

WIAAI and Vertical Limit Case Study: A Partnership to Develop Effective Wireless Apprenticeships for Underrepresented Populations

September 2017

Wireless Infrastructure Apprenticeship Access Initiative



National
Urban League

MMTC
Multicultural Media, Telecom
& Internet Council

WIA
Wireless
Infrastructure
Association



**WIAAI and Vertical Limit Case Study:
A Partnership to Develop Effective Wireless Apprenticeships
for Underrepresented Populations**

Executive Summary

WIAAI’s goal is to create Registered Apprenticeships in vocations focused on building, repairing and servicing the nation’s wireless infrastructure, which in turn will create livable wage jobs for underrepresented populations. To meet the demand for apprenticeable occupations, it is important for employers to recognize the value of diversity and inclusion in their recruitment efforts. Working with employer partners, WIAAI helps employers to evaluate options intended to broaden outreach and access to additional candidates.

With this charge in mind, and in under a year’s time, the WIAAI Consortium has achieved significant milestones toward the main role of a National Equity Intermediary. The WIAAI Consortium, in conjunction with key stakeholders, and WIA, under its function as the National Sponsor of the Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program (“TIRAP”), established and developed close working relationships with industry employers dedicated to closing their workforce gaps by building and participating in diverse apprenticeship programs, developing affirmative action plans, establishing recruitment and selection procedures, and complying with new EEO regulations.

About TIRAP

The Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program (“TIRAP”) is a joint venture of telecommunications companies, industry associations, and the U.S. Department of Labor (“DOL”) that develops DOL-credentialed apprenticeship programs available to qualified employers for career development of the telecommunications workforce.

TIRAP’s mission is to partner with stakeholders to promote safety, enhance quality, and enable education and advancement opportunities in the telecommunications workforce so companies can meet network infrastructure buildout needs.

This case study features Vertical Limit, an Employer Partner and an early adopter of TIRAP.

About Vertical Limit

Vertical Limit is a leading service solutions provider to the wireless industry. Fueled by proprietary software systems and people who work like their grandparents used to, Vertical Limit is a complete service solutions partner. Its team of wireless experts plan, build, modify, optimize, and maintain wireless networks across North America. Vertical Limit is headquartered in Minnesota with offices in Colorado, Texas, Wisconsin, and Illinois. More importantly, its reach spans coast to coast, as does the WIAAI Consortium’s.

Meeting Specific Training Needs

At Vertical Limit, providing a clear career path for employees is ingrained into company culture. Integrating TIRAP into its existing career path strategy allows the company to provide even more growth and development opportunities for its employees, as well as ensuring that its training and education curriculum are aligned with generally accepted best practices of the wireless industry.

TIRAP meets this need because TIRAP’s Executive Board and Advisors are some of the top leaders and experts in the industry; the training curriculum reflects the most



“We believe that one of the most important things we need to do as a company and that the industry needs to do to attract and retain talented individuals is to make a clear career path for current and prospective telecommunications workers. TIRAP is a very valuable way to show that career path.”

- Justin Gillette, Director of Risk Management, Vertical Limit

innovative and most recent best practices of the wireless industry.

Attracting & Retaining High Quality People

WIAAI shares Vertical Limit's belief in providing careers, not just jobs. When we recruit people, we want them to know that with our partner companies, including Vertical Limit, they can build the future that they choose. Most of Vertical Limit's leaders started working on crews and worked their way into leadership positions. Integrating TIRAP into Vertical Limit's career path strategy helps make it more robust and helps the company to ensure that it is building future leaders.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

Having support from the National Sponsor, WIA (the Wireless Infrastructure Association), has helped make Vertical Limit's process easy. WIA coordinates the registration of both the participating employer and the apprentices, assists with monitoring the program and the company's apprentices as they progress through the program/occupation, and supports reporting by providing program and apprentice metrics.

WIA takes this level of support to another level by assisting Vertical Limit with the review and evaluation of federal and state resources that can be used as a means of funding the establishment of its Registered Apprenticeship Program. This high touch approach from the National Sponsor continues long after the program is registered and apprentices are identified. For more about TIRAP and WIA's role as National Sponsor, go to www.tirap.org.

Final Thoughts

Vertical Limit has always been very committed to any effort that will help move the wireless telecommunications industry forward and to keep workers safe. They are

grateful to be participating in TIRAP and are confident that it will be a value-added experience for everyone involved.

Expanding Apprenticeships

WIAAI Initiative

The Wireless Infrastructure Apprenticeship Access Initiative (WIAAI) is designed to cultivate opportunities in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. The National Urban League leads a national group of organizations working with the DOL to develop national and regional "opportunity partnerships" that expand Registered Apprenticeships. Two national partners – Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) and Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC), along with 38 Urban League Affiliates, bring forth a wide variety of services and expertise that employers such as Vertical Limit may consider as resources to support implementation and future expansion of their Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Providing Resources for RAP Sponsors

The WIAAI Consortium has access to multiple resources that may be useful to employer partners as they evaluate, build and register their apprenticeship program. These resources support employer partners in the key areas of curriculum development, industry best practices, and technical assistance with Affirmative Action Plans and Recruiting/Selection of top talent.

Urban League Affiliates have longstanding, established workforce development programs that prepare candidates for entry into the workforce with specialized skill sets. This includes pre-apprenticeship programs that contribute to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce by preparing participants to meet the basic qualifications for entry into one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs.



"Vertical Limit is an early adopter of the TIRAP Model. The WIAAI Initiative looks forward to evaluating opportunities to support this innovative organization as they implement, and ultimately expand, their Registered Apprenticeship Program."

- Ronald Marlow, VP, Workforce Development, National Urban League



Supporting Diversity & Inclusion

WIAAI's goal is to create Registered Apprenticeships in vocations focused on building, repairing and servicing the nation's wireless infrastructure, which in turn will create livable wage jobs for underrepresented populations. To meet the demand for apprenticeable occupations, additional candidates must be considered. Working with employer partners, WIAAI will evaluate options intended to broaden outreach and access to additional candidates and seek to find means to supplement employer recruiting efforts.

About the WIAAI Members:

National Urban League

The National Urban League is an historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, the National Urban League spearheads the efforts of its local affiliates through the development of programs, public policy research, and advocacy. Today, the National Urban League has 88 affiliates serving 300 communities, in 36 states and the District of Columbia, providing direct services that impact and improve the lives of more than 2 million people nationwide.

Wireless Infrastructure Association

The Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) represents the businesses that develop, build, own and operate the nation's wireless infrastructure. Members include wireless carriers, infrastructure providers, and professional services firms that collectively own and operate telecommunications facilities around the globe. Through public affairs and advocacy efforts – on the local, state and federal level – WIA works to support the widespread deployment of wireless infrastructure in order to enable wireless broadband everywhere.

MMTC

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and social justice in the mass media, telecom and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. With a 30-year track record of increasing diversity in media and telecommunications access, ownership, and employment, MMTC is generally recognized as the nation's leading advocate for multicultural advancement in communications. MMTC develops and implements the curriculum, technical assistance, and training and marketing materials for DOL-approved occupations under the WIAAI Consortium, and conducts program evaluation.

Contact the WIAAI Initiative at
apprenticeship@nul.org

Vertical Limit Inquiries should be directed to:

Vertical Limit
844.565.7233
info@verticallimit.com
Executive Sponsor - Eric Bicknese, President & CEO
Program Administrator - Justin Gillette, Director of Risk Management



**National
Urban League**



Author:

Deb Bennett is Director, Office of Apprenticeship, at the Wireless Infrastructure Association

WIAAI and Vertical Limit Case Study:

A Partnership to Develop Effective Wireless Apprenticeships for Underrepresented Populations

This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with Federal Funds from the Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration under Contract Number DOL-ETA-16-C-0126. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.