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September 2023

Elevating with AJAC



Dear Friends,

For many of us, including me, when we think of the aviation industry, we think about professions like pilots, flight attendants, and employees of commercial airlines. Those jobs only account for a percentage of professionals in the aviation industry. What goes most unnoticed are all the professions – such as machinists, aircraft mechanics, and industrial maintenance technicians – that work “behind the scenes” to make the aviation industry run. These types of jobs are often quality, family-wage careers that require training and certifications, but many people, especially young people, do not know that these professions exist.

Through the [South King County Community Impact Fund](#) (SKCCIF), we’re funding organizations like [AJAC](#) that are working to bridge that gap. Launched in 2008, AJAC is an industry-driven apprenticeship organization training a generation of professionals in the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries. AJAC partners with over 300 employers in Washington and 20 community colleges, technical colleges, skill centers, and high schools to offer their apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and create pipelines that connect students and workers directly to aviation industry employers. Annually, AJAC serves approximately 400 apprentices.

As part of SKCCIF, AJAC is operating pre-apprenticeship cohorts at South Seattle College, Green River College, and Bates Technical College. Through these 10-week programs, students earn college credits while they gain foundational skills in advanced manufacturing including machining, blueprint reading, precision measuring, and shop math. Students also learn employee readiness skills, gain familiarity with aerospace and manufacturing careers, and get connected to industry employers. This is truly where the rubber meets the road, because coming into this program, individuals likely had no experience being in a machine shop. Then after 10 weeks, they can do things like operate a mill or a lathe on their own!



As Chris Pierson, AJAC Director of Operations and Funding, said, “Students don’t leave the pre-apprenticeship program as machinists, but they graduate the program understanding the steps they need to take to achieve that goal.”

Many of AJAC’s [Manufacturing Academy](#) graduates become registered adult apprentices, creating a direct pipeline from pre-apprenticeship into apprenticeship and then long-term careers. Approximately 85% of the students enrolled in their pre-apprenticeship programs graduate the program, and roughly 70% find employment in the aerospace and manufacturing industries. In the coming months, AJAC will be accepting applications for their Winter pre-apprenticeship cohorts. [Please spread the word](#) and encourage people to apply.

The Port is committed to developing the next generation of professionals in port-related industries, and it is thanks to our community partners, like AJAC, that we are developing pathways for youth, women, people of color, and many more in our region to attain quality professions in these industries. Thank you for leading the way, AJAC!

In Unity,

Bookda Gheisar
Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

\$600,000 Available for South King County Environmental Projects



Community-led groups can now apply for Port of Seattle funding to improve the local environment in neighborhoods near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA). With the launch of the fourth cycle of the Environmental Grants Program, organizations serving the communities of Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Normandy Park, SeaTac, and Tukwila can apply for a single-year award of \$20,000, or multi-year funding for up to \$60,000. A total of \$600,000 is available for this cycle.

Potential projects include public space improvements, equipment or artwork installations, or neighborhood project or environmental stewardship projects in these South King County communities. Projects must take place on public property. Proposals must be submitted by Monday, October 30, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. [Read more →](#)

Partners Launch Citizenship Application Campaign



The Port of Seattle and OneAmerica, a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to building power in immigrant and refugee communities, launched a campaign this month to encourage qualified individuals to apply for United States citizenship. The campaign includes social media and video messages to encourage qualified individuals to consider embracing the benefits and responsibilities that come with U.S. citizenship.

Those interested in applying for citizenship can receive free application assistance from volunteer immigration attorneys, paralegals, and interpreters during a daylong Citizenship Day clinic on Saturday, September 30, at Renton Technical College. [Read more →](#)

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