

Inland Empire Regional Training Consortium (IERTC) Evaluation At-A-Glance Report



Evaluation Overview

Established in 2014 with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Inland Empire Regional Training Consortium (IERTC) was a regional initiative to develop a highly trained, highly technical workforce to advance industry and the economy of the Inland Empire Region of Southern California. Composed of 12 college and university consortium partners, IERTC was formulated to address the advanced manufacturing needs of numerous employers located in the Inland Empire. Working in conjunction with employers, as well as other key partners, IERTC focused on training incumbent workers, long-term unemployed individuals, and military veteran populations in the targeted industry of advanced manufacturing. In addition to the individual colleges' programs, IERTC also developed the InTech Center, hosted by California Steel Industries in Fontana, California, which focuses on advanced manufacturing applications.

Since its inception, IERTC has built evaluation into its program to assess the effects of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant on the career success of its trainees and gather lessons learned from implementing the grant. To provide a comprehensive evaluation of IERTC, ICF was hired as a third-party evaluator to examine the implementation and effects of the consortium's faculty, students, and partners involved in IERTC with data collected from an outcomes evaluation that uses a pre/post survey methodology.

The Colleges

IERTC is made up of 10 community colleges—Barstow Community College, Chaffey College, College of the Desert, Crafton Hills College, MiraCosta College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Norco College, Riverside City College, San Bernardino Valley College, and Victor Valley College—and two 4-year universities—California State University, San Bernardino, and University of California, Riverside. This report shares highlights about each of the college partners.

Eleven of the colleges in the consortium provided direct education to students. The colleges primarily focused on short-term intensive trainings that offered certifications; in addition, some colleges offered academic degrees (e.g., associate degrees). The remaining college, the University of California, Riverside, played an advocacy and public relations role in raising the profile of IERTC regionally.

The IERTC Colleges



Program Implementation

Through talking with college staff, instructors, students, and partners, ICF learned how IERTC built a local, competitive workforce and trained students for employment in high-paying jobs.

Training Designed for Employment

IERTC used effective strategies to prepare students for employment opportunities. This included hands-on instruction and assessment, alignment with industry-recognized credentials, and a focus on topics relevant to in-demand career fields. Some programs offered hybrid online courses with a combination of virtual and in-person instruction. To help connect what was learned to employment opportunities, programs provided students with job readiness and placement services, such as soft skills training, career fairs, employment referrals, career coaching, and internship programs.

During the grant, colleges developed courses that were highly targeted to the students and employers they served. Colleges were responsive to feedback in refining their courses, and they recognized the importance of a dynamic training model that will continue to change over time to meet local needs.

Engaging Partners

Partnership engagement was key to the success of the IERTC program, as illustrated by the program staff and stakeholders describing the program. The IERTC colleges engaged a range of partners, including local employers and industry groups, workforce agencies, and other educational institutions and community organizations. These partners made important contributions to program development, program outreach and recruitment, and student career and training supports, and provided resources for training equipment and facilities. These partnerships increased and strengthened over the course of the grant and were expanding in the final months of the grant; they will continue to support program sustainability in the future.

Regional Capacity Building and Program Impact

The final year of the evaluation captured stakeholders' perspectives on capacity building and the impact of the IERTC activities, which occurred at the individual trainee, institution, and regional levels.

During the grant, programs connected students to high-paying jobs and provided a career pathway where students could be successful. Colleges reported successful student employment placement. College staff and students shared how the students were getting jobs and wage increases once they completed the program. Employers hired students from the program and sent their current employees to receive additional training and upskilling. Employers appreciated what the program offered and how it allowed them to address skill gaps in their area.

IERTC CURRICULUM STRATEGIES

- Flexible training options
- Industry-relevant credentials
- Hands-on instruction
- On-the-job training opportunities
- Soft skills training
- Focus on in-demand skills areas
- Responsive to industry and student needs

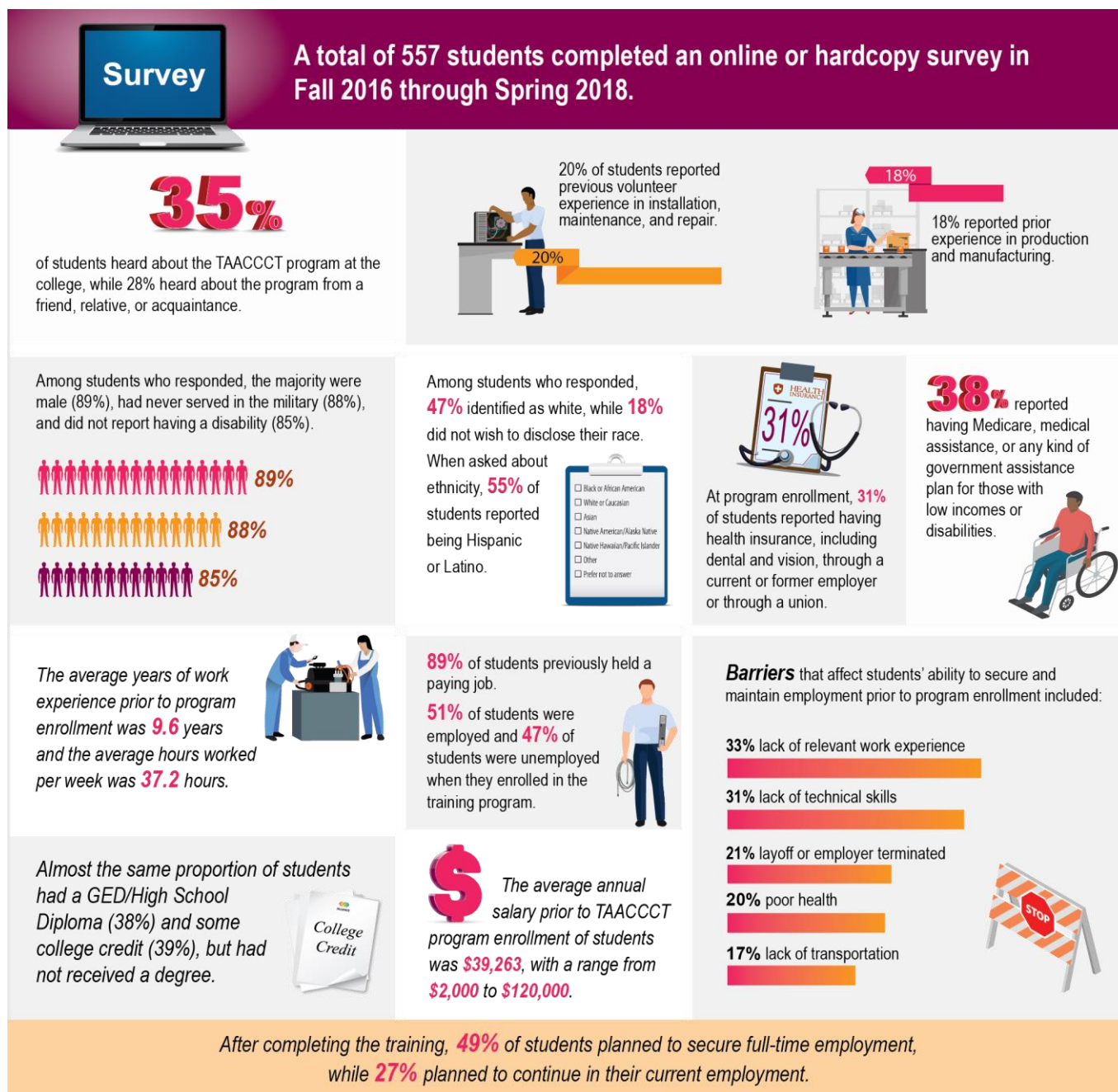


Throughout the program, the IERTC colleges built their capacity to offer training to the region. They developed a diverse set of training courses, including for-credit, non-credit, and not-for-credit courses and programs that offered accelerated formats and stacked credentials. Many of these programs will continue to be offered after the TAACCCT grant ends, although they will be supported by other funding sources and adapted to meet current needs. As a result of IERTC's program innovation and outreach, the consortium's programs received recognition at the state and national levels. Over the long term, program stakeholders expected that the impact of the initiative would continue to grow as more individuals and businesses were affected.

"The economic impact is huge, because we're going to allow our local residents an opportunity to have high skills, a high-paying job that will sustain a family, which is going to drive the entire economic sustainability of the region up."

– Employer Partner

Student Profile



College Profiles¹

Barstow Community College

- **Program focus:** Industrial maintenance, welding
- **Credentials:** College certificates, associate degree, industry certifications
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, college students, unemployed/underemployed workers, displaced workers

The Barstow Community College program offered training in (1) industrial maintenance mechanical, (2) industrial maintenance electrical and instrumentation, and (3) welding technology. They served incumbent workers and college students, including students who were unemployed/underemployed and displaced workers. The program expanded its already strong industry partnerships to support its students. For example, their work with employers, such as California Steel Industries, allowed them to place students in internship opportunities offering valuable work experience to make them more employable. Other employers who they partnered with recruited current or former students to meet recruitment needs. Bringing employers to class was also beneficial so that the students could network and hear firsthand what employers are looking for in their new hires. Barstow implemented not-for-credit training programs, which included training for area manufacturing companies' incumbent workers and for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

California State University, San Bernardino

- **Program focus:** Entrepreneurship
- **Credential:** Course completion certificate
- **Target populations:** IERTC students, college students

California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) offered entrepreneurship training to IERTC students and others in the community. Students could take one or two classes in sequence, located at the InTech Center, that were project-based and taught students skills for creating and running a business. In addition

to the courses, CSUSB also offered local workshops, which helped build awareness of their courses to others in the local area. The program was a springboard for students to determine whether starting a business was a good fit for them personally, and to discover what it takes to be successful. To support students' business activities, the Small Business Development Center and Women's Business Center programs, led by the TAACCCT Program Director at CSUSB, offered resources, counseling, and training to students on an ongoing basis. The staff expects that the program will lead to the creation of new businesses, which will ultimately create more jobs and improve the local economy.

Chaffey College

- **Program focus:** Multiple areas of advanced manufacturing
- **Credentials:** Industry certifications
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, unemployed individuals

Chaffey College developed a training facility, called the InTech Center, in partnership with California Steel Industries. The college offered a range of programs in advanced manufacturing, including industrial maintenance, welding, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). Students included incumbent workers, veterans, unemployed or underemployed individuals, and displaced workers. Students highly valued the career supports offered at the InTech Center. Staff members reached out directly to instructors and students to inform them of job opportunities, help with networking, and facilitate conversations between students and industry partners. Staff helped draft resumes and practiced interview scenarios with students. Employers in the area recognized the InTech Center as a community partner and a source for well-trained employees. The apprenticeship component was particularly popular because it allowed employers to work with a student during a trial period and train the student in industry- or employer-specific areas.

¹ The profiles include the 11 colleges that enrolled TAACCCT students.

College of the Desert

- **Program focus:** Energy efficiency; heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR)
- **Credentials:** Certificate of completion, certificate of achievement, associate degree, industry certifications
- **Target populations:** Unemployed individuals, veterans, incumbent workers

College of the Desert (COD) offers multiple areas of training, with a focus on HVAC and energy systems. The college serves a range of students, such as incumbent workers, unemployed individuals, and veterans. One of COD's strengths is that they combined TAACCCT funds with other grant funds to maximize the amount of resources and support they can provide their students. Because of the success of the internship program, geared mostly toward HVAC students, COD reached out to HVAC, energy, construction, and solar companies in the region to request their partnership. Multiple companies offered COD students paid internships that are supported by other grants, including the Strong Workforce grant. COD's program has had a significant impact on the local community in Coachella Valley. COD has seen approximately 400 participants in its TAACCCT-funded program, with a total of 140 completers.

Crafton Hills College

- **Program focus:** 3D art design
- **Credential:** Certificate of completion
- **Target population:** College students

Crafton Hills College built upon existing courses from both its Computer Science and Arts departments to support its TAACCCT-funded project—the 3D Art Design Program. Crafton used the grant funds to buy additional 3D printing equipment and materials for students to use in the classroom. Through the general college, students received numerous resources to support their education. Students had access to academic tutoring and, if needed, they could access childcare services on campus, along with counseling

and career services to help them with job placement. Pending curriculum approval in Fall 2018, graduates of the program will receive an industry-relevant credential—a Computer-Assisted Graphic Design (Art) Certificate. The certificate allows students to pursue careers in graphic design, which is currently an area of high demand in the local area.

MiraCosta College

- **Program focus:** Advanced manufacturing, engineering
- **Credentials:** Industry certifications, certificate of accomplishment
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, college students

MiraCosta College offered training in multiple areas of advanced manufacturing in its state-of-the-art facility in the North County area of San Diego. It used different strategies to prepare students for the workforce. One of those components included the incorporation of the Career Readiness Bootcamp into the curriculum. Students not only received soft skills training, but also job placement support through resume writing and mock interviews. Another component added to the curriculum was “job shadowing.” A month prior to graduation, students could visit an industry partner to shadow employees as they work. Staff members had strong partnerships with industry advocacy groups, associations, and coalitions that helped them spread the word about the program's innovations and uniqueness. In addition, industry members attended advisory meetings twice a year, and some industry partners provided feedback on coursework and existing curricula, even outside of advisory meetings.

Mt. San Jacinto College

- **Program focus:** Engineering
- **Credential:** College certificate
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, college students

Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC) offered an engineering program to incumbent workers and college students. This program began in the first year of the grant and led to the establishment of an engineering department at the college. The program gave students the opportunity to learn through hands-on projects. The hands-on and collaborative elements of the program allowed students to build the critical thinking skills they needed to be technicians or engineers in the field. Students reported that they could apply their skills to employment opportunities after completing the program and could transfer to a local 4-year engineering program, such as the one at the University of California, Riverside. By leveraging TAACCCT and other grants, MSJC started building an all-purpose lab in which students could work with a wide variety of equipment on creative projects. The space opened in Fall 2018. It will benefit the school and the community because it can be leveraged by faculty in engineering and other departments to enhance classroom instruction, and by others as a training center or as a craft-making facility.

Norco College

- **Program focus:** Industrial automation/automated systems technician, computer numerical controls, electrician, machine operator, facilities maintenance
- **Credentials:** Industry certifications, college certificate
- **Target populations:** Unemployed, recent high school graduates, incumbent workers, TAACCCT recipients

Norco College's TAACCCT grant project, known as the Accelerated Certificate & Employment (ACE) Program, offered accelerated training programs in different areas of advanced manufacturing, such as

industrial automation and facilities maintenance. One component that made these programs successful was the cohort model approach. Working in cohorts, students were able to build relationships and grow their networks—with fellow students, instructors, and administrators. One of the program's successes was its strong relationship with industry. Partners co-developed the curriculum with the program staff and faculty to ensure that the curriculum embedded the skills required by the industry. The ACE Program continues to expand its existing partnerships with industry, community members, and other stakeholders. Throughout the grant, the college maintained industry engagement through annual industry panels and advisory meetings, where employers had an opportunity to network directly with students and provide program administrators with curriculum feedback.

Riverside City College

- **Program focus:** Cybersecurity, quality assurance
- **Credentials:** Industry certifications, college certificate, associate degree
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, college students, unemployed individuals

Riverside City College (RCC) offered training programs in cybersecurity and quality assurance to college students, incumbent workers, and unemployed individuals. The courses gave students a strong foundational skill set that they could carry on to their future careers. In addition, students benefitted from academic and career support services at the college. The program had strong partnerships with local industry that provided valuable input on their programs and contributed to connecting their students to jobs. RCC also engaged in outreach to high schools to help recruit students into their programs and expand enrollment. RCC held multiple outreach events, such as a Senior Day for local high school students, which helped RCC build awareness of their programs. Students in the cybersecurity program obtained jobs in their field or transferred to a bachelor's degree program at nearby colleges, such as California State University, San Bernardino.

San Bernardino Valley College

- **Program focus:** Mechanical craft, welding
- **Credential:** Industry certifications
- **Target population:** Incumbent workers

The San Bernardino Community College District (SBCCD), in partnership with San Bernardino Valley College, offered training to incumbent workers in welding and mechanical craft applications. The participants were exposed to multiple learning styles, including hands-on instruction, lectures, and videos, which were designed to help them understand the materials and prepare them with the job-relevant skills needed by industry. In addition, the participants were able to practice these skills, which they would use on the job. Both employers and their employees reported that the program was relevant and useful. They reported that the instructors were high quality and well-known for their supportive classroom environments. Not only did the participants enjoy the courses, but some even registered for full-time and advanced courses. The program's strong reputation within the community enabled SBCCD to build new partnerships with several employers. This allowed the college to serve numerous participants by providing training that was tailored to employer needs.

feedback in the lab by assisting students with their positioning and process variables to help them identify weld defects, learn how to correct them, and use proper puddle control. The program strengthened its partnerships across the board throughout the duration of the grant. They conducted outreach events at high schools, career fairs, and college fairs, as well as participating on the High Desert Manufacturers' Council. Victor Valley also has established rapport with local and regional industry, which improved awareness of their program.

Victor Valley College

- **Program focus:** Welding
- **Credentials:** Industry certification, college certificate
- **Target populations:** Incumbent workers, college students

Victor Valley College provided training in welding for incumbent workers and college students. The students valued their instructor and appreciated how he explained the course materials in different ways, depending on a student's learning style. The instructor also provided students with real-time

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Support services for students with disabilities are provided through Chaffey College Disability Programs and Services. Anyone needing information about services for students with disabilities should contact the Disability Programs and Services, at 909/652-6393 or TDD/TTY 909/466-2829, email dps.staff@chaffey.edu. The toll free numbers for the California Relay Service are 1-800-735-2929 or 1-877-735-2929 for TDD/TTY users.



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