



JOHN J. HELDRICH CENTER FOR
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Where the Jobs Are:
The Changing Face of Apprenticeship**

Conference Proceedings

July 2005

Acknowledgments

This publication reports the proceedings of “Where the Jobs Are: The Changing Face of Apprenticeship,” a briefing held June 17, 2005 at Mercer County Community College. The briefing was conducted as part of the Career Connections project, an industry-education alliance that brings employers and educators together to develop curricula and resources that will prepare students for jobs in demand by New Jersey employers. Career Connections is financed through the Verizon Foundation.

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The principal authors of these proceedings are Heldrich Center staff members Robb C. Sewell, Senior Writer/Editor, and Jeffrey Stoller, Deputy Executive Director. Kathy Krepcio, Executive Director of the Heldrich Center, provided valuable advice.

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Introductory Remarks

Jeffrey Stoller, Deputy Executive Director of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, welcomed everyone and described Career Connections' mission promoting business-education partnerships that create qualified candidates for job opportunities throughout New Jersey. He recalled the success of the October 2004 Career Connections conference on business-education partnerships with New Jersey community colleges, and how it spurred this briefing on apprenticeships.

He challenged the audience to consider how their past impressions about apprenticeships may no longer be true. As everyone will learn at this briefing, apprenticeships are very different today.

Stoller thanked the members of Career Connections' Steering Committee, who organized this briefing. He made special acknowledgment of the efforts of Brian Peters of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Anne Freeman of the New Jersey Department of Education. He also recognized the support of the Heldrich Center staff and the staff of the Conference Center at Mercer County Community College.

Ciro Scalera, Director of Public Affairs at Verizon New Jersey, a company invested in workforce development, next addressed the audience. Scalera has worked in youth services for over two decades and is excited about working on **positive** youth development. He stressed that today's youth are capable, bright, and energetic, and, given the opportunity, they can and will succeed no matter their backgrounds.

Building Partnerships to Promote Apprenticeship

David Cunniff, Youth Transition to Work Coordinator for the New Jersey Regional Council of Carpenters, shared the sense of pride carpenters have in their handiwork. He described carpentry as a high-paying and lucrative job, and stressed that the trade needs skilled, talented, and intelligent workers.

Cunniff emphasized that apprenticeship is not like college. Apprentices do not have parents who pay for their education. Rather, apprenticeships are part of the **real world**. There are three basic rules for each apprenticeship: You have to show up, you have to show up on time, and you have to be productive.

Cunniff defined an apprenticeship as a highly flexible training model. He described the Youth Transition to Work program as a resource that prepares young people for careers. It not only provides mentoring to apprentices, but also offers supplemental training to help apprentices master basic math skills and develop a strong work ethic.

Youth Transition to Work stresses curriculum alignment for its programs. For instance, each school uses the same textbooks for all students, and every school needs to complete a community project.

Cunniff attributed the program's success to the many strong partnerships it has nurtured over the years. From high schools and faith-based organizations, to vocational and technical schools; from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to the New Jersey Department of Education, each partner contributes to the success of the program. Another key to the program's success involves its articulation agreements with local businesses, trade unions, and industries.

As the economy and society evolve, new ways to advance apprenticeships must be explored. Access to programs must be expanded and personnel need to be trained to market and promote apprenticeships and to increase both the number and diversity of apprentices.

Q & A

Question: Can you touch on the importance of ergonomic training? This issue affects many people in diverse industries. As an example, Cunniff cited carpal tunnel syndrome, a disorder that afflicts many people, especially those who work with computers. Such a disorder can force apprentices out of their industries and can cost upwards of \$40,000 to remedy. Ergonomics safety instruction plays a key role in many industries. It is essential in all industries, especially those dealing with computers.

How Traditional Apprenticeships are Changing

Mary Burks, Coordinator of Career Education for the Trenton Public Schools, served as moderator for this session. The panelists were *Donna Scalia*, Apprenticeship and Training Program Specialist, U.S. Department of Labor; *Joseph Borgia*, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Mercer County Vocational Schools; *Rodney Brutton*, Project Director, Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program; and *Jill Schiff*, Member Services Director, Building Contractors Association of New Jersey. Burks noted that this panel is composed of experts who will give participants both general and specific information about apprenticeships.

Donna Scalia started by describing the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors, which promotes, monitors, and registers apprenticeship programs in cooperation with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. She defined a registered

apprenticeship as a workforce development mechanism under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Labor. The rigorous program can be taken at vocational and technical schools, proprietary schools, and community colleges. Once individuals complete the program, they receive a credential that is recognized throughout the United States.

The first step in having an occupation qualify as an apprenticeship is for someone to petition for it to be recognized as such. The petitioning organization or individual must demonstrate a national need for the occupation. A survey is also conducted to ascertain the occupation's worth. To date, over 850 occupations have been approved as apprenticeships, covering a gamut of industries including information technology, electronics, automotive, hospitality, and health care.

Apprenticeships are critical to the nation, as evidenced by their prominence in President Bush's high-growth jobs training initiative. The initiative targets industries such as health care, information technology, biotechnology, retail, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and hospitality. New Jersey is active in this initiative. In fact, Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties in New Jersey have been targeted for health care apprentice programs.

Scalia concluded by emphasizing that apprenticeships are a thriving element of the current workforce system, and that apprenticeships are ever evolving in response to the needs of the nation.

Next, Joseph Borgia discussed how each of New Jersey's 21 counties has a designated apprenticeship coordinator who helps develop related training components. For information, visit <http://www.wnjp.in.state.nj.us/stc/apprentice2.html>. Coordinators also provide technical assistance to help potential apprentices with paper work. He noted that the on-the-job

training aspect of apprenticeships is critical. Ultimately, an apprenticeship amounts to four years of full-time employment, or 8,000 hours.

Many individuals begin their apprenticeships with skills that need to be honed. As a result, they are required to complete 156 hours of related training per year to supplement and complement on-the-job training.

Borgia emphasized that there is much misinformation about apprenticeships and sought to clarify some of that misinformation. Apprenticeships can last anywhere from one to six years. Programs are portable, meaning that they can be transferred from employer to employer, as long as it is acceptable to the parties involved. Individuals are accepted into apprenticeships based upon their qualifications, not because they have a relative in the business. Additionally, individuals are admitted to programs only as new openings develop.

One major misconception about apprenticeships is they are restricted to just a few occupations. This is hardly the case, with apprenticeships continually broadening to other occupations.

Borgia emphasized that an apprenticeship is a career; it is not simply a job. It is the jumping-off point for individuals to begin making a living and to start advancing their careers. Apprentices can go on to pursue higher education goals as well as loftier endeavors and positions within an organization.

Rodney Brutton described the Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program as an ongoing effort to prepare local residents for careers in trades. One of the program's key partners is the Newark Public Schools, which is instrumental in helping to recruit students for the trades. Brutton emphasized that the program does not lower standards to get people into the trades. Candidates must have a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma and a valid

driver's license. They also must pass a drug test. Considerable time is spent pre-screening applicants so that they are well prepared for the program.

In the past three-and-a-half years, the program has placed 157 union members representing 14 different crafts.

Brutton stressed that it is essential to educate the community about apprenticeships. People need clear information about what an apprenticeship is and what the trades need. Three elements are critical to the success of an apprenticeship program:

1. Academic preparation — Apprentices must have knowledge of the industry they will be working in.
2. Career and trade exposure — Students must be exposed to all kinds of careers and trades. It is important to inform them about what opportunities exist and what those positions entail. Doing so enables students to have a choice in the trade they plan to pursue.
3. Life and job readiness skills — Students must be prepared for the interview process. They may need guidance about what to wear during interviews. They also may need to be educated about financial literacy (for example, saving versus spending money).

Brutton closed by sharing some success stories about graduates from the Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program. One such person is the first and only African American woman to work in steam fitting in the Newark area. Struggling financially only a year ago, she was literally homeless when her brother told her about the program. She enrolled and now, a year later, she is earning \$39 per hour. Another example is a recent high school graduate who now makes a living as an ironworker. Only 18 years old, he earned \$51,000 in one year.

Next, Jill Schiff discussed how the Building Contractors Association of New Jersey prepared a career resource manual, set up a Web site, and established a speakers' bureau to present its information to educators and students. The career resource kit, while specific to the construction industry, can be adapted to any trade. Initially, 2,500 kits were produced. After receiving an enthusiastic response to the kits, another 1,000 were distributed to middle schools.

One of the innovative approaches that the Association employed was to hand deliver the kits, rather than mail them. Doing so enabled Association staff to interact with school staff and to engage in conversations about the kit. Subsequently, a specialty trades manual was produced along with promotional brochures and posters.

One of the most important issues the Association had to confront was determining how to get people to take the manuals off their bookshelves and put them to use. One solution was to partner with *NJBiz* and *NextStop* magazines. Promotional materials were created that address students' most persistent question: "How much money will I make?" An upcoming promotional piece will address how students can progress from apprentice to business owner.

Association products are marketed broadly and are free to the public. The Association is eager to work with other organizations and industries so they can adapt the products for their own purposes.

Q & A

Question: Have Rodney or Jill considered targeting their efforts at the elementary school level? According to Schiff, the Building Contractors Association of New Jersey, in conjunction with its partners, is already working with elementary school students. One way they

do so is by offering hands-on activities. Brutton stressed that the Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program's focus is on high school seniors, not lower-grade students.

Question: Is there any interest in students who have dropped out and are going to adult high schools? According to Brutton, there is a great deal of interest in reaching these individuals. In fact, the Newark/Essex initiative seeks to help individuals in all kinds of programs. The program often uses personal testimonies from its apprentices to promote the program's benefits and successes.

New Directions for Apprenticeship

This panel was moderated by *Ray Yannuzzi*, Provost and Vice President of Camden County College. The panelists were: *Maureen King*, Project Coordinator, New Jersey Council of County Colleges; *Ray Bramucci*, President, Instructional Systems, Inc.; *Dana Berry*, Executive Director, Starting Points for Children; and *Harry Litwack*, Project Coordinator, Communications Workers of America Transition to Apprenticeship Program.

Yannuzzi kicked off the panel by referencing the Heldrich Center's *Ready for the Job* publications as a great resource and applicable to many of the issues being discussed at the briefing.

Harry Litwack talked about the Transition to Apprenticeship Program's Web site (www.employeegrowth.com). He indicated that people need to think of apprenticeships as a stepping stone and described the Web site as an effective way to convey information to young people. In addition to the web, the program runs informative training sessions at colleges, and offers pre-apprentices classes such as resume writing, cover letter writing, and interviewing skills.

Litwack talked about the program's Web site. Highlights include:

- Instructional standards, emphasizing what employers and the industry require
- Information on certifications and what is needed
- State and federal financial information
- A list of New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers
- Grant opportunities
- Literacy program information
- Selective service information for males turning 18 years old
- Job links including national and local job sites

Next, Ray Bramucci talked about the need to be both humble and realistic on the first day on a job. He shared a story about his first day at the U.S. Department of Labor. There, he met a co-worker who was unaware of Bramucci's position as Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor. The co-worker referred to himself as a "B employee" — "I'll be here before you, I'll be here while you're on the job, and I'll still be here when you're gone."

Bramucci commended the Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program as an exemplary national model. He also noted the ingenuity of the apprenticeship movement around the globe. Many nations do not take it for granted that their workforce will be highly skilled. Rather, they invest in their human capital. He said it is crucial that the United States have specified skills for specified wages and that employers hold to that standard.

Bramucci noted that what is usually absent in non-traditional apprenticeships are staged wage increases. Without wage progression, apprenticeships are limited. It is to the employer's benefit to have good workers in place. Wage progression will help ensure that employers have the best workers.

He also talked about the concept of job promotion, which is critical to the success of both employer and employee. He described a New Jersey hospital program where lower-skilled, lower-paid housekeeping workers took part in a 12-week training program wherein they could become certified hospital assistants. As openings became available, those employees who had graduated from the program could qualify for those jobs. Twenty-one hospital employees entered the program; afterward, 14 received promotions along with a wage increase. The program was instrumental in turning the hospital around. To honor the successes of the program's graduates, the hospital held a big ceremony, attended by the graduates, their families and friends, and hospital employees and administrators.

Bramucci emphasized that employees need to be rewarded for being good workers and for showing loyalty. He noted the huge gaps between licensed and non-licensed employees. In the case of the hospital, the repercussions from low morale can be enormous: staff turnover is high and ultimately the patient suffers. The key to ensuring employees have good morale and are loyal and productive is simple: they have to be paid well.

Dana Berry discussed her background in social work and education. She also described her organization, Starting Points for Children, which focuses on nurturing child care careers for people from non-traditional work backgrounds. Children cannot see any differences between non-licensed, non-certified school employees and teachers, which is troubling when one considers the influence these individuals can have on young, impressionable children.

Starting Points for Children started out for welfare workers and older workers. The organization soon realized the importance of being innovative in developing this workforce. Thus, the program was broadened to include

older workers when it became evident that they were a great resource. This was a challenging proposition because Starting Points' staff did not have many of the experiences of the older workers.

Two groups — one in Paterson and the other in Kearney — participated in the pilot program. They each had the same curricula, criteria, and assignments. The focus of the program was on learning, teaching, and modeling. In time, participants began to learn the skills of teaching and educating children.

Today, Starting Points for Children has a wait list of over 100 people in Hudson County, New Jersey alone. Remarkably, this has been accomplished without any advertising. The results of the program have been amazing: School aides have a better understanding of education, employees have received salary increases, fewer people have left jobs, turnover rates have decreased, and the program's graduates have earned college credits through Thomas Edison State College.

The success of the program is most evident through the words of its graduates. Berry ended by saying that the challenges are to find a funding base for the program, and not upset the existing hierarchy but enhance it.

Maureen King ended the panel by talking briefly about New Jersey PLACE, which helps apprentices gain course credits and pursue a college education. New Jersey PLACE will soon begin marketing its program across the state. One of the most important points is that it is possible to be both an apprentice and go to college; individuals do not have to merely choose one over the other.

Q & A

One audience participant stated that it is essential that there be a commitment by the employer to participate in the apprenticeship program and that the employer have wage progression in place. Donna Scalia agreed and said that the U.S. Department of Labor has stipulations that any accredited program must have wage progression.

Closing Remarks

The briefing concluded with *Jerry Keenan*, Executive Vice President of the New Jersey Alliance for Action, thanking the speakers for doing such a great job.

The key to apprenticeships is **communication**. Unfortunately, those invested in apprenticeships must continually fight the notion that it is bad to go into these trades.

There is much positive that can come out of people going into trades. He spoke about the tremendous pride that accompanies an individual's role in building a school or putting together a computer network. He emphasized that apprentices are high-quality workers, not troubled kids who have no other options in life. They may not want to be president of IBM, but they do have skills to utilize and positive contributions to make to society.

Apprenticeships are much more difficult than going to college. College gives individuals time to avoid the real world. Apprenticeships do not afford that liberty; they are not the easy way out.

Appendix A



JOHN J. HELDRICH
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WHERE THE JOBS ARE: THE CHANGING FACE OF APPRENTICESHIP

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
JUNE 17, 2005

AGENDA

- 9:00 a.m.** **Registration/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:30 a.m.** **Welcome**
Ciro Scalera, Director of Public Affairs, Verizon New Jersey
Career Connections Steering Committee
- Building Partnerships to Promote Apprenticeship**
David Cunniff, Youth Transition to Work Coordinator
New Jersey Regional Council of Carpenters
- 10:00 a.m.** **How Traditional Apprenticeships are Changing**
- Panelists:**
- Donna Scalia, Apprenticeship and Training Program Specialist
 U.S. Department of Labor
- Joseph Borgia, Mercer County Apprenticeship Coordinator
 Mercer County Vocational Schools
- Rodney Brutton, Project Director
 Newark/Essex Construction Careers Program
- Jill Schiff, Member Services Director
 Building Contractors Association of New Jersey
- Moderator:**
- Mary Burks, Coordinator of Career Education
 Trenton Public Schools

11:00 a.m. **Break**

11:15 a.m. **New Directions for Apprenticeship**

Panelists:

Maureen King, Project Coordinator
New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Ray Bramucci, President
Instructional Systems, Inc.
Former Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Labor
Former Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor

Dana Berry, Executive Director
Starting Points for Children

Harry Litwack, CWATAP-YTTW Project Coordinator
Communications Workers of America

Moderator:

Ray Yannuzzi, Provost and Vice President
Camden County College

12:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

Jerry Keenan, Executive Vice President
New Jersey Alliance for Action

12:30 p.m. **Networking Lunch**

Appendix B



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WHERE THE JOBS ARE: THE CHANGING FACE OF APPRENTICESHIP

MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
JUNE 17, 2005

REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS

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Fred Aiken

Burlington County Institute of Technology

Kathleen Alexander

New Jersey Department of Education

Robert Baird

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Sheila Barrett

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Marie Barry

New Jersey Department of Education

Dana Berry

Starting Points for Children

Rukiya Blackwell

Isles

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Non-traditional Career Resource Center

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