

2017 Strategic Innovation Grant Awardees

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry awarded 11 entities Strategic Innovation Grants to support the commonwealth's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. The grants support Governor Wolf's vision of "jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works" by encouraging creativity and innovation in achieving one or both of the following goals for workforce development depicted in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

- Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential and degree attainment, and provide all Pennsylvanians an opportunity to a job that pays.
- Expand the state's pipeline of workers for targeted industry sectors from entry level skills to middle skills through Industry Partnerships, WEDnetPA, and other innovative strategies.
- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and other similar experiences.
- Engage employers directly to ensure we are closing the skills gap, and are able to more quickly upskill or reskill the workforce to meet the current and future needs.
- Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to understand education and employment outcomes and more effectively evaluate our efforts.

Grants were awarded utilizing state Reemployment Fund resources. A list of grantees and brief summaries of their projects follows.

Applicant	Amount
Berks County Workforce Development Board	\$ 195,000.00
Chester County Workforce Development Board	\$ 240,000.00
Delaware County Workforce Development Board	\$ 198,067.00
Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board	\$ 70,000.00
North Central Workforce Development Board	\$ 170,000.00
Northern Tier Workforce Development Board	\$ 139,000.00
Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board	\$ 177,933.00
South Central Workforce Development Board	\$ 300,000.00
Three Rivers Workforce Development Board	\$ 210,000.00
Tri-County Workforce Development Board	\$ 300,000.00
TOTAL	\$2,000,000.00

Grantee: Berks County Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Crescent Regional Industry Sector Partnership Pathways to Middle Class "Jobs that Pay"

Amount Awarded: \$195,000

Location: Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh and Northampton Counties

Project Summary: The Crescent Regional Industry Sector Partnership Pathways to Middle Class "Jobs that Pay" will implement the likely to succeed approaches outlined in a recently-published CRISP regional Sector Strategy Report for the upskilling of adult job seekers with barriers to employment, and underemployed workers to provide these individuals with the entry and intermediate-level skills necessary to enter occupations that provide opportunities for career growth and a family sustaining wage. This project will enable regional employers to more quickly fill existing and future openings for skilled candidates with industry recognized qualifications with a special focus in the Food Processing & Manufacturing Industries.

Grantee: Chester County Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: The Internship Institute - Veteran TrainingCorps

Amount Awarded: \$240,000

Location: Bucks and Chester Counties

Project Summary: The Internship Institute is the certifying body of internship quality. TII's model is to hire veterans as its "TrainingCorps" who train employers and recruit interns. TII's TrainingCorps veterans help employers set up successful, high-caliber internship programs by applying a proven innovative, industry-driven approach called Internship Seeding. Those internships subsequently create job pathways for more veterans, stepping stones for non-veteran students and upward mobility for others in work transition. The purpose of this funding is to enable TII's TrainingCorps and Internship Seeding Initiative to bring to fruition current initiatives in Bucks County and expand the program into Chester County. TII's overarching goal is to make its TrainingCorps veteran employment program self-sustainable and enable it to replicate and scale the initiative across the Commonwealth.

Grantee: Delaware County Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Advancing High-Demand Occupation Education and Training Through Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality Applications

Amount Awarded: \$198,067

Location: Chester and Delaware Counties

Project Summary: The focus of this project is to utilize virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to provide important instructional experiences for an ever-expanding list of fields that include healthcare, skilled trades, advanced manufacturing, and advanced technology.

Grantee: Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: The Northeast PA Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative II

Amount Awarded: \$70,000

Location: Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne and Wyoming Counties

Project Summary: The Northeast PA Pre-Apprenticeship Initiative II is an established program that connects young adults, women, minorities, dislocated workers, and under employed adults of our communities to the opportunities and career pathways in the Building and Construction Trades and manufacturing. Four outcomes of this initiative are:

improve basic skills and prepare individuals to take and pass the apprenticeship exam and interview; provide qualified applicants to the Trades and manufacturing apprenticeship programs; 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.

Grantee: North Central Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Careers that Work II - Implementing a Customer Centered Design Challenge in North Central Pennsylvania

Amount Awarded: \$170,000

Location: Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter Counties

Project Summary: Careers that Work II will engage partners in the Customer Centered Design methodology by challenging them to design training and workforce delivery programs with the customer in the center of the design. Projects will serve a total of 75 participants with training that will lead to an industry recognized credential and work-based learning or employment.

Grantee: Northern Tier Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Northern Tier Fit4Work Reengagement Project

Amount Awarded: \$139,000

Location: Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties

Project Summary: The Northern Tier Fit4Work Reengagement Project will assist individuals with barriers in gaining the skills and tools needed to be productive and successful in employment and their community. The focus will be on individuals who have been disengaged from the workforce due to incarceration or other barriers contributing to long-term unemployment. This project will provide assistance to individuals in overcoming barriers to establish a recent work history and develop foundational and work readiness skills to gain employment while simultaneously working with employers to provide a skilled, reliable workforce to meet their needs.

Grantee: Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Northeast PA Regional Consortium Strategic Innovation - Bridge to Employment (START)

Amount Awarded: \$177,933

Location: Carbon, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne Counties

Project Summary: The Skills, Tasks, and Results Training (START) program provides participants with the 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 (AHLEI). The project is expected to serve 90 participants with 72 participants completing training. Of those completing training, 65 participants will either enter employment or continue their education by enrolling in credit-bearing programs at their local educational institution.

Grantee: South Central Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Building an Integrated Education and Training (IET) Model in South Central Pennsylvania

Amount Awarded: \$300,000

Location: Lancaster and Lebanon Counties

Project Summary: SCPa Works proposes to partner with the Lancaster WDB, Lancaster-Lebanon IU13, the Literacy Council of Lancaster Lebanon, Harrisburg Area Community College, and the Career and Technology Centers in Lancaster

and Lebanon Counties 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. This project will target education and training programs in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties for occupations designated “high priority” (HPOs) and where data indicates higher dropout rates from training programs.

Grantee: Three Rivers Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Tech Hire II

Amount Awarded: \$210,000

Location: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington and Westmoreland Counties

Project Summary: The purpose of TechHire is to launch individuals into viable careers in technology. We achieve this by a staged approach: first by providing initial short-term training that results in job placement and also by cultivating strong learning capabilities, as only life-long learners can succeed in the rapidly changing tech occupations. Second, we provide support to the new hires to continue gaining more expertise and employment stability through additional educational credentials. The collaborative nature of our project ensures that the training is employer-driven, so that the skills participants learn are applicable for real-world scenarios. We also work directly with employers to make sure that the boot camp training translates into jobs. Our partnership with regional educational institutions also enables participants to seek academic credit for their training and further their education.

Grantee: Tri-County Workforce Development Board

Grant Title: Career Pathway Development in Manufacturing and Health Care utilizing Basic Industry Skills/Pre-Apprenticeship Training

Amount Awarded: \$300,000

Location: Armstrong, Butler, Indiana, Lawrence and Mercer Counties

Project Summary: The Project for Career Pathway Development in Manufacturing and Health Care Utilizing Basic Industry Skills/Pre-Apprenticeship Training will 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 with employment and additional educational options along the path. Targeted clusters will include advanced manufacturing and health care. In addition, the councils will develop a screening and assessment process for possible participants as well as developing curriculum for basic industry skills training. Tri-County and West Central Workforce Development Boards will procure the basic industry skills/pre-apprenticeship training.