

For Immediate Release – July 2022
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The Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board Hosts Experience Works! PLUS Professional Development Day Event

July 2022 – On Wednesday, July 27, 2022, the WFWIB hosted the Experience Works! PLUS Professional Development Day at Westmoreland County Community College; its first in-person event since 2019. The event welcomed Experience Works! PLUS interns and representatives from their worksites, interns from BotsIQ’s summer internship program, and workforce development partners.

Since 2018, the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board (WFWIB) has coordinated and provided its Experience Works! PLUS program. The Experience Works! PLUS program coordinates internship opportunities for Westmoreland and Fayette County young adults enrolled in post-secondary education. Working with both the young adults and representatives from Westmoreland and Fayette County worksites, the program provides wages to the interns for fulfilling unpaid internship opportunities. This program model allows for the interns to gain valuable workforce experience in a role that aligns with their career interests and provides a no-cost opportunity for local businesses to implement business improvements and provide additional internship experiences.

In addition to helping local young adults and businesses, the Experience Works! PLUS program helps the overall community. The program supports the local area’s future workforce by exposing individuals, who will soon enter the workforce full-time, to readily-available career opportunities that closely align with their professional goals. This exposure works to keep the future workforce in the local area, rather than looking to move from the two-county area or completely out of the state.

In addition to the experience and knowledge an intern gains during their actual internship, the Experience Works! PLUS program goes beyond the workplace. Participating interns receive what the WFWIB calls “career readiness”. The interns’ career readiness is typically divided into components that touch on various topics: portfolio development, financial literacy, interview preparation, workplace etiquette, and more. This year, however, the WFWIB also provided an Experience Works! PLUS career readiness experience that it has not done for three years.



The Experience Works! PLUS Professional Development Day started with a brief panel centered on the services provided by the Westmoreland-Fayette PA CareerLink® centers. The day moved on to feature a local industry representative panel and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) workshop. Industries featured on the panel included manufacturing, film, healthcare, and economic development represented by DMI Companies, Headspace Media, WVU Medicine Uniontown Hospital, and Catalyst Connection respectively. Panelists answered questions regarding their industry, shared information on what their organization looks for during the hiring process, and provided their advice for new graduates that are navigating the workforce and for mentoring. The DEI workshop was highly anticipated as it welcomed nationally-known speaker Darrell “Coach D” Andrews of Darrell Andrews, LLC and Associates. Andrews motivated attendees through his lessons on the importance of DEI and how it can help organizations become better than ever before.



Andrews’ energy and lessons were a perfect segue to the event’s lunch and networking session, in which attendees were encouraged to network with one another and learn more about the other internship opportunities taking place across the area.

Following lunch, attendees split up between two breakout sessions: “Utilizing LinkedIn” and “Interview Prep”. The Utilizing LinkedIn session, provided by BotsIQ Executive Director Michel Conklin, provided the audience with a crash course on how college students and recent graduates can best utilize the social platform as a job-finding option, self-branding tool, and networking resource. The Interview Prep session, provided by Westmoreland County Community College Career Connections Center Coordinator Diane Metz, focused on the importance of resume development, cover letter creation, salary negotiation during the interview, what to wear, and more. Regardless of what session attendees chose to attend, everyone gained valuable lessons on critical pieces to entering the workforce.

The day concluded with a final panel comprised of past and current work experience program participants. A previous Experience Works! PLUS participant, previous pre-apprentices from the German American Chamber of Commerce’s pre-apprentice and apprentice program, a previous Experience Works! (another WFWIB program) participant, and a current BotsIQ intern took to the stage to share how being in a work experience program helped them succeed. Additionally, panelist shared their advice on landing jobs after graduation and the importance of mentorships.

“The Professional Development Day served as an opportunity for interns to meet one another, share about their work experiences in the program, and be encouraged by local workforce leaders,” shared WFWIB Youth Program Specialist Madeline Butina. “By those measures, the event was a huge success. I’m glad we had such a large turnout and it seemed as though the interns gleaned a lot of valuable information from the presenters, panelists, and each other.”

Overall, the successful event welcomed over 50 attendees. The WFWIB would like to extend a very appreciative thank you to all of its attendees, speakers, panelists, moderators, and staff that made this event possible.

The Experience Works! PLUS program will continue to be provided through to June 2023. Depending on funding, the WFWIB hopes to sustain program activities beyond that deadline as continuing to provide

local young adults and youth with valuable career experiences will always be a priority. For program application pieces, please follow the link [here](#).

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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. For more information about the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board, please visit www.WestFayWIB.org. The Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. For federal funding information, visit www.westfaywib.org/resources/.