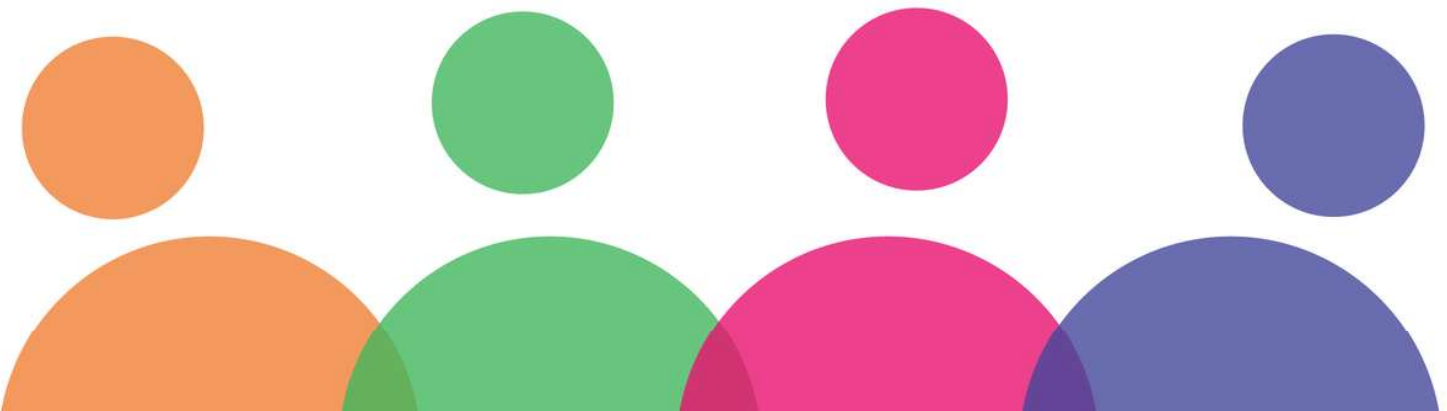




2024 Impact Report





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.

At the bottom of the page, there are four large, overlapping circles in orange, green, pink, and purple, matching the colors used in the logo above.

Thank You!

Peggy Kershner & Nikki Schnovel, Co-Executive Directors

Dear Friends of Connections Work,

As we reflect on 2024, we are proud to share how Connections Work continues to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs of our community. This past year brought deeper impact, expanded reach, and renewed clarity about who we serve and why.

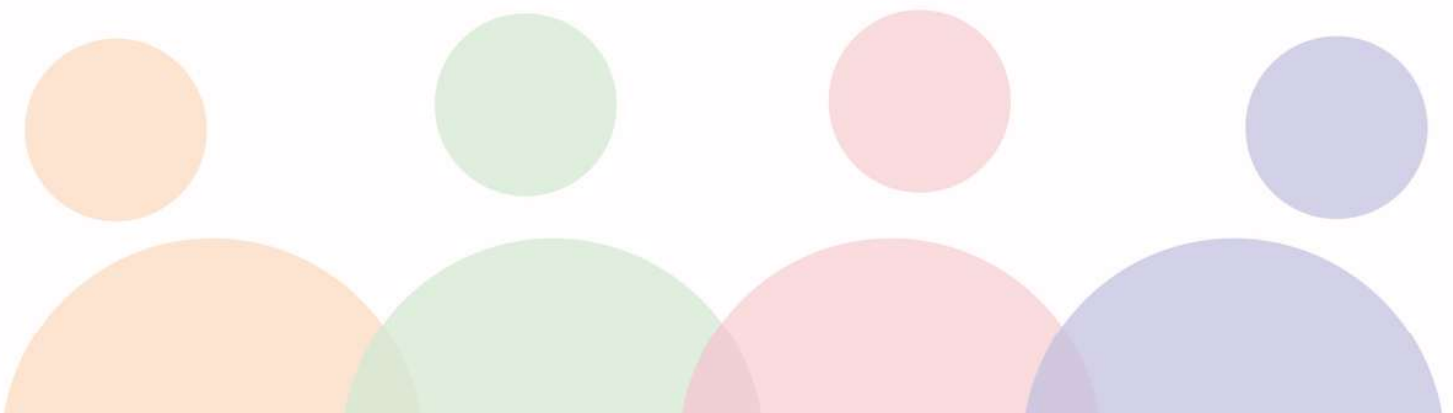
Today, we support individuals at every stage of justice involvement. From early intervention through our Forensic Diversion program to long-term restoration through the Pardon Project of Berks County, our programs help people move forward with dignity, purpose, and opportunity bridging gaps between law enforcement, mental health services, and second chances.

Since our 2023 rebrand, we've expanded beyond the justice involved to serve others facing barriers to employment and stability. Through our Contracted Services division, we now offer case management, wraparound support, cognitive-based workforce development, and our Employee Essentials curriculum to young adults, students, and jobseekers. These services, embraced by employers, educators, and community partners, help individuals build a foundation for long-term success.

At the core of our mission is a belief that with the right support people can grow, change, and contribute in meaningful ways. We are proud of our programs, our dedicated team, and most of all, the lives being transformed every day. Thank you to our supporters, volunteers, donors, fair-chance employers, and partners. Your commitment makes this work and our clients' success possible.



Peggy Kershner *Nikki Schnovel*



2024 Statistics:

We Are CHANGING LIVES...



2,874 - Total Clients Assisted

2,220 Male / 654 Female

12,788 In-Office Visits

2021 = 4,604 2022 = 6,950 2023 = 8,373



846 Attended Classes

394 clients participated in financial literacy classes, and 452 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 better employee.



\$18,675 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.).



\$51,209 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. Clients were also given taxi/ Uber/Lyft passes totaling over \$940.



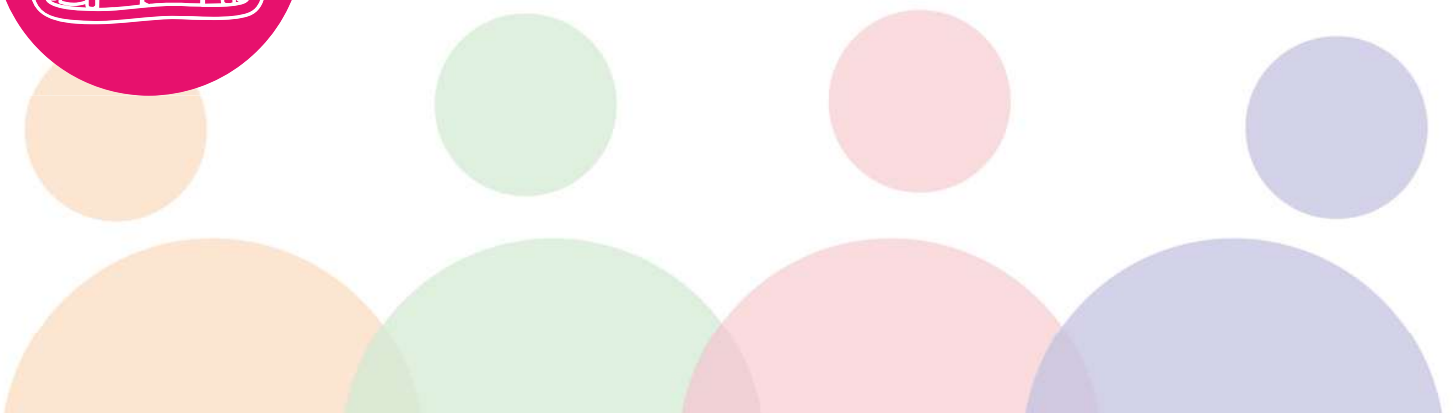
\$2,393 In Work-Required Footwear

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



1,069 Received Basic Needs Assistance

1,069 essential resources were provided to clients in need. These items included 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...

1,347 Utilized Computer-Based Learning Center

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



\$1,580 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 476 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 2023 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.



56 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.



“

Embracing a culture of second chances fosters empathy, understanding, and inclusivity among employees. It sends a powerful message that everyone deserves an opportunity to succeed and grow, contributing to a positive work environment and enhanced employee morale.

”

Pamela Hernandez, Senior VP, Chief People Officer at Tower Health

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
Craig Poole
Scott L. Rehr
Eric Savage
Mark Stone
Michelle Tomczak

2025 Life Improvement Ambassadors

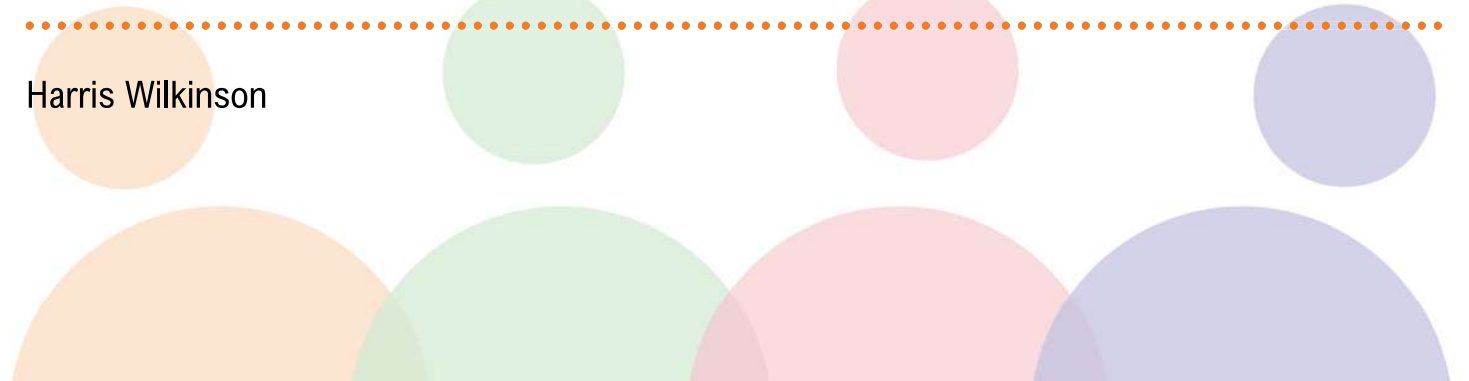
Sharon Mast
Al Weber (posthumously)

2025 Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardees

Brentwood Industries
Rich Durina
GoggleWorks Center for the Arts
Officer Justin Schlottman
Officer Andrew Gadaleta
Tec Centro Berks

2025 Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee

Harris Wilkinson



What Does Change Look Like?

Harris Wilkinson - 2025 Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee

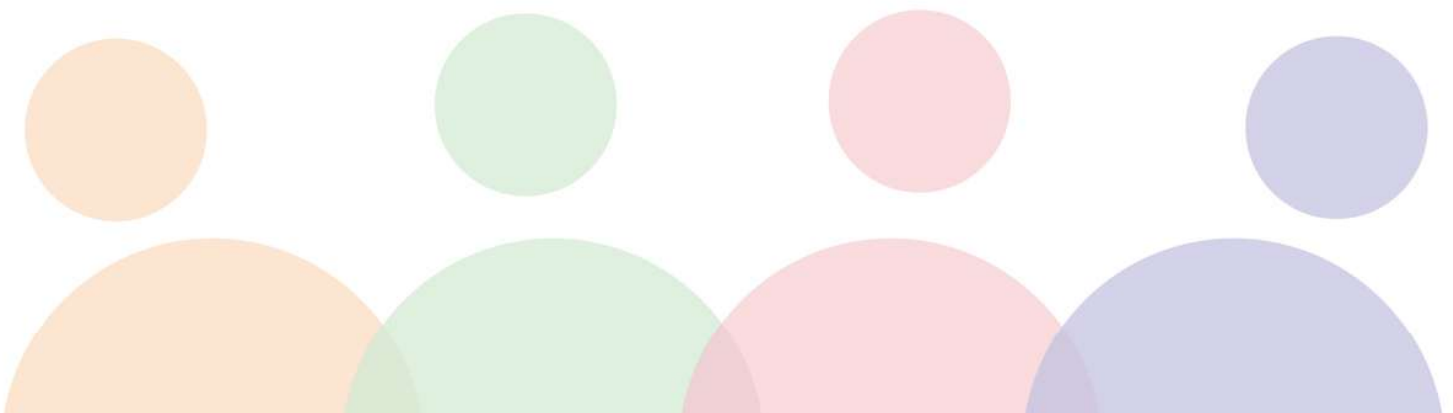
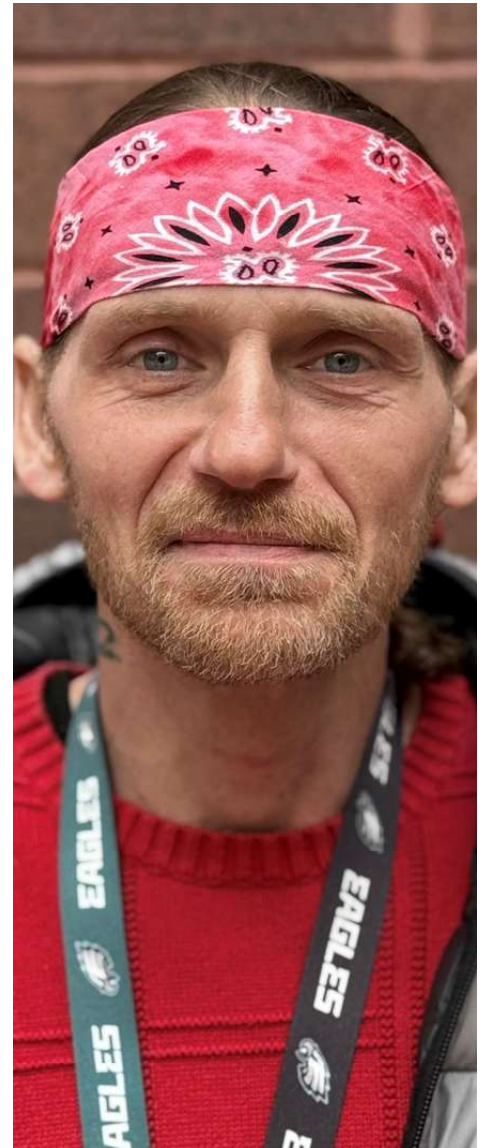
Harris Wilkinson's journey is one of resilience, redemption, and the power of community. Facing hardships from an early age, his life took difficult turns, including a series of incarcerations that could have defined his future. But Harris refused to let his past be his only story. Determined to rebuild his life, he embraced change and sought a fresh start.

Harris found support through Connections Work and its Work In Progress workforce development program, which provided him with the tools, training, and confidence to rebuild his life. "When I first came to Connections Work, I had no ID, no Social Security card, no birth certificate, I felt like I didn't exist. They gave me my identity back." With our guidance and the unwavering encouragement of his family, Harris stepped into a new role that would unexpectedly transform his life: a crossing guard.

What seemed like a simple job became a meaningful calling. Every morning, Harris greets children with warmth, ensuring their safety and brightening their days. The gratitude he receives, whether in the form of a gifted pair of mittens, a hot coffee, or just a smile, reminds him that kindness is a two-way street. He has even found ways to give back, handing out hats and gloves to students in need.

In addition to landing a job he loves, Harris continues to take advantage of the services of our Digital Navigator. Harris has learned how to write and send professional emails, manage online finances, and install and manage apps on his phone. He is becoming more confident, is able to troubleshoot on his own, and feels more self-sufficient and resourceful when tackling digital challenges. Harris's journey hasn't been easy, he still carries the weight of past struggles, including a brain surgery in his youth that made life more difficult—but today, he stands tall. He takes pride in the life he has built, one rooted in purpose, hard work, and connection. Every day, as he helps children safely cross the street, he knows he has also crossed into a future he once thought was out of reach.

His story is proof that no matter where we come from, we all have the power to rise, rebuild, and make a difference.



What Does Change Look Like?



Chris

Chris first connected with Connections Work in 2023, determined to make a lasting change. Over the next two years, he worked tirelessly to overcome significant personal challenges and prepare for the next step in his journey.

In 2025, Chris was accepted into Cohort 40 of our Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R3) program and he embraced the opportunity with energy and optimism. Known for his positive attitude and team spirit, Chris quickly became a valued member of the cohort.

With his sights set on employment, Chris remained focused and driven. Just days after graduating from R3, he was offered and began a job with a local manufacturer. He completed his training ahead of schedule and has settled into his permanent role.

Chris's story reflects the power of persistence and preparation and reminds us of the transformation that's possible when people are given the chance to succeed.

William

After serving six years in state prison, William was ready for a fresh start. In February 2025, he became involved in Connections Work's DOC Workforce Development program while residing in a local halfway house and within just two months, his life changed dramatically. William completed our job readiness program, secured full-time employment with a local food manufacturer, and moved into his own apartment.

Since starting his job, William has remained consistently employed and is making meaningful strides toward financial independence. With support from his case manager, he's been developing better budgeting habits, saving money, and working toward purchasing monthly bus passes to support his long-term stability.

William's story is a powerful reminder of what's possible when motivation meets opportunity.



What Does Change Look Like?

Edward

When Edward joined the Connections Work Reentry Works program a year ago, he was determined to build a better future. Through consistent effort and a positive attitude, he completed all program components and remained focused on his goals even when the right opportunity didn't come quickly.

His perseverance was rewarded when he landed a position as a part time van driver for a local school district. As he navigated the complex onboarding process, Edward leaned on his Reentry Works case manager for support proving that with the right resources, determination leads to results. His strong work ethic didn't go unnoticed. He was quickly offered a second part time role as a food service worker with the district.

Then, several months into his employment he took an even bigger step forward: Edward was hired full-time as a janitor earning \$18/hour. He now has significant savings and is actively working toward securing permanent housing.

Edward's journey is a testament to how second chances, paired with persistence and support, can lead to real change.



Amanda

When Amanda enrolled in the Connect to Success program, she had one major goal in mind: earning her GED. But with determination and support from her Connections Work mentor, she achieved even more. Amanda not only began working toward her GED she also secured a job and moved into her own apartment.

She continues to attend GED classes regularly and is now saving to purchase her first car. Amanda's drive and commitment are clear, and she's well on her way to reaching the next milestone.

Connect to Success is a workforce development initiative that provides free GED instruction, paid work experiences, and career readiness programming for young adults. Connections Work is proud to offer this opportunity in partnership with the PA CareerLink® Berks County Young Adult Program and the Berks County Workforce Development Board.



Reentry Programs



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 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

“

I was having issues with everyone, I was very depressed and then I came here and everything changed. My outlook has changed. I wasn't motivated before but now I am. I feel successful!

”

Eddie, R3 Graduate

Reentry Programs

Working Toward Change

Working Toward Change (WTC) provides case management both pre- and post-release from the Berks County Jail System (BCJS). 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.

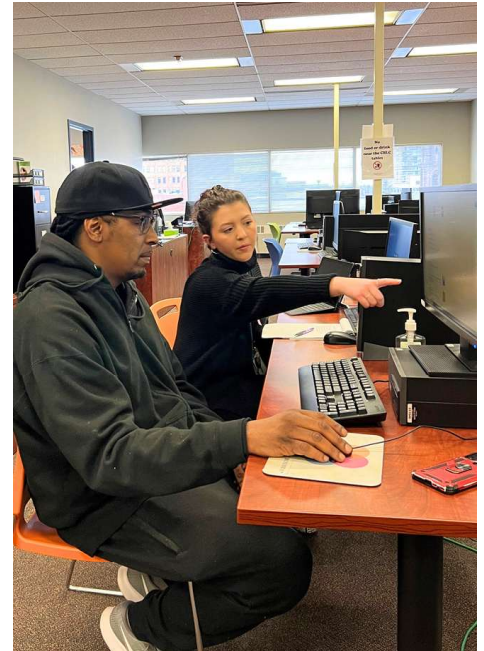
Post-release, clients continue to work with their Case Manager to address any immediate needs, such as housing, ID, food, clothing, and medication. They will complete an employment curriculum, including resume building, interviewing skills, proper job search, completing applications, financial literacy, and job retention. All participants have access to our Computer Based Learning Center as well as employment opportunities cultivated by the Employment Development Specialist. Case management services continue for one year after release from BCJS.

DOC Mentoring

The Department of Corrections (DOC) Mentoring program is designed to help an individual realize how a positive, productive outlook toward overcoming barriers and negative situations can lead to increased success in their reentry. Mentors help individuals in accessing resources in the community for needs such as medical benefits, social security benefits, mental health, substance abuse, and food resources. Mentors also assist in early intervention strategies to aid the justice involved who are at risk of relapsing and/or recidivating.

DOC Workforce Development

The DOC Workforce Development program is designed to equip the justice involved with the tools and support necessary to become productive members of our community. Services include case management, employment readiness, essential skills training, financial literacy, assistance with basic needs for employment (ID, bus passes, work boots), job search assistance, and retention support.



Reentry Programs

Work In Progress

Work In Progress (WIP) is a comprehensive reentry workforce development program for current or former justice-involved individuals who have a mental health diagnosis and are currently receiving case management services from a mental health provider. Connections Work staff work with WIP participants on a one-to-one basis to prepare them for entering employment. The program includes job readiness and essential skills training, financial literacy education, and cognitive-based workforce sessions. Our Employment Development Specialist enlists the support of local employers to provide job shadowing and volunteer opportunities for WIP clients. Once programming is completed, the participant receives assistance with job search and job placement. Additionally, case management and retention support are provided to each participant for a minimum of one year following their enrollment in the program.



Reentry Resource Center

The Reentry Resource Center (RERC) 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 at the Berks County Jail for those meeting eligibility qualifications.

Connect To Success

Connect to Success is a program of the Berks County Workforce Development Board that partners with Connections Work with the Young Adult Program of the PA CareerLink Berks County. The program provides GED instruction, workforce development services, case management and mentoring to 18-24 year olds with justice involvement.

Auxiliary aids and services upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services are available free of cost. Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. AColumbo@BerksPa.gov. For program funding details, in compliance with the Stevens Amendment, please visit: BerksPa.gov/departments/workforce-development-board.



Reentry Programs

Reentry Works

Reentry Works is a groundbreaking and comprehensive workforce development program that serves anyone in Berks County with current or past justice system involvement.

This innovative program uses a case-managed approach to help individuals overcome barriers, gain stability, and become reliable, successful employees. It directly addresses the challenges of unemployment and underemployment by meeting people where they are and guiding them every step of the way. Reentry Works offers comprehensive assessments of skills, education, and experience; develops individualized employment plans; and provides essential training in employment preparedness, financial literacy, and digital literacy. Job search assistance, employer connections, and ongoing support ensure not only stable employment but long-term job retention.

Recovery Works

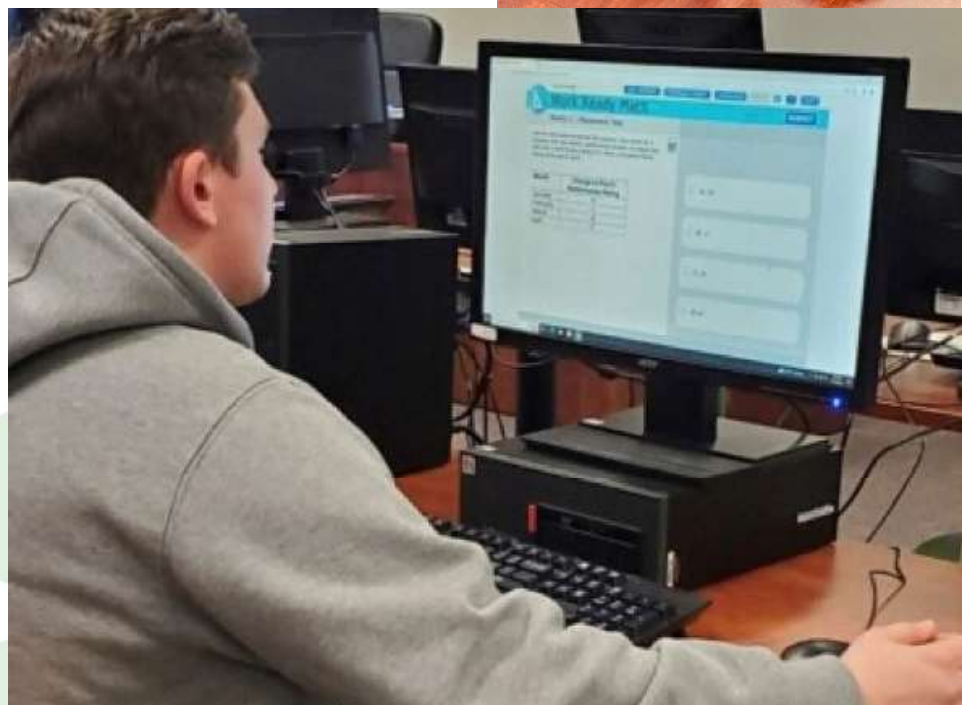
Recovery Works is a robust workforce development program for individuals with an Opioid Use Disorder and for those whom opioids have played a part in their substance use history. Justice involvement is not a pre-requisite for program involvement. The program uses a case managed approach to help clients become reliable and successful employees and helps to address issues of unemployment and underemployment.

The program includes skill, education, and experience assessments, utilizes individualized employment plans, and provides employment preparedness financial literacy, and digital literacy education. Case managers also provide job search assistance, connections to employers, and employment retention support.

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

Level Up

Level Up is a collaboration between The Literacy Council of Reading-Berks and Connections Work. The program provides GED and ESL 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.



Pretrial Services



Verified interviews and assessments



Monitoring Pretrial population in Berks County Jail System



Providing pretrial supervision



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

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.

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, which was designed to ensure that the economic circumstances of a person will not subject him/her to punishment before trial.

Diversions 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.

Mental Health Forensic Diversion

Mental health disorders are overrepresented and under-treated in the criminal justice system. The Mental Health Forensic Diversion Program at Connections Work, in collaboration with the Berks County Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Program Office, seeks to decrease the incarceration rate of the non-violent mentally ill population and maintain community safety based on risk assessment. Once referred for diversion services, a team member meets with qualifying individuals to explain the voluntary nature of the program and ensure the applicant is committed to treatment and has a desire to remain crime free. Our team then works with each individual to make connections to effective supports, treatment, and services to reduce entry into the criminal justice system.

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

The Mental Health Forensic Diversion Program at Connections Work, in collaboration with the Berks County Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Program and Alvernia University, hosts a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for law enforcement members on how to respond to situations where people are experiencing mental health crises.

Participants receive 40 hours of training and development, including hands-on scenario-based training, virtual reality training, and discussions with a variety of mental health and law enforcement professionals in a classroom setting. Those who received certification stated:

- they have a better understanding of what people with mental illness face in their everyday lives.
- they could better identify symptoms of mental illness.
- they felt they could improve their crisis responses to individuals with mental illness or in crisis.



Contracted Services

Empowering Workforce Success

“

Connections Work Employee Essentials program is an outstanding resource that teaches students how to identify situations that may be or could become barriers to showing up on time for work. It also teaches students to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that may cause conflict in the workplace, which limits their preparedness for work.

”

*Christopher Spohn,
Red Knight Early Career
Academy Program
Development Consultant*

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 Red Knights 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.



Employment Development

Connections to Employment

Employment Development: Securing stable employment at a livable wage is pivotal for successful reentry into society. Our Employment Development Team at Connections Work cultivates partnerships with employers, educators, and service providers, ensuring abundant opportunities for our clients to thrive. Our mission is to stay attuned to the evolving job market landscape and expand our agency network.

Facilitating the transition from our R3 registered pre-apprenticeship program to certified apprenticeships in the construction sector remains a core focus. Graduates of our R3 program seeking apprenticeships gain access to enhanced educational opportunities, improved salaries, and fulfilling lifelong careers. Collaborating with our affiliates, ABC Keystone, ABC Eastern PA, and Berks Career and Technology Center, we can assist with transitions into apprenticeship roles.

Our team orchestrates bi-annual Career Fairs, welcoming individuals with justice-involved backgrounds. Through proactive outreach and networking initiatives, these events draw significant attendance from employers, educators, and service providers alike. Elevating the visibility of our agency and programs has led to a surge in job seekers participating in these career fairs.

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

Thank you to the employers, community partners, educators, and volunteers who change many of our client's lives and improve their communities.



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

Volunteer Opportunities

Mother's / Father's Voice Program

For 29 years, Mother's / Father's Voice volunteers have been recording incarcerated parents reading stories to their young children. The book and DVD 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 2024, 501 parents read books to 775 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.

Holiday Gift Project

Connections Work enlists individual volunteers and volunteer groups throughout the community to provide holiday gifts for children whose parents are incarcerated or involved in the criminal justice system. The event is coordinated by Alice Moyer at West Lawn United Methodist Church. The families that attended the party decorated gingerbread houses, created festive arts and crafts and had a meet-and-greet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. But that was not all! They also received blankets from the volunteers with Blankets of Hope. At the end of the event, parents picked up the gift-filled sacks, which were delivered by our volunteers. Many thanks to the many individuals and groups that helped make this day so special.

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

The United Way of Berks County plays a critical role in advancing our mission by funding impactful programs, engaging workplaces, and inspiring community-wide support and Connections Work is proud to be a long-time partner. Their generous funding sustains key initiatives, including the Working Toward Change program at the Berks County Jail and our Computer-Based Learning Center. In 2020, United Way helped us launch the Reentry Resource Center, connecting clients with vital resources and preparing them for a successful return to the community.

In 2022, United Way awarded a transformative \$1.2 million, three-year grant to create Reentry Works, expanding our workforce development services to all Berks County residents with current or past justice involvement. This program addresses unemployment and underemployment through personalized case management, skills and education assessments, job readiness training, financial and digital literacy, and employer connections helping clients become successful, reliable employees.

Over the years, United Way has also supported Connections Work through volunteer efforts and donations of essential items, such as toiletries and bicycles, which provide additional help to clients as they rebuild their lives. We are deeply grateful to the United Way of Berks County for their unwavering commitment to building stronger futures alongside us.



Power of the Purse

Power of the Purse is a women's giving circle whose focus is to improve the lives of women and children in our community. By funding programs that help them break the cycle of poverty, women can have the barriers to entering/re-entering the workforce or seeking the education they need to do so. Connections Work has been the recipient of several grants to remove obstacles to employment and education for women with justice involvement in.



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. Blankets of Hope also provided blankets that were given to the children and families who received holiday gifts through the Connections Work Holiday Gift Project.

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!

2025 Impact Awards Luncheon

Thank You, Sponsors

Connections

Tower Health

Opportunities

Emerald Advisors
Penn State Health St. Joseph
Medical Center

Second Chances

Council on Chemical Abuse

Partnership

Brentwood
Penske Transportation Solutions
East Penn Manufacturing
Tompkins
Members 1st Federal Credit
Union
Weik Capital Management
Nevins & McAllister
Visions Federal Credit Union
Patricia Giles

Hand Up

TASC
Literacy Council
Omega
Ottick Solutions
Gage Talent & Business
Solutions
Schlouch Incorporated
Morgan Stanley



Life Improvement Ambassador
Sharon Mast with Tom Rentschler



Life Improvement Ambassador
The Family of Al Weber



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardees
*Officers Andrew Gadaleta &
Justin Schlottman*



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
Rich Durina



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
Tec Centro Berks

2025 Impact Awards Luncheon

Thank You!



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
Brentwood Industries



Paul J. Hoh Impact Awardee
GoggleWorks Center for the Arts



Kip Frasso Outstanding Transformation Awardee
Harris Wilkinson



Kicking Off Our Event... *Alexia Pursley*, Connections Work Board of Directors Vice President & Treasurer



Getting The Crowd Going...
Peggy Kershner & Nikki Schnovel



Cheers To Our 40 Years



Save The Date...
2026 Impact Awards Breakfast
Thursday, April 16, 2026

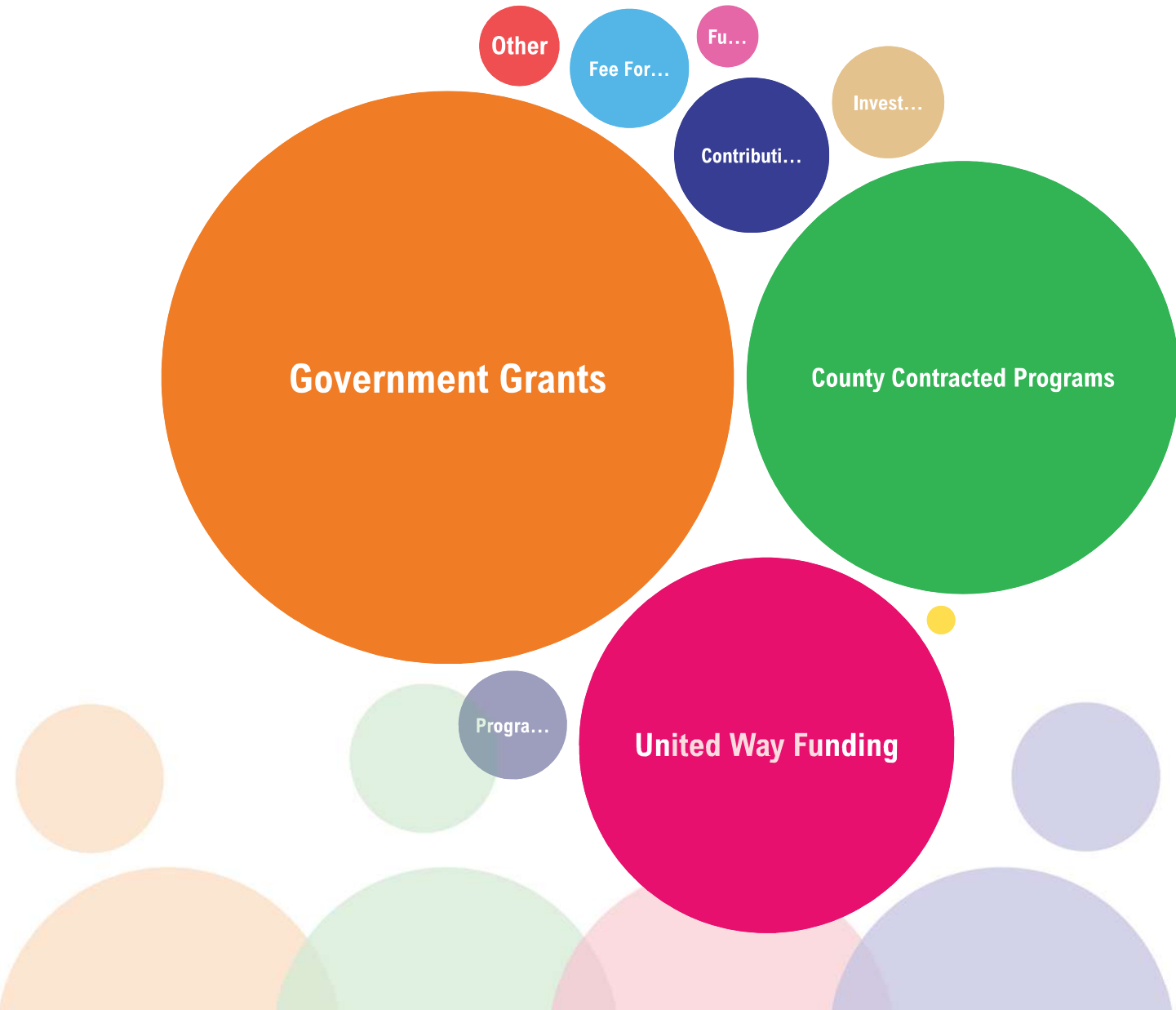
Financials

Connections Work Revenue & Expenses
Calendar Year 2024
January 1 - December 31, 2024

Revenue

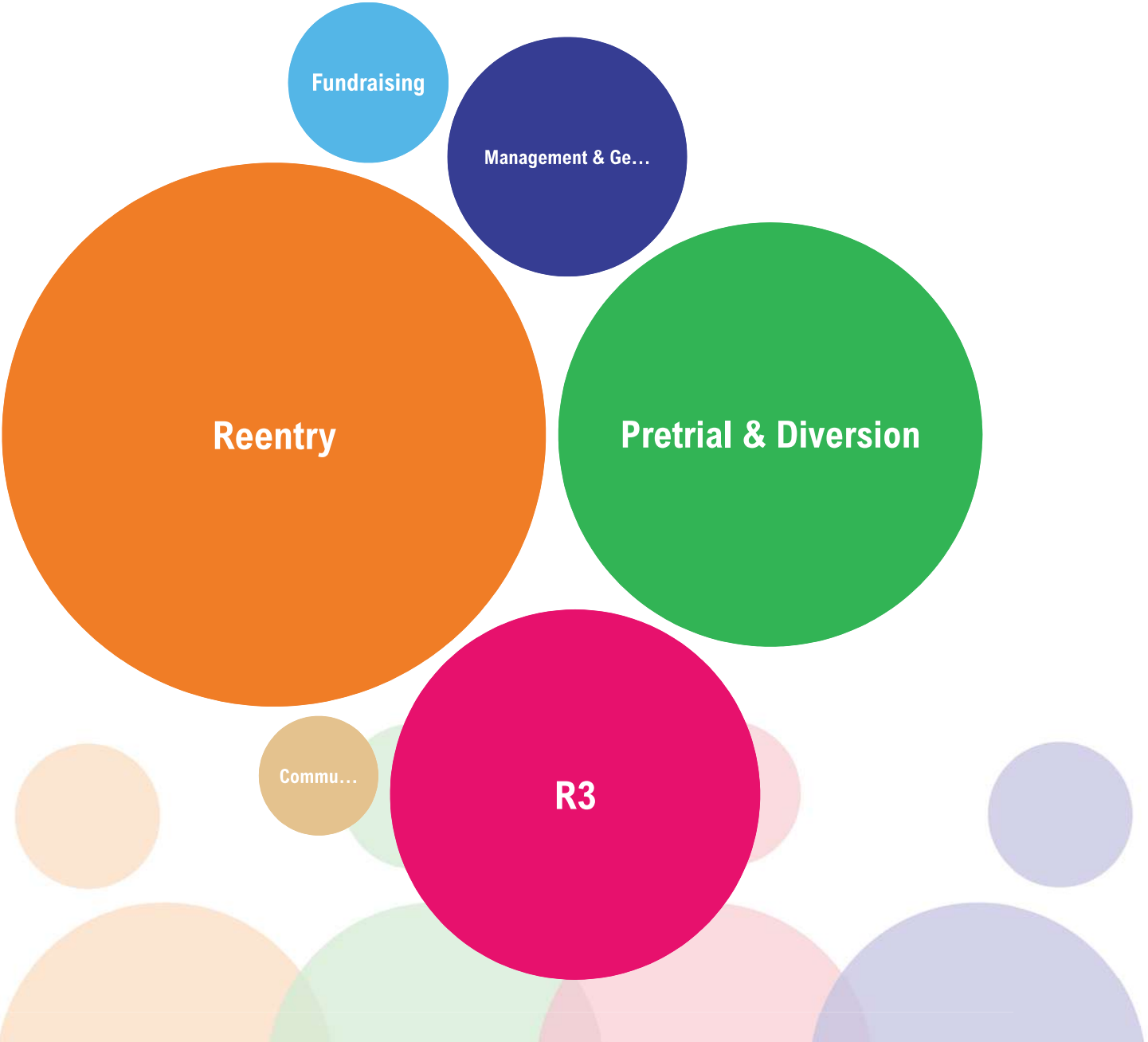
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United Way Funding	\$630,151	
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Other	\$28,840	
Fundraising Events	\$17,120	
Contributions - In-Kind	\$3,663	

TOTAL REVENUES & SUPPORT \$3,262,598



Expenses

Reentry	\$1,307,484	
Pretrial & Diversion	\$795,350	
R3 - Rebuilding Reentrants & Reading	\$605,748	
Management & General	\$253,665	
Fundraising	\$113,779	
Community Outreach	\$63,172	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,139,198	



2024 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 +

Breidegam Family Foundation, Inc
Henry Janssen Foundation

\$5,000 - 9,999

Performance Toyota pjh
Penn State Health St. Joseph
Jeannie Savage fb
Peter & Mary Terranova fb
FirstEnergy Foundation

\$2,500 - \$4,999

United Methodist Women, Eastern
Pennsylvania Conference
Jerry & Carolyn Holleran
Scott & Yvette Rehr a
Emerald Advisers, LLC

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Santander Bank
FareStart
Renewed Spirit Church
Russel Becker & Janet Winter-Becker
Tower Health
Michael & Diane Duff
Elsayed & Cathy Elmarzouky a
E.G. & Klara M. Smith Foundation
Patricia Giles
Rev. Dr. Mike and Susan Hall
Capital Blue Cross
Peggy & Lee Kershner s
Sharon Mast a
Council On Chemical Abuse
Brentwood Industries pjh
Alexia Pursley b
Thomas Rentschler b
Champion Personnel, Inc.
Nikki & Leroy Schnovel s
Customers Bank
Stone Financial a
Joan Swinehart v
Weik Capital Management, Inc.
Kent & Sara Weymouth

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous Donor
Ottick Solutions, LLC
Steve & Carmela Bobick
New Journey Community Outreach pjh
Literacy Council of Reading-
Berks, Inc. pjh
RKL, LLP
Diann Connor
Members 1st Federal Credit Union
Gage Personnel
Christine Guistwite s
Chris Hoh
Resolution Law Group
Morgan Truck Body pjh
Karen Linder
Treatment Access and Services
Center (TASC)
Robert Myer
Oxholm Family Fund
Vanessa Starr s
Hope Rescue Mission
Ronald Velez b
Tompkins Bank
Barbara Waller
Christ Episcopal Church
Omega Systems Consultants, Inc.

\$250 - \$499

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West Berks Mission District
Hack Away At Hunger & Poverty
District Attorney's Office
Easy Does It, Inc.
Weik Capital Management
Patty & Aaron Bell s
Auman Funeral Homes
Penske Transportation Solutions
Safe Berks pjh
Steven Gorman
Bradley & Barbara Hall
Joseph & Dana Hartz
Phyllis & Mike Hechinger
Unique Snacks pjh
Kate Hoh a
Immanuel United Church of Christ
Cynthia Long
Sydney & Gerald Malick
Jason & Stacy Mensch s
Veronica & David Morrison
Daryl Moyer
Opportunity House
Brian Pinto fb
Marilyn Schneider
PA CareerLink Berks
Robert & Martha Spezialetti
Tweed-Weber-Danks, Inc.
Bill & Jody Widing v
Mark & Zelda Yoder

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

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\$100 - \$249

PA Recovery Organizations Alliance
Josie Basile s
Co-County Wellness Services
Keith Belles s
Neuberger Berman
Amber Boyer s
Erin Brown s
Laura Brown
Community Aid, Inc.
Express Employment Professionals
Tonya Butler
Michael & Patricia Cavanagh
Jackie Checo s
Russell Clineff s
Reading Area Community College
Michael Dautrich v
Amanda & David Deiser s
Renee Dietrich
VA Productions
Eastern Atlantic States Regional
Council of Carpenters
Denise Frasso
Kathy Galtere s
David Gottshall
NAMI Berks County PA
Sweet Street Desserts pjh
Empire Beauty School
Robyn Hoh Cavanagh
Orrstown Bank
Chris Kehs
Eamon Kenny s
JGM Fabricators & Constructors, LLC.
Kunkle Management & Consulting
Services
Michelle Little s
S&S Structures, Inc.
L. Carole Longenecker
Tricia Ludgate
Barbara Lykens
George & Genevieve March
Restorative Justice Initiative,
Penn State College of Education

\$100 - \$249 (cont.)

Gaelen McAllister
Linda McCrea v
Ashley McGee s
City of Reading
Stevens & Lee PC
Elith Moscoso s
Chad Moyer s
Denise & Douglas Myer s
Desiree Negron s
East Penn Manufacturing
Amy Nichol s
Jessica Nunez s
Shawn & Kristy Olanin
Bruce Osterhout
Jane Palmer
Roxanne Parmar v
J.P. Mascaro & Sons
Homewerks LLC
Linda Rentschler
David & Jane Rohrbach v
Humanus
Renee Ruhlman
Manpower
Brandon Sands s
Casey Schmidt s
William Seaman
Trudi Sheetz
Unique Snacks
Selena Slimmer s
Timothy Smith
Donald & Joann Smith
Jill Starr
Construction Masters Services LLC
Deutsch Eck Restaurant
Leonette Stocker b
Kathleen & Mark Stone s, a
Lori Stoudt s
Jen & Rich Tinsman
Michelle Tomczak a
I-LEAD Workforce
PhytogenX, Inc.
JGM Fabricators & Constructors, LL
Warren Weik

\$100 - \$249 (cont.)

Charles & Karen Weiss, Jr.
Anna Weitz
Berks Coalition to End Homelessness pjh
Paulino Home Healthcare
Stephen & Christine Wullert

“Connections Work provides an important service to inmates of the jail, those who are released, and our Berks County community. It gives inmates a chance to stay connected with their children and it gives the inmates and those released the support and connections they need to be contributing members of our community.”

Jane Rohrbach

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Up to \$100

Anonymous Donor
Heather Adams
Theresa Adams
Rosa Alvarez s
Vicki Anderson
Connie Archey
David & Carey Babczak
Joanne Balzano-LaRusso
London Barber s
Meghan Barrell
Kris Bashore
Carole Beech
Diane Billman
Jessica Blauser
Debra Blum
Sue Borelli
Auria Bradley
David & Sandra Brant
Ryan & Jillian Breisch
Lynne Burns
Aaliyah Charlott s
Debra Chaveas
Jose Delgado
Beth Delibertis
David Delozier
Rich Durina v
Jack Edwards
Jill Evans
Reading Public Museum
J. Gail Freymoyer
Stanley Furrow
Marianne Garrett
Sue Gernert
The Wyomissing Foundation
Wendy & John Glassmoyer
Cole Golden v
Tammy & Paul Granger
Terry Grassley
Anne-Marie Grill
A. Nils Groten
Heather Hagmaier
Amanda Hansen
Debbie Hartranft

Up to \$100 (cont.)

Marcia & Mike Hayter
Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Holy
Guardian Angels Church
Timothy & Mary Hoh
Phil Holzman
Michael & Kathryn Joffred
Alneasa Jordan
SFS ALDP Participants
Jenna Koch
Kimberly Koenig
Rachel Kuhn
Heather & Craig Laudenslager
Kim Leppold
Brandon Levan
Tanya Mack
Christy Mack
Ruby Martin a
Melissa Maurer
Jacinda Maus s
Kerstin McBride
William McEllroy
Rosemary McFee
Mindy McIntosh
Karen Mckeever
Berks County Community Foundation
Holy Cross United Methodist Church
Erica Moody
Phyllis Moser
Genesis Munoz Arias s
Joni and David Naugle
Carol O'Rourke
Yoheli Ortiz
Nancy Palmerino
Karen Parish
PhytogenX, Inc
Brianna Perez s
Jennifer Perry
Alexis Piazza v
Joe Pipher
Lily Ponce
Debbie Ramsey
Michael Reese
Eileen Romeiser

Up to \$100 (cont.)

David Rutt
Christine Sadler
YMCA
Colleen Schearer
Denise Sidle
Richard Small
Christine Smith Hoh
Dr. Scott Snyder
Joe Speece
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance
Jaclyn Steed
Mark Sterley
Pat Stocker
Janice Storms
Yvonne Stroman
Erica Swanson
Kaye Sward
Elizabeth Sweeney
Janice and Gerard Thompson
Taylor Walker s
John & Mary Jo Weishampel
Mary Westmoreland
Jodi Whalen
Christina White
Deborah Wilson
Margaret Wilson

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Thank You!

In Honor & in Memory

In Honor of Kate Hoh's 90th birthday

Vicki Anderson
Connie Archey
Carole Beech
Sue Borelli & Scott Hoh
Debra Chaveas
Diann Connor
Jill Evans
David Gottshall
Susan Hall
Marcia & Mike Hayter
Dan Elmer & Chris Hoh
Timothy & Mary Hoh
Terrence & Robyn Cavanagh
Phil Holzman
L. Carole Longenecker
Barbara Lykens
Gaelen McAllister
Bruce Osterhout
Nancy Palmerino
Karen Parish
David Rutt
Timothy Smith
Christine Smith Hoh
Pat Stocker
Kathleen & Mark Stone
Jodi Whalen
Deborah Wilson
Margaret Wilson

In Honor of the late Reverend Paul Hoh

Michael Reece

In Honor of the late Paul Hoh and Kate Hoh

Renee Dietrich

In Honor of Tobey Oxholm

Oxholm Family Fund

In Honor of Linda S. Speece

Joe Speece

In Honor of the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks

Lily Ponce

In Honor of Eric March

George & Genevieve March

In Memory of Kate Hoh

Thomas Rentschler
Richard Small
John & Mary Jo Weishampel
Renee Dietrich
Michael Reese
Joanne Balzano-LaRusso
Brian, Michael, Cathleen & Patricia Cavanagh
Colleen & Tom Bendornagel
Charles & Karen Weiss, Jr.

In Memory of Kip D. Frasso

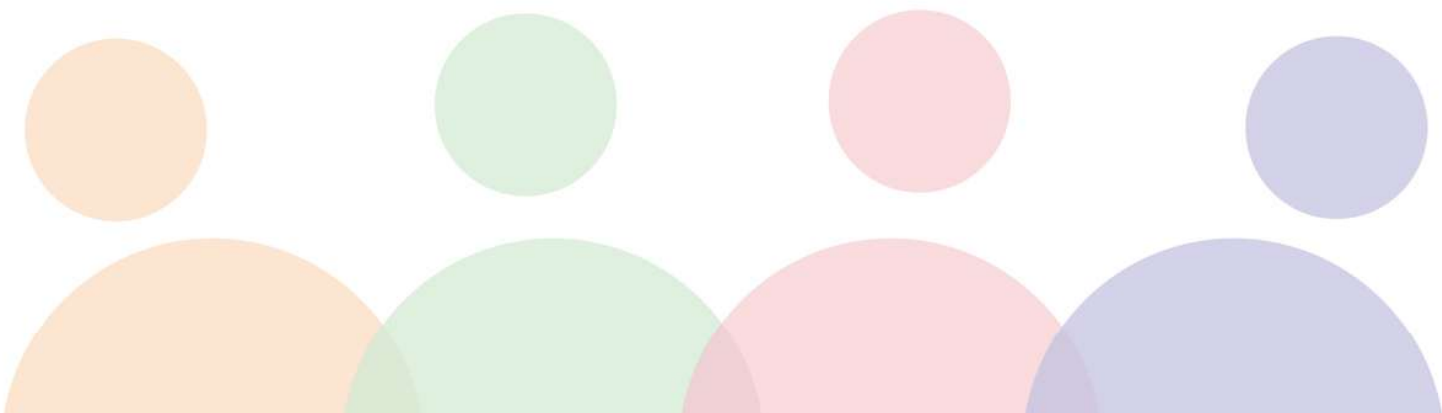
Denise Frasso

“

It's important to give returning individuals a second chance at becoming productive citizens who are able to set and achieve their goals. I'm impressed with the many programs Connections Work has developed to help with that process.

Sydney Malick

”



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*
Nikki Schnovel, *Co-Executive Director*
Christine Guistwite, *Director of Programming*
Jason Mensch, *Director of Programming*
Patty Bell, *SHRM-CP, HR Director*
Denise Myer, *Finance Manager*
Jessica Nunez, *Leadership Support*
Chad Moyer, *Program Manager*
Amanda Deiser, *Program Manager*
Kristy Belschwinder, *MH Diversion Program Manager*
Michelle Little, *Lead Case Manager*
Taylor Cipolla, *Lead Case Manager*

Team Members

B Avalos	Eamon Kenny
Josie Basile	John Mayers
Keith Belles	Elith Moscoso
Aaliyah Charlot	Desiree Negron
Erin Delson	Amy Nichol
Seth Duval	Selena Slimmer
Kathy Galtore	Lori Stoudt
Ebony Grant	Taylor Walker
Hali Griffith	Alivia Walters
Mike Keiser	

Board of Directors

Tom Rentschler, Esq.
President

Alexia Pursley
Vice President & Treasurer

Joe O'Neill
Secretary

Abhi Amatya
Karissa Rodriguez, Esq.
Larry Snow
Leonette Stocker
Ron Velez



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

Connections Work earned the 2024 Gold Seal of Transparency from CANDID (formerly Guidestar), the leading source for nonprofit and foundation financial, leadership, and mission information. Our financial details and agency information can be viewed at <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/23-1969810>.

Connections Work is proud to be certified by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) through its Standards for Excellence certification program. Connections Work completed this certification program by voluntarily opening itself up to scrutiny by a "jury of its peers" who examined our organization for compliance with PANO's Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. Standards of Excellence are based on fundamental values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility, and accountability. Connections Work's programs and services, management, fundraising, and financial practices were examined in depth before the certification was awarded. *Connections Work was one of the first organizations to be certified under the Standards program that began in 2002.*

2025 Career Fair



Thank You Career Fair Sponsors

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ConnectionsWork.org

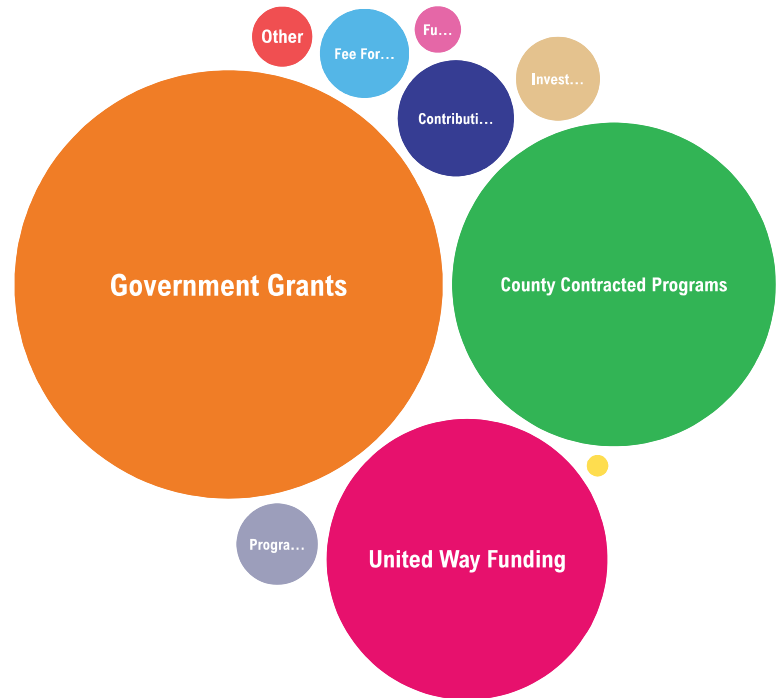
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