

Eight Awardees to Place Americans in Good Jobs that Strengthen Economic and National Security

On January 14, 2025 the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced grant awards to eight industry-led workforce training partnerships serving ten states as part of the Good Jobs Challenge. The awardees will **train and place over 3,000 workers** in good jobs that advance industries in key critical and emerging technologies that strengthen the economic and national security of the United States.

In the first round of the Good Jobs Challenge awarded in 2022, EDA funded 32 awardees, which are **on track to achieve their goal of over 50,000 placements by 2027**, with nearly 13,000 job placements as of September 2024. This announcement expands the Good Jobs Challenge portfolio to 40 awards total serving 35 states and one territory.

The Good Jobs Challenge aims to fortify the economic and national security of the United States and advance the competitiveness of regions throughout the United States through industry-led, demand-driven workforce development. EDA investments under this program ensure that companies have access to skilled workers and that workers are placed in good jobs so that industry and workers succeed. By breaking down historical silos in workforce training systems with strong sectoral partnerships, these projects meet the needs of both the American workers and industries that are producing and delivering critical technologies. pandemic and building more resilient, shockproof local economies.

In close partnership with the Department of Commerce and EDA, the 8 new Good Jobs Challenge awardees are designing and implementing projects that are:

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CORE THEMES

Advancing industries in key technologies that strengthen economic and national security of the United States

The eight awardees' projects will advance American jobs and technology-based industries that are responsive to societal, national, and geostrategic challenges.

Congress identified the initial key technology focus areas (KTFA) in the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. Each sectoral partnership supported by these awards will advance an industry in at least one KTFA.

- **Robotics, Automation, and Advanced Manufacturing**

[University of Rhode Island Research Foundation \(RI\)](#) will support workforce development in ocean robotics, sensors, and materials that are instrumental to national defense.

[Building a Smart Manufacturing Workforce in South Central Kentucky \(KY\)](#) will advance development in robotics, automation, and manufacturing.

- **Advanced Materials Science**

[The Advanced Polymer and Manufacturing Excellence \(APEX\) \(OH\)](#) will create accessible career pathways in the polymer industry to support the creation of the rubber and plastics needed to produce a wide range of goods.

- **Advanced Energy and Industrial Efficiency Technologies**

[The Advanced Nuclear Workforce Ecosystem \(ID, WY\)](#) will establish a robust nuclear industry workforce development program to create strong pathways to quality energy jobs.

- **Biotechnology, Medical Technology, and Immersive Technology**

[The Richmond-Petersburg Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Workforce Initiative \(VA\)](#) will train and place workers needed to produce the medications that are critical to the health of Americans and that cannot be dependent on international suppliers.

- **Data Storage, Data Management, Distributed Ledger Technologies, and Cybersecurity, Including Biometrics**

[The IT Workforce Accelerator Sustainability Project \(IL\)](#) will address critical shortages in (information technology) IT healthcare and manufacturing.

- **Artificial intelligence, machine learning, autonomy, and related advances**

[Technology Employment in Colorado Partnership \(CO\)](#) will advance the aerospace industry workforce by training shop floor technicians, software developers, system engineers, and cyber-engineers.

- **Natural and Anthropogenic Disaster Response or Mitigation**

[The Alaska Municipal Disaster Response and Mitigation Partnership \(AK\)](#) will train workers in geographic information systems (GIS), predictive analytics, and data management that will support natural disaster response and mitigation and help local governments better prepare for and respond to the impacts of extreme weather events, floods, and wildfires.

Placing workers in jobs that align with the Good Jobs Principles

The Good Jobs Challenge program focuses on job training that leads to placement in good jobs. A good job provides workers and their families with stability, security, and dignity.

The Departments of Commerce and Labor published the Good Jobs Principles, which create a framework for stakeholders for a shared vision of job quality. These awardees exhibit strong alignment with the eight [Good Jobs Principles](#), including a stable, predictable living wage and basic benefits including health insurance, paid leave, and a retirement plan.

Aiding unemployed or underemployed workers and those adversely impacted by economic shocks into good jobs that do not necessarily require a four-year degree

This competition prioritized projects that served workers subject to technology, energy, or trade shocks in the region or addressed the needs of incumbent workers.

Several projects set goals specific to upskilling incumbent workers or using unique training models, like on-the-job training and the utilization of a learning management system to support employers with limited capacity.

Applying a worker-centric approach that gives program participants the confidence that they can land a good job through employer commitments, wraparound supports, and worker voice

Awardees have secured nearly 100 commitments from employers to hire participants that complete training.

These commitments reduce uncertainty for employers and prospective employees. Employers can have confidence in the training that prospective employees receive, and program participants can have confidence that their training will lead to a good job. Employer partners include Lockheed Martin, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Dupont, Caterpillar, Inc., Civica, Inc., Phlow, General Motors, Henkel, General Dynamics Electric Boat, and many more.

The Good Jobs Challenge takes into account that far too many Americans who want to upskill into higher paying jobs lack the support they need to start and complete a training program. In response, all awardees will provide a variety of tailored wraparound services to remove systemic barriers for workers to participate in training programs. A vast majority of the grantees will offer childcare and transportation, while others will offer technology and robust coaching services both during training and into employment.

Projects include a wide range of strategies to secure worker voice in program design and implementation. For example:

- **The Advanced Polymer and Manufacturing Excellence and Alaska Municipal Disaster Response and Mitigation Partnership** projects partner with the AFL-CIO.
- **Building a Smart Manufacturing Workforce in South Central Kentucky** uses a Worker Council comprised of worker representatives in manufacturing to help design program activities including recruitment, workplace culture, and career advancement opportunities.
- **The University of Rhode Island Research Foundation** partners with UA Local 51 Plumbers and Pipefitters as a training provider.

Utilizing a range of training models that can effectively deliver the knowledge, skills, and mindsets that workers need and that employers demand

Many Good Jobs Challenge awardees will build and expand work-and-learn opportunities with leading employers, including entry-level learn and earn manufacturing programs, on-the-job clinical training, and apprenticeships.

Questions? Email EDA at GoodJobsChallenge@eda.gov