DRIVEN TO INNOVATE

Snapshots from Delivering the TDL Workforce

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) is a critical sector to the U.S. economy, employing over 4.6 million workers who track orders, ensure the safety of goods during transit, and manage the logistics of planning and executing shipments using different modes of transportation.

Through JFF's Delivering the TDL Workforce, a two-year initiative generously supported by the Walmart Foundation, 10 regions across the country scaled up their TDL training programs to provide low- to middle-skilled workers with occupational training that led to industry recognized credentials, offered them supportive services, and placed them into good jobs.

This series highlights the innovative ways three grant recipients used this initiative to expand training access to incarcerated women, spur employer investment in TDL training, and secure steady funding to sustain programs.

BEYOND ENGAGEMENT
Employer Investments Expand TDL Opportunities

An interview with Chad Stocks, vice president for workforce development, Hinds Community College

Mississippi's Hinds Community College serves 32,000 students each year in six locations and has a long history of providing career and technical education. In 2013, Hinds partnered with KLLM Transport Services to create the KLLM Driving Academy in an effort to meet the significant demand for truck drivers. In 2016, Hinds built a diesel technician training program modeled on the driving academy, and it continues to work closely with local employers to develop other TDL training programs.

JFF What prompted Hinds to partner with KLLM to build the truck driving academy?

CS Hinds Community College received a U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant, which is all about employer partnerships. As part of that grant, we tried to stand up two programs—commercial truck driving and maritime deck hand. We partnered with KLLM to develop the commercial truck driving program. KLLM stepped up to the plate in a big way: they donated 11 or 12 trucks and invested $3 million in a new training facility. They're paying the salaries of 32 employees at the academy and some of the instructor salaries. KLLM provides scholarships to students, lunch every day, housing for those who live more than 15 miles from the academy, and other wraparound support services for

students. Our partnership with KLLM allowed us to build a completely new program—it's not like anything else we had offered before.

JFF How is the truck driving program unique?

CS We created an entirely new model: instead of enrolling students just twice a year, in September and January, the truck driving academy starts a new class every Monday. We enroll anywhere from 15 to 25 students each week. We're creating a pipeline of new employees for an industry that needs workers desperately—long-haul trucking has an annual turnover rate that sometimes exceeds 100 percent.

The weekly start date is crucial for attracting students: they can enroll when they're ready. We found that if a student wanted to start a truck driving program, but had to wait for three, four, or five months to enroll, we lost them. For an industry like truck driving, where demand is so great, you can't afford to lose a potential driver because the training program isn't ready when the student is ready.

Setting this program up was challenging—our systems aren't set up for weekly enrollments, but we made it work. Additionally, employers didn't have time to wait 5 months between graduating cohorts. In our new Diesel Academy, we even compressed the program from 2 years to 16 months—our employer partners didn't want summer breaks.

JFF How did Jobs for the Future's Delivering the TDL Workforce initiative intersect with the KLLM academy?

CS The KLLM academy was completely set up and running when a couple of our local funding partners mentioned the Walmart-funded JFF initiative to attract women and minorities into TDL jobs. It was a perfect fit with the academy. We saw it as an opportunity to put more women and minorities to work in this field, but we had no idea how successful we would be.

The grant had a target goal of recruiting 75 women over two years. We hit that goal in the first quarter. The number of women in the program went from 3–4 percent to 10–12 percent. We spent the grant funding and met the grant outcomes—in a matter of months.

JFF How did you accomplish this phenomenal increase in engagement?

CS Marketing! As part of our grant proposal, we asked for money to spend on marketing and recruitment, and then we asked KLLM for additional money. We ran electronic billboards with pictures of women and the tagline "driving her way to a new career" throughout the district, and we also ran radio and TV ads. We spent about $1 million of company money and used another $30,000 of our grant funds to pay for the additional marketing. It worked really well.

JFF What kinds of recruiting did you do to attract other minorities into the program?

CS We highlighted women in print and electronic media, as well as implementing outreach activities within the community to attract minorities.

JFF Once you had the tremendous response from all that advertising, what did you do to support women and help retain them in the trucking program?

CS We used a portion of the TDL grant funds to help pay for some of the women's expenses and to waive the one-year work commitment that comes with acceptance into the KLLM trucking academy. That way, if they didn't succeed, they wouldn't have any debt.

We also learned quickly that female students did better with female trainers for the six week on-the-road training, so now we have all-female driving pairs.

JFF How have you engaged other employers?

CS The KLLM Driving Academy received a lot of attention in the local press and through DOL, and other companies started coming through the president's door looking for "the same deal." Dr. Muse [Hinds Community College president] had to explain that not only had Hinds not given KLLM a "deal," KLLM had stepped up to the plate. When KLLM said that they wanted to be a partner, they meant it.

Once employers understood that, we were able to expand the KLLM model and build out some other training programs. We took the same model and built a diesel academy—to train diesel mechanics—with support from Empire Truck and heavy equipment dealer Stribling Equipment. There's huge demand for diesel mechanics— Empire Truck has told us they can hire 400 technicians tomorrow, across six states. We're about a year in that partnership, which is funded entirely by Empire and Stribling. We've received donations of a building, tools, heavy equipment, and scholarships for students.

Billboard recruiting women to KLLM's Driving Academy

We have the same goals for including women and minorities in the diesel program, and we've already graduated two women and placed one at KLLM. Women diesel mechanics are very rare, so this is a big deal.

JFF How are you expanding the academy model into other TDL occupations?

CS We sat down with our advisory board and broke down the sector into its component parts, and then we revamped existing programs and built new ones to meet employers' needs. We already had a collision repair program and a transportation parts and accessories program in place; however, we revamped them with industry input. And in addition to the diesel mechanic, we built two more brand new programs: Transportation Logistics, which is already underway, and Heavy Equipment Operator, which is currently in development.

Employers are an integral part of this: they're driving the curriculum content, providing the funding, and are truly partnering with the college to develop a talent pipeline to meet their urgent need for workers.

JFF Are these new programs exact replicas of the KLLM Driving Academy?

CS Not exact replicas, but they are all similar. For some occupations, where there's less demand, there's no need for weekly enrollments. Those programs have intakes every eight weeks. Each program is responsive to employer needs—in that sense they are very much modeled on the KLLM program.

JFF Why have you been so successful in engaging employers?

CS Employers need workers, and we're here to help fill that pipeline. We're thinking creatively about how to meet employer needs—shortening the time to the credential, expanding class start dates to weekly or every eight weeks, and being flexible on the time of day we offer courses and where we offer them—we'll do what it takes to create training programs that work for employers and students. Having KLLM lead the way was incredibly powerful. They set the standard for engagement, and we can hold them up as a model to others who come to us looking to replicate our success with the truck driving academy.

Other colleges are also asking for our help in replicating these programs, and we're happy to help. I travel all over the country to show community colleges how we built on our success with KLLM to develop a range of TDL training programs that meet our local employers' needs.

HINDS TDL PROGRAMS
at a Glance

KLLM ACADEMY
10 to 15 weeks

1,488
People trained

182
Women trained

1,081
Minorities trained

1,351
Students who received
credentials/certification

2,456
Total credentials awarded

DIESEL ACADEMY
14 months

78
People trained

2
Women trained

17
Minorities trained

27
Students who received
credentials/certification

95%
Placement rate

QUICK FACTS
Delivering the TDL Workforce

WHAT A two-year initiative supported by the Walmart Foundation and administered by JFF.

WHO Ten regions across the country received grants. JFF provided technical assistance to sites to adopt national best practices in training program design, participant recruitment and retention, curriculum delivery, employer engagement, local partnership development, and job placement strategies. JFF and the sites particularly focused on recruiting and connecting women to this predominantly male sector.

Impact of the initiative over two years

3,697
Jobseekers served, including **781** women

2,150
Jobseekers placed into jobs with an average placement wage of **$15.59** per hour

768
Incumbent TDL workers trained, including **224** women

Generated pay raises for
371
incumbent workers

Impact at Hinds

1,408
People trained for commercial driver's license

1,002
Program graduates hired

208
People in paid internships, scheduled to graduate in 2017

172
Women enrolled

137
Women in paid internships or employed

$15.86
Average hourly wage

Acknowledgments

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Jobs for the Future (JFF) is a national nonprofit that builds educational and economic opportunity for underserved populations in the United States. JFF develops innovative programs and public policies that increase college readiness and career success and build a more highly skilled, competitive workforce. With over 30 years of experience, JFF is a recognized national leader in bridging education and work to increase economic mobility and strengthen our economy. Learn more at www.jff.org.

ACCESS TO HIGH-PAYING CAREERS

Many occupations that provide family sustaining wages without a college degree are in male-dominated industries. It takes careful planning to break these gender barriers and successfully connect women to these jobs. Training providers can draw on resources from the Adding a Gender Lens to Nontraditional Jobs Training toolkit, for strategies to recruit women into their programs, enhance job training to address critical issues such as safety for women, and prepare women for job interviews and other components of career success.

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE