



Governor Wolf Announces \$2 Million in Strategic Innovation Grants to Promote Workforce Development Initiatives

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Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced the award of \$2 million in reemployment funding to 10 Strategic Innovation grants across the commonwealth to support the state’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.

“These funds promote the development of workforce skills for employees statewide by employing creative and innovative workforce development strategies,” Governor Tom Wolf said. “Strategic Innovation grants not only expand the state’s pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors, but also promote increased employment opportunities for Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment to obtain jobs that pay.”

Approved through the Department of Labor & Industry, Strategic Innovation grants work to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs to the demand side of the labor market, and increase public-private investment in critical skills through multi-employer workforce partnerships.

“Establishing career pathways as a route for career advancement and development provides expanded employment opportunities for commonwealth residents,” said Sec. Manderino. “Engaging employers directly ensures that we can quickly address any skills gaps in order to meet current and future employment needs.”

A \$300,000 grant was awarded to the South Central Workforce Development Board (SCPa Works) to design and implement rigorous, high-quality integrated education and training (IET) programs, which will combine basic-skills instruction with training for a specific occupation or industry, beginning in the fall 2017 semester. SCPa Works will partner with the Lancaster Workforce Development Board, Lancaster-Lebanon IU13, the Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon, Harrisburg Area Community College, and the Career and Technology Centers in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. This project will target education and training programs in Lancaster and Lebanon counties for occupations designated “high priority,” and where data indicates higher dropout rates from training programs.

“The integrated education and training (IET) model is a promising practice across the country that we believe will greatly benefit South Central Pennsylvania residents,” said Chief Executive Officer of SCPa Works Jesse McCree. “By providing adult education and literacy services concurrently with contextual workforce preparation activities, we can help build strong career pathways that leads to better economic mobility.”

For a full list of grantees and brief summaries of the funded projects, visit

<http://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/grants/Documents/2017%20Strategic%20Innovation%20Grant%20Awardees.pdf>.

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Following is a list of Strategic Innovation grant winners and amounts awarded by local workforce development boards:

Berks County Workforce Development Board – A \$195,000 grant was awarded to provide entry and intermediate-level skills to adult job seekers with barriers to employment, and underemployed workers.

Chester County Workforce Development Board – A \$240,000 grant was awarded to the Internship Institute to hire veterans as its "TrainingCorps," who then train employers and recruit interns.

Delaware County Workforce Development Board – A \$198,067 grant was awarded to utilize virtual and augmented reality to provide important instructional experiences for an ever-expanding list of fields that include healthcare, skilled trades, advanced manufacturing, and advanced technology.

Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board – A \$70,000 grant was awarded to improve basic skills and prepare individuals to take and pass the apprenticeship exam and interview; make apprenticeship programs more accessible to youth, women, minorities, dislocated workers, and under employed adults; and, promote the diverse benefits of skilled, technical careers in Northeast Pennsylvania.

North Central Workforce Development Board – A \$170,000 grant was awarded to provide training to 75 participants that will lead to an industry recognized credential and work-based learning, or employment.

Northern Tier Workforce Development Board – A \$139,000 grant was awarded to assist individuals who have been disengaged from the workforce due to incarceration, or other barriers contributing to long-term unemployment, in gaining the skills and tools needed to be productive and successful in their community.

Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board – A \$177,933 grant was awarded to provide 90 participants with an opportunity to earn a total of five industry recognized credentials, including three industry recognized and portable professional certifications from the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.

South Central Workforce Development Board – A \$300,000 grant was awarded to build an integrated education and training model in South Central Pennsylvania, which will combine basic skills instruction with training for a specific occupation or industry, beginning in the fall 2017 semester.

Three Rivers Workforce Development Board – A \$210,000 grant was awarded to launch individuals into viable careers in technology by providing initial short-term training that results in job placement and provide support to the new hires to continue gaining more expertise and employment stability through additional educational credentials.

Tri-County Workforce Development Board – A \$300,000 grant was awarded to foster career pathway development in manufacturing and health care utilizing basic industry skills and pre-apprenticeship training to create two employer councils (one for each industry), which will be responsible for creating a career pathway to lead from basic skills training for entry-level employment to training needs for advanced positions.

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