Pennsylvania Department of Aging

Pennsylvania Hall of Fame of Champions of Older Workers
2017 Outstanding Employer

Congratulations, City of Bethlehem Recycling Bureau

Bethlehem

Mature workers are the focus of employee hires made by the City of Bethlehem Recycling Bureau (Recycling Bureau). This employer has relied on the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Board and the AARP Foundation Senior Community Service Employment Programs, the City of Bethlehem's website, and employee referrals to hire older workers. This seasoned workforce of mature adults has proven to be responsible and dependable, and is known for a strong work ethic.

An estimated 85 percent of the Recycling Bureau's employees are aged 55 years and older, and staff the Theis/Cornfeld Recycling Center and the Bethlehem Yard Waste Facility. Among these workers, 17 percent are full-time and work as managers or heavy equipment operators. The remaining staff members are primarily part-time, earning an average hourly wage of $11.75. Employees typically work about 18-24 hours per week, and are afforded flexible benefits. The average worker at the Recycling Bureau has been on the job for about eight years. The Recycling Bureau's former manager recently retired at the age of 92, after 25 years of service!

The City of Bethlehem has created employment opportunities for older workers, including those who have barriers to employment. Three formerly homeless individuals were participants in the local Senior Community Service Employment Program and subsequently, found unsubsidized employment at the Recycling Bureau. These particular employment opportunities have made it possible for older workers to live independent, productive lives.

The Lehigh Valley is home to a skilled and robust workforce. While large companies scramble to attract younger, experienced employees to meet their growing talent needs, the City of Bethlehem Recycling Bureau has recognized and capitalized on the valuable traits of a mature workforce.