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WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE RECEIVES RECORD \$12 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT FOR NATIONWIDE JOBS TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

LOS ANGELES—West Los Angeles College (WLAC), www.wlaac.edu, has been awarded a \$12 million federal grant—the single largest grant in the college’s history—to develop and oversee a variety of apprenticeship programs across the country for as many as 5,000 students during the next four years. WLAC will be the lead college on the grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and will work with five other colleges, the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, plus numerous private-sector employers and professional organizations.

“The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), which includes WLAC, has a strong commitment to educating the workforce of tomorrow and to providing equal opportunities for all who want to pursue their dreams of higher education and well-paying jobs. This grant positions our community colleges to continue to be responsive to employer needs and help build strong regional economies,” Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., said.

The grant is part of a larger, \$183 million effort by the U.S. Department of Labor to work with more than 20 academic institutions and other public-private partnerships across the country to create as many as 85,000 internships and on-the-job training opportunities via apprenticeships, according to the department’s announcement, <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20190624>.

“This is a remarkable achievement for West that aligns with the Board of Trustees’ vision that the District should do everything in its power to help career pathway development for Californians,” LACCD Board of Trustees President Andra Hoffman said.

WLAC will work with five other colleges including College of the Canyons, www.canyons.edu, El Camino College, www.elcamino.edu, both in California; Truckee Meadows Community College, Reno, Nevada, www.tmcc.edu; Columbia College of South Carolina, www.columbiasc.edu, and Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, N.Y., www.sunyocc.edu. In addition to the Hawthorne, Calif.-based South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), www.sbwib.org, WLAC will partner with the Aerospace Industries Association, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Institute for American Apprenticeships and about 17 private sector employers.

U.S. Rep. Karen Bass, 37th Congressional District, <https://bass.house.gov>, whose district includes WLAC, said “Community colleges help ensure that quality education is accessible to everyone, and they work hard to meet their students’ needs wherever they are in their career and education. I am delighted that West Los Angeles College has won this significant grant to increase access to local job and internship opportunities. In order to invest in our future, we must invest in our students. Congratulations to West Los Angeles College on this award.”

Aracely Aguiar, WLAC Vice President of Academic Affairs, said the program will provide many different student-focused “career on-ramps” for jobs, education, internships and apprenticeship opportunities. The program should begin in Fall 2019, Aguiar said.

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“Some students will enter the program through an employer or agency referrals. Others will enter through one of the participating colleges. Some will be entry-level students who can explore a field and receive instruction in work readiness skills, occupational skills and possibly a two- to three-month internship,” she said. “Others will have the option of temporary employment; entering an apprenticeship program at a higher level and completing a certificate or degree possibly leading back to employment in the industry in which they already interned.”

For WLAC, the program actually expands on a pilot program launched in 2017 that was created through a collaboration with Northrup Grumman and the SBWIB called the “Aero-Flex Manufacturing Apprenticeship” program that was also approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, according to WLAC President James M. Limbaugh, Ph.D.

“WLAC is proud to partner with an outstanding array of educational institutions and businesses across the country to expand access to industry-recognized apprenticeship programs in aerospace and defense, energy storage, and bioscience fields,” Dr. Limbaugh said.

SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel also commended the partnership. “West L.A. College has been a valuable partner for many years, our collaboration on apprenticeship development has been very successful, and we are excited that our work is now getting national attention and will put thousands of people to work.” Vogel said the SBWIB helped provide funding for the grant application and will now help fill as many as 1,200 of the apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships positions will include work as an Aerospace Engineer; Aircraft Structural, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers; Avionics Technicians; Biomedical Engineers; Chemical Technicians; CNC Machine Tool Programmer; CNC Machine Tool Operators for metal and plastics; Manufacturing Production Technician; Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians; Metal Worker; Quality Control Technician/Inspector; Regulatory Affairs and Compliance Specialist; Robotics Engineers; Software Developers and Tool & Die Maker.

Dennis Fitzgerald, Vice President of Operations for Impresa Aerospace, of West Compton, Calif., <http://impresaaerospace.com>, one of the private sector companies involved in the program, said his company sees great value in the apprenticeships. “Impresa Aerospace is pleased to continue its partnership with West L.A. College and its Aero-Flex partners. Apprenticeships are a valuable workforce development model for new and incumbent workers and is something that would not be a reality for our firm without the support of grant funding and the support of the workforce system.”

LACCD Trustee David Vela, who currently chairs the Board’s Legislative and Public Affairs Committee, said the \$12 million federal grant is “fantastic news” for the District and WLAC. “The Board’s efforts to ensure the District and our colleges receive adequate federal funding is key to carrying out our mission as one of the nation’s premier two-year higher education institutions and it is certainly gratifying to learn of this record grant for WLAC.”

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About the Los Angeles Community College District

LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation’s largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California’s diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/LACCD>, @LACCD, and on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/laccd> @laccd and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.

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