
Competency Models In Action:

ETA Competency Models Inform United Way Partnership's Initiatives to Address Employer Workforce Needs

September 2015

- Customizing ETA's Commercial Competency Model
- Developing career pathways for in-demand occupations
- Working with multiple partners to address workforce challenges

Introduction

Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW) is focused on meeting employer demand in the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana tri-state region by growing the skills of its current and future workforce. Managed by United Way, its partners include businesses, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, education institutions, labor, service providers and philanthropic funders.¹ PCW was cited as an exemplary regional partnership in Vice President Biden's report "Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity."

As part of this initiative, PCW has developed industry competency models derived from the U.S. Department of labor, Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Commercial and Industrial Construction and Advanced Manufacturing Competency Models to specifically communicate what skills are needed to enter the construction workforce. They are also using ETA's Building Blocks model to support their Work Readiness Collaborative to help targeted individuals, such as ex-offenders and welfare recipients, get started on a career pathway. PCW's Commercial/Institutional/Industrial Construction Competency Model most closely aligns to ETA's pyramid format.

The Workforce Need

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the outlook for construction-related occupations is very strong. Employment opportunities for carpenters, with median pay of \$39,940 per year in 2012, will increase by 24% between 2012 -2022, much faster than the 10.8% average for all occupations. During that same time period, employment opportunities for electricians, with median pay of \$49,840, will increase by 20%, faster than average. Likewise, employment opportunities for brick, block and stone masons, earning \$44,950 in 2012, will increase by 34%, much faster than average, and for HVAC mechanics and installers, earning \$43,640, increase by 21%, faster than average.²

Regional projections for construction industry jobs are also favorable. According to a report produced by Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI), construction industry jobs in

¹<http://www.competitiveworkforce.org>

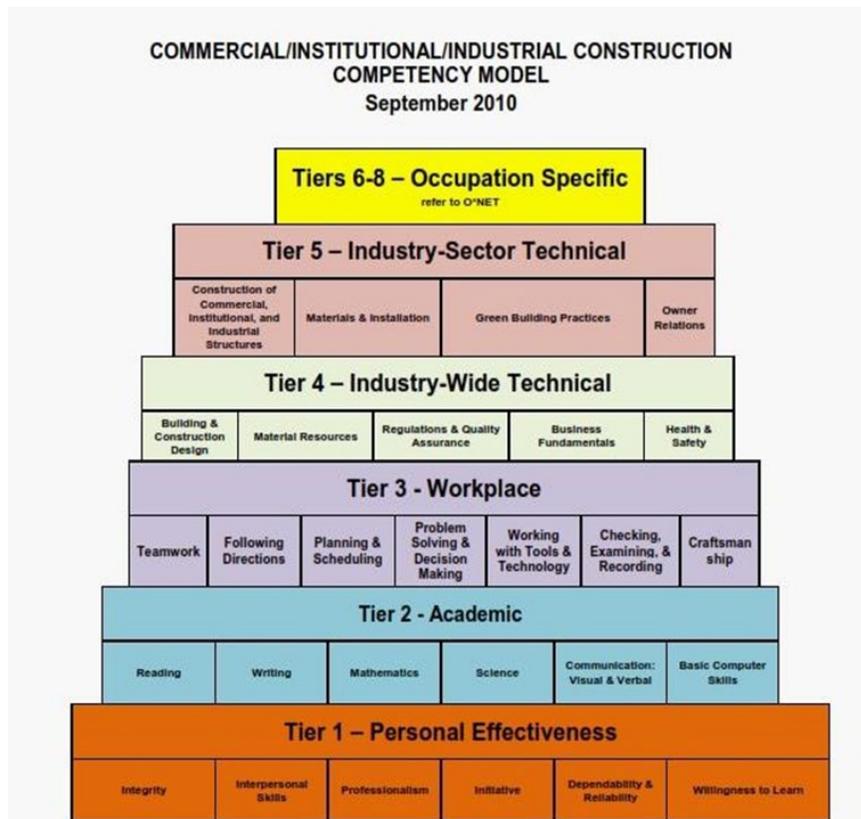
² Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-2015 Edition

Cincinnati, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana will increase by 12% between 2013 and 2020 with average earnings of \$63,167 per year.³

Approach

“We are a workforce intermediary,” says Janice Urbanik, Executive Director, PCW. “We serve as a facilitator and connector. We don’t find people jobs or provide direct services; rather, we identify workforce needs with employers and try to address those needs with system changes.” In this case, the need was to establish a clear means of communicating to prospective workers and educators the kind of skills and competencies an individual needs to join the construction workforce.

“PCW is employer-driven,” says Ms. Urbanik. “Our advisory groups meet on a regular basis, with a PCW staff person in attendance and an employer chairperson. PCW’s Commercial/Institutional/Industrial Construction Competency Model was directly derived from ETA’s Competency Model Clearinghouse website. We printed out ETA’s Commercial and Industrial Construction Competency Model and went through each item, tier by tier, with our advisory group.” As a result of these deliberations, changes were made in some of the language and content to create a competency model reflecting the needs and interests of the region.⁴



³EMSI, Occupational Overview, Q2 Data Set, Partners for a Competitive Workforce

⁴ Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Commercial/Institutional/Industrial Construction Competency Model, http://www.competitiveworkforce.com/files/FINAL_-_Commercial-Institutional_-_Industrial_Construction_Competency_Model.pdf

Next Steps

With that accomplished, PCW is taking yet another step forward. “We are now working on career pathways for specific occupations within five in-demand industry sectors: construction, health care, manufacturing, information technology and transportation, distribution and logistics,” says Ms. Urbanik. “Our goal is to take our work to scale. We’re focused on trying to raise awareness of careers in response to industry demand. We take a multi-generational and “place-based” holistic approach. Parents need gainful employment; children need to start career exploration. We want families to harness their assets to put them on a path to permanent economic security.”

Related Links

Partners for a Competitive Workforce

<http://www.competitiveworkforce.org>

Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity Report

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/skills_report.pdf

Competency Model Clearinghouse

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/>

Competency Model Clearinghouse, Commercial and Industrial Construction Competency Model

<https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/Competency-Models/construction-commercial.aspx>