

PRECISION OPTICS

A New OP-TEC Initiative for Precision Optics Technicians

Background:

Precision Optics Technicians (POTs) create and test optical (infrared, visible and ultraviolet) components that are used in lasers and sophisticated electro-optical systems for defense, homeland security, aerospace, biomedical equipment, digital displays, controlled nuclear fusion and nanotechnology. POTs also integrate precision optical components into these electro-optical systems and maintain them.

Precision Optics Technician Shortage:

There is a forecasted shortage of POTs that could require our country to out-source this work to foreign nations—a situation that would compromise our nation’s security and sacrifice a vital sector of future economic development.

Contributing Factors:

- Loss of experienced POTs in the United States
- Only a few colleges created programs in Optical Fabrication
- No known educational programs in two-year colleges still prepare new POTs
- Precision Optics education/training is much more than just a “craft worker apprenticeship” experience
- United States military, defense and homeland security rely on a domestic source for Precision Optics

OP-TEC Initiative:

Through funding provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF), OP-TEC will:

- 1) quantify how many POTs are needed now and for the next six years,
- 2) determine what knowledge and skills these technicians should possess,
- 3) identify teams of colleges and employers willing to initiate educational programs to prepare POTs,
- 4) design a comprehensive initiative that would encourage and support colleges to develop the capacity for preparing POTs; and,
- 5) secure sufficient funding to carry out the developmental effort.

Please contact us to support this critical initiative or to request more information!

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