

For Immediate Release – October 2021

Contact: Janet Ward | Executive Director | 724-755-2145

Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board Receives WIOA Statewide Activities Grant

WESTMORELAND COUNTY, PA (October 29, 2021) – On September 21, 2021, the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board (FWFIB) received notification that its proposed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities project was awarded. In partnership with Southwest Corner Workforce Development Board (SCWDB), the *Healthcare Employment Ecosystem Project* seeks to create economic prosperity by connecting healthcare employers and identifying strategic solutions to the industry’s primary challenges.

As a result of the almost two-year effort navigating COVID-19, southwestern Pennsylvania’s healthcare industry is struggling to meet labor demands. While labor demands are heavily due to the lack of healthcare professionals, workers fulfilling supportive occupations within the healthcare industry, such as IT, are additionally lacking. The project’s comprehensive focus on all occupations within the healthcare industry centralizes on the entire healthcare ecosystem. Targeting Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties of southwestern Pennsylvania, the project will work to address several major needs of the region including workers’ educational attainment, those facing barriers to work, and staffing/applicant shortages among others.

“Healthcare employers in the region face numerous human resource challenges and labor shortages, including the need for a highly skilled workforce, misconceptions about career opportunities, and rapidly changing technology,” shared SCWDB Director Ami Gatts. “We Look forward to creating a partnership with a shared vision and value, increasing the community’s capacity to shape outcomes and foster multi-sector collaboration.”

Through the convening of local healthcare employers and organizations, innovative strategies will be developed and designed to meet the needs of the industry. These convening opportunities will additionally assist in the development and implementation of activities such as internships, on-the-job trainings, individualized training accounts, and more to create solutions to the region’s healthcare challenges. Meeting and discussing with healthcare organizations on a regional level will assist the local workforce development boards of Westmoreland-Fayette and Southwest Corner to identify the areas within the region of highest needs and the specific activities that will best support healthcare providers.

“As a healthcare services provider, Redstone Presbyterian Seniorcare sees the value in a regionally driven, comprehensive approach that addresses the economic and workforce challenges currently being faced by local workers and the region’s healthcare industry,” Redstone Presbyterian Seniorcare Vice President & COO Vicki Loucks.

In addition to addressing the needs of healthcare organizations, convening will also address ways to serve individuals facing barriers to employment. For instance, discussions during convening opportunities will be held to identify the necessary training, education, experience, etc. individuals need to fulfill employment opportunities within the healthcare industry.

The *Healthcare Employment Ecosystem Project* will target workers looking to enter/advance in the region’s healthcare ecosystem. Additionally, the project will support healthcare employers and organizations in addressing and developing solutions for their current workforce challenges.

The *Healthcare Employment Ecosystem Project* is expected to kickoff early 2022.

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About the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board

The Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board (WFWIB) is a non-profit entity consisting of appointees from the business, education, and labor sectors of Westmoreland-Fayette counties. The board is empowered to lead workforce development activities in Fayette and Westmoreland counties. The WFWIB is funded by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provides funding to federal workforce programs and local Workforce Development Boards. The WFWIB oversees the three PA CareerLink® centers that are located in Westmoreland and Fayette counties: PA CareerLink® Westmoreland County at Youngwood, PA CareerLink® Fayette County, and PA CareerLink® Alle-Kiski. The Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. For more information about the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board, please visit www.WestFayWIB.org.