

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation
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For Immediate Release: Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019
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South Dakota Apprenticeship Program Receives National Excellence Award

PIERRE, S.D. – The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) presented its State Excellence award to the Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) for the Start Today SD Incentive program, an initiative to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeships in South Dakota.

Over the past three years, DLR received \$1.6 million in apprenticeship grant funding. The vision of the grant is to provide South Dakota businesses with a proactive strategy to engage individuals in their communities, improve skill sets, and meet workforce needs.

In 2018, 40 organizations applied for the Start Today SD Incentive funding. Of those, 17 were chosen to receive a total of \$490,000. In just four months, this created 14 Registered Apprenticeship Programs, while three organizations implemented National Apprenticeship Programs.

“Apprenticeships help bridge our skills gap and equip folks with the tools they need to work high-paying, in-demand jobs right here in South Dakota,” said **Governor Kristi Noem**. “This program has been successful because employers provide their own innovative solutions, resulting in a higher-skilled workforce. We’ll continue working to bolster our work-based learning programs and expand career opportunities.”

The Start Today SD initiative has so far resulted in 300 new apprentices and an increase of 15 percent in the number of female apprentices.

“Apprenticeships give people opportunities to experience new jobs and expand the workforce,” said state Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. “We have a pool of untapped workers ready to learn new skills, and now is a great time for businesses to take advantage of this opportunity.”

To apply for Start Today SD Incentive funding, visit starttoday.sd.com. Intent to submit letters are due Sept. 30.

DLR was presented with the prestigious NASWA State Excellence award at the 83rd Annual Meeting / 2019 Workforce Summit & UI Directors’ Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

Pictured Left to Right: Dawn Dovre, DLR Deputy Secretary; Kendra Ringstmeyer, DLR Director of Workforce Training; and Jon Pierpont, 2019 NASWA Board President.

View video summarizing the Start Today SD Incentive at <https://youtu.be/RtRqTjx5zPs>.