

FY 2021 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT - GOOD JOBS CHALLENGE

Project Narrative: Philadelphia Works, Inc.

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & SYSTEM LEAD ENTITY DESCRIPTION

1a. Executive Summary

Philadelphia's workforce development board, Philadelphia Works, Inc. (PhilaWorks), is galvanizing a regional coalition of partners across Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties to design and scale a **Coordinated Southeastern Pennsylvania Workforce Development System** (*The Coordinated SE PA System*). This system will develop and launch training programs designed to meet employers' needs for talent and build the skills of our regional workforce within targeted growth industries that are driving the creation of quality jobs in our region: 1) **Healthcare & Life Sciences**, 2) **Energy**, and 3) **Infrastructure**.

Regional employers, facing ongoing uncertainty amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and grappling with historic labor market shortages, are eager to fuel workforce pipeline development to meet labor needs. *The Coordinated SE PA System* is poised to respond to this urgency by mobilizing employers in partnership with an expanding coalition of committed stakeholders - including regional workforce and economic development boards, training and service providers, organized labor, community and equity advisors, and with support from city, county and other municipal representatives. Together, these partners will design an integrated workforce development system calibrated to meet existing and emerging industry skills needs, coordinate & synchronize regional training efforts, and connect career seekers to quality jobs.

The Coordinated SE PA System aims to connect 3,000 – 4,000 career seekers to good jobs within 24-36 months, accelerating equitable recovery, driving economic growth, and disrupting chronic intergenerational poverty across the region.

1b. Identify & describe the System Lead Entity or Backbone Organization

Philadelphia Works, Inc. will serve as the **System Lead Entity** for *The Coordinated SE PA System*. Founded in 1999, PhilaWorks is a non-profit, quasi-public organization that serves employers and connects youth and adult career seekers to employment and training opportunities. PhilaWorks' mission is to develop and manage smart workforce solutions that respond to business needs and increase economic opportunity for all Philadelphia residents. Across a comprehensive workforce development system, PhilaWorks has three core mission initiatives:

- **Career and Employment Services:** PhilaWorks funds, leads, and manages the City's network of employment and training services (the PA CareerLink® system (PACL)), where youth and adult residents connect to viable career opportunities, career guidance, job training, and job placement services. PhilaWorks collaborates with educational institutions, city agencies, and nonprofit partners to provide support services that address barriers to employment.

These efforts align with the City’s workforce development strategy to support workforce readiness for returning citizens, opportunity youth & young adults, and immigrants.

- **Business Services:** PhilaWorks engages employers to build access to a robust employment pipeline that enables the growth and retention of local talent, offering employee trainings that reflect industry needs, organizing and supporting pre-apprentice and apprentice programs, and convening industry partnerships to address workforce needs.
- **Workforce Insights and Innovation:** PhilaWorks aggregates and shares research on employment and labor market trends.

Through partnerships with over 50 service and training partners, PhilaWorks engages nearly 40,000 unique career seekers annually, including 8,000+ youth, as well as 2,000 employers. PhilaWorks specifically engages and serves career seekers facing labor market barriers. Since 2019, roughly three-quarters of PAFL participants identified as Black or African American, while 12% identified as Hispanic or Latino; 65% were considered prime working age, falling between ages 25 and 44, while 15% were under 24, and 10% were over 55. Nearly three-quarters of participants identified as female, 80% reported possessing at least a high school diploma, and 80%+ participants were low-income or in poverty at the time of application, with more than one-third participating in programs directly related to food stamps and cash assistance.

In addition to a comprehensive service platform, PhilaWorks also has expertise and experience participating in and convening multi-sector, multi-region initiatives. Since the implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2015, PhilaWorks has been an active member of the Southeast Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board, a 6-county coalition of workforce boards in Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. This Board collaborates with its economic development counterpart, the Southeast Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (SE PREP), to develop strategic plans that address common workforce and economic growth challenges.

Given its range of programming and network connectivity, PhilaWorks is uniquely qualified to serve as the System Lead Entity for *The Coordinated SE PA System*. In this capacity, PhilaWorks will be singularly responsible for overseeing planning, launch, implementation, and evaluation in coordination and cooperation with a broad and representational pool of stakeholder partners (*see attached support letters*).

Key responsibilities as System Lead Entity include:

- 1) Centering and prioritizing equity principles through all phases of activity.
- 2) Assessing community need to calibrate wraparound services to specific barriers to employment for historically marginalized career seekers.
- 3) Supporting an inclusive, representational, and regional pool of stakeholders including employers, industry representatives, education and training providers, community-based organizations, labor unions, and other key advisors.

- 4) Aligning program plans to meet employer needs and ensuring all resulting employment meets baseline metrics for quality jobs to include offering family-sustaining wages and benefits, career growth and advancement opportunities, and transferrable skills.
- 5) Overseeing grant management and compliance, to include funding requests, reports, filings, disbursements, and spearheading initiatives to secure ongoing, future support.
- 6) Providing operational capacity to deliver effective implementation of all activities.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYER LEADERSHIP & COMMITMENTS; STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERS

2a. Employer Leadership & Commitments

PhilaWorks is actively assembling an expansive and growing coalition of stakeholders to develop, design, and launch *The Coordinated SE PA System*, including dozens of employers from target industries, the region’s economic and workforce development organizations, training providers, community and equity advisors, and city, county and municipal representatives.

Three **Backbone Organizations** are engaged to manage three **Sectoral Partnerships**, see below:

1) *Healthcare & Life Sciences Sectoral Partnership. Backbone Organization: The West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI)*

Based out of The University City District (a nonprofit dedicated to community revitalization), WPSI is a high-performing workforce intermediary that has been successfully connecting Philadelphians to career-track jobs within anchor institutions for over a decade through year-round, cohort-based, jobs-driven training models. WPSI’s programs provide employers with high-quality candidates, while working to address unemployment in high-poverty zip codes. WPSI continually refines & improves its approach using rigorous data analysis, extensive feedback from alumni and employer partners, and the latest research in human resource development. This continual improvement has driven consistently impressive outcomes:

- 97% of program graduates are placed into jobs; 82% track one-year retention at placements; & graduates earn an average of \$18 in hourly wages.
- Over 10 years 1,540 WPSI participants have gone on to earn \$55 million in wages.
- Participants have primarily been residents of five zip codes in West Philadelphia: 19104, 19131, 19139, 19143, and 19151, where 100% of participants have annual incomes below \$30,000. Last year, over 88% of WPSI jobseekers identified as Black.

WPSI is uniquely qualified to be the Backbone Organization for the Healthcare & Life Sciences Sectoral Partnerships due to: 1) deep and established relationships with the largest industry employers in the region, 2) demonstrable & replicable results, and 3) experience serving career seekers from historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities. Key partnerships include the three largest regional employers: University of Pennsylvania & Health System (#1, 47,204 employees), Thomas Jefferson University & Jefferson Health (#2, 32,000 employees) & Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (#3, 21,925 employees), along with newer partnerships with rapidly growing Life Sciences employers to include Spark Therapeutics (#13 of the region’s Life Sciences companies with 800 employees) and Adaptimmune Therapeutics (#14, 495 employees).

Participation in *The Coordinated SE PA System* will enable WPSI to disseminate its approach and share its model with counterparts across the 6-county region.

Employer Leadership & Involvement

To date, WPSI has engaged 15 Healthcare & Life Sciences employers, each of whom has pledged to 1) actively participate in training program design & curriculum development and 2) make hiring commitments, pending training program completion. All Employers will complete WPSI's needs analysis to inform customized curriculum and will also lead at least one training class. All jobs offered through the Healthcare & Life Sciences Sectoral Partnership will provide starting wages between \$15 - \$30/hour, along with benefits packages that will vary depending on position title. See attached letters of commitment from the growing employer partner network, including: AdaptImmune, Bayada, Chester County Hospital, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Crozer Health, Freedom Village at Brandywine, Jefferson Health System, Lampire Biological Laboratories, Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center, Penn Medicine, Simpson Senior Services, Spark Therapeutics, Temple Health, Tower Health and Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic. Additional outreach and engagement conversations are underway with prospective employer partners to include: Iovance, Jefferson Institute for Bioprocessing & WuXi Advanced Therapies.

2) Energy Sectoral Partnership. Backbone Organization: Philadelphia Energy Authority (PEA)

The Philadelphia Energy Authority (PEA) is an independent municipal authority established in 2010 to support the City of Philadelphia on energy affordability and sustainability. In 2016, PEA launched the Philadelphia Energy Campaign – a 10-year, \$1 billion investment in clean energy and energy efficiency to create 10,000 jobs. PEA's programs are developed in tandem with relevant workforce training. For example, Solarize Philly, a citywide bulk discount program helping homeowners go solar, is paired with the nation's first high school vocational solar training program, Bright Solar Futures, and Built to Last, a low-income home restoration program that preserves the safety, health, and comfort of existing affordable housing, is paired with the GRIT green residential retrofit training program.

To date, PEA has launched over \$200 million in projects and created over 2,000 jobs. Solarize Philly has helped make Philadelphia one of the fastest-growing solar markets in the country and has helped over 750 homes add rooftop solar. Built to Last is a model for scaling home repair and will grow from servicing 100 homes by 2023 to serving thousands on an annual basis in subsequent years. PEA serves 92,000 homes through its Water and Sewer Service Line Program and has supported the City and School District to contract over \$300 million in solar and energy efficiency projects. To date, PEA has graduated 35 students, placed 16 in internships, and placed 20 in full-time jobs with an average wage of \$15.40 per hour. Placements include Exact Solar, Philadelphia Streets Department, Solar States, Arsenal Solar, Grid Alternatives, Gen 3 Electric and HVAC, and others.

PEA is uniquely qualified to serve as the Backbone Organization for the Energy Sectoral Partnership, given past experience and demonstrable success forging community-based and industry partnerships, providing career on-ramps, developing skilled and diverse workers for

the green economy, and creating jobs. With support from the Good Jobs Challenge, PEA will scale existing programs and accelerate impact.

Employer Leadership & Involvement

Employer partners will play a pivotal role in this project providing insight on in-demand labor needs, job openings, and specific skills needs. Employer input will provide guidance on offered certifications, needed instructional hours, hands-on training opportunities, and on-the-job internship experience pre-graduation. PEA has experience working with employers in this way - as part of Bright Solar Futures, PEA convened an Occupational Advisory Committee that includes over 20 local and regional clean energy employers to advise on curriculum development and employment partnerships. PEA will leverage this group and others to develop the Energy Sectoral Partnership and create onramps for employment. Committed employer and industry partners include PECO & Solar States (see attached letters of commitment), with outreach and conversations in progress with prospective employer partners including PGW, UGI, Dominion Energy, Essential Utilities, Smart Energy & the aforementioned existing employer partners.

3) Infrastructure Sectoral Partnership. Backbone Organization: The Philadelphia Area Labor Management Committee (PALM)

PALM is a private non-profit organization founded in 1982 by the Philadelphia Council of the AFL-CIO and the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Its mission is to foster increased labor-management cooperation in Southeastern Pennsylvania. PALM has worked with 300+ companies and unions across the region establishing cooperative communication, problem solving and change processes in industries as diverse as transportation, communication, utilities, construction, petro-chemical, pharmaceuticals and public education.

PALM is uniquely qualified to serve as the backbone organization of the infrastructure sectoral partnership given its long-standing and deep involvement with the region's construction industry through its BUILT-RITE Program, the Construction Industry's Labor-Management alliance of contractors, unions and construction users. Since 1985, BUILT-RITE has been involved in 400+ construction projects in the region valued at over 85 billion dollars. Major projects include: the Pennsylvania Convention Center, the Eagles and Phillies Stadiums, Limerick Generating Station, and, most recently, Penn Medicine's Patient Pavilion.

With PALM as the Backbone Organization, the Infrastructure Sectoral Partnership will draw on an established network of collaborators who have worked on local construction projects for 30+ years. Further, PALM will leverage its partnership with the Laborers District Council's new Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Facility housed in North Philadelphia, to provide a base of operations for planning, convening, and program service delivery. The facility opened in 2021 and houses a robust pre-apprenticeship program serving residents of North, Southwest and South Philadelphia, in tandem with wellness programs, soft skills training, and educational services provided by Temple University. It is well-positioned geographically to engage priority populations and is fully outfitted to function as a regional hub for recruitment, training, and employer engagement. PALM will also utilize the training networks embedded in each county's

apprenticeship modules to further extend workforce development activities. These will be augmented by outside educational and wraparound service assets.

Employer Leadership & Involvement

PALM has engaged over 200 employers and associations as well as 57 unions, each of whom has pledged to support and actively participate in 1) Training program design and curriculum development tailored to journey person acceptance, and 2) Making hiring commitments pending program design completion and training. Committed employers and organized labor partners include: The Building Trades Council, The General Building Contractors Association, Monroe Energy, and General Asphalt Paving Company of Philadelphia (*see attached letters of commitment*). Additional outreach and engagement conversations are in progress with prospective partners to include industry associations, owners and users of construction services & key trade unions.

I. Backbone Organization Roles and Responsibilities

Backbone Organizations will lead Sectoral Partnerships under and in close collaboration with PhilaWorks. Each Backbone Organization will be responsible for:

- Expanding partnerships by adding employers and assuring region-wide and county-specific representation and inclusion of minority- and women-owned enterprises.
- Leveraging existing relationships and developing new relationships to assemble and support an inclusive and representational stakeholder network including employers, education & training providers, community-serving organizations, labor unions, and others.
- Convening stakeholder partners & facilitating collaborative planning efforts.
- Conducting market analyses, collecting ecosystem data, processing findings & developing training & curriculum to meet employer need.
- Conducting robust engagement and outreach efforts to identify, recruit and engage participants, with an emphasis on serving prioritized populations from historically underserved communities, and then delivering training programs with integrated wraparound services designed to help priority populations overcome barriers.
- Tracking and reporting on activities, measuring outcomes, and evaluating impact.

2b. Other Stakeholders & Partners

To support and supplement employer and industry input, PhilaWorks has engaged an expansive set of non-employer stakeholder partners to assure regional coordination & alignment, as well as to provide content expertise, additional perspectives & strategic support for outreach, engagement & wraparound support services. Specific service delivery needs will be determined and designed during System Development phases of work. Stakeholders' roles and expected contributions range across category to include expertise in regional economic development, program development and partnerships, employer engagement and networking, talent outreach and awareness, training and education, as well as wraparound services. Many partners offer intersecting skillsets with complementary service models, such as training and employment opportunities, or training and wraparound services, etc.

What follows is a preliminary list of network stakeholders and partners committed to supporting the planning, design, and implementation of *The Coordinated SE PA System*: The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia via The Life Sciences Talent Pipeline Collaborative and The Greater Philadelphia Energy Action Team (GPEAT); The City of Philadelphia; its Office of Sustainability (OOS), Commerce Department & Philly Counts; Clarifi; Community College of Philadelphia; Community Integrated Services; Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc.; Delaware County Community College; The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC); Esperanza; Episcopal Community Services; Future Works Alliance; Graduate! Philadelphia; Impact Services Corporation; JEVS; Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center; Philadelphia Youth Network; The Southeast Equity & Economy Committee (The SEEC); The Urban League of Philadelphia; The Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF); The Welcoming Center & Wexford Science & Technology LLC (*See attached letters of commitment*)

SECTION 3: REGIONAL DESCRIPTION

Location, Region & Service Area: *The Coordinated SE PA System* will span six Pennsylvania counties (the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Labor Market) including Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery & Philadelphia. This 6-county region is home to more than 4.5 million residents, representing 35% of Pennsylvania’s population - one-third (35%) reside in Philadelphia, followed by Montgomery (18%), Bucks (14%), Delaware (12%), Chester (12%) and Berks (9%)¹. With the inclusion of Berks County, the service area includes Reading – the 4th largest municipality in the Commonwealth. Five of the six counties, with the exception of Berks, are part of the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which encompasses portions of New Jersey and Delaware and has a total population of more than 6 million. This regional MSA is the 7th largest in the U.S. and has the 9th largest regional GDP.

Economic & Workforce Context for Southeastern Pennsylvania Region: Amidst the ongoing public health crisis and disruption of the COVID-19 global pandemic, economic recovery and labor market rebounds within Southeastern Pennsylvania have been sluggish. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Philadelphia’s metropolitan statistical area has added the fewest jobs among the nation’s 12 largest MSAs over the last year. Despite improving conditions in 2021, the region’s economic recovery lags behind peer regions². The issue is particularly acute in Philadelphia, the only Pennsylvania county designated as a Persistent Poverty County where a quarter of the population lives in poverty - the highest rate of the ten largest U.S. cities and more than triple the average across surrounding collar counties. At the onset of COVID-19, Philadelphia lost 100,000 jobs in a single month, plummeting from 750,000+ to a low of under 650,000. Though the City recouped many of those losses, at the close of 2021 employment remained down by nearly 50,000 jobs and the average unemployment rate across the 6-county region was 4.53% - higher than the national average of 3.9%, with Philadelphia tracking nearly 50% higher at 6.8%. This, at a time when local employers across multiple industries cite labor availability as the most important issue they are facing³.

¹ 2021-2024 WIOA Multi-Year Regional Plan, Southeast Workforce Planning Region

² [Philadelphia lags behind other big cities...](#) Philadelphia Business Journal (January 21, 2022)

³ [Economic Outlook 2022 – Member Survey Results](#), The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia

The apparent contradiction between labor supply and employer demand underscores the region’s urgent need to better calibrate its current and future labor force to meet existing and emerging industry skills need. *The Coordinated SE PA System* offers a scalable intervention with catalytic potential to accelerate regional recovery and fuel equitable economic growth for years to come. If funded through the Good Jobs Challenge, the *Coordinated SE PA System* will undertake regional coordination to invest resources into an integrated workforce development model responsive to market demand, sensitive to community interest, and focused on COVID-considerate occupations that meet this critical moment to build back better.

Key Industries: Like many American cities, Southeastern Pennsylvania was reshaped during the second half of the 20th century as a consequence of deindustrialization. The early 2000s saw an economic revival driven in part by growth of the region’s “eds and meds” sector. Today, the Philadelphia MSA’s healthcare sector is the 4th largest in the US, accounting for 500,000+ supported jobs, and 7 of the 10 largest regional employers. The region’s position as a nationally recognized healthcare hub also fuels the flourishing Life Sciences industry which has attracted venture capital, startup and research investments, as well as occupational demand to the region. In 2019, CBRE and the RES Group asserted that “*the explosion of biotech and advanced life sciences*” in the region has resulted in less than a 2% vacancy rate of available lab space.⁴

Beyond “eds and meds,” expected infrastructure investments in bridges, roads and highways, broadband communications infrastructure, infrastructure resiliency, public and rail transit, solar power, and more will drive growth occupations within construction, energy, and other associated fields. In 2021, PhilaWorks prepared a labor analysis for the City of Philadelphia examining how labor supply will meet this expected demand. Findings highlighted the demand for *middle-skill occupations*, which make up the majority of occupations across these industries, present minimal education barriers, and meet quality job benchmarks for wages, benefits, and career growth. Per PhilaWorks: “*these anticipated infrastructure projects provide a critical opportunity for low-skill unemployed workers to transition into middle-skill occupations with livable wages. These candidates would need short or moderate-term job training and/or basic adult education to become qualified for top infrastructure jobs.*”⁵ Moreover, investment in workforce development for infrastructure and energy present the region with opportunities to forge a more inclusive and equitable workforce. Currently, these industries lack racial, ethnic, and gender diversity and include a significant concentration of mature or near-retirement workers - a majority identify as white, male and 45+ years old.

Industry Selection: To guide industry selection, PhilaWorks and *The Coordinated SE PA System’s* stakeholder network drew on partner experience, expertise, and multiple data sources – namely: PhilaWorks’ *2021 - 2022 Recovery Occupations Report* and a commissioned *Labor Market Analysis* by McKinsey & Company. Both sources identified key positions within Healthcare; Life Sciences; Infrastructure; and Green Energy jobs that:

- Are experiencing immediate demand and offer long-term growth during the pandemic.

⁴ [Market Assessment of Life Sciences Laboratory Space](#), RESGroup, CBRE, PIDC, & Dept. of Commerce, Philadelphia (2019)

⁵ *Assessing Workforce Development Needs of Prospective Infrastructure Projects*, Philadelphia Works, Inc (2021)

- Pay livable and family-sustaining wages, i.e. offer wages of \$15.00 or more.
- Offer career on-ramps for career-seekers with limited educational or work experience.
- Require an Associate’s Degree or less.
- Qualify as WIOA High Priority Occupations.

Healthcare and Life Sciences occupations provide some of the most promising opportunities for regional career seekers during the pandemic. These industries are deeply intertwined and connecting them under one Sectoral Partnership will enable PhilaWorks to leverage existing healthcare network relationships and programs to generate training modules focused on Life Sciences. Occupations in these fields provide multiple pathways, or “forks,” for career development. For example, a Nursing Assistant credential (CNA) who is seeking to increase their educational attainment and wages may consider a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) credential as just one option among many. This CNA may also build experience with programs of similar length and promise to that of an LPN, including Respiratory Therapists (median wage of \$30.00 hourly), or Medical or Clinical Laboratory Technician (median wage of \$29.00 hourly). Full-time positions in these fields may translate to earnings of more than \$60,000 for workers.⁶

Growth in the energy industry is outpacing the skilled workforce needed to meet employer need. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the clean energy industry was growing 4-7% faster than the overall statewide labor market. By the end of 2019, energy jobs accounted for just over two percent of all jobs in the state. Most solar developers were training entry level employees from scratch, creating a difficult, expensive labor market, and diversity in the industry lagged. Solar Installer is listed as the fastest-growing job in the U.S.⁷ and as a High Priority Occupation for Philadelphia County due to high employer demand for solar workers.

Infrastructure jobs boast substantial employment and annual hiring, separate from potential Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)-fueled growth. This makes Infrastructure jobs ideal occupations for cohort-based training and education programs. Employment placement opportunities can also be coordinated in sizeable groups with large and small local employers alike, benefiting both larger economic and small business interests at once. Although the Infrastructure jobs umbrella includes many occupation groups that are well-established in the Southeastern Pennsylvania region, it also includes occupations in which Green Energy growth is projected, according to the National Center for O*NET Development, and North Carolina State University⁸ and Emsi Burning Glass Insights.⁹ These include both traditionally conceived Energy jobs that have expanded to include Green Energy specializations, as well as Green Energy-Adjacent (or Green Energy-Impacted) jobs.

Target Participants: PhilaWorks expects to prioritize reaching and engaging communities of color, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, justice-impacted and reentry participants

⁶ [2021-2022 Recovery Occupations](#), Philadelphia Works (2021)

⁷ [Fastest Growing Occupations](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

⁸ [“Greening of the World of Work...”](#) Lewis, Rivkin, Dierdorff, Norton. (2009)

⁹ Emsi 2021 Q2 dataset.

and career seekers living in poverty, including those in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Additional priority populations may include individuals with lower literacy rates and/or those with English as a second language. To effectively reach these priority populations, PhilaWorks will take a two-pronged approach. First, leveraging existing resource networks such as PhilaWorks' Women in Non-traditional Careers (WINC) outreach and career exploration tools, existing funded apprenticeship readiness programs (e.g. WINC Tradeswomen Readiness Program and apprenticeships offered by Carpenters, Laborers and Finishing Trades, JATCs and CAPP), and established youth pipeline programs with partners like YOACAP, PowerCorpsPHL & YouthBuild. Then, to further bolster program recruitment and ensure inclusive participation, PhilaWorks is assembling a diverse group of service providers and community partners representing the entire 6-county region to collaboratively design Sectoral Partnerships. All partners have expertise in specific populations and/or are trusted partners in their neighborhoods. These partners will be actively engaged in planning and program development, to include securing input and perspective from program beneficiaries. These combined efforts center equity as a core priority informing the design of training models, outreach strategies, and wraparound service integration. PhilaWorks has specifically partnered with Philly Counts, a City of Philadelphia initiative with expertise in community engagement, for expert guidance and applied support on designing impactful outreach initiatives and messaging activated through existing neighborhood-based ambassadors and trusted social networks.

Proposed project's consistency with CEDS

The Coordinated SE PA System aligns with and advances key workforce priorities detailed in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) *Growing Greater Philadelphia*¹⁰, produced by The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in 2019. The CEDS covers a nine-county region – Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, as well as Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer in New Jersey. Per *Growing Greater Philadelphia*, the CEDS is the region's "strategy-driven framework to increase economic productivity, diversify local wealth, improve the culture for underrepresented businesses, and increase individual prosperity for the region's residents." One of four overarching strategic goals described in the CEDS is "Maximizing Human Capital Potential," with three supporting objectives: 1) Develop training to capitalize on the region's current and future workforce; 2) Increase job and career opportunities for underrepresented populations, such as minorities and women; and 3) Create job and career opportunities for nontraditional students, returning citizens, older workers, veterans, and immigrants. *The Coordinated SE PA System* offers a direct pathway to achieving these objectives and reaching these goals.

SECTION 4: IMPACTS OF REGIONAL WORKFORCE TRAINING SYSTEM

Identify and define the project phase

¹⁰ [Growing Greater Philadelphia](#), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (DVRPC, September 2019)

If awarded funding through the Good Jobs Challenge, all three Sectoral Partnerships will commence work at the System Development Phase.

Explain how the project meets The EDA’s Recovery & Resilience investment priority

The Coordinated SE PA System aligns with and advances a number of the EDA’s Recovery & Resilience Investment Priorities including Equity, Recovery & Resilience, and Workforce Development. Specifically, *The Coordinated SE PA System* will be designed to directly benefit underserved populations and historically marginalized communities within the 6-county region, such as communities of color, disconnected youth, individuals in recovery, justice-impacted and reentry participants, and career seekers living in poverty, including those in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Women, Infants and Children (WIC). *The Coordinated SE PA System* is sharply aligned to advance the EDA’s Workforce Development priority and will leverage employer and industry partnerships to develop workforce readiness for a pipeline of career growth opportunities that promise family-sustaining wages and career advancement within growing regional industries.

Describe the number and type of jobs expected to be available

The Coordinated SE PA System aims to connect an estimated 3,000 – 4,000 workers to jobs by October 2025. Each Sectoral Partnership has preliminarily defined likely output occupations, as well as provided a preliminary and conservative estimate for the number of jobs to be placed. PhilaWorks expects to extend preliminary estimations through Partnership expansion during the System Design Phase of work. Currently, for Healthcare & Life Sciences, WPSI expects project activities to yield between 600 and 1,000 jobs across the following occupations within Healthcare: *Patient Services Associates, Patient Care Associates, Unit Secretaries, Medical Assistants, Pharmacy Technicians, Patient Services Representatives, Clinic Aides, Clinical Support Associates & Phlebotomists*. Within Life Sciences: *Warehouse Associates, Manufacturing Technician Associates, GMP Cleaning Technicians/Lab Commercial Cleaners, & Lab Technicians*. For Energy, PEA expects project activities to yield between 250 and 500 jobs across the following occupations: *Solar Installers, Solar Designers and Salespeople, Equipment Suppliers, Teachers and Trainers, Energy Auditors, Weatherization and Solar Technicians, and Utility Line Workers*. For Infrastructure, PALM expects to yield at least 500 jobs in the following occupations: *Laborer, Highway & Heavy Laborer, Electrician, Carpenter, Rod Setter, Cement Mason, Plumber, Pipefitter, Sprinkler Fitter, Operating Engineer, Boilermaker, Rigger, Iron Worker, Insulator and Painter*.

Explain why the proposed partnership and system is achievable.

The Coordinated SE PA System will build off existing regional momentum to coordinate, collaborate, and accelerate regional workforce and economic development initiatives. It will leverage proven methodologies for workforce training, curriculum design, and employer & industry engagement through partnerships with established, experienced, credentialed, and reputable Backbone Organizations. *The Coordinated SE PA System* will capitalize on the aligned interest and sense of urgency from employers who are eager to meet labor needs. To sustain the program beyond the grant period, stakeholder networks will explore supplemental funding

avenues including WIOA and other workforce funds, primed philanthropic sources, many of whom have already signaled interest, as well as industry partnership groups, which often present opportunities for pairing public funds with collective employer-funding to meet identified sector needs. Funding from the Good Jobs Challenge will enable PhilaWorks and partners to establish a prototype capable of producing meaningful and measurable outcomes. This, in turn, will position the network to compete for and secure additional resources to sustain, supplement, and expand the model over time.

SECTION 5: FUNDING REQUEST AND PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

PhilaWorks is requesting a total of \$24,343,596 from the Good Jobs Challenge to support the development, launch, implementation and evaluation of *The SE PA Coordinated System*.

Describe anticipated projects specific to the three phases

As System Lead Entity, PhilaWorks will identify opportunities for 1) cross-sector collaboration, 2) fundraising, and 3) network growth. PhilaWorks will facilitate and drive synergistic opportunities for peer exchange learning, transferrable skill training, and system-wide service coordination. Below are descriptions of activities for each sectoral partnership by phase.

Healthcare & Life Sciences

Phase #1: System Development (3 months)

- **Refine & adapt WPSI's process for gathering skills needs from employers:** including documenting specific strategies for engaging existing healthcare & life science partners, and engaging experts in other regions for peer learning around skills gathering for life sciences.
- **Adapt WPSI's skills training approach to life sciences.** WPSI's approach is customized to specific employer need and includes foundational courses, as well as specialized classes. WPSI will adapt its methodology to meet life sciences skills needs, including engaging technical skills providers and growing train-the-trainer materials.
- **Analyze and assess current staff and staff capacity** to determine if additional personnel would be required to fully execute & support *The SE PA Coordinated System*.
- **Codify model for presenting data to strengthen partners' case to employers.** WPSI uses a Job and Onboarding Fact Sheet with a Job Quality Rubric to compile and compare employer skills needs, strategies, HR systems, employee supports, culture markers, and other indicative measures of job quality as they impact talent acquisition and retention. This tool, in conjunction with relationship stewardship and trust-building, is an essential component towards mobilizing employer partners to adopt high-wage and high-skills workforce strategies. During System Development, WPSI will codify its approach for replication.

Phase #2: Program Design (9 months)

- **Develop training model & curriculum:** Define, with employers, in-demand (immediate & anticipated) industry roles; using past experience and success as a model, work with employers to identify opportunities for degree elimination – co-designing training programs that satisfy job requirements while removing degree specifications, thereby opening up quality career ladder opportunities.

- **Engage employer partners and secure hiring commitments;** letters will detail specific numbers and type of roles the employer commits to hiring.
- **Develop and refine outreach and engagement strategies:** Engage workforce boards and employers to identify training providers that can provide technical job-specific skills training; build relationships with additional CBOs to understand their service populations and develop targeted recruitment materials; pursue media to amplify messaging; and expand WPSI's Salesforce infrastructure to be shareable across entities.

Phase #3 – Program Implementation (24 months)

- **Recruit underserved workers who are unemployed or underemployed to participate:** design events (virtual and in person) to create awareness of the programs; and leverage CBO network to disseminate opportunities, advise on recruitment, and extend outreach.
- **Deliver skills training:** Execute train-the-trainer programs.
- **Provide wraparound services:** Implement virtual coach-matching platform (GoCoach) to ensure participants have access to coaching during the program and the critical first 90 days on the job; utilize UniteUs to connect individuals to additional resources for support.
- **Place workers into well-paying, quality jobs:** Trainings will include embedded interview days with employer partners; career seekers not extended offers will continue to receive support to ensure placement within 90 days of training program completion.

Energy

Phase #1: System Development (6 months)

- **Expand stakeholder network:** Create Employer led Occupational Advisory Board (OAB) committed to creating opportunities and access for participants; engage Employer Partners of the energy stakeholder network to survey their workforce needs and invite them to participate in the OAB; work with local Workforce Investment Boards to identify participants and resources; work with PA Department of Labor to leverage employer incentives, including On-the Job Trainings, training assignments, and short-term insurance for participants. Identify CBOs with resources to provide supportive services, training space, recruitment, and case management resources to the project participants.
- **Engage partner & set metrics:** Incorporate research and coalition stakeholder feedback into ongoing efforts; establish a goal to train at least 15 participants in each county using the existing GRIT and Bright Solar Futures training resources; and meet with coalition partners quarterly to better connect existing programs and resources.

Phase #2: Program Design (6 months)

- **Develop training model & curriculum:** Confirm in-demand industry roles with employers to anticipate workforce needs; determine skills needs from employers, including position-specific expertise as well as general professional development and life skills training towards defining which soft skills training to focus on via wraparound service partnerships; confirm non-degree training and certificate pathways that lead to well-paying careers; ensure access to employment by identifying pathways at all levels of educational attainment and creating access to stackable, portable industry-recognized credentials.

- **Engage employer partners and secure hiring commitments:** scale mid-training internship opportunities to provide participants with on-the-job experiences pre-graduation; increase networking opportunities between employers and program participants; kickoff out-of-school programming to connect high school students and opportunity youth to industry leaders in clean energy to forge mentorship opportunities; host in-person and virtual special events that expose program participants to the spectrum of green job opportunities; and work closely with the PA Dept of Labor to secure employer incentives that hire through network partners (to include Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to further a learn and earn model, pre-apprenticeships, and bonding opportunities).
- **Develop and refine plans to support robust outreach and engagement towards recruiting workers from priority populations:** Continue relationship building with community-based organizations (CBOs) to understand their service populations and develop targeted recruitment materials, including information sessions in partnership with CBO; expand reach to local level elected officials to disseminate training opportunities.

Phase #3 – Program Implementation (24 months)

- **Recruit underserved workers who are unemployed or underemployed to participate:** Enroll a total of 360 participants in new Bright Solar Futures and GRIT cohorts across the six counties; work with partners to pilot at least one cohort of GRIT and one cohort of the BSF Out-of-School model by providing toolkits, marketing materials, and curriculums for each training; continue to place graduates in energy-related job placements utilizing a 12-month follow-up model.
- **Deliver skills training:** Launch new cohorts for Bright Solar Futures and GRIT. Cohort models will incorporate feedback from coalition partners gathered during the system development and program design phases.
- **Provide wrap-around services to workers:** Deliver calibrated training programs and access to wrap-around services; and execute partnerships between existing workforce training programs and regional workforce development providers.
- **Place workers into well-paying, quality jobs:** Mobilize the employer-led Occupational Advisory Board committed to hiring participants from the project.

Infrastructure

Phase #1: System Development (12 months)

- Expand the network by recruiting additional owners and users of construction as well as industry associations.
- Increase outreach to surrounding counties and develop articulation agreements with training facilities in Delaware, Chester, Bucks, Berks, and Montgomery counties that specify hiring commitments and parameters.
- Work with labor and management partners to refine curriculum design and recruitment strategies.
- In consultation with the various apprenticeship programs, PALM will work with its partners to improve customization of pre-apprenticeship activities to meet apprenticeship needs.

Phase #2: Program Design (12 months)

- Implement training, recruitment and placement activities on a test basis. PALM's history with similar programs has indicated that refinement and fine tuning are essential after the initial program has run its course.
- Convene a review board made up of all stakeholders to assess program performance on an ongoing basis.
- Apply feedback & findings towards program operation improvements. PALM anticipates focusing specifically on assessing sufficiency of training, wraparound service needs and effectiveness and participant placement and retention.

Phase #3 – Program Implementation (12 months)

- Expand the training platform, incorporating system enhancements defined in Phase 2, including mechanisms for reaching underserved workers and career-seekers through calibrated wraparound services.
- Track placements and retention metrics to continue to refine and improve the program.
- Identify and develop resources to assure program continuation beyond the end of the Good Jobs Challenge funding period, to including leveraging the Good Jobs Challenge grant to pursue other opportunities.
- It is expected that institutional partners who participate in this grant will carry the work forward into the future, including the Laborers District Council Training Facility, local owners desiring increased diversity on their projects, and participating employers, building trades councils and their affiliates.

5c. Identify any anticipated barriers to worker participation and how you plan to mitigate the impact of those barriers.

Career-seekers throughout the 6-county region face a range of challenges and barriers preventing their participation or advancement in the labor market, to include access to childcare, reliable transportation, prior criminal record, income level, language and other barriers. PhilaWorks will draw on the expertise, insight, and experience of stakeholders and partners – all of whom have specific expertise in serving specific populations and/or are considered trusted partners in their neighborhoods - to prioritize wraparound services and integrate delivery models within *The Coordinated SE PA System*. For example, to address low literacy rates, Integrated Education and Training models will be explored. These types of training models blend basic adult education and technical skills training for specific occupations. For those with a history of justice involvement, services like expungement clinics and specialized job search preparation sessions will be offered to teach individuals how to best position their experiences while interviewing. Transportation has been a long-standing barrier for individuals' success in training and employment. *The Coordinated SE PA System* will leverage its stakeholder network to gain access to regional transportation authorities, private companies and others to explore creative solutions or wraparound services to improve transportation access.