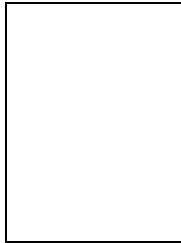


Bliss Painting Utilizes Skilled Trades Training Fund to Train 9, Hire 2



Bliss Painting of Alpena is a painting company that specializes in residential, commercial, and industrial wall coatings and coverings. They've been voted the #1 painter in Alpena for 5 years in a row now. Because of this honor (as well as national awards in painting), Bliss has given back to their community by doing charity work for churches, schools, and non-profits. But, like many skilled trade companies, they struggled with finding the right candidates who want to work in their industry, often having to hire people with no experience and spend precious time training them for many months at a time.

Over the past few years, Bliss Painting has utilized the services of Michigan Works! to post their job openings on Michigan Talent Connect. They've also utilized Michigan Works! On-the-job Training funding multiple times. Thanks to the training funds, they were able to spend more time training employees properly, giving them a better understanding of services and products – which increases both employer and employee efficiency. Bliss Painting came to MW! once again, hoping to be awarded Skilled Trades Training Funds, in order to strengthen current employees and future employees knowledge and information on OSHA, lead safety, renovation and repair, along with protective coatings training.

With help from Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium, Bliss Painting was awarded and utilized \$3,735 in Skilled Trades Training Funds to train 9 current employees in MiOSHA General Industry training and hire 2 new employees.

Bliss Painting and its employees were able to benefit from STTF immensely. The MiOSHA training opened the employees' eyes to safety procedures and standards in the workplace. Once this training was complete, employees of Bliss Painting were able to apply what they had learned to make sure their work space was hazard free.

"We sent our employees to an OSHA training course. The OSHA training made our employees more knowledgeable about their rights related to workplace safety and health, as well as overall home and workplace hazards. They were able to bring that knowledge back to Bliss Painting and put it to good use- in the shop and on the jobsite," reports Bliss Office Manager, Julie Peters.

She continues, "The training grant is a great idea and very helpful to a small business who needs a little help paying for training that doesn't normally take place on a yearly basis, as well as helping to pay for new hires that need extra training to work in a skilled trade. Having worked in the office of a skilled trade business, I have seen firsthand how hard it is to find employees who want to do the work- let alone, have any experience to begin with- especially painting experience. Many people can say they "know how to paint" but few really do. Painting truly is a skilled trade!"

One of the biggest issues Bliss ran into while planning the training was trying to actually find classes or seminars that were in the local area. Often, they had to outsource and pay higher trainer costs to have the training on-site, rather than sending their crew downstate to Saginaw or Detroit and pay for training PLUS hotel rooms, food, fuel/mileage, etc. Bliss had initially planned on additional training with their STTF award, but were unable to do it all in the time frame allowed for the training grant. They are hopeful that in the future, Alpena, and the surrounding areas (Northern MI) will have more training options available so that businesses don't have to send their

employees to lower Michigan (Saginaw and below), or pay extra to get someone to come to their business to train them.

Bliss painter and training recipient Cole Werth was thankful for the training, stating, “I knew there were always health and safety hazards at work- no matter where you work, but after going through the OSHA training, it really opened my eyes to just how many hazards there can be when we don’t work safe-especially in our line of work. We have definitely been more proactive at working safer, and applying what we learned to both work and home life every day.”