



MassHire Berkshire Career Center Awarded \$1 Million Grant

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded MassHire Berkshire Career Center, through Berkshire Training & Employment, Inc, \$1 Million in funds to help address the opioid epidemic in Berkshire County. Funds will be administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration through the National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant.

Funding will focus on mitigating the impact of the opioid crisis on the Berkshire County workforce as a whole. Funding is intended to increase skilled addiction recovery service professionals in Berkshire County by providing training, employment, and internship opportunities to individuals directly or indirectly impacted by the opioid crisis to prepare them for work with local mental health, addiction service providers and other health and human service agencies. In turn, helping alleviate staffing shortages these agencies are experiencing, allowing them to expand recovery supports for Berkshire County residents who have been impacted by this devastating crisis. Grant funds will also be used to support information and training sessions for local employers to foster recovery ready work environments to support continued and long-term employment for employees impacted by the epidemic.

Employment and training activities will build on existing career center services and service model including career counseling, workshops, job search assistance, and occupational skills training. Workshops specific to program participants will focus on overcoming barriers commonly experienced by individuals in recovery. The Career Center will hire two (2) Career Counselors dedicated to the project who will provide additional supports focusing on recovery-related factors.

Training opportunities for eligible participants will be funded using grant funds, as well as current funding sources and administered by Berkshire Training & Employment, Inc.

Program specific Career Counselors are anticipated to be onboarded by January 1, 2024 with employer education anticipated to begin fall 2023 and training programs being implemented Spring of 2024.

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MassHire Programs & Services are funded in full by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration grants. (Additional details furnished upon request.)