Career Pathway Services

Erica Swinney Staley, Executive Director
Sarah Mercado, Program Director
Mfgren.org
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A Brief Program History


- **2005 - 2007**: Chicago Public Schools (CPS) invites MR and the CMRC to submit a school design as part of CPS’s interest to help students find career/post-secondary pathways linked to manufacturing after high school. The Chicago Board of Education approved the school design, **Austin Polytechnical Academy (APA)** opened as one of three new schools in the Austin Community High School building. **APA was operated by CPS/CTU**.

- **2007 – 2011**: Starting with 9th graders, APA is the **first high school in Chicago to offer both engineering and manufacturing courses**, at the time was 1 of 4 high schools in Illinois with a **NIMS accredited training program**, MR organized 100+ manufacturing facility tours, students begin earning NIMS credentials, participate in manufacturing internships and within the first graduating class in 2011, the first APA student gets full-time manufacturing job after high school.

- **2012 – 2019**: MR develops activities through the **Manufacturing Connect & Young Manufacturers Association** programs, nationally recognized, earned competitive DOL grant, **140 manufacturers** participated in program, **first in Chicago to start dual-credit Manufacturing Tech course**, raises and invests millions of education/workforce development dollars into Austin.

- **2019 - 2022**: MR reorganizes as a community-based program serving in-school youth and young adults across the Chicagoland area through new funding opportunities with the State of IL and Cook County.
Today:
Career Pathway Services

Expose, inspire, prepare, and support youth and young adults for careers in manufacturing. 4 program models:

- **Manufacturing Connect**: career exposure, technical training, work-based learning and coaching, job placement and retention supports for in-school youth, ages 14-18
- **Young Manufacturers Association**: peer support, career exposure, technical training, coaching, job placement and retention supports and leadership development for young adults ages 18-29
- **Instructors Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing**: training and professional development for teachers and instructors providing manufacturing-related training and career pathways programming
- **Career Pathways Services**: training and technical assistance activities that complement MR programs, customized for strategic partners and employers
Career Pathway Services

Expose, inspire, prepare, and support youth and young adults for careers in manufacturing.

- **Not a traditional workforce development program**: MR draws from a youth development and social services orientation to engage youth and young adults who typically may not identify or seek out manufacturing as a pathway that can assist them in achieving their life goals.

- **We meet young people where they are**: MR finds a variety of ways for youth to relate to peers already in the sector to help illuminate what could be possible for their future. No matter what career path they ultimately choose, young people benefit from having a network of professional and social supports, work experiences, technical and professionalism skills training.

- **Get the job, keep the job, grow a career**: For those who enroll in our training program and choose to pursue a career-track job in manufacturing we support them as much as possible through training, job placement, retention through 1 year and beyond to help ensure their success.
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Youth Service Elements:

1. **Career Exposure** (Fieldtrips, info sessions, guest speakers)
2. **Creating Connection** (Build identity, trust, trauma-sensitivity)
3. **Low-barrier Training** (Industry credentials plus mfg-readiness skills)
4. **Individualized Supports** (IDPs, tools and transportation, social-emotional supports, referrals, case management, college enrollment supports)
5. **Work Experiences** (Internships, job shadows, summer jobs)
6. **Job Coaching and Placement** (Get the right job)
7. **Job Retention Supports** (Keep the job, peer support, YMA services)
8. **Life and Leadership Skills** (YMA services, workshops, civic engagement opportunities)

Strategic Partner Service Elements:

1. **Program Design and Planning** (Develop customized career pathways programs to effectively engage youth in manufacturing)
2. **Train the Trainer** (Support instructors, administrators, counselors towards building impactful career pathways programs)
Manufacturing Connect

- Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Delegate Agency program for in-school youth
- Designed to serve youth aged 16-18
- Last year cohort of 25 seniors from 15 different high schools
- 12-week program introducing youth to manufacturing/STEM careers, earning a NIMS credential, supports to enroll in college or pursue employment after high school
- Partnering as a resource for schools, social service agencies and other workforce development providers
Young Manufacturers Association

• Started in 2016 by program alumni in response to ongoing need for training and support on the job. Started as a peer support network for young adults pursuing careers in mfg

• Serving young adults ages 18-29

• Emphasizes peer support, leadership and network development, building a new identity around pursuing careers in manufacturing, not just getting the job but keeping the job

• Goal is to establish active YMA chapters across the Chicagoland area, encourage more young people to consider manufacturing career pathways

• YMA Activities: youth-oriented technical training, job placement and individualized supports, peer support meetings and events, community engagement
Outputs & Outcomes
2011 - 2022

• Manufacturers Participated: 153
• Total Participants Served: 476
• Total Work Experiences Completed: 720 (includes job shadows, internships and summer jobs; highest # of manufacturing work experiences completed for youth/young adults in one program in City of Chicago)
• Total NIMS Credentials: 361 participants earned 591 credentials (highest # of NIMS credentials earned by youth/young adults in one program in City of Chicago)
• Manufacturing Job Placements:
  • 127 program completers
  • 182 jobs
  • Average retention across all placements: 15 months
  • 90-day retention average: 76%
  • Average wage: $18.55/hr plus benefits
Manufacturers make our programming for youth possible. Employers provide guidance and a variety of work experiences, facility tours, job shadows, summer jobs, internships and full-time job opportunities. Here are some of the companies most active in the last year.

- Best Fruit & Nuts
- Columbia Metal Spinning
- Dakkota Integrated Systems
- Damron
- DeCardy Diecasting
- Ferrara Candy Company
- Freedman Seating
- FosterWorks
- Hudson Precision
- Laystrom Manufacturing
- Matot
- Matrix Tooling
- PK-Tool
- World’s Finest Chocolates
- Zenith Fabricating
This is what success looks like
Success Story: Terrence, Tool & Die Apprentice

Graduated: Austin Polytechnical Academy, 2011, Manufacturing Connect & Young Manufactures Association participant

Terrence was not a particularly active participant in our in-school program. He received some training, but he popped in and out throughout high school such that we did not think he was interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing. He graduated high school and went on his way. In 2014, he returned to our office and inquired if we could help him find a job, he had a child now and his job at the Family Dollar was no longer meeting his family’s needs. We gave him some personalized tutoring to help refresh his technical skills and helped him secure a job at Dudek & Bock Spring Manufacturing.

After a year working there, they recognized his potential and paid for him to join a Tool & Die Apprenticeship Program where he studied and learned on the job. Along the way he got in trouble being at the wrong place, at the wrong time with the wrong people and was arrested for a crime that could have sent him to jail. MR staff went to all his court dates and advocated on his behalf with the judge. We were able to share that Terrence was in a good job and was an active leader and role model in our program for other young people. Our advocacy helped the judge to see Terrence as being a productive member of his community and Terrence was able to avoid jail time and keep his job. He graduated the Apprenticeship program in 2018 where he currently works making $22/hour.
Success Story:
Kyana & DeAndre, Power Couple

Graduated: Austin College & Career Academy, 2019, Manufacturing Connect & Young Manufacturers Association participants

Kyana was an active participant in the Manufacturing Connect (MC) program from her freshman year at Austin College & Career Academy. She had multiple work experiences throughout high school and entered an internship with Ferrara Candy after graduating in 2019. Kyana was trained to work in the kitchen as a Mogul Operator, responsible for blending ingredients to make candy. Her starting rate was $11/hour as she trained for five months, until she became a full-time permanent employee with Ferrara Candy as a Mogul Operator, making $19.50/hour (today she makes $21/hour) and is planning to start a family with her partner DeAndre.

DeAndre also graduated Austin College & Career Academy as an active MC participant. DeAndre successfully completed multiple internships including one with Ferrara Candy that was featured on the local news. In his senior year in high school, he started an internship with Freedman Seating and is still employed with them today as an Assembler after being promoted from a Packer. DeAndre has taken advantage of Freedman Seating’s tuition reimbursement program and took a few Mechatronics classes at Daley College. Today he and Kyana are preparing to start a family! They are both are enjoying a high-quality life, able to afford their comfortable apartment and DeAndre is pleased to drive to work in his 2020 Chevy Camaro thanks to both earning a livable wage.
Success Story: Isaiah, Future Fabricator

Graduated: Academy of Scholastic Achievement, 2021, Manufacturing Connect participant

Isaiah McMullen was a student at an alternative school on Chicago’s west side, where a school counselor referred him to Manufacturing Connect (MC). Isaiah grew up in Chicago’s Humboldt Park community and now lives with his father in Jackson Park on the city’s west side. While the MC program was held online during the pandemic, students were still able to participate and learn key skills for the workforce. Isaiah says he learned valuable measurement and blueprint reading skills. He also demonstrated what he had learned and received a credential from the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS). While participating in MC, Isaiah designed a logo as part of a branding activity for a company, Best Fruit and Nuts, for the program’s paid Spring Break Internship. Isaiah graduated as salutatorian from his school in June 2021.

With MC’s help, he is working full-time, for Foster Works, a woman-owned custom sheet metal fabricator on the near west side. He started his job with the company in packaging and shipping and is currently training in manufacturing skills at the company. His supervisors are giving him high praise and are eager to get him to start to work in welding at the company. For Isaiah, like others in the program, there’s another key piece to finding one’s way in the workforce – learning how to present oneself and make a positive impression on an employer. Isaiah says that the MC team helped him do just that by working with him as he created a resume and coaching him for interviews. “They were great teachers,” he says of the staff he worked with in the Manufacturing Connect program. “And this program helped me get a job right away.”

Today, Isaiah is still working at Foster Works. Isaiah is getting ready for next steps and a future in the workforce. “I really want to be a fabricator of cars at some point, and open up my own shop,” he says. His employer is helping him get training in welding. He also has a couple of things to share with others who may be looking for opportunities in the manufacturing sector. “You have to be really hungry for it,” he says, “and patient as well.”
Thank You!

**Erica Staley**, Executive Director, estaley@mfgren.org

**Sarah Mercado**, Program Director, smercado@mfgren.org

**Leslye Long**, Asst. Program Director, llong@mfgren.org

773-278-5418

[www.mfgren.org](http://www.mfgren.org)

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