



## Community Impact Awards – 2013 Application

Indicate which Community Impact Award your company is applying for:

I. Education

**In less than 500 words, please describe the initiative(s) that the company has undertaken:**

In 2004, Metro Technology Centers began implementing Character First traits in all classrooms as part of their curriculum. Character First is a program that teaches 49 specific qualities that make up an individual's character. Each month a different character trait is studied by students in Metro Tech classrooms.

One of the reasons Metro Tech decided to implement the Character First program came from suggestions by Advisory Member Committees. Each Metro Tech career program has an Advisory Committee made up of professionals that work in the industry representing that career program. For example, a Creative Director from an Advertising Agency may serve on the committee for the Graphic Design class. These committees meet two or more times a year.

Advisory Committee members are asked what skills should be taught in the classroom to keep students current with industry. They are asked if Metro Tech is teaching the correct skills. Most often, the members were pleased with the trade skills taught by Metro Tech. The problems that employers face in today's market are the soft skills such as punctuality, customer service, responsibility, orderliness or truthfulness.

As a result, the staff at Metro Tech found that the Character First traits were the same traits that employers were looking for in employees. Metro Tech's curriculum staff worked with each teacher to implement Character First traits in their career programs. Each class decides on ways to practice these traits. Most classes study the character trait of the month and have interactive sessions to demonstrate the quality. Some students select a character trait to describe other students who have shown leadership qualities. They use many creative ways to show the importance of good character in school and in the workplace.

Now Metro Technology Centers also requires all support staff to implement the study of the character traits each month in departmental meetings and board meetings. The program applies to all Metro Tech employees and students. Each year Metro Tech gives the "Character" award to an employee demonstrating character first. This is the most prestigious award given at Metro Tech.

**Describe the impact that this has had on the campus or community:**

Please support your response with as much empirical, rather than anecdotal, data as much as possible.

Metro Technology Centers averages 30,000 enrollments each year and around 300 full-time employees. All full-time students and staff learn and practice these traits on a monthly basis. Thousands of Oklahomans are learning to become better workers and ethical citizens.

Each year Metro Tech asks students to complete surveys about skills they have been taught. One of the questions asked on the survey:

“I am taught the skills I need to be successful on the job (teamwork, customer service, dependability, professional dress, work ethics, etc.”

The results have improved considerably in the last seven years.

Fiscal year 2006: 80.1% answered strongly agree/agree

Fiscal year 2013: 90.3% answered strongly agree/agree

This is a 10% increase in the character skills taught to students, since implementing the Character First program in the classroom.

There have been several comments from employers about how happy they are with Metro Tech students they have hired. A letter of recommendation is attached written by a Metro Tech teacher about a former Metro Tech student. This letter testifies to the true character recognized by the employer. The student testifies that he has been successful at this job because of character traits he learned in the classroom at the Public Safety Academy.

**Please scan and attach a letter of recommendation from the campus or community impacted by your company’s outreach.**

Please see the letter and photo attached.