



December Feature: Four-Week Training Program in Heavy Equipment Operation Announced

Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), in partnership with the International Union of Operating Engineers (Local 49) is offering a short-term training that leads to a career in heavy equipment operation. This four-week training is possible because of a Pathways to Prosperity grant received from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

The training will begin Tuesday, January 22 and run Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm, ending February 15. The first two weeks will cover Essential Skills and are being taught by Bryce Bjork, WDI Instructor and Navigator, with support from the many talented WDI Career Planners and subject experts. Students will have an opportunity to visit the Operating Engineers Training Center in Hinckley, Minnesota, meet apprentices, see apprentices at work, and learn about all of the classes available to them once they become apprentices. Each day has a theme of the day that covers key topics such as the importance of a positive attitude, attention to detail, reliability, enthusiasm, and critical thinking.

The second week students will work on tools of the trade, following directions, verbal communication, taking initiative, and teamwork. Another field trip takes them to the local Operating Engineers site where they will, under the direction of two trainers, get in the seats of heavy equipment and get a feel for being the driver. Additionally, there are sessions on math as it relates to the trades, as well as time spent creating a cover letter and resume, honing their interviewing skills, and a chance to practice those newly-acquired interviewing skills on one another.

During the second two weeks, students will be in the capable hands of experienced union Operating Engineers' trainers and have a number of different experiences. Students will come away with a very good idea of what a career in this field involves and if it is a good fit for them. Students will complete certifications in OSHA 10, MSHA, as well as CPR and First Aid.

One goal of this program is to give persons from barriered populations access to a short-term training in a high-demand career that pays a family-sustaining wage. A second goal is to provide skilled employees to local contractors, who are looking for employees to work in the fields of asphalt paving, crane operation, highway heavy, and/or mechanic.

If you have someone who may be interested in this training, please have them contact Susan Boehm at susanboehm@workforcedevelopmentinc.org or 507.512.0494.