

Community Action Network

YES Turner CAN. Turner Industries Chairman, Roland Toups, coordinated with Baton Rouge Mayor, President Kip Holden, and community ministers, leading to the start of a program called the Community Action Network (CAN) in July of 2008. The CAN program is designed to solicit the help of Community Leaders in assisting Turner Industries in identifying a potential workforce from the local community to address current and future workforce needs. We knew from the start of the program that many of the people that would be coming to us would lack the appropriate craft skills for immediate employment opportunities. To address this, we set up training and funding opportunities for these individuals to help prepare them for challenges that may arise.

Turner employees must have standard credentials before being allowed to enter industrial work facilities. The TWIC, Transportation Worker's Identification Credential, Card is a recent requirement dictated by the Department of Homeland Defense that is an obstacle for many. The \$135 cost and prolonged delays in receiving the cards have made it harder to place potential workers in the local community. The BASIC Safety Orientation is another hurdle. Agreements with the Mayor and community grants have helped to cover these costs in many cases.

All participants in the CAN program are encouraged to enroll in classes through ABC, The Associated Builders and Contractors. Traditionally ABC classes are offered two nights per week. New initiatives through Community Block Development Grants, Work Investment Act, and partnerships with the Technical Colleges and Department of Education have allowed ABC to expand that model. They are now able to offer summertime training for recently graduated High School students. This model allows potential employees to receive concentrated training before they attempt to enter the workforce.

The CAN program enrollees also have the advantage of receiving employment counseling from our CAN administrator, Frank Norris. The counseling includes training opportunities, employment seeking guidance, and interviewing advice. This guidance informs them on what to expect before they start the employment process. Frank is heavily involved with Turner's recruiters throughout the process to give these potential employees the best opportunity to advance their careers. Since the program began, Turner has met with over 60 community ministers, interviewed and enrolled over 100 applicants into the program, and placed over 40 in employment and training.