



Make it in America Challenge

The Challenge

Too often, manufacturers in rural communities go it alone — from growing their business to training their employees to marketing their products. Access to business assistance is limited by distance, lack of connections, and uncertainty about operations and needs.

The Answer

The State's MEP, Impact Washington, and Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board have forged a model partnership that is delivering results through the Make it in Washington grant project. This project, along with the unique partnership created between economic development and education providers, has created an effective outreach and information gathering system that identifies:

- Business location
- Industry sector
- Product
- Material needs
- Employee needs
- Interest in additional education and training
- Market targets

The project's partners coordinate outreach efforts and provide on-site technical assistance to manufacturers across the state. Businesses no longer have to go it alone, but have professional help.

Education is Key in Rural Areas

Building the skills of current employees, and attracting new people to manufacturing, isn't easy in rural areas, where populations are low and training opportunities are limited. To meet this need, the Workforce Board, Impact Washington and MEP have helped coordinate online training programs accessible anytime and anywhere in the state, to help "upskill" local workforces—both current workers and those needing more education to become employed. Through online training, at both the community college and university level, participants are gaining industry-recognized credentials, two- and four-year degrees, as well as advanced degrees, to move ahead in their careers and enhance their company's competitive edge.

What People are Saying About Make it in America Challenge

"All in all, this is an initiative with a very positive impact on my career and on my employer's business success, and I [thank] U.S. Department of Labor for doing it."

— **Glutenfeeda Foods, Skagit**

"I have always wanted to go back to school and finish my AA degree but life got in the way. This made it possible for me to go back and at least gain a Purchasing and Supply Chain Management Certificate of Completion. Who knows maybe I will continue to educate myself after I complete the certificate. Thank you for the opportunity!!"

— **IsoRay Medical, Benton**

"I and my employer have the highest confidence that this certificate and the curriculum from this program would be greatly beneficial to me and our business. We are a privately owned manufacturing company employing thirty-two people and have been in business since 1979. I would take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered by WSU and the MiiW WSU Scholarship Program. It would be an honor and a privilege to be considered and known as a Washington State Cougar."

— **Manufacturing Services, Benton**

Results So Far

- The partnership is actively working in 31 out of 39 counties covering over 71,000 square miles across Washington.
- Over 700 businesses surveyed.
- 130 + businesses receiving direct support.
- 60 students enrolled. Half in graduate programs at Washington State University (WSU) and half in undergraduate programs at WSU, Highline College, and Shoreline Community College.
- Real time data on industry location, sector, employment, skill needs, product and market details.
- An Asset Map of Washington manufacturers and manufacturing support services.

Unique

This project in concept, program, and deliverables is unique among the entire group of Make it in America and Jobs Accelerator federal grants. It provides a strong partnership model for a more complete economic development system that can and does have the capacity to work across great distances and yet offer urban services to the most rural community.

The Ask

- Funding to enable Impact Washington to extend its outreach and support services to the proposed expanded end date of September 30, 2018. (Funding amount to be determined and added by Impact)
- Funding to extend the partnership.
- Funds should be made available for both program and administration of the project.

For More Information

To learn more about Make it in America Challenge, please contact Deloit Wolfe, Jr. at dwolfe@impactwashington.org or 425-681-6798.

Make it in America Challenge is a key component of Washington State's federally designated Manufacturing Communities program, administered by the Puget Sound Regional Council. To learn more, contact Sarah Lee at slee@psrc.org or 206-898-2025.