SPARK FORCE™

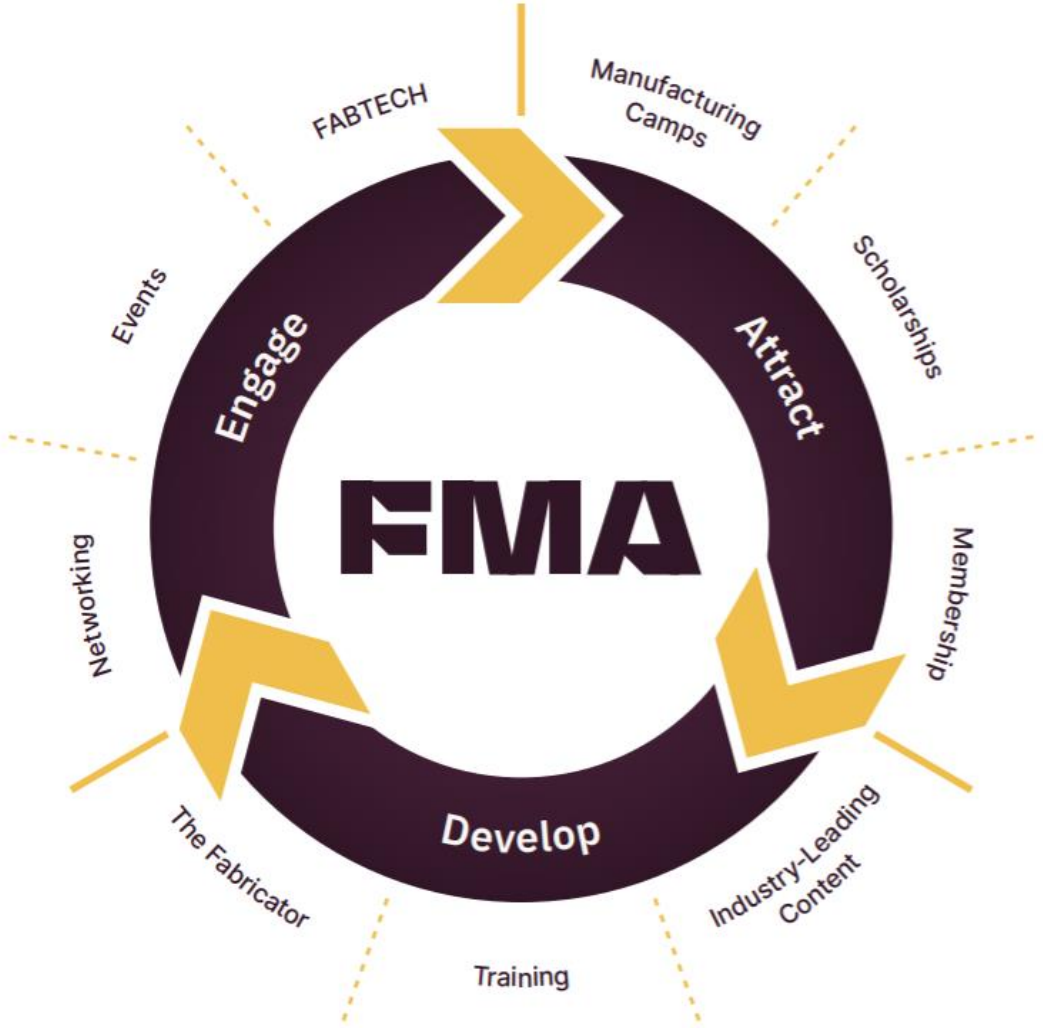
THE FMA FOUNDATION

Spark the Future: How Summer Manufacturing Camps Drive CTE Enrollment and Workforce Growth

NCATC 2026 CONFERENCE

FMA™

FMA Fabricators and Manufacturers Association



We shape the world.

FMA unites thousands of metal fabrication and manufacturing professionals around a common purpose: to **shape the future** of our industry, and in turn **shape the world**.

To do it, we've built a **workforce lifecycle** that supports individuals and businesses at every point in their development.

▶ Visit **fmamfg.org** to learn more.

Our mission is to attract, develop, and engage the next generation workforce for manufacturing.

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Our Programs

Scholarships

- Awarded twice each year for the fall and spring semesters
- Focus on skills training and technical programs leading to careers in manufacturing
- Priority given to FMA members and students enrolled in member schools
- **1,000+** scholarships awarded since program began in 1990

Summer Manufacturing Camps

- Introduce middle school and high school students to manufacturing career pathways
- Spark interest early when most impressionable and parental influence is strong
- Partner host organizations
- **30,000** Summer Manufacturing Camp participants since program began in 2005

Inclusive Manufacturing Camps

- Soft skills and job readiness training plus work experiences for young adults with disabilities
- Educate employers about an underrepresented talent pool
- Manufacturer involvement is crucial
- **450+** Inclusive Manufacturing Camp participants since program began in 2022

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Summer Manufacturing Camps

- Designed for students **ages 12–16**
- Hosted at partner schools and organizations that direct each camp's unique focus
- **Goals:**
  - **Increase awareness of manufacturing career pathways** in local community
  - Project-based hands-on experiences
  - Plant tours and guest speakers from local manufacturers



SparkForce provides Camp Hosts with:

✓ $2,000 funding grant per camp
✓ Entrepreneurship curriculum
✓ Custom t-shirts and marketing support
✓ SolidWorks® student licenses

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Inclusive Manufacturing Camps



- Designed for **transition age (16+) students with disabilities**
- Hosted at partner schools and service organizations
- Typically, camps run 4 to 8 weeks between June – Sept.
- **Goals:**
  - **Provide pathways to employment opportunities**
  - Real-world work experiences
  - Hands-on job training in manufacturing environments
  - Hosts engage with local manufacturers to educate them on benefits of hiring and retaining an inclusive workforce

SparkForce provides Inclusive Camp Hosts with:

✓ Funding grants to fully cover costs to run the camp

✓ Custom t-shirts and marketing support

✓ Connections to manufacturing employers and experienced camp host network

SparkForce.org

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Building Giants Manufacturing Camps

- In partnership with the U.S. Navy's Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) and BlueForge Alliance
- Camps are co-branded with BuildSubmarines.com
- **Goals:**
  - Increase awareness of **career pathways in submarine manufacturing**
  - Project-based hands-on experiences
  - Plant tours of SIB suppliers and manufacturers

BUILDSUBMARINES.COM



SparkForce provides Camp Hosts with:

- ☐ Funding grant to fully cover cost
- ☐ Camp curriculum with specialized BuildSubmarines.com supplemental content
- ☐ Custom t-shirts and educator resources
- ☐ Additional support from local SIB lead

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Program Impacts

Students and Families	Host Schools and Organizations	Manufacturing Employers	Communities
✓ Explore manufacturing career paths and local job opportunities	✓ Promote CTE curricula and skills training programs to students and their families	✓ Develop educational partnerships and tap into local talent pipelines	✓ Raise awareness of high-paying, in-demand jobs in the area and region
✓ Engage in hands-on experiences with advanced equipment and technologies	✓ Boost enrollment in skilled trades and manufacturing-related training programs	✓ Recruit future employees, interns, and apprentices	✓ Keep talent local as graduates build careers in their hometown
✓ Connect with employers to learn about salaries and career paths	✓ Strengthen industry relationships and attract donor support	✓ Showcase manufacturing facilities and cutting-edge technologies to students, parents, and educators	✓ Bolster the local economy by supporting local manufacturers
✓ Get financial support for technical education			

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2026 SparkForce Manufacturing Camps

(as of 7/10/26)

5,500+
Camp Participants

336
Summer Manufacturing Camps

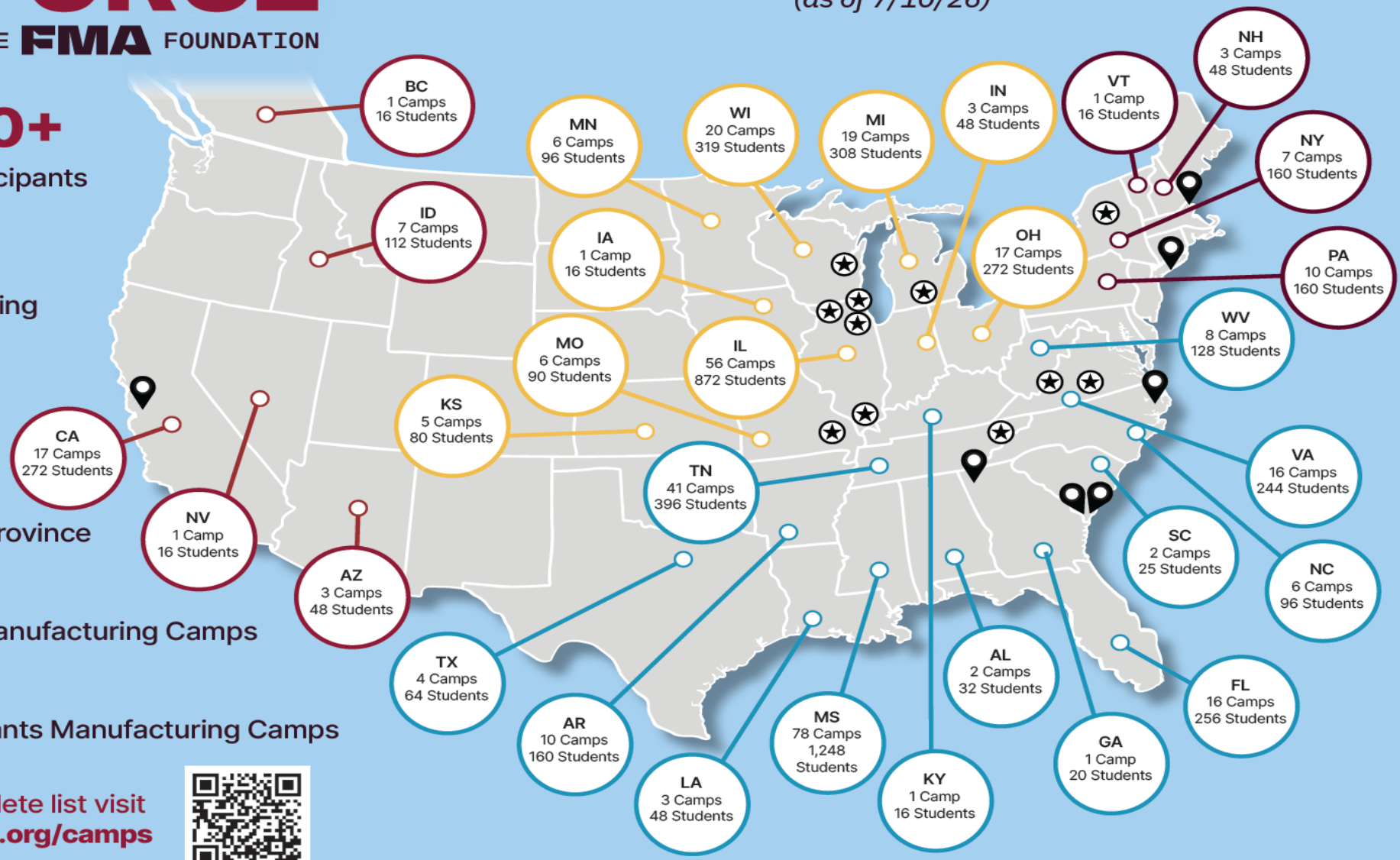
30
U.S States

1
Canadian Province

12 ★
Inclusive Manufacturing Camps

7 📍
Building Giants Manufacturing Camps

For a complete list visit
sparkforce.org/camps



Johnston Community College – Spark the Future

WELDING, FABRICATION, & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CAMP

The Middle-School Opportunity

- Why reach students this early?
- Forming career perceptions
- Open to exploration
- This is the time to build relationships before high school.



Why SparkForce?

- Experience
- Shared Vision for Manufacturing
- Financial Support
- Curriculum Playbook
- Marketing Support





The Goal Isn’t Enrollment

- We’re not asking them to choose a career
- A positive first experience with technical education







Starting with an Experience

- Curiosity
- Confidence
- Career Awareness
- Pathway





Don’t Make Them Watch — Make Them Do

- Short Demonstrations
- Hands-On Work
- Keep the Pace Moving



Local Industry: More Than a Sponsor

- Funding
- Material Donations
- Guest Speakers
- Industry Tours







The Long Game

Manufacturing Camp → High School CTE → College/Dual Enrollment → Career



Beyond the Camp —Logan Schall

- Attended at Age 14 (2022)
- “Camp got me interested in machining”
- Earned certifications at JCC
- Studying Mechanical Engineering at Liberty University



Beyond the Camp — Nathan Raynor

- Attended at age 14 (2023)
- “helped me discover an interest in welding and encouraged me to pursue it further”
- 2026 Enrolled at Pitt Community College through NC Career and College Promise





Beyond the Camp — Ayden Eason

- Attended at age 14 (2022)
- Graduated JCC 2025 with AAS & HS Diploma
- Earned BioWorks Certification — 2025
- AAS in Applied Engineering — Spring 2026
- Currently a senior at East Carolina University
- BS Industrial Engineering Technology
- Full-time: Aseptic Filling Technician, Grifols



What We Want Them to Leave With

- “Making things is fun”
- “I didn’t know I could do that”
- “Maybe this is for me”



What We Learned

- Start planning early
- Include the entire camp staff and faculty
- Give them something <u>real</u> to do
- Be flexible, let the campers discover their capabilities
- Use industry as a partner, not just a sponsor





The Takeaway

- There’s more to this than just welding
- The camp creates relationships and a “community” event
- Help students make informed decisions









2027 Summer Manufacturing Camp

Grant Application Open Sept. 1 - Dec. 1, 2026



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Learn more: sparkforce.org/camps/host-a-camp



Presented by JOCO Works Committee Members

NCATE Conference | Tacoma, Washington | Talent Pipeline

JOCO WORKS
A WORLD OF WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITY