develop enhanced patient education materials that address health care literacy barriers and to conduct outreach efforts through delivery of continuing education for in-home health care providers.

Early Wellmark grant findings show the need for rapid integration of simulation technology into Kirkwood’s health science and continuing education programs. Cutting-edge technology will provide a safe environment for students and professionals to practice and refine basic and high-risk skills, and acquire higher level critical thinking and team-building skills.

Kirkwood’s Customer Contact Training
This is an industry-driven, pre-employment training program designed specifically for careers in the call center industry. Kirkwood received a two-year, $150,000 sectoral grant from DOL’s Education and Training Administration (ETA) to develop and deliver a Customer Contact Training program to address workforce development needs identified by the regional call center industry.

Industry partners include AEGON USA, APAC Teleservices, GE Capital, GEICO Direct, Global Crossing, McLeod USA, Mattel Interactive and Toyota Financial Services. The program’s target population includes individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, low-income, welfare-to-work recipients, dislocated workers, people with disabilities, older workers or new entrants in the labor market. The project partners are playing a significant role in the recruitment and training of program participants, and the placement of program graduates. In addition, the project fostered the establishment of a regional Call Center Industry Group formed by the industry partners with participation by another 10 regional employers.
**ACT/Kirkwood Distance Learning Demonstration Project**

Kirkwood received a two-year, $500,000 grant from DOL’s Education and Training Administration (ETA) to address regional workforce skills gaps through increased access to technology-based education and training programs, and to test the effectiveness of delivering e-learning courseware provided by ACT in Iowa City over Kirkwood’s distance learning system.

Kirkwood’s network of Educational Service Centers is linked by the college’s microwave telecommunications system and by Kirkwood’s wide-area network (WAN). The WAN was upgraded to provide the increased bandwidth required to deliver ACT’s multimedia and interactive software. More than 125 incumbent workers were enrolled in 375 courses offered at Kirkwood’s six rural and two urban Education Service Centers. An incentive discount was provided to companies to encourage investment in workforce training using the new distance learning delivery system.

**IT-Career Edge® Academy Project: Information Systems Management (ISM)**

Kirkwood received a three-year, $728,000 grant supported by H1-B Visa dollars through the Education and Training Administration to establish an Information Systems Management Career Academy. Kirkwood’s partners in this project include 28 area high schools, the Workplace Learning Connection, Region Ten Iowa Workforce Development, and regional employers. More than 560 area high school students are enrolled in the ISM Academy.

The ISM Academy is designed to provide workplace learning experiences for students, and to supplement and reinvigorate area high school business education programs with high quality, industry-driven and technology-enhanced course offerings.

The project has funded over 135 scholarships to qualified students to help them pursue the IT-Career Pathway from high school to college. Participating area high school teachers receive training and on-going support from Kirkwood instructors.

Kirkwood’s future Career Edge® Academy initiatives include the development of a Science Academy in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids high schools with funding support from the National Science Foundation STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program) initiative.