



# **BUILDING A DIVERSE & SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE**

Connecticut's Marine Industry

A Plan | In Action | A Future



## **OVERVIEW**

The Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) is a 501 (c)(6) trade organization established in 1954 to protect and promote the interests of the recreational boating industry in Connecticut. With nearly 350 member businesses the organization is comprised of the majority of marine-related businesses in the state, but not all.

The organization is governed by an 18-member Board of Directors, is run by an Executive Director with two additional staff members and executes its mission with the help of several volunteer committees.

CMTA participates, partners and produces a wide range of programming from boating education to environmental stewardship; oversees with the Clean Marina Program with an MOU from the State of Connecticut; produces the largest Boat Show in the State. Along with several industry-related activities.

In 2017 the Association made Education, Training and Workforce Development a top priority as a retiring workforce, coupled with a decline in technical trades interest and competition from other industries and states were impacting Connecticut's boating industry. Over the course of the next two years CMTA began cultivating resources and embarking on outreach and inclusionary activities. (Please see Addendum I)

In 2018, CMTA founded the CMTA Foundation a 501 (c)(3) exclusively dedicated to the educational, training and workforce development of the marine industry.

## **INCLUSION POLICY**

Inclusion is a core value of the Connecticut Marine Trades Association ("CMTA") and as such CMTA is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture among our membership and works to promote diversity and inclusion policies in each of our member businesses. CMTA derives value when receiving input from diverse organizations and individuals and our policy extends to any and all means of education, training and recruitment for employment within the marine trades industry.

In all of CMTA's educational, training and work placement efforts we make a concerted effort to engage interested parties representing the diversity that exists within our State. In embracing inclusive practices at the member (individuals and businesses) level, CMTA encourages the use of the strengths and perspectives that each person possesses as a result of the individual's age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, military veteran status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

CMTA understands that achieving diversity is a continuous process and we seek to maintain the highest standards of ethics and transparency both as an Association but also among our members. Therefore, we strive to:

- Support and encourage policies of social inclusion
- Work to reflect diversity in our staff, committees and member entities
- Engage with diverse constituencies
- Work with diverse vendors and consultants
- Celebrate diversity and inclusion in our programming
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## INDUSTRY BACKGROUND

CMTA Member Companies Include (but are not limited to) these types of businesses:

- Boat Builders
- Boat Dealers & Brokers
- Boat Membership Clubs & Rentals
- Boat Haulers
- Boatyards & Refit Yards
- Dock Builders, Installers, Repairers
- Electronics Retailers, Service Companies
- Environmental Services
- Finance & Insurance Companies
- HVAC, Refrigeration, Plumbing and Other Specialty Service Providers
- Marinas
- Retail Operations
- Yacht Clubs

Among these companies, jobs and careers include (but are not limited to):

- Boat Building and Construction
- Canvas Fabrication and Installation
- Captains & Launch Operators
- Carpentry and Woodworking
- Cleaning and Detailing
- Customer Service Associates; Concierge
- Dock Staff & Fuel Dock Operators
- Dock Building, Repair and Installation
- Electrical and Electronic Technicians, including Computer Systems
- Engine Repair Mechanics: Small, Diesel, Inboard, Inboard/Outboard and Outboard
- Equipment Operations: Fork Lift, Travel Lift, Crane and Other operations
- Fiberglass and Composite Specialists: Building and Repair
- Finance and Accounting; Bookkeeping
- General Yard Labor
- HVAC and Plumbing
- Hydraulic system
- Management Personnel: General Managers, Service Managers, Project Managers
- Painting, Sanding and Varnishing
- Pipefitting
- Sail Rigging
- Sail Making and Repair
- Sales Associates
- Shipwrights
- Technicians in a wide variety of disciplines
- Welding and Metal Work

CMTA Member business are located throughout the State of Connecticut from the inland lake districts, to the up-river towns and cities to the Long Island Sound shoreline and, inland, non-water locations. Employees of these member businesses come from small and large towns and cities throughout the state.

CMTA has been working with other state and national marine organizations to develop and implement a strategic workforce growth and inclusionary plan. This includes:

- National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)
- Marine Retailers of the Americas Association (MRAA)
- Recreational Boating Leadership Council (RBLC) – Diversity Subcommittee
- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF)
- National Marine Trades Council (NMTC)
- Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Jersey Marine Trades Association

CMTA worked with the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association on the final draft of *Strategy 10+1 A Marine Industry Guide to Growing the Workforce*. (See Addendum II) Several of the Strategy 10+1 recommendations are included in the attached action and implementation plan.

# Workforce Growth and Development Plan

This plan has been in implementation at various stages over the course of the last two years and that activity may be found in Addendum I. This outlines the strategies and associated activities related to the achievement of each strategy.

## STRATEGIES

- I. **Marketing Industry Awareness**
- II. **Training & Education**
- III. **Fundraising**

## STRATEGY ONE: MARKETING INDUSTRY AWARENESS

*Perception can be powerful in both positive and negative ways.* CMTA and the marine industry as a whole has recognized that cultivating talent means competing against bigger and better financed industries. And all of these industries have the same problem: limited public awareness, blue collar connotations, with a perception of “dirty” and are compounded by the push of both parents and educational institutions to get young adults into college rather than the “trades”. Further specific to the marine industry is the perception that it is a “seasonal” or part-time only industry.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **To Cultivate Awareness of the Industry and Opportunities Available within the Industry.**
  - a. Outreach to Middle and High Schools
    - i. Participation in Perkins Grant Committees at High Schools Statewide
    - ii. Identification of School Districts needing to offer additional non-college pathways
    - iii. Opportunities to interact directly with students to create awareness
    - iv. Industry participation in Boating Clubs, Projects, After-School Programs
    - v. Field Trips to Member businesses
    - vi. Cross-over tie-ins with Industry sponsored events i.e. Boat Shows, Trade Shows
  - b. Outreach to Technical Schools and Training Centers
    - i. Identify possible advisory committees for industry participation
    - ii. Introduction of suggested technical training curriculum
  - c. Outreach to Job Placement Centers, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS), Labor and Veteran’s Departments
    - i. Attending Workshops, Career and Job Fairs on behalf of Industry
    - ii. Getting Member Businesses to attend and participate in job and placement training
    - iii. Involving Manufacturers in these processes

**2. To Communicate Member Job, Career and Training Opportunities.**

- a. CMTA Website Job Board – linking to other available Job boards, networks
- b. CMTA acting as clearing house for applicants to provide applications and resumes for distribution to member companies
- c. Promoting job opportunities at as many industry events as possible.

**3. Public Service Announcements**

- a. Social Media Channels, Television and other sources to air the Industry Video (can provide).
- b. Speaking opportunities at any available group out-reach

## **STRATEGY TWO: TRAINING & EDUCATION**

As we move to lower unemployment rates across the state and nation, finding “skilled” workers is becoming increasingly difficult. Out-of-State competition has become an issue in Connecticut as neighboring states have been luring skilled personnel to their shores as business has increased, and overall the availability of trained “trades-people” has been decreasing.

Thus, we have identified three target training populations:

**1. In-School Populations**

- Middle School, High School and Post-Secondary School

**2. Entry-Level and/or Career Changers**

- Including Military and Veterans

**3. Incumbent Workers**

- Current Workforce

## **ACTIVITIES**

**1. In-School Populations**

- a. Work with existing boat building classes/courses by bringing in industry experts to assist curriculum and link to On-The-Job (OTJ) shadowing, apprenticeship or training opportunities.
- b. Provide suggestion or guidance on Capstone projects
- c. Petition the Department of Education to implement a Marine Education Curriculum. Example: Massachusetts Curriculum (Addendum IV) which was established in cooperation with the American Boating & Yacht Council (ABYC)
- d. Target specific school districts to implement the more comprehensive ABYC technical training program
- e. Partner with related Schools: The Sound School, Bridgeport Aquaculture to expand their boating related needs: training, seamanship, repairs and maintenance of watercraft
- f. Partnering these students with member businesses to complete course work.
- g. Partnering with engine manufacturers to address school equipment needs.

## **2. Entry-Level and/or Career Changers**

- a. Coordination with Workforce Alliances, WIBS, and other job-placement organizations to partner with national training programs such as MMI technical training
- b. Petition Eastern WIB to participate in the Manufacturers pipeline training process to provide alternative placement locations for participants.
- c. Coordinate with any existing prepared training program
  - i. Adapt Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship Curriculum from RIMTA and CCRI programs (Addendum III)
  - ii. Adapt ABYC training curriculum for placement at Technical training centers and Community Colleges
  - iii. Encourage Members to engage in Train the Trainer Programs to offer additional training opportunities at member businesses

## **3. Incumbent Workers** – simply defined as existing employees

- a. Provide additional advance training through engine and boat manufacturers – to achieve certification resulting in career advancement, greater earnings and job satisfaction.
- b. Encourage “Help-up” programs at member companies to attract and train the next generation.

## **STRATEGY THREE: FUNDRAISING**

CMTA is a 501(c)(6) trade organization fully supported by membership dues and events such as the Boat Show to support the membership operations. The funding of wide-spread awareness, education and training programs requires a more significant financial commitment than a 300+ member organization can exclusively support.

In the absence of public funding sources, CMTA recognized the potential funding points through private and public pipelines that will fund 501 (c)(3) charitable organizations. To that end the CMTA Foundation was formed and designated in late 2018 to try to take advantage of some of these opportunities.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Investigate and Apply for Available Grant Funding**

- a. Industry Partners
- b. Distributors and/or Manufacturers
- c. National Associations
- d. National Training Initiatives with Funding Partners

### **2. Fundraising Activities**

- a. CMTA Events – Annual Foundation Golf Tournament
- b. Outside CMTA Partner Events

### **3. Identify and Apply for Private Foundation Funding**

4. **Identify any Public Funding Sources** that may become available for Training, Apprenticeships, OTJ partnerships, Second-Chance programs etc., that may be available to individual businesses.

## **ADDENDUMS:**

- Addendum I CMTA Workforce Activities to Date
- Addendum II Strategy 10+1: A Marine Industry Guide to Growing the Workforce
- Addendum III RIMTA Pre-Apprenticeship Outline
- Addendum IV Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education – Vocational Technical Education Framework – Transportation Occupational Cluster “Marine Service Technology