

City's Renewed Commitment to Workforce Development, Including \$1 Million for Innovative Workforce Solutions

In the fall of 2020, the Commerce Department's Office of Workforce Development released a Call for Ideas seeking proposals for the new Workforce Solutions Grant. The goal was to identify innovative solutions that address workforce challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by long-standing racial injustice.

Through the Workforce Solutions Grant, the City of Philadelphia is investing \$1 million in organizations and programs that will intentionally identify, elevate, and address the specific challenges Black, brown, and other historically disadvantaged residents face when preparing for and entering the workforce.

Organizations Awarded Funding

The four organizations selected to receive funding through the Workforce Solutions Grant are: Drexel University's Goodwin College of Professional Studies, EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.), Philadelphia Energy Authority, and the Urban League of Philadelphia. These efforts are scheduled to begin in February 2021.

- Drexel University's Goodwin College of Professional Studies (Drexel-Goodwin) will use the funds to launch a Manufacturing Career Accelerator Program (MCAP), which is built upon the successful 2017 Manufacturing Industry Bootcamp. MCAP is comprised of three 7-week skill building and certification trainings that will prepare unemployed and incumbent workers for long-term, high wage, middle-skill careers in manufacturing. The program will recruit candidates for three sessions—in March, May, and July—who have been displaced by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn. There will be a specific effort to recruit women and people of color.
- The Urban League of Philadelphia (ULP) will utilize the funds to expand their Urban Tech 3.0 (UT3) program. In 2018, ULP began partnering with JobWorks, Inc., a national workforce development organization, to adapt their proprietary TechWorks program model to support ULP's strategic priorities around Information Technology (IT) workforce diversification. TechWorks prepares individuals with minimal IT experience for in-demand, higher-paying technology jobs. Through an intensive boot camp program, participants can earn four industry-recognized certifications and

connect to job opportunities that pay nearly \$18 per hour on average. Urban Tech 3.0 strengthens and expands on the TechWorks program with the addition of training stipends and a tech fellowship.

- Philadelphia Energy Authority will utilize the funds to develop and launch the new [Green Retrofit Immersive Training \(GRIT\) Program](#), which has three core components: an 11-week hybrid training including hands-on labs, a 6-week internship rehabilitating affordable housing units, and placement into living wage jobs with contractors performing green home retrofits. GRIT participants will receive a weekly \$400 stipend for full participation in the training and internship. The program is recruiting now in partnership with the Philadelphia Unemployment Project. Interested candidates can email evao@ecasys.org to learn more about how to apply.
- EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.) will use the funds to develop a new Multi-generational Program, which aims to address the needs of both children and parents, with the goal of creating opportunities and better outcomes for families. EDSI's Multi-generational Program will provide training and assistance to parents to obtain employment at a minimum of \$13.25 an hour for a full-time job. This program will enroll 10 families in each cohort lasting eight-weeks with online activities four days a week: parents will attend the Customer Service Bootcamp and the BuildEd virtual program to promote an entrepreneurial mindset, while students will participate in online tutoring and activities with older students attending career exploration and BuildEd sessions.

Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment

The Workforce Solutions Grant is a key initiative of the City's overall economic recovery strategy that seeks to address the impact of the pandemic on both businesses and workers, especially Black and brown residents that have been disproportionately affected.

Through the Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment, the City and its workforce development partners will help foster sustainable, living-wage jobs while working to bring unemployment down to January 2020 levels—which were historic lows for Philadelphia. There will also be an intentional focus on decreasing racial and ethnic disparities in unemployment.

To achieve these goals, key initiatives across two main categories will be implemented to help:

1. Directly connect residents to employment opportunities today.

- Through the Workforce Solutions Grant, four organizations will receive a total of \$1 million to accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to supporting un- and under- employed Philadelphians prepare for and connect to sustainable career pathways that pay a living wage.
- Utilize the PA CareerLink® Philadelphia System to expand access to quality employment
- Engage targeted employer partnerships to support local employers with hiring Philadelphians to fill positions that pay a living wage.
- Through [PIDC's Navy Yard Workforce Development Initiatives \(NYWDI\)](#), create training programs that connect high-potential South Philadelphia residents to permanent employment with Navy Yard employers.

2. Position Philadelphia as a talent hub for the future.

- Expand Industry Partnerships that convene multiple employers to align on talent development needs, challenges, and solutions.
- Implement Career Connected Learning—a collaborative effort by the Department of Commerce, Office of Children and Families, Philadelphia Works, and the School District of Philadelphia—to engage employers to design and provide career-connected opportunities for public high school students.
- Through the [PHL Most Diverse Tech Hub initiative](#), invest \$500,000 in programs and ideas that enhance technology skills for the future talent pipeline, helping to make Philadelphia one of the top—and most diverse—tech hubs in the nation.
- Through the Philadelphia Skills Forward Initiative, a partnership that incentivizes employers to invest in talent and expand resources and opportunities for residents.

The Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment is a collaborative effort by the City, led by the Department of Commerce, along with its workforce development partners including Philadelphia Works and PIDC. The 2021 Commitment builds upon critical work initiated by previous workforce development efforts outlined in:

- [Fueling Philadelphia's Talent Engine](#) (2018)
- [Growing with Equity: Philadelphia's Vision for Inclusive Growth](#) (2019)
- [Respond Restart Recharge Reimagine: An Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery for Philadelphia](#) (2020)

>>[Read the full Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment](#)<<