PA Workforce Development Association and Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

Governor’s Employer Award

Central Pennsylvania

Congratulations, Opportunity Construction, LLC

Steelton

Nominated by SCPa Works

Carl Phinney, owner of Steelton-based Opportunity Construction, LLC, needed ready-trained workers in time for the start of a busy construction season. The company focuses on giving ex-offenders and those with barriers to employment a chance at a promising future through hard work. Beginning in January 2016, Opportunity Construction and the PA CareerLink® locations in south central Pennsylvania developed a strategy to ramp up the company’s workforce in time for the highway construction season.

Initially, the company planned to hire 20 new, full-time employees, provide company-paid Workzone Safety Flagger certification training and testing, and additional training during the slow work periods to help employees get to the next skill level and advance to other positions in the company. The recruitment strategy targeted the ex-offender population to fill these positions.

The hiring campaign started with the posting of positions on JobGateway™ and scheduling of two Workzone Safety Flagger Information Sessions. The events were posted on the PA CareerLink® Capitol Region event calendar, and flyers were distributed to market the open positions to workforce partners at job fairs and workshops, and on job boards. The materials were also used as handouts at the PA CareerLink®.

A total of 99 job seekers attended two information sessions. Candidates were pre-screened. An assessment tool called SkillDex was used to determine their skill gaps. Following the pre-screening interviews, 42 job seekers were selected for interviews. Out of these candidates, 24 participated in the Flagger Certification training and testing stage. All of the new 20 full-time employees eventually hired by Opportunity Construction from this recruitment effort were ex-offenders. In fact, 18 of the 2016 employees are returning to work for the 2017 season.

Opportunity Construction also participated in 14 WIOA On-the-Job (OJT) training contracts to support the training of the new hires, with jobs paying prevailing wages of $19.21 per hour. By June 1, 2016, Opportunity Construction hired 10 more employees with the help of the PA CareerLink®. Overall, the company increased its total workforce by 25 employees in 2016.