

NEWS RELEASE

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JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA RECEIVES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR GRANT TO PREPARE YOUNG ADULTS FOR THE WORKFORCE

Workforce Pathways for Youth Demonstration Grant Will Support JA Initiatives in Five States

PHILADELPHIA, PA (January 4, 2024) – Junior Achievement (JA) of Southeastern Pennsylvania announced that it is one of five JA offices across the United States to participate in a \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor as part of its Workforce Pathways for Youth demonstration initiative. With the support of JA USA, Junior Achievement operations in five states are developing a Workforce Pathways program that will lead to a national offering. JA SEPA will be receiving \$180,000 over three years as a part of this grant.

In addition to the Commonwealth of PA (JA of Southeastern Pennsylvania – the Philadelphia area), it is also happening in California (JA of Northern California – The Bay Area), Indiana (JA of Southwestern Indiana – Evansville area); New York (JA of Western New York – Buffalo area) and Virginia (JA of Southwest Virginia – Roanoke area).

“Junior Achievement has a long history serving students from kindergarten through high school,” said Stephanie Gambone, President & CEO. “In recent years, JA’s robust content and programs (including financial literacy and career readiness) have proven to be valuable for young adults, as well. We are thrilled to have received this recognition as local JA areas are increasingly tapped to take part in workforce conversations and this grant is an extension of that existing work.”

The JA Area offices will deploy age-appropriate workforce readiness resources for youth between 14 and 21, primarily in rural areas. These resources will address soft skill development, career exploration, job readiness, work-based learning opportunities, and other experiences such as summer jobs and apprenticeships.

In support of the initiative, as well as JA’s desire to more effectively connect young adults to workforce and postsecondary education pathways, JA is launching several existing and new initiatives focused on this young adult space, covering the areas of coaching, credentialing, badging and a talent marketplace complete with resume tools and connection to employment. (SmartResume)

The launch of JA's Workforce strategy will support the creation of new partnerships between local workforce development boards and youth-serving out-of-school organizations, establishing new connections and strengthening the density of existing connections with local workforce partners, community organizations, and other nonprofits.

About the Grant

To support workforce development programs that prepare young people and help them access good-paying careers, the U.S. Department of Labor recently awarded \$14 million in grants to seven organizations in five states to deliver workforce services when youth are out of school.

The **Workforce Pathways for Youth** demonstration grants being made to parent organizations in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia and Virginia are intended to support recipients' efforts to supply workforce readiness programming for historically underserved youth from ages 14 to 21 in 21 states and American Samoa.

Organizations will deliver job training and develop summer and year-round workforce pathway opportunities for youth and include strategies such as soft skills development, career exploration, job readiness and industry-based certifications. These strategies may also include proven earn-and-learn models of pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships.

About Junior Achievement of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Junior Achievement of Southeastern PA equips young people for economic mobility and the pursuit of their own ambitions.

In collaboration with educators, community organizations, and businesses, we ensure young people (5-25) have access to high quality financial education and career-readiness learning experiences to inspire possibilities, prepare them for careers, and build skills to succeed. With a focus on under-resourced communities and expanded programming for middle and high school students, we provide foundational and scalable solutions that elevate all young people in Southeastern Pennsylvania to be future-ready. Please visit <https://southeasternpa.ja.org/>