



# NEWS

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## **Business-Education Partnership of Bucks and Montgomery Counties Awarded \$200k Grant From PA Department of Labor & Industry**

**Norristown, PA (May 11, 2015)** – The Business-Education Partnership of Bucks and Montgomery Counties has been awarded a \$200,000 Business-Education Partnership Grant from the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I). These funds will support the Workforce Investment Boards’ efforts to connect schools, employers, and students to provide career-related experiences and exposure opportunities for students through soft-skills development, internships, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring.

The overall goal of the Business-Education Partnership of Bucks and Montgomery Counties is to provide an intermediary network through the leadership of the Workforce Investment Boards (“WIBs”) and businesses to support middle schools and high schools. In addition, the Partnership will include business entities, school districts, career and technical schools, and institutions of higher education.

The Partnership has identified four key goals:

1. Raise student (and parent) awareness of the skills necessary to be employed in high demand, high priority occupations, along with information about those occupations, to enable them to make knowledgeable decisions about their careers and acquaint them with the variety of training options (e.g., college, technical education, apprenticeships, and military). The targeted high priority career pathways are healthcare, engineering/ manufacturing, information technology, and building and construction.
2. Direct the interests of the counties’ businesses in providing a variety of work-based learning options for students, such as internships, job shadowing, mentorships, youth apprenticeships, and service learning, and workplace learning experiences for teachers, counselors, and youth.

3. Determine where there are gaps in providing career-related opportunities that target the needs of special youth populations, including those who are disabled, out of school, in alternative education, within families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, in or aging out of foster care, court-involved and/or migrant and develop programs to fill those gaps.
4. Provide coordination for linking students, counselors, and teachers with business/industry along with a central point of contact for schools, businesses, and the community.

Some of the Partnership projects/activities to be conducted are:

- Educator-in-the-Workplace Program
- ManuFest and Road Show
- Careers in Two Years (Ci2Y) Videos
- Futures Fairs
- Lunch & Learns
- Internships
- Job Shadowing and Mentorships
- Mentor Training
- College Tours

The Partnership will develop research-based practices that document the outcomes of the programs/activities established through the grant and share these “Best Practices” with other partnerships throughout the state. The Bucks and Montgomery County WIBs share a commitment to developing career awareness in the county schools so that students and their parents can make appropriate life choices through an increased understanding of career pathways. Students and parents need to view career pathways, especially in the middle school years, as creating options for the future. This gives them a broad perspective which they can explore, rather than a narrow focus on a career or occupation.

The Partnership seeks to provide the structure, organization, and resources to ensure that these goals are met. The WIBs will leverage the funds available through the Business-Education Partnership Grant to support the activities. Over 10,000 students attend the high schools and Centers for Technical Education (CTEs) in this Partnership.