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**ADULT & DISLOCATED WORKER  
PROGRAM HANDBOOK**



**EMPLOYMENT • EDUCATION • TRAINING**



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# Welcome!

We look forward to working with you!

Central Connections is a Central PA CareerLink® program designed to assist you with employment, education, training, and connections to other services to help you succeed. Whether it is improving existing talents, learning new skills, or connecting you to work, Central Connections has something for everyone.

Your journey towards a career doesn't have to be one you take alone. The Central Connections team places your success as its top priority and we'll remain by your side not only from the start, but we'll continue to offer services and support once you are working in a new position.

## What You Can Expect

A dedicated staff person will serve as your main point of contact throughout your entire enrollment. We are dedicated to helping you navigate and connect to skills training, community resources, long-term employment, and everything in between so that your goals are met.

We will treat you with respect and kindness. Whether you walk through our front doors, or meet us virtually, you'll always be greeted by friendly and expert staff who are committed to their work of helping job seekers achieve their goals.

We'll use our workforce expertise to help you define and meet your goals, and we'll take your lead- you are in charge of defining the goals important to you and we'll help you plan out the steps to get there. We have tools and resources to help you identify your skills, strengths, abilities, and needs so that we can help you develop a customized plan that we'll adjust as you determine necessary.

In addition, you'll have access to the entire PA CareerLink® team which includes experts in a variety of specialized areas. We'll help you connect with them and together our network will work for you.



## INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES

### GOAL PLANNING

We can't wait to learn more about you and maybe you'll even learn more about yourself too! We'll provide you with tools and opportunities to identify your strengths, goals, and transferrable skills. We'll also give you space to explain your needs and the needs of your family and we'll strive to connect you to resources that can help. We will look forward to getting to know you and discussing what you enjoy, aspire to be, and hope to achieve so that we can provide relevant services you want.

We'll help you develop an individualized employment plan and will work together with you to make it manageable and meaningful. We'll work together to outline action steps to meet the goals you define.

Central Connections staff know priorities and goals may change- we expect that may happen. We'll be here to help you adjust as needed so that you keep making progress toward the goals you want to meet.

### CAREER PLANNING

We want you to be able to make well-informed decisions regarding the next step in your career. The local job market is continuously changing. We'll help you understand the ins and outs of who is hiring for which positions, what skills are needed, what wages they are paying, and what opportunities there might be for movement within a company. Most importantly, we'll help you figure out how those positions might be a great fit for you.

Career Planning with Central Connections staff is personalized. We'll be with you every step of the way, providing guidance and services to help you overcome barriers and meet your goals.



## JOB APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Job applications might be the first information an employer reviews when screening applicants. They can be challenging to complete as applicants need to be prepared to highlight skills and abilities, past employment, and references. Central Connections staff will provide individualized guidance based on your background, skills, and abilities so that your application is honest, accurate, error-free, and leads to you passing the screening phase and being invited to an interview.

## RESUME AND COVER LETTER ASSISTANCE

Resumes and cover letters are often an employer's first impression of you. One of the frequent challenges job seekers have in writing both is understanding their strengths and transferrable skills. Central Connections staff will help you create and/or revise a resume and cover letter that highlights your skills, talents, and experiences so that you will stand out during the hiring process.

## WORKSHOPS

Our workshops led by PA CareerLink® instructors are designed to bring you the best experience possible, including opportunities to ask questions and have discussions with other job seekers. Workshops are always available at no cost to you and you'll be able to select from a wide range of topics. Whether you'd like to broaden your knowledge around budgeting, improve your computer skills, or learn tips that may help with your job search, there are workshops for you. We'll provide individualized guidance regarding which ones might be a perfect fit as you work toward your goals.

Some of our workshops are even led by outside experts that we invite to lead discussions and training on topics that may be of interest. Often, the individuals leading such discussions are in charge of hiring with local companies, so participation in the workshops can be a great opportunity for you to make a lasting first impression.

Workshops offered virtually give you a unique opportunity to practice navigation of virtual software that employers may require as part of their interview process, such as Zoom. Your Central Connections staff will follow-up with you after



workshops to help you build on what you've learned and apply new skills and insights to your goal planning and action steps!

## **PA CAREERLINK® ONLINE**

PA CareerLink® Online is always available and makes career planning readily accessible. You can access occupational videos, skill assessment tools, and resources to help you improve your interview skills with the click of a button. And of course, you'll be able to browse thousands of job postings for local positions. Central Connections staff will help you navigate the vast resources available and focus on those that might be most helpful for your individual plans.

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>

## **MOCK INTERVIEWS**

Interviews can be nerve-racking for anyone, but practice can relieve anxiety and as the saying goes, practice makes perfect. We'll hold mock interviews with you which will allow you the opportunity to practice unique responses to popular questions and industry specific questions you may encounter when invited to a real interview. We'll provide you with constructive feedback so that you gain confidence and succeed. Current interview trends include phone, face-to-face, and virtual meetings on the computer and we're prepared to help you shine in all of them.

## **CAREER FAIRS AND EMPLOYER EVENTS**

PA CareerLink® offers various events throughout the year to allow businesses and job seekers to connect. Events for individual employers that are seeking new talent happen frequently and larger scale job fairs where there are opportunities to meet numerous business representatives from many industries are coordinated as well. As your Central Connections staff, we'll help you prepare. From working on your 30 second "elevator speech" so you know what to say when you walk up to a company's table or enter their virtual room on Zoom, to being prepared to interview on the spot, Central Connections will give you the tools to make a positive impression.



## RESOURCES

There are a wide variety of resources available in our community. We'll help you navigate and research the contacts and services you and your family may need, including but not limited to - housing, utility assistance, food banks, medical assistance, childcare, mental health services, etc. In addition, the PA CareerLink® has a huge range of specialized staff and services. We'll help you seamlessly connect to the other programs and opportunities that you decide are right for you, including but not limited to Veteran's services, GED programs, college preparation/tutoring, services for individuals with disabilities, and more.

## FOLLOW UP SERVICES

Central Connections support doesn't end once you gain employment. In fact, we look forward to staying connected with you for one year. Our goal isn't to simply connect you to work- we wish to help you retain employment for the long term. We will remain in contact with you and are available to help you successfully transition in your new job, connect you with services to overcome challenges and barriers along the way, and help you adjust and plan if and when your goals change. If you find yourself in need of a career change or wish to connect with other education and training services, we will be ready to help!



## TRAINING SERVICES

Finding the right career is a full-time job and a tough decision for anyone to make. Sometimes additional training is needed to step into the career you'd like and Central Connections can help. As we work together to understand your goals, we can determine if training services might be the best option for you. Two types of trainings you may want to consider are listed below:

### ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)

When you have some of the skills needed for the job you want, but not all of them that the employer requires, OJT might be a good option for you. With an OJT, the employer interviews and then directly hires you with a training plan in place that they develop with PA CareerLink® staff.

You'll be hired with wages and benefits that are exactly the same as employees in the same position who do not have an OJT, and you'll receive hands on training with experts at the company. You'll be employed and be increasing your skills at the same time while the company receives a financial reimbursement to help cover the cost of your training.

### INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

An ITA is a grant or scholarship used to help cover the costs of post-secondary training. The amount you may be eligible to receive is based on the length of the training and other financial assistance available.

We will review high priority occupational trainings, certifications, and degrees to help you understand the careers those trainings can lead to and what wages you might expect to be paid.

*PLEASE NOTE OJT AND ITA FUNDS ARE NOT GUARANTEED TO ANY PARTICIPANT AND ARE CONTINGENT ON ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAINING FUNDS AND FUNDING AVAILABILITY.*

#### OJT Benefits:

- Direct Employment
- Hands-on-Training
- Increased Skills
- Central Connections Support and Services

#### ITA Benefits

- Tuition Assistance
- Career Plan
- Central Connections Support and Services
- Placement Assistance
- Training for High Demand Careers

## STAFF CONTACT

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

**Next Steps:**

**Next Scheduled Service:**

**Next Scheduled Central Connections Appointment:**

