Executive Summary 20 Points

Working-age adults face many challenges in pursuing education to advance or enhance their careers. Along with availability of quality childcare, adult learners often juggle work, education, and family responsibilities, and struggle with reliable transportation. And while adults struggle to gain the skills for better positions, businesses struggle to fill high paying manufacturing positions in a market that has too few skilled workers. Employers face a wave of retiring workers that take with them decades of intellectual talent. Compounding this problem is the industry’s inability to effectively attract workers to manufacturing. Faced with a multifaceted challenge, PCC developed a creative, multifaceted solution for Southern Colorado and our workforce by designing programs, curriculum and spaces that were mobile and responsive.

Providing a training solution to prepare adult learners for skilled jobs, PCC’s Pueblo Corporate College developed a Mobile Learning Lab (MLL) to take workforce development onto the doorstep of employers. A MLL is 48 foot trailer with on-board power generation, climate control, instructor stations, and hands-on training equipment that replicate on-campus technical labs.

Mobile learning labs provide a unique delivery method (a classroom without walls and on wheels) that save companies valuable travel and downtime. Another benefit reported by both industry supervisors and instructors is the ability for learners to be introduced to a concept in theory and simulation, and then immediately use it on the plant floor the same day. This application, customized at work, is what makes the training relevant and valuable.

MLLs directly address and reduce the challenges of time and distance supporting working-age adult participation and success. Along with its benefits for individuals, on-site training also helps employers develop the skilled workforce they need for business growth and competitiveness - especially in "middle-skill" jobs that require some post-secondary education, but less than a four-year degree. PCC’s Labs provide training to more than 65 organizations and have a proven record of effectiveness in providing hands-on training for specific operations without interrupting a company's production schedule. Our MLL journey began as an idea, which turned into an experiment, which evolved into a model and is now the standard and expectation from our stakeholders. On this journey, we continually refined our processes as we built our fleet up to seven labs, with another one under development. The return on investment for the fleet is 60% for the college, plus 975 new jobs created for our communities, and 2,136 individuals trained, who now earn an average of $52,000 annually.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Partnerships and Collaborations 30 points

We know that collaboration is a vital component to the successes of workforce development and that it is imperative to not only build but maintain relationships that will support your program. We consider the relationships with employers, local workforce centers, economic development entities, and community organizations necessary to provide our customers with a comprehensive solution to fit their workforce needs.

Over the years, our successful partnerships with employers such as Vestas, Trane, EVRAZ Rocky Mountain Steel, UTC and many others have led to the creation of hundreds of new jobs, the development of industry recognized credentials, the attainment of grant funded training programs, and investment in our existing labor force and community.

To be able to say yes to nearly every opportunity, we know we need to depend on strong partnerships in our community with the workforce centers and economic development teams. Workforce center partnerships assist with the preparation of a highly skilled workforce necessary to preserve our nation’s competitiveness. Working with our local workforce centers (Pueblo Southwest, Pikes Peak and Southeast Workforce Centers) PCC has targeted unemployed and underemployed job-seekers for specialized fast-track training programs in mobile learning labs. Partnerships with our local workforce centers leverage career and supportive services, Workforce Investment Act Opportunity Funds, aptitude assessments and employee readiness training for program participants.

We also align with the goals and mission of our local economic development organizations whose mission is to attract new employers to the area, retain existing businesses, and ultimately grow the community. PCC works closely with the Pueblo Economic Development Corporation (PEDCO), Region 9 Economic Development, La Plata Economic Alliance, and Montezuma County Economic Development Alliance (MCEDA) to support business attraction and expansion. Our economic development partners include PCC in prospect conversations and all partner organizations work together to support business retention and expansion.

Over the last 3 years, PCC has developed a strong partnership with the Colorado Department of Corrections. Through this partnership, over 300 offenders have received technical training utilizing MLL’s and customized training equipment. This program provides offenders with technical job skills that prepare them to enter the workforce upon release from the correctional system.
Securing the funding for the upfront lab costs can be challenging. PCC secured funding through a variety of sources including local, state, and federal grants, PCC foundation funds, and an institutional investment. For success in this area support of your administration and a commitment to do the leg work to gather the needed financial resources is needed.

In 2006, PCC and the PCC Foundation raised funds from employer donations and also made an institutional investment to build the first multi-functional MLL. Two years later, PCC received a Department of Labor, Community Based Job Training Grant to build 3 additional mobile learning labs dedicated to electrical systems, mechanical systems, and machining training. Two years later, PCC was awarded funds through a Colorado Community College System Grant application to the U.S. DOL that funded 3 more labs for PCC as well as mobile learning labs for 2 other system colleges.

**Economic Impact** 20 points

With seven mobile learning labs and over 2000 skilled workers, we can affirm that the businesses and industries in our service area, particularly our manufacturers, are stronger and more productive. At Pueblo Community College, it is about job creation and job retention. The men and women who trained in our mobile learning labs now earn an average of $52,000 annually, over a $100 million dollar annual impact to a recovering economy.

Working closely with local and state economic development organizations when prospects are brought to the region, many employers have stated that PCC and the customized workforce training opportunities utilizing the mobile learning labs were part of the reason they selected Pueblo.

Since 2007, over 975 new jobs have been created from the attraction of 6 new employers to the area. Multiple expansions with these employers as well as other existing employers in the area have resulted in additional job creation and retention.

**Program Results** 20 points

Pueblo Community College has been serving customer needs in Mobile Learning Labs (MLLs) since 2007, with the following outcomes.

- 2,136 unique participants served in mobile learning labs
- 142,048 hours of training completed in the mobile learning labs
- 4,394 Certificates of Completion awarded
- 1,318 participants employed during or after training
- Participants averaged 67 hours of training
• 59 unique companies/organizations served by mobile learning labs
• 23,650 miles traveled (equivalent of 7 trips from Florida to Washington State)
• $4,261,440 in revenue generated allows for program sustainability

In 2015, MLL Workforce Development House Bill 15-1271 passed allowing Colorado First and Existing Industry (CFEI) Training funds for MLLs. The Bell Policy Center supported the bill to “help working-age adults acquire the education and skills needed for employment or advancement in high-demand jobs, help employers fill the critically needed skilled positions, and help our state enhance its economic strength and competitiveness.” Last year PCC was awarded the state’s first CFEI MLL Grant to build a Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) lab.

Mobile Learning Labs are an award winning project, receiving the following recognitions.

• 2015 National Council for Continuing Education & Training (NCCET) Exemplary Program Award for Workforce and Economic Development
• 2017 Economic Development Council of Colorado (EDCC) EDIE "Excellence in Economic Development" Partner of the Year Award for partnership with Vestas and use of MLLs
• Repeated Bellwether Finalist
• 2018 Bellwether Workforce Award

**Replication 10 points**

Our programs have proven to be a replicable model. Within the last 3 years, our sister colleges in Colorado have started their own mobile learning lab journey developing labs dedicated to energy and water quality. We’ve also been contacted by organizations outside of the state who found our program to be the most comprehensive they found. One employer even built training equipment modeled from that in the mobile learning labs so employees could continue to practice concepts learned in class.

With 10 years of experience, PCC has learned many insights about successful strategies and critical “lessons learned”. For example, understanding the deployment and maintenance challenges such as transportation of these portable “classrooms”, providing proven models to address a variety of student and employer needs, and addressing the need for a workforce that not only has training but experience. Implementing creative solutions, PCC has several successful approaches for replication and logistical delivery of this innovative workforce development training program.