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*By David Wichner Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Tuesday, June 14, 2011 12:00 am*

It takes more than great ideas to create vibrant high-tech industries - it takes skilled workers, and the training to develop them.

Earlier this month, JobPath, a local nonprofit agency, announced that it had won a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Labor Department to provide job training and related support to 50 underserved adults.

The money will help JobPath clients train for jobs in industries that are hiring skilled workers, including biotech, health care, aviation and engineering.

Teaming up with Pima Community College, JobPath will focus the grant funds on training adult immigrants and refugees who are highly skilled but are unemployed or grossly underemployed, said Herminia Cubillos, executive director of JobPath.

"We have a significant community in Tucson of immigrants or refugees who had a degree or a profession in their own country," Cubillos said, citing skilled immigrants from Eastern Europe and Africa as an example.

"Many of them are cleaning toilets."

The grant money will help JobPath train clients in English and career skills, and in some cases make the transition to certificate or degree programs at PCC, Cubillos said.

But you don't need to be an immigrant or refugee to get help from JobPath.

The agency, whose annual base budget of \$500,000 is funded by the city and Pima County, offers help to any county residents seeking jobs, or better jobs, with help including career counseling and financial aid.

JobPath applied for a separate grant to specifically fund biotech education but didn't get that one, Cubillos said.

Past JobPath programs have included summer "bridge" programs to help recent high school graduates transition into careers, and the agency is constantly seeking new grants.

Such programs can indeed be a path to a job.

About four years ago, Linda Lopez applied for a five-week introductory biotechnology program at PCC, sponsored by JobPath under a \$276,000 federal grant. Lopez got an A in

the course, four college credits and a stipend of \$800.

After acing advanced-placement science and math classes and graduating as valedictorian of her class at Sunnyside High School, Lopez enrolled in the biotech certificate program at PCC. She graduated on a fast track two years later, with a biotech certificate as well as an associate's degree in science.

"I didn't know anything about this field, but I knew I wanted to do something in science or medical," said Lopez, who is now 20.

Recommended by her PCC dean, Lopez was hired in February - two months before graduating - by HTG Molecular Diagnostics, a fast-growing Tucson company that makes systems and materials for gene-based testing.

As a customer-service associate for HTG, she does everything from project tracking to lab work. She gets an annual salary of about \$28,000, plus full company-paid benefits.

Lopez is hoping to further her education, but in the meantime she's enjoying her work at HTG, which is expanding its staff as it moves its gene-based testing technology from drug research into clinical diagnostics.

"Every day is different. ... It's always fun, always fast-moving," Lopez said.

JobPath's Cubillos said that under the earlier grant, from 2005 to 2007, the agency placed all 30 of its program enrollees in biotech jobs with HTG, the University of Arizona, Oro Valley-based Ventana Medical Systems-Roche locally, and with Covance Inc., a contract drug-research firm in Chandler. "It's not a lot of jobs, but they're very well-paying jobs," she said.

### **Glaxo adds HTG funding**

The investment arm of drug giant GlaxoSmithKline has joined the latest round of venture-capital funding for HTG Molecular Diagnostics, the company said Monday.

SR One, the venture-capital arm of GlaxoSmithKline, joined the second round of HTG's series D financing. The company has raised \$16.2 million in the current funding series.

The funding round was led by Novo A/S and includes Fletcher Spaght Ventures, Merck Capital Ventures, Solstice Capital and Valley Ventures.

Additionally, Simeon George, a partner in SR One, is joining HTG's board of directors, the company said.

*Tucson Tech appears Tuesdays in the Star. Send story ideas to Assistant Business Editor David Wichner at [dwichner@azstarnet.com](mailto:dwichner@azstarnet.com) or 573-4181.*