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STATE SYSTEM UNIVERSITIES PARTNER WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR TO CREATE INNOVATIVE WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS

Millersville and Shippensburg the first to develop #Prepared4PA workforce programs

Contact: Cody Jones, codyjones@passhe.edu

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education has announced two partnerships involving State System universities, the private sector, and community agencies are the

#Prepared4PA



first recipients of #Prepared4PA grants that support the creation of innovative credentialing programs to help Pennsylvanians advance in their careers. The State System Foundation will serve as a strategic thought partner and administrator for the program.

Initial funding was provided by major national donors including the Lumina Foundation and Strada Education Network. Ongoing funding to support the tuition costs of students who benefit from the efforts will come from employers, government grants and philanthropy.

First, an agribusiness pilot is designed to address workforce demands and the subsequent career pathways of those who work in that industry. This partnership involves Shippensburg University, the GIANT Co., Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg

University of Science and Technology, and SCPa Works. It will create upskilling programs for current workers and serve as a model that could migrate across other industries in the Commonwealth.

Second, a mental health services pilot will address demand around the growing need for diverse mental health services through a partnership among Millersville University, Lancaster County Workforce Development Board, PA CareerLink of Lancaster County, Church World Service, and Literacy & Learning Success (a program of the Literacy Council of Lancaster-Lebanon). The program will expand access to mental health certification for immigrants, refugees and bilingual citizens. Successful implementation will increase the number of bilingual mental health professionals and improve access to mental health career pathways.

"While our universities continue to provide excellent residential college experiences for traditional students, we are also committed to doing our part to meet the state's workforce needs through creative credentials like these two pilot programs," Chancellor Dan Greenstein said. "I'm proud of the work that Millersville, Shippensburg, their community college partners and local employers are engaging in as our State System universities create innovative pathways their region's workforces need."

The #Prepared4PA program grew out of a two-day summit in November 2019 between the State System and major employers across Pennsylvania. This resulted in the creation of workforce assemblies in four regions of the Commonwealth, which examined the competencies leading industries need among the workforce and how higher education can develop high-quality, inclusive credentials to meet demand.

The initial pilots like the ones involving Millersville and Shippensburg are designed to foster partnerships in communities among employers, workforce training providers, and higher education institutions.

"The State System is looking to refresh its vision for public higher education, and to that end, we're reimagining our education and business models for the 21st century," said Cindy Shapira, chair of the State System's Board of Governors. "The #Prepared4PA program helps us meet that goal and our mission. Pilot programs like these can have great benefits for students, universities, and local economies essential to Pennsylvania's success."

"The time is now for higher education, a key driver of local economies in the commonwealth, to be innovative in creating short term diverse, equitable and inclusive credentialing opportunities for individuals in Pennsylvania," said Cynthia Pritchard, CEO of the State System Foundation.

For more information on #Prepared4PA, please visit its website at Prepared4PA.org.

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education oversees 14 four-year public universities educating more than 93,000 students across the Commonwealth. The State System offers more than 2,300 degrees and certificates in more than 530 academic areas.