

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 4, 2022

Ms. Linda Cruz-Carnall
Regional Director
US Economic Development Administration
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Ms. Cruz-Carnall:

I write in support of the application submitted by Philadelphia Works, Inc. (PhilaWorks) of Greater Philadelphia to the Economic Development Administration's Good Jobs Challenge. PhilaWorks is the City of Philadelphia's workforce development board. Founded in 1999, it is a non-profit, quasi-public organization that develops and manages smart workforce solutions that respond to business needs and increases economic opportunity for all Philadelphia residents. It serves employers and connects youth and adult career seekers to employment and training opportunities.

I understand that PhilaWorks is leading the application, which includes a consortium of economic and workforce development organizations from the Southeast Pennsylvania region (Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties). The requested funding would support the robust design and implementation of a streamlined regional workforce training program connecting residents to quality employment opportunities within multiple critical industries. These sectors would include healthcare, life sciences, energy and infrastructure. I've learned that these industry selections were informed by comprehensive data collection, which included, but was not limited to, a nationally recognized consulting firm, regional workforce boards, economic development organizations, recent placement of federal investments and prospective employer partners.

Furthermore, I am informed that Philaworks is leveraging its resources as a collaborative powerhouse to bring together regional stakeholders who have extensive industry expertise and will serve as a backbone to lead the work in the industries mentioned above. If implemented, this proposal would allow for the launch of an inclusive, sustainable and coordinated workforce development program in the broader region. I am also told that the program would accelerate equitable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance the Southeastern Pennsylvania region's workforce priorities, respond to anticipated growth in certain critical sectors in response to the passage of the infrastructure bill and grow economic opportunity for the region's residents. The strategic focus on equity and reaching individuals that have traditionally been underserved, under-resourced and faced significant barriers to employment makes this application particularly compelling as well.

From my understanding, this proposal aligns well with a number of EDA's priorities, particularly facilitating an equitable recovery in hard hit regions of the country. I also understand this to be a novel proposal in the way it looks to explicitly utilize the opportunity to adapt the workforce to the region's needs following the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. By pairing proven workforce development capacity, a broad coalition of regional stakeholders and a strategy rooted in equity, Philadelphia Works has put together a proposal that can help the broader region build back better.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator