

LANCASTER COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The Lancaster County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) is pleased to provide our 2021 Annual Report. The Board of Directors and staff of the Board are dedicated to continued engagement in innovative and strategic initiatives that address our current and future workforce needs.

In 2021 the LCWDB elevated its role in the community by providing up-to-date labor market data to local stakeholders regarding affects Covid-19 continued to contribute to our local industry sectors, employers, and jobseekers. Like many other local areas, our message changed from “when we reach post-Covid” to “how do we move forward in-spite of Covid.” Due to losing close to 5% (over 13,000) of workers from our labor force, our goal was two-fold. One, partner with employers to create innovative solutions to deploy technology or upskill their current workforce and two, to provide support to jobseekers looking to re-enter the workforce.

Key Accomplishments in 2021 include:

1. **Celebrating 2-Year anniversary** of Career Ready Lancaster! (CRL!), a business-education partnership convened and supported by Lancaster County Workforce Development Board as the backbone organization
2. **Advancement of Apprenticeship** as a priority workforce solution in Lancaster County with investment into policy, funding, and six Registered Apprenticeship Navigators
3. **Relocation** of PA CareerLink® Lancaster County to a brand-new 18,000 square foot building that includes updated technology, layout, and collaboration amongst one-stop partners
4. **Implementation of tiered Youth Development programs** that offer strategic pathways and opportunities for work-based learning beginning with middle school through opportunity youth
5. **Continuation and improvement** of virtual services and satellite locations to better serve customers and offer more flexibility
6. **Recipient** of \$1,499,999 Federal Pathway Home 2 grant to provide career guidance and occupational training to 150 inmates at Lancaster County prison
7. **Deployment of new website** at www.lancastercountywib.com that includes easy access to workforce solutions, encourages engagement with viewers, provides at-a-glance up to date labor market data, and contains information to keep our organization in compliance with regulations.

Specifically, the Lancaster County Workforce Development Board has contributed the following outcomes in alignment with the five broad goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.

Goal #1: Career Pathways and Apprenticeship

LCWDB has developed a strategic investment in Career Pathways by convening and providing backbone support to Career Ready Lancaster! (CRL!), a business-education partnership. The partnership has grown to over fifty-five cross-sector stakeholders including school superintendents, businesses, and community partners. Led by a steering committee and three action teams, the partnership develops and delivers on 90-day cadences. In 2021, CRL! launched a parent-friendly [website](#) that helps guardians and teachers navigate multiple career pathways including workforce, apprenticeships, certifications, trade school and college. The Employer Demand team conducted an in-depth [study](#) in partnership with EDC (Economic Development Company) of Lancaster's Center for Regional Analysis in which they determined long-term projections of occupations and skills in the Manufacturing and Healthcare industries. CRL! has also published a 2021-2022 Career Pathways directory called [Work and Learn in Lancaster County](#). This guide helps jobseekers understand careers available in Lancaster County and what education or training is required, along with salaries. The clickable directory links directly to O*NET.

To develop a “boots on the ground” approach to our Apprenticeship Expansion initiative, in April 2021 we supported a group of six local Registered Apprenticeship Navigators, made up of One-Stop Partners, Board staff, and local community leaders, who would partake in a year-long Registered Apprenticeship Program to become [Apprenticeship Navigators](#). Under the group sponsorship of Keystone Development Partnership (KDP) and the PA Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO), these six apprentices complete 144 hours of technical instruction and 2,000 on-the-job training hours to learn how to assist employers or sponsors to register and maintain successful Registered Apprenticeships. This cohort of apprentices will join the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance to make a direct impact to the Governor's goal of increasing apprenticeships by 2025.

LCWDB has also partnered with the Manufacturer's Association of South-Central PA, ABC Keystone, Junior Achievement of South-Central PA, and NuPaths to bring *pre-apprenticeship* opportunities to Lancaster County high school students in Manufacturing, Construction, IT and STEM related career paths.

Goal #2: Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement

LCWDB continues to support the [Lancaster-Berks Construction Connection](#), a next-gen industry partnership focused on increasing diversity and the talent-pool for construction careers. In 2021 the group launched a social media presence on Facebook and helped to create engaging career awareness [videos](#) that are shared on the CRL! website and with local jobseekers.

Within the Career Ready Lancaster! partnership, a deeper dive into Manufacturing and Healthcare, *our county's top two industries identified by employment and gross domestic product*, identified the top nine occupations that make up 75% of the industry. Utilizing sector specific task groups, the CRL! partnership is working on creating common language for employers, job seekers and educators to create clearer, more attainable career pathways in these high demand areas.

In September 2021, the LCWDB developed a new role titled Director of Compliance and Business Engagement. This role emphasizes a more direct strategic connection with businesses in Lancaster County



and works closely with the Business Service team at PA CareerLink® Lancaster County. With the devastating effects that Covid has had on our local workforce the past two years, LCWDB has prioritized funding for employers such as Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training & Apprenticeship Training. In PY20, we exceeded our training goal by investing over \$700,000 in the upskilling of Lancaster workers to ensure we are supporting a highly skilled, retained workforce.

The Business Services Team (BST) at PA CareerLink® Lancaster County has returned to offering in-person recruitment events. Pre-pandemic, employers would reserve a room in PA CareerLink® to recruit candidates. Currently, employers may reserve a table in our Career Resource Center to meet with customers utilizing the computers for UC (Unemployment Compensation) and job search. The location change was to increase employer visibility and customer engagement during their visit. In addition, we have returned to offering job fairs. Job fairs have been held in collaboration with different partners including the Lancaster Chamber and Lancaster Newspapers. Most recently, our job fair at Clipper Magazine Stadium in September 2021 had over seventy employers and three hundred job seekers participate.

Goal #3: Youth

A key strategy of Career Ready Lancaster! and the Youth Council of the LCWDB is to ensure all high school seniors have a realistic, attainable, first choice career plan by 2023. In 2021, we continued to partner with our 16 local school districts and local employers to identify and connect youth to work-based learning (WBL) opportunities such as pre-apprenticeships, internships, job shadows, and [virtual workplace experiences](#). By partnering with Edge Factor, the [Lancaster has the Edge](#) page offers the community free access to hundreds of cinematic, high-quality videos showcasing career and technical education, skilled trades, virtual tours, and day-in-the life videos.

Our Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded Career Counselors who work alongside Lancaster County high-schools continue to make a tremendous impact by offering collaborative support to guidance counselors and college and career counselors. Utilizing career guidance resources of the PA CareerLink®, at-risk students are offered an additional level of support in coordination with the school staff, and increased exposure to WBL opportunities as well as industry recognized credentials.

In 2021 LCWDB procured a second provider to deliver WIOA Out-of-School Youth (OSY) funds to serve an additional thirty youth for a total of **eighty** out-of-school youth. We continue to support forty in-school youth in high demand career clusters at the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center. Funds include supportive services for tools and uniforms, dual enrollment into college courses, and the fourteen youth elements. Our TANF program supported over sixty paid internships, career counseling, access to ACT Workkeys, individual training accounts, pre-apprenticeship training, and a stipend-based program for 12–15-year-olds.

Lastly, we understand that we also need to empower our educators and youth community providers with tools and best practices to increase work-based learning and align with PA's Career Education and Work Standards (CEWS). In partnership with Lancaster-Lebanon IU13, we have created an asynchronous



learning experience eligible for professional continuing Act 48 to foster career path planning. Topics include a brief overview of the Pennsylvania Career Education and Work Standards, an introduction to Career Ready Lancaster and the High 5's, an overview of Lancaster County workforce statistics, and time to interact with Lancaster Anytime Anywhere Career Exploration resources which include virtual reality tours and career interviews. Educators access this training for free through Schoology.

Goal #4: Continuous Improvement of the Workforce Development System

The LCWDB staff and Board of Directors are continuously analyzing the workforce system and seeking improvements. One improvement was an investment in a grant management system funded through a Capacity Building grant that provides a friendly, electronic interface for potential bidders of workforce funding. This system allows deployment, decision, and tracking of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and will increase efficiency in the procurement process.

We have also incorporated a "Data and Trends" [page](#) on our new website which updates monthly and quarterly with local employment, industry, wage, and occupation trends. Included on the website are user-friendly forms that allow customers to request customized data and connect with staff regarding initiatives like apprenticeship.

By continuing to expand Career Ready Lancaster! by adding additional partners and continuous 90-Day action plans, as well as being a voice in the community by participating in events like United Way's [Community Conversations](#), LCWDB strives to provide strategic direction and leadership to the Lancaster community regarding Workforce.

Our Chief Operating Officer, Anna Ramos, was selected as a fellow in the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association's inaugural Policy and Advocacy Fellowship (PAFP) to help raise the collective capacity of workforce development at the federal, state, county, and local level. During this fellowship, Anna is contributing to the continuous improvement of PA political, legislative, and budgetary processes, engagement and advocacy, development of policy statements, and the overall landscape and who is who in PA Politics.

Goal #5: Strengthening the One-Stop Delivery System

The biggest impact LCWDB made in strengthening the One-Stop Delivery system is the relocation of the PA CareerLink® Lancaster County. This two-year project, impacted by Covid and supply chain issues, culminated in opening its doors to customers in November 2021. Utilizing an open floor plan, hotelier spaces for partners, updated technology that allows for live-streaming and virtual intake appointments and workshops, collaboration amongst one-stop partners, and accessibility for the public, this investment has already made an enormous impact in strengthening the One-Stop delivery system in Lancaster. The space has already been utilized to host local Society for Human Resources (SHRM)



meetings, manufacturing pre-apprenticeship training, to host employer recruitment events, and provide job-searching assistance.

Customer Testimonials

A true measure of customer success is the outcomes of participants served within the one-stop system. Beyond common measures, employment, and retention are the customer's experiences. Below are samples of customer testimonials from 2021.

Jean – Dislocated Worker "I started services with PA CareerLink in June 2021 after losing my job as a Forklift Operator. I was looking for a change in careers but wanted to still utilize my current skills. I was interested in training to become a CDL driver because of the stability in the industry and it would give me many opportunities in life. I was open to regional and local driving positions and said to my Career Navigator that I would do anything needed to be successful in this industry. I immediately started to complete all the tasks needed to be presented to the training committee by my Navigator. I started training at Shelly Trucking in September 2021 and completed in October 2021. My Career Navigator provided me with job leads and I was able to secure employment very quickly after completing the training. I started working with CRST Trucking as a Regional CDL A Driver on November 11, 2021. I work full time at \$20.00 per hour"

Alexis – Youth "My name is Alexis Bell, and I currently am working as a social media specialist thanks to CareerLink! My experience working with CareerLink has been amazing. They have helped me in areas I would have never been able to accomplish without them. CareerLink also helped me through the pandemic when being able to work was a scarce opportunity. Also, CareerLink helped me get a certificate in business, and although this is not a degree, this is one step closer! I am still working with CareerLink for more opportunities, and they have already given me the best help I could possibly ask for!"

Brian – ReEntry Adult Brian enrolled into the Re-Entry Employment Program in August 2021. He wanted to find employment related to the Transportation Industry. Brian said that he had struggled to find employment with his criminal background. The Re-Entry team worked with Brian to complete the steps necessary to gain CDL training, thus helping him gain employment in an industry that will accept his background. "I have been an auto mechanic for 14 years and believed it was time for a change. Once I have my mind set on something, I will do it. This opportunity is something that not everyone has, that is why I took it so seriously. 14 years at one job is a big task. It shows my dedication to my craft, and I plan to have fourteen plus years in this industry as well. The training program has changed my life and has made it possible for me to provide a better future for my family. Everyone I have had contact with during my time in your program has been awesome and amazing to work with! This has been a blessing for sure and it (the program) helps more than you realize!" After working with Brian, he has referred others to the Re-Entry program for services. Brian is currently employed at Kreider Farms, making \$21.25 an hour and continues to succeed!



Challenges

In 2021, Lancaster continued to face drastic workforce shortages due to mass exodus from retirees, women, and those in traditionally low-paying jobs in hospitality, food services and retail. To combat these challenges, we continue to support flexible and remote assistance of PA CareerLink® staff and services, increased investments in Incumbent Worker Training and Apprenticeships, and innovative ways to help retrain and connect displaced workers. We have developed pre-vocational training to help workers obtain entry level work in Administrative and Healthcare occupations, partnered with Junior Achievement of South-Central PA to host multiple virtual recruitment events, and increased our “satellite” office locations to include multiple access points throughout the county.

Promising Practices

We have had some customers attend our workshops or enroll into our programs that are struggling with their job search due to being transgender. One of the most common barriers they face is their name change. Jobseekers want to go by the name they are most comfortable with, but hiring managers run into issues when reaching out to former employers. The usual guidance is to provide employers with their given name, but this can be triggering to some. A title one staff member has reached out to local experts and has done extensive research on the subject matter to create a cohesive workshop to address these real concerns of jobseekers. The goal is to offer this workshop a few times throughout the year as it would not be needed weekly. This was presented to the LCWDB, and a meeting with the OEO Office was scheduled to review this option and the green light was given to proceed with the content for the workshop.

Transgender Job Search: Challenges and Solutions Time: 1 Hour

Workshop Description: This workshop offers practical solutions to the challenges many transgender and non-binary job seekers face throughout the employment process. Suggestions and tips are offered for job applications, resumes, networking and interviewing. Resources include a list of local LGBTQIA-friendly employers and information on accessing additional PA CareerLink of Lancaster County services.

Workshop topics include which name to use on resume, shifting expectations for pronouns, finding trans-friendly companies, managing fear and anxiety, know your rights. This workshop is set to roll out in 2022.

Additional State Guidance

LCWDB works closely with staff from Labor and Industry and the Department of Human Services on a consistent basis. We appreciate the guidance and knowledge of state staff. We do not seek further guidance at this point.

