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Transportation Learning Center Continues to Implement Innovations for Transit Occupations

- Expanding Competency-Based Frameworks for Transit Occupation Apprenticeships
- Piloting Core Competencies Curricula with Partners
- Introducing Adults and Youth to Frontline Occupations in Public Transportation

Introduction

The Transportation Learning Center (TLC), an industry champion in the development of the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Competency Model, from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), has successfully actualized the TDL competencies to help fulfill its mission to build labor-management training partnerships that improve organizational performance, expand workforce knowledge, skills and abilities, and promote career advancement.

The organization has developed, established and expanded national frameworks for apprenticeship, based on the competencies articulated in ETA's TDL Competency Model, for four frontline transit occupations. TLC has also developed and piloted the Transit Core Competencies Curriculum (TC3), derived from the TDL Competency Model, to create a bridge between Academic and Personal Effectiveness Competencies and Transportation/Transit Core Knowledge.

The Workforce Need

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment opportunities for transportation and materials moving occupations are estimated to average 1,333,400 nationwide each year from 2016-2026. BLS data also indicates that employment opportunities for vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics, installers, and repairers are estimated to be 180,400 nationwide in that same time period.¹

Furthermore, in testimony before Congress on March 13, 2019, Jack Clark, TLC Executive Director said "...for all occupations and industries in the US, the median age of workers is 42 years of age. The median age in bus service and urban transit is nearly 51. We see that the aging workforce issue, widely understood as a crisis for the overall economy, stands as an even larger challenge for transit. Looking at only the age distribution understates the workforce challenge for transit. About 400,000 people work in public transportation now. Of that figure, 90% currently work in the frontline operations and maintenance occupations. Because of retirements and other exits from transit employment, transit has a very large number of jobs to fill."²

Approach: TC3

TC3 is an initiative designed to reach out to young people and adults in the communities that public transportation serves, introduce them to frontline career opportunities, and provide them with baseline knowledge and skills that will help them enter and succeed in the industry.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/emp-by-detailed-occupation.htm>

² March 13, 2019, Testimony before the House Transportation Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Development Guide for the TC3 Industry Overview



Transit Core Competencies Curriculum (TC3)

Module 1: Public Transportation Industry Overview

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



“We have developed six instructor-ready TC3 modules, three of which have been piloted extensively in Career and Technical Education high schools (sometimes in collaboration with community colleges), as well as with workforce development agencies partnering with transit agencies and their unions,” says Patricia Greenfield, Senior Program Director, Workforce Education, TLC. “These three modules focus on the following subject areas: Public Transportation Industry Overview, Workplace Relations (contextualized for the transportation industry), and Safety and Security. Other areas, including introductions to public transportation vehicle maintenance, and electrical and mechanical theory and applications, have been developed and initially piloted. TC3’s goal is to provide program participants with career awareness and initial competencies that help prepare them for good jobs at family-sustaining wages in a stable and growing industry.”

TC3 pilot partners have included the following locations and entities:

- Cleveland, OH
 - Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
 - Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 268
 - El Barrio Workforce Development Center
 - Cuyahoga Community College
- Boston, MA
 - Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
 - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 103

- Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
 - Roxbury Community College
- Denver, CO
 - Denver Regional Transportation District
 - ATU Local 1001
 - Mile High Youth Corps
 - Community College of Denver
- New York City, March 2019
 - NY ATLAS
 - Consortium for Worker Education
 - Transport Workers Union of America, Local 100
 - South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation

Approach: Competency-Based Apprenticeships

Working in partnership with transit agencies, unions, state and federal apprenticeship agencies, local workforce centers, community colleges, career and technical education organizations and other national nonprofits, TLC has completed competency-based or hybrid national frameworks for apprenticeships in the following occupations: Bus Maintenance Technician, Elevator-Escalator Technician, Rail Care Technician and Signals Technician. The first DOL-approved competency-based framework, developed in collaboration with the Urban Institute, is for the [Bus Maintenance Technician apprenticeship](#).

“We’ve registered eight new programs with a few more in the pipeline,” says Jack Clark. “We’re also working with a number of locations that had apprenticeships and are bringing them into a national network. Some of the experienced labor-management committees are helping newer locations, while everyone is working to upgrade the quality of apprenticeships with a lot of emphasis on learning on the job. We have found that many employers prefer a competency-based apprenticeship over a traditional time-based apprenticeship, because it focuses on work-based learning rather than time in the classroom, leading to more productivity from the employers’ perspective.”

Next Steps

“Developing and implementing competency-based apprenticeships, as well as hybrids of competency and time-based programs, will continue to be a priority,” says Mr. Clark. “The work on developing a competency-based framework for Signals Maintainers is ongoing. Metro in the Twin Cities in Minnesota is developing a Rail Car apprenticeship that will probably be a hybrid.”

“We will continue to pilot and customize our TC3 curricula for interested partnerships in other locations and develop additional modules as new needs emerge,” says Dr. Greenfield. “We are also exploring the possibility of developing online and distance learning options for future use.”

Related Links

Transportation Learning Center
<http://www.transportcenter.org/>

SEPTA Hybrid Program in Elevator-Escalator
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/yp0vbluuogyrai/SEPTA%20approved%20standards.pdf?dl=0>

Transit Core Competencies Curriculum
https://www.transittraining.net/courseware/transit_core_competencies