



Promising Business Education Practice

Tri-County Business-Education Partnership Mini-Grant Program

AT A GLANCE

Facilitated by the Tri-County Workforce Development Board and offered to schools and organizations in Pennsylvania’s Armstrong, Butler, and Indiana counties, the mini-grant Program promoted and expanded career awareness activities for students in grades nine through 12.

RESULTS / IMPACT

Multiple programs funded by the mini-grants impacted several hundred students, teachers, and employers in the tri-county region:

Apollo-Ridge High School, Armstrong County

The Allegheny Valley Hospital led a tour for 18 students who expressed interest in exploring healthcare, business management, and administration careers.

Butler County Area Vocational Technical School, Butler County

Twelve students attended and interacted with employers from a variety of industries including health care, manufacturing, communications, auto repair, and construction during an “Employment Mingle” event.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Lemieux Sports Complex, practice and training facility for the Pittsburgh Penguins and a sports medicine outpatient facility, hosted a tour for 38 ninth grade students allowing them to learn about careers and high priority occupations in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) including health care, culinary arts, HVAC, graphic arts, and automotive technology.

Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School, Butler County

The Carnegie Science Center’s SciTech Days offered multiple hands-on workshops; 18 students attended two sessions: *Neuroscience*, *Physics and Your Brain in the Year 2062* and *Your Future*. Students also explored Tech Zone exhibits throughout the day.

Indiana County Technology Center School, Indiana County

Regional health care employers interacted with 34 students enrolled in the school's Practical Nursing Program to share information about health care occupations and opportunities including advancement on the nursing career ladder.

Leechburg Area School District, Armstrong County

A motivational speaker engaged 70 students during a tenth grade career breakfast with a presentation focusing on popular career pathways in STEM, energy, manufacturing, health care, art, marketing, and others.

Lenape Technical School, Armstrong County

A Union Apprenticeship Career Exploration event gave 114 students the opportunity to visit union training centers for laborers, sheet metal workers, bricklayers, operating engineers, boilermakers, steamfitters, ironworkers, IBEW, carpenters, and plumbers. Similarly, a Manufacturing Career Exploration event involved 44 students who toured two businesses to learn about careers in manufacturing, engineering, and design.

Mars High School, Butler County

Union Apprenticeship Field Trips allowed 69 students to visit union training facilities for plumbing, iron, electrical, and steamfitter workers and the aviation academy.

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, Butler County

Students designed a small café where they provided beverages and snacks for peers and staff. The Starfish Café allowed 20 students to explore jobs within the food service industry and utilize ServSafe standards.

Penn United Technologies, Inc., Butler County

Women in Manufacturing engaged 27 girls in grades nine through 12, providing them with an opportunity to learn about careers that are both traditionally and non-traditionally pursued by women in this industry.

United Way of Butler County, Butler County

To experience student apprenticeship programs and expand their career awareness, 560 teachers attended apprenticeship training for a day. As a result of their experience, teachers developed relevant project-based learning lessons for their students.

ORIGIN/IMPLEMENTATION

With funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Business-Education Partnership Program grant, the Tri-County Business-Education Partnership, facilitated by the Tri-County Workforce Development Board, developed a mini-grant program designed to expand career and employer exposure for students and educators in the region. School districts, career and technical centers, employers, and agencies working with youth located within the Butler, Armstrong, and Indiana counties were eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 with funds available to use during the 2015-2016 school year.

While applicants were encouraged to identify their unique goals and priorities, proposals were required to promote career pathways as well as provide career awareness and work-based learning activities for youth in grades nine through 12. Further, career awareness activities had to align with a high priority occupation or industry with high priority occupations and could include but were not limited to job shadowing, student tours, classroom presentations, career fairs, guest speakers, professional development for teachers, and industry-related materials. Employer involvement in the proposed project was expected and equipment (including digital devices) was not an eligible expense for these funds. A review team from the Tri-County Business-Education Partnership examined all applications and made recommendations for awarding the funding.

NEXT STEPS/SUSTANABILITY

The mini-grant program is expected to continue as long as funding is secured. Depending on the specific funding stream, however, the focus may change. For example, during the 2016-2017 school year, TCWIB is expected to offer mini-grants to fund apprenticeship program tours in the trades and manufacturing career pathways.

To date, the mini-grant program has concentrated on high school students, however, expanding to other grade levels is a potential goal.

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