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IN-MaC's Second Annual Micro-Grant Virtual Impact Summit Highlights Building Workforce Ecosystems, New Round of Funding

More than 65 educators, industry partners, and community-based organizations gather to share best practices around partnering to prepare the next generation of workforce

WEST LAFAYETTE, IN– The Purdue University, Indiana Next Generation Manufacturing Competitiveness Center (IN-MaC) hosted its second annual Micro-Grant Virtual Impact Summit. The summit included Lewis Cass Polytechnic Academy presentations, University High School, Whitley County Consolidated Schools, Genesis: Pathways to Success, Mishawaka Schools, and STEM YES!

Attendees discussed micro-grant best practices and benefitted from a showcase of micro-grant grantees, programming, and initiatives supported by micro-grant resources.

"The goal is to create a stronger, more competitive manufacturing ecosystem for Indiana, and the nation as a whole, as we start mobilizing resources and expertise to build out local, sustainable workforce development networks," said Lisa Deck, IN-MaC program manager for education and workforce. "These networks strengthen the relationship between workforce innovation, education, entrepreneurship and manufacturing research. IN-MaC micro-grants provide targeted support that leads to large impact within these networks."

IN-MaC micro-grant virtual summit presenter, Lori Heuer, director of talent development at Whitley County Consolidated Schools sharing how she and her district are making an impact for students in K-12 with an IN-MaC micro-grant.

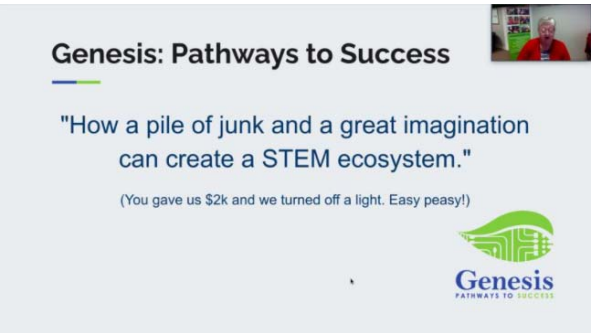
Participants gained insights into STEM talent development from organizations throughout Indiana. Presentation topics included:

- Whitley Works – A community-based approach to career exploration, exposure, engagement and experiences: Whitley County Community Schools

- A new way of learning: IN-MaC and Lewis Cass Polytechnic Academy
- Getting started with a robotics team: University High School
- How a pile of junk and a great imagination can create a STEM ecosystem: Genesis: Pathways to Success
- Can recycling be fun? Manufacturing a solution: SCS Recycling Initiative
- Why STEM YES!: DirectEmployers Institute

Lewis Cass Polytechnic Academy Director Mallory Claypool detailed how his school was one of the first to implement an IN-MaC Design & Innovation Studio and the impact the studio and IN-MaC micro-grant program has had on his students.

“The best thing about the IN-MaC Design & Innovation Studio is I can get students interested in manufacturing and engineering without ever talking to them about manufacturing or engineering,” said Claypool.



Cheryll Obendorf, the director of Genesis: Pathways to Success, gave a virtual presentation at the Indiana Manufacturing Competitiveness Center (IN-MaC) micro-grant virtual summit.

Attendees learned about the importance of relationships between educators and industry partners during a discussion with Whitley County Consolidated Schools’ Director of Talent Development, Lori Heuer. Heuer highlighted how building bonds with these partners can support existing programs through offers of expertise sharing, equipment donations and touring opportunities.

“The companies love when we bring the students to them,” said Heuer. “It shows a vested interest. It has also led to the donation of equipment to the school corporation to supplement programs supported by IN-MaC micro-grants.”

The summit concluded with details about the third round of IN-MaC micro-grant funding that is now available. Grants range from $1,000 to $2,000 and are open to educators, community-based organizations and industry partners. Programs must impact at least 100 individuals, including students and adults.

“We are looking for creativity, innovation and impact,” said Deck. "Get your education, community, and industry partners together to create an idea that can grow your local workforce development ecosystem and challenge manufacturing perceptions."

Funding applications are due April 30, 2021. This year, IN-MaC is allowing applications that include virtual programming aspects. To learn more, visit http://bit.ly/in-macmicro-grant or email Lisa Deck at adeck@purdue.edu.

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About IN-MaC: IN-MaC provides programs and services to enhance the talents and capabilities of Indiana's present and future workforce by facilitating connections between educators and industry to catalyze the formation of near-term and long-term skills in a highly accessible manner across Indiana. IN-MaC supports a variety of STEM-type, skilled trades, degree (associates and undergraduate), and certificate programs.

IN-MaC leverages its resources, networks, and partnerships with industry, local communities, educators, and interested stakeholders to provide a variety of formal courses and informal activities that embolden pathways to meet the present and future manufacturing workforce's talent needs.

About IN-MaC Micro-Grant Program: The micro-grants are designed to support innovation and encourage organizations across Indiana to dedicate resources towards development and program implementation that impact and create manufacturing awareness for youth (K-12), post-secondary students, and the incumbent workforce.