

**College:** Lakeshore Technical College  
**Location:** Cleveland, Wisconsin  
**Practice:** Non-Traditional Occupations Program  
 Increasing female awareness of, and participation in, male-dominated occupations

<i>Year Started</i>	1994
<i>Budget</i>	\$40,000
<i>Program Participants</i>	300
<i>College FTE</i>	1,800
<i>Target Sector</i>	Manufacturing
<i>Staff Size</i>	7 PT instructors
<i>Structure</i>	Program run through Lakeshore Technical College
<i>Key Outcomes</i>	Promotion of non-traditional gender and ethnic occupational awareness Female enrollments in non-traditional occupational programs increased 100% during 1996-1998

## Introduction

The counties of eastern Wisconsin experienced a tremendous economic revitalization in the last decade. Restoration of historic downtowns, initiation of new development, and expansion of local industry led to a significant decrease in regional unemployment rates and a significant increase in the region's renown.

Though the economies of Calumet, Ozaukee, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan counties are healthy, each still has obstacles to overcome. Workforce development, for example, is a key obstacle. Many firms have been finding it difficult to hire skilled workers at affordable wages.

In response to this demand for personnel, Manitowoc County's Lakeshore Technical College has for six years run the Non-Traditional

Occupations Program. The goal of the program is to stimulate among women awareness of, and capacity for, certain professions typically dominated by males. Through hands-on instruction, the program focuses on building both knowledge and confidence—skills necessary to tackle a broader array of occupations and changing workforce conditions. The college also seeks to increase new opportunities for female workers by collaborating with regional employers and labor unions.

## Community Background

The four-county region surrounding the cities of Sheboygan and Manitowoc in eastern Wisconsin boasts a lively tourist base and a diverse economy. Location on the western coast of Lake Michigan

Program focus	Sector specific	Economic condition	Economic base			Target populations
			Mfg	Agr	Svc	
School to work Non-traditional occup.	No	Growing	43	2.9	22	Women

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Calumet, Ozaukee, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan Counties</i>
<i>Total Population</i>	311,000
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$41,000
<i>% Below Poverty Level</i>	5.8
<i>% Unemployment Rate</i>	3.1
<i>% Minority Population</i>	1.8
<i>% Rural Population</i>	34.6
<i>% High School Graduates</i>	79.9
<i>% College Graduates</i>	17.1

provides the region with enchanting terrain, as well as the reputation for being “Wisconsin’s Maritime Capital.” Major regional industries include furniture, plumbing fixtures, stainless steel products, wood products, corrugated packaging, and cheese and sausage products.

The area’s buoyant economy and quality of life are evident in a number of ways:

- The region has a highly educated population, above-average median household income, and a below-average poverty level
- The Sheboygan-Manitowoc metropolitan area has an unemployment rate (between one and two percent) that ranks as the 29th lowest of the nation’s 262 largest cities
- The city of Sheboygan ranks as the FBI’s fourth safest city in the country
- The region ranked fourth nationwide for job creation in 1997
- The region has been named one of Readers Digest’s best places to raise a family
- Sheboygan was named for six consecutive years one of Money Magazine’s most livable cities

## Program Description

Lakeshore Technical College (LTC) in Cleveland, Wisconsin, offers women a number of workshops as a part of the Non-Traditional Occupations Program (NTO): Developing Machine Tool Aptitudes, Developing Mechanical Design Aptitudes (Computer Aided Drafting), Introduction to

Industrial Maintenance Skills, and Introduction to Basic Electrical Skills. Each of these workshops covers knowledge and skills used in the relevant industries and provides hands-on training for equipment operation and manufacturing processes. The intent is to help women explore technical careers in a more comfortable environment than traditional introductory courses that are predominately taken by men.

Completion of one 18-hour NTO workshop results in one vocational credit. The program next encourages participants to continue their education and earn either a one-year technical diploma or a two-year associate degree through matriculation into the college’s mainstream technical programs. Apprenticeship programs are also available in several occupations: carpenter, industrial electrician, machinist, millwright, printer, sheet metal worker, technical brick mason, technical plumber, and tool and die maker.

LTC maintains satellite campuses at both the Manitowoc and Sheboygan County Job Centers where it provides center clients with information on nontraditional jobs and training opportunities. The college produced its own NTO video that highlights women in various non-traditional training programs at LTC. It is shown at local high schools, job fairs, career exploration classes and at area job centers.

## Outcomes

Women in the Sheboygan-Manitowoc region have been given increased opportunities to move into high-wage, non-traditional careers, and many are doing so. Female enrollments in non-traditional occupational programs increased 100 per cent between 1996 and 1998. During the 2000-01 school year, 115 women enrolled in non-traditional training programs.

Feedback regarding the NTO program has been very positive. A majority of participants felt that the topics covered in each workshop provided a thorough overview of each industry and thought that the breadth of information was helpful. Participants also felt that the hands-on activities and methods used were very interesting and kept them engaged.

## **Strengths, Challenges, and Replicability**

The strengths of the LTC program are its innovative approach to the region's skilled labor shortage, its hands-on training, and the individual attention it gives to students.

While an impressive number of women participate in NTO workshops, many choose not to pursue a non-traditional training program for a variety of reasons such as family responsibilities or financial needs. Further, a major challenge to this program is what happens after women complete their studies. According to the college, many labor unions and employers remain set in a traditional hiring pattern that excludes female employees from consideration.

In addition, LTC has determined that the original program does not adequately prepare women for some of the circumstances present in the reality of the workplace, such as harassment, and feels it does not sufficiently prepare women in nontraditional workforce success skills such as self-advocacy, assertiveness, communication skills, and job retention. In 2001 the college was in the midst of writing a curriculum to address these and other issues to better prepare women for employment in non traditional occupations.

The Wisconsin state college system has suggested that this program be used as a model for other colleges in the state. In 2000, NTO's program staff developed and presented several workshops to share information that will serve as a model for other districts in the state that would benefit from developing and implementing a Non-Traditional Occupation Program.

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