

US Navy Submarine Industrial Base Celebrates Growing Workforce



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By Team Submarines Public Affairs

The Navy's Submarine Industrial Base Program's (SIB) Workforce Development Team in partnership with Department of Defense suppliers hosted more than 700 new workforce members for Talent Pipeline Project Signing Day events this summer in Philadelphia; Hampton Roads, Virginia; and Pittsburgh.

These events recognize members who have completed trade skills training and are embarking on careers at small and medium-sized defense industrial base suppliers.

The talent pipelines, administered by the Navy's Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) Program and its partners, address critical industrial base workforce needs by connecting career and technical training providers, students, and companies in the SIB. The program's goal is to sustain a maritime and defense industrial base-focused talent pipeline, enabling employers to further develop their workforce through recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining skilled employees with critical trade skills.

Senior Navy leaders, industry, non-profit, education partners, and federal and state elected officials who support workforce development efforts were in attendance to recognize the new workforce members.

The Philadelphia Signing Day was held on May 4, followed by the Hampton Roads event on June 3 and the Pittsburgh event on June 20.

During his address at the Philadelphia signing day, Matt Sermon, Executive Director, Strategic Submarines, said, "To those of you embarking on a career in national security, what you do is vital to defending the American way of life. The only way that America will keep pace with the technological savvy and industrial might of our competitors is with the American worker, with American innovation, leveraging technology, capacity building, and technical rigor. Thank you for your contributions to the industrial base."

The Philadelphia program is in its second year and during this year's Signing Day, more than 165 employees that participated in the inaugural event in May 2022 were in attendance to celebrate their one-year anniversary.

For many, participation in a talent pipeline has been life-altering. At the Hampton Roads Signing Day mother of four and newly minted welder, Cassandra Blythe, shared her personal journey that led to a career at SIB supplier, Advex. Blythe tragically lost her husband and was looking for a new way to provide for her family.

"I chose the Certified Welding Program at Virginia Peninsula Community College," said Blythe. "It was drastically different from what I was used to, but not totally unfamiliar. My two grown sons both have careers in welding for the defense industry, they offered support and dared me to give it a try."

Following in her family's footsteps, Blythe's daughter applied and was accepted to the welding program at New Horizons in Hampton, Virginia for the 2023-2024 school year. Blythe said she hopes to encourage women of all ages and inspire girls to seek a trade that is rewarding and fulfilling.

Over the next 10 years, America's submarine industrial base will need to hire 100,000 skilled employees to meet the Navy's growing demand for submarine construction through 2040.

"You are part of truly something special," said Admiral Daryl Caudle, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, during his keynote address at the Hampton Roads Signing Day. "No one else can do what our industrial base can do, anywhere in the world. No one else is able to sustain a combat fleet of conventional and nuclear-powered warships, at such a high tempo over the class lifecycle of thirty, forty, or even fifty years. No one else is so critical to our ability to deliver deterrence, sea control, and power projection at our timing and tempo. You all should be extremely proud. I know I am. It's impossible to see the talent before me today and not be excited and confident in the future of our country."

The Navy is on a journey to recapitalize its sea-based strategic deterrence and to guarantee a capable and enduring undersea presence. To do so, it must address challenges to SIB capability, capacity, and workforce development.

Speaking at the Pittsburgh event, Rear Admiral Scott Pappano, Program Executive Officer, Strategic Submarines said, "This event is to recognize the men and women who are taking the next step in their journey to join the defense industrial base. They are the future of this nation and will define where this nation goes in the next decade, the next generation, the next century. It all starts here, tonight."

Rear Admiral Pappano spoke about the importance of America's submarine fleet in the context of increasing global threats and stressed the crucial importance of the manufacturing sector.

"The most important thing we need right now is to re-establish manufacturing and continue to grow manufacturing. I'm very glad we're doing that here in Pittsburgh."

Having launched the Hampton Roads and Pittsburgh Pipeline Projects this year, the Navy plans to build on the positive momentum with plans for five Signing Day events next year, adding events in Long Island, New York and Boston as SIB moves toward meeting workforce demand.

For more information on the Navy's Submarine Industrial Base Program's Talent Pipeline Program visit:

[Talent Pipeline Program \(dibtalentpipeline.com\)](http://dibtalentpipeline.com)