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Manufacturing Bootcamp is Fastrack to Employment for Many *Public/private partners help economically disadvantaged excel*

As if it wasn't challenging enough to compete in California's double digit unemployment rate job market, trends show that minorities may be feeling the pinch a little more than most. According to April 2009 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate of Hispanics is over 2% higher than that of their White counterparts, and 4% higher than Asians. This isn't just a new trend, as unemployment rates for Hispanics have trended higher than Asians and Whites, as far back as 2006.

Fortunately, a creative partnership between El Proyecto del Barrio (EPDB), the Centers for Applied Competitive Technologies (CACT), and California manufacturers, is helping prepare at-risk youth for manufacturing careers through a FastTrack Manufacturing Bootcamp.

The EPDB Program Director Haimanot Fekadu, for the South and North San Fernando Valley, said, "Our mission is to provide high quality service in the areas of education, training and skill development leading to employment in a chosen career path for youth living in underserved communities. The partnership with CACT for the Manufacturing Bootcamp is a perfect fit for our clients."

The FastTrack Manufacturing Boot Camp prepares at-risk youth, ages 18-21, for high paying, upwardly ladder careers in manufacturing. Ninety individuals have been placed in long-term employment, due to the intensive education and training which helps participants quickly gain the skills needed to succeed in manufacturing positions. "Initial training includes a 40-hour employability skills class focusing on basic math and English skills," said CACT @ College of the Canyons Director Keith Rypka. "After it's determined that students have the basic skills to continue in the program, they enter a 140-hour technical skills 'boot camp' covering general manufacturing and CNC skills taught at the college's Manufacturing Education Center, a space provided by Aerospace Dynamics International, Inc. (ADI).

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The manufacturing portion of the program is intense with students attending class for at least seven weeks. Coursework includes blueprint reading, shop math, trigonometry and precision measurement along with CNC setup, operation, programming and hours of hands-on practice, using industrial sized equipment to work with aircraft aluminum and titanium donated by ADI. In addition, classroom work is augmented by online training exercises. This enables students to review principles of their CNC work outside of the classroom, even after the program has ended. For more information, contact Keith Rypka at (415) 420-7713 or

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The Centers for Applied Competitive Technologies (CACT) are an initiative of the California Community College's Economic and Workforce Development (CCCEWD) program. There are 13 CACTS across California with the mission of advancing the global competitiveness and innovation for advanced technology companies in California through responsive workforce training and technical consulting services. Go to www.MakingItInCalifornia.com

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