Challenge

Manufacturers in the San Antonio area faced an aging workforce, rapidly changing skill needs, and too few young people in career and technical education programs.

Many jobs were unfilled because the current workers didn’t have the skills to fill them and there was no focus on the next generation.

Action

The San Antonio Manufacturers Association (SAMA) convened members to support Alamo Colleges and the Alamo Academies in an innovative public-private partnership to close the skills gap.

More than 50 area high schools partner with the Alamo Academies, a “Higher Education Dual-Credit Career Academies” model, to provide students an immersive experience in a manufacturing related curriculum. While in high school, students are dual enrolled at Alamo Colleges, where they engage in 2-1/2 hours of instruction needed to complete a one-year technical college program of studies, as part of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree pathway.

During their junior and senior years of high school, students earn 31-34 college credits.

Academies students complete an industry-paid internship in the summer between their junior and senior years, working full time for 8 weeks for a participating employer, earning approximately $3,000 for the summer. Upon graduation, students can either enter a high-demand, high-tech career or continue with their education. The internship also allows employers to test the students before employment.

Results

>> Pipeline Development
Dream It. Do It. reached over 11,500 kids in the San Antonio region, educating them in local manufacturing opportunities

>> Qualified Candidates:
Alamo Academies graduates have earned more than 1,000 industry-based certifications, including NCRC, MSSC and NIMS.

>> Better Pipeline:
89% first-time-in-college Academies’ students earned a Level I Certificate of Completion – a graduation rate 27 times higher than the state average.

>> A Clear Pathway:
The Academies provide a college pathway for high school juniors and seniors to attain industry and academic certificates that lead to high-wage jobs or to further higher education while addressing critical workforce industry needs.

>> Sustainability
Partners contribute over $2 million to support operating costs. The Alamo Colleges provide facilities, equipment and instruction; school districts provide textbooks and round trip transportation; employers pay their interns’ salaries; and cities fund operating costs.

>> Partners
Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Toyota, CPS Energy, ITM, Rackspace, and many more.

“I graduated college with a one year certificate of completion before I even graduated high school. They really prepared me with that internship to have that strong work ethic.” Sarah Escobar, Graduate Toyota Motor Manufacturing