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South Dakota Apprenticeship Program Receives National Excellence Award

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For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON - The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) recognized the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) for its Start Today SD Incentive program, an initiative to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeships in the state. South Dakota DLR was presented with the prestigious NASWA State Excellence award at the 83rd Annual Meeting / 2019 Workforce Summit & UI Directors' Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

Over the past three years, the South Dakota DLR received \$1.6 million in apprenticeship grant funding. The vision of the grant is to provide South Dakota businesses with a proactive strategy to engage individuals in their communities, improve skill sets, and meet workforce needs.

In 2018, 40 organizations applied for the Start Today SD Incentive funding. Of those, 17 were chosen to receive a total of \$490,000. This created 14 Registered Apprenticeship Programs, while three organizations implemented National Apprenticeship Programs, in just four months.

The Start Today SD initiative has so far resulted in 14 new approved programs, 300 new apprentices, and an increase of 15 percent in the number of female apprentices. Overall, South Dakota DLR deems the program successful because employers provided their own innovative solutions to their workforce needs, particularly in rural areas where more than half of South Dakota's residents live. In these areas, businesses have used the Registered Apprenticeships to train employees, resulting in a higher-skilled workforce.

"Through these efforts, we intend to increase the Registered Apprenticeship program opportunities for South Dakota residents. Apprenticeships give people opportunities to experience new jobs and expand the workforce," said South Dakota DLR Cabinet Secretary Marcia Hultman. "We have a pool of untapped workers ready to learn new skills, and now is a great time for businesses to take advantage of this opportunity."

"South Dakota's Start Today SD program shows innovation in developing critical apprenticeship programs that are driving workforce and economic development throughout the United States," said Scott B. Sanders, Executive Director of NASWA. "The investment in rural areas being realized by the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation through this program will multiply ten-fold as these apprenticeship programs continue to develop and expand over the years."



Pictured above: Left to Right - Dawn Dovre, Deputy Secretary and Director of Policy and Public Affairs for the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and Kendra Ringstmeyer, Director of Workforce Training, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and Jon Pierpont, 2019 NASWA Board President and Executive Director, Utah Department of Workforce Services.

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