

Abstract - Women in Skilled Careers (WISC)

Company: Hampton Roads Workforce Council (formerly Opportunity Inc. of Hampton Roads)

Title: Women in Skilled Careers (WISC)

Area to be Served: Hampton Roads Region of Virginia (Norfolk Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Newport News, Hampton, and Suffolk)

Number of Participants: 40

Funding Level Requested: \$500,000

Total Cost Per Participant: \$12,500

Women in Skilled Careers (WISC) proposes to create a pipeline of skilled workers for the ship repair industry by targeting an under-recruited population; women in general and specifically women who have received, or are receiving, services for issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, homelessness, and poverty. WISC will provide these women with a fast-tracked pathway to earn critical skills, obtain recognized credentials, and begin employment in the ship repair industry while earning a living sustainable wage with full employment benefits. As a result, partner employers will save valuable time and effort by being able to hire from a pool of applicants who have been recruited, trained, and credentialed.

Hampton Roads Workforce Council (formerly Opportunity Inc. of Hampton Roads), the regional workforce development organization, is serving as the intermediary for this collective impact bringing together community-based organizations, industry associations, higher education institutions, public media, and employers. The program is not creating new resources but rather utilizing existing resources collectively to maximize the outcome with a single target population.

WISC is a 12-week training program utilizing a pre-apprenticeship model with three phases: classroom training, experiential hands-on learning leading to guaranteed interviews, and after-care through frequent case management until employment stability is established. Participants will engage with potential employers while in the classroom through presentation and discussion while being exposed to the industry and participating in a shipyard tour. To strengthen employability skills basic technical math, ruler reading, financial literacy, and soft skills training will be provided. Participants will enroll in a Virginia Ship Repair Association (VSRA) Marine Trade Training (MTT) course to learn the skills needed to enter an in-demand skilled trade career. MTT course options are: electrical, pipefitting, coatings, welding, outside machinist, and sheet metal. Participants will potentially earn up to three credentials/certifications: VSRA MTT, OSHA 10-Hour Maritime, and Emergency First Response (EFR). Participants will also complete a Blueprint Reading & Technical Drawing training. Maritime employers have committed to interview any individual who has completed the WISC program.

Transportation, childcare, and stipends will be provided to participants. To provide support to companies who build a workforce hiring individuals who have experienced trauma, training in Trauma-Informed Care, Cultural Diversity, and Recruitment/Retention of Talent will be offered to employers and their employees.

The goal of WISC is for a minimum of 40 women to earn a total of 120 nationally-recognized credentials. The success of the program will be measured by how many participants successfully complete the program, how many credentials are earned, how many participants receive employment offers, and how many participants accept employment in the ship repair industry.