



2025 Impact Report



Belief Statement

Connections Work believes that life changing success is possible for everyone, when barriers are removed, and people are encouraged to believe in their future and given the tools and opportunities to pursue it.

Mission Statement

Connections Work changes lives and improves communities by providing services and supports to individuals seeking pathways to success.

Vision Statement

Berks County and the broader region is stronger, healthier, and more prosperous because of the work we do.

Thank You!

Peggy Kershner & Nikki Schnovel, Co-Executive Directors

Dear Friends of Connections Work,

As we reflect on 2025, we are incredibly proud of all that Connections Work accomplished and, most importantly, the impact our staff, partners, volunteers, and supporters helped make possible throughout Berks County.

As you will see in our Impact Report, it was a great year for our programs. Across Connections Work, individuals worked toward employment, stability, and brighter futures while overcoming barriers that can often feel overwhelming. Our team continued to meet people where they are, provided individualized support, and created opportunities that lead to meaningful and lasting change. Every job secured, goal reached, barrier removed, and success celebrated reminds us why this work matters.

Our impact also extended well beyond our walls. In 2025, we continued to strengthen our connection to the broader community through career fairs, Reentry Simulations, community outreach, and opportunities to help others better understand the challenges faced by justice-involved individuals and those working to overcome barriers.

None of this work happens alone. Connections Work is fortunate to be surrounded by dedicated staff, engaged Board members, generous funders and donors, committed employers, volunteers, and incredible community partners who believe in our mission and in the people we serve.

As we look ahead, we remain excited about the opportunities before us. We will continue to grow, innovate, build partnerships, and find new ways to respond to the needs of our community. Thank you for being part of Connections Work and for helping us continue Changing Lives and Improving Communities.



Peggy Kershner *Nikki Schnovel*

2025 Statistics:

We Are CHANGING LIVES...

1,586 - Total Clients Assisted

1,211 Male / 375 Female

7,582 In-Office Visits

469 Attended Classes

134 clients participated in financial literacy classes, and 335 clients attended employment preparation classes. These employment-focused sessions cover topics such as resume writing, interview skills, job search education, and how to be a more productive employee.

\$17,133 In ID Assistance

A valid ID is required to work in the state of Pennsylvania. To get an ID, clients need to provide their social security card, birth certificate (or other form of ID), and two forms of proof of residency (utility bill, lease agreement, etc.).

\$24,776 In Bus Passes

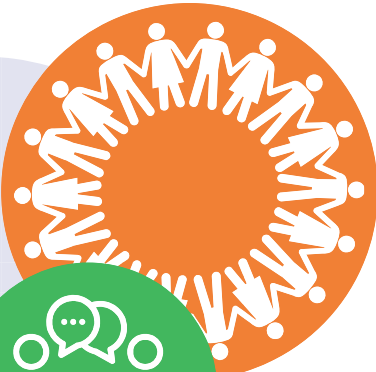
All-day bus passes were given to clients so they could go to job interviews and for the first week(s) of employment until they could begin covering the cost of transportation. \$1,080 in taxi/ Uber/Lyft passes was also provided.

\$1,370 In Work-Required Footwear

Needing work boots or non-slip shoes often creates a barrier to employment. By providing footwear, clients can accept job offers sooner.

966 Received Basic Needs Assistance

Essential resources are provided to clients in need. These items include hygiene supplies, blankets, bicycles, and a variety of other basic necessities. These resources play a vital role in helping individuals stabilize and move forward.



& IMPROVING COMMUNITIES...

996 Utilized Computer-Based Learning Center

Clients use the Computer-Based Learning Center (CBLC) to update resumes, search for jobs, and improve their basic skills.

\$924 In Clothing Assistance

When having the right clothing becomes an obstacle to accepting the job, Connections Work steps in to ensure our clients can meet the requirements.

Over 600 Job Seekers Attended Career Fairs

Job seekers with justice involvement can meet fair chance employers in a welcoming environment. Volunteers provide support with application completion, mock interviews and job readiness coaching.

40 Employers, Educators, and Service Providers

Attended the February and October 2025 Career Fairs.

60 Fair Chance Employers

Affiliated fair chance employers regularly hire Connections Work clients, giving them the second chance they need to start their next chapters.

46 Community Events

Outside events allow our team members to speak about the programs and services we offer and the ripple effect we have throughout our community.



Life Improvement Ambassadors

Hamid Chaudhry
Elsayed Elmarzouky
Althea Harmon
Paul Hoh
Kate Hoh
Dr. Constance Dent
Linda Faye Epes, Esq.
Dr. Ann T. Gundry

Megan Huesgen
Ruby Martin
Sharon Mast
Craig Poole
Scott L. Rehr
Eric Savage
Mark Stone
Michelle Tomczak
Al Weber

2026 Life Improvement Ambassador

Dan Fogarty

2026 Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardees

Connections Work Mother's / Father's Voice Volunteers
Empire Group
The House That Fur Built
Reading School District's Early Career Academy
The Student Conservation Association, Inc.
The United Way of Berks County

2026 Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee

Samuel Cruz
Aimee Geiken
Chris McLaughlin

Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardees

Samuel Cruz



Samuel Cruz's story begins at a very young age. At just thirteen, he was on his own. His mother tragically passed away while in prison, and his grandmother passed soon after. With no one left to turn to, Samuel found himself living on the streets of New York. In order to survive, he began running drugs, using drugs, and committing other crimes, leading to repeated involvement with the justice system starting at the age of sixteen.

While struggling with addiction, Samuel relocated to Reading, hoping a new environment would help him regain control of his life. Despite that hope, he continued to face difficulties and experienced several encounters with the law. Eventually he hit rock bottom and ended up in jail for the last time. That moment became the wake-up call he needed. As soon as he completed his sentence, he came to Connections Work seeking help.

Samuel quickly secured a job but soon realized he was not prepared for the responsibilities that come with employment. After three months, he left the position and returned to Connections Work, where he was given the opportunity to join our R3 program. Through the program's cognitive intervention sessions, Samuel strengthened his job readiness and learned how to better navigate workplace relationships, something he had always struggled with.

During his R3 cohort, Samuel secured a position at the DoubleTree in Reading, who kindly held the position for him so he could complete the program.

Now working as a Houseman at the DoubleTree, Samuel truly does a little bit of everything to get his job done. As he approaches his one-year anniversary, he has been able to save money and transition from a subsidized housing program to renting his own room.

Samuel credits his success to the many supports in his life: his NA brothers and sisters, the R3 team and Connections Work staff, his children and grandchildren, his church community, and most importantly his lord and savior Jesus Christ. He has found a purpose and the determination to keep moving forward each day. He knows that no matter how difficult things become, returning to substance use is no longer an option.

Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardees

Aimee Geiken

Aimee Geiken's story is one of turning turbulence into triumph. She spent twenty-five years in and out of the legal system, with no end in sight. For eight of those years, she also battled addiction, often not knowing where she would stay from one night to the next. After losing her son to the custody of Children and Youth Services and facing over a decade of state time, Aimee decided that enough was enough.

Aimee was accepted into Treatment Court in lieu of her state sentence and became involved in our Treatment Court Workforce Development Program. After spending several months working with our staff seeking employment, she applied for and was accepted into R3. While she initially struggled to adjust to the high accountability demanded in the program, she soon became increasingly comfortable with her classmates and the R3 team and grew engaged and invested in her success.

Despite personal struggles, Aimee showed up each day with a smile and a willingness to learn. She graduated from R3 in May 2025 and that same day secured a full-time position at Integrated Community Home Care Solutions, where she continues to work today. In addition to her job, Aimee is an active volunteer in the community. She serves weekly hot lunches at New Journey Community Outreach and also supports Ashes to Beauty, a grassroots organization serving the homeless. Aimee has graduated from Treatment Court and, through her stable employment, has saved enough to rent her own room and purchase a car.

Aimee maintains strong connections with her R3 classmates, stays in touch with the R3 team, and remains active in her church and community. Now two and a half years clean, Aimee is proud of her accomplishments but never forgets where she started.



Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardees

Chris McLaughlin



Chris McLaughlin battled addiction and incarceration for more than half of his life. After 23 years, he decided he had enough. When he left jail for the last time, he had nothing. Although he was in recovery, he was not connected to programs that could help him move forward. Knowing that continuing down the same path would only lead him back to where he started, Chris stopped by Connections Work after hearing that bus passes were available. He soon learned about other supports as well, including hygiene kits, something small that made a big difference in rebuilding his confidence.

Chris initially became interested in the R3 program because the stipend offered a quick paycheck. Once accepted into the program, he began to realize how much more the program had to offer and he became increasingly engaged.

Chris graduated from R3 in May 2025 and three days later began his full-time job at Brenntag, where he continues to work and thrive. During his time there, he has moved through several roles, building new skills and experience. He now works third shift, which allows him to spend his days giving back to the community.

Chris remains very active with Connections Work and the R3 program. He regularly speaks at R3 orientations to encourage new participants and attends graduations to celebrate their success. He also volunteers as a mock interviewer for R3 participants and at our Career Fairs. Chris would like to give a special shout-out to Connections Work staff person Rich Durina, who challenged him and helped him strengthen his interviewing skills.

Through R3, Chris learned accountability for his actions, decisions, and words. He credits the cognitive curriculum with helping him make better decisions and manage his emotions both at work and in his personal life. Now two and a half years clean, Chris has a job he loves, is working toward becoming a Certified Recovery Specialist, has rented his own apartment, and recently purchased a new car. He is also grateful for the support of his fiancé, Serenity.

Chris remains deeply appreciative of the support he has received and is committed to continuing to give back to the community that supported him.

Reentry Programs



R3 Rebuilding
Reentrants &
Reading

R3 is an 8 Week Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program in the Construction Trades.

The R3 program is comprised of three components to achieve optimum results:

- Technical Education: Connections Work partners with the Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC) where clients receive an overview of construction, electrical, plumbing, and masonry.
- Hands-On Learning: Clients learn woodworking and welding skills at the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts and put those new skills to work on a cohort project.
- Employment-Focused Cognitive Curriculum: Connections Work staff deliver interactive lessons to teach clients how to identify and manage high-risk situations related to obtaining and maintaining employment.

R3 Clients Also Receive:

- A stipend over the 8 week training
- Case Management and Mentoring
- Flagger, HAZWOPER, and OSHA 10 Safety Certifications
- Life Skills and Professional Development Education
- Credit towards Apprenticeship Programs with our Apprenticeship Affiliates; Associated Builders & Contractors Keystone and Eastern Chapters and select programs at the Berks Career and Technology Center

“

R3 provided me with a bucket of tools and paid me to be in it. It was a win-win situation. I am very happy and fortunate to have been part of the program.

”

Jaime, Former R3 Participant

Reentry Programs

Working Towards Change

Working Towards Change (WTC) provides case management both pre- and post-release from the Berks County Jail System. Individuals who score moderate/high or high on the Ohio Risk Assessment Prison Intake Tool (ORAS-PIT) and who meet other eligibility requirements are referred to WTC for case management services. Connections Work staff complete a thorough assessment with the client, which along with the results of their ORAS-PIT help prioritize targets for change. The client and their case manager work together to develop a case plan, set goals and objectives and identify resources needed to achieve them.

Post-release, clients continue to work with their Case Manager to address any immediate needs, such as housing, ID, food, clothing, and medication and are enrolled in our workforce development programming.

Level Up

Level Up is a collaboration between The Literacy Council of Reading-Berks and Connections Work. The program provides GED, ESL, and Adult Basic Education classes in our office to participants in our workforce development programs. The educational achievements experienced in Level Up assist our participants to gain employment and advancement opportunities.

Reentry Resource Center

The Reentry Resource Center is a single point of contact for individuals with current or prior justice system involvement. Connections Work staff conduct a brief assessment to aid in determining which of their needs require immediate attention. Assistance for basic needs along with information and referrals to services in the community is provided. Services are available in the Connections Work office and in the Berks County Jail System.



Workforce Development Program Model

Connections Work's workforce development programs are built on a comprehensive, individualized approach designed to help people overcome barriers and achieve long-term employment success. Across all initiatives, participants receive case-managed support that blends career preparation, skill-building, and wraparound services tailored to their unique needs and goals.

Individualized Planning & Career Readiness

Early in their involvement, participants meet one-on-one with staff to assess their education, training, and work history. Together, they develop an Individualized Employment Plan to guide the next steps of their journey.

Participants also engage in classes focused on employment readiness, essential workplace skills, and financial literacy, including communication, teamwork, resume development, interview preparation, and job retention strategies. Evidence-informed cognitive and behavioral interventions further strengthen the social, emotional, and coping skills needed for workplace success.

Digital Literacy & Skill Development

Digital literacy is a key part of our model. Participants who need support receive digital navigation services to build confidence using technology for employment and daily life.

Participants also have access to our Computer Based Learning Center, open each weekday for staff-assisted job searches, online applications, and digital learning. When appropriate, individuals utilize:

- WIN Career Readiness Courseware to strengthen applied math, reading comprehension, and workplace problem-solving
- Northstar, a digital literacy platform offering self-paced tutorials and assessments in essential computer and internet skills



Workforce Development Program Model

Adult Education Partnership

To address educational barriers, Connections Work partners with the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks to offer Level Up, providing convenient on-site GED, ESL, and Adult Basic Education opportunities in a supportive learning environment.

Employer Connections & Job Retention Support

Our workforce development efforts are supported by an Employment Development Team that builds strong relationships with local employers and connects participants to job opportunities across our programs.

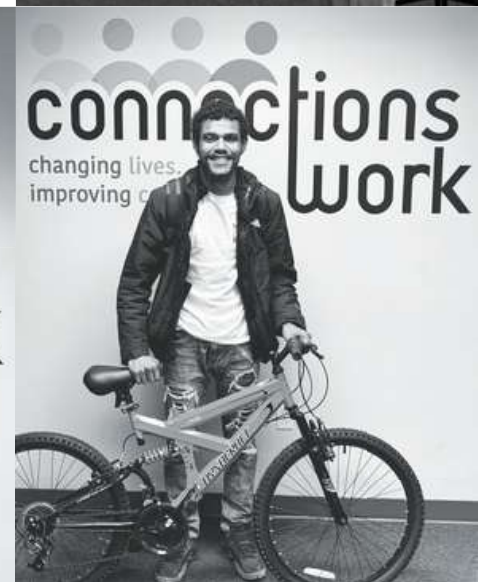
Securing employment is a major achievement, but maintaining stable work is often the true challenge. Staff provide ongoing coaching, retention support, and follow-up services to help participants navigate workplace expectations and build long-term success.

Supportive Services for Stability

Because many participants face challenges beyond job skills alone, Connections Work helps address critical needs such as identification, transportation, and required work items like uniforms or job-specific footwear. These supports are often essential to achieving stable employment.

A Comprehensive Path to Success

Through this comprehensive model, we provide targeted workforce programming for individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances, helping each person move toward stability, self-sufficiency, and success.



Workforce Development Programs

Reentry Works

Reentry Works serves individuals in Berks County with current or past justice system involvement. This program is especially important because barriers to employment often remain long after supervision ends. Reentry Works ensures individuals have access to the support, guidance, and opportunities needed to successfully rebuild their lives and reconnect with the workforce.

Recovery Works

Recovery Works serves individuals impacted by an opioid use disorder. Justice involvement is not required. This program recognizes that stable employment is a critical component of long-term recovery, and case managers work closely with participants and their support networks to promote stability, wellness, and sustained success.

This program is made possible in whole by funds received through the Berks County Opioid Settlement Agreement

Berks County Treatment Court Workforce Development

We partner with Berks County Treatment Court team to provide employment-focused services throughout their involvement with Treatment Court. Workforce development is a vital part of treatment and accountability, helping individuals be successful in their Treatment Court journey and build structure, purpose, and long-term independence.

This program is funded in part by the Berks County Office of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.



Workforce Development Programs

Work in Progress

Work in Progress serves current or formerly justice-involved individuals who are living with a mental health diagnosis and receiving case management through a mental health provider. This program offers intensive support and, when appropriate, volunteer or transitional opportunities to build experience and confidence. Meaningful employment plays a powerful role in improving mental health, self-esteem, and overall stability.

This program is funded in whole by the Berks County Office of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

Working Toward Change

Individuals who participated in this program while incarcerated at the Berks County Jail System are able to continue working with their case manager once released into the community and can focus on finding and keeping a job.



Employment Development

Connections to Employment



Securing stable employment at a livable wage is a critical step in helping individuals rebuild their lives. The Employment Development Team at Connections Work plays a vital role in this process by cultivating strong relationships with employers across Berks County. Through regular communication with businesses, educators, and workforce partners, the team stays closely connected to the evolving needs of the local job market.

These relationships allow our staff to gather valuable insight into hiring needs, workplace expectations, and opportunities that are open to individuals who may face barriers to employment. This information is shared with our case management team, helping them guide clients toward positions where they are most likely to succeed and grow. By aligning employer needs with the strengths and goals of our clients, the team helps create meaningful employment matches that benefit both individuals and businesses.

The Employment Development Team also supports participants in Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R3) our registered pre-apprenticeship program by helping graduates explore next steps in the construction trades, including connections to apprenticeship opportunities through partners such as ABC Keystone, ABC Eastern PA, and Berks Career and Technology Center.

In addition, the team organizes biannual Career Fairs designed to connect individuals with justice involvement and other barriers directly with employers willing to offer opportunities and second chances. Through these efforts, the Employment Development Team helps ensure that the pathway from program participation to meaningful employment is both clear and achievable.

To find out more about becoming a fair chance employer or the Career Fairs, email: HelpWithHiring@ConnectionsWork.org



Pretrial Services

Pretrial Interviews and Assessments

Pretrial Case Managers conduct post-arrest interviews and assessments of criminal defendants and furnish the verified assessments to the judiciary, either prior to bail being set or at the preliminary hearing. Connections Work utilizes the Pretrial Assessment Tool of the Ohio Risk Assessment System (PAT-ORAS) to assess the risk of a defendant committing a new offense while under pretrial release or failing to appear in court. Connections Work also assists with jail population management. Pretrial staff conduct a monthly review of the jail population to assure that low-risk defendants are not needlessly incarcerated due to their inability to post bail. We are pleased to see that on average, the true pretrial population (those held only on a bail) hovers around 34%, which is well below the national average. For those defendants that are classified as low risk and are deemed appropriate for pretrial release, Pretrial Case Managers will provide the assessments to defense counsel and encourage that a motion is made to modify the bail to release the defendant on unsecured bail.



**Verified
interviews and
assessments**

Pretrial Supervision

Connections Work provides a supervised release for criminal defendants who would otherwise remain in jail until the final disposition of their case. Pretrial Case Managers utilize the results of the PAT-ORAS to set conditions that are based on the risk that individual poses and to ensure both court appearance and public safety. Pretrial Case Managers provide drug and alcohol program referrals for individuals identified as having a drug or alcohol problem. Connections Work also oversees the Community Release Bail Program.



**Monitoring Pretrial
population in Berks
County Jail System**

Diversionary Courts

Connections Work provides personnel and support for the Berks County Treatment Courts, which include DUI, Drug and Alcohol, and Mental Health Courts. Connections Work interviews and assesses most treatment court applicants and provides referrals for drug and alcohol testing and treatment. Our Treatment Court Case Manager provides case management and workforce development programming for participants in the DUI, Mental Health, and Drug Treatment Courts. The Treatment Courts provide an intensive combination of court-ordered treatment and regular interaction with the Treatment Court Judge and the team, which includes the Public Defender's Office, Adult Probation Office, TASC, SAM, Inc., the District Attorney's Office, treatment providers, and Connections Work.



**Providing pretrial
supervision**



**Assistance with
Treatment Courts -
DUI, Drug and
Alcohol
Mental Health**

Mental Health Forensic Diversion

Mental health disorders are both overrepresented and under-treated within the criminal justice system. The Mental Health Forensic Diversion Program at Connections Work, in partnership with the Office of Berks County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, aims to reduce the incarceration of non-violent individuals living with mental illness while ensuring community safety. The program supports individuals with identified mental health conditions and co-occurring substance use who are involved with or at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Grounded in early identification, treatment-focused alternatives, and strong cross-system collaboration, the program provides a structured pathway from criminal justice involvement to long-term stability. Our team works closely with each participant to connect them to effective supports, treatment, and services that help prevent future system involvement.

This program is funded in full by the Berks County Office of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Certification Training for Criminal Justice Professions

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program in Berks County strengthens partnerships between law enforcement, mental health providers, and community agencies while improving safety and increasing diversion from the traditional criminal justice system for individuals with behavioral health concerns. The CIT Program also provides law enforcement officers with a specialized 40-hour training focusing on de-escalation techniques, recognizing behavioral health conditions, and responding to mental health crises through connection to appropriate support services and resources rather than entering the criminal justice system.

As of January 31, 2026, 106 individuals, including 70 law enforcement officers and Sheriff's deputies across 30 municipal and state police departments, have completed CIT training. With certified officers and a quarterly steering committee coordinating interagency efforts, the program directly supports the Forensic Diversion Program by improving frontline response, promoting safe diversion, and fostering continuity of care for individuals at risk of justice system involvement.



The Pardon Project of Berks County

What Is The Pardon Project?

The main goal of the Pardon Project of Berks County is to assist individuals with a criminal record who have served their sentence and are seeking a pardon of their records. The Pardon Project connects eligible applicants with trained volunteer Pardon Coaches to assist them in completing the pardon application and aid them in their journey.

The Pardon Project offers individuals a life-changing opportunity to finally break free from their past mistakes and live their lives according to their current potential. Connections Work is thrilled to coordinate the efforts of the Pardon Project of Berks County and serve as the official Pardon Hub for Berks County.



Why Are Pardons Important?

People change, but records don't! Pardons give people who have changed their lives the opportunity to stop being defined by their worst mistakes. Pardons restore the rights and privileges that were lost as a result of a conviction. Not only do they open the door to greater employment and educational opportunities and increased housing options, but they also can have a positive economic impact on the community.

Research has shown a past conviction history can raise over 40,000 barriers, including employment, education, housing, and professional licensing. These barriers not only impact individuals but also have far-reaching consequences for their families as well.

Eligibility Criteria Includes:

- Cannot have a conviction of a sex crime
- Must reside in or have a conviction in Berks County
- At least 2 years have passed since the completion of the sentence (including probation and parole)
- Cannot have any open criminal cases
- Must have all restitution paid in full and be active with a payment plan if there are outstanding fines and court costs

Where Can I Learn More?

ConnectionsWork.org/Pardon-Project

“

Mistakes made long ago shouldn't follow you for the rest of your life.

”

PA State Senator Judy Schwank

Contracted Services

Empowering Workforce Success

Employee Essentials is delivered to students during their on-the-job training placements. It equips them with practical skills for navigating real workplace situations, including managing difficult workplace experiences and understanding workplace hierarchy. Through this training, students develop the tools needed to address conflict with poise and professionalism, ultimately supporting successful job attainment and long-term employment retention.

Meredith Morse Carrier
Reading School District
Early Career Academy
Coordinator

Our expertise and innovative approach make us a go-to partner for organizations looking to equip individuals with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. We have developed high-quality employment preparedness services for employers, educational institutions, and other training providers. One of our signature offerings is Employee Essentials, a transformative, cognitive-based curriculum that helps individuals overcome employment barriers by addressing the connection between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This program fosters personal growth, professional development, and long-term job success.

Beyond Employee Essentials, we provide a range of workforce development services, including:

- Case Management
- Job Readiness Training
- Job Search Support
- Career Preparedness Education

Our ability to design, implement, and sustain workforce programs that adapt to the needs of diverse populations has made us a sought-after provider. We have built strong, long-standing partnerships, demonstrating a consistent track record of stakeholder trust and success with marginalized populations.

Over the past year we have provided support to Tec Centro Berks, Reading School District's Early Career Academy, and the Reading Conservation Corps.

Through our contracted services we are able to create opportunities that change lives and strengthen communities by extending our impact beyond the justice involved.



Volunteer Opportunities

Mother's / Father's Voice Program

For 30 years, Mother's / Father's Voice volunteers have been recording incarcerated parents reading stories to their young children. The book and private YouTube link to the recording are sent to the child for them to watch their parent reading while following along in the book. This provides a sense of closeness between the parent and child that would otherwise not be possible.

In 2025, 527 parents read books to 1,096 children!

Mock Interviews

Mock Interview Volunteers can connect with clients to allow them to practice their newly learned interview skills, which is hugely beneficial to individuals who are embarking on their new lives! They help at our bi-annual career fairs and with R3 participants. Volunteers provide instant feedback so that our clients can show their best selves to future employers.

Pardon Coach

Pardon Coaches increase applicants' chances for success by providing guidance on writing detailed essays demonstrating how they have changed their lives for the better since their convictions. The total time commitment is approximately 4-5 hours (depending on the applicant's needs), which includes a one-hour training. Meetings with the applicant can take place either virtually or in person.

For more information about Connections Work programs and how you can volunteer to help, please visit our website at ConnectionsWork.org



Collaborative Community Initiatives



United Way of Berks County

As a United Way of Berks County partner, Connections Work receives funding to support the Working Toward Change program at the Berks County Jail System.

Over the years, many Connections Work initiatives and events have been made possible thanks to the generous financial and volunteer support of the United Way of Berks County.

In 2020, the United Way of Berks County funded Connections Work's Reentry Resource Center, to help our clients seeking resources within our community. Assistance for basic needs along with information and referrals to services in the community is provided through this initiative. The Reentry Resource Center expanded into the Berks County Jail System to allow individuals to prepare better for their release into our community.



In April 2022, the United Way of Berks County awarded a \$1.2 million focused, 3-year grant that launched the Reentry Works program.

Reentry Works has expanded Connections Work workforce services to ANY individual in Berks County with current or past justice system involvement, addressing their issues of unemployment and underemployment. The program enables our clients to become reliable and successful employees. Reentry Works uses a case-managed approach and creates individualized employment plans for each client. The program's curriculum includes skill, education, and experience assessments; financial literacy; employment preparedness; digital literacy; and employer recruitment.

Literacy Council of Reading - Berks

Connections Work is proud to partner with the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks to expand educational opportunities for the individuals we serve. In addition to our partnership with the Level Up program, the staff of the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks are our trusted subject matters experts in adult education, working closely with our team to ensure that clients receive the instruction and support they need to move forward with confidence.



New Journey Community Outreach

Connections Work and New Journey partner to assist reentrants who are getting back on their feet. New Journey provides a daily soup kitchen, weekly food pantry, and weekly clothing center for individuals and families in need in the City of Reading. Most recently, New Journey has given Connections Work clients volunteer opportunities, to not only get valuable work experiences but also give back to their community.

Thank You!

Collaborative Community Initiatives

Berks County Forensic Task Force

The mission of the Berks County Forensic Task Force is to enhance the quality, coordination, and planning of services for the justice-involved in Berks County to support the reintegration of returning citizens into local communities, lower recidivism rates, reduce the number of victims of crime, and increase the safety of our communities.

Blankets of Hope



Blankets of Hope supports Connections Work clients by providing blankets to individuals who are homeless or are at-risk for homelessness, and beds and bedding for those who are getting off of the street and moving into a home.

Berks County Library System

The Berks County Library System provides laptops at our Career Fairs. These enable applicants to update their resumes and to go online to apply for positions advertised by employers attending the Career Fair.

The Forge

The Forge collects new and gently-worn suits, dress shirts, and ties, and donates them, sizes, and matches them to Connections Work R3 graduates. Owning a suit enables them to put their best feet forward in their interviews, or whenever a suit would be appropriate. Their mission is to help men become the version of themselves that our culture needs, focusing on positive imagery, service, and fellowship!

Visions Federal Credit Union

Through a partnership with Visions Federal Credit Union, Connections Work clients have access to personal finance classes and one-on-one financial counseling as part of their workforce development journey. These sessions are led by Jadon Dembi, a Financial Wellness Officer at Visions, who shares practical tools and guidance to help individuals build financial confidence and stability.

Empowering our clients with the skills to manage their money is one more way we're helping them build a stronger future.



2026 Impact Awards Luncheon

Thank You, Sponsors

Opportunities

Customers Bank
Emerald Advisors, LLC
Weidenhammer

Second Chances

Council on Chemical Abuse

Partnership

Brentwood Industries
East Penn Manufacturing
Members 1st
Nevins & McAllister
Ottick Solutions
Reading Hospital, Tower Health
Stone Financial
Tec Centro Berks
Tompkins
Visions Federal Credit Union
Weik Capital Management

Hand Up

Burkey Construction
Get Clarity
Kunkle Management &
Consulting Services LLC
Literacy Council of Reading -
Berks Inc.
Omega Systems Consultants,
Inc.
TASC
VA Productions



Life Improvement Ambassador
Dan Fogarty with Nikki Schnovel &
Peggy Kershner



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardees
Connections Work Mother's / Father's
Voice Volunteers



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardees
Empire Group



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
The House That Fur Built



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
The United Way of Berks County

2026 Impact Awards Luncheon

Thank You!



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
Reading School District's Early Career Academy



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
The Student Conservation Association, Inc.



Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee
Samuel Cruz



Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee
Aimee Geiken



Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee
Chris McLaughlin



Save The Date...

2027 Impact Awards Breakfast
Thursday, April 22, 2027

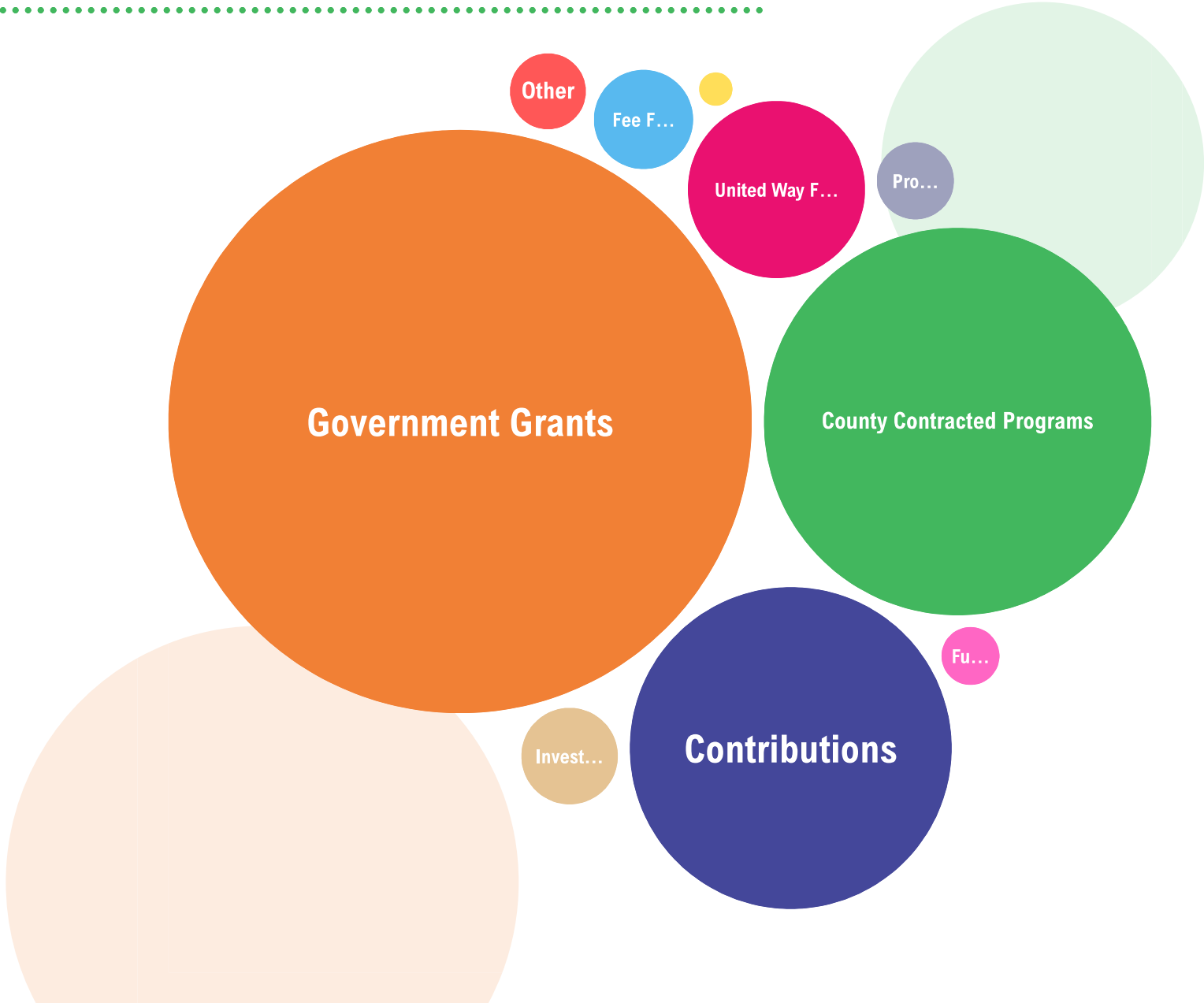
Financials

Connections Work Revenue & Expenses
Calendar Year 2025
January 1 - December 31, 2025

Revenue

Government Grants	\$1,770,914	
County Contracted Programs	\$781,157	
Contributions	\$538,726	
United Way Funding	\$163,072	
Fee For Service Contracts	\$51,172	
Investment Income	\$48,420	
Program Services	\$30,925	
Other	\$29,908	
Fundraising Events	\$17,433	
Contributions - In-Kind	\$5,765	

TOTAL REVENUES & SUPPORT \$3,437,492



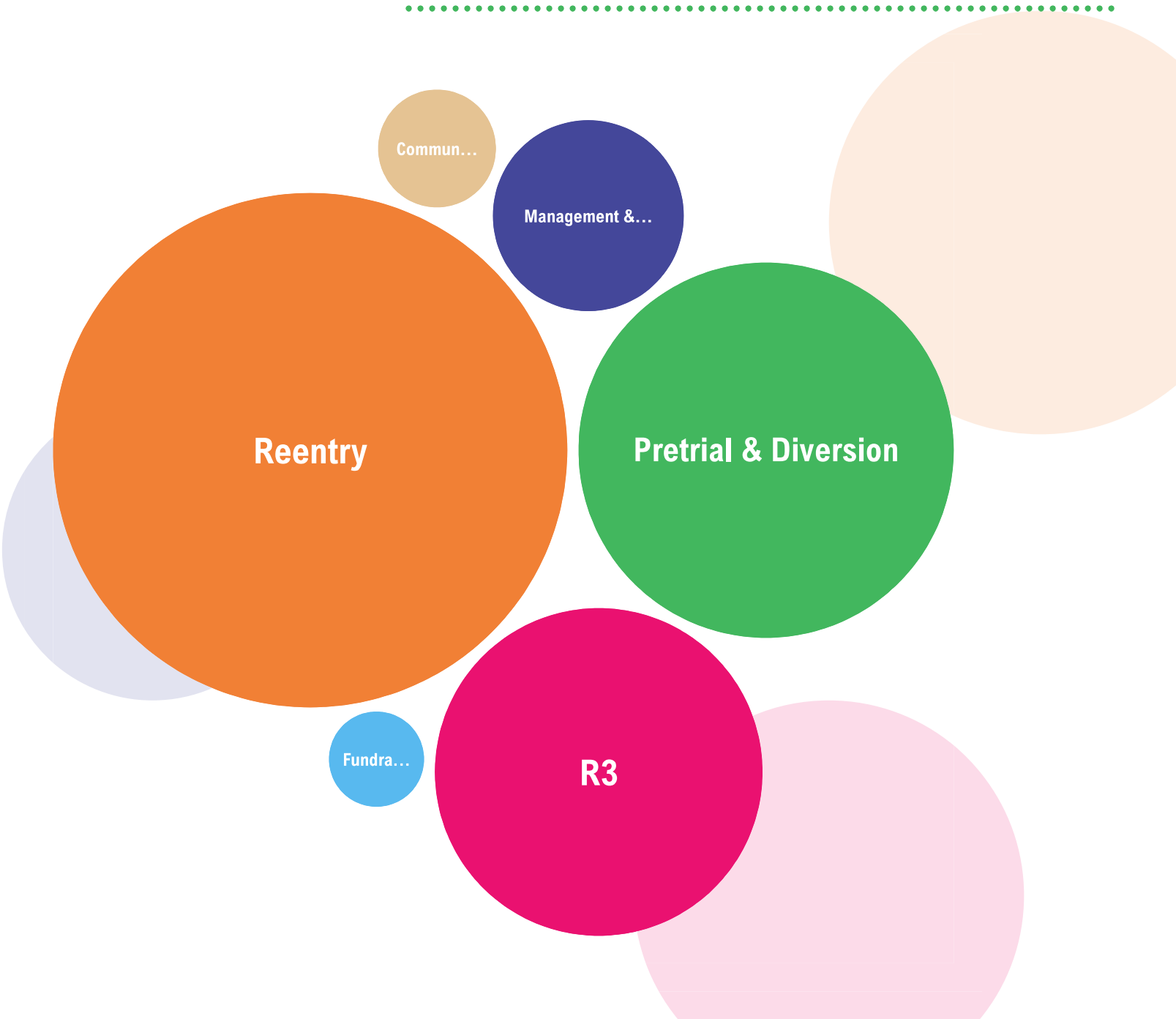
Financials

Connections Work Revenue & Expenses
Calendar Year 2025
January 1 - December 31, 2025

Expenses

Reentry	\$1,361,347	
Pretrial & Diversion	\$724,646	
R3 - Rebuilding Reentrants & Reading	\$552,477	
Management & General	\$187,547	
Community Outreach	\$71,341	
Fundraising	\$46,581	

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$2,943,939**



2025 Donors!

Ambassador - a
Board of Directors - b
Former Board Member - fb
Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee - pjh
Connections Work Staff - s
Volunteer - v

We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of our donor list. If you discover an error, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us at 484.260.3860 ext. 3927 so that we may correct our records.

\$10,000 +

Anonymous Donor
Fulton Foward Foundation
Henry Janssen Foundation
Santander Bank
Peter and Mary Terranova fb, v
The Wyomissing Foundation

\$5,000 - 9,999

Kimberton Whole Foods, Inc.
Jeannie Savage fb
Woman's Exchange of Reading Fund

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Emerald Advisers, LLC
Jerry and Carolyn Holleran
Penn State Health St. Joseph
Scott and Yvette Rehr a
United Methodist Women,
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Brentwood Industries pjh
Cathy & Doug Weaver Fund
Council On Chemical Abuse
E.G. & Klara M. Smith Foundation
East Penn Manufacturing Co.
Exeter Friends Meeting
Patricia Giles
Brad and Barbara Hall
Kim Hiester
Chris Hoh & Dan Elmer
Peggy and Lee Kershner s
Literacy Council of
Reading-Berks, Inc. pjh
Sharon Mast a, fb
Members 1st Federal Credit Union
Nevins and McAllister, LLC
Penske Transportation Solutions
Alexia Pursley b
Renewed Spirit Church
Nicolle and Leroy Schnovel s
The Hill School, Student
Philanthropy Council
Tompkins
Visions Federal Credit Union
Weik Capital Management, Inc.
Kent and Sara Weymouth
Russel Becker & Janet Winter-Becker

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous Donor
Anonymous Donor
District Attorney's Office
Denise Frasso
Gage Personnel
Rev. Dr. Mike and Susan Hall
Cynthia Long
Jason and Stacy Mensch s
Morgan Stanley
Morgan Truck Body pjh
Robert Myer
New Castle Lawn & Landscape
Omega Systems Consultants, Inc.
Ottick Solutions, LLC
Oxholm Family Fund
Performance Toyota
Tom Rentschler b
Schlouch Inc
TASC
Ronald Velez fb
Mark & Zelda Yoder

*A special thank you to
Weaver Associates for
the in-kind printing of
the Connections Work
Impact Awards program.*

2025 Donors!

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\$250 - \$499

Abhishek Amatya fb
Berks Counseling Center
Berks Tec Centro pjh
Champion Personnel, Inc.
Christ Episcopal Church
Diann Connor
Virginia Dodge
Steven Gorman
Christine Guistwite s
Phyllis and Mike Hechinger
Sydney and Gerald Malick
Veronica and David Morrison
Denise and Douglas Myer s
Brian Pinto fb
Reading Area Community College
Marilyn Schneider
Donald and Joann Smith
Michelle Tomczak a
Tower Health
Unique Snacks pjh
Barbara Waller

\$100 - \$249

ABC Keystone Chapter
Heather Adams
Aerotek
Amerihealth Caritas
Josie Basile s
Patty Bell s
Keith Belles s
Berks County Adult Probation
Berks County Clerk of Courts
Ruth Besson
Blankets of Hope
Borelli's Creperie, Deli, and Market
Brilliant Solar
Erin Brown s
BTI
Robyn Cavanagh
Champion Personnel
Community Aid, Inc.
Construction Masters Services
Amanda and David Deiser s
Sharon and Malcolm Dreibelbis
Seth Duval s
Empire Beauty School
Empire Group
Express Employment Professionals
Kathy Galtere s
Get Clarity
GoggleWorks Center for the Arts pjh
Herbein + Company, Inc.
Homewerks LLC
J.P. Mascaro & Sons
JGM USA
Eamon Kenny s
Keystone Job Corps
Kunkle Management &
Consulting Services
Heather and Craig Laudenslager
Christian Leinbach
Michelle Little s

\$100 - \$249 (cont.)

Melissa Maurer
Elith Moscoso s
Chad Moyer s
NAMI
Amy Nichol s
Not One More - Penn State Berks
Jessica Nunez s
PA CareerLink Berks County (EDSI)
Packaging Corporation of America
Jane Palmer
Penn State Restorative Justice Initiative
PeopleShare
Precision Technology
Pro Max Fence Systems, LLC
Redner's Markets
Linda Rentschler
Jane and David Rohrbach v
Renee Ruhlman
S&S Structures, Inc.
Safe Berks pjh
Scouting America Hawk
Mountain Council
William Seaman
Richard Small
Susan and Allen Stalneckner
Lori Stoudt s
Elizabeth Sweeney
The Kaiser Martin Group
The Performance Group
Thompson Group
UPS
Taylor Walker s
Bill and Jody Widing v

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Up to \$100

Jim and Carol Adams
Abel Adekola
Anonymous Donor
Ann Bertorelli
Logan Boyer
Amber Boyer s
David and Sandra Brant
Ann Brugger
Lynne Burns
Laura Catalano
Jackie Checo s
Tony DeMarco
Rich Durina s
Malinda Essig
J. Gail Freymoyer
Stanley Furrow
Marianne Garrett
Wendy and John Glassmoyer
Cole Golden v
Tammy and Paul Granger
Arthur Grim
Amy Groh
Terri Hill
Caitlin Hinsey
Jason Hornberger
Megan Huesgen a, fb
Barry and Connie Imhoff
Michael and Kathryn Joffred
Lorena Keely
Brandon Levan
Ruby Martin a
Paola Mateo

Up to \$100 (cont.)

Geraldine Means
Cindy Milian
Mandy Miller
Veronica Morrison
Phyllis Moser
Gabrielle Mu s
Kathleen Nallo
Joni and David Naugle
Michael Reese
Molly Robbins
Brad Roberts
Todd Romeiser
Christopher & Cindy Rumpf
Joanna Schlottman
Susan Schlottman
Casey Schmidt s
Judith Schwank
Tom Scornavacchi
Pam Seaman
Stephanie Smith
Keith Stamm
Christopher Sullivan
Janice Thompson
Robert Twardowski
Drew Weidner
John and Mary Jo Weishampel
Mary Westmoreland

In Honor & in Memory

In Honor of Sharon Mast and Al Weber

Oxholm Family Fund

In Honor of Al Weber

Diann Connor
Robert Twardowski
Kent and Sara Weymouth

In Memory of Kate Hoh

Chris Hoh and Dan Elmer

In Memory of Kip D. Frasso

Denise Frasso

The Connections Work Culture

Nurturing Our Workplace Culture

A strong workplace culture doesn't happen by chance, it's the result of thoughtful, consistent effort. At Connections Work, we take great pride in the culture we've built and understand that maintaining it requires a shared commitment to nurture and evolve it. We are intentional about creating an environment where every individual can succeed and feel supported. Our dedication to cultivating a positive and empowering workplace is woven into the fabric of who we are, evident in every interaction and decision we make.

A key element of our culture is our focus on continual growth. We believe that creating a positive work environment demands ongoing learning and responsiveness. That's why we equip our team with tools and opportunities to grow professionally and personally. From enhancing communication and leadership skills to building stronger teams through shared understanding of workplace dynamics, our training programs help team members thrive, and empower them to extend that same support to our clients.

Building culture isn't just about developing skills, it's about fostering a deep sense of belonging. We believe that when every team member feels heard, respected, and valued, we all do better. It's not just a principle we follow, it's a core part of our identity.

What truly defines our culture is our collective commitment to make it exceptional. Whether someone is brand new or has been with us for years, everyone contributes to shaping our shared values and day-to-day experiences. At Connections Work, we're more than a workplace, we're a community where people are supported, appreciated, and inspired to bring their best every day.

We Believe...

- *All people have value.*
- *Mistakes do not define us.*
- *How we show up is critical to our success.*
- *Psychological safety is a basic human need.*
- *Not everyone has had the same opportunities.*
- *Positive change is possible through hope, opportunity and second chances.*



Staff & Board of Directors

Leadership Team

Peggy Kershner, *Co-Executive Director*

Nicolle Schnovel, *Co-Executive Director*

Patty Bell, SHRM-CP, *Human Resources Director*

Kristy Belschwinder, *Mental Health Diversion Program Manager*

Amanda Deiser, *Program Manager*

Christine Guistwite, *Director of Programming*

Michelle Little, *Program Manager*

Jason Mensch, *Director of Programming*

Chad Moyer, *Program Manager*

Denise Myer, *Finance Manager*

Jessica Nunez, *Quality Control Manager*

Team Members

Lyndsey Algelo

B Avalos

Keith Belles

Jaclyn Condi

Rich Durina

Seth Duval

Kathy Galtre

Leisha Gonzalez Colon

Mike Keiser

Brandon Leal

Rose Mercedes

Nate Morgan

Elith Moscoso

Amy Nichol

Selena Parmegiani

Michelle Pham

Angelica Rosato

Audrey Solt

David Souvannarath

Lindsey Steele

Lori Stoudt

Board of Directors

Tom Rentschler, Esq.
President

Alexia Pursley
Vice President

Joe O'Neill
Treasurer & Secretary

Pamela Hernandez
Hamilton Newton
Karissa Rodriguez, Esq.
Leonette Stocker

Connections Work is a United Way of Berks County Agency Partner.



Career Fairs



CAREER FAIR

September 21, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton,
701 Penn St., Reading
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Thank You Career Fair Sponsors



Investing in Our Future!

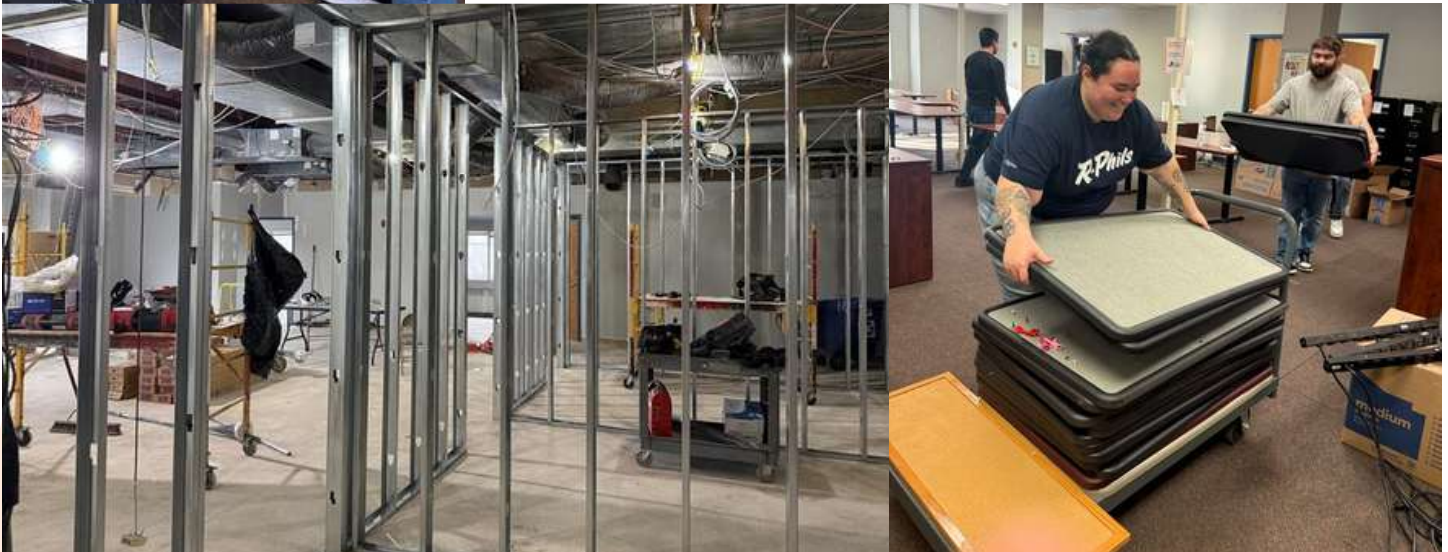


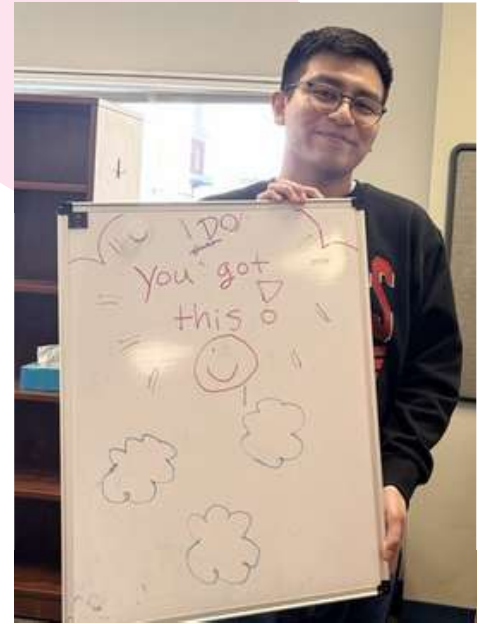
In 2025, Connections Work was honored to receive a \$722,852 ARPA Capital Projects Fund Multi-Purpose Community Facilities Program grant. This transformational investment is allowing us to renovate and modernize our client service space to better meet the needs of the individuals we serve. Construction began in early 2026, and we were fortunate to partner with Burkey Construction, whose expertise, professionalism, and guidance made our first major renovation project a great experience.

Of course, a renovation of this size came with plenty of challenges! For several months, we packed up offices, classrooms, and client services and temporarily relocated operations while construction was underway. We are incredibly grateful to our landlord, Service Access & Management (SAM), for being such outstanding partners and generously providing temporary space that allowed us to continue serving our clients with minimal interruption. We also want to thank our amazing staff for their flexibility, patience, and willingness to adapt throughout the process.

We LOVE our new space and can't wait to show it off! Be sure to follow us on social media and through our Constant Contact newsletters for details about our Fall 2026 Open House and Ribbon Cutting as we celebrate this exciting new chapter for Connections Work.

This grant was funded through the U.S. Department of the Treasury under the administration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority.





Thank You For Your Support!



Click Here To Give Today.



Connect with Us

Connections Work
19 N. 6th St., 4th Floor
Reading, PA 19601
484.260.3860
ConnectionsWork.org