

SB 1527 Applied STEM Worker Training Pilot Program

SB 1527 provides training for unemployed and underemployed engineers and other professionals to transition into the bioscience and advanced manufacturing industries in Oregon. This statewide, public/private partnership (and working in conjunction with local workforce development boards) will help re-employ Oregonians in high-wage, traded sectors jobs and help these industries address their workforce needs.

The **A-STEM Worker Training Pilot** will leverage the Oregon Bioscience Association's (Oregon Bio) existing BioPro workforce training program, which has successfully trained more than 1,600 Oregon bioscience workers over the last four and a half years. Designed to train incumbent workers, our curriculum of 53 BioPro classes and 23 instructors has helped many Oregon bioscience companies sustain their impressive 31% rate of growth from 2001 to 2010.

Guided by an active industry steering committee and working in conjunction with local workforce development entities, Oregon Bio will modify and synthesize its existing, industry-vetted curriculum into a two-week, professional immersion program for dislocated workers. The A-STEM Training Pilot will be specifically designed to augment the existing skills of unemployed mid-level professionals (product/project managers, engineers, production supervisors and business professionals) and will:

- Efficiently transition dislocated, skilled workers into the high-growth bioscience and advanced manufacturing industries
- Generate jobs with above average industry wages (\$80K and above)
- Fill high-skilled positions that trigger company-wide hiring (multiplier effect)
- Reduce the current need for recruitment of out-of-state or H1B visa workers
- Address critical shortage of industry training outside the Portland metropolitan area (Bend, Medford, Eugene, Corvallis, Boardman, etc.).
- Supplement the existing palette of academic alternatives (Community College certificate and University/Graduate degree programs)

If Oregon can take a leading role in helping develop such an industry-driven, advanced re-training program, the state can simultaneously promote the growth of both bioscience and advanced manufacturing companies and shorten the time required to re-train partially qualified Oregonians for these new careers.

SB 1527 appropriates \$250,000 to Business Oregon to establish the A-STEM Worker Training Pilot to re-train 100 Oregon workers for the bioscience and advanced manufacturing industries. Since the average wage of these workers exceeds \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year, the re-employment of fewer than half of these workers would generate enough state payroll taxes in the first year to pay for the entire pilot.

Accountability would be assured through a robust tracking and reporting system. BioPro and Business Oregon will track and report to the legislature on the status of the program, including information about the trainees selected, the number of successfully placed workers, and new payroll taxes accrued to the State. If successful, this program could provide a model that could be applied to help transition high-skilled Oregonians into other growing industries around the state.

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