



**“Creating Pathways to High-Paying
Careers for Pittsburgh’s Students”
Office of the Mayor
Pittsburgh, PA**



PROJECT CONTEXT

According to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Greater Pittsburgh is at a serious [inflection point](#) with its workforce. Baby Boomers, which make up more of the Greater Pittsburgh region’s workforce than the national average, are retiring without a strong pipeline of younger talent behind them. At the same time, technology is changing the nature of work in numerous industries, forcing candidates to acquire new skills and credentials. In 2016, The Allegheny Conference estimated that the region could need over 80,000 more workers than current strategies would produce. While Pittsburgh is home to many strong industries and education institutions, the pathway into high-paying jobs for local students is not always clear.

While more innovation in training is needed, Pittsburgh does have several existing Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities to prepare residents for promising, high-paying careers that offer the chance at upward mobility. At Westinghouse Academy, for instance, Pittsburgh Public Schools operates an Emergency Response Technology program where students can gain entry-level skills, dual enrollment credit and certifications in first responder roles. [Partner4Work](#), the Pittsburgh area’s workforce development, also operates programs like *BankWork\$ Pittsburgh*, which provides no-cost coursework to prepare individuals with barriers to employment for entry-level customer service roles in the banking industry. Building on the local opportunities to ensure Pittsburgh’s youth have clear pathways to high-paying careers in the region will require greater coordination among all the key stakeholders. This includes connecting local employers, schools and families to establish formal partnerships that could help to make it easier for students to remain in the city.

The City of Pittsburgh will partner with FUSE Corps to host an executive-level fellow for one year who will work to build the infrastructure to ensure students who complete training programs are connected to high-paying careers with local employers. The planning process will involve working with employment partners, City staff, the CTE team at Pittsburgh Public Schools, and other community stakeholders to develop recommendations for ongoing communication structures and key industries to prioritize for the short and medium term. By the end of the year, the Executive Fellow will have secured agreements for guaranteed interviews and/or job offers with employers in 2-3 career pathways, and a clear plan for how to continue the city to continue this coordinating function on an ongoing basis.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The following provides a general overview of the proposed fellowship project. This project summary and the potential deliverables that follow will be collaboratively revisited by the host agency, the Executive Fellow, and FUSE staff during the first few months of the fellowship, after which a revised scope of work will be developed and agreed upon by the FUSE Fellow and the host agency.

Starting in April 2021, the FUSE Executive Fellow will conduct a robust listening tour with City leaders, education leaders, students and local employers. Conversations would focus on understanding the unique contributions of training partners, the key challenges in connecting students to employment after they finish programs, and insights for which industries to focus on in the short term. The listening tour would start by connecting with leadership at Pittsburgh Public Schools and Partner4Work, and then branching out to include the region’s largest employers,



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students and other key stakeholders. At the end of the listening tour, the Executive Fellow will have developed



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recommendations for promising pathways (e.g. Emergency Medical Services, etc.) that have the most potential to secure post-program agreements. These pathways will most likely have existing strong training options and shortages of qualified job candidates.

With this information as a starting point, the Executive Fellow would then start to pursue two simultaneous streams of work that ultimately yield pathways from CTE programs into two or more industries that offer opportunities for upward mobility— (1) making recommendations for the City to continue this type of coordinating work in the future, and (2) securing post-program agreements with employers. Securing these career pathway agreements should be done for at least two industries that connect to the CTE programs. The recommendations stream of work will include researching similar structures in other cities, regions, or states, playing back those findings to City staff and other key partners, and working collaboratively to develop a plan for how to embed this function into the city's operations. To secure post-program agreements, the Executive Fellow will work with training partners, City staff and other key stakeholders to determine key employers and industries to focus on. This will require extensive engagement work to build relationships in order to understand the needs of training partners and employers so that the fellow can ultimately broker mutually-beneficial agreements.

By April 2022, the Executive Fellow will have built a concrete vision for the City's coordinating role, and proven how crucial this work will be by securing agreements for strong program graduates. The key deliverables for this role include the following:

- *Conduct a robust listening tour*- Meet with key stakeholders (i.e. PPS Career and Technical Education team, Partner4Work Program Staff, etc.) to understand barriers to connecting students to employment, and identify key industries to focus on for post-program agreements.
- *Research promising CTE pathway initiatives in other cities nationwide* – Capture national best practices, interview other staff from across the country, and make recommendations on which models the City of Pittsburgh may be best positioned to replicate given its unique assets.
- *Develop clear recommendations for how to connect students, education opportunities and employers* - Work collaboratively with key partners to develop recommendations for how the City could play an ongoing role in systematically aligning employers and training programs.
- *Establish communication systems to sustain partnerships* – Build out the systems to regularly convene key partners, and closely coordinate efforts between the City and Pittsburgh Public Schools.
- *Secure formal agreements for employment opportunities* - Work with employers and training programs in 2-3 key industries to agree to interview and/or hire graduates from programs; launch pilot programming for pathways into careers in those 2-3 key industries.
- *Plan for sustainability* – Codify the City's long-term role, ongoing partnership with Pittsburgh Public Schools and other local stakeholders, and generate buy-in for a multiyear strategy to sustain the initial programming.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- **Project Supervisor - Lindsay Powell**, Assistant Chief of Staff, *City of Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office*



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Executive Sponsor - Majestic

Lane, Chief Equity Officer, *City of
Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office*



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- **Angela Mike**, Executive Director CTE, *Pittsburgh Public Schools*
- **Earl Buford**, CEO, *Partner4Work*

QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 10-15 years of professional experience with an emphasis in coalition building.
- Knowledge of Allegheny County and experience in workforce development and urban school districts that serve predominantly students of color preferred, but not required.
- Ability to create direction and movement within bureaucratic environments.
- Superior critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Ability to synthesize complex information into clear and concise recommendations.
- Ability to relate to a wide variety of diverse audiences with strong emotional intelligence and empathy.
- Self-motivated, goal-oriented, entrepreneurial leader who can also be an independent worker.
- Persistent in obtaining information and creatively resourceful in identifying solutions to complex problems.
- Ability to create direction and movement within potentially ambiguous environments.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills with an ease in public presentations.
- Understands the need for solutions to support all people in a community regardless of race, religion, gender, immigration status, or ethnicity.

FUSE Corps is an equal opportunity employer with a core value of incorporating diverse perspectives into our work at every level. We encourage candidates from all backgrounds to apply for this position.