

Mobile classroom training the unemployed in Tampa

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Tampa, Florida -- Mark Vinkey and his family relocated to Florida from Wisconsin a little more than two months ago. With 34 years of manufacturing experience under his belt, he figured he'd easily be able to land a job in the Tampa area.

Instead, he found himself among the 9.4% of people (124,628 people) in the Tampa Bay region looking for work.

"I'm a skilled machinist and I've been working in engineering for the last six years, but got down here and the jobs were pretty scarce," said Vinkey. "There are days when you're wondering how long it's going to take."

His search is finally over. He's among 12 people learning the latest technology in manufacturing on the Mobile Outreach Skills Training (MOST) program bus.

"It's a career, it's not one of those things that's an entry level job that you just go in and do the same type of work...it's opportunity to advance," said David Bankey, a MOST instructor.

The MOST program travels throughout the state and is free to the employer and the trainee.

Paid for with grant [funds](#), the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership works with the Work Force Boards across the state to locate the jobs, find the recruits, and train the workers so they're ready to take on the manufacturing jobs that have moved away from manual labor to computers.

"Employees are looking for this skill set, but it just doesn't exist, so we've got to take people and bridge that gap," said Ted Astolfi, Deputy Director of Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

"These are good \$13, \$15, \$18 an hour jobs we're talking about so these are higher wage jobs than you would ordinarily see," said Astolfi.

"I'm very happy, very excited, my whole family is," said Vinkey.

MOST and FMEP is reaching out to manufacturing companies to let them know they're willing to train future employees at no charge. They'll even drive the training bus to their offices.

CLICK: [FMEP Training](#)

Those who are looking for work can contact their local Workforce Board to learn about about the manufacturing training program.

CLICK: [Find your local Workforce Board](#)

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