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Governor Wolf: $4.8 Million Investment to Train Direct Care Workers will Improve Quality of Care for Patients Across Pennsylvania

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Press Release, Workforce Development

Governor Tom Wolf announced today more than $4.8 million has been awarded in Direct Care Worker Training Grants (DCWTG) to improve the quality of care provided by direct care workers while creating opportunities for them to build new careers and earn family-sustaining wages.

“As demand increases for essential services provided by direct care workers, their safety and the quality of care they provide must be maintained,” said Gov. Wolf. “Nearly 90 percent of direct care worker jobs are filled by women who receive limited health benefits and earn relatively low wages. These grants not only benefit our loved ones in long-term care facilities like nursing homes and receiving care at home, but also the workers who care for them.”

The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) awarded the DCWTGs to four eligible grantees that submitted proposals. The program will create and develop training programs that increase the quality of services, offer specialty certifications, and create viable career opportunities for personal care assistants, home health aides and certified nursing assistants.

The DCWTG programs operate from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

The following organizations received DCWTG funds:

- **$2 million to a partnership of the District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, SEIU HealthCare PA Education & Training Fund, and the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA)** to develop a mutually beneficial solution to the COVID-19 direct care workforce crisis. The 1199C and SEIU Training Funds will partner with PHCA to provide effective, high-quality, career path-based occupational training and certification to 1,000 Pennsylvanians in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bucks, Butler, Chester, Delaware, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Washington and Westmoreland counties.
- **$1.2 million to Center for Independent Living of Central PA** for training including CPR and first aid, universal precautions and infection control, fall preventions and more. The program will service 1,200 trainees in Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Schuylkill, Snyder, Somerset, Tioga, Union and York counties.
- **$1.2 million to Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit** to increase the number of well-trained and retained direct care workers as part of the DCW Heroes project, which recruits, trains, hires and retains valued employees who wish to enter and proceed along a nursing and healthcare career path. This grant will be used to expand the labor pool and reach into underserved communities. The program will service 600 trainees in Bradford, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Juniata, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne and Wyoming counties.
- **$407,000 to Penn Asian Senior Services** to provide a unique combination of home health aide (HHA), certified nursing assistant (CNA), and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) training to prepare displaced and incumbent workers for careers in the healthcare industry along with additional non-technical skills. The program will service 228 trainees in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

“Direct care workers not only serve their patients, they are also a true lifeline for families struggling to provide their loved ones with quality care,” said L&I Acting Secretary Jennifer Berrier. “These training grants are a win-win for the workers who will get new skills and the patients in their care.”

The Long-Term Care Council, which advises the Department of Aging and other agencies on long-term care issues, developed the Blueprint for Strengthening Pennsylvania's Direct Care Workforce. This report recommended the establishment of standardized core training for direct care workers to provide career pathways throughout the continuum of long-term services and supports.

"Direct care workers are the cornerstone of long-term care, so I'm pleased to see how the important work of the Long-Term Care Council and its recommendations in the Blueprint for Strengthening Pennsylvania's Direct Care Workforce has helped inform the goals and strategies of the DCWTG program," said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres, who chairs the Council. "The organizations awarded this funding will be uniquely positioned to train workers to ensure the needs of the residents are met in these diverse communities."

Direct Care Worker Training Grants of up to $2 million are available through L&I's reemployment funding to assist individuals in becoming employed or improving their employment, including job search and placement services, educational enhancement, job training and job readiness and workplace skills training.

Additional information is available on the L&I website or by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.