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Workforce Development In the Motion Picture Industry

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Background:

Since the initial film tax credit legislation was passed in spring of 2006, Connecticut Film Center has given tremendous thought and consideration to how to successfully develop a Connecticut-based workforce for the film and television industries. We have had numerous conversations on this topic with film producers, crewmembers and their union representatives. In addition, we have also consulted with many interested Connecticut constituents and state and municipal office holders. We have devoted so much attention to this issue, because we understand that creating jobs for residents of the state of Connecticut is key to the success of the incentive program. This can be achieved through a proper Workforce Training Program that operates with the cooperation of producers, the unions and the State of Connecticut.

This year, Connecticut Film Center worked closely with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness to develop a plan to grow a skilled industry workforce. Under contract to OWC, CFC created a three phase workforce development initiative.

This past summer Connecticut Film Center, once again through a contract with OWC, also held a very successful production assistant training seminar, where we brought in industry professionals to teach young people the basics of working on a film set or in a production office. Many of those who took the seminar have gone on to employment in the industry.

Concept:

Through our research, CFC feels that the three-phased program model we developed will provide the fastest and most efficient route to a skilled workforce in the state of Connecticut.

If we want to achieve our goal of creating a skilled workforce that actually works on the movies shot in Connecticut, it is imperative that any training program be done in conjunction with the unions. Our program focuses on training provided by currently working union members, combined with hands-on experience on *actual motion picture projects*. Interaction with these professionals will also be a great help as the trainees strive to find work in the business.



The Process:

CFC envisions three Workforce Training Program locations in different regions of the state. Each program should be approximately 16 weeks long and consist of three separate phases.

Phase 1 – Two Weeks – This phase of the Workforce Training Program serve as an introduction to the world of production and more specifically to ten key production departments:

- Camera
- Electric
- Grip
- Hair/Makeup
- Locations
- Production Office
- Property
- Set Construction
- Sound
- Wardrobe

The goal is to give trainees an overview of motion picture production, set etiquette and operations, and the various jobs on the set. It is also important to give trainees a sense of what life is like for a free-lance production crewperson.

Phase 2 – Four Weeks - Upon completion of Phase 1, trainees apply for specific department training in Phase 2. Instructors will chose trainees they feel are best equipped to achieve success in the department they've applied for. This selective process will also assure that only the most qualified students graduate to Phase 2 of the program.

The first two weeks consist of specialized classroom training in the trainees chosen department. During this time, they will learn, in part, by prepping a short film that will be produced through the collaboration of all of the departments.

During the second two weeks of Phase 2, the ten departments will complete prep and production of the short film. Once the production of the short film begins, instructors will act as advisers to their departments, overseeing the work that trainees do, but not working themselves.



Phase 3 – Those candidates that successfully complete the first two phases of training will then go on to the final stage - an eight to twelve week period working in a paid mentorship position on a feature film. Each position will be partially subsidized by the state.

Conclusion: A short classroom period, exposure and guidance from working industry professionals and true on-the-job training will combine to offer each and every trainee an entrée into real film production jobs. Motion picture industry careers can and will be created in Connecticut in the next few years and for years to come.

Upon completion of the Workforce Training Program, every candidate will be ready to begin a career in the motion picture industry in entry level jobs. While the program will not assure union-membership, it would be the best method of working toward that goal.