

## **OCL Skills Gap Study Session, Dec. 15, 2014, at ProLiteracy**

**Attendees:** Kim Armani, Zach Becker, Ron Boxx, James Branche, Ginny Carmody, Bill Coplin, Jeff Craig, Karen DeJarnette, Marion Ervin, Rosemary Jonientz, Peter Knoblock, Sarah McIlvain, Mel Menon, Tim Penix, Frank Ridzi, Dominic Robinson, Mike Sattler, Mary Thompson, Juanita Williams, James Yu

**OCL:** Ben Lockwood, Sandra Barrett, Renée K. Gadoua

**Topic: How do apprenticeships work for mid-skill jobs in today's economy?** (Facilitated by **Laura Miller**, Darco Mfg., and **Mel Menon**, OnPoint for Jobs)

Panelists:

**Ann Marie Talierno:** president, [CNY Area Labor Federation](#);

**Robert Leslie:** director, [CTE programs, SCSD](#) (Formerly worked at OCM BOCES and Carrier)

**Penny Hazer:** president, [Merit Apprenticeship Alliance](#)

**Bill Cullen:** president, [Falk Precision](#) (employee owned company)

**Travis Woodard:** apprentice at Falk Precision

**Greg Lancette:** president, [CNY & Northern NY Building Trades](#).

**Carol Hill:** work-based learning coordinator, [SUNY Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center](#)

**Bruce Hamm:** director of business engagement at [MACNY](#)

**Nick Haslowe:** [state Department of Labor](#) supervisor for apprenticeship programs

**Dave Goodness:** regional director, [Workforce Development Institute](#)

### **What are the buckets/categories for apprenticeships?**

Industrial; building trades (includes utilities and plant managers);

**Haslowe** noted that New York state hopes to expand apprenticeship opportunities to health care, service industry and IT. As technology and job needs shift department is looking at what trades are appropriate and to introduce more trade categories that require skills training and fit the model. State lists 300 occupations.

**What is an apprenticeship?** See <http://www.labor.ny.gov/apprenticeship/appindex.shtm>

**Hamm:** A formal, registered apprenticeship training involves classroom instruction and on-the-job training – minimum of two years required. 2,000 hours of ojt training required. Most apprenticeships take three to five years to complete. (There is an informal usage of the term.)

**Miller:** Back in the day, large companies like Carrier had 4,300 employees and 60 percent of direct revenue went to labor. Shift in industrial landscape makes 150 employees more typical for a plant.

**Lancette:** Technology evolves and plants need more craft workers and longer schedules. More projects are condensed from 24 to 12 months, requiring longer hours and shift stacking.

There are fewer registered apprenticeships. Haslowe estimates a decline from 1,000 sponsoring employers 20 years ago to 600 today.

Workers want to protect the integrity of the trade. Workers tend not to be cross-trained, but specialize in a skill area.

The conventional time-based model apprenticeship takes three to five years to complete. There is also a proficiency-based model, which measures certain skills, and a hybrid model.

**Taliercio** notes a small resurgence of interest in apprenticeships.

**Question: What is the difference between on-the-job training and an apprenticeship?**

**Hamm:** Apprenticeship provides a credential, certified by the Department of Labor. Those skills are transferable, a recognized credential. On-the-job training typically has not record of training.

**(According to state DOL website, an apprenticeship is a process of learning a skilled occupation through paid on-the-job training under the guidance of experienced journey workers and related classroom training. To be an apprentice, must be 18 (or 16 with parental approval.) There is a written contract between the apprentice and the employer that acknowledges their shared commitment to the training process. Apprenticeship training is usually offered by the employer at no cost to apprentice.)**

**Taliercio** described an apprenticeship as a college education for a tradesperson. It is a statewide standard. “You know exactly what you’re going to get.” She noted that some resistance to apprenticeships may come from distrust of unions. Not all apprenticeships are union-based.

**Miller:** Small businesses hire workers with potential to be trained.

**Cullen:** Falk has one apprentice now and has certified two in last few years. Travis had to go through pre-evaluation. We want someone who wants to come to work on time and learns and doesn’t feel entitled to a job.

**Woodard:** Started as an assembly worker at Falk four years ago and worked his way up. Started putting screws in a panel and worked his way up to programming. He uses an online journal to document what he has done each day and can document what he has done and use it to train others. He works with school (OCC), Falk and vendors. He said he must adapt quickly.

**Goodness** said he entered apprentice program in 1985 and it created a ladder to move up.

**Hamm** noted that the medical training system is an apprenticeship without the name.

**Hazer:** Apprenticeships are more popular for youth and un- and underemployed. It is highly structured to provide a path to a definite end. “It is the other college degree,” she said.

**Hill:** There is a big need for pre-apprenticeship programs. “There are a lot of people in the community who are not ready for apprenticeships. We have to look at how we’re going to get them ready.”

Pre-apprentice programs focus on soft skills and basic math. Many applicants can’t do simple fractions. Also educates about unions and apprenticeships. An attempt to bridge the gap to make people eligible for apprenticeships.

Onondaga County has started the Built-to-Build Pre-Apprenticeship Program to attract more minority students. The program director was not able to attend this afternoon’s meeting.

**Taliercio** noted that no matter the training program, people need to be taught soft skills.

**Leslie:** Employability skills/expectations are a requirement for state CTE programs. Internships are intended to show people what's expected on the job.

**Virginia Carmody,** Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County, noted that there are many adults who need basic education and ESL to be ready for jobs or apprenticeships.

While programs don't discriminate by age, construction is a young person's job, because it's hard on the body.

**Lancette:** No matter your age, you have to be able to adapt. If you've been out of school awhile, you may have to relearn math skills.

**Goodness** noted another reason for resistance from employers: "If I train them, they'll leave."

**Cullen:** Falk attempts to make the working environment "so good the workers want to stay."

**Haslowe:** "Certification for people in the trades is very attractive. They have that credential. It carries weight. It will serve you well if you go out of state."

**Hamm:** Apprenticeships declined because they are expensive. Money for training shrunk. Cost for four-year training for one worker was \$150,000-plus. He noted workforce faces major depletion as journeypersons in their 40s, 50s and 60s retire. "When they go, we're going to be in trouble."

**Lockwood:** What can the state do to sweeten the pot for small companies?

**Lancette:** In 2012, out of 17 trade unions we work with, 440 apprentices enrolled, trained in 160,000-square foot training centers, costing \$4.4M annually. Employer partners and members paid for training. Recently New York state has developed work force development grants. Now have 110 apprentices in his union, costing \$700,000 a year. There is a very big expense. The apprenticeship training came out of employers sitting around saying, 'Where are we going to get our workforce?'

**Hazer:** "Kids need to know there is a sustainable career path. We're missing how to articulate the path of apprenticeship to journeyman to supervisor so they see it's a sustainable career. How do we get to the high schools and the kids? Employees need to step up."

**Leslie:** State regents will vote this year on new CTE legislation, which could spur more interest. People are beginning to see the relevance of moving kids to technical pathways.

**Haslowe:** There is a better way to prepare workers than the school of hard knocks. There's monitoring, a set time for the program.

**Cullen:** Repeated invitation to visit his shop to see what a modern manufacturing operation looks like.

**Hamm:** MACNY [Partners for Education & Business](#) program brings kids to local manufacturing shops. "We're opening the doors of our manufacturing operations to show people what's going on in modern manufacturing."