

West Philadelphia Skills Initiative

IMPACT REPORT 2016





The mission of University City District’s **West Philadelphia Skills Initiative** (WPSI) is to connect West Philadelphia employers seeking talent to West Philadelphians seeking opportunity.

University City District (UCD) is a partnership of world-renowned anchor institutions, small businesses and residents that creates opportunity, and improves economic vitality and quality of life in the University City area of West Philadelphia. We work within a place-based, data-driven framework to invest in world-class public spaces, address crime and public safety, bring life to commercial corridors, connect low-income residents to careers, and promote job growth and innovation.

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● Greetings from the Skills Initiative

A little over five years ago, UCD – once exclusively focused on the physical transformation of our community – began to ask some important questions: What if we could connect people in the community to jobs at our partner institutions? What if we could work with residents living just blocks away from large employers, and bridge the skills gap that makes this distance seem unconquerable? What if we could help our institutional partners solve real business needs by stemming entry level turnover while building the skills that enable advancement and growth?

In order to explore these ideas, we worked with our partners, nationally-renowned education and medical institutions and private employers. And together, we created the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI), connecting unemployed neighborhood residents seeking opportunity with major employers seeking talent.

Today, we approach everything we do through the powerful dual lens of physical development and talent development. If we want to create livable and vital cities and neighborhoods, then an all-in strategy to leverage employer relationships for inclusive opportunity seems essential to us. After five years, we are proud of our results and the Skills Initiative's transformative impact on both employers and jobseekers. But we are just getting started. As economic growth accelerates in University City, the Skills Initiative is perfectly positioned to help hundreds of West Philadelphians access life-changing opportunities in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Matt Bergheiser

President
University City District



Sheila Ireland

Vice President of Workforce Solutions
University City District

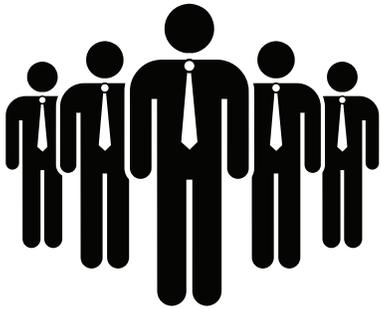
● Closing the Opportunity Divide



University City has become the city and region's economic powerhouse, with more growth on the horizon. This 2.4 square mile neighborhood is home to the city's largest and most innovative academic, research and commercial partners, who collectively employ approximately 76,000 individuals. Yet even as UCD's institutional and private partners pursue transformative developments that will create more businesses and jobs in the years to come, the community continues to grapple with poverty. Thirty-one percent of West Philadelphia's population lives below the poverty level, with an unemployment rate that is 14% higher than the citywide rate. A gulf exists, preventing communities and residents from accessing local opportunities.

The West Philadelphia Skills Initiative was created to bridge that gulf. For nearly twenty years, UCD has worked hand in hand with institutional partners to revitalize University City, and WPSI leverages those relationships in order to help local residents access opportunity and thrive in the workplace.

Opportunities



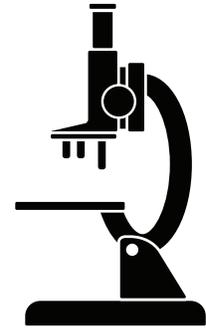
76,000

jobs in University City,
a thriving economic engine



\$3.9 billion

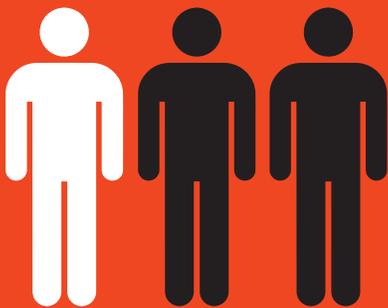
in construction activity
in University City since 2015,
with billions of dollars
of activity on the horizon



\$1 billion

invested in annual research
and development by
University City institutions

Challenges



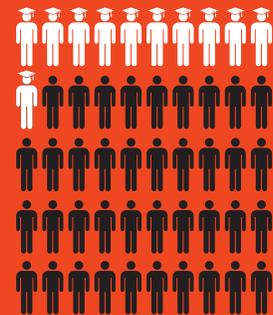
Over 1 in 3

West Philadelphians
lives below
the poverty level



47%

of households
have incomes
below \$25,000 a year



Only 22%

of the population
aged 25 or older
has a bachelor's degree



● The Skills Initiative Approach

The Skills Initiative harnesses the hiring power of the institutions at the core of University City’s economic engine – from Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania to The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia – and gives local residents the tools they need to open the door to opportunity. We use a unique, employer-driven strategy that adds value to both jobseekers and employers.



WPSI adapts recruitment and curricula to employers’ specific hiring needs - regardless of sector or position - only launching training cohorts once employers have committed to partnering with the program. As an employer-driven program, the Skills Initiative exemplifies the benefits of a “train and place” model rather than the “train and pray” approach common to many workforce programs. With a best-in-class approach to both soft and hard skills, the staff ensures that employers receive talented local employees who fit their work culture and are prepared to thrive on the job.



Perhaps most importantly, many participants find that the Skills Initiative becomes a pivotal life experience, connecting them to the tools, behaviors and supports they need to build careers that can change their lives, families and communities.



Why the Skills Initiative Works

STEP 1:

Employer Engagement



Employers partner with the Skills Initiative when they're looking to resolve challenges related to recruitment, high turnover or performance quality. The Skills Initiative designs its recruitment, selection, and training activities based on the employer's needs, working with the employer to understand:

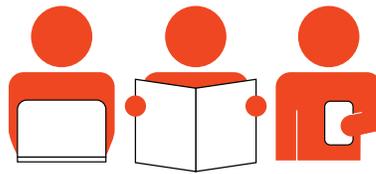
- Performance Gaps
- Workplace Culture
- Current Hiring Practices
- Retention Challenges

Employer Commitment:

Employers identify vacant positions that can be filled by program graduates and agree to interview graduates and give them preferential hiring status.

STEP 2:

Recruitment



Eligibility:

WPSI recruits individuals who are currently unemployed, live in West Philadelphia (zipcodes 19104, 19131, 19139, 19143, or 19151), received a high school diploma/GED, and possess the specific credentials and characteristics that an employer requires.

Outreach:

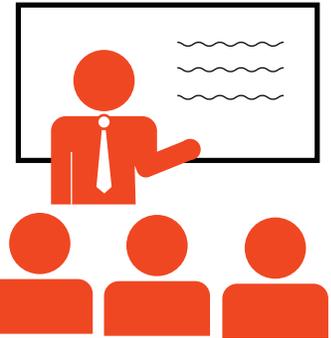
During recruitment, the Skills Initiative uses an online platform and social media, shares information with non-profits and community-based organizations and conducts information sessions for the public.

Selection:

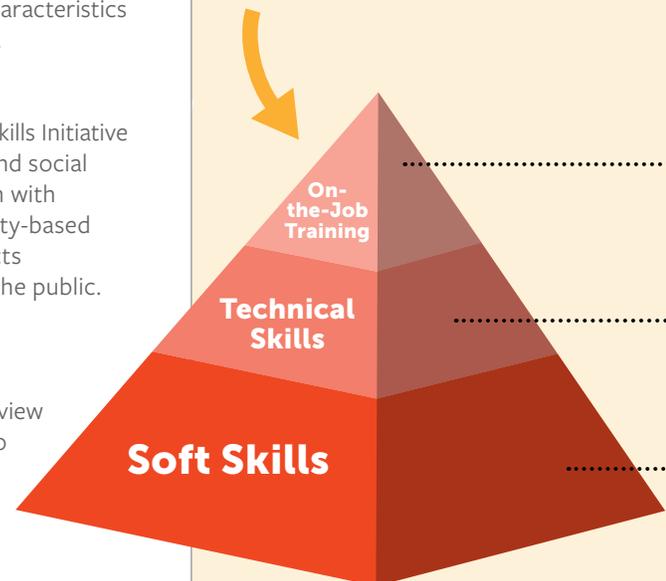
The Skills Initiative uses an in-depth application, interview and assessment process to build each cohort.

STEP 3:

Customized Curriculum

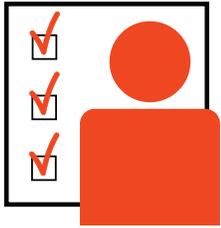


The Skills Initiative offers a flexible program model, ranging from 4 to 26 weeks. While the model changes based on employer needs, it always includes WPSI's best-in-class approach to soft skills development:



STEP 4:

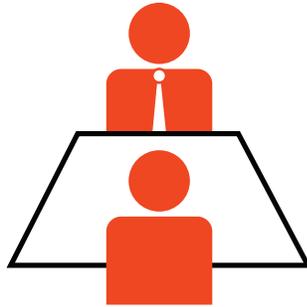
Feedback and Evaluation



The Skills Initiative builds weekly performance evaluations and milestones into the program. A performance-based weekly stipend is used to model expectations of the workplace and encourage the behaviors and tools that are needed in a professional environment.

STEP 5:

Interviews with Employer Partner



Participants have structured opportunities to meet with the employer throughout the program, and graduates are guaranteed interviews at the end of the program.

STEP 6:

Post Placement Supports



Program graduates receive coaching services and have the opportunity to join the WPSI Alumni Network for ongoing supports.

On-the-Job Training

Longer programs include **on-the-job training**, which allows participants to learn onsite with the employer while earning a wage.

Technical Skills

Many cohorts receive **technical skills** training, designed to help participants adapt their previous technical skills training to the needs of a specific employer or to teach an employer’s proprietary technical systems.

Soft Skills

Soft skills are the foundation of every cohort’s experience. The curriculum is assigned to help participants better understand themselves and their career goals, and how to navigate today’s job market and succeed in the workplace.

● Our Results



Over the years, the Skills Initiative has made a positive impact on jobseekers, employers and our shared West Philadelphia community. These numbers highlight our results since launching the program, demonstrating the cumulative impact of helping individuals connect to life-changing employment opportunities.

IN 5 YEARS...

610

adults and youth touched through WPSI job training, internships and workshops

\$12
MILLION

in wages for previously unemployed West Philadelphians

53

average number of weeks unemployed prior to WPSI

Last Year...

90% OF OUR GRADUATES
CONNECTED TO
EMPLOYMENT

AVERAGE
STARTING
WAGE \$13.37

This Year...

We are on track
to serve

122

West Philadelphia
residents

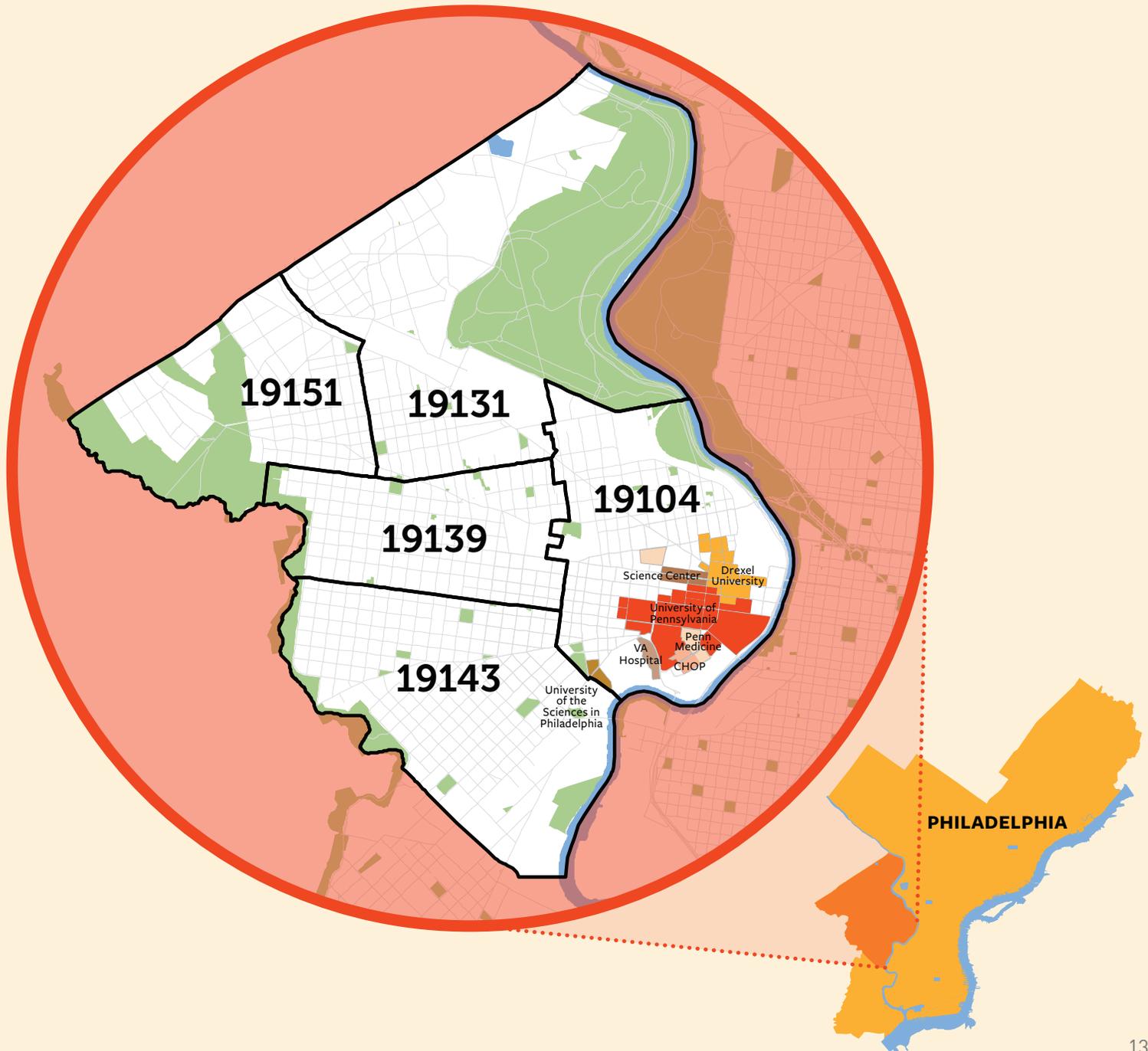


Representative Positions for WPSI Graduates

Since the Skills Initiative curriculum focuses on soft skills, we are able to recruit individuals with the technical skills needed to succeed across a range of positions and sectors:

- Certified Medical Assistant
 - Patient Sitter
 - Inpatient Clerk
 - Lab Technician
 - Desktop Support Analyst
 - Administrative Support
- Security Officer
 - Customer Service Representative
 - Bike Patrol Officer
 - Food Service Worker
 - Grounds Maintenance, Landscaper
 - Parking Attendant, Valet Driver

WPSI Participant Catchment Area



● The Skills Initiative Testimonials

Employer Partners

“ We have some really difficult-to-fill positions. And if we can look to our local community to fill those positions – to me it’s an opportunity to get people back to work, to have people have pride in their community, to be part of something that’s bigger in their community. I feel such a great sense of pride in knowing that we are working together to get people who live minutes from here [...] back to work. But to know that we’re doing that at the same time as filling really critical-to-fill jobs – I can’t think of anything better. ”



Madeline Bell

CEO, The Children’s Hospital
of Philadelphia

“ The partnership that Drexel has fostered with the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative has been fundamental to our ability to hire highly skilled employees residing in our West Philadelphia community. Thanks to WPSI’s expertise, hard work and dedication, Drexel is able to directly impact the lives of its neighbors and assist them with achieving long term success. ”



Megan Weyler

Vice President,
Human Resources & Organizational
Effectiveness, Drexel University

Participants



Shanise Hicks

The Children's Hospital
of Philadelphia Cohort
July 2015

“I have so many great things to say about WPSI, I don't know where to begin. This program has helped me find myself, build my confidence. We built people skills, communication skills, and I have also learned to open up and network. Not only did we gain professional education, we also gained life skills, learning how to stay financially stable and also how to prioritize our lives. I can say I will never forget WPSI – this was one of the best experiences I've ever encountered.”



Gary Bailey

University of Pennsylvania Cohort
February 2016

“This program has helped me focus on the career I want and how to make a plan and attack that plan. I'm really able to focus in on my [...] career search. I'm just ready to tackle the world and show them what I've learned and what I have to offer.”



Nateesha Malcolm

Allied Universal Cohort
September 2015

“Coming to this program I was lost, I didn't know who I was. Throughout the program I was taught a lot of valuable things I can use for the rest of my life. This program has helped me find myself again, know my potential and worth. WPSI has given me so much training and so much information on how to be successful. WPSI has changed my life and I'll forever be grateful.”

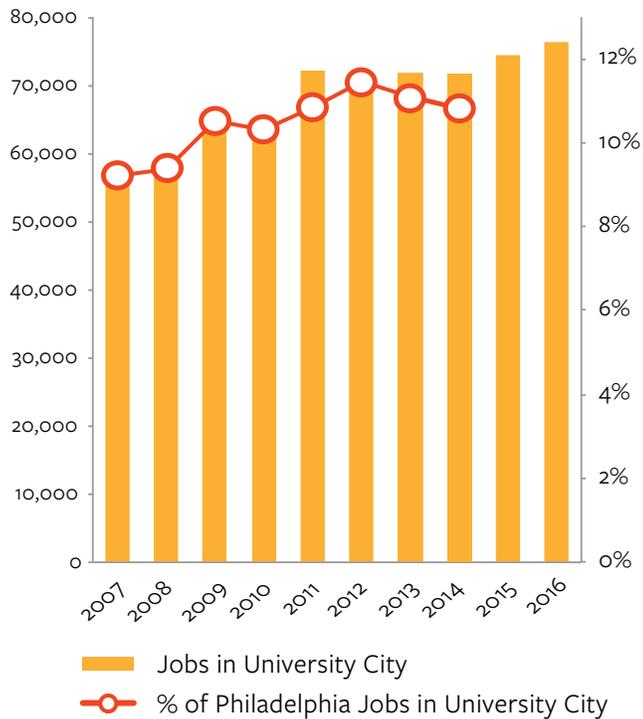
● Looking Forward



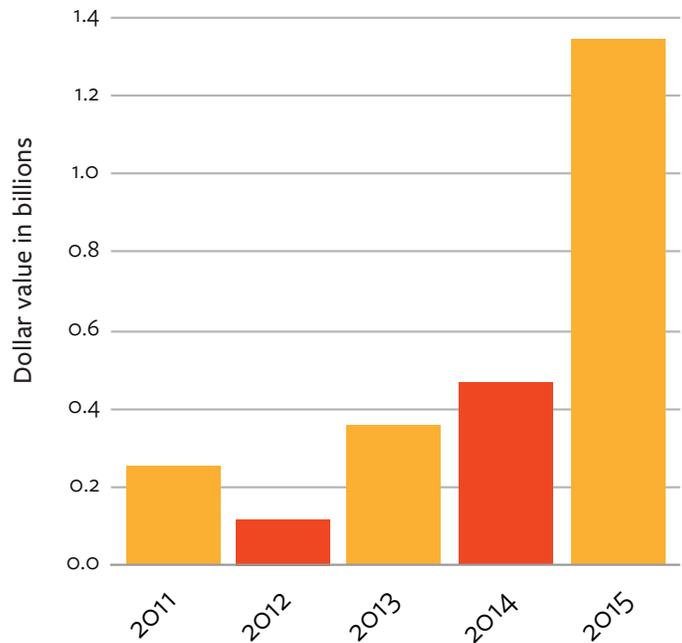
After five years of the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, we are looking to the future. Together with our partners, we are constantly asking ourselves how to turn University City's accelerating economic growth into accelerating economic opportunity for all. As local institutions and businesses continue to create new jobs in the district, we are expanding our capacity to serve ever more jobseekers and employer partners. We are also taking steps to prepare the workforce of the future, aligning our economic opportunity vision with the growth sectors of the local economy. Much of that effort is based on the unprecedented surge of real estate development in University City, and the green space that accompanies this growth.



Total Jobs in University City



Value of New Real Estate Development Projects





Fueled by the expanding footprint of our partners, UCD launched our landscaping social venture, Green City Works, which connects our work to beautify the district with our workforce expertise. In addition to caring for UCD's own public space projects, Green City Works executes fee-for-service landscaping contracts for local institutions and businesses. Green City Works already manages 250,000 square feet of green space and is on track to become a self-sustaining business that trains, places and directly employs local residents with the highest barriers to employment, including returning citizens. It also serves as a template for UCD's deeper exploration of social enterprise models.



At the same time, the Skills Initiative recently initiated the Community Porches Reclamation (CPR) pilot, combining our soft skills approach with entry-level carpentry and safety skills for young adults (18-26). The curriculum is enhanced by on-the-job training opportunities, as the cohort rebuilt a dilapidated front porch belonging to a longtime community member. At its current scale, the program allows the Skills Initiative to connect local residents to opportunities in the building industry, which will continue to drive tremendous economic growth throughout the district. As we grow, and a new skyline rises around us, we hope to prepare new members of the construction workforce drawn from right here in West Philadelphia.



By aligning the Skills Initiative with the economic opportunities generated by our local partners, we are positioned to scale our impact, ensuring that more West Philadelphians can access opportunity and contribute to the ever-expanding growth of our community.



Green City Works

is UCD's landscaping social enterprise, leveraging institutional purchasing power for job growth and opportunity.



● The Skills Initiative in the News



Senator Vincent J. Hughes; Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell; Sheila Ireland, Vice President of Workforce Solutions, University City District; Representative Dwight Evans; Representative James R. Roebuck Jr.; Obra S. Kernodle IV, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor; Matt Bergheiser, President, University City District; and Harold T. Epps, Commerce Director, City of Philadelphia celebrate WPSI's new training center at a ribbon cutting in June 2016.

From a move to a new facility that will allow us to scale our impact, to a visit from Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, there are big changes afoot here at the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative. As we continue to grow our capacity to serve local jobseekers and employers, we continue to share our approach and impact with partners on a local and national stage.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Commentary: In University City, Giving the Jobless a Chance

by Matt Bergheiser, President, University City District

“[Green City Works has] committed to offering employees good wages, full-time positions, and advancement opportunities.”

“UCD is building career pipelines to jobs that are in demand in the neighborhood.”

“Based on WPSI’s overwhelming success, there’s pressure from both employer partners looking for workers and West Philadelphians looking for jobs.”

PHILADELPHIA
**BUSINESS
JOURNAL**

UNIVERSITY CITY
Review



U.S. Senator Bob Casey visits Green City Works to help install a new landscaping project at Amtrak's 30th Street Station

“Locally, programs like the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative are helping businesses and labor adapt to the new economy, training and connecting unemployed residents to jobs in the health-care and IT sectors.”

philly  com

“The program targets applicants struggling with challenges such as longterm unemployment or re-entry from the criminal justice system, and helps them build transferrable job skills.”

flying  kite



Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen Visits WPSI

“The percentage of [WPSI participants] finding jobs has climbed steadily over the last five years to about 95 percent, and demand from potential employers now exceeds the supply of workers the program can offer.”

The New York Times

“After her speech, Yellen met in a roundtable with training participants and graduates at the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, a program that connects local residents with job opportunities in the area.”

Bloomberg

“Derek Holmes, who looked in vain for work for a year after losing his previous job, is now training as a certified medical assistant at Drexel University. He said he hopes Yellen learned from his story ‘that there are many people in many communities with talent, with drive, with determination that just need opportunity.’ ”

newsworks

A photograph of construction workers in red shirts and yellow safety vests working on a site. In the background, a large concrete mixer truck is visible. In the foreground, a white sign stands on a sidewalk.

UCD at Work



University City District

Employer Partners Include:

**The Children's Hospital
of Philadelphia**

**Drexel University College
of Medicine**

University of Pennsylvania

**University of Pennsylvania
Health System**

Allied Universal

BrightView

Green City Works

Impark

SodexoMagic

Green City Works Partners Include:

Amtrak

Brandywine Realty Trust

Drexel University

The Enterprise Center

International House Philadelphia

**National Board of
Medical Examiners**

Philadelphia Water Department

**University City
Science Center**

University of the Sciences

University of Pennsylvania

**University of Pennsylvania
Health System**

**Wexford Science
+ Technology**



WPSI Funders Since Inception

(Adult Training)

ACE Charitable Foundation

Bank of America Foundation

Barra Foundation

Claneil Foundation

Citi Foundation

Citizens Bank Foundation

Connelly Foundation

Department of Community and Economic Development
through the Mayor's Office of Community
Empowerment and Opportunity

Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation

Equal Measure

GlaxoSmithKline

Job Opportunity Investment Network

The Lenfest Foundation

Lincoln Financial Foundation

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

McLean Contributionship

Patricia Kind Family Foundation

Pew Charitable Trusts

The Philadelphia Foundation

Samuel S. Fels Fund

United Way of Greater Philadelphia
and Southern New Jersey

Wexford Science + Technology

Wells Fargo Foundation

UCD Board

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Executive Vice President
University of Pennsylvania

David Adelman, Vice Chair

President and CEO, Campus Apartments

Joseph Trainor, Treasurer

Chief Financial Officer, Wistar Institute

Maureen Rush, Secretary

Vice President for Public Safety
University of Pennsylvania

Della Clark

President, The Enterprise Center

Jamie Gauthier

Community Representative
Garden Court Community Association

Julian Goresko

Community Representative
Walnut Hill Community Association

Peter Grollman

Senior Vice President, Public Affairs
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Barry Grossbach

Community Representative
Spruce Hill Community Association

Curt Hess

Senior Vice President of Real Estate
University City Science Center

Brigid Isackman

Interim Vice President for Finance &
Administration, University of the Sciences

Lindsay Johnston

President
Common Ground Realtors

Michael Jones

Community Representative
Powelton Village Civic Association

Thomas Klaritch

Executive Vice President
HCP Medical Office Properties

Daniel Liberatoscioli

President, The Restaurant School
at Walnut Hill College

Donald Melnick

President
National Board of Medical Examiners

Mark Mills

Owner
Metropolis Group / 40th Street Live

Phil Moses

Principal, Vice President,
INTECH Construction, Inc.

Keith Orris

Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations and
Economic Development, Drexel University

Brad Paul

Co-Owner and General Manager
Central City & Ardmore Toyota

Susan Phillips

Senior Vice President
University of Pennsylvania Health System

Joe Reagan, Jr.

Vice President, Development
Wexford Science + Technology

Joe Ritchie

Vice President of Development
Brandywine Realty Trust

Nelson Shaffer

Chief Administrative Officer
Pennoni Associates, Inc.

Tanya Steinberg

President & Chief Executive Officer
International House

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Sheila Ireland

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Program Coordinator

Sarah Davis

Director of Development

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Program Manager

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Strategic Initiatives Manager



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