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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA

House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing
Community-Based Workforce Centers

Monday, April 28, 2025 | 1:00 p.m.
Representative Carol Hill-Evans

OPENING REMARKS

1:00 p.m. Rep. Carol Hill-Evans, D-York

PANEL ONE

1:05 p.m. Dr. Scott Rogers, Administrative Director
York County School of Technology

Jacqueline Martino-Miller, Charter School Chief Executive Officer
Crispus Attucks York

Q & A with Legislators

PANEL TWO

1:35 p.m. Melissa Longenberger, Executive Director, Workforce Now Foundation
York Builders Association

AliceAnn Frost, Executive Director
TecCentro York

Q & A with Legislators

PANEL THREE

2:05 p.m. Sully Pinos, Executive Director, BLOOM Business Empowerment Center
York County Economic Alliance

Q & A with Legislators

Remarks and Testimony can be found by scanning the QR Code below:

Monday, April 28, 2025

Pennsylvania House Democratic Policy Committee

Prepared Testimony of Scott Rogers, Administrative Director, York County School of Technology

Chairman Bizarro, Rep. Carol Hill-Evans, and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee, we are proud to host you today and I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the importance of workforce centers to train students for rewarding careers in Pennsylvania.

My name is Scott Rogers, and I serve as the Administrative Director of York County School of Technology - or York Tech - a comprehensive technical school that offers a well-rounded curriculum.

I've worked in education for over twenty-five years and have served in leadership roles at the York County School of Technology since 2009.

For the last twenty-two years, I have worked in career and technical education and have watched firsthand the demand as more students and families recognize the power of technical education to build careers and thriving lives in our local Pennsylvania communities.

We are proud to host you today and share our students' success through career and technical education.

York Tech was established in 1969 as the York County Vocational Technical School. This year, we celebrate our 56th birthday.

We opened our doors after over a decade of research regarding the need for a regional technical school and the decision to implement a full-time comprehensive technical delivery model for high school students as well as an Adult Education Department to serve the community's workforce needs.

Today, in 2025, the York County School of Technology continues to serve and deliver the workforce training needs for York County and South Central Pennsylvania across various in-demand technical program training programs.

We serve students in grades 9-12 who reside within the fourteen member school districts in York County.

However, full-time admissions are limited to students entering Grades 9-10. Most of our students apply for acceptance into a specific technical program or technical career pathway for entry in 9th grade.

Today, we serve approximately 1670 York Spartans.

Much like a traditional high school, each student completes their traditional academic courses here at York Tech. However, unlike traditional public schools, our students also complete their technical coursework and workforce training related to one of 26 PDE-BCTE approved in-demand career and technical programs.

York Tech's combination of traditional academics and technical training gives our graduates the flexibility to pursue postsecondary education or enter directly into the workforce or military with a leg up on the competition or what we call a labor market advantage.

At York Tech, students gain 1540 hours within their technical program, complete and master an extensive technical task list of skills, and earn numerous industry certifications. Last year our 380 students from our Class of 2024 earned on average four industry certifications per graduate.

During their time with us, they complete the technical performance and written component of their specific Technical Programs National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessment, earn a YCST Workforce Ready Technical Program Certificate, and their YCST High School Diploma.

By the spring of their 12th-grade year, almost a third of our graduating students will also have experienced a cooperative education work-based learning experience to add real-life technical work experience to their resume.

At York Tech, our goal is simple — ensure that every graduating Spartan has the flexibility to enter the job force after high school or earn the required secondary credits to explore postsecondary opportunities, such as college or a trade school.

And our success is clear. Our students have a 99 percent graduation rate.

We work with LifeTrack Services Inc. to administer follow-up surveys to our alums at two and five-year intervals after graduation. We know our students and alums are having success, and it directly benefits our communities and your constituents.

The latest data from our classes of 2016-2019 identified that 76 percent of our students work full-time, and another 5 percent are in the U.S. military. Seventy-two percent of graduates are living in York County, and 32 percent have completed a postsecondary education program often related to their technical program of study or an area related to the technical area.

Fifty-five percent are employed in York County, with the remaining employed in neighboring counties and Maryland.

Almost 80% stated that upon graduation, they were confident they could find a job directly out of high school to support themselves, thanks to the technical training and work-based learning experience they received from YCST.

Additionally, York Tech has a thriving adult and continuing education program. Our school is not just open from 7:30-3:20; it extends until 9 pm and on weekends for those who want to pursue their education and skills into adulthood. We work with over 4,000 of these students a year across 14 in-demand full and part-time technical programs, including Mechatronics, Welding, Automotive, HVAC, Cosmetology, Dental, Medical Assisting, CDL, Phlebotomy, Nail Tech, Cos Teacher Program, Plumbing, Forklift Training, Drivers Education, Heavy Equipment, and Diesel Tech. Most Adult and Continuing Education students are residents of York County and have graduated from our member high schools.

We also have a licensed practical nursing program to help train for an in-demand career. Our nursing program works with 60 students annually – 30 in each cohort.

Unfortunately, the demand for career and technical education far outpaces the supply of student seats in York County and throughout Pennsylvania.

For example, this year, we received 1,150 applications from students entering Grades 9-10 for the 2025-26 school year. Our limited capacity allowed us to accept only 490 students, which is just under 43%. Applications have significantly increased since the pandemic. The demand for Chapter 339 CTE-approved programs has increased significantly.

More and more students and their families are desperately seeking a path to career and technical education that will provide knowledge, skills, and growth.

We ask for your help to make these goals a reality for more students.

Increase the CTE Subsidy: Pennsylvania needs to increase the overall CTE subsidy to meet growing enrollment demands and rising operational costs. We need more funding for operational soft costs to meet the enrollment demands in our communities. More students than ever want to access career and technical education. Commonwealth funding needs to reflect the increased demand.

Professionally, I am saddened to be turning away students who desire and should be able to obtain technical skills and build a pathway to a good career. These students are seeking and want to acquire these technical skills that our local workforce and businesses need now, but they must matriculate into a regular comprehensive model, if there are not enough seats available at the regional CTC. A majority of our funding comes directly from our member districts. Our districts are already faced with challenging economic decisions and increasing the CTE subsidy supports regional CTC's to be able to expand their technical program offerings and supports member districts to send students to regional CTC's.

Revise the CTE Funding Formula: The current funding formula is outdated and doesn't account for the growing demand for Career and Technical Education (CTE) or the rising costs of delivering it.

It's time to update the formula to ensure Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) have the resources they need to keep pace with modern education methods and serve every student who wants to pursue CTE.

Increase the Reimbursement Rate for Adult and Continuing Education Programs: The reimbursement rate for adult and continuing education programs has been set at \$6.88 per instructor hour for decades. The low rate makes it difficult for Career and Technical Centers to provide training and education to adult learners as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Adult Affidavit Program. With a higher reimbursement rate, we can increase enrollment at adult-only programs so more adult learners can get the skills they need to thrive in our communities.

We are succeeding in every measure.

Our students are thriving. We're helping businesses grow by supplementing the workforce with skilled people ready to grow their careers.

We appreciate all of the legislature's work to improve career and technical education in Pennsylvania. Now, we need your help so more students have the opportunity to build thriving careers - and lives - in our communities.

We need fair and appropriate funding to meet the needs of students and families in our region.

Thank you for your time and support of career and technical education in Pennsylvania.



**Submitted by Melissa Longenberger, Executive Director
York Builders Association Workforce NOW Foundation
House Democratic Policy Hearing: Community-Based Workforce Centers**

Chairperson, members of the committee, and fellow community advocates:

Thank you for the opportunity to share how the YBA Workforce NOW Foundation is helping to rebuild the future of the building trades workforce in York County.

The YBA Workforce NOW Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2022 to address the growing skills gap in the building trades industry. Backed by the York Builders Association and guided by a strong network of industry professionals, we offer a suite of programs designed to introduce students to rewarding careers, connect employers with future talent, and empower our community through skilled trade education.

Why We Exist

Nearly half of today's skilled trades workforce is nearing retirement. At the same time, far too many students are graduating without a clear sense of direction—or access to the hands-on experiences that help them make informed decisions about their future. Many feel immense pressure to "figure it all out" at a young age, fearing that one wrong move could lead to a lifetime of regret or a dead-end job. Others are overwhelmed by the financial burden of college, anxious about taking on debt they may carry for decades or navigating family expectations that don't align with their personal goals.

Some students quietly wrestle with self-doubt—wondering if they're "college material," comparing themselves to peers who seem to have it all figured out, or simply feeling like they don't fit the traditional mold. And many aren't even aware that practical, well-paying, and fulfilling alternatives to college exist.

The YBA Workforce NOW Foundation exists to address those fears head-on. We create accessible, no-cost pathways for students to explore rewarding careers in the building trades—through hands-on learning, direct employer connections, and programs that build confidence, skills, and real opportunities. Our mission is to replace confusion with clarity, fear with empowerment, and uncertainty with tangible steps toward a successful future.

540 Greenbriar Road | York PA 17404 | (717) 767-2444
YBAWorkforceNOW.ORG

"To invest in the future of the building industry through strategic partnerships & opportunities"

What We Do

We currently operate four core programs:

1. Construction Career Days

Each fall, we coordinate immersive jobsite tours where local companies host high school students for hands-on learning experiences. These events allow students to see real job environments, meet working professionals, and gain exposure to different career paths and various roles within each company.

We've proudly hosted Construction Career Days since 2018—well before the Foundation became a nonprofit—demonstrating our long-standing commitment to connecting students with hands-on career exploration in the skilled trades.

- **This year our 2025 Construction Career Days hosts were Rojahn Custom Cabinetry, York Excavating, James Craft & Son, Inc., Regal, Inc. Plumbing, Heating & A/C and Yoe Construction Inc. They hosted over 80 students from eight different schools.**
- Many of our host companies have hired students in some capacity after participation in previous years.

2. Career Fairs

Our annual Career Fair brings together approximately 20 local companies and over 100 students for direct networking opportunities. Students come prepared with custom business cards to make real connections.

- **2024: 18 companies, 140 students**

3. Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Launched in 2022 in partnership with the York County Alliance for Learning (YCAL), our state-recognized pre-apprenticeship is designed for high school juniors and seniors. In 2024, the YBA Workforce NOW Foundation was approved as an Educational Improvement Organization through the PA Department of Community & Economic Development Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.

- Participants receive hands-on training in carpentry, electrical, plumbing, masonry, and more.
- Each student earns OSHA 10 certification and a PACT Core certificate.
- Enrollment has steadily increased, with two cohorts annually and a current **waitlist for the 2025–2026 school year.**
- Alumni are already working in local shops like Yoe Construction, breaking barriers and building long-term careers.

4. Career Resources

We offer job descriptions, videos, and flyers customized for students, parents, educators and employers. We build relationships with local schools to ensure students are aware of the resources and opportunities available to them. These resources help reshape perceptions and guide students toward high-demand, well-paying careers.

We also offer scholarships for tools and continued education, and work to facilitate job shadowing, mentorships, and real connections between students and employers.

What Makes Us Different

While many workforce programs aim broadly, **our programs are specifically designed for the building trades industry**. We partner with real employers, respond to real workforce needs, and provide **no-cost**, high-impact experiences for students. This targeted approach allows us to act quickly, adjust with industry trends, and focus resources where they're needed most.

Our Recommendations to Lawmakers

To further support and expand programs like ours, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

- **Increased funding and state support** for community-based pre-apprenticeship programs that are industry-specific and employer-driven.
- **Incentives for employer participation**, including tax credits or public recognition for hosting students and offering training.
- **Streamlined access to transportation funding or resources** to help students reach training sites, which can be a barrier.
- **Support for skilled instructors and tradespeople** who wish to teach—many of whom are eager to give back but need flexibility and compensation to do so.

Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient workforce in Pennsylvania—one student, one skill, and one opportunity at a time.

Thank you for your time and attention. I welcome your questions and appreciate your interest in workforce development through community-based programs like ours.

Respectfully,
Melissa Longenberger
Executive Director
YBA Workforce NOW Foundation

Written Testimony for the PA House Policy Hearing

From Tec Centro York

Presented by: AliceAnne Frost, Executive Director, Tec Centro York

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Tec Centro York. My name is AliceAnne Frost, and I serve as the Executive Director of Tec Centro York, a vital workforce development initiative addressing the growing employment and skills gap in our community.

The Tec Centro York Story: A Collaborative Vision

Tec Centro York was established as part of the broader Tec Centro Workforce Network, grounded in a shared vision among philanthropic partners, corporate leaders, and community organizations to meet the workforce demands of York County. Through strategic partnerships and dedicated investment, we've created a center that provides critical workforce training and development services, empowering individuals and strengthening our regional economy.

Comprehensive Services to Meet Workforce Needs

At Tec Centro York, we offer a full spectrum of workforce development services, including career training, adult basic education, and employment assistance. Our walk-in services ensure that community members have immediate, accessible support for job placement, résumé building, and career counseling. These wraparound services provide a seamless pathway to employment and long-term economic independence.

A Focus on Full-Time, In-Demand Careers

Many of the individuals we serve are underemployed and seeking stable, full-time employment. At Tec Centro York, we focus exclusively on preparing individuals for high-demand careers that offer full-time hours and benefits, ensuring that our graduates can achieve financial stability and sustainable career growth.

Business Partnerships Drive Job Placement

We work closely with local employers to align our training programs with real workforce needs. These partnerships help us identify job openings, develop industry-specific training, and support successful job placements. As a result, our graduates transition directly into meaningful careers that contribute to York's economic vitality.

Serving a Diverse and Underserved Community

Our commitment is to serve a diverse population, particularly individuals from historically marginalized communities who have faced barriers to employment. By equipping these

individuals with marketable skills and robust job placement support, we are helping families move toward self-sufficiency and financial security.

Strategic Philanthropy Accelerates Impact

A generous building donation from M&T Bank significantly accelerated the opening of our center, allowing us to begin serving the community more quickly. This investment underscores the power of public-private partnerships in workforce development and reflects the strong local commitment to economic empowerment.

Legislative Support: A Proven Investment

We deeply appreciate the legislative funding that has supported the growth of the Tec Centro Workforce Network. Over the past three years, state investment has grown from \$5 million to \$8 million, and then to \$15 million, an increase that demonstrates confidence in the impact of our work.

For the 2025–2026 fiscal year, we respectfully request continued funding of \$15 million to sustain and expand this critical work. The Tec Centro Workforce Network now operates in six communities with seven centers, generating a \$31 million economic impact in 2024 from a \$6.5 million state investment.

Looking Ahead: A Clear Path Forward

In the next 12 months, Tec Centro York will fully implement allied health training, adult basic education, and expanded employment services. We are also exploring the acquisition of a new building to establish a dedicated trades training center, further expanding career pathways for York residents.

Current Impact and Growing Demand

Since our opening in January 2025, Tec Centro York has become a critical resource for individuals looking to improve their language skills and pursue careers in healthcare, particularly as Certified Nursing Assistants, Medical Assistants, and Phlebotomists. We have already served 175 students, equipping them with in-demand skills to thrive in today's workforce.

However, demand continues to grow rapidly. We currently have a waiting list of 528 individuals eager to enroll in our programs, far exceeding our current capacity due to space and funding limitations.

Expanding Program Offerings to Meet Demand

To meet this increasing need, we plan to expand our program offerings to include:

- **GED/HiSet Preparation** – To help individuals without a high school diploma take the next step in education and employment.

- **Digital Literacy Training** – To equip students with essential technology skills for today’s job market.
- **Dental Assistant Training** – In response to rising demand within the healthcare sector.
- **Skilled Trades Training** – Including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and welding programs to address workforce shortages in the trades.

These new offerings will allow us to serve more individuals and fill critical skills gaps in the regional workforce.

The Urgency of Legislative Support

Without additional investment, we risk losing the opportunity to provide life-changing training to hundreds of York residents. The gap between community need and available resources is widening, and it is imperative that we act now to expand our facilities and programming.

The Economic Case for Investment

Investing in Tec Centro York will yield significant returns. Workforce development has been shown to:

- Increase local employment rates
- Reduce reliance on social services
- Boost regional economic productivity

By preparing individuals for careers in high-demand sectors, we’re building a stronger, more resilient economy for York and beyond.

Strengthening Communities & Retaining Local Talent

The individuals we train want to stay in York, raising families, contributing to local businesses, and building stable futures. By offering career pathways that provide family-sustaining wages, Tec Centro York plays a critical role in lifting people out of poverty and supporting long-term regional growth.

Call to Action: Continued Legislative Support

Your continued support is essential to the success of Tec Centro York and the broader Tec Centro Workforce Network. With sustained investment, we will:

- Empowering more individuals
- Strengthen local businesses
- Driving economic growth across our region

We invite you to visit Tec Centro York and witness firsthand the impact of our programs and the lives being transformed every day.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to workforce development.

Sincerely,

AliceAnne Frost

Executive Director, Tec Centro York