

## Round 2 TAACCCT Grant Recipients Announced

The U.S. Department of Labor [announced](#) \$500 million in grants to community colleges and universities as a result of the second round of the [Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training](#) (TAACCCT) program on Sept. 19, 2012. TAACCCT is a 4-year, \$2 billion initiative to fund development and expansion of innovative career training programs that meet industry needs, invest in staff and educational resources, and provide access to free, digital learning materials. The grants are to promote skill development and employment opportunities in high-demand fields, such as health care, advanced manufacturing, transportation and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers. Each grantee is required to collect student outcome data and conduct evaluations that build knowledge about effective strategies for placing graduates in jobs.

The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education. It supports the broader goals that every American obtain at least one year of postsecondary education or training and that the U.S. will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

Each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico will receive at least \$2.5 million in dedicated funding for community college career training programs through the program. Round 2 grantees include 297 colleges and universities, either as individual applicants or as members of a consortium. There were 27 awards made to community college and university consortia totaling almost \$360 million, and another 27 awards for individual institutions totaling over \$78 million. The 25 states that did not have a winning individual submission will be contacted to develop a qualifying \$2.5 million project.

## CTE Courses: Creating Commonality With SCED

The CTE profession has the opportunity to recommend updates to the CTE courses identified in the [School Codes for Exchange of Data](#) (SCED) system, an effort led by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics. The system is useful for national research studies and student transcript work as it uses a standardized taxonomy for identifying courses.

The project, CTE Courses: Creating Commonality with SCED, will include input from the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the Department of Education and, most importantly, practitioners in the field. CTE teachers, administrators, teacher educators, state education agency consultants, local education agencies and postsecondary institutions, are invited to participate in it. Working groups of six to eight people per Career Cluster™ will update and align CTE course names and definitions using resources provided by the steering committee of ACTE, NASDCTEc and ED representatives. Ideally, each working group will include participants across the profession and across states. For more information about the project, complete the online volunteer application at <https://www.acteonline.org/content.aspx?id=18105&terms=sced>.

## PG&E: Creating a Pool of Skilled Energy Job Applicants in California

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), one of the largest combination natural gas and electric utilities in the United States, employs some 20,000 persons to provide energy services for 15 million users over 70,000 square-miles in northern and central California. Like many in the energy industry, PG&E is concerned about finding work-ready applicants. The emergence of green energy technologies for which neither incumbent nor new workers are prepared complicates its search. To help individuals in its nearby communities acquire the skills for jobs in the energy and utilities industries, PG&E and its partners launched the [PowerPathway™](#) program to cultivate industry-informed career pathways into such jobs.

[PG&E created a partnership](#) with local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and community colleges to supply pre-employment services by providing customized, skilled craft training. PG&E's initial goal was to fill 70 positions and graduate three cohort classes of 25 applicants each from three locations. When the program was first posted, PG&E received over 4,000 applications generally from people in local, underserved communities with at least 10th-grade-level mathematics and English skills. The WIBs screen, pre-test, advise and support potential applications to PG&E. Three community colleges provide 10- to 12-week training courses, developed and customized jointly with PG&E. General courses include mathematics, reading, physical conditioning, industry awareness, and compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Administration guidelines. Once applicants are signed up for classes, they receive Individual Training Account funds from their WIBs to support their educations. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates receive certificates of completion from both the college and the PowerPathway™ program, and are considered work-ready candidates for career opportunities within the energy sector.

Recognizing the need for qualified applicants across California's extended energy industry, PG&E invited other energy employers to tap the talent pool. Although there is no guarantee of a job, graduates of PowerPathway™ fare better in the hiring process than do typical applicants. From 2008 to 2010, the PowerPathway Skilled Crafts Training Network trained over 160 individuals across seven Bridge to Pre-Apprentice/Utility Worker programs; 104 were hired into industry-related positions, including 88 at PG&E, at wages ranging from \$19.50 to \$35 an hour. The PG&E supervisors who worked with the graduates said that they would hire other PowerPathway™ graduates and rated their hiring satisfaction at 4.6 out of 5.0. PG&E is also seeing PowerPathway™ hires advance, on average, six months ahead of their peers in apprenticeship progression. According to PG&E's calculations, this equates to a \$30,000 savings in time-to-productivity, based on salary alone. Currently, with 28 employees meeting that criterion, the return is over 3-to-1 on the investment. PowerPathway™ also engenders significant intangible benefits in the form of community goodwill and increased diversity. Information and excerpts from *Corporate Voices for Working Families* ©2011.