

First graduates complete Lee College 'Ready to Work' industrial training program

Grant-funded initiative prepares students for careers in the growing petrochemical industry

BAYTOWN, TX — Kevin Dorsey was out of work and looking for a way to better support his family when a local employment resource agency pointed him toward the Center for Workforce and Community Development at Lee College, which offers an innovative program to help train the long-term unemployed and underemployed for petrochemical careers.

Through funding from the H1-B Gulf Coast Ready to Work Grant awarded to the college by the U.S. Department of Labor, the workforce center is providing industrial crafts training in several high-demand and high-growth fields: welding, electrical, millwright, instrumentation, pipefitting, process technology refresher, first-line supervisor and project management. Students learn from instructors with years of industry experience, using the latest tools of the trade and cutting-edge technology found in the real working environment.

Tuition in the H1-B Ready to Work program is free to eligible participants, and those who successfully complete the training earn credentials from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) recognized by companies throughout the petrochemical and construction industries.

When the first graduates from the H1-B pipefitting class received their certificates in April in a ceremony at the recently opened Lee College McNair Center, Dorsey was among them — and more hopeful than ever about his chances to find stable and well-paying employment.

"Pipefitting wasn't even my first choice, but I stuck with it and really enjoyed it," Dorsey said. "It's a different skill set that not a lot of people have or can do. This program gave us the training to put us above other people applying for the same jobs."

Debi Jordan, executive director of the workforce center, told the graduates that Lee College's industry partners are awaiting candidates with the strong work ethic, knowledge and credentials they gained through completion of the H1-B Ready to Work program.

"You have been given the tools to get a very well-paying job and make a great career out of it," Jordan said. "There is going to be something good out there for you."

For more information about enrolling in the U.S. Department of Labor H1-B Gulf Coast Ready to Work Grant program at Lee College, contact the Center for Workforce and Community Development at 281.425.6311.