

New Program Will Prepare Allentown Students for Careers in Manufacturing

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY- The Lehigh Valley is receiving state funding to put students on the path for family-sustaining careers.

A \$250,000 Industry Partnership grant to Workforce Board Lehigh Valley will prepare students in the Allentown School District for jobs in the manufacturing and supply chain industries.

The program will include employers going to classrooms to provide career-focused instruction, along with curriculum that builds employability skills.

“This will result in establishing a manufacturing and supply chain industry club in Allentown School District’s after-school program in order to open the doors to those career pathways, work experience opportunities for students, part-time, full-time jobs, and a hands-on look-see at the manufacturing and supply chain sector to increase the talent pipeline. That’s what this is about,” said Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director of Workforce Board Lehigh Valley.

The Lehigh Valley is among the top 15% largest manufacturing markets. More than 700 manufacturers collectively generate output of \$8.1 billion, which comprises 16% of the region’s \$50.2 billion Gross Domestic Product.

The grant to Workforce Board Lehigh Valley is among \$4.2 million in grants statewide. They were announced on Feb. 15 by Pennsylvania Labor & Industry Secretary Nancy Walker at International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 375 in Allentown.

“These organizations do great work. They connect industries in education and work to put people into jobs,” Walker said. “These Industry Partnerships span everything from agriculture and nursing to manufacturing and supply chain resources.”

The Industry Partnership program focuses on meeting current and future needs in agriculture, information technology, robotics, healthcare, transportation, and manufacturing. It encourages partnerships among businesses to address education and training, economic development needs, coordination of regional support teams, identification of community resources, and further opportunities for collaboration.

“We appreciate Governor Shapiro’s support for the workforce here and also investing here in Lehigh Valley, and also with the school district,” said Paul Anthony, Business Manager of IBEW Local Union 375 and a member of the Board of Directors of Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC).

Walker said the governor has requested the state Legislature allocate an additional \$2.2 million in funding for the Industry Partnership initiative in next year’s budget. Shapiro also is seeking \$2 million to create a one-stop-shop digital platform for career, education, and training resources to help students and adults plan their future.

“Governor Shapiro is targeting his investments in communities where there’s a synergy of local leaders, there is an alignment of economic development, workforce development, education, training, and community. Well, the Lehigh Valley is full of synergy,” Dischinat said.

Jen Ramos, Deputy Superintendent of the Allentown School District, said the school district needs the program now more than ever.

“It’s efforts like these that support establishing a solid workforce pipeline through the employability skills curriculum, workforce development, and in partnership with our local community,” Ramos said. “This partnership is one that aligns with the core values of our district - equity, excellence, and partnership.”

State Rep. Peter Schweyer said the grants are the result of bipartisan cooperation between legislators and the Shapiro administration. The announcement was attended by Lehigh Valley state representatives from both parties – Democrats Schweyer, Jeanne McNeill, and Mike Schlossberg, and Republican Zachary Mako.

“The work ethic is here, the opportunities are here. It’s really just connecting those dots,” Schweyer said.



Pennsylvania Labor & Industry Secretary Nancy Walker, center, with state and local officials at IBEW Local Union 375)

Auditor General DeFoor Creates Pathways to Employment by Expanding Job Opportunities to Associate Degree Graduates

By April Hutcheson

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor today announced his department is expanding its career pathways to include graduates of accredited associate degree programs in the areas of accounting, business, data analytics, finance, economics, math or another closely related field.

“Our goal is to create pathways to careers and expand opportunities to good jobs to more Pennsylvanians than ever before,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “As a community college graduate, I can tell you firsthand that associate degree programs offer practical, hands-on training that prepares students for high-demand industries like auditing. That’s why I am so excited to announce the Department of the Auditor General will be hiring individuals with associate degrees.”

Previously, to be considered for a position at the Department of the Auditor General, candidates needed to hold a bachelor’s degree in accounting or finance and complete 12 credits of accounting as part of their coursework.

The department’s Intern to Hire Program also is expanding to include individuals who have received their associate degree in the last six months. The Intern to Hire Program offers candidates full-time positions in the department upon graduation from an undergraduate or graduate program as long as they have worked 900 hours, or six months, and have had successful performance reviews.

“I could go on about the benefits of working for the Commonwealth, and the job satisfaction you get from public service,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “But it’s time for you to go online to our website at paauditor.gov and see what career opportunities we have available for you.”

For more information about career opportunities or the Intern to Hire Program, visit www.paauditor.gov/careers and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

