



# South Dakota Workforce Innovation Award Nomination: Expanding apprenticeships in South Dakota

Contact Information of Individual Submitting Nomination

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Agency Name: South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR)

## Expanding apprenticeships in South Dakota

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) provided \$490,000 in Start Today SD Incentive Funding to expand the number of pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships in South Dakota. As a result, 17 new programs were approved in an aggressive, four-month time frame.

Since 2016, DLR has received three U.S. DOL Registered Apprenticeship grants totaling \$1.6 million. The vision from Day 1 has been to provide South Dakota businesses a proactive strategy to engage individuals in their communities, improve their skills set, and fill workforce needs. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) provide employers a proven business model to develop fully trained employees.

In evaluating the RAP presence in South Dakota, programs primarily existed in the building trades and construction industries, which tend to be highly male-dominated, and only four females were participating at the time. The lack of program diversity and the fact nearly half of South Dakota's workforce is women provided DLR with the vision to build RAPs as a method to meet employers' workforce needs.

In Fall 2018, an application process for Start Today SD Incentive Funding was released. This provided a maximum of \$30,000 per business to help offset the initial startup costs when developing Pre- and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Forty organizations applied. Each application was scored based on priority factors, such as: key industries, career pathway model, pre-apprenticeship linkage, partner collaboration, and under-represented population recruitment.

During National Apprenticeship Week in 2018, DLR announced 17 organizations were selected to receive the Start Today SD Incentive totaling \$490,000. These organizations represented hospitality, advanced manufacturing, retail, agriculture, building trades, automotive, construction, and healthcare industries. Over the next four months, the DLR and U.S. DOL joined forces to offer intensive guidance and technical assistance as the organizations developed programs to meet and enhance their workforce needs.

On April 30, 2019, DLR and U.S. DOL held a "Future Focused" event to celebrate the accomplishments of the State's efforts over the last three years to bring our vision to a tangible reality. Fourteen RAPs were officially registered with U.S. DOL and three organization implemented National Apprenticeship Programs. A signing ceremony took place, as well as workshops to learn the RAPIDS data entry process and how WIOA can meet the training needs of both businesses and individuals. South Dakotans now have access to 17 new RAPs.

**Statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts were an exceptional contribution.**

## **OUTCOMES**

The desired outcomes of the Start Today SD Incentive were to improve the perception and feasibility of RAPs, streamline the process of technical assistance from the U.S. DOL, diversify and increase the types of programs offered, and overall increase the number of apprentices, specifically females.

## **RESULTS**

- Start Today SD included an outreach campaign, which significantly improved regional recognition through social media, a branded microsite, TV and radio commercials, and paid search engine marketing.
- The collaboration pursued between DLR and U.S. DOL resulted in 14 new sponsors and three businesses signing National Programs in a four-month program development time frame. This equated to 15% growth in one day.

- The variety of new industries and occupations helped debunk the myth apprenticeships are only in the trades occupations.
- South Dakota met its grant objectives by adding 300 apprentices. The number of female apprentices increased by 15%. In addition, Round 3 funding was doubled based on our performance success.
- Overall, this incentive was successful because employers stepped up to provide their own innovative solutions to their workforce needs.

## **U.S. DOL PARTNERSHIP**

The Start Today SD Incentive utilized performance-based contracts which relied on a strong partnership with the U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship State Director to provide guidance, technical assistance, and overall approval of programs.

As a single region state, South Dakota only has one Office of Apprenticeship staff to provide oversight and technical assistance to the entire state, resulting in a communication bottleneck.

To combat this challenge, DLR acted as the point-of-contact for technical assistance questions and planned all in-person and Skype workshops. Weekly update meetings were held with the State Director to ensure the organizations were on track to complete development within the time frame for the "Future Focused" event.

## **RURAL AREAS**

South Dakota covers 75,885 square miles. More than half of our 882,000 residents live in rural communities lacking traditional post-secondary training options, and some areas do not have broadband capabilities to support online classes. Employers in these areas face the same skills gap employers in urban areas face.

Because of the Start Today SD Incentive, many rural businesses have developed RAPs to train employees and retain community members. RAPs are becoming recognized as a viable post-secondary training option for South Dakota's workforce.

## **Examples of work**

[2\\_starttodayincentive\\_application.pdf \(59.1KB\)](#)

[3\\_starttodayincentive\\_scoringrubric.pdf \(54.4KB\)](#)

[Start Today Incentive\\_Application and Funding Guide.pdf \(139KB\)](#)

[nr111418\\_ra\\_incentives.pdf \(109.3KB\)](#)

[nr111418\\_ra\\_incentives\\_map.pdf \(765.9KB\)](#)

[apprenticeship incentive campaign timeline.pdf \(146.6KB\)](#)