

# HELP WANTED

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS NEEDED

## HOW CAN WE CONNECT OUR RESIDENTS TO JOBS WITH BENEFITS AND ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

## HOW CAN WE PROVIDE OUR EMPLOYERS WITH WORKERS THAT FUEL PROSPERITY AND PRODUCTIVITY?

Committed workers seeking career opportunities that pay family sustaining wages and empower them to transition away from government support.

New Philadelphians eager to apply their knowledge and pursue the American Dream.

Workers stuck at the bottom rung of the ladder poised to climb and succeed.

Former industrial workers wanting to transition into new careers as production job opportunities decline.

Young adults aspiring to learn, teach, and lead.

Young people seeking entry-level jobs in a secure field with career possibilities.

Adults actively learning basic computer applications and eager to apply their analytical skills.

Seasoned administrative professionals ready to learn new technical skills and re-enter the workforce.

Recent high school graduates looking to embark on a career rather than remediate in college.

Skilled and career-minded individuals who are under-employed but seeking full-time, hands-on work with long-term potential.

Former residents of the correctional system seeking a GED and a second chance.

Parents of school-age children focused on working outside the home.

Expanding weatherization employers seeking to train and retain motivated workers.

Businesses in need of thousands of qualified customer service specialists with strong communication, technical, and people skills.

More than 120,000 new managers needed across all sectors of our economy.

Life sciences looking for a large number of skilled scientists and technicians.

Medical laboratories and bio-manufacturing firms seeking laboratory technicians.

Seeking clerical workers with transferable competencies and technological skills.

Growing health and human service providers searching for employees at all levels.

Advanced manufacturing industry seeking technically skilled workers.

Seeking entry-level workers with skills to adapt and advance in the workplace.

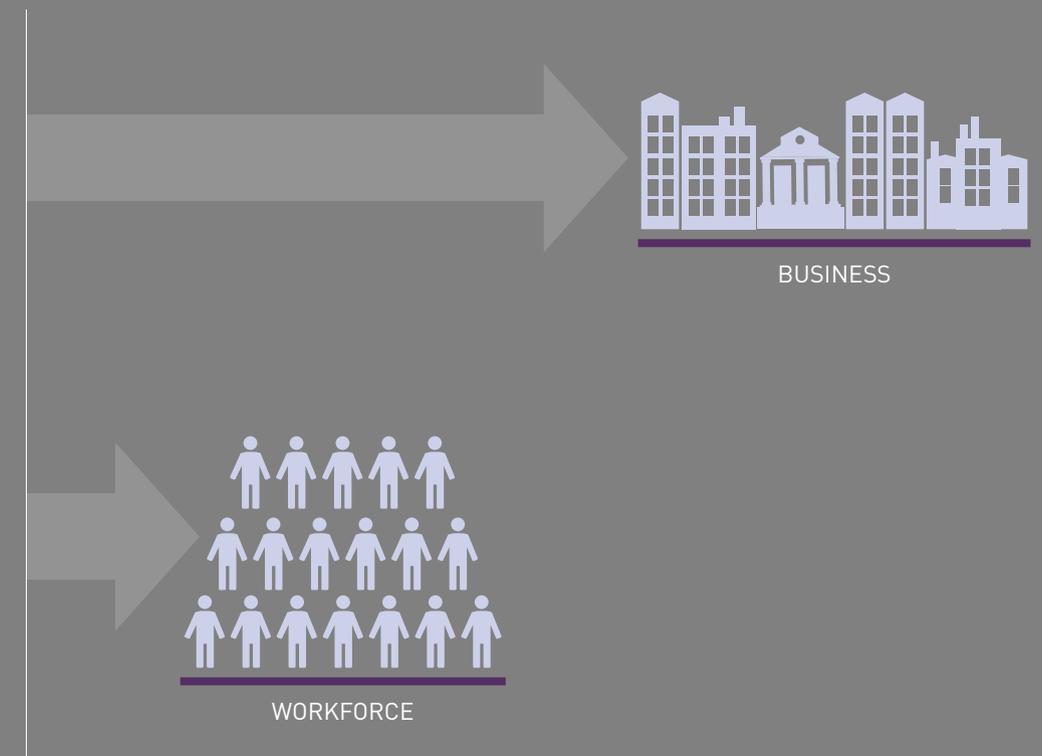
Medical employers and insurers hiring a large number of health information technologists.

Hospitals needing more than 54,000 nurses across Pennsylvania in the next 12 years.

A school system seeking the next generation of educators to inspire tomorrow's workers.

**CONNECTING PEOPLE TO GOOD OPPORTUNITIES IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS IT SEEMS. IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, BUSINESS DEMANDS A NEW KIND OF WORKER WITH STRONG BASIC SKILLS. AS OUR ECONOMY RECOVERS, PHILADELPHIA WILL NOT HAVE THE SUPPLY TO MEET THIS DEMAND.**

THERE IS A GROWING GAP BETWEEN THE ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF OUR BUSINESSES AND THE FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS OF OUR PEOPLE. WHILE OUR BUSINESSES HAVE RAPIDLY ADVANCED AND EVOLVED, WE HAVE NOT INVESTED THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR OUR PEOPLE TO KEEP PACE.



Our future depends on closing this gap. By preparing Philadelphians with the skills, knowledge, and abilities they need to be successful now and in the future, we will position Philadelphia and the region at the forefront of the global economy — educated, innovative, and prosperous.

WANTED:

### HUMAN CAPITAL

Technology, globalization, innovation: these and other factors have contributed to a seismic shift in our economy.

Consider this: thirty years ago, one in four jobs in Philadelphia was in manufacturing. These jobs required little, if any, formal education but a great deal of skill that could be learned on the job. Today, one in twenty jobs is in manufacturing, and these positions require both a great deal of skill and education.

While manufacturing provides a dramatic example, there is not a single industry sector in our economy that has not been touched by this major workforce trend. Employers across all industries are demanding a new kind of worker. They must be highly literate, skilled in problem solving and quantitative reasoning, proficient with information technologies, and able to communicate, respond to change, and work collaboratively. Considering its industry mix, Philadelphia demands a greater concentration of workers with these competencies than the surrounding suburbs or the state.

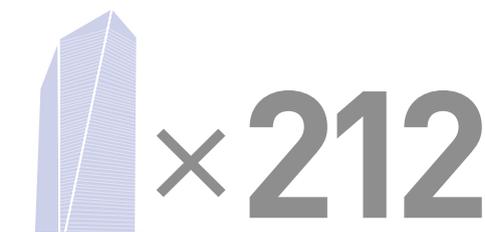
WANTED:

### A NIMBLE WORKFORCE

Human capital is the currency of our new economy. Today's workers must quickly adapt to change and assimilate new information. They must stand ready to move into the fields of tomorrow, created through the innovation of today.

The challenge is that we are not competing as we should today, and we are certainly not prepared to take advantage of what is coming tomorrow. Over 202,000 adults in Philadelphia have not obtained a high school diploma, and many of those who did complete high school have not acquired the basic skills needed to obtain good jobs and advance into a career.

Over 50 percent of working-age Philadelphians — approximately 550,000 individuals — need to develop their workforce literacy skills. That's 550,000 Philadelphians who are unprepared to compete in our knowledge-based economy or to successfully complete a post-secondary degree. That's 550,000 people whose talents and abilities have not been activated and who are not yet able to fully contribute to our region's economic growth and productivity. That's 550,000 opportunities for our city, our economy, and our families to grow stronger, wealthier, and healthier.



> APPROXIMATELY 212 NEW CIRA CENTERS WOULD EMPLOY 550,000 PEOPLE.

### RAISING THE BAR

#### LITERACY LEVELS IN PHILADELPHIA COMPARED TO PENNSYLVANIA



Right now a little more than 50 percent of Philadelphia's adults are low literate, which means that more than half of our neighbors struggle to follow written instructions or complete a form — such as a job application or paperwork required for their child's school.

**WANTED:****THE FOUNDATION FOR A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY**

Literacy proficiencies of the population are a key determinant of the quality of the workforce and are found to have a close, positive association with economic growth and living standards.

Because they have not yet had the opportunity to fully develop their literacy skills, over 50 percent of Philadelphia's working-age adults are currently only able to compete for one-third of the jobs that are available in today's economy. That's approximately 550,000 individuals qualified for roughly 211,000 jobs available in Philadelphia.

**> IN A WORLD WHERE BUSINESS CAN GO VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE TO FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE, TO COMPETE, PHILADELPHIA MUST COMMIT TO BECOMING A CITY WITH A WORLD-CLASS, HIGHLY LITERATE WORKFORCE.**

**WANTED:****A WORKFORCE THAT FUELS THE GROWTH OF A HEALTHY ECONOMY**

Make no mistake about it: **this is a crisis.**

Without an immediate and purposeful investment in elevating the literacy proficiencies of our adults, Philadelphia will fall further behind in the global, knowledge-based economy.

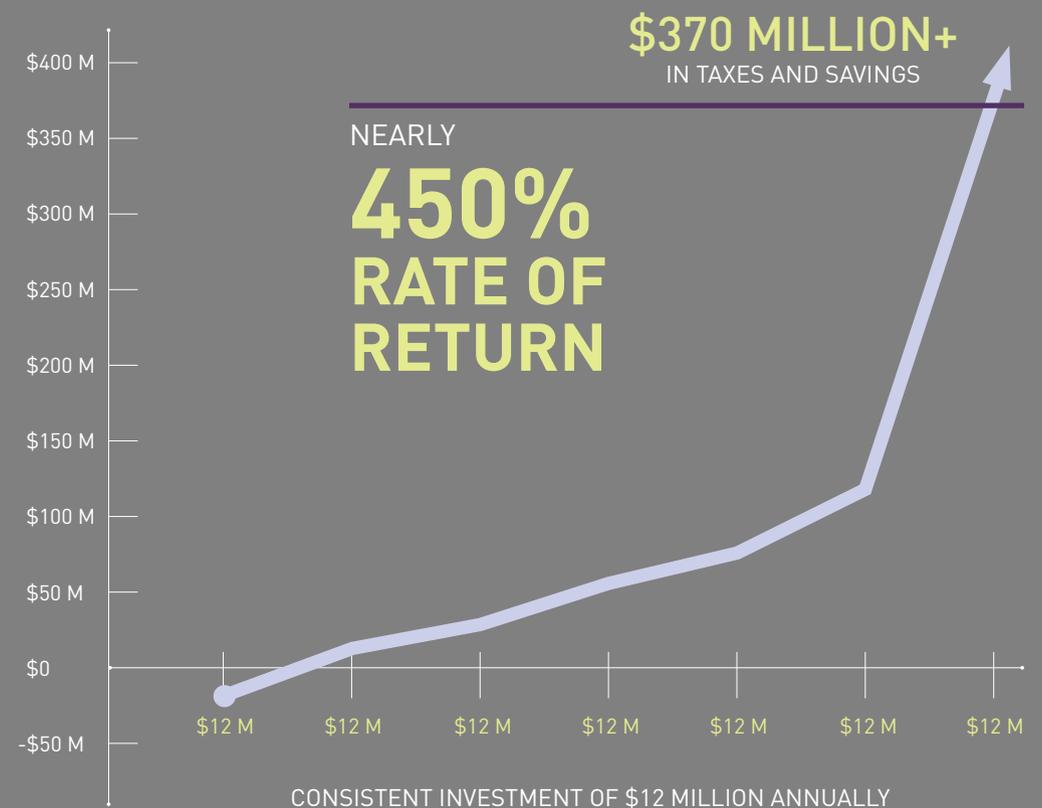
There are two paths.

If we continue as we are, simply addressing this issue at the margins, by 2030, an additional 50,000 more Philadelphians will not have the basic literacy skills to compete in the economic mainstream.

Or, we can forge a new path that confronts this challenge directly and fundamentally realigns our workforce to meet the needs of our new economy. In Philadelphia, select providers have created and piloted workforce literacy courses with remarkable results. Participants initially testing at less than a 7th grade level in both reading and math made average gains of two and a half grade levels in only 10-12 weeks. More than half of the participants secured new employment or decided to pursue post-secondary education, and many students earned their adult high school diploma.

United we can and must capitalize on this success. We must invest time, talent, and treasure in strategies that work and continue to pioneer new partnerships and programs that allow our city and its people to prosper in the new economy. It will take leadership. It will require strategic investments. It will demand our collective will.

Research suggests that a strategic investment of \$12 million a year over the next seven years in work-specific intensive literacy courses would result in taxes and savings to the City of Philadelphia of more than \$370 million.

**STRATEGIC INVESTMENT AND RETURN FOR THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS**

While this is a significant amount in these tenuous economic times, there are very few other opportunities where you can invest and expect a nearly 450% rate of return. Over this seven-year period, 21,818 individuals could advance their skills and position themselves for opportunities in our dynamic knowledge economy.

**WANTED:****A WORKING AND THRIVING CITY**

The benefits of increasing the literacy levels and improving the competencies of our residents translate to every segment of our city and its economy.



FOR **OUR COMMUNITY**, INCREASED LITERACY MEANS A HIGHER CALIBER WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH, HEALTHIER CHILDREN, AND GREATER WEALTH. IT ALSO MEANS AN INCREASED NUMBER OF TAXPAYERS AND REDUCED DEPENDENCY ON PUBLIC RESOURCES.



FOR **OUR BUSINESSES**, BETTER SKILLS AMONG WORKERS TRANSLATE TO A MORE PRODUCTIVE, PROFICIENT, AND PROFITABLE LABOR FORCE, INCREASED RETENTION, AND REDUCED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COSTS. BUSINESSES WITH THE FORESIGHT TO INVEST IN THEIR TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN DIFFICULT TIMES ARE POSITIONED TO GROW QUICKLY AS THE ECONOMY RECOVERS.



FOR **INDIVIDUALS**, INCREASED BASIC LITERACY OPENS DOORS TO BETTER JOBS, HIGHER WAGES, MORE SECURE EMPLOYMENT, AND ADDITIONAL EDUCATION INCLUDING COLLEGE. MORE EDUCATION ALSO HAS A PROFOUNDLY POSITIVE IMPACT ON ALL FAMILY MEMBERS, INCLUDING INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT CHILDREN WILL COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL AND GO ON TO COLLEGE THEMSELVES.

**THE CHOICE IS OURS.**

EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO INCREASE THE LITERACY LEVELS OF OUR RESIDENTS. HOWEVER, TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE, WE MUST UNITE TO PREPARE OUR PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS THEY NEED SO WE CAN ALL BE SUCCESSFUL.

**HOW CAN YOU BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION?**

## HELP WANTED

### CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY POWER BROKERS

- Exercise leadership in articulating and addressing the challenge.
- Demand the new investments in adult workforce literacy that are necessary to transform our economy.

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### EMPLOYERS

- Collaborate with literacy providers to develop progressive workforce literacy programs that respond to business needs.
- Encourage and reward those employees who strive to enhance their skills.

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### ADULT EDUCATION COMMUNITY

- Lead, collaborate, and adapt to meet the changing demands of the 21st century economy by fostering practices that center on workforce development.
- Exercise scrutiny over the adult literacy system.
- Establish and report on metrics that link to economic outcomes.

## HELP WANTED

### ADULT LEARNERS

- Take control of your careers and economic futures by re-engaging in education.
- Focus on success and motivate others to follow in your footsteps.

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### LABOR UNIONS

- Include adult education as part of every negotiation.
- Educate employers about the necessity and benefit of investments in their workers.
- Facilitate employer-provider skills training partnerships in the interest of your members.

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### THE CITY

- Lead, invest, and collaborate in tackling this issue: Philadelphia's most compelling human capital challenge.
- Establish a sustainability plan for adult education programs that is driven by our city's workforce needs.

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**FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHERS,  
PLEASE CONTACT EXCEL PHILADELPHIA.**

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## JOIN US IN SECURING OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE.

EXCEL PHILADELPHIA IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE PHILADELPHIA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD. IT WAS CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILADELPHIA'S LITERACY COMMUNITY TO GENERATE NEW KNOWLEDGE AND ADVOCATE FOR THE ISSUE OF ADULT WORKFORCE LITERACY.

The purpose of Excel Philadelphia is to inform, engage, and mobilize the full community — employers, educators, adult literacy providers, government, other stakeholders, and, of course, adult learners — to create the conditions necessary to support literacy gains, particularly among working adults.

Learn more and download the companion research and policy briefs at [pwib.org](http://pwib.org).

We call our body of work around adult literacy “Excel Philadelphia” for a reason: this publication honors the remarkable courage of adult learners and the talented and committed professionals who teach them. Thank you for being at the heart of what makes our city great.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Help Wanted* was years in the making and benefitted from many dedicated contributors and champions along the way. The journey began with a visionary board chair — **George E. Davis** — who recognized that adult literacy was a core workforce issue and gave us the support to begin pursuing direct solutions to this challenging dilemma. **The Verizon Foundation** was an early supporter of this work and enabled us to convene a task force in 2004 that included **Pat Coyle** (Rohm & Haas, retired), **Cheryl Feldman** (District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund), **Ronald Hinton Jr.** (Allegheny West Foundation), **Diane C. Inverso** (Mayor's Commission on Literacy), **Eric Rabe** (Verizon), **JoAnn Weinberger** (Center for Literacy), and the National Center on Adult Literacy, represented by **Graham Finney**, **Dr. Daniel A Wagner**, and **Dr. Janet C. Smith**. **Linda McAleer** (The Melior Group) conducted our employer focus groups and was instrumental (along with **Jeanette Aaron**) in gathering input and framing the new direction.

**Susan Gewirtz** of the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** made this new direction possible. In addition to providing funding, she volunteered advice at key junctures along the way. We must also express our gratitude to **Dr. Paul Harrington**, **Dr. Neeta Fogg**, and their colleagues at the **Center for Labor Market Studies**, **Northeastern University** who created the original model necessary to quantify the gap between the literacy levels of our people and the literacy demands of our employers.

The adult literacy community in Philadelphia has been a long-standing partner in this work. Their dedication to advancing the skills of our workforce, their commitment to system change, and their frank and honest assessment of current conditions made this work possible. Specifically, we want to acknowledge the **Workforce Solutions Collaborative**, a group that has taken the lead in developing a unified, universally accessible workforce literacy system in the greater Philadelphia area.

The programmatic innovation fostered by the Collaborative would not have been possible without funding from the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), administered by **Rose Brandt**, who has now come home to Philadelphia, and her successor at the state, **Michael Westover**. In Philadelphia, we celebrate **Temple University**, **Center for Social Policy and Community Development** and **District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund** for designing pilot projects to be delivered at Philadelphia's PA CareerLink Centers, as well as the wonderful staffs at our North and Northwest Centers for working tirelessly to develop solutions for integrating literacy into the workforce system. Yes, it can be done!

Additionally we would like to thank our communications partners including the talented team at **Paragraph, Inc.**, who developed the concept, copy, and design for *Help Wanted* as well as the exceptional efforts of **Bellevue Communications Group** and **Group SJR** who have helped increase awareness of this critical issue and compelling publication.

Others who have provided substantive input and support along the way include **Patricia A. Coulter** (Philadelphia Urban League), **David Fair** (United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania), **Don Kligerman** (Fairmount Ventures), **Dr. Lori Shorr** (City of Philadelphia), and **David B. Thornburgh** (Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania).

Special thanks to the volunteers from our board who came together to help us launch *Help Wanted: Knowledge Workers Needed*. We ask a great deal of our board members, and we are grateful for their energy and commitment to this body of work.

Finally, none of this would have happened without our colleague **Lauren Hirshon**, who took Excel Philadelphia on in 2005 and has nurtured it brilliantly ever since!



**Sallie A. Glickman**  
CEO, Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board



**Roosevelt Hairston Jr**  
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*Advancing our economy through our people.*

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