



March 19, 2025

Illinois Community College Trustees Association
401 E. Capitol, Suite 200
Springfield, IL 62701-1711

Re: 2025 Business / Industry Partnership Award

Dear ICCTA Awards Committee,

The Illinois Valley Community College Board of Trustees is pleased to recommend OSF Healthcare for the ICCTA Business / Industry Partnership Award.

The OSF St. Elizabeth (Ottawa), St. Paul (Mendota), and St. Clare (Princeton) sites, under the guidance of Heather Bomstad, Vice President of Patient Care Services, were key partners with IVCC in support of our new Surgical Technician program. The partnership between IVCC and OSF HealthCare was established through a shared commitment of addressing local healthcare workforce shortages. IVCC conducted a local needs assessment, identifying Surgical Tech as a critical area of demand. OSF confirmed this need and collaborated with IVCC to develop a certified program that could be implemented quickly. The uniqueness of this partnership lies in its accelerated six-month structure, allowing students to quickly enter the workforce, along with OSF's direct support in hiring and training. Additionally, an OSF Surgical Technician serves as the course instructor, further integrating real-world expertise into the curriculum and strengthening the educational experience. To enhance student readiness, OSF collaborated with IVCC to integrate a structured, paid training component, allowing students to gain six months of real-world experience before transitioning into full-time employment. This collaborative approach ensures graduates are well-prepared for the demands of the field, reinforcing the program's effectiveness in developing a skilled workforce for the region.

The IVCC Board of Trustees wholeheartedly recommends OSF Healthcare for the 2025 Business/Industry Partnership Award.

Sincerely,

Everett Solon

Board Chair, Illinois Valley Community College

ICCTA Business / Industry Partnership Award Criteria

1. History, goals and uniqueness of the partnership.

The partnership between IVCC and OSF HealthCare was established through a shared commitment of addressing local healthcare workforce shortages. In response to the PATH Grant's (Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Network) goal of strengthening rural healthcare post-pandemic, IVCC conducted a local needs assessment, identifying Surgical Technicians as a critical area of demand. OSF confirmed this need and collaborated with IVCC to develop a certified program that could be implemented quickly. The goal was to align with IVCC's existing noncredit programs - providing fast, certification-based training while ensuring strong employment outcomes for graduates. The uniqueness of this partnership lies in its accelerated six-month structure, allowing students to quickly enter the workforce, along with OSF's direct support in hiring and training. Additionally, an OSF Surgical Technician serves as the course instructor, further integrating real-world expertise into the curriculum and strengthening the educational experience.

2. Examples of innovative curricula, training programs, and/or academic courses developed.

The IVCC Surgical Technician Program utilizes an innovative curriculum through Condensed Curriculum International, ensuring students receive high-quality, industry-aligned training. A key component of the program is the direct involvement of OSF HealthCare, where a certified Surgical Technologist from OSF serves as the instructor, providing real-world insights and expertise. Students gain critical hands-on experience through observation hours at IVCC, followed by an opportunity for six months of additional training at OSF if accepted into the stipend program. This structured pathway, combined with a two-year work commitment at OSF, ensures graduates are fully prepared to transition seamlessly into the workforce. The program's emphasis on hands-on learning, real-world application, and direct employer collaboration addresses the unique challenges of rural healthcare by equipping students with the skills needed to succeed in one of the region's primary healthcare employers.

3. How the business is involved in planning, reviewing, & evaluating the curricula/workforce training programs.

OSF HealthCare played a critical role in the Surgical Technician Program to ensure it met industry standards and workforce needs. While OSF approved the overall program structure, they recognized the importance of additional hands-on training due to the program's accelerated nature. To enhance student readiness, OSF collaborated with IVCC to integrate a structured, paid training component, allowing students to gain six months of real-world experience before transitioning into full-time employment. This collaborative approach ensures graduates are well-prepared for the demands of the field, reinforcing the program's effectiveness in developing a skilled surgical technician workforce for the region.

4. How the business supports and promotes the college's workforce training efforts

OSF actively supports and promotes IVCC's workforce training efforts through its Stipend Program, which provides significant financial and professional benefits to students. OSF has promoted this opportunity, allowing IVCC Surgical Technician students to apply for the program, which, if accepted, offers a full refund of tuition costs, six months of paid hands-on training across multiple surgical specialties (OB, ENT, General Surgery, etc.), and a guaranteed two-year employment commitment. This initiative not only reduces financial barriers for 2 students but also enhances their practical skills and job readiness. By investing in student success and workforce development, OSF strengthens the pipeline of skilled surgical technicians in the region, ensuring long-term benefits for both graduates and the local healthcare system.

5. Ways in which the business serves and supports the college constituency.

OSF plays a vital role in supporting IVCC's healthcare programs, including the Surgical Technician Program, by providing students with hands-on training, financial assistance, and direct employment opportunities. Beyond surgical

technology, OSF collaborates with IVCC across multiple programs, including the nursing program, where students complete clinical hours to gain essential real-world experience. This partnership strengthens the local healthcare workforce by ensuring students receive high-quality training and seamless transitions into in-demand healthcare roles. By working closely with IVCC, OSF actively supports the college's mission to prepare skilled professionals who will serve the region, reinforcing a shared commitment to improving healthcare access and quality in the community.

6. Measurable improvement rates (e.g., productivity increases, cost decreases, service expansion).

The partnership has demonstrated strong success rates, with 27 students enrolled in Fall 2024 and 26 successfully completing the program. Many of these graduates applied for and were accepted into the OSF Stipend Program, where they are now gaining hands-on experience through six months of paid training at various OSF locations. This partnership is directly contributing to workforce development by increasing the number of skilled surgical technicians in the region. Additionally, OSF's upcoming Peru location, set to open in Spring 2025, presents an opportunity for IVCC Surgical Technician graduates to support service expansion and meet growing healthcare demands. With 19 students currently enrolled in Spring 2025, IVCC and OSF anticipate continued success in training/placing surgical technicians, further strengthening the local healthcare system.

7. Employment and promotion opportunities for community college alumni

IVCC maintains strong connections with Surgical Technician graduates through exit surveys and ongoing follow-up to track certification progress, employment status, and overall experiences. This continuous engagement allows IVCC and OSF to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, graduates are invited to return and share their experiences in greater depth, providing valuable insight for prospective students while promoting the program. By fostering these connections, IVCC and OSF ensure that alumni can advance in their careers while also inspiring and guiding future cohorts. This approach strengthens employment outcomes and reinforces the long-term success and sustainability of the partnership.

8. How the business and college have benefited from the partnership.

The partnership between IVCC and OSF has been mutually beneficial, addressing a critical workforce need while strengthening educational and healthcare opportunities in the region. IVCC Continuing Education has successfully developed a high-demand, sustainable program that equips students with essential surgical technician skills. OSF has directly benefited by training surgical technicians who have received foundational education and can be further trained to meet OSF's specific standards and protocols. This ensures a skilled workforce, reducing the need for other medical professionals to step into surgical roles and allowing OSF to optimize its staffing structure. As a result, both IVCC and OSF are enhancing local healthcare services while providing students with a clear, direct pathway to employment in a vital and growing field.

9. Gains realized by the community

The IVCC Surgical Technician program has generated significant interest from the community, consistently filling enrollment slots and maintaining waitlists of 10 or more students each semester. This high demand reflects the program's value in addressing local workforce shortages. Additionally, the program's success has garnered attention from other colleges seeking to replicate the partnership model between IVCC and OSF, further demonstrating its effectiveness. By expanding career opportunities for students and increasing the number of trained surgical technicians in the region, this collaboration directly benefits local healthcare facilities and enhances the overall quality of patient care.