

NEWS AND EVENTS

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Contact: Kevin Lessard, kevin.lessard@phila.gov

Four organizations awarded \$1 million from Workforce Solutions Grant for innovative solutions to support un- and under-employed Philadelphians.

Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment lays out strategy to advance equitable workforce development opportunities and align resources to lift Philadelphians out of poverty.

PHILADELPHIA — The City of Philadelphia’s Department of Commerce—in partnership with Philadelphia’s economic and workforce development partners—today announced a renewed strategic commitment to address workforce challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and that have been exacerbated by long-standing racial inequity and injustice. In alignment with this commitment, the City, through the Workforce Solutions Grant, also announced an investment of \$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.

Through the Workforce Solutions Grant, the City sought proposals from organizations which were evaluated on their ability to identify and accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to supporting un- and under-employed Philadelphians. These organizations will serve local job seekers to prepare for and connect to sustainable career pathways that pay a living wage. The Workforce Solutions Grant is one piece of the City’s commitment to workforce development in 2021.

“During the past year, the pandemic, unemployment crisis, and civil unrest from our country’s racial reckoning have affected all residents, but the challenges we face today are also an opportunity to change course and work harder to deliver true equity for all Philadelphians,” said Mayor Jim Kenney. “The City looks forward to working with the organizations doing critical work in identifying short- and long-term solutions to the many challenges that face our workforce in the difficult months ahead.”

Organizations Awarded Funding

The following four organizations have been selected to receive funding through the Workforce Solutions Grant, with efforts to begin in February 2021:

- **Drexel University’s Goodwin College of Professional Studies** will use the funds to launch a Manufacturing Career Accelerator Program (MCAP), which is built upon the successful 2017 Manufacturing Industry Bootcamp specifically designed to create access to manufacturing careers for low-skilled adults in Philadelphia. Drexel-Goodwin was awarded \$246,000 for this work.

- **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. The Urban League of Philadelphia was awarded \$253,763 for this work.
- **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. The Philadelphia Energy Authority was awarded \$250,000 for this work.
- **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. EDSI was awarded \$250,000 for this work.

More information about the efforts these organizations are undertaking using funding from the Workforce Solutions Grant is [available online](#).

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.

The **Workforce Respond and Recharge 2021 Commitment** lays out the core focuses of the City—along with workforce development partners PIDC and Philadelphia Works—for advancing equitable workforce development opportunities for residents and aligning resources to lift Philadelphians out of poverty.

“The past year has been incredibly difficult for workers and has elevated crucial discussions about the future of work, which is why the City remains committed to helping prepare Philadelphia residents for careers that can sustain families while bridging the gap between employers, workforce providers, and residents to foster a thriving, equitable workforce full of opportunity,” said Michael Rashid, Commerce Director for the City of Philadelphia. “We’re very grateful to the many organizations we consulted with to develop these initiatives, including City Council, local Chambers of Commerce, anchor institutions, employer partners, community organizations, and workforce development providers.”

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 through one-on-one advising, events, and more.
- 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), and [Respond Restart Recharge Reimagine: An Equitable and Inclusive Economic Recovery for Philadelphia](#) (2020).

###

[VIEW ALL POSTS](#)

