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Partnership of BioSTL, BioNexus KC, and the Missouri Biotechnology Association Receives Grant to Launch Statewide Training and Employment Initiative for High-Demand Bioscience Careers.

Missouri's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding will establish the first bioscience industry-led, statewide workforce training effort and provide targeted opportunities for historically underserved communities.

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ST. LOUIS, MO – BioSTL, the bioscience industry backbone organization and nonprofit innovation hub for the St. Louis metro, has won a \$2 million competitive workforce training grant administered by the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED). The \$2 million investment will enable BioSTL and its statewide partners to establish the “Bioscience Industry Occupational Training and Equity Collaborative Hub for Missouri (BIOTECH for MO).” This statewide workforce development platform will strengthen Missouri’s bioscience workforce, help safeguard domestic drug supply chains, and support underrepresented and underserved communities to secure quality employment in the bioscience sector.

"St. Louis and Missouri global leadership in the bioscience industry -- capitalizing on our world-class scientific strengths in health care, medicine and agriculture -- relies on continued growth of our scientific and manufacturing workforce," said Donn Rubin, President and CEO of BioSTL. "This grant will allow BioSTL and our partners to respond to industry hiring needs and bring into the workforce many of those hardest hit by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic."

BioSTL will work with partners across the state to design and implement workforce training programming that meets the needs of employers as well as individuals looking for new opportunities for economic advancement. Partners co-leading this effort include the Missouri Biotechnology Association (MOBIO) and BioNexus KC, a nonprofit advancing the Kansas City bi-state region as a global leader at the nexus of human and animal health.

"Our success in human and animal health has been built on decades of regional collaboration and partnership in Kansas City," said Dennis Ridenour, President and CEO of BioNexus KC. "The BIOTECH for MO initiative will equitably invest in preparing Missouri’s current and future workforce to play a key role in bringing important medicines and therapies to patients around the world."

"The bioscience industry is one of the fastest-growing employment sectors in the country, with average salaries 85% above the national average," said Kelly Gillespie, Executive Director of MOBIO. "The BIOTECH for MO initiative will ensure that Missouri continues to occupy a unique national and global position in this growth fueled by a diverse and skilled workforce."

BIOTECH for MO is made possible through Missouri's State Fiscal Recovery Funds authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act. As passed by the Missouri General Assembly and signed by Governor Parson, DED designed competitive grant programs to support businesses, nonprofits, community development, broadband infrastructure, and other key priorities.

"A stronger workforce means a stronger tomorrow, and this [Workforce Training Grant] program will go a long way in ensuring Missouri workers can meet the demands of the future," said Governor Michael L. Parson.

"This program is going to help employers in critical industries find the workers they need to propel our economy forward," said Maggie Kost, Acting Director of the Department of Economic Development. "At the same time, it will equip real people with job skills that improve their lives, provide for their families, and benefit their communities."

BIOTECH for MO will provide a centralized hub for education, industry, government, and community partners to design and implement programs that train and recruit individuals for key bioscience occupations. Initially, the BIOTECH for MO initiative is projected to serve at least 350 individuals in preparing for and securing new, quality jobs. Employer partners from across Missouri as well as the Kansas City and St. Louis bi-state metros include Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ceva Animal Health, TriRX, Ronawk, KCAS, and MilliporeSigma. BIOTECH for MO will also connect with partners across Missouri's innovation ecosystem, namely the Cortex Innovation Community and its Center of Excellence for essential drug manufacturing innovation, the API Innovation Center. Academic institutions partnering to provide industry-responsive training include Metropolitan Community College and St. Louis Community College. Community organizations partnering to support individuals with access to childcare and transportation and help with targeted recruitment and training include Rung for Women and Family Workforce Centers of America. Economic development organizations are also partnering with BIOTECH for MO including the Mid-America Regional Council to support cross-sector partnerships. Further, BIOTECH for MO will work closely with Missouri's public workforce system including partnerships with the St. Louis Agency for Training and Employment, St. Louis County Workforce Investment Board, and the Full Employment Council.

"Through partnerships with employers, training providers, community organizations and the public workforce system, BIOTECH for MO will build our state's workforce to advance innovative solutions in health, climate change, energy, food security, agriculture, supply chain resilience, and national security," said Justin Raymundo, Director of Regional Workforce Strategy for BioSTL, who will provide overall leadership for BIOTECH for MO. "BIOTECH for MO will deliver on a vision shared across the state to improve human health in Missouri and around the world."

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About BioSTL:

Since 2001, St. Louis nonprofit BioSTL has laid the foundation for the region's innovation economy with a comprehensive set of transformational programs that advance St. Louis' leadership in solving important world challenges in agriculture, medicine, healthcare, and other fields. BioSTL has introduced nationally acclaimed initiatives in startup creation and investment (BioGenerator), strategic business attraction (GlobalSTL), physical environment (including the Cortex Innovation District and BioGenerator Labs), entrepreneur support, seed and venture capital, a diverse and inclusive workforce, and public policy. Find us online at biostl.org and follow us on twitter @BioSTL.

About BioNexus KC:

The KC region is a global leader at the nexus of human and animal health, inspiring thinkers from diverse disciplines to combine their efforts for a common purpose — healthcare innovation. For more than 20 years, BioNexus KC has been advancing the region’s strengths in digital health, cancer research, health equity, informatics, and rare disease.

BioNexus KC stimulates collaboration, accelerates emerging technology from concept to reality, and creates opportunities at the nexus of:

- Human and Animal Health
- Urban and Rural Health
- Academia and Industry
- Kansas and Missouri

About MOBIO:

Missouri Biotechnology Association (MOBIO) is the only statewide membership group that speaks with one voice to advance and champion the life sciences in Jefferson City, across the state, and in Washington, D.C. MOBIO represents the most extensive and broadest cross-section of life science organizations including businesses, higher education, medical research, start-ups, agri-science and related firms involved in research, development, and commercialization of the life sciences. MOBIO serves to connect, develop, and advance the state’s bioscience community.

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