



CONTACT: Samantha Byles
Bellevue Communications
Office: 215-893-4287
Cell: 857-869-0822

EducationWorks Receives \$503,000 Grant to Support Workforce Development through PowerCorpsPHL

Awarded by the Lenfest Foundation, the grant will be used to expand programming to develop additional career pathways for its members.

PHILADELPHIA (August 15, 2017) - EducationWorks, a nonprofit provider of out-of-school, in-school, and workforce development programming for young adults, today announced that it has received a \$503,000 grant from the Lenfest Foundation. The grant will directly support PowerCorpsPHL, a City of Philadelphia AmeriCorps program operated in partnership with EducationWorks that supports the City's environmental and sustainability initiatives through workforce development and career training for young adults between the ages of 18 and 26, many of whom are returning citizens.

The grant will specifically support the launch of an enhanced program model for PowerCorpsPHL, which will deepen employer partnerships and lengthen the career support available to program participants. With the additional funding, PowerCorpsPHL aims to better prepare participants for a wider range of job opportunities and career pathways that lead to permanent, living wage jobs. Program participants will be able to pursue advanced education and training in one or more of the following areas: Green Infrastructure, Skilled Trades, Community Outreach and Leadership Development.

"PowerCorpsPHL members who remain engaged in the program beyond their initial 6-month term of service have shown better employment outcomes and realize increased opportunities for career advancement," said PowerCorpsPHL Executive Director Lisa Varon. "The research demonstrates that employees who are a part of on-the-job training programs or internships are more likely to have increased wages and greater workforce outcomes," she said, referencing a 2014 report from the US Department of Labor, *What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence*, which identifies successful techniques to improve employment and educational outcomes for young adults. "This investment will allow us to make such opportunities available to more of our PowerCorps members."

"A primary focus of PowerCorpsPHL has and will always be to develop career pathways, and by lengthening the program and guaranteeing a longer term of service, PowerCorps members will be provided with a greater opportunity to explore jobs and see what it takes to make it them a career," said EducationWorks CEO Miles Wilson. "Through our partnership with the City of Philadelphia and funds from the Lenfest Foundation, we can continue to expose PowerCorps members to long-term careers in niche industries that directly impact the communities that they live in."

PowerCorpsPHL is one of several existing City programs which will support a citywide workforce development strategy initiated by Mayor Jim Kenney's administration. The strategy, being developed by the City's Managing Director's Office and Department of Commerce, is aimed at promoting growth with equity by creating career pathways connected to high-growth industries; better aligning training



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programs with the current and future needs of employers; and improving access to employment for populations facing barriers.

Additionally, a number of city sustainability initiatives, including the 25-year “Green City, Clean Waters” program that aims to reduce stormwater pollution through green infrastructure and the Office of Sustainability’s “Greenworks Vision for a Sustainable Philadelphia,” have recognized PowerCorpsPHL as an important tool for improving the health and well-being of the city.

“My administration is committed to ensuring every Philadelphian has the opportunity to thrive and succeed, and sustainability is a key part of that – clean water, greener neighborhoods, and quality infrastructure systems ensure that residents are living in healthy environments,” said City of Philadelphia Mayor James Kenney. “To make that a reality, we have to invest in Philadelphians and help create a workforce that has the capability to develop and maintain these spaces for generations to come. PowerCorpsPHL is an exemplary workforce development tool, providing career pathways for opportunity youth in our city, and I am thrilled the Lenfest Foundation is providing funding for EducationWorks to expand the program.”

Over PowerCorpsPHL’s first four years, EducationWorks has engaged 358 young adults in removing 230 tons of debris, planting 6,000 trees, and revitalizing 3,750 acres of public land by building trails, restoring creek beds, constructing rain gardens, elevating trees for safety, and removing invasive plants to allow native plants to thrive. 80% of PowerCorpsPHL participants who complete a six-month term of AmeriCorps service transition successfully to employment, post-secondary education and/or additional national service.

PowerCorpsPHL will work to implement the enhanced program model for a new cohort of members that are welcomed in September.

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