

NJBIA

REPORT TO MEMBERS *by Philip Kirschner, President*

NJBIA Employee Training Program Is a Great Success

The fifth year of NJBIA's employee skills training program is such a success that NJBIA is urging its member companies to reserve class time for their employees now, before this year's allotted training funds run out.

As of early August, the NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training program, just five weeks into its fifth year, had already held or committed approximately half of its available classes in basic computer operations, mathematics & measurement, communications (including customer service) and English as a second language. That translates into 335 classes for approximately 3,600 employees representing close to 200 companies. The combined tuition value of those classes is \$540,000.

NJBIA started the popular program in 2007, and it's free to employers and their employees. There's no charge for the training, which is conducted by the community colleges and funded by the NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development, NJBIA's program partners.

The goal of the program is to make state training grants available to small businesses that previously were unable to meet the requirements of the state's existing grant programs.

The training can be held at your facility, if you have enough employees signed up (generally 10 or more). If you have just a few employees who need training, they can join an open enrollment class with employees from other companies at one of 67 county college sites statewide.

Bob Rosa, who coordinates the training program for the community colleges, has two words of advice for companies that haven't signed up yet:

"Act now."

"We are significantly ahead of where we were last year at this time," says Rosa, who is chief operating officer with the NJ Community College Consortium. "We've delivered 100 classes to 75 companies in the first five weeks of this year's program....I have no doubt we're going to sell out again this year."

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The statistics for the first four years of the program (July 2007 through June 2011) are impressive:

- * 26,700 employees trained
- * 1,715 businesses participated
- * 2,420 training sessions delivered in all 21 counties and at all 19 county colleges.
- * \$3.6 million in state training grants provided

A notable feature of the program is that the community college instructors customize their course curriculum to fit the specific needs of each company.

Liz Wood, HR director for Isles Inc., a community development group in Trenton, recently had this to say about the program: "The course content was relevant and necessary for our workforce – from computers to communications skills. The scheduling was flexible and the instructor was interested in tailoring the program to our organizational issues."

Dennis Cronin, director of education with The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, said his organization also has had a very positive experience: "The positive evaluation ratings, comments and personal feedback I have received are unanimous. ... The instructor demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the topics and excels in her ability to engage and motivate her students to high levels of achievement."

To schedule your employees for training, contact Bob Rosa with the NJ Community College Consortium at rrosa@njworkforce.org or (609) 393-9000. **NJB**

