prepares individuals for manufacturing and tech-aligned roles and provides a strong foundation for additional study. Goodwill anticipates that 150 underserved residents will complete training over its two-year grant period.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

OUTREACH: Filling two outreach liaison positions in the first half of 2024 enabled Goodwill to ramp up outreach efforts in the second half of the year, expanding outreach beyond the City of Buffalo and into the rest of Erie County.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT: Hiring a Business Relationship Manager in February 2024 has improved relationships with employers, and increased on-site activities such as employer participation in career fairs, mock interviews and site tours for participants.

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS: Partnerships with other trainers such as NWTC, Trocaire, and Safetec have enhanced Goodskills Career Builder with additional training and certification opportunities for participants.

SHOP MATH PROGRAM INTEGRATION: The successful Shop Math program at JCC, demonstrating math competency, has been implemented as a requirement across all three sites, providing an additional credential for participants.

ACHIEVEMENT-BASED STIPENDS: Stipends tied to milestones that include graduation, job placement, and credentialing now incentivize student progress and continued participation.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Manufacturing Track

Four weeks of training prepares individuals to begin a career in manufacturing.

Certifications: OSHA 10

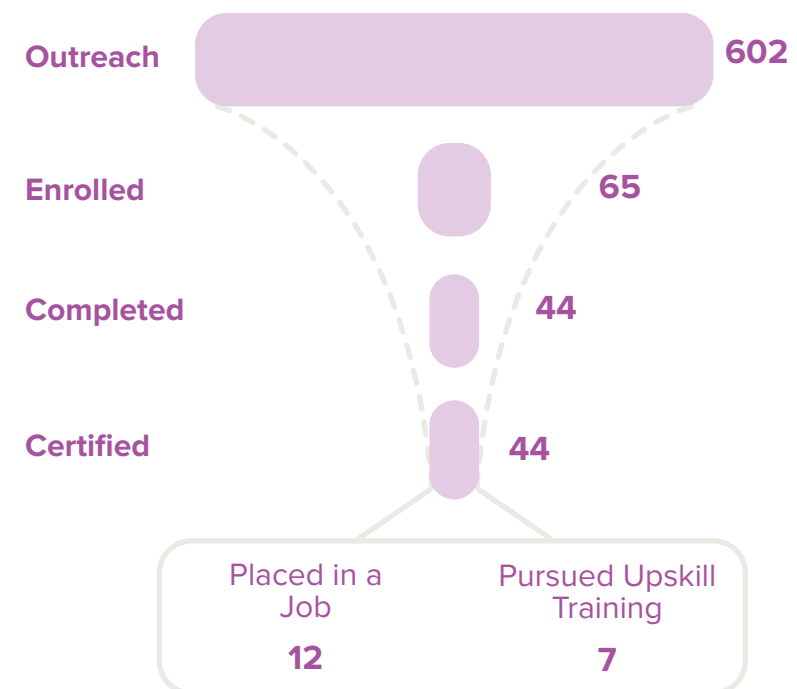
Tech Track

Goodskills Career Builder tech track prepares students to work in a tech-enabled role or pursue additional training.

Certifications: ITF+

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of December 31, 2024



Goodwill enrolled 65 individuals in Goodskills Career Builder at its Buffalo location in 2024, as Erie County is the geographic focus of its Coalition funded work. 44 individuals successfully completed the program, earning industry-recognized credentials such as OSHA 10, CyberSafe, Shop Math, and CompTIA ITF+.

Twelve individuals secured jobs at companies that included M&T Bank, Spectrum, Kaleida Health, National Fuel, Univera, Ingram Micro, Catholic Health, and Centivo. Inc. Seven graduates went on to pursue additional training at Trocaire, Per Scholas, Buffalo State and/or KORP Foundation.

The program serves a diverse population with a significant number of participants facing barriers to employment such as lack of transportation, unemployment, benefit cliffs, and no education or training beyond high school. The average wage of individuals placed in employment was \$19.71/hour or approximately \$41,000/year on an annual basis. Goodwill estimates that employee fringe benefits contribute an additional 30% to this hourly rate.

LOOKING AHEAD

Continued Program Improvement: Goodwill will continue to refine its program curriculum, incorporating direct feedback from employers. The program will also further integrate soft skills development, recognizing the importance for student success, as well as in-demand technical skills.

Continued Focus on Interview Preparedness: The program will continue to emphasize interview skills development, addressing the specific challenges students face.

Focus on Retention and Connection: The program will continue to prioritize strategies to keep students engaged and connected to the program and maximize career success. Using stipends tied to milestones is a key strategy in this effort.

Data-Driven Adjustments: The program will continue to use data to support outreach, program development, job placement and career success for students.

Jamestown Community College (JCC)

JCC is expanding its current manufacturing offerings to all three campus locations. These offerings were developed in partnership with employers. The programs are fast-track offerings with a 90% completion and job placement rate. Programs include Welding Fundamentals, Machining/CNC Operator, Industrial Maintenance Technician and the Building Automation Systems Technician. JCC is also developing new programs targeting employers and their incumbent workforce interested in upskilling, and JCC is also launching industry-driven tech courses at all three locations and at industry partner sites.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

Successfully implemented training programs in Welding, Industrial Maintenance Technician, Machining/CNC Operator and Building Automation Systems.

EXPANDED EXISTING PROGRAMMING:

Progress included procuring equipment, marketing, recruitment and offering programs related to Building Automation System Technician (BAS), Welding, Industrial Maintenance Technician, and CNC/Machining programs.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING CERTIFICATE PATHWAYS:

Prepared for development of new programs. In manufacturing these will include CNC lathe and mill, CAD/CAM, electrical, controls, robotics and automation. IT-related programs under development include A+, Network+, Server administration, Security, Azure Cloud, Cloud Data and Cloud AI and construction of a smart classroom.

CLEAN TECHNOLOGY/ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE:

Continued to work to advance the Construction Fundamentals program in partnership with the City of Jamestown, the Southern Tier Builder's Exchange, and others. JCC is exploring opportunities with Job Corps to expand access to selected programs.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Building Automation Systems

Trains individuals in the design, installation and maintenance of building automation systems.

Certifications: OSHA 10 Construction, JCC Certificate of Completion

Welding

Provides foundational skills in various welding techniques.

Certifications: OSHA 10 General Industry, AWS D1.1 Structural Steel Qualification, JCC Certificate of Completion

Industrial Maintenance Technician

Prepares individuals for work as industrial maintenance technicians.

Certifications: OSHA 10 General Industry, Smart Automation Certification Alliance (SACA): Electric Motor Control Systems 1, JCC Certificate of Completion

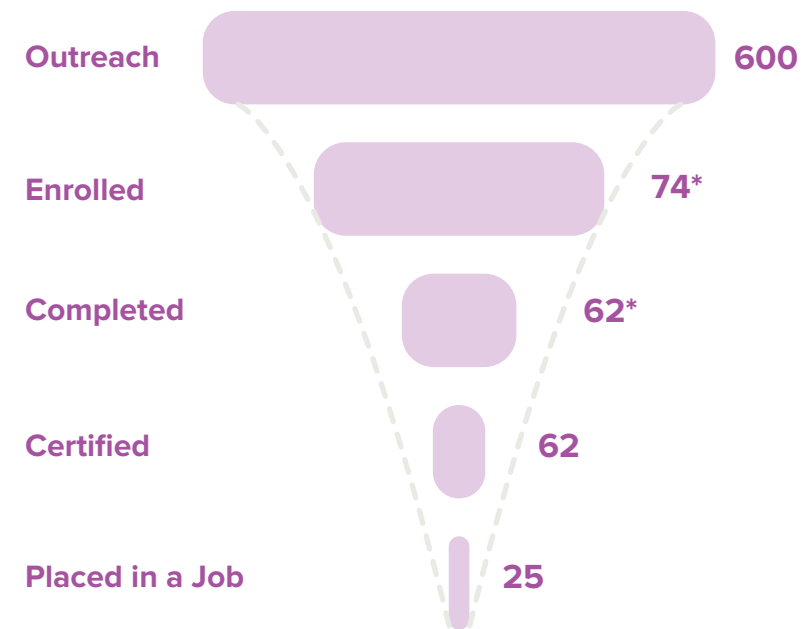
Machining/CNC Operator

Trains individuals to operate machine tools and computer numerical control machines.

Certifications: OSHA 10 General Industry, HAAS Basic Mill Operator, JCC Certificate of Completion

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of December 31, 2024



*An additional 266 students enrolled in an online Basic Shop Math course, with 74 successfully completing it. This course prepares students for further training programs.

JCC reached 600 individuals with information about training and/or career opportunities in tech and manufacturing. Seventy-four were enrolled in Industrial Maintenance Technician, Welding Fundamentals, Machining/CNC Operator and Building Automation Systems Technician. Completion rates were strong. Sixty-two completed these technical training programs.

Sixty-two students earned at least one certificate, with each program offering a JCC Certificate of Completion and OSHA 10 certification. Various other industry certifications were earned by students.

Nine students from the spring 2024 semester were placed in jobs. The total also includes 14 BAS students who are employed. Hiring employers include Cummins JEP, Rosina Food Products, Dresser Total Piping Solutions and Cimolai-HY. The average wage reported was \$18/hour.

LOOKING AHEAD

Continue to execute two projects with OSWD, meeting project milestones, and focusing on successful program launches, student recruitment and job placement.

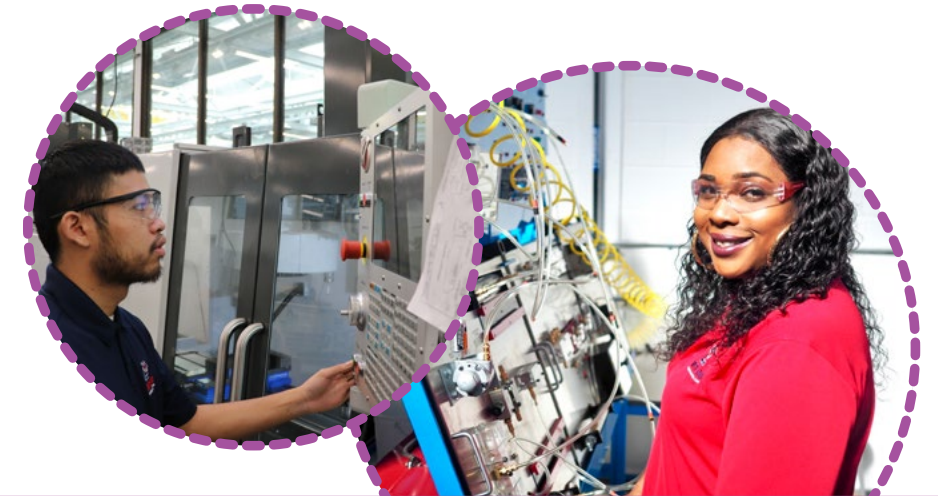
Offer CAD/CAM and Electrical Technician programs beginning in February 2025. Launch the Construction Fundamentals pre-apprenticeship program in spring 2025, targeting high school graduates and adults seeking a career in the skilled trades.

Potentially begin a BAS/HVAC program with Job Corps in summer 2025.

Expand program reach, increasing student participation at all locations.

Northland Workforce Training Center

NWTC continues to build on its successful training model for advanced manufacturing with new and updated programming that prepares students for jobs in clean energy and manufacturing. The program features an Emerging Technologies Lab with a live microgrid and hands-on learning opportunities. In addition to industry-driven, employment-focused training, students receive wraparound services, career coaching and placement services. NWTC anticipates enrolling 189 students a year in CNC machining, mechatronics, HVAC and clean energy training leading to a certificate or degree. NWTC has an 88% retention rate, nearly 64% graduation rate for matriculated programs, almost 98% completion rate for industry-driven programs and 80% job placement rate.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

TRAINING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

NWTC successfully launched the first CNC training cohort in May 2024 with 15 students. The CNC curriculum was developed with input from two dozen employers. The program is on target for hitting a 75% job placement goal. NWTC also launched a mechatronics program in fall 2024 with 60 students.

CLEAN TECH AND HVAC LAB DESIGN DEVELOPMENT:

Preliminary design for the HVAC lab has been finalized in collaboration with SUNY Erie. An engineering firm was selected and a collaborative meeting brought together various stakeholders for the CleanTech Lab.

BUILD-OUT AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASES:

Lab build-out is underway. Welding and machining equipment was purchased, a press brake was installed for the industrial wiring lab and industrial wire was ordered.

TEAM ADDITIONS:

NWTC hired several additional staff members to support growing operations including one instructor with 45 years of industry experience who has made valuable curriculum contributions.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

CNC Machining

This 12-week program was created in response to employer feedback. It offers the skills needed for an entry-level CNC Operator role.

Certifications: HAAS Certification

Mechatronics

This program equips students with electrical, mechanical, robotics and computer tech skills.

Certifications: Mechatronics certificate

Clean Energy Tech

This is a full-time, one-year certificate program offered in partnership with Alfred State College.

Certification: one-year certificate

HVAC

This one-year certificate leads to technical roles in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC).

Certifications: one-year certificate

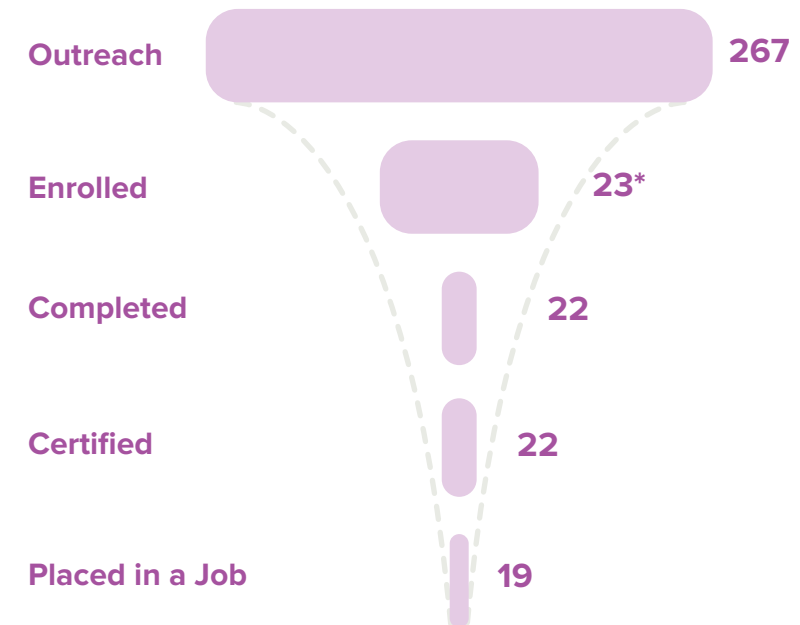
Finishing & Deburring

This 12-week, industry-driven program prepares students for finishing and deburring roles in manufacturing.

Certifications: Certificate of completion

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of January 31, 2025



*While an additional 51 students enrolled in a mechatronics class in fall 2024, they will not graduate until May 2025.

Coalition funded training programs at NWTC reached 267 individuals, with 23 individuals enrolling and 22 completing their program, earning certificates in CNC Machining and Finishing & Deburring.

The program served a diverse population, with 17 enrollees (74%) identifying as individuals of color and five as female (22% of the total).

Many participants reported facing barriers to employment, including transportation challenges (13%), lack of post-high school education (43%), and prior unemployment or being out of the workforce (48%).

Nineteen graduates secured employment as CNC Operators and Finishers. Average earnings of graduates were \$20.90/hour.

LOOKING AHEAD

Training Program Implementation and Expansion: The next program started in January 2025. NWTC will consider expanding the CNC program based on demand, particularly in the Niagara Falls area where there is high employer demand.

Mechatronics and other programs: NWTC's 2025 graduating classes will include more than 70 mechatronics students (51 in May and 21 in August), 32 HVAC students, and 32 clean tech students.

Lab Buildout: Buildout of the clean tech and HVAC components will continue into 2025 with completion expected by fall 2025.

Interview Readiness: Will increase focus on interview skills to address common challenges faced by students.

Per Scholas Buffalo

Per Scholas expanded its tuition-free IT training programs to WNY in 2024, strengthening the regional pipeline into higher-wage tech jobs. With two planned satellite locations and partnerships with Coalition members, Per Scholas will eventually offer four training tracks, including Cloud, Cybersecurity, Systems Support, and Software/Data Engineering. Per Scholas will eventually serve up to 260 individuals a year across the region and generate an estimated \$8 return for every dollar invested.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT: The Per Scholas campus in Buffalo opened in August 2024, located in Larkin at Exchange. The site is one of 24 existing across the nation, all with a mission of advancing economic equity for adults (18+) from underrepresented communities through training in tech.

PROGRAM LAUNCH: Training launched in October 2024 with a 13-week IT Support cohort of 21 learners. On-campus instruction is held Monday through Friday and includes technical training, supplies, certification fees, zero-percent loans and professional development.

OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT: Per Scholas generated more than 400 interested applicants for its inaugural class with 22 seats. This strong interest was fueled by media coverage, a TikTok video and the launch of a recruitment and admissions web page in July.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING: In addition to being an active member of the Coalition, Per Scholas hosted a roundtable event in July gathering input from over 40 community organizations. Per Scholas Buffalo also engaged with numerous businesses and garnered significant media attention, including coverage by Channel 4, The Buffalo News, Buffalo Business First, and the Governor's Office.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

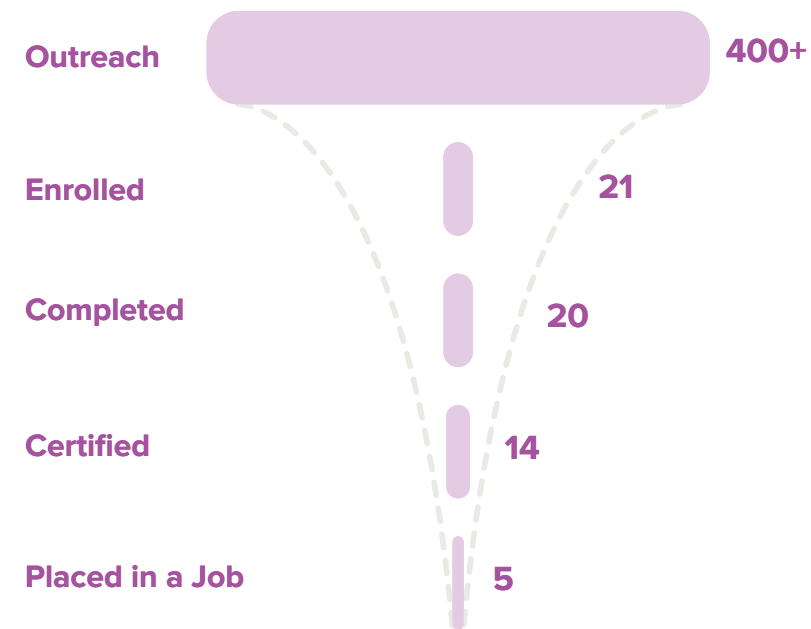
IT Support

This 13-week program prepares individuals for an entry-level job in tech or a tech-aligned role.

Certifications: Google IT Support Professional, CompTIA A+

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of January 31, 2025



Per Scholas' inaugural class launched in October 2024 with 21 learners, including 12 individuals of color and four women. The class also included four individuals who identify as being New Americans.

Five learners have already secured jobs at employers that include Odoo, Spectrum, and Northwest Bank. Two of these employers are coalition council members.

Barriers faced by program participants include transportation, the need for childcare, and having no education or training beyond high school.

LOOKING AHEAD

Meeting national and local goals: Per Scholas' local goal of placement in a career job within three months of completion exceeds the national goal of job placement within one year. All graduates receive support for CompTIA certifications and job placement.

Program Improvements and Expansion: The next cohort in Buffalo began in February 2025, with targeted outreach to attract qualified applicants. Per Scholas is exploring program locations in Niagara Falls and the Southern Tier.

Program Scaling: Per Scholas is leveraging national resources to expedite hiring a dedicated outreach specialist in 2025 to strengthen applicant pools through partnerships with pipeline developers.

Licensing: Per Scholas Buffalo is a licensed career school through NYS/BPSS.

Trocaire College

Trocaire College is delivering Jump Start Plus tech training in underserved areas of Buffalo and Lackawanna. The 15-week program combines IT career exploration, work readiness training, and industry-recognized credentials. A financial stipend is available to participants who face barriers such as transportation or childcare. Over two years, Trocaire will train 96 individuals across eight cohorts for entry- and mid-level careers in tech, equipping them with in-demand, industry-recognized credentials.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: Trocaire launched Jump Start Plus and trained four cohorts in 2024.

CERTIFICATION SUCCESS: The large majority of students completing Jump Start Plus in 2024 successfully earned their CyberSafe certification.

STAFFING: Trocaire hired three instructors in 2024 and an operations manager to facilitate the program. Two instructors were graduates of the program.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT: Trocaire has cultivated partnerships with at least seven employers through the WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition. These employers have been willing to speak and meet with students, do mock interviews and offer company tours.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES: Student activities have been offered at Tech Academy, 716 Ministries and Gerard Place, allowing students to interview a tech worker, and participate in mock interviews with employers.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

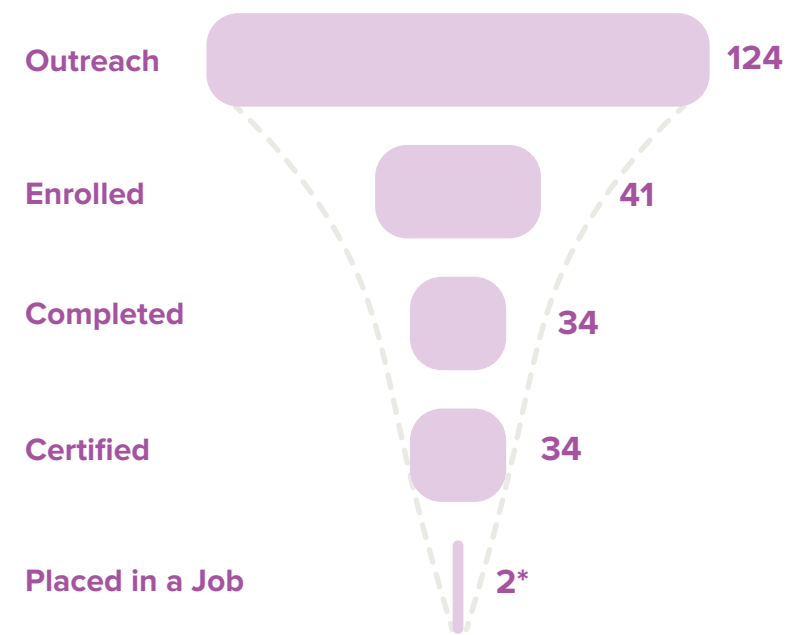
Jump Start Plus

This 15-week, 224-hour program covers IT foundations, basic internet security and skills related to IT support.

Certifications: CompTIA A+, CompTIA IT Fundamentals, and CertNexus CyberSafe

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of December 31, 2024



*Of those responding, two graduates secured employment.

Trocaire’s Jump Start Plus training program demonstrated a strong reach within the community, generating the interest of 124 individuals and enrolling 41 participants. The program serves a diverse population, including 30 individuals of color and 17 women.

Of those enrolled, 34 successfully completed the program and 34 earned at least one certificate which included Cybersafe (34), CompTIA IT Fundamentals (14), and CompTIA A+ Core 1 (4) and Core 2 (2).

The program achieved two job placements in 2024 with graduates filling roles in the field of Postsecondary Computer Science Teaching. \$50/hour was the average wage reported for those placed in employment.

LOOKING AHEAD

Program Implementation and Expansion: The first cohort of 2025 has 31 students enrolled and began in January. Jump Start Plus will launch in Niagara Falls in February. Recruitment is underway.

Student Academic Success: Trocaire is implementing additional support measures to increase student participation and success in additional certification exams. While the CyberSafe exam has high pass rates, relatively fewer students take and pass IT Fundamentals and A+ Core 1 certification.

Job placement: Trocaire participated in a tech job fair organized by TechBuffalo in February. This event connected recent tech graduates with hiring companies across the region.

UB - The Center for Industrial Effectiveness (UB TCIE)

To address the shortage of technicians across the region and state, UB TCIE will launch an Entry-Level Manufacturing Technician (EMT) training program in 2025. This is a new certificate program that prepares students for work as technicians in jobs that have traditionally been filled by individuals with two- and four-year degrees. The program will prepare up to 100 individuals for entry-level employment in a variety of manufacturing industries. The 400-hour program consists of classroom training where theory and lab validations include lectures, readings, discussion, project work, and assessments. Training also includes a one-month internship where participants gain hands-on experience. The program will offer wraparound services and college credit that can be applied towards a degree.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:

Curriculum development is ongoing with a strong focus on aligning with employer need in manufacturing. The goal is to provide students with a basic skillset that can be built upon through an apprenticeship, employment or future training.

TRAINING PARTNER SELECTION: Alfred State has been engaged as a key partner for both curriculum development and recruitment. Other potential partners for enrollment and recruitment include DIDIWNY and Goodwill.

TRAINING SITE SELECTION: Training will take place at GreenForce Training on E. Delavan Ave. in Buffalo, which is located on a bus line and near Viridi.

PLANNING FOR PROGRAM LAUNCH: A total of eight cohorts are planned with 12 students per cohort. Training is 12 weeks long with a one-month apprenticeship component after training is completed. The first two cohorts will start in June 2025.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Entry-level Manufacturing Technician (EMT) Training

This 12-week program prepares students with skills and stackable credentials for an entry-level technician job in manufacturing.

Certifications: Certificate of Completion

College credits: 1+ credit hour

While UB TCIE's program doesn't have outcomes yet, the program is slated to begin enrolling students in March 2025 and officially launch in June 2025. By September 2025, the program anticipates 25 individuals will have completed classroom training and will be ready to begin an internship and/or apprenticeship.

An additional 75 individuals will complete classroom training by June 2026. A total of 100 individuals are expected to complete training and an internship by August 2026.

Throughout the program, participant data will be tracked, including demographics, wraparound service needs, program completions, internship placements and employment outcomes.

LOOKING AHEAD

Employer input: Staff from UB TCIE and Alfred State presented to the Manufacturing Sector Partnership on January 10, 2025 to generate feedback on the curriculum and identify employers who would be willing to participate in a 30-minute interview to discuss their needs for entry-level manufacturing workers. Program curriculum was scheduled for completion by February 2025.

Outreach and recruitment: TCIE will be working closely with Alfred State and community-based organizations to recruit students for the first cohort.

Program launch: TCIE's program will launch in June 2025 with two cohorts, each with 12 students.

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) (Cattaraugus-Allegany and Chautauqua Counties)

The region's two workforce development boards in the Southern Tier partnered to bridge the gaps among job seekers, trainers and employers, and strengthen the workforce for manufacturing and tech across Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties. Chautauqua Works and the Cattaraugus-Allegany Workforce Development Board will braid public funding into coalition strategies. Along with existing federal funding, these two WDBs will utilize the new funding for training and wraparound services, addressing the barriers faced by rural residents in the region.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

FUNDING CONTRACTS: Grant agreement contracts with OSWD and RCWJF were finalized in November 2024, unlocking the resources for this work to move forward.

ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT: The WDBs successfully posted and filled two ecosystem developer roles, with one covering Chautauqua County and the other covering Cattaraugus-Allegany Counties. Both positions had a December 9, 2024 start date.

INVENTORY: Ecosystem developers were initially tasked with inventorying training providers, a crucial first step in understanding the landscape and connecting the dots for potential participants.

PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT: Goodwill's Goodskills Career Builder was identified as a potential source of participants for the pipeline that will be further developed by this work.

COALITION COORDINATION: Participation with the Coalition and the two sector partnerships will leverage coalition work and avoid duplication for maximum impact.



Over a two-year grant period, WDBs have a goal of reaching 200 applicants, 100 participants, 75 trainees and a 60% job placement rate.

LOOKING AHEAD

Inventory: Finalize the training provider inventory, including both in-person and online resources available to residents.

Roundtables: Hold roundtables with business and training providers in the Southern Tier to understand their needs for skills, where the gaps are, and ensure participant training aligns with employer demand.

Documentation: Establish a process for documenting activities and outcomes, including how to track participants through the pipeline (from referrals from WDBs to coalition trainers to employment).

Leverage the Coalition: Continue to build on and leverage Coalition work, integrating programs like Goodskills Career Builder into the workforce pipeline in the Southern Tier.

DREAM IT DO IT WNY

Dream It Do It Western New York (DIDIWNY) is energizing and building the early talent pipeline. The Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Programs (DIDIAMP) is connecting, engaging, enriching, challenging and rewarding students on their way to manufacturing career pathways. DIDIAMP provides manufacturers with access to an early talent pipeline for talent validation and recruitment. The initiative is powered by Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance (BNMA) and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier (MAST) and their combined 300+ members.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

EXPANDED PROGRAMMING:

Event programming included one Girls in Manufacturing Camp, one STEM/Tech War Event, one Mayhem Camp, one TCAM Camp, and 365 DIDIAMP enrollments. The STEM/Tech War Event was expanded to a two-day program in Jamestown that engaged 1,000 attendees, including students, teachers, community members, and more than 30 organizations.

EXPANSION ACROSS WNY: DIDIWNY expanded into Erie and Niagara counties with the hiring of two new directors, one for each location, enabling new programming in both counties during the fourth quarter of 2024.

CONNECTIONS WITH SCHOOLS:

Established connections with five new schools and executed 10 data privacy agreements.

TALLO PILOT PROJECT: Expanded the use of Tallo across the region. Tallo offers a no-cost platform for early adopters in manufacturing and schools that connects aspiring talent with both manufacturers and educators. Implementation focused on engaging schools, enrolling students, awarding certifications and onboarding companies onto the Tallo platform.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION:

Collaborated on a regional programming calendar.



PROGRAMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

DIDI Advanced Manufacturing Program (DIDIAMP)

This program engages students starting in 8th grade through the end of high school towards a pathway into a manufacturing career. The pathway includes activities that raise awareness of careers in manufacturing and offer hands-on learning, as well as the opportunity to earn industry-relevant badges and certifications.

Manufacturing Technology Tours

Guided tours of local manufacturing companies raise awareness of career opportunities within the industry.

Girls in Manufacturing Camps

These camps are designed to introduce girls to opportunities in manufacturing with hands-on activities.

STEM/Tech Wars

These competitive events challenge students to address real-world manufacturing challenges, while building skills and sparking interest in manufacturing careers.

Manufacturing Mayhem Camps

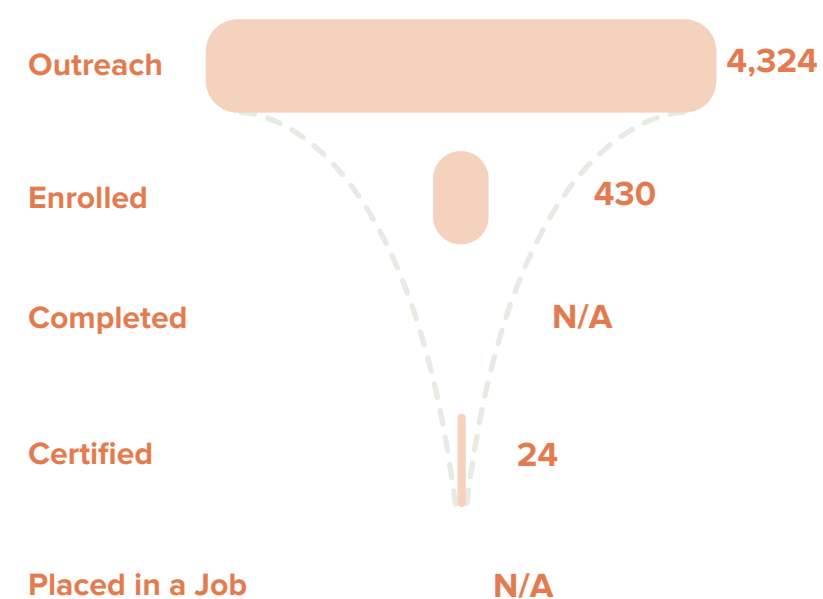
These camps offer a variety of career exploration activities.

TCAM Camps

These camps educate the educators on the career opportunities for students in the manufacturing field.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of December 31, 2024



DIDIWNY aims to enroll 4,550 students in grades 8 through 12 across WNY in DIDI Advanced Manufacturing Programs over its three-year project.

By the end of year one in June 2025, it expects 1,050 enrollments. By the end of year two in June 2026, an additional 1,400 students will be enrolled. By the end of year three in June 2027, an additional 2,100 enrollments will be completed.

Currently, the project has achieved 430 student enrollments. Twenty-four students received certifications with an award of 16 green belts and eight yellow belts.

LOOKING AHEAD

Continued Growth in Erie & Niagara: Further develop and expand programming in Erie and Niagara Counties, building on the groundwork and initial implementation in 2024.

Manufacturing Day/Month: Continue collaborating regionally and across the Coalition. Work closely with the Coalition on activities that celebrate Manufacturing Day/Month 2025 and raise awareness of career opportunities in manufacturing.

Pilot Project Expansion/Evaluation: Evaluate the Tallo pilot project's early success and potentially expand its reach and impact. Focus on continued student enrollment, badge awarding, and onboarding of manufacturing companies.

TechBuffalo

TechBuffalo is fostering coordination, collaboration and overall leadership across tech employers, trainers, community partners and potential talent pools. They leverage their existing network, convening power and strategic planning to align curricula and supportive services to foster job placement, retention, and larger, more inclusive tech talent pipelines. TechBuffalo also tracks and shares ecosystem metrics.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

ECOSYSTEM BUILDING: TechBuffalo presented ecosystem data to the Coalition council and the tech sector partnership to help them understand regional demand for tech training and the landscape of tech jobs. Insights will also inform training pathway development.

TECH DATA: TechBuffalo initiated a contract with Lightcast for access to a database that will enable them to share a persona-based dashboard on their website for use by job seekers, employers, trainers/educators, and business leaders.

HIRING EVENT PREP: TechBuffalo engaged over 40 regional employers in planning the first hiring event for tech training program graduates, with 11 employers committed.

CAREER AWARENESS EVENTS: TechBuffalo's Family Code Nights engaged over 350 participants across 14 events, while quarterly Community Conversations convened more than 180 attendees. A Pathways to Tech event brought together over 40 community organizations and 180+ attendees. More than 700 participants engaged in an annual Women in Tech conference and bi-monthly meetups.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

as of January 31, 2025

Outreach: 392

TechBuffalo estimates that they were able to reach nearly 400 residents with information and activities related to careers in tech. Outreach events have included Family Code Night, Pathways to Tech, Community Conversations, and Women in Tech. All programming is developed and marketed to the adult workforce including underemployed individuals, and those underrepresented in tech including women and people of color.

LOOKING AHEAD

Tech Hiring Event: TechBuffalo leads a tech hiring event that convenes local companies seeking to fill tech and tech-enabled roles as well as recent graduates of coalition tech training programs implemented by BCAT, Per Scholas, Trocaire and Goodwill.

Website Update: TechBuffalo plans to launch an updated website dashboard with real-time job data from Lightcast.

Tech Pipeline Development: TechBuffalo will continue to reach out to residents with programming and activities that raise awareness of careers in tech, including Family Code Night, Pathways to Tech and Community Conversations.

Success Stories



"Goodskills gave me the confidence to get my life back on track."

De Lanio Phelps was feeling defeated about life. He lacked the things he desired and felt stuck, unsure how to reach his goals. Although he longed for a purposeful job, he struggled with confidence and guidance, making it difficult to connect with employers due to past challenges.

When a friend introduced him to **Goodskills Career Builder**, De Lanio eagerly enrolled in the next session in Niagara Falls. He often arrived early and asked insightful questions about the material and how to enhance his chances of landing his ideal job. Through the manufacturing pathway at Goodskills, De Lanio built on his existing skills, earned his OSHA 10 certification for workplace safety, and completed forklift training—skills he now uses daily. With this focused training, valuable certifications, and an updated resume, he was ready for success in the job market.

After facing some initial hurdles finding the right position, his resume caught the eye of **TAM Ceramics**, a partner of Goodskills that manufactures ceramic powders. De Lanio applied the interview strategies he had learned, impressing everyone at TAM with his enthusiasm, energy, and curiosity. As a result, he received an offer for a Batch Operator position. On the same day he learned of his interview opportunity, De Lanio received notification that he was accepted into the CNC Machining Program at Orleans-Niagara BOCES to further advance his skills.

De Lanio's drive to learn, passion for helping others, and willingness to share his journey inspires others.



Jashell (Shelly) was a manager at Moe's Southwest Grill, working long, stressful shifts lasting from the day late into the night. During that time, she was also taking an online Veterinary Assistant course. Once she completed that course, she left her position at Moe's to work for Green Acres Veterinary Center. Even though the pay was less, she decided to take the job since it was the career she had set her sights on. Unfortunately, it wasn't a good fit, so she was feeling lost and unsure of her future.

One day her partner showed her a flyer for **Northland Workforce Training Center's new 12-week Finishing & Deburring Certification program**, so she decided to apply to take the course. Out of 60 applicants, she was among the 20 who were selected to be interviewed. She was really nervous at the interview, anxious because she didn't know much about this field of study, but she impressed the panel enough to be accepted into the class.

Her first day of class was scary, but she was excited to try something new. It was even more intimidating when she got there and realized that she was the only woman in the class. She said, "I felt I had something to prove as the only female." One of her instructors was also female, so that made her feel more comfortable and let her know that women could succeed in advanced manufacturing, too.

Not only did Shelly become proficient at finishing/deburring, but she also graduated at the very top of the class! She was so happy when she was told; it felt great after working so hard and proving she could do it.

All that effort paid off when Shelly was offered a Finishing Technician-B position in the Space and Defense division of **Moog**. Two weeks into her new job and she's loving it. She feels welcome, well-prepared to do the work that's required, and is grateful that her co-workers and trainers are very helpful.

And what does Shelly's supervisor, Dave Salazar, think of her? He's pleased that she's doing really well and that Northland taught her more than just the basics. She knew the features, lingo and tools of the job, and was able to fit right into her new role.

Thanks to her training, Shelly feels like she is now on a career path with great potential.



Taranja Lewis is a single mom with two children who stopped working in 2023 so she could take care of them. She knew that she eventually wanted to pursue a tech career in order to provide for her family, so she had tried self-paced courses online for two years. Unfortunately, they didn't work for her because she's someone who does better with hands-on learning.

She found out about **Per Scholas** through her Tik Tok feed. At first, she wasn't sure whether it was legitimate because it sounded too good to be true. However, after reviewing the comments and seeing one praising its Buffalo Director, Jeremy Besch, she decided to apply and was gratefully accepted into the program.

She said she was really nervous about going back to school, but she persevered. Taranja is proud of the experience she had of seeing the course through to the end. She was named the Core Values Recipient at Per Scholas' inaugural graduation ceremony, and she quickly received two job offers!

Taranja is excited to begin a new career at **Tesla**, and she hopes to continue her education through Per Scholas' Alumni Certifications. Her journey in the field of technology is just starting, and with her dedication to her development and to her new employer, she's on a new career pathway.



"Manufacturing is coolish."



"I learned a lot about local careers."

"Manufacturing is high tech, innovative and creative."



"The camp was made for people like me."

"Manufacturing is a promising career."

"I learned to never give up."





“I got the resources through Goodskills to begin a career that can grow with me.”

Kayli is a single mom from Buffalo who was tired of an unfulfilling and inconsistent job in food service. She was looking for a career that would give her work life meaning while providing for her and her young family. She wanted more for herself and her young son but felt stuck without the support and direction she needed to move forward.

During her weekly library visits to search for job opportunities, Kayli discovered a flyer for **Goodskills Career Builder**. True to her proactive spirit, she quickly explored the Goodskills website and applied that same day. However, the journey with Goodskills was not without its challenges. After being accepted, Kayli had to relocate her family while juggling daytime classes and nighttime shifts in food service. With unwavering determination, she engaged fully in the program, always managing to keep a smile on her face.

Through Goodskills' technology career pathway, Kayli collaborated with a Career Coach to set long-term financial goals and identify essential skills for her desired career. She successfully completed workforce readiness training, earned a cybersecurity certificate from **Trocaire College**, updated her resume, and tirelessly practiced her interview skills.

Kayli's compassion made her an ideal fit for the role of Member Care Specialist at **Centivo**, a health plan for self-funded employers in Western New York. In this position, she supports both members and healthcare providers, ensuring optimal care for everyone involved.

With her relentless determination and ability to connect with others, Kayli is an asset to employers and the community.



For Kipp Reynolds, the decision to enroll in the **Building Automation Systems program at SUNY Jamestown Community College** was more than just an educational choice — it was a life-changing pivot toward career stability and growth.

With a longstanding interest in the trades, the BAS program at JCC immediately stood out as a pathway to achieve that goal.

"I was in a career that was starting to be affected by AI, and wanted to pursue a career that provided more stability and longevity," Reynolds shared. "Plus, I had always been interested in the trades."

What made JCC's BAS program even more appealing was its accessibility and flexibility. Thanks to generous grant funding, the program was offered free of charge — a rare and invaluable opportunity. Evening classes allowed Reynolds to continue working while learning, making it possible to transition careers without sacrificing financial stability.

Reynolds found the connection between electrical theory and mechanical systems both fascinating and practical. "The ultimate goal was to understand a bit of everything within the trades," he explained. And JCC's program delivered on that promise.

Beyond gaining technical knowledge, Reynolds emphasized how the program opened doors he had not expected. Shortly after beginning the program in Fall 2024, he secured a part-time, grant-funded position as a staff development assistant at **JCC**. His dedication and newly acquired skills quickly propelled him forward. In less than a year, he earned a promotion to assistant director of facilities.

Reflecting on his journey, Reynolds credits JCC's program for providing opportunities he might not have otherwise encountered. "I have found a position that utilizes the knowledge gained daily, and it's been a terrific career shift," he said.

Reynolds is enthusiastic about recommending JCC's BAS program to others. "Accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and faculty who are friendly and approachable — those are the things that made the program stand out to me," he noted.

For anyone considering a career in the trades, Reynolds has straightforward advice: "If you have any interest in the trades, this is a terrific primer."

Lessons Learned and Promising Practices

The Coalition seeks to foster collaborative learning and drive positive workforce impacts by facilitating information sharing, providing mutual support, and developing promising practices to address shared workforce challenges. In early January 2025, funded Coalition members convened to reflect on the progress of their programs in 2024 and identify lessons learned and promising practices that will inform the continued implementation of their programs in 2025 and potentially benefit others. This section summarizes what Coalition members shared.

ENHANCE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Leverage experienced instructors for curriculum improvement, new ideas and to ensure training responds to industry needs.

Implement progressive pathways to address varying levels of readiness of incoming participants.

Integrate more built-in assessments to track program progress and the achievement of milestones.

Add dedicated study time and practice modules to support participant success with challenging certifications.

STRENGTHEN INTERVIEW READINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Prioritize interview preparation throughout a program. Address common challenges, particularly the interview questions and techniques that commonly trip up interviewees.

Incorporate professional development into curricula to prepare students for the job search and interview process.

Utilize career coaches for one-on-one interview preparation and job search support.

IMPLEMENT STUDENT MOTIVATION STRATEGIES

Consider implementing a stipend program tied to student achievements and milestones (such as graduation, job placement, and credentialing). This incentivizes ongoing student participation, retention, outcomes reporting, and connection with the program.

MAXIMIZE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Shift the focus from general employer involvement to more direct engagement that includes hands-on training by employers and industry experts.

Engage staffing agencies in job fairs and employer recruitment efforts.

Consider the value of industry experts who bring program ideas, employer relationships, and a deep understanding of the skills employers need.

TARGET OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT

Utilize media, including social media to broadly promote program successes and opportunities for incoming participants.

Consider a strategic approach to outreach—targeting qualified applicants and leveraging community-based organizations and industry intermediaries.

Be prepared with information and resources for unqualified applicants to help them prepare for future applications. Point them to pipeline feeder programs such as Goodwill’s Goodskills Career Builder.

SUPPORT STRONG COALITIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

Understand that coalition building requires time, patience and consistent effort.

Consider the value of collaborative outcomes and build a strong foundation of collaborators. Dedicated resources for this are helpful in expanding reach, collaboration and impact.

Recognize the value of “behind the scenes” conversations and collaborations that can be spurred on by coalition work.

STAY FLEXIBLE AND READY TO ADDRESS IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS

As programs ramp up, know that appropriate staffing is important to avoid being consumed with day-to-day management tasks.

Address potential barriers to information access and communication in K-12 schools, such as limited internet access in some rural districts and cell phone restrictions on students in other districts.

Explore solutions at the statewide level that could address local barriers (such as getting software approved district by district).

“Employer involvement is great but employer training is even better.”

WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition Member (paraphrase)

“[T]he lesson learned is if you keep moving your feet forward...and just stay determined, then good things will come to you.”

WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition Member

“[C]ollaboration, coalition building, [and] partnerships take a lot of work and a lot of time, a lot of finesse, a lot of patience.”

WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition Member

“[W]e know together we can go farther.”

WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition Member

PROMISING PRACTICE

Fresenius Kabi

Addressing Talent Demand Through Upskilling, Career Ladders and Partnerships with Trainers

Fresenius Kabi is a global company located in Western New York that offers contract manufacturing services. They are a member of the Coalition Council and the Coalition’s manufacturing sector partnership.

Fresenius Kabi is implementing what has been a successful strategy for upskilling their workforce by focusing on a combination of in-house training and partnerships with a manufacturing trainer.

Instead of hiring from outside the company for the range of technical skills they need, Fresenius Kabi prioritizes hiring entry-level workers based on general skills, such as work ethic, communication and problem-solving abilities. This practice allows them to build a strong foundation of talent with the cross-cutting skills their company needs at all levels.

The company implements a training program that progresses workers from entry-level operator roles to inspector positions and ultimately to machine operator roles. This approach to upskilling provides employees with a career path and opportunities for advancement.

Recognizing the importance of advanced manufacturing skills, the company sponsors longer-term employees’ training through NWTC’s mechatronics program. This investment enhances employee skills while also demonstrating the company’s commitment to a worker’s career growth. To encourage employee participation and recognize the value of their time and commitment to learning new skills, Fresenius Kabi provides full-time pay and overtime for employees who attend training at NWTC. They also pay for the certificate their worker receives.

This program is a triple win for the company, its workers and participating trainers. Half of program participants have been able to move into higher level positions at Fresenius Kabi.

PROMISING PRACTICE

12-Week Finishing & Deburring Certification Program

The Workforce Need

In April 2024, multiple employers expressed a need for **Finishing & Deburring Technicians**. Assessment of local providers confirmed that there were no active training programs preparing individuals for these positions. Employers wanted the Coalition to develop a strategy to address this issue.

Employer Champions and Industry Partners

A subgroup was formed to achieve this mission. We selected “Employer Champions” to recruit and engage additional employers and to guarantee hire upon students’ successful completion. One of the largest manufacturers in WNY, Moog, spearheaded this effort, reaching out to their subcontracting partners. They were assisted by BNMA to obtain additional employer participants. NWTC worked with the employers to identify needed equipment and develop curriculum. NWTC hired Master Finishers from Moog to teach the class.



Funding and Leverage

Funding was needed to purchase the equipment (\$32K). We received funding from the Workforce Development Institute (WDI). NWTC successfully submitted and received approval from NYS DOL for the program to be recognized on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). In doing so, we were able to obtain funding from Workforce Buffalo to cover the tuition and class supplies (\$5K per student) needed for those who qualified for assistance. 100% of the students qualified. The participating employers included Moog, Keller Technology, Casey Machines and T&T Legacy Metals. They agreed to provide a \$2K student stipend for each intended hire. We encouraged these employers to apply for On-the-Job-Training (OJT) funding from Workforce Buffalo to help offset the salaries of these new hires, providing up to \$10,000 for each hire, with three hires maximum for the year. (Employers had all agreed to pay these new full-time hires \$22/hour salaries.)



Outreach, Recruitment and Participant Selection

Moog created a video designed to raise awareness about the occupation to recruit students. A flyer linking to an online application was distributed by NWTC, Goodwill of WNY, Say Yes Buffalo, and Workforce Buffalo for recruitment. We received 60 completed applications. The recruiting organizations narrowed the application pool down to 18 potential candidates. Criteria included those who made under \$22/hour and had reliable transportation, since most of the employers were in the suburbs and not near a bus line. Of the 18, five were white males, one was a Hispanic male, five were females and seven were African American males. Those 18 candidates were then interviewed by the employers, who used a common question and rating system to select the top 10 candidates, of which four were white males, one was a Hispanic male, one was an African American female, and four were African American males.



Program Implementation and Outcomes

The inaugural Finishing & Deburring training program began on October 28, 2024 with 10 students. The class met four hours/night for four days/week for 12 weeks, or 192 hours, combining classroom and hands-on/lab experience. Plant tours of the participating employers were offered to the students. Nine students completed the course on January 16, 2025. All nine students were hired by the committed employers.



Looking Ahead

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

Develop and implement more targeted short-term training programs in high-demand areas like CNC Machining and Finishing and Deburring.

Through case study development, share emerging practices to maximize impact and facilitate replication of innovative approaches such as the Finishing and Deburring program.

Actively participate in Manufacturing Day/Month 2025 with targeted outreach and engagement activities that raise awareness of manufacturing careers at companies across the region.

Leverage an ongoing collaboration with DIDIWNY to promote manufacturing careers and connect high schools with coalition partners.

STRENGTHEN TECH SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

Pilot a skills-based hiring strategy with employers, prioritizing CompTIA certifications over degrees as an indicator of skills and competency.

Working closely with Coalition members, identify employer partners who are willing to hire graduates from programs for tech and tech-aligned roles.

Track outcomes of the pilot to assess effectiveness in connecting participants with employment opportunities.

LAUNCH AN INNOVATION FUND

Drive targeted investments into promising workforce development initiatives identified by the Coalition.

Encourage leveraging additional resources to maximize the impact of the new innovation fund.

Communicate a process for accessing this funding to ensure accessibility for all eligible Coalition members.

STRATEGICALLY ENGAGE EMPLOYERS

Actively recruit new employer members to the council, prioritizing those aligned with existing training partners.

Leverage organization's employer profile matching expertise to identify new members.

Adopt a network-building approach to directly support job placement for graduates of coalition trainers.

Finalize a "who does what matrix" that showcases for employers coalition trainers and pipeline developers.

PROMOTE DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Actively identify and share best practices among members related to program development, recruitment, job placement, retention and other key areas.

Showcase successes and lessons learned, documenting them through short, readable briefs that can be incorporated into annual progress reports and foster continuous improvements across the Coalition.

MONITOR AND REPORT PROGRESS

Publish an inaugural annual progress report in early 2025 highlighting coalition-wide progress and outcomes. Provide a semi-annual progress update.

Implement a data-sharing agreement with the NYS DOL to track participant wage outcomes of Coalition-funded training programs.

Continue to use data to inform future strategies and measure impact.

IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE NEW FUNDING SOURCES

Evaluate new opportunities that align with the Coalition's vision and goals.

Prioritize funding and sustainability for existing partners.

Data Sources and Notes

Outcomes Data: The outcomes data presented in this report reflects 2024 program results, as submitted by funded Coalition members. It includes outcomes for the Per Scholas Buffalo's graduating class in January 2025. Program initiated in 2024 but finishing in 2025 will be included in next year's report. A standardized online portal was used to collect information from funded members. Some funded members provided subsequent updates and edits through email, meetings, and feedback on an initial draft of this report.

Enrollment in Training: Reflects the number of individuals who enrolled in Coalition funded programs in 2024. Individuals in programs that will not be completed in 2025 are separately noted and not included in the collective enrollment total for the Coalition.

Certificates: Reflects the number of participants who completed training and earned at least one certification. In tech, certificates primarily include industry-recognized credentials such as CompTIA certification. The manufacturing numbers include certificates of completion as well as industry-recognized certifications.

Average Hourly and Annual Wage: These figures represent a weighted average across Coalition members who provided this data. Where Coalition members reported an hourly salary, an annual salary was calculated assuming a 40-hour work week and 52 weeks per year. The same assumptions were made to calculate an hourly rate for funded members that provided an average annual salary.

Job Placements: This metric reflects graduates who secured a new job or received a promotion with their existing employer after completing their training. Graduates who remained in the same position they held before starting the training are not counted as a job placement. While the Coalition aims for all graduates to find employment in their field of study, some job placements may be in other fields.

Minimum Wage: As of January 1, 2025, the minimum wage in WNY is \$15.50 per hour.

Participation in Pipeline Development Activities: This data reflects enrollment reported by Dream It Do It WNY and TechBuffalo in a variety of career awareness events.

Barriers: The data presented reflects the total number of individuals reported by Coalition members as facing specific barriers. While the goal was to align with barrier data collected by funded members for OSOS grant reporting, some funded members may not collect all of this information from their participants, meaning the numbers show may underestimate the true total.

Success Stories: All funded Coalition members were invited to contribute success stories. In some instances, the Coalition's intermediary team interviewed participants recommended by funded members and then drafted their story for this report.

Acronyms Used in this Report

ENTITIES

BNMA - Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance

BCAT - Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology

CRS – Center for Regional Strategies

DIDIWNY - Dream It Do It WNY

DOL - Department of Labor

ESD - Empire State Development

JCC - Jamestown Community College

MAST - Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier

NWTC - Northland Workforce Training Center

NYPA - New York Power Authority

OSWD - Office of Strategic Workforce Development

RCWJF - Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation

UB - University at Buffalo

UBRI - UB Regional Institute

UB TCIE - UB - The Center for Industrial Effectiveness

WDB - Workforce Development Board

GEOGRAPHIES

NYS - New York State

WNY - Western New York

COURSEWORK AND CERTIFICATIONS

AI - Artificial Intelligence

BAS - Building Automation System

CAD/CAS - Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Systems

CNC - Computer Numerical Control

DIDIAMP - Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Programs

EMT - Entry-Level Manufacturing Technician

EV - Electric Vehicle

HAAS – Hardware as a Service

HVAC - Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

IT - Information Technology

OJT - On-the-Job-Training

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TCAM - Teacher, Counselor, Administrator and Manufacturer



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