

For immediate release

November 3, 2023

Roane State selected to receive \$1.4 million Department of Labor grant to train & prepare diverse workforce



Roane State Community College was recently named a recipient of more than \$1.44 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The college is the only recipient to be selected within the State of Tennessee.

Administered by the department's [Employment and Training Administration](#), the [Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program](#) will help Roane State design, develop, and grow nuclear industry training and work-based learning opportunities. The programs will prepare students seeking occupations in this field and further support those who are already part of the nuclear workforce in East Tennessee.

"We are honored that our proposal was selected from among the many deserving applications for this grant," Roane State President Chris Whaley said. "To be the only recipient chosen in Tennessee highlights the incredible work we are doing for our students and the partnerships we have built with local businesses over the years. The grant will allow us to expand those important and mutually beneficial relationships as we train students for in-demand professions and meet our regional workforce needs."

Roane State will partner with a number of local employers throughout the grant's five-year term, including CNS Y-12, Energy Solutions, MSTechnology, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, local labor unions, and others who face resource challenges regarding skilled workers in the nuclear field. Members of the college's newly established Nuclear and Energy Technology Program Advisory Board will also assist with the effort.

The college already has strong relationships with the various nuclear facilities in the Oak Ridge area, supporting employee training, developing internships and apprenticeships, and providing skilled workers for critical positions. UT-Battelle, which manages and operates ORNL for the U.S. Department of Energy, recently [donated \\$100,000 to help launch a nuclear technology program](#) at the college.

The project proposed by Roane State for the USDOL grant will be designed to meet the demonstrated employer need for nuclear technicians. According to the project description, a large portion of the work will focus on the immediate need for skilled workers as well as filling the labor pipeline for the long term. Furthermore, early stages of this proposed project will allow for additional analysis of the available labor pool and, most importantly, their education needs to meet employer demand.

The program will be a skills-based curriculum aligned with partner employers' demands, providing several different levels of credentials such as an associate degree with emphasis in "hands-on" nuclear applications, certificates, and health and safety certifications. Paid internships, additional non-credit curricula, and certifications are also to be developed and determined as part of this grant.

“The Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs funding will help to train job seekers in advanced manufacturing, information technology, and professional, scientific, and technical occupations that support renewable energy, transportation, and broadband infrastructure,” said Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su. “We look forward to working with our grantees to help strengthen and expand our workforce to provide opportunities for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs.”

The full grant announcement from the U.S. Department of Labor is posted online at dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20230926. Additional information about Roane State’s current academic programs is available at roanestate.edu/academicprograms.

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This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Roane State Community College is a TBR and AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Compliance and Risk Officer, Tamra Oliver, 276 Patton Lane, Harriman, TN 37748, (865) 354-3000 x4262, olivertl@roanestate.edu. This grant is funded with \$1,444,545 of federal funds which is 76% of the total project. Roane State Community College is funding 24% of the project with \$455,958 of funds.