

Millions of Jobs, Not Enough Skilled Workers To Fill Them

State Funds Help Train Workers For Hi-Tech Manufacturing Jobs

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WOBURN -- Unemployment may be high, but there are millions of jobs out there. The problem? There aren't enough skilled workers to fill them.

In Massachusetts where manufacturing is crucial to economic recovery, the state is working with companies and schools to get workers retooled.

Glenn Worthing worked in machine shops his whole life but was having trouble getting promoted because he didn't have all of the skills. Then he started training at the Custom Group in Woburn, a family owned and operated metal parts plant.

"It's a great opportunity for me. It's opened a lot of doors. I learned quite a bit," said Worthing. "The biggest problem I had was trigonometry. That was a problem," he said.

Worthing now works for the Custom Group. The company started offering classes after noticing it didn't have enough employees who could keep pace with new technologies.

"Today's manufacturing is heavily involved in computer design. There's engineering in everything we do," said Carl Pasciuto, president of the Custom Group. "It requires higher education and a skill set to be successful."

With the goal of keeping advanced manufacturing in the commonwealth healthy and growing, the state is stepping in with seed money to career centers, community colleges and schools like Custom Group's.

"We have the workforce training fund, \$21 million a year that provides grants directly to employers," said Jen James, Massachusetts undersecretary of workforce development. "A significant number of manufacturers use that program and it trains and helps employers back fill positions."

Every component made at the Custom Group either flies or goes into submarines.

"You've got to make it better, faster, cheaper everyday," said Pasciuto.

"I think it gives people the opportunity to get off the streets and back to work," said Paul Williamson, a trainee at the Custom Group's school.

The plan is to integrate even more manufacturing jobs to Massachusetts. But to do that, you must have a skilled workforce.

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