



PRESS RELEASE

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**SBWIB Aero-Flex Team Successfully Registers
First in the Nation - Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship**

HAWTHORNE, CA – The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) and the Aero-Flex team of employers and partners have successfully registered **the first Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship occupation in the United States**, sponsored by Tooling U-SME, a non-profit dedicated to advance the manufacturing industry. This is also the first degreed registered apprenticeship in the U.S. in the engineering discipline. This new national apprenticeship, approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship, aligns with the current nationwide effort to expand apprenticeship in America and creates an extended career pathway for anyone interested in becoming an Aerospace Engineer. *“This is a substantial achievement for our Aero-Flex team and for workforce development, not only in California, but to meet industry needs on a national level. It shows a commitment from the U.S. Department of Labor to support innovative apprenticeships that meet the needs of business. SBWIB is thankful for their assistance in streamlining this process for our employers and team,”* said Jan Vogel, Executive Director for SBWIB.

The Aero-Flex Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship follows the implementation of Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship, an innovative employer-centric ‘earn and learn’ model for engineering. Aero-Flex was originally developed to meet the nationally recognized hub of aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries located in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County. The Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship allows employers to scale nationwide, applying the framework to workforce development wherever the company does business.

Furthermore, the Aero-Flex model was designed from conception to validation by industry partners and employers who appreciate a non-traditional model that would ‘flex’ curriculum and program design to meet their business needs. Initially championed by Northrop Grumman Corporation, the Aero-Flex employer team, known as the Unilateral Apprenticeship Committee, now includes Impresa Aerospace, LLC; L3 Electron Devices; Magnetika, Inc.; Northrop Grumman Corporation; Space Vector Corporation; TEN TECH, LLC; Verisurf; and Zodiac Water and Waste Aero Systems.

The Aero-Flex program allows the student to gain real world experience exploring career tracks; from earning a certificate and becoming a technician, to earning a degree and becoming an engineer. The new Aero-Flex apprenticeship has created innovative employer-guided pathways of which one allows the student to combine earning their bachelor degree while receiving employer customized training and graduating employed.

The Aero-Flex Apprenticeship extends the career pathway to anyone interested in becoming an Aerospace Engineer including those open to exploring related occupations through the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship in Engineering. The Aero-Flex team will also soon be rolling out new Pre-Apprenticeship tracks linked to other advanced manufacturing roles and registered apprenticeships.



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As the USDOL sees the benefits of an innovative employer-driven framework to create a registered apprenticeship within an important occupation, the partners behind Aero-Flex provided the technical, educational and workforce development expertise. In addition to the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), these partners include West Los Angeles College, El Camino College, Tooling U-SME, and Training Funding Partners (TFP), along with funding through the CA Apprenticeship Initiative of the CA Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the California Workforce Accelerator Fund, and AMP SoCAL (Advanced Manufacturing Partnership of Southern California).

For more information on Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship or the Aerospace Engineer Apprenticeship, please contact Jessica Ku Kim at jkim@sbwib.org or call (310) 970-7700.

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Photo caption: Graduating interns of Northrop Grumman’s HIP (High School Involvement Partnership) program and SBWIB’s Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship program posed at their graduation ceremony at Northrop Grumman Corporation in Redondo Beach, CA.