

Office of Community Development
State of Louisiana
Division of Administration

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION

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GOV. EDWARDS ANNOUNCES PRO LOUISIANA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards launched a workforce development program of the [Louisiana Watershed Initiative](#) that will create a workforce skilled in professional resilience occupations, which are critically important in disaster recovery and mitigation efforts.

The first phase of LWI's [PRO Louisiana](#) program, which is coordinated in partnership with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and Louisiana Economic Development, will focus on heavy equipment operator training.



“We’ve awarded more than \$440 million in federal funds to flood mitigation projects statewide that will break ground over the next few years, which means we need trained

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resilience professionals to support these efforts now more than ever,” Gov. Edwards said. “PRO Louisiana highlights the Louisiana Watershed Initiative’s comprehensive approach to flood risk reduction. Going beyond funding mitigation projects throughout the state, we’re starting to prepare a skilled workforce to deliver those projects by filling needed jobs in disaster resilience.”

PRO Louisiana provides federal funding for occupational training courses that are vital to the state's flood recovery and resilience efforts. The goal is to develop a skilled workforce that can support flood risk reduction projects and build Louisiana’s defense against future disasters.

Six colleges are offering PRO Louisiana courses this spring and/or summer: Baton Rouge Community College, Central Louisiana Technical Community College, Louisiana Delta Community College, Northshore Technical Community College, Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College and South Louisiana Community College. Click [here](#) for more details.

The initial courses will provide training for heavy equipment operators, which are in demand and crucial to the success of flood resilience efforts in Louisiana, according to a 2018 labor market analysis by LED and the Louisiana Workforce Commission. PRO Louisiana will support additional courses in the future, such as flood risk analysis and resilient construction methods for builders, contractors and other professionals.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative to provide heavy equipment operator training courses through PRO Louisiana, which will benefit the futures of our students and of our state,” LCTCS President Monty Sullivan said. “Demand for heavy equipment operators is on the rise as our communities recover from previous disasters and prepare for the growing risks of future ones. PRO Louisiana courses will provide the training and skills students need to secure essential, well-paid jobs with a higher purpose: safeguarding our state.”

“Louisiana has the best workforce development training programs in the country, and higher education partnerships that deliver customized training are a big reason why,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said. “By equipping students to perform jobs that support resilience work, PRO Louisiana strengthens our economy in a way that literally rebuilds our state. LED is proud to partner with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System to capitalize on these federal funds and fill the talent pipeline for a growing job sector.”

Tuition assistance may be available for eligible students. For more information about courses and application instructions, click [here](#).

About the Louisiana Watershed Initiative

*Gov. John Bel Edwards established the **Council on Watershed Management** in 2018, which serves as the coordinated, interagency organization at the state level for watershed-based flood risk reduction. The **Louisiana Watershed Initiative** serves as the Council's programmatic arm under which all related efforts operate.*