

IEC - Transcript

00:00:03 Narrator

Welcome to the Supply Chain Automation Workforce Hub, or the Hub, interview series. The Hub is an industry intermediary funded by the U.S. Department of Labor as a one-stop solution for recruiting and training skilled workers in supply chain automation, powered by employers, education institutions and workforce organizations. It brings together key stakeholders to develop Registered Apprenticeship Programs for RAPs for customized training solutions.

In this interview, Rebecca Barnes, the executive director of IEC of the Bluegrass, talks about how and why IEC of the Bluegrass is working with the Hub on supply chain automation RAPs.

00:00:41 Rebecca Barnes

My name is Rebecca Barnes. I'm the Executive Director of IEC of the Bluegrass. We're a merit, merit shop-based company for apprentices for the electrical trade. So when we were created, and we're a national organization, the National Independent Electrical Contractors Association, and when we were created, it ultimately was to create a space for electricians to come together in a manner that would... would benefit all who were part of these different contractors.

00:01:18 Narrator

Why does IEC of the Bluegrass use the RAP model?

00:01:21 Rebecca Barnes

...but you know, our, our goal is to help the students succeed in being a better electrician, and I think that's one of the, you know, the, the starting points in the standards for us is that that in goal is to create a better electrician for the workforce, but ultimately it's with all of these resources that we're able to do that. And so being a member association and being able to have 164 apprentices, you know, these... this is allowing our contractor members to put their apprentices through a training program that they would not be able to necessarily provide themselves.

00:02:02 Narrator

How do your apprentices benefit from participating in a RAP? How is the RAP part of their career path?

00:02:08 Rebecca Barnes

Trades are becoming more and more relevant as, you know, the pandemic kind of subsidies and a regular four-year college may not be an option for most people and so what that allows us to do is provide a safe space and a safe learning space and an awesome opportunity for people that are looking to get involved. And for us...

00:02:32 Rebecca Barnes

You know, the importance is, is each student, you know, what are you getting out of it? Where do you see yourself in, you know, three to five years, and how can we help you get there?

And I think it's, it's through this program that they're meeting each other and they're meeting our instructors and they're... we're giving them opportunities to go out and, and have those conversations with associate partners and really see where in the electrical field that they are going to want to continue their career.

00:03:01 Rebecca Barnes

And then with most of their companies, they're allowed to work, you know, work their way up in some of these positions and, and opportunities, and I think that's something that we've seen throughout the years, is that, you know, our first-year students, they start, they might be very green in regards to whether it's their age or the electrician trade in general. However, you know, through the four years not only of the, the actual apprenticeship training here at the training facility, but on-the-job training experience by then, you know, we've got guys that are getting their journeyman's license.

00:03:34 Rebecca Barnes

We've got guys that are getting their master's license. We've got guys that are, you know, starting their own companies, you know, going into estimation, managing roles. And then throughout the training program, they're able to see what kind of fields they want to be in. Do they want to be out in the field every day? Do they want to be in the office?

00:04:00 Rebecca Barnes

There's just so many opportunities in the electrical trade, in general, that it truly is a special time and place for us as a Registered Apprenticeship program to really show them what is possible and that, you know, after the four years, once you complete that, that's just the beginning of your journey.

00:04:19 Narrator

What is the value of RAP to your members, the companies that you work with?

00:04:23 Rebecca Barnes

The retention for Registered Apprenticeship Program, at least with ours, is, is by far one of the best, you know investments that some of our contractor members have made in sending, you know, their apprentices here. They're able to truly show them what is out there and then what they can provide. And, and then, too, it's.. It's that, you know, respect and loyalty back to say, "I really want to succeed within this company and how can I do that?"

00:04:57 Narrator

Do you have any advice for others considering starting a RAP?

00:05:00 Rebecca Barnes

You know for us as a registered apprenticeship group, IEC of the Bluegrass, our-- we succeed because our members help us succeed, and the resources we get from programs like yours, is what, is what helps us make us who we are. And ultimately at the end of the day, there are so many resources out there that can help us in regards to keeping us, you know, not only maintaining what we need to do in a sense of responsibility, but at the same time taking the, the burden off of just creating a program on its own.

00:05:37 Rebecca Barnes

A Registered Apprentice is, it allows us to have so many more resources at our fingertips than just creating something on your own, and I and I would say to anybody out there considering creating a Registered Apprenticeship is to know that those of us that are out there that are succeeding, that it's only because of these partners, um, that that is happening.

And I don't know that you wouldn't necessarily get that if you did a program on your own, and so, with us, it would, you know, [be] a no-brainer to always, you know, to have originally started as a Registered Apprenticeship group.

00:06:12 Narrator

Thank you so much for listening to the Hub's interview series. Please visit our website at scworkforcehub.com for more information about the Hub and the services and supports we offer.