

2020 WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD

NOMINATION FORM

APPLICANT:

Victoria, Texas

Name of Community or Workforce Board

D. Dale Fowler, CEcD - President of Victoria Economic Development Corporation

Contact Name and Title

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361-485-3190

Email Address

Telephone Number

92,084

Community Population (as of most recent census or as officially marketed)

D. Dale Fowler

TEDC Member Name

Summary:

Please attach a brief description of the workforce development initiative. Within this description, address the awards criteria of innovativeness, transferability, community commitment, measured objectives and secondary benefits. Please provide the start date of the project and completion date, if applicable. Provide measurable results from the project in the past 12 months. The workforce development initiative can be a long-term project, but must show measurable results in the award year.

The nomination can be no longer than five conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages (including the one-page nomination form).

Please submit this completed nomination form and your project summary via email to Amy Swank at amy@texasedc.org on or before **5:00 PM, Wednesday May 15, 2020**. You may also submit up to five (5) photographs of your workforce project as separate jpeg files.

Questions regarding the Workforce Excellence Award program or procedures should be directed to Amy Swank, Vice President, Texas Economic Development Council, amy@texasedc.org, 512-480-8432.

TEDC 2020 Workforce Development Committee Chair
Art Mann, Hillsboro EDC



Texas Economic Development Council 2020 Workforce Excellence Award Application



Victoria, Texas | Award Category III | Population: 92,084

Associated Builders and Contractors Inc., Texas Mid-Coast Chapter – Mid Coast Construction Academy

Following years of supportive foundational groundwork, the Mid Coast Construction Academy grew out of a need for skilled labor in the construction industry in Victoria, Texas. Local employers realized an increased demand for plumbers and electricians to fill their workforce gaps and looked to their member organization to assist them in creating a pipeline of skilled workers. The Mid Coast Construction Academy (MCA) was founded in 2018 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization by the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Texas Mid-Coast Chapter to be a National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) Accredited Training & Education Facility and Apprenticeship program registered with the Department of Labor (DOL). The MCA Apprenticeship program educates high school and adult jobseekers in electrical and plumbing trades with plans for expansion into additional crafts in coming years. NCCER-certified instructors provide classroom and hands-on training for students which enables them to secure jobs with good wages.

The MCA is the first apprenticeship program in Victoria and assists students from Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Lavaca, Refugio, Bee, and Victoria counties. The mission of the MCA is to promote and educate students and jobseekers about the construction industry and develop skilled labor through pre-apprenticeships (high school) and apprenticeships (adult). The program bolsters the skilled labor population in Victoria which enhances economic development opportunities for attraction and retention of workers. The four-year program enables our local construction contractors to hire local labor and keep dollars in our community where these construction projects are being performed.

The Apprenticeship program is designed for the jobseeker as well as those employed in the applicable industry. Adult students are required to be full time employees in an industry-related field while attending classes at the academy. Upon completion, the MCA will provide job placement assistance to applicants. Employers also enroll current employees to continue training their workforce and prepare employees to sit for certification tests and obtain licenses to operate. The Pre-Apprenticeship program is designed for students in the 11th and 12th grades from the public, private, or homeschool setting. The high school aged student who successfully completes the Pre-Apprenticeship tract are eligible to matriculate to the Apprenticeship program.

Funding to sustain the academy and the programs offered has been derived from employers, partnerships with school districts, grants, community and private donations, and the local workforce development board. The MCA has proven to be a worthy endeavor to better the lives of citizens and enhance communities.

INNOVATINESS

As the first program of its kind in the Victoria region, members of the Texas Mid Coast Chapter began the initiative by following the lead of the national parent organization, Associated Builders & Contractors Inc. (ABC). The market-driven approach to apprenticeship programs is supported by ABC. Leadership from the Texas Mid Coast Chapter garnered the best practices of established programs in the nation by other chapter members and fashioned them to meet the specific needs of the local employers. The MCA is governed by a Board of Trustees and committees made up of local employers, educators, and construction professionals from the commercial, residential, and industrial industries. The commitment from the professional founders was to establish a program to impart technical and theoretical knowledge of the industrial and commercial trades resulting in a certified employee while strongly emphasizing the development of coveted soft skills and work ethic that sustain the quality of the employee.



TRANSFERABILITY

Apprenticeships work to close America's skills gap. Work-based learning with competency-based progression is a value add for employers and employees. The MCA uses the worldwide, industry recognized NCCER curriculum. This standardized curriculum allows employees or students to begin a study of craft in one location and complete it in another if necessary. Area industry representatives shared information with the MCA



Board regarding their labor needs and the skills gaps of employees. The Board created a full program to meet the specific needs of the employers while providing instruction with latest advances in curriculum offered. This strategy supports a safe, skilled, and productive workforce. Current curriculum in Victoria focuses on plumbing and electrical trades. The MCA will expand their curriculum in August 2020 to offer a 2-year Construction Technology Pre-Apprenticeship program to students in the rural school districts of Jackson County. The cluster offering is perfect for rural communities to share expenses where an individual program would not be sustainable due to low enrollment. The MCA program also provides college bound students the opportunity to gain real-world

experience before entering studies in engineering programs.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND LEVERAGE

In addition to the local community business owners and professionals designing and establishing the program, the community and industry support through financial and in-kind donations is exceptional. The 6,000 SF classroom and lab space has been provided with a low-cost lease by the Victoria Electric Cooperative. The Golden Crescent Workforce Solutions, the local office of the Texas Workforce Commission has partnered with the MCA to market the program at Career Fairs, student seminars, and direct student funding to enroll in the academy. In 2019, community grants and foundation financial support totaled \$159,329. This represents support from the entire region and not Victoria alone.

MEASURED OBJECTIVES

The MCA is proud to have 100% job placement for adult apprentices working full-time in their craft. Employment has made an impact on the lives of the apprentices and has filled the need for skilled workers to complete construction projects in the region. Enrollment in the program has grown from 31 students in 2018 when the program launched, to 47 students in 2019. The numbers are projected to increase again with additional schools engaging their students in the upcoming school year. There has been interest from the local University to partner with MCA in developing a dual-credit program for students to prepare them for a bachelor's degree in Entrepreneurship or Construction Management. The economy in Victoria is diverse and has remained relatively strong even in times of slowdown in oil and gas activity. As additional companies seek new places to conduct business, having an employee base with diverse skill sets provides them with confidence.

SECONDARY BENEFITS

Expanding career choices and securing the workforce of the future are necessary for sustaining a community and growing an economy. Providing someone the opportunity to earn wages while increasing knowledge is empowering. To accomplish that while filling a need of an employer is a win for everyone. Employers decrease their turn-over rate by hiring students that have already been vetted through the academy. Those students are more engaged, have knowledge of the potential career, and are eager to demonstrate loyalty. The MCA program provides employers a more cost-effective solution by helping to reduce expenses for contractors while gaining valuable on-the-job experience and hours toward certifications and licenses.

