

Career Changer Stories: Machining



Real Skills for Real Jobs

Jeff's Story

In 2011 I was laid off from a small-engine repair job with Cook County. Work was hard to find in Chicago, so I went to Texas, where I took a seasonal job at a golf course. When that ran out, I came back to Chicago. I was drifting and got into some trouble and was facing a seventeen-year sentence on drug and gun convictions. I was paroled after 28 days. If I wanted to avoid hard time, I had to turn my life around. I knew I needed some skills, to get a job, but didn't have the money to pay for training tuition. When I went to the Job Service, they didn't have any WIA funds available. I met a person from IMF, who told me that the Safer Foundation might give me a WIA tuition grant. I joined the Safer Foundation program, and they gave me the grant to take the machinist training class at IMF.

The IMF program has helped me succeed. The instructors are compassionate about your need to learn. They would help me at any time, stepping aside from the prepared lessons to help me with anything I didn't understand. They can do that because the classes are small. A lot of time they go off the book to show you, because you learn better by doing it rather than reading about it. What I really loved was how

well the instructors knew the trade, because they'd been in the field. They taught easy ways to do the work to get it done. They taught me basic things that are really good to know that people coming out of other programs don't learn--I can sharpen a drill, if it stops cutting, or a cutoff tool, make my own recess tool, sharpen chasers, box tools, and reamers. When a tool gets dull at work, I'm the one others at the company come to fix it. Stuff you learn at IMF makes you want to keep going. It's exciting.

When I went on interviews, I found I had picked up things about a lot of different kinds of operations, which made it easy to talk with the interviewers. I had several offers to choose from.

My wife and I lived in a tough area with lots of crime, and we wanted to move to a peaceful place. Because of my job, we had the finances to move to a quiet suburb; I didn't have a problem finding a nearby job. With what I learned at IMF, I can get a job in any state, in any place.

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