

WINN Funds Create New Model of Workforce Training and a **GAME CHANGER** for Nevada Students

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Almost a year after lawmakers created the Workforce Innovations for the New Agenda (WINN) Fund, the

dollars are developing a model partnership that will change workforce development as we know it.

Last January, lawmakers approved the tax incentive package designed to bring Faraday Future to North Las Vegas, including a new grant program designed to assist employers to recruit and retain a well-trained, diverse workforce. CSN, through its partnerships with the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Southeast Career & Technical Academy, the Clark County School District, and Faraday Future, received the first \$500,000 grant this spring.

The bulk of these funds are helping bring equipment to SECTA, where we started training 49 SECTA and 31 Mojave High School students this fall in associate of applied science degree programs for manufacturing associates and facilities maintenance. CSN students and those recruited in the future through DETR to work at Faraday or other manufacturing companies will also train at this site.

Manufacturing and logistics is an important field statewide, representing nearly 120,000 jobs

or more than eight percent of our workforce. The average annual wage in this sector is about \$66,500, according to the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Entry level workers must have knowledge in hydraulics, pneumatics, and programmable logic controllers, to name just a few areas. And Faraday is not the only opportunity in town in this field. There are a growing number of manufacturing opportunities at such local companies as Ocean Spray and Unilever in Southern Nevada.

SECTA is founded at the site of an airplane repair center and provides an ideal location for this initial pilot project with its high ceilings and expansive floor plan. More than half of its students (and Mojave High School students) receive free and reduced lunch. Recently SECTA Principal Kerry Pope described the reaction of the students enrolled in these courses.

"Many of these students never thought they would attend college, so when they started and we told them, 'OK, you are now in college,' their response was incredible. They were fist-bumping and high-fiving. This is changing their lives," she said.

The WINN grant is a huge win for these young students.

CSN and its partners have developed a program that will

begin with recruitment in middle school but provide a foyer of entry for all ages of higher education students. It's equipped with on and off ramps that allow students to take a series of courses that lead to stackable credentials, each with its own set of skills. A student can obtain a certificate of achievement, work for a year or two, and then enter the pathway again to obtain an associate of applied science degree. We have internships and apprenticeships built in as well to allow for real-world experiences, apart from the hands-on training they'll receive in the classroom.

Finally, we are working with our sister institutions to develop a four-year degree for those aspiring to management in manufacturing or facilities maintenance. The funding will also cover ACT WorkKeys assessments for Faraday recruits to screen and onboard employees with DETR.

It is my sincere hope that our state can continue to offer this fund to help us create simple pathways from K-12 that lead strategically to meaningful careers in high demand occupations.

By Dr. Michael Richards, President, College of Southern Nevada, csn.edu

