

**National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education  
Auto Fast Track: Improving Automotive Technician Training  
Through a Flexible Industry Apprenticeship Program  
Award Number 2000467**

**Total: \$288,828**

**Project Period: 7/01/2020 to 06/30/2023**

**PI: Ian T Andrews, Automotive Faculty**

**Co-PI: Mark Gerko, Chairperson**

**Employers:** Ricart Automotive, Honda, Tuffy Auto Service Center, Toyota Direct, and Chesrown Chevrolet

**Education Partners:** Tolles Career and Technical Center, South-Western City Schools, Marysville Exempted Village School District, and Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools

**Dissemination Partners:** CA2VES Center, housed at Clemson University, Center for Advanced Automotive Technology (CAAT) funded at Macomb Community College, National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC) funded at West Virginia University

**External Evaluator:** The Rucks Group, LLC



**Project Overview**

The national need for skilled automotive technicians continues to grow. With older technicians retiring and newer technicians leaving the industry, there will be a potential shortage of 20,000 to 25,000 technician jobs in the automotive industry detrimentally effecting dealerships. This project will create the Automotive Fast Track flexible apprenticeship pilot to assist incumbent technicians to launch a lucrative career by providing them the opportunity to be on campus two days a week and be concurrently employed by a partner dealership for three days a week. Utilizing the earn and learn model in the automotive industry creates a new dynamic to strategically engage employers and upskill technicians working within automotive companies and dealerships. This approach allows for industry to become an education partner with vested interest in student technician success.

Columbus State Community College and industry partners will expand the experiential learning model and prepare a pipeline of technicians to meet industry demand by partnering with local dealerships and regional high schools. Based on these objectives, the project will create the following deliverables:

1. **Automotive Fast Track Apprenticeship Pilot** - New, collaboratively-developed and industry-led earn and learn model design including foundational technical coursework and field experience.
2. **High School Awareness Initiative** - Increase the education pipeline by targeting high schools and local career and technical centers.
3. **Employer Guide for additional employer partners** – Creation of an Employer Guide for additional partners to replicate the earn and learn model.

An external evaluator will include formative and summative inquiries and reporting, and results will be disseminated to local, statewide, and national audiences. This work will increase the number of educated technicians prepared to meet the workforce’s demands. This project is funded by the Advanced Technological Education program that focuses on the education of technicians for the advanced-technology fields that drive the nation’s economy.

