



**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**MID-SOUTH**



## **Nearly \$1 Million Awarded to ASU Mid-South and Delta Community College Partners in New Grant**

Arkansas State University Mid-South and fellow members of the Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC) will share in a \$988,570 grant that will prepare workers for advanced manufacturing and transportation careers as part of the Arkansas General Assembly's Workforce Initiative Act of 2015.

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the grant program's administering agency, recently made notification of the award to Dr. Debra West, Chancellor of ASU Mid-South and to the presidents and chancellors of Arkansas Northeastern College in Blytheville, Arkansas State University – Newport, East Arkansas Community College in Forrest City, and Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas in Helena, who make up the consortium institutions.

“We are very honored to be given an opportunity of this magnitude to create a model for training our workers for the growing manufacturing and transportation sectors. We expect tremendous economic outcomes for our region as a result of this grant,” said Dr. West.

The primary goal of this program is to create long-term relationships between employers and regional workforce alliances to address the challenge of skills gaps among workers in the region. By ensuring that post-secondary educational institutions are producing the credentials employers need, Arkansas can be more effective in recruiting new industry to the state.

“The ADTEC colleges met extensively with employer partners throughout the region surveying best practices and including workforce alliance partners in specific discussions,” explained Dr. Callie Dunavin, Director of ADTEC and Associate Vice Chancellor of Strategic Initiatives at ASU Mid-South. “ADTEC was one of the 3 highest funded grantees in the new state workforce funding totaling over \$15 million.”

Dave Brady, Executive Director of Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas, who participated in planning processes for the project,

commented: “In keeping with national trends, employers are vocal that employees’ lack of basic/soft skills costs companies time, money, and productivity and is the primary skills gap. The ADAPT program is an excellent example of collaborating with industry and education to bridge these skills gaps that prevent employees from being successful in higher-demand occupations in advanced manufacturing and transportation, distribution and logistics - jobs that are at the top of the lists on our regional employers hiring forecasts. “

The grant award supports Arkansas Delta Accelerating Pathways Together (ADAPT) program which focuses on delivering training that provides rapid entry into the regional workforce in targeted sectors identified as high demand by labor market data, workforce development boards, and employer feedback. The program will focus on pathways in advanced manufacturing and transportation, distribution and logistics with a regional approach to Certified Driver Training. These sectors were selected because of the high level of importance in the region, and the interdependence of the two sectors.

Work-based learning opportunities will be integrated where employer support is available. Additionally, ADTEC plans to develop a regional, employer-recognized certification which will be awarded to students who complete all requirements of the ADAPT workforce readiness model. The ADTEC colleges plan to award three college credit hours to students who successfully complete all workforce readiness requirements.

The ADAPT model will address regional labor needs by targeting industries with significant projected employment needs and delivering relevant technical training through enhanced or new career pathway models. The program assures that students who are potential employees have access to attain a full roster of credentials including employer/industry certifications, and value-added certifications.

According to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, “the Workforce Initiative Act Regional Workforce Grant Program seeks to properly evaluate and address the workforce education needs of our state. Preparing and encouraging Arkansans to pursue high-demand jobs, including but not limited to, those stemming from industry recognized credentials, career and technical certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees is essential to building a skilled and employment-ready workforce.”

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