

Two Philadelphia-area Organizations Earn National Recognition for Youth Career Programs

Philadelphia Works Named a Finalist for “Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge”

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The New York City-based Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education) has named nonprofit Philadelphia Works a finalist for its “Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge.” Philadelphia Works, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, the City’s Commerce Department, and the Office of Children and Families will receive \$3,000 to enhance its Career Connected Learning (CCL) system. This improved system will allow young people to find thousands of internships, jobs, and career preparation programs in the Philadelphia area.

“Philadelphia Works is very excited to win a grant from the ‘Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge,’” said Kimberly McCaffrey, manager of the youth workforce system at Philadelphia Works. “CCL systems support large-scale efforts to engage middle and high school students in meaningful on-the-job experiences, and ultimately, connect graduates to next steps towards jobs that pay a living wage and provide career advancement opportunities.”

The CCL System will streamline the thousands of career opportunities in Philadelphia. The online platform makes it easier for young people to find a wide range of internships and jobs from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

“Young people in Philadelphia are having a hard time connecting to job opportunities because of the lack of awareness that’s available to them,” said Timothy Perry, a former intern at Philadelphia Works. “They often don’t have the time to learn about new opportunities. The CCL system puts the information in one place, making it easier to bridge the gap between young people and employers.”

GBC-Education also named [The Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) in Camden, New Jersey a finalist for the “Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge.” TPL and the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority will create the city’s first high school workforce school yard at Mastery Charter High School. The site will be an outdoor learning environment to support the school’s goals of becoming a green job incubator. This is another way that the Challenge is supporting 21st century job skills.

The “Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge” honors teams for their bold, innovative ideas that equip young people to participate in the workforce. It helps solve an urgent problem: in

the U.S., one in ten young people is not in school and not employed—a total of four million youth. These young people are badly needed in the workforce. The most recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed 11.3 million job openings—a near record high—with openings increasing in many sectors including service and manufacturing.

“Cities and businesses across the country are struggling to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They must attract young, diverse workers who are excited by the innovation and energy of urban centers,” said Justin van Fleet, Executive Director of GBC-Education. “To jump start these efforts, cities need to re-imagine how they can create ecosystems allowing young people to gain the skills they need for meaningful employment. That’s exactly what Philadelphia Works, the Trust for Public Land, and other teams have done. Their ideas are tremendously inspiring.”

The winning team is from Greensboro, North Carolina. Philadelphia Works and TPL are part of a select group of 14 finalists from across the country. Together, these organizations will form a nationwide community of practice of changemakers. Over the course of the next year, this network will share best practices and connect with business leaders and policymakers invested in youth skills development efforts. This will allow their ideas to grow, succeed, and inspire others. **Learn more about the “Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge” and see the full list of winners and finalists [here](https://newsroom.philaworks.org/2022-04-27-Two-Philadelphia-area-Organizations-Earn-National-Recognition-for-Youth-Career-Programs).**

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