

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW / POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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Community Education Councils (CECs) -- The Community Education Councils (CECs) are non-profit organizations located primarily in northern and western PA that bring higher education opportunities to rural or educationally underserved communities in Pennsylvania. Current locations include:

Armstrong Center for Community Learning

104 Armstrong St., Suite A, Ford City, PA 16226

Community Education Center of Elk & Cameron Counties

4 Erie Avenue, Suite 200, St. Marys, PA 15857

Corry Higher Education Council

221 North Center Street, Corry, PA 16407

Keystone Community Education Council

206 Seneca Street, Suite 30, Oil City, PA 16301

Lawrence County Learning Center

101 S. Mercer St., 2nd Floor, New Castle, PA 16101

Potter County Education Council

5 Water St., P.O. Box 5, Coudersport, PA 16915

Schuylkill Community Education Council

1 W. Centre St., PO Box 355, Mahanoy City, PA 17948

Warren/Forest Higher Education Council

589 Hospital Drive STE F, Warren, PA 16365

Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

107 8th St., Honesdale, PA 18431

These institutions serve rural and often under-served regions of PA that generally don't have a community college or trade school conveniently located to their citizens, and CECs provide similar services to fill educational and training gaps in such areas as industry certifications, apprenticeship programs, GED programs, and entrepreneurship guidance.

For state of PA budgeting purposes, CECs are not classified as an educational institution, and as such, do not receive those annual budget increases allocated to PASHE schools and community colleges. CECs have been flat-funded for the past

several years and now struggle financially to maintain services in an inflationary economy.

The legislature needs to better understand and appreciate the roles that CECs play in providing training and educational opportunities in areas of Pennsylvania that haven't fully recovered economically, and consider **classifying CECs as educational institutions for budgeting and funding purposes** and begin to address current and future budget shortfalls.

Job Readiness Training

Numerous focus group of employers show that entry-level workers are frequently lacking in **job readiness** including: 1) lack of math skills, especially with respect to understanding fractions, decimals, and reading measurements; 2) inability to speak effectively about themselves and deliver their 'elevator pitch'; 3) lack of understanding re: the need to come to work consistently day after day; 4) failure to understand the need to respect their manager(s); 5) inability to populate an on-line job application; 6) poor or no digital literacy / basic computer skills; 7) hesitancy to answer phone calls – even from employers they've interviewed with.

Legislation that appropriates additional funding for such training – at both a middle / high school level as well as for young adults between the ages of 16 – 24 could mitigate these issue and improve opportunities to secure and retain employment for this population, as well as alleviate workforce shortages.

Manufacturing Training

Current studies project that 2.1 million manufacturing jobs may go unfilled by 2030 due to lack of trained workforce for this sector that pays above average wages. This void may stifle efforts to re-shore industries over the next few years.

Additional funding for apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and paid internships, coupled with financial incentives or tax credits with participating manufacturers – especially those who participate in formal apprenticeship programs, could mitigate this problem and improve the talent pipeline for this critical sector of the Pennsylvania economy.

The Commonwealth would see the added benefit of retaining more of our young people and reversing the brain drain that has plagued areas in the East and Midwest.