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Bechtel's Military Hiring Program Takes Veterans from the Front Line to Construction

BY LAUREN HARRELL

Bechtel, one of the largest global engineering, construction, and project management companies, has partnered with Adaptive Construction Solutions (ACS) to create the Military to Project Program, or M2P Program. Through veteran outreach, the program recruits veterans and transitioning service members interested in launching a career in the construction industry. M2P is a career progression strategy designed to be a comprehensive workforce development model that assists veterans from point of hire through training, integration onto project and continues until mastery of a trade craft. M2P consists of NCCER craft training curriculum and project specific hands-on skills based training.

"Through the M2P program, veterans are identified, trained, and hired into craft positions where they are equipped with sufficient knowledge and information to successfully begin a career in the construction industry," said Bob Deatherage, Industrial Relations Manager at Bechtel. "Some veterans struggle to find gainful employment or are unable to get into a career they desire. We want to help them build a career, establish internal and external relationships, ensure understanding of key business processes, policies, and procedures, and explain short and long-term performance expectations so they are ready to join and excel in the workforce."

ACS provides innovative workforce development strategies that leverage the experience and competence of veterans from the US Armed Forces. ACS sponsors a Department of Labor group

Registered Apprenticeship that provides NCCER credential training for hundreds of veterans throughout the U.S. As a Department of Veterans Affairs approved program, veterans are eligible to utilize their GI Bill benefits to receive a monthly housing allowance in addition to their competitive wages. The combination of wages and allowance provides a financial bridge as they earn while they learn. ACS utilizes sector partnerships with workforce agencies to assist the veterans as they enter the program.

"As a veteran, I wanted to build an organization that helped those who served our nation transition into a career," said Nicholas Morgan, President at Adaptive Construction Solutions. "While in the military, we received the training necessary to perform our job with confidence and have clarity with our career progression. Transitioning can be challenging when the skills earned during service do not translate easily to the civilian world." Service members are provided significant training prior to performing their responsibilities in the military. M2P delivers the intensive training needed for veterans to have the confidence to be productive and safe on the project. According to ACS, the organization enrolled more veterans into Registered Apprenticeship programs than thirty-two states enrolled individually for all occupations in 2017.

Bechtel chooses participants for the program through a rigorous application process designed and administered by ACS. Following selection, an orientation familiarizes the

new employees with the company and ensures that they are equipped with sufficient knowledge and information needed to successfully perform their duties. The orientation addresses key business processes, policies, and procedures, as well as performance expectations. The initial training of the program is located at the Bechtel Welding and Applied Technology Center (W&ATC) in Houston, Texas. This state of the art facility is used for the first five weeks the Veterans are in the program.

Participants learn how to use ratios and proportions, solve basic algebra, area, volume, and circumference problems, as well as solving triangles using the Pythagorean Theorem. They are also required to understand plot plans, structural elevation drawings, P&IDs, isometric drawings, and spool sheets. This, combined with team building, mentoring, and direct supervision along with provided instruction on basics such as safety, math, tool identification, drawings, detail sheets, and basic rigger training ensure a well-rounded, educated, and trade experienced individual. Following the initial five-week training, participants are deployed to Bechtel job sites where their careers truly begin and they start their progression into a life long journey as a craft trade person. Each participant is then assigned a mentor with similar background and experience with Bechtel to provide guidance.

Over the last eight months, more than 70 veterans have been trained by Bechtel Master Trainers and employed through this program as pipefitters and riggers. With the intent to expand that number this year, the program recently expanded to electrical training. No matter their previous experience, veterans who have the desire to progress to higher level positions such as foremen and superintendents, have the opportunity to do so by gaining the necessary skills to help them climb the career ladder. Veterans are not only encouraged to work toward their goals but also guided to achieve success with Bechtel working hard to support them in accomplishing their dreams.

“Bechtel believes veterans are a great asset to our industry and in conjunction with ACS, created this program to accelerate their learning curve so that they can successfully demonstrate their ability to succeed in changing environments and deliver results in a safe and efficient manner,” said Rob Scott, a charter member of Bechtel Services, also called Bserve, an employee resource organization created to execute strategies and develop connections that integrate the experiences, values, and knowledge of the armed forces in Bechtel. “Veterans who participate in our program are invested in creating a productive career and moving up the construction career ladder from helper or journeyman into leadership positions such as foreman or general foreman. Bechtel provides veterans several weeks of training prior to being assigned to the jobsite, where they are taught basic skills in fields such as pipefitting, rigging, and electrical, sharpening skills many veterans already possess, so they are better prepared to work toward their career goals.” ♦



Student applies his training instruction by using a wraparound to make a pipe bandsaw cut.



Student demonstrates the proper technical cutting of pipe and proper use of bandsaw during his class at the Bechtel Welding and Applied Technology Center.



Students receive instruction and take written tests to refresh their math and other knowledge required to be successful as a pipefitter.