

## Solution

Instructor-led Training  
for Apprenticeship

## Industry

Power

## Size

23,000+ Employees

## Location

WECC Region

# Utility improves onboarding process and employee retention through enhanced apprenticeship program.

## Challenge

A large WECC region utility was facing challenges with their system operator apprenticeship program. It couldn't get new hires up to speed quickly enough and was experiencing high employee turnover. It was also dealing with some pushback from the union because of perceived inconsistencies in the program.

The two-year apprenticeship program required investment by both the utility and the new hires to prepare them for maintaining BES reliability. The amount of time the training team was spending on the generic and NERC certification components made it harder to focus on the utility-specific information.

The utility decided to turn the generic and NERC training portion of the apprenticeship program over to a third-party vendor, ultimately choosing HSI.

The HSI SMEs' training development and delivery experience provided the extra resources the utility needed to move their program forward.

## Solutions

HSI took on the instructor-led training program, developing and delivering nine classes plus a NERC certification class. The HSI-provided training is generic and delivered in person, except during the pandemic when the program was briefly suspended, then switched seamlessly to distance learning.

The HSI classes complemented the utility's other apprenticeship program components including on-the-job training and training with their proprietary simulator. Trainers also participate in the HSI classes to interject utility-specific information.

Students trained in cohorts of eight to 10. Cohorts are staggered with two apprenticeship programs going simultaneously.

Each HSI class is four days and includes a textbook, quizzes after each section, and a final exam. Classes train on concepts while the utility provides hands-on experience through tasks and simulation.

HSI's comprehensive program ensures a smooth transition from instructors to our robust online training. Since students learn the fundamentals in the previous nine courses, they move quickly through the online NERC training to the NERC certification course to the exam. The program currently has a 100% pass rate for the NERC certification exam.

## Results

The utility is pleased with the training provided and the challenges with the union have lessened. The depth and range of HSI's SME experience means we provide experienced support to the utility training team. HSI's focus on the generic piece enables the utility's trainers to cover the fieldwork and utility-specific information.

Providing a structured training program met the utility's goals of streamlining training and retaining employees. The program is ongoing with the utility recently celebrating the start of their 10th cohort.

### HSI courses include:

- Basic Electricity and Electronics
- Electrical Power System Operations
- Electric Substations
- Transmission Lines
- System Protection
- Generation Renewable Energy
- Operations
- Interconnected System Operations
- System Operating Dynamics
- Emergency Operations, Situational Awareness, and Restoration
- NERC Certification Instructor-led