

March 2025 NWSA Job Connect Board Staff Report

Apprenticeship Day 2025

There will be a single National Apprenticeship Day on April 30th. The weeklong celebration will resume in 2026. Suggestions for this day include graduation ceremonies, social media campaigns, call-to-action, career fairs, signing days, etc.). Staff are currently working with Title 1 Apprenticeship Navigators along with Operations to plan for this day. Please share any thoughts or ideas you have for the celebration this year with Lisa S.

The PA Apprenticeship Annual Report - 2024 Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Council Chairperson's Report.

Interesting Apprenticeship Statistics & Trends from the report (page 14).

- The number of apprenticeship programs registered annually has steadily increased from 18 in 2022, 32 in 2023, and 42 in 2024. This is an increase of 133% from the 18 programs registered in 2022 to the 42 programs registered in 2024.
- New apprentices registered grew from 4,693 in 2022 to 5,766 in 2023, and 6,021 in 2024 - a 28.3% increase from 2022 to 2024.
- Based on data from the 2023 and 2024 federal fiscal year report and compared to other states in our region (Federal Apprenticeship Region 2: Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia) PA leads in the number of active apprentices, new apprentices, and apprenticeship completers.
- In Federal Fiscal Year 2024, Pennsylvania was 3rd In the U.S. for Apprentices Completed, 11th for Active Apprentices, and 10th for number of New Registered Apprentices.
- The average journey worker wage for the top 20 apprenticed occupations was \$24.39.
- The number of new sector apprenticeship programs is growing fast. In 2024, the number of Healthcare programs increased by 15%, Technology programs increased by 8.6%, Agriculture Programs increased by 75%, Education programs increased by 30.7%, Transportation programs increased by 17.6%, and Hospitality and Tourism programs increased by 26%.
- Fourteen occupations were registered for the first time in Pennsylvania in 2024. Ten of those occupations were registered for the first time in the nation.
- Apprentices in new sectors continued to grow in 2024. The number of new agricultural apprentices increased 6.6%, new education apprentices increased by 16.4%, new technology apprentices increased by 35%, new transportation apprentices increased by 160%, and new hospitality and tourism apprentices increased by 62.5%.
- The number of female apprentices continues to grow from 7.1% of all apprentices in 2022, 10.4% in 2023, and 14.3% of all apprentices in 2024.
- There were 14 new Pre-Apprenticeship programs registered in 2024, a 6% increase from 2023 to 2024.
- The manufacturing sector led the way with 36% of 2024 registered pre-apprenticeship program additions. Pre-Apprenticeship programs in the Technology sector also increased by 38% in 2024."

Conversation With PA Dept Labor and Industry Secretary Walker

On March 3rd, Secretary Nancy Walker from the PA Department of Labor & Industry, held a virtual meeting with the Northwest Workforce Region. Present for the meeting included Local Workforce Development Board members and staff, Labor & Industry employees, Operator and CareerLink® partners, along with other representatives from the area.

Highlights of the meeting included what is working well for workforce in the Northwest region – the Uniquely Able Academy, resources for those with barriers to employment, collaborations/partnerships, braiding of funding, and Apprenticeships/Pre-Apprenticeships were a few of the successes that were named. Career exploration, training and focusing on youth as upcoming workers were also discussed.

Secretary Walker asked attendees what some of the barriers or challenges that exist pertinent to employment. Housing was brought up - limited housing stock has a direct impact on companies who are recruiting talent. Transportation barriers – no public transportation in the rural areas, bus schedules which do not correspond with manufacturing/business hours and carpooling. Some possible solutions and options were explored that may be viable in the future.

The limited funding of Careers and Technical Centers and the impact this has on students and the workforce was discussed. Increased funding is needed to eliminate wait lists, so all students can attend programs. Initiatives to further develop and expand workforce using state and federal grants was outlined along with the need for continued discretionary grant funding. The future of manufacturing and healthcare in the region included talk about what best practices can be implemented.

New Rapid Response Coordinator

Sheila Berry is the new Rapid Response Coordinator who will be covering the NW and WC Workforce areas. Her contact information is Sheila R. Berry, Rapid Response Coordinator, Rapid Response Services PA Department of Labor & Industry | Workforce Partnership & Operations. Office location - PA CareerLink® Mercer County, 217 West State Street, Sharon, PA 16146. Office: 724-347-9257 X 103 | Fax: 724-983-5701 and email: sheberry@pa.gov. Welcome Sheila!

Unemployment Compensation

Website www.uc.pa.gov.

SkillUp

Over 6000 free courses are available that focus on behind the walls, schools, youth, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships. If anyone is interested in having a SkillUp demonstration or has an organization that is interested in having a demonstration, please let Keith Knauff of PA CareerLink® know keith.knauff@nwpacareerlink.org

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA) Conference

This year, in addition to a number of Board Staff attending the PWDA conference, the Northwest is privileged to have one (1) Board Member, Jessica Hansford, and one (1) of our partners, Mary Bula, attending PDWA as presenters.

Jessica Hansford, Board member and Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Clarion Psychiatric Center will be presenting at the PWDA conference in a breakout session on Mental Health in the Workplace. 80.6% of individuals with a mental disorder are among working-age individuals, and workplace stress has been identified as one of the biggest sources of employee anxiety and depression. Employees are the largest investment a business makes. Struggles with mental health have been shown to directly impact absenteeism and employee turnover. It is important for the modern workplace to implement structure and training for leadership to support mental wellness. The session will provide some background on mental illness, discuss important elements of a workplace that promotes mental wellness and provide basic interventions appropriate for the workplace.

Mary Bula, Erie Together Executive Director and partner with NWPA Job Connect through the BEP grant, was selected to present a workshop at the upcoming PWDA conference. The workshop will focus on the Erie County Career Pathways Alliance (ECCPA)'s work and the notable outcomes that can be achieved when cross-sector stakeholders align around career readiness. The workshop will articulate the composition of the ECCPA, and the group's evolution, impact, and lessons learned. It will showcase the roles of key partners, including NWPA Job Connect, educators, employers, and others, to provide effective career exploration experiences and develop a career pathways system better preparing youth for the workforce and helping meet employer needs.

NWPA Job Connect is an active participant in the ECCPA, serving on the Leadership Team, providing relevant data to inform its programming, and partnering to secure critical funding to bring employers together with educators for important dialogue, to execute high quality career exploration experiences, and to develop timely and relevant career-based informational resources.



Save the Date
April 24, 2025

Mark your calendar now for the Ribbon Cutting & Campaign Celebration to be held on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at the Education & Training Center at Pitt-Titusville. The event will be held in the J. Curtis McKinney II Student Union from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Join us and experience the newly renovated Student Union, featuring the new Manufacturing Assistance Center, makerspace, and digital arts studio.

Invitations will be sent closer to the date.

Local News

NWIRC – is holding a ‘Driving Impact for Manufacturers 2025’ (DIFM25) conference on March 25th at the Bayfront Convention Center to promote manufacturers in our service area. This event will have a big workforce related focus. The information and registration can be found at: <https://nwirc.org/difm25-manufacturing-conference/>

Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) – The original group who met in October 2024 met again on January 24, 202 at Marquette in Erie with a hybrid option. The original group included: regional bank reps, PA CareerLink®, board staff, FDIC, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland representatives, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) representatives and EARN. The January meeting had a representative from DCED who spoke on the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) and explored Financial Empowerment Center models, banking career pathways, and workshop collaboration. We are thankful for the willingness of this group to continue working on initiatives that will help the workforce of the region to be financially enabled.

Opioid Grant Project ECHO – Informative virtual sessions are available to support employees with a substance use disorder and how to support recovery in the workplace for both employers and employees to be successful. This is a series of eight (8) sessions - held every other Tuesday from 8-9am. The series starts February 15th - May 20th. A Coaching series has also begun relative to staff working directly with those with substance abuse disorders. For information on either session, please contact Lisa Stalnaker.

St. Benedict Education Center (SBEC) - Monitoring update – the official report for PY 2023-2024 has not been received yet. No issues are anticipated.

SNAP 50/50 - ended on December 31st. This was a specialized SNAP program, not ran by SBEC. Since it ended, participants are now eligible for SNAP EARN and will be coming to SBEC. SBEC is working with all three (3) counties for a smooth transition for the participants. In Erie, SBEC is working with the CAO and ECAT to get them transferred to SBEC. Crawford and Venango also have some participants who will now come to SBEC.

NWPA Job Connect Grant Updates

1. **Business Education Partnership (BEP) 2022** – Erie Together continues creating/distributing videos reflecting the skilled trades industries that focus on middle schoolers/historically underserved population groups. The videos can be found on the NWPA Job Connect website. TV segments are also being aired with the videos. The UAA program cohorts for Crawford and Erie have begun.
2. **Apprenticeship Building America Grant (ABA)**: The grant continues to support the increase and expansion of RAP and Pre-RAP opportunities to diverse populations in the area.
3. **Opioid 2023 NDWG (Disaster Recovery NDWG to address the Opioid Crisis)**: The application was awarded from L & I to deliver in-location Title I employment services in residential and community-based locations. Title 1 is in the process of recruiting for the TDS position that is required for the grant.
4. **BEP 2024** - NWIRC will produce 15 manufacturing Virtual Reality tours; work with 15 schools in Warren, Clarion, Venango, Forest, Crawford County; 1,800 students will participate in classroom presentations, receive flyers with video QR and receive 2,000 video views. [Manufacturing Virtual Tours for Students - NWIRC](#) for information on their

website. Erie Together will: reach 100 students from across eight (8) Erie County school districts; attract at least 25 employers to participate in the project and offer one or more career exploration career ready skills development experiences; successfully develop a Profile of a Graduate (POG) Activity Book and Assessment for use by parents, caregivers and others; translate the POG into multiple commonly spoken languages in Erie County; collect data from participating students regarding awareness of high priority and/or in-demand occupations and understanding/development of career ready skills; use the Career Street platform to track data related to the planned performance outcomes. More information can be found on this project at [Skilled Trades — Erie Together](#).

Grant Announcements

1. **Manufacturing PA Training-to-Career Grant Program** (DCED). Applications for up to \$200k are accepted until the funding is exhausted. Grants support projects that result in short-term work-readiness, job placement, or the advancement of the manufacturing industry. Email was sent to schools, CTEs and Training Providers.
2. **Supporting Pennsylvania's Advanced Manufacturing Sector through Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships** - This initiative will support the development and expansion of RAs and Pre-RAs in the manufacturing sector. Option 1: New RA and Pre-RA programs in the manufacturing sector. Option 2: Increasing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in existing RA and Pre-RA programs in manufacturing. Awards will be made as \$1,200,000 for new projects and \$800,000 for existing projects. Email was sent to CTEs and Training Providers.
3. **Supporting Certified Teacher Registered Apprenticeship (CTRA) Programs in Pennsylvania** - to support schools throughout the Commonwealth facing significant barriers to staffing qualified teachers by providing funds to schools and districts to support the creation of CTRA programs under the guidance of the Apprenticeship Training Office (ATO). The CTRA programs will utilize the framework(s) designed under the "Building and Supporting a Certified Teacher Apprenticeship Program" grant initiative and will be in alignment with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's outlined Educator Workforce Strategy. The grant will competitively award up to \$400,000 to support the development of a new CTRA program(s) serving one (1) Local Education Agency (LEA) or school district and up to \$600,000 can be awarded to eligible grantees with the intent to serve two (2) or more LEAs or school districts in developing new CTRA programs. The deadline was February 14, 2025. Emailed to schools, CTEs and Training Providers.
4. **Digital Connectivity Technology (Technology) Program** - This program utilized \$20 million of the \$279 million in the Capital Projects Fund that were allocated to Pennsylvania through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. Recipients include libraries, municipalities, workforce training organizations, not-for-profit organizations, other community anchor institutions, in areas where affordability is a barrier. The PBDA will open a second round of the Technology Program beginning April 1, 2025, to distribute the remaining laptops. In preparation for this second round, there will be two webinars which will provide an overview of the program, review FAQs, and outline any updates to the guidelines. Additional information for these webinars is provided in the attached flyer. Should you have additional questions or needs, please contact the PBDA at pbda_capitalprojectsfund@pa.gov. This information was shared with Libraries and Training Providers/Schools and WDB email groups.

5. **Appalachian Regional Commission Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE)** – Letters of Intent Required by February 14. The federal Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provides funding to assist in substance use recovery programs that focus on re-entry into the workforce. Eligible applicants are local public and nonprofit organizations located in the counties served by the ARC. Two types of awards given: 1) Up to \$500,000 for three-year implementation grants, and 2) Up to \$100,000 for 18-month planning grants. More information can be found at: <https://www.arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/inspire-initiative-application-information/>. Emailed to CLEOs, WDB, Economic Development and Erie County.
6. **Supporting PA's Healthcare Sector through RAs and Pre-RAs.** The notice of grant availability (NGA) for Supporting PA's Healthcare Sector through RAs and Pre-RAs offers eligible applicants the opportunity to serve as sponsors or intermediaries of new RAs or Pre-RAs. Additionally, the NGA offers the opportunity for expansion of existing RAs and Pre-RAs. Approximately \$2, 000,000 in funding is available with a maximum award amount between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The deadline to apply is February 28th. All components required for the grant submission can be found within the NGA and the related appendices at the following link: <https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dli/documents/businesses/workforce-development/grants/documents/healthcare-sector/healthcare-sector-nga.pdf>. Emailed to training providers and WDB.
7. **Supporting PA's IT Sector through RAs and Pre-RAs** offers eligible applicants the opportunity to serve as sponsors or intermediaries of new RA and Pre-RAs. Additionally, the NGA offers the opportunity for expansion of existing RAs and Pre-RAs. Approximately \$2, 000,000 in funding is available with a maximum award amount between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The deadline to apply is February 28th. All components required for the grant submission can be found in the following link: [https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dli/programs-services/workforce-development-home/grant-opportunities.html#accordion-c2752036a9-item-e061eff760~:text=The%20application%20deadline,Q%26A%20\(PDF\)](https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dli/programs-services/workforce-development-home/grant-opportunities.html#accordion-c2752036a9-item-e061eff760~:text=The%20application%20deadline,Q%26A%20(PDF)). Emailed to training providers and WDB.
8. **WalkWorks Active Transportation Planning Program.** Municipalities and metropolitan and rural planning organizations. Priority will be given to communities located in PA DOH State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) priority counties or with an overall percentile rating above 60 in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) PennEnviroScreen Tool. The 10 current SPAN target counties are: Clearfield, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mercer, Northumberland, and Philadelphia. Funds will be available to a limited number of MPO/RPO, municipal, and/or multi-municipal applicants to assist with the development of a plan, which will identify and prioritize projects related to modes of active transportation with an emphasis on walking, biking, using a wheelchair, and accessing public transit. Grantees in priority areas can receive up to \$50,000. Grantees in non-priority areas can receive up to \$25,000. Deadline: March 21st and more information can be found on the DOH website. Emailed to CATA and Erie County.

Letters of Support were given to the following:

1. Northwest Industrial Resource Center - PA Manufacturing Training to Career – Expansion Grant for ‘Manufacturing Talent Stream’.
2. Titusville Area School District’s application for a PA Manufacturing Training to Career - Expansion Grant.
3. IU 5 – Supporting Certified Teachers Apprentices.
4. PA Department of Labor & Industry - Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Office’s Year 3 State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant application.

Awarded Grants from Partnerships/Letters of Support

1. Erie High School’s grant proposal for six (6) Lincoln Electric Power Wave 300C multi-Purpose Welders to be housed at the Erie High School Welding Technology/Welder Program. The use of the machines will allow students to earn additional industry certifications and gain training time on machines for entry level employment. In addition, an increased number of students will be able to use machines that meet the current task grid and CIP. The certifications earned align with the current in demand occupations list (IDOL) and will assist local employers in meeting the increased need for employees in this field. The program CIP is 48.0508 and graduates obtain SOC 51-4121 Welder status. The grant total is for one (1) table that those programs will share with the total cost at \$106,000.

PA CareerLink®

Title I Contact: PA CareerLink® Shawn Waskiewicz, Shawn.Waskiewicz@nwpacareerlink.org

Social Media Platforms

PA CareerLink® [Facebook:](#)

NWPA Job Connect [Facebook:](#)

NWPA Job Connect [LinkedIn:](#)

Workshops

Visit the NWPA Job Connect [website](#) for upcoming workshops and public access locations.

PA CareerLink® Centers

Temporary Erie Mobile Location: 450 East 16th Street, Erie, PA. 830-4pm M-F

Erie Main Office
1647 Sassafras St
Erie, PA 16502

814-455-9966 | TTY: 814-871-4610

Oil Region Main Office
255 Elm St
Oil City, PA 16301

814-678-5050 | TTY: 814-678-5065

Toll Free: 844-833-5248

Find your nearest PA CareerLink® Public Access Location

For information on the Public Access Locations, please call toll-free at 844-333-5248, or send an email to info@nwpacareerlink.org

<u>Partner</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Day of Week</u>	<u>Time</u>
Clarion Mall	22631 PA-68 Clarion, PA 16214	Wednesdays	10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Corry Hi-Ed	221 N Center St Corry, PA 16407	Wednesdays	9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Meadville Public Library	848 N Main St Meadville, PA 16335	Thursdays	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Warren Public Library	205 Market St Warren, PA 16365	Mondays	10:00 am – 3:00 pm

PFP Staff Contact Information

Lisa Miller, Executive Director, lmiller@nwpajobconnect.org, 814-282-1551

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