
Competency Models In Action:

Consortium Develops Certifications for Supply Chain Management Occupations

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- Collaborating with industry and educators in preparing individuals for supply chain management occupations
- Developing industry-recognized certifications and credentials
- Partnering with the National Urban League local affiliates to provide participant support services

Introduction

Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies.¹

“Companies are finding that the growing complexity of supply chains has a significant consequence: hiring the right people to build and manage the expansive operations is more difficult than ever. Industry experts say an understanding of technology and an ability to work in a global environment are increasingly important in the supply chain, forcing managers to look for people with a rare mix of specialized skills to manage this crucial aspect of their business.”²

The mission of the Leveraging, Integrating, Networking, Coordinating Supplies (LINCS) Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training grant is to address that need. The program is administered by a consortium of nine colleges and three universities led by a national team from Broward College. The other consortium members are Columbus State Community College, Essex County College, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Harper College, Long Beach City College, San Jacinto College, St. Petersburg College, Union County College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Northwestern University and Rutgers University. The college members offer course instruction and the university members provide guidance and subject matter expertise.

The LINCS consortium has developed educational content for eight supply chain management certifications that will increase the skill level of individuals seeking employment in that field. The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) is the official LINCS industry partner and certifying body for these certifications.

¹ Council of Supply Chain Management, <https://cscmp.org/supply-chain-management-definitions>

² Wall Street Journal, 5/22/15

The Workforce Need

The lack of an educated and trained supply chain management workforce makes it difficult for industries to fill vacant positions and reduces U.S. competitiveness and market share.

According to the LINCS Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, the greatest supply of chain management positions is in the entry and middle management levels, 20% and 60% respectively.³ These occupations include: Transportation Specialist/ Analyst; Warehouse Picker/Packer; Inventory Specialist/ Analyst; Procurement Specialist; Demand Planner and Customer Service Representative.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics also supports the increasing need for supply chain management professionals. For example, between 2014-2024, the agency projects that there will be approximately 85,400 job openings for transportation, storage and distribution managers due to growth and replacement needs.⁴

Approach

“In July 2014, the consortium conducted a national survey of supply chain organizations, contacting 5,242 practitioners at 1,500 companies located in 35 states,” says Leslie Backus, National Principal Investigator, Broward College. “We asked them to identify the competencies that are needed for supply chain management positions.”

The LINCS consortium used the results of this survey to develop content, curriculum and online learning for the eight certification tracks defined below:



Certification Tracks

Supply Chain Management Principles	Customer Service Operations
Transportation Operations	Warehousing Operations
Demand Planning	Inventory Management
Manufacturing & Service Operations	Supply Management & Procurement

Students may choose between instructor-led courses offered by the nine consortium colleges or self-guided study using online materials. Participants have the flexibility to earn one

³ Supply Chain Insights LLC, 2012, Supply Chain Talent: The Missing Link?

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://data.bls.gov/projections/occupationProj>

certification or select multiple tracks to earn several certifications. After completing a course or completing the self-guided study, participants may take a SCPro™ Fundamentals exam offered and certified by CSCMP. Upon passing the exam, the participant receives a certification in the particular competencies tested by that exam.⁵

LINCS students include college students, displaced workers, long-term unemployed workers, veterans entering or reentering the workforce, and those in career transition. The program also serves incumbent workers, and high school seniors who may be undecided about what jobs to pursue after graduation.

Partnerships

Each LINCS consortium college member partners with the National Urban League (NUL) local affiliate in their jurisdiction. The NUL affiliate serves as a recruitment source and also has access to resources such as community social services, financial assistance, transportation vouchers, resume writing, computer skills and case management that provide critical support and wraparound services to LINCS participants. In addition, NUL affiliates can serve as off-campus classrooms that are in proximity to participants' residences.

Next Steps

"Our most recent figures indicate that more than 2,300 unique participants have enrolled in LINCS programs at our nine colleges," says Ms. Backus. "Since many students earn more than one certification, more than 830 students have earned more than 1,500 certifications in supply chain management. In 2016, we're pivoting from recruitment of participants to more emphasis on job placement for new entrants to this industry sector, as well as promotions for incumbent workers in supply chain management occupations. As one successful participant attests in a letter written to his Project Director, "Had it not been for the LINCS program and certifications, I honestly do not believe I would have been offered the [job] opportunity. I'm thankful for the LINCS program opportunity, and the efforts that everyone on the team does on behalf of us students."

Related Links

Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals

<https://cscmp.org>

Broward College/LINCS Education

<http://www.broward.edu/academics/lincs/Pages/lincs-education.aspx>

⁵ Broward College, <http://www.broward.edu/LINCS>