



2.2.21 – NYS Legislative Testimony

Testimony Provided by Martha Ponge, Director of Apprenticeship, MACNY

Good afternoon members of the State Legislature, Senate Finance Chair Liz Krueger and Assembly Ways and Means Chair Helene Weinstein.

My name is Martha Ponge, and I serve as Director of Apprenticeship for the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY). I represent seven manufacturing associations statewide whose combined efforts in the support of registered apprenticeship provide all individuals, regardless of their work experience or academic qualifications, equitable access to the middle class while supporting the skilled workforce needs of manufacturers across the state.

I am here to advocate for the Manufacturers Intermediary Apprenticeship Program, known as MIAP. We are very grateful for the prior Legislative support for this program. The Governor's FY2022 budget completely eliminates our funding.

Since the original pilot in 2016, MIAP has grown to serve all the Economic Development Regions across the state with 7 Alliance Partner associations. Together, the Alliance Partners sponsor over 25 trades. We have worked closely with the New York State Department of Labor and partnering companies to establish new trades in advanced manufacturing and IT, as well as providing technical assistance to other industry sector associations. Partnering with other associations, such as Big I NY, the Independent Service Centers of NYS, SEMI, as well as our new work with the Developmental Disabilities Policy Council has the potential to bring over 3,400 small and medium sized businesses to the table in the next 12-18 months. Additional expansion of registered apprenticeship trades to be developed this year, will support growing industry sectors, including Computer Gaming, Childcare, Pharmaceuticals and Nutraceuticals, Dairy and Agriculture, the Semi-Conductor Industry and the Green Energy sector.

Currently in Central New York we support more than 50 companies participating in apprenticeships. Statewide we support over 200 companies through direct sponsorships or through technical assistance. To date, the Alliance Partners have impacted the lives of hundreds of individuals and your continued support has the potential to impact thousands more New Yorkers as we emerge from COVID-19. Despite the adverse economic effects of COVID, this year we expect to add over 150 apprentices and award journey worker certifications to over 40 apprentices. During the pandemic, employers supported by MIAP were able to maintain 98% of all active apprentices while increasing preapprentice activity by 80%. The Alliance Partners successfully transitioned to 100% digital support, allowing employers to maintain access to quality OJT and RI supportive services.

In 2020, the Enacted State budget provided \$750,000 in funding for MIAP. We maintained our commitment to expand the program into Long Island and New York City. Although the COVID-19 pandemic limited our expansion, I am pleased to report that the Long Island Region, which is home to over 3000 manufacturers with over 10,500 open positions, has 13 companies that have committed to establishing apprenticeship programs and the momentum is growing. In New York City, we are currently working with the Sewing Trades and Fine Jewelry manufacturers. The growth of the Warehousing and Logistics trades will positively impact growth in these regions in 2021. Both these regions have the capacity to grow faster than any others to date and it is imperative that we can continue to support their burgeoning efforts.

The State funding you have provided over the past years has allowed us to leverage federal funding and align the apprenticeship program with other efforts in New York. It also allows us to provide companies individualized program support, letting them free up internal resources to deliver on the job training. Additionally, we are developing an Apprenticeship Navigator trade. This new trade will provide training for internal resources within individual companies, as well as those in workforce development, who are integral with providing guidance for adults and youth looking for career pathways into the middle class.

In 2019, according to the United Way of NYS, the top 10 fastest growing jobs in the state had an average salary of \$32,000 dollars per year, and as of 2020, 49% of New York State residents earned less than \$20 per hour. In contrast, employees within advanced manufacturing made an average annual salary of over \$71,000. As we emerge from COVID, access to careers in manufacturing is more important than

ever. These manufacturing jobs could significantly raise household income and improve overall quality of life.

In order to address the skills gap earlier on, MACNY and the Alliance Partners are focusing on Youth Apprenticeship beginning in 9th grade, providing stackable credentials and allowing students to go directly from high school into Registered Apprenticeships in high tech, high growth careers. This type of programming is the first step in our commitment to raise awareness within school aged youth and their families, as well as expose them to alternative pathways and meaningful careers. Our Alliance Partner in Rochester, alone, will provide youth apprenticeship opportunities to 32 companies and 65 students in 2021; an increase of 50% over the previous year. Long Island and Central New York partners are actively engaged in scaling this highly successful pilot with a laser focus on students and families from Minority and Low- and Moderate-Income communities.

COVID has exposed the fragility of careers in industry sectors such as hospitality and food service. Conversely, manufacturing and high-tech fields will emerge from the pandemic and provide growing employment opportunities and skills-based training for their employees. Economic indicators already gauge that the number of employees required to fill open positions in high tech careers across the state is higher than prior to the pandemic. Recent events provide a unique opportunity for employers in these sectors to recruit unemployed and underemployed individuals into these high growth careers and positively impact their lives moving forward. Employers do not have the internal resources to do this alone. They look to the Alliance, in their role as trusted partners, to help facilitate the recruitment and retention of these new workers.

With the growing employment challenges, we anticipate as we emerge from the pandemic, and the devastating effects we have already seen in our minority and Low- and Moderate-Income communities, it is imperative that we continue to support MIAP. MIAP has consistently afforded individuals a pathway out of poverty and access to a springboard career that eradicates the limits of future income. With the flexibility of the NYS Registered Apprenticeship Program we can meet these individuals where they are and bring them to the skill levels required to attain and keep these good jobs. With over 50K open positions in high demand, high-paying sectors, it is critical that we continue to bridge the gap between individuals who want access to these jobs and the employers in New York that need these individuals to remain competitive in a global market.

To continue this highly successful and effective program and meet the growing needs across the state, we respectfully request \$750,000 dollars in funding to sustain and grow MIAP.

Thank you.