



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Manufacturing Connect Recognized for Excellence by the National Career Pathways Network**

WACO, Texas (September 13, 2017) – On Friday, October 27, the National Career Pathways Network (NCPN) will recognize the winners of the 2017 Career Pathways Partnership Excellence Award competition. Three programs will be recognized at the annual conference luncheon at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch. This year's honorable mention recipient is Manufacturing Connect.

Manufacturing Connect (MC) inspires young people and equips them for self-sufficiency while creating conditions that support community development. Through public/private partnerships, MC creates and expands the linkages between schools, communities, and opportunity in the manufacturing sector.

MC was developed by nonprofit Manufacturing Renaissance through a partnership with Austin College and Career Academy (formerly Austin Polytechnical Academy), a Chicago public school that opened in 2007.

Since 2007, MC's more than 100 manufacturing partners have provided advisory support, opportunities for field trips, and work experiences such as job shadowing activities and paid internships. MC's advisory board includes representatives from the offices of Senator Durbin, Congressman Schakowsky, Cook County Commissioner Boykin, and Alderman Taliaferro, along with the Chicago/Cook Workforce Partnership, City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago Teachers Union, Chicago Federation of Labor, and other groups.

MC high school participants follow a three-year pre-engineering Project Lead The Way course sequence. Participants can earn up to three NIMS machining credentials and, if they qualify, can take a manufacturing technology dual-credit course earning up to six college credits. MC students experience two to four field trips to manufacturing facilities by their junior year and complete a work-readiness training aligned to the U.S. Dept. of Labor's work-readiness assessment. The program provides individualized counseling, job shadowing, paid one-week spring break internships and six-week summer jobs, and mentoring and career coaching. MC also provides opportunities for teachers to receive technical training, earn industry credentials, and participate in externships at local manufacturing companies.

Since 2010, approximately 215 MC participants have completed the program. Sixty program completers have been placed in full-time manufacturing jobs earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 per year.

Open to any Career Pathways Initiative (state, regional or local), the Career Pathways Partnership Excellence Award emphasizes the importance of career guidance and advising, professional development for educators and employers, and the employer role in providing work-based learning opportunities for students.

NCPN ([ncpn.info](http://ncpn.info)) is an organization for educators, employers, and others involved in the advancement of Career Pathways, career technical education (CTE), and related education reform initiatives.

Contact:

Erica Swinney Staley, Program Director  
[eswinney@mfgren.org](mailto:eswinney@mfgren.org)  
773-278-5418