US Navy Launches Careers in Defense Industry



General Dynamics Electric Boat
By Team Submarine Public Affairs, June 4, 2024

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) program along with local shipbuilding companies and suppliers, elected officials, and community leaders gathered to celebrate the future of the defense workforce during the inaugural National Signing Day event in Boston on May 30.

The National Signing Day concluded a series of five Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) events across key maritime hubs, honoring the latest group of talent joining the Defense Industrial Base (DIB).

The five regional TPPs in Philadelphia, Virginia, Pittsburgh, New York, and New England highlighted the SIB program's efforts over several years to develop robust talent pipelines

within these regions. Across these signing days, more than 2,700 individuals were recognized for starting their careers with small and medium-sized suppliers that support the maritime industry.

“Serving as a part of the National Signing Day event has been a huge honor,” said Meganne Atkins, executive director, AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Office, and guest speaker. “Witnessing the accelerated growth of this program, from my first event at a high school gymnasium in Pittsburgh to this grand stage now at the New England Aquarium in Boston has been a humbling, edifying, and inspirational experience,” said Atkins.

During the event, each region’s senior representative, or flag sponsor, introduced an employer to represent that specific pipeline. The National Signing Day showcased the scope and scale of the TPP.

The Signing Day events kicked off in Virginia on May 7, where the region’s TPP celebrated its second year by recognizing 1,200 new hires. The event underscored the critical role these skilled tradespeople, including welders, pipefitters, and electricians, play in our national security.

“It doesn’t matter your position or title; you contribute to our national security. You are helping the United States of America exercise power projection and diplomacy,” emphasized Team Submarine’s Command Master Chief Jeff Hiscocks during the ceremony.

Mike Ross, an Assembly Operator at TE Connectivity and a U.S. Army veteran, the event’s new hire guest speaker, expressed his gratitude for the professional development opportunities at TE and the privilege of continuing to serve the military beyond uniformed service.

“Every day I am driven by a sense of purpose knowing that the parts we develop contribute to the defense of our country and

its allies," said Ross.

On May 14, the Pittsburgh pipeline recognized over 700 skilled tradespeople who joined or reached their one-year anniversary with employers supporting the Defense Industrial Base. In just its second year, the Pittsburgh pipeline has already doubled its impact, expanding from 30 to 72 participating companies and now reaching across Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, and Maryland. The event highlighted the growing collaboration across the region.

The inaugural Signing Day for the New York TPP was held on May 21. It celebrated partnerships with 36 employers and recognized 74 individuals who have found careers in defense manufacturing. This milestone reflects the program's commitment to fostering new opportunities and supporting the region's industry.

Philadelphia's third Signing Day event on May 23 celebrated the program's success in helping more than 650 individuals find careers within defense manufacturing.

The Navy's Executive Director for Strategic Submarines, Mr. Matt Sermon, highlighted the importance of these roles, stating, "The Pennsylvania Talent Pipeline is a critical workforce program that helps protect our Nation. The skills and hard work you bring are the cornerstones in building the next generation of submarines that will patrol our oceans and protect our shores."

Concluding the series of events, the New England TPP hosted its first Signing Day and celebrated its partnerships with 31 employers and recognized 394 individuals on May 30. Following the New England event, key members from the other four TPPs joined the New England leaders and employees for the National Signing Day event.

"I'm glad we have such a fantastic turnout for the first-ever New England Talent Pipeline Project Signing Day," said the

pipeline’s Flag sponsor Ms. Atkins said Meganne Atkins, executive director, AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Office. “To everyone who’s walking across this stage today, I say this: embrace this moment. This is your time to shine, to show the world what you’re made of! You’re doing incredibly important work that directly impacts our national security. And together, we will continue to build a future that is safe, secure, and full of endless possibilities.”

Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, highlighted the occasion in a video message to the group.

“It brings me great pleasure to participate in the conclusion of one chapter of your lives and the beginning of what will be the next phase of an incredible part of your professional journey,” Caudle said. “You are now an elite member of the foundation that supports our world-class Navy. Celebrate today’s occasion because it is certainly an achievement worth enjoying.”

As the U.S. Navy prepares to build one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines per year by 2028, which will require hiring more than 140,000 skilled workers over the next decade, initiatives like the SIB’s Talent Pipeline Programs are more critical than ever.

Prior to these events, Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, Program Executive Officer for Strategic Submarines, noted the program’s importance.

“These signing days highlight the many meaningful career paths to be found in submarine manufacturing and the good-paying jobs being created in communities across the country,” emphasized Pappano. “These events represent merely the beginning as we work to grow and sustain the Submarine Industrial Base long-term.”

The May signing days celebrated individual achievements and underscored the collaborative efforts of over 290 defense

industry and 140 academic partners dedicated to supporting the Nation’s defense. As the program continues to expand, adding new events and regions, the TPP stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and the enduring spirit of the skilled tradespeople who are the backbone of the U.S. Navy’s submarine fleet strengthening national security and our communities one skilled tradesperson at a time.

In a world of evolving global security threats, the U.S. Navy’s investment in workforce development through the SIB Program is crucial. These initiatives not only bolster the submarine force but also affirm the Navy’s commitment to maintaining American maritime supremacy.