Prep Northwest
Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance

Resource Guide

Serving the counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren
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The Organization
Established in 1967, the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (Northwest Commission) is an Oil City-based, public, non-profit regional resource for economic and business development as well as community development and planning. The Commission provides these quality services at little or no cost to clients.

Services
The Northwest Commission strives to assist private sector job creation and retention through its business and economic development programs such as:

- **Government Contracting (Procurement Technical Assistance Center - PTAC)** - Provides technical assistance to companies interested in contracting with the Federal, State and Local levels of government.

- **Business Financing** - Provides business loans to stimulate the expansion of small companies.

- **International Marketing Assistance** - Provides direct export assistance to small and medium-sized businesses.

- **Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP)** - Serves as the Regional Coordinator for the Northwest PREP Region.

The Northwest Commission also provides community development and planning services to municipal governments, school districts and non-profit organizations:

- **Transportation Planning** - Coordinates and encourages maximum local participation in transportation project planning for the five rural counties of Clarion, Crawford, Forest, Venango, and Warren.

- **Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)** - Provides classroom training on transportation technologies and procedures developed at the state and federal level to local municipalities at little or no cost.

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The Organization

The Clarion County Economic Development Corporation's (CCEDC) expertise is in the ability to identify your needs, match your needs to specific resources, and to work with you to access these resources. For our existing wealth generating customers in Clarion County, we are committed to establishing and maintaining professional relationships through the Business Retention and Expansion Program. Prospective companies are welcomed to Clarion County with assistance in site location, business financing options and workforce recruiting, and development.

The Clarion County Economic Development Corporation is a 501(c) 3 charitable non-profit organization, which means your membership fees are tax deductible. For more than 30 years, our mission has been to work with existing and prospective wealth generating companies to create and keep family sustaining jobs in Clarion County.

Services

- **Locating Your Business** - The CCEDC helps wealth generating companies – whether they are start-ups, existing companies in the county, or companies that are considering a location in Clarion County – to find existing buildings or developed land that fits their needs. Contact us about the comprehensive database of available buildings and sites in Clarion County. If you have questions regarding the costs associated with a particular building or site regarding property taxes, utilities, construction, and lease/purchase, we have the resources to find you the answer for your business decision.

- **Planning Your Business** - The CCEDC can link your business to resources that help you develop a business plan, a marketing plan, improve your use of resources, help with the development of new technology, and to help manufacturers become efficient.

- **Financing Your Business** - The CCEDC helps qualified companies identify and obtain low interest loans, grants, tax credits, and loan guarantees. The CCEDC’s process includes identifying financing needs (purchase of machinery, purchase of buildings or land, construction or renovation of buildings, and working capital), identifying resources/programs to meet these needs, presenting the pros and cons of financing programs, and following through until financing is secured.

- **Staffing Your Business** - The CCEDC can provide you with labor market data, wage rate data, and demographics. We match you to resource partners that could meet your employment needs by helping you find and hire the right employees, find training wage subsidies and applicable tax credits, identify training needs and training providers, and find money to help fund training.

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The Organization

The Economic Progress Alliance (EPACC) improves the quality of life in Crawford County, PA by promoting, facilitating and supporting viable economic development opportunities. The mission of the EPACC is carried out by a highly experienced and capable professional staff. The EPACC also employs an in-house construction and maintenance crew to build, rehabilitate and manage property in Crawford County.

Services

- **Economic Development Point of Contact for Crawford County** – EPACC provides access to industrial/business parks and land, administers two in-house loan funds and facilitates access to other state and local government funds, and assists in the successful completion of development projects in Crawford County.


- **Full Service Property Management** – In addition to managing our business parks and two senior apartment locations in downtown Meadville, EPACC has an in-house construction and maintenance crew to build, rehabilitate and manage property in Crawford County.

- **Business Financing** – EPACC provides an avenue to low-interest loans and other resources through in-house funds and private and public lending partnerships to assist in the successful completion of a variety of development projects. We are also a DCED certified provider.

- **Business Assistance** – EPACC conducts business outreach appointments which in turn lead to referrals made to regional service providers with expertise based on the specific need of the business.

- **Attraction and Retention of Business** – In addition to our loan programs, EPACC works to attract and retain companies through available land and office space that can be made to accommodate a specific business need.

- **Community Event Support/Organization** – EPACC plans Greater Meadville Area Day each year, which is an annual golf outing and dinner, and attends numerous community events throughout the year. We partner with various service providers on educational seminars and sessions throughout the year. We also manage two conference room facilities at the Bessemer Commerce Park and Crawford Business Park in Meadville which are available for business and public use.

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The Organization

Seven organizations with one staff and one mission. DevelopErie is a private-public partnership of four non-profits and three public authorities. Our mission: “Develop our Region’s economy and increase our Region’s prosperity.” The Economic Development Corporation includes: Greater Erie Industrial Development Corporation, Erie County General Authority, Enterprise Development Fund, Erie County Industrial Development Authority, Erie County Community Services Financing Authority and EIDCO, Inc.

Services

Some of the services include:

- **Real Estate Development** - DevelopErie has developed nine business parks throughout Erie County with a total portfolio of more than 750 shovel-ready acres. Parcels range from 1 acre to more than 200. In addition to land, DevelopErie owns more than 1 million square feet of industrial and commercial space throughout the region.

- **Brownfield Recycling** - DevelopErie and affiliated agencies have completed 14 land recycling projects totaling over 250 acres under the PA Land Recycling Act of 1995.

- **Transport & Utility Infrastructure** - DevelopErie specializes in infrastructure development, which is often customized to assist business growth and expansion.

- **Grant Management** - DevelopErie provides grant administration and monitoring services based on specific third party project needs.

- **Business Finance** - From startups to established companies, DevelopErie provides customized financial assistance and support to aid business growth and development.

- **Consulting & Technical Assistance** - DevelopErie works to create partnerships that provide our region’s businesses and organizations the programs, products and services they need to be successful.

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The Organization
The Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership (ERCGP) has been the region's preeminent Chamber Of Commerce for over 100 years. All three divisions of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership — Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, and Growth Partnership — support the organization's core mission of providing the leadership to attract, retain and expand business in the region. As a whole, the organization continues to make significant progress in the areas of membership; customer service; business attraction, retention, and expansion; and the identification of key regional initiatives that promote the economic health of the Erie region.

Services
The ERCGP's Economic Development Division's initiatives focus on direct business assistance, business-to-business connections, forecasting job demand to influence education and training, attracting new businesses to the region, and maximizing our deep supply chain for new competitive advantage.

- **Business Retention and Expansion**
  
  **Erie Business Action Team** - Dedicated staff to proactively meet with over 200 individual businesses annually that serve as official gateway into the Economic & Workforce Development system for all businesses in Erie County. All visits are documented in an CRM system (Executive Pulse) that presently has over 1400 business records in Erie County alone. Staff not only meet and document need, but they then coordinate and manage service provider response to each business.

  **Lead Economic Development Team** - A unique, bi-monthly meeting of 14 local, regional and state leaders economic and workforce development organizations with ERCGP serving as the convener/facilitator. The purpose of the "Lead Team" is to coordinate service to customers, share program information, collaboratively develop new programs to meet business needs.

- **Business Attraction**
  
  **Tap Into Erie** - A targeted outreach and marketing campaign aimed at growing and expanding companies in water-intensive industries. The goal is to market Erie's greatest asset - water. The campaign is additionally aimed at getting "Erie" into the minds of decision-makers when considering expansion or relocation.

  **Takt Triangle** - is the global manufacturing "Center of Excellence" bounded by Erie, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo. "Takt" is a manufacturing term meaning the shortest amount of time to produce something for it to be profitable. The goal is to attract investment via the deep & diverse manufacturing supply chain within the "Triangle". Companies will detail their certifications, specialized equipment, capabilities, and industry sectors served. This provides a cost effective marketing platform for regional manufacturers and a way for the region to effectively compete in a global marketplace.

- **Workforce Development**
  
  **Project Jobs** - Conducting on-going census of employers to formulate a clearer picture of where the job openings are and where they will be. Using the Erie Business Action Team’s web-based platform, all employers in Erie County will be able to complete an electronic survey that will capture each of their employment needs in the immediate, mid-term, and long-term. Aggregate results of the company surveys will identify volume of jobs by O*NET Codes (Occupational Information Network). When completed, this primary research of employer demand will enable the community – citizens, training providers, educators, elected officials and business leaders – to see first-hand the occupations most in demand for workers.

- **Long Term Economic Prosperity and Growth**

  **Destination Erie** - Destination Erie is working together with citizens throughout Erie County to build a more sustainable region by creating a plan to meet the economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st Century. The Economic Development Division is leading the Economy & Workforce Work Group which is charged with developing an economic development vision and agenda for the 5-county region comprised of Erie, Warren and Crawford Counties in Pennsylvania, Ashtabula County in Ohio, and Chautauqua County in New York.

Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership
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www.eriepa.com
The Organizations

Forest County Industrial & Commercial Development Authority/Forest County Industrial Development Corporation
Main office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The Tionesta Business Park is located on US 62 North in Tionesta just south of the Tionesta Fish Hatchery. The Special Projects Consultant’s office is located in the Forest County Visitor Center (422 Elm Street) at the junction of Routes 36 and 62 in Tionesta. Office hours are Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. The Consultant recommends, develops and implements projects for the IDA/IDC Board of Directors.

Forest County Community & Economic Development
The office is located in the Tionesta Business Park on PA Route 62 just north in Tionesta. The office is open from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday and by special appointment. This department administers Forest County’s annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement. Each year the CDBG program provides funding for projects throughout the County which benefit low-moderate income persons. The Coordinator also provides technical assistance for community and economic development projects throughout the County and is an active NWPA PREP Partner.

Services
Forest County’s economic development agencies work together to develop and implement projects and programs which:

- Create jobs
- Assist, encourage and promote industrial development
- Acquire and distribute business and economic information
- Promote Forest County and its resources and facilities to businesses as a potential site for re-location or expansion
- Assist and encourage residents of Forest County to prepare themselves for gainful employment in the arts, sciences, trades or crafts
- Purchase, acquire, finance, lease and convey land and buildings

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The Organization
Established in 1955, the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC) is a Lawrence County-based, 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. We are dedicated to working with entrepreneurs, local business owners and new businesses to enhance the economy of the County through the delivery of public/private resources — either at no-cost or low-cost -- for the development, expansion and retention of employment opportunities.

Services
The LCEDC provides access to:

- **Funding Sources** - The LCEDC can assist your business in acquiring state and regional loans and administers a number of local business loan programs. Financing can be used for such eligible activity as land and building purchase and construction, machinery and equipment and working capital. In addition to loan funds, tax abatement, tax credits and some select grant funding is available as well.

- **Available Service** - State, regional and local services are provided to entrepreneurs and businesses including, business startup workshops, government contracting, international marketing, energy audits, ISO certifications, etc.

- **Site and Facility Search** - The LCEDC can help your business find its next new home or expansion site through its comprehensive real estate database and its connection with local developers.

- **Real Estate Development** - The LCEDC has undertaken a number of site development and redevelopment projects throughout its existence including: Brownfield clean-up and redevelopment, Industrial Park developments, Greenfield development and industrial speculative buildings.

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The Organization

The Penn-Northwest Development Corporation (PNDC) was established in 1985 as a 501 (c)(3) private, non-profit, economic development corporation. Penn-Northwest’s mission is to attract new business and industrial investment, provide outreach and retention services to support the retention and expansion of business and industry, and provide coordination and support services for economic development in the Mercer County, PA region.

As Mercer County’s lead economic development agency, Penn-Northwest strives to benefit the region and make the Mercer County community a better place. Penn-Northwest’s business is to ensure that the companies throughout Mercer County succeed, thereby ensuring the economic vitality of our region. Penn-Northwest serves as a strategic partner to help new and existing businesses “Make it in! Mercer County.”

Services

PNDC’s Professional Industrial Plant Expansion, Relocation and Start-up Services include:

- **Business Assistance and Financing Programs** – PNDC assists companies in accessing various resources and financing programs in support of new investment and job growth in Mercer County.

- **Mercer County Industrial Growth Fund** – This local revolving loan fund is administered by PNDC and is available to qualified companies for land, building, machinery, equipment & certain soft costs.

- **Confidential Project Assessment and Financial Packaging** – PNDC provides assistance to companies in determining which financing programs would best suit their project.

- **Site/Facility Searches** – PNDC promotes and maintains a comprehensive inventory of available sites and facilities. PNDC staff is available to coordinate exclusive site tours, connect(659,170),(910,198) with site owners, and help establish a lease or purchase arrangement.

- **Industrial Outreach Services** – PNDC is dedicated to the retention of Mercer County’s industrial base by providing services to existing industries, such as utility advocacy, equipment financing, and securing incentives.

- **Training and Technology Assistance** – PNDC provides workforce recruitment, training and funding assistance in cooperation with our local workforce providers.

- **Development Coordination** – PNDC provides assistance to communities with interest in development and strives to serve as the cooperative bridge by bringing municipalities, business owners, and regional leadership together.

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The Organization

The Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism has a distinct mission to increase the prosperity and population of the Oil Region by enticing people to live, work, learn and play in “the valley that changed the world” through the preservation, promotion, development and support of historical, educational, natural, recreational, residential, commercial and industrial destinations.

Services

The Oil Region Alliance is the lead economic development agency, designated tourist promotion agency for the County of Venango and manages the Oil Region National Heritage Area (ORNHA) which includes all of Venango and eastern Crawford County.

Economic Development - Using an asset-based approach to Economic Development, new business development, local business expansion/workforce development and trail/waterway-based development, the Oil Region Alliance focuses on meeting the needs of new target industries and our existing businesses based on available assets and then focuses our resources to best meet those needs. The Alliance also offers business financing programs to new and existing businesses. Services include:

- **Business Attraction**- ORA has developed an aggressive global and regional industry marketing-attraction campaign, sales calls, prospect generation and hosting key industry decision makers. The “Help Us Grow Venango” initiative was launched to enlist the assistance of our residents to sustain a regional commitment to attract new industries and promote existing business growth.

- **Business Retention and Expansion**- Outreach specialists focus on “taking care of, nurturing and supporting” existing businesses and help to facilitate local companies’ growth and expansion needs.

- **Business Finance**- Helping businesses thrive by providing valuable guidance and customized financial assistance to aid in business and expansion. SCORE mentoring services are available to help you start and grow your business through free and confidential business advice.

- **Industrial Parks Developer**- Looking to start a regional or global business in an area free of specific state and local taxes? The Sandycreek Keystone Opportunity Zone is a designated KOZ and will meet your needs. We work diligently with developers in securing properties for business growth and development to the region.

- **Workforce Development**- Work in partnership with the Pennsylvania CareerLink® and regional training providers to connect employers with potential employees to meet workforce needs of today and into the future.

Tourist Promotion – The Alliance promotes the Oil Region as a travel destination by marketing the region to increase overnight stays, spending and visitation. Our goal is to maximize the economic potential of our nationally-recognized trails and waterway-based outdoor recreation opportunities. We encourage potential visitors to “Grab Life by the Trails” and explore our 65+ miles along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail including paved asphalt hiking & biking trails, our water trails, arts and culture trails, history trails, and the Allegheny GeoTrail.

Heritage Area Manager – Congressionally designated in 2004, the Oil Region National Heritage Area focuses on the area’s legacy as the birthplace of the world’s petroleum industry. The Alliance administers multiple projects with local partners to carry out the approved ORNHA Management Action Plan.

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The Organization

Established in 2003 through the merger of the Warren County Chamber of Commerce and the Warren County Development Association, the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry (WCCBI) serves all of Warren County as an independent not-for-profit corporation (501c6). Through its 501(c)3 affiliate entity, the Warren County Development Association (WCDA), in addition to providing economic development services, supports significant community development initiatives such as the Trails at Jakes Rocks, Northern Allegheny Outdoor Womens Association, RunRevolution and the Allegheny River Clean-up.

Services

The WCCBI has defined focus and allocates available resources to the following focus areas throughout Warren County.

- **Workforce Development and Education** – Direct collaboration with the Pennsylvania CareerLink and regional training providers helps with connecting employer and potential employee needs to these assets in a timely and focused manner. Continued direct investment in local educational initiatives such as the St. Bonaventure University Dual-Enrollment program and various Warren County Career Center programs and sponsorship of ACES Career-Week and the Warren County Diploma Program are several examples of our commitment to educational opportunities for students of all ages and needs.

- **Employer Retention and Recruitment** – Continual communications with local businesses to determine resource and personnel needs is a key element of the WCCBI focus to ensure that existing businesses grow and prosper in our community. Opportunities for new employer recruitment to the community are aggressively managed and facilitated through use of local, regional and state-based programs.

- **Real Estate Development** – Serving commercial and residential developers in securing appropriate properties for initial or redevelopment activities as well as taking direct property ownership when necessary to promote and support business growth and development.

- **Tourism** – In an ongoing effort to draw individuals to our community and to highlight the lifestyle and professional opportunities available throughout Warren County, the WCCBI facilitates numerous multi-day nationally recognized special events which focus on the natural recreational and cultural resources which abound in our community.

- **Local Business to Business relationship building** – Serving all of Warren County in a traditional “Chamber” manner, the WCCBI provides ample opportunities for local businesses to network with one another and share best-practices as well as support one another directly as suppliers of goods and services on a “buy-local” basis. Monthly newsletters and daily email “blasts” help to communicate key events and business happenings within the community.

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The Organization

Established in 1988, Catalyst Connection is an economic development organization dedicated to helping small manufacturers improve their competitive performance in southwestern Pennsylvania including Lawrence County (part of the Northwest PREP region). Our advisors, consultants, and instructors are highly motivated experts with academic degrees and real-world manufacturing experience. In addition to training and consulting, we administer financial programs which can provide funding for equipment and machinery.

Services

Catalyst Connection supports manufacturers in three primary areas:

- **Business Growth** - Increase sales through new customers, new markets and new products.
- **Operational Excellence** - Enhance performance through productivity, quality and process improvements.
- **Talent Management** - Realize greater value from your employees with effective hiring, training and retention practices.

In addition, Catalyst Connection offers additional services that provide financing, resources and workforce pipeline to enable the primary services to be more successful and available to our clients:

- **Financial Services** - Access capital for expansion and development projects.
- **Explore the New Manufacturing** - Engage in programs that support next generation workforce programs.
- **Paying for Continuous Improvement Initiatives** - Reduce business expenses that can be reallocated for improvement projects.

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The Organization
Our experienced business advisors provide value to manufacturers:

**Listen & Assess** - NWIRC advisors identify opportunities for growth, savings and profits.

**Develop Solutions** - The NWIRC advisors, in partnership with our national network, provide objective, creative and high-quality solutions.

**Deliver & Facilitate Projects** - NWIRC advisors provide management services, oversee consultants and ensure projects objectives are met.

Services
Benefit from our proven, results oriented services:

- **Innovation Engineering - Next generation applied technology research & development services**
  - Meaningful, unique and creative solutions produced
  - Non-obvious technologies identified and assessed
  - Innovation-based market opportunities identified, sized and assessed
  - Leverage university, commercial and research lab expertise

- **Lean Manufacturing Services - Cost reduction consulting services and training**
  - Increases production capacity
  - Increases on-time deliveries
  - Reduces scrap, waste and set-up times
  - Staff members become problem solvers
  - Continuously improve

- **Facilitated Management Services - Objective and high quality solutions and projects**
  - Experienced management consultants & economic development resources
  - Accelerated and higher quality management proposal and project services
  - County, state and federal grant experts

- **CoreValue Services - Advanced business valuation**
  - Quick and self paced
  - Online and user-friendly
  - Prioritized expert recommendations
  - Valuation diagnostics identify positive and negative practices
  - Online project management and business planning tool

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The Organization

The Clarion University SBDC provides consulting services and educational programs to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their small business. Clarion University SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs in confidential, one-to-one sessions to help them with a range of business issues including testing a new business proposition, shaping a business plan, investigating funding opportunities, and much more.

Since its inception, the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers has evolved into a network of 18 universities and college-based centers. The centers are the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides high quality consulting, training, and information resources to empower new and existing businesses. The Clarion University SBDC serves Armstrong, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Potter, and Venango counties.

Services

- **Information** - The SBDC has a variety of resources and training seminars to help entrepreneurs obtain timely, relevant, and detailed information required to make sound business decisions. Along with the an up-to-date online SBDC knowledgebase, our center can provide subsidized access to other valuable information including commercial databases. Training is offered on a wide range of small business topics. Check out our website for current events.

- **Consulting** - The SBDC provides comprehensive management and technical assistance directly to small businesses in the following areas: pre-venture, loan packaging, business planning, exporting and importing, marketing, management assistance and long-term growth strategies. One-on-one consulting is provided at no charge. Funding is provided by Clarion University, the Small Business Administration, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- **Environmental Management** - Offers confidential compliance assistance with environmental and health and safety regulations, on-site assessments to look for opportunities to cut costs through pollution prevention and energy efficiency, and assistance developing and marketing environmental technology.

- **Government Marketing** - Helps companies sell to federal, state, local, and quasi-government agencies. Provides a computerized bid lead program, and assistance in marketing products and services to government, proposal preparation, and contract compliance.

- **International Business** - Helps companies assess their international trade readiness, products or services for export potential, strategic and marketing plans, and market entry strategies. Helps identify foreign sales agents and distributors. Provides information on trade mission and trade show opportunities, international trade procedures and regulations, technical standards, sources of trade financing, risk management, import restrictions, duties, and tariffs.

- **Technology Assistance** - Helps inventors bring products to market by offering engineering services early in the development cycle. Provides preliminary intellectual property guidance, evaluates and reviews design options, sources component suppliers, and assists in accessing market potential. The Clarion University SBDC works closely with the Center for Applied Research and Intellectual Property Development offering hands on applied research and product development services along with access to laboratory and prototype development space.

**Director: Dr. Kevin Roth**

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www.clarion.edu/sbdc/
The Organization

Since its inception in 1980, the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers has evolved into a network of 18 universities and college-based centers. The centers are the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides high quality one-on-one consulting, training and information resources to empower new and existing businesses. The Duquesne University SBDC proudly serves Lawrence, Butler, Beaver and Allegheny counties.

Services

- **Consulting:**
  The SBDC assists in the process of turning ideas into business as well as the expansion of small businesses. We also provide information every business needs to make critical decisions through one-on-one consulting that is provided at no charge. Our center provides comprehensive assistance directly to small businesses in many areas including:

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Consulting and training are done in-house at the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation located at Plaza South, Suite 100, 100 East Reynolds Street in New Castle.

- **Information:**
  The SBDC has a variety of resources to help entrepreneurs obtain timely, relevant and detailed information required to make sound business decisions. Along with our up-to-date SBDC knowledgebase, our center can provide subsidized access to other valuable resources including commercial online databases.

- **Education:**
  The First Step Workshop provides aspiring entrepreneurs with guidelines and resources on starting a successful new venture. The workshop is offered monthly at the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation. For more information refer to our website at www.duq.edu/sbdc or call the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation at 724-658-1488.

Other seminars and workshops educate entrepreneurs on business topics ranging from basic business skills to advanced management techniques. Topics may include accounting and bookkeeping issues, taxes, human resources, marketing tips, and business management.

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The Organization

Since its inception in 1980, the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers has evolved into a network of 18 universities and college-based centers and more than ninety outreach locations operating under the guidance of the State Director located at the University of Pennsylvania. The centers are the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides high quality one-on-one consulting, training and information resources to empower new and existing businesses. The Gannon SBDC proudly serves Erie, Crawford, Mercer and Warren counties.

Services

- **Consulting** - The SBDC assists in the process of turning ideas into business as well as the expansion of small businesses. We also provide information every business needs to make critical decisions. This is done through one-on-one consulting that is provided at no charge. Our center provides comprehensive management and technical assistance directly to small businesses in many areas including:
  
  Pre-venture  Loan Packaging  Government Marketing  
  Business Planning  Exporting and Importing  Engineering Development  
  Marketing  Management Assistance  Business Continuity and Survival  
  Long-Term Growth Strategies  Technology Commercialization  Environment Management

- **Information** - The SBDC has a variety of resources to help entrepreneurs obtain timely, relevant and detailed information required to make sound business decisions. Along with our up-to-date SBDC knowledgebase, our center can provide subsidized access to other valuable resources including commercial online databases. The knowledgebase is a blog pertaining to starting, managing and expanding a small business. The Gannon SBDC works closely with Erie Technology Incubator providing aspiring technology-related small businesses consulting services.

- **Education** - The First Step Workshop provides aspiring entrepreneurs with guidelines and resources on starting a successful new venture. The workshop is offered 2 or more times a month at various locations. For more information refer to our website at www.sbdcgannon.org. Other seminars and workshops educate entrepreneurs on business topics ranging from basic business skills to advance management techniques. Topics may include accounting and bookkeeping issues, taxes, human resources, marketing tips, and business management.

Director: Margaret Horne, AVA, MBA  
horne001@gannon.edu  
900 State Street, Suite 100, Erie, PA 16501  
P: 814.871.7232  
www.sbdcgannon.org
The Organization
Northwest PA CareerLink® offices are the “One-Stop” employment centers that provide direct services to employers and job seekers in their respective northwest Pennsylvania communities. The Northwest PA CareerLink® offices serve the following six counties: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren. Staff members are available to assist businesses and job seekers with a variety of services which include:

Employers:
- Online Job Postings at www.jobgateway.pa.gov
- Customized Recruitment Services
- Priority of Service for Veterans
- Job and Labor Market Analysis
- Customized Applicant Screening
- Professional Rental Space
- Federal Bonding Program
- On the Job Training Wage Reimbursement
- Work Opportunity Tax Credits
- Workplace Skills Assessments

Job Seekers:
- Job Fairs
- Monthly Hands-on Career Workshops
- Referrals to Community Agencies for Additional Assistance
- Financial Assistance for Occupational Training
- Youth Employment Programs
- Skill and Aptitude Assessment
- State Civil Service Testing Information
- Priority of Service for Veterans
- JobGateway® a Premier Online Job Search Resource
- Staff Assisted and Self-Directed Job Searches
- Career Resource Center
- Staff Assisted Career Planning
- Services for Persons with Disabilities

The Supporting Organizations
The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is a membership consortium of business, community leaders, and elected officials. The WIB’s focus is on strategic planning, policy development, and oversight and coordination of the regional workforce development efforts. Partners for Performance (PFP) provides the staff function and support for the WIB’s activities with three primary focuses which include policy needs/assessment, community outreach and human resources services to the PA CareerLink® system.
The Organizations

West Central Job Partnership is a non-profit agency established in July 1986 to administer the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program and other federally funded workforce development initiatives in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. WIA programs are designed to provide training (or re-training) to individuals that align and meet the critical skill needs of regional employers.

PA CareerLinks® are the “one-stop” employment centers that provide direct services to address the needs of jobseekers and employers searching for qualified job applicants. Services and programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs of job seekers and employers.

Services

Some of the services provided include:

- Skills certification and assessments
- Space for employers to recruit and interview job applicants
- Coordinate job fairs and on-site recruitment
- Connect employers to professional job placement staff
- Job vacancy postings, applicant screening and referral of qualified applicants
- Services for U.S. Veterans and Veteran referrals
- Referrals of recent training graduates with up to date workplace skills
- On the Job Training – wage reimbursement for eligible new hires
- Reimbursement for 3rd party training and/or in-house training for current employees based upon worker eligibility or approved Industry Partnership
- Labor market information
- WorkKeys® testing center for the National Career Readiness Certificate®

PA CareerLink Lawrence County
102 Margaret Street, New Castle, PA 16101
Eileen Borrelli, Site Administrator
P: 724.656.3165 x221
eborrelli@wjcp.org

PA CareerLink Mercer County
217 E. State Street, Sharon, PA 16146
Angela Palumbo, Site Administrator
P: 724.347.9257 x217
apalumbo@state.pa.gov

West Central Job Partnership
44 South Beaver Street, New Castle, PA 16101
Sam Giannetti, Executive Director
P: 724.658.2501 x221
samg@wcjp.org
The Organization

For more than thirty years, Ben Franklin Technology Partners (Ben Franklin), has been investing in tech-startups and small manufacturers in the process of developing an innovative product or process. The program’s investment strategy is not designed to compete with or replace traditional sources of capital such as bank loans, local/regional economic development funds, or equity groups. Ben Franklin funding is used to support the development and commercialization process until the business owner is either generating sufficient revenue or able to attract follow-on investment. There are no fees, points, or collateral required to apply.

The center can make up to three or four yearly rounds of investment in one technology startup. The process is competitive and includes at least a 1:1 matching component and payback obligation. Successful applicants must meet mutually agreed-upon milestones in order to apply for the next round. Total funding support for one startup typically does not exceed $500,000.

Services

- **Pre-Seed Investments** – This funding, up to $10,000, is used to determine the project’s validity and is usually spent for trade show attendance, product testing, or targeted customer visits. If the client and Ben Franklin decide not to move forward with the project, the $10,000 investment is forgiven. Otherwise it is rolled into the total amount the client is seeking and subject to payback.

- **Phase One: Product Development** – This application should address the product development and technical feasibility risks associated with starting a technology company. A Ben Franklin investment at this stage will support prototype development; engineering costs, protection of the intellectual property, etc., and typically ranges from $50,000 - $125,000 (Convertible Debt).

- **Phase Two: Market Development** – Applications should focus on market feasibility and acceptance which could include the introduction of beta sites and proof-of-concept installations, and a detailed executable marketing plan. Some initial sales are a plus, but not required. A typical Ben Franklin investment would be in the $150,000 range (Convertible Debt).

- **Phase Three: Business Growth & Development** – Startups that are beginning to generate revenue, and are at near break-even, can apply for an investment of up to approximately $200,000. The funding is intended to accelerate sales efforts and encourage overall business growth (Convertible Debt).

- **Small Manufacturing R&D Projects** – Funding of up to $250,000 is made to existing, small manufacturers who are developing a new product/ process or entering a new market. Because the risks associated with an established business are fewer, the payback is structured differently from that of an emerging startup (Conventional Debt).

Ben Franklin Technology Partners
5340 Fryling Rd, Suite 202, Knowledge Park, Erie, PA 16510
P: 814.898.6650
www.cnp.benfranklin.org
The Organization

The Governor’s Action Team (GAT) is a group of experienced economic development professionals that serves as a single point of contact for companies looking to establish new business operations in Pennsylvania or companies considering retention and/or expansion of existing Pennsylvania operations. GAT is headquartered in Harrisburg and operates six regional offices located in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Lewisburg, Scranton, Erie, and Bethlehem.

Services

How GAT can help businesses create and retain jobs in Pennsylvania:

- **Site Selection Assistance** - GAT provides businesses with the information they need to make an informed assessment of the Commonwealth and its communities as a business location. GAT is able to:
  - Identify suitable sites & buildings for client companies by utilizing our property database (www.pasitesearch.com) and relationships with local partners
  - Provide information on available workforce, infrastructure (utilities and transportation), PA taxes and quality of life
  - Provide information on state incentives
  - Coordinate and host site tours with client companies
  - Make appropriate introductions to local economic development groups and elected officials

- **Interagency Coordination** - As a one-stop-shop, GAT will coordinate the involvement of all Commonwealth agencies in a business development project (DEP, PennDOT, L&I, Revenue, and other agencies as necessary)
  - Facilitate introductions and pre-application meetings
  - Expedite permit review and approval

- **Access to Economic Development Incentives** - GAT serves as the primary contact for businesses wishing to access the Commonwealth’s various economic development incentive programs. GAT performs a thorough due diligence review of each project taking into consideration the following:
  - Overall economic impact of the project
  - Company’s financial condition
  - Validity of the company’s business model
  - Strength of commitments for private financing for the project
  - Competitive posture of the project

Based on its assessment, GAT packages an appropriate offer of state business financing programs which can include:

  - Low interest loans for land, buildings and equipment
  - Grants and loans for infrastructure improvements and environmental remediation
  - Grants for workforce training
  - Discretionary grants
  - Tax credits for new job creation
  - Tax credits for research and development

Northwest Regional Office Director: Doug Massey
dmassey@pa.gov
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P: 814.871.4770
The Organization

Northwest Pennsylvania Incubator Association (NPIA) was founded in 1992 and organized as a non-profit in 2007. This association is made up of 6 organizations in the communities of Corry, Franklin, Girard, Greenville, Titusville and Warren. These organizations own incubators in Northwest Pennsylvania. The NPIA office is located in the Girard Area Industrial Development Corporation at 227 Hathaway St. E, Girard, PA.

Services

- Manufacturing Incubator Space
- Office Incubator Space
- Business & Industry Loans

Franklin Industrial & Commercial Development Authority
191 Howard Street, Franklin, PA 16323
P: 814-432-4476 x101
Cell: 814-758-8189
Tom Allen
tallen@ficda.org
www.ficda.org

Greenville Area Economic Development Corporation
182 Main Street, Greenville, PA 16125
P: 724-588-1161
Jim Lowry
jim.lowry@gaedc.org
www.gaedc.org

The Redevelopment Authority in the City of Corry
1524 Enterprise Road, Corry, PA 16407
P: 814-664-3884
F: 814-664-3885
Cell: 814-881-7277
Richard Novotny
Rnovo@corryidc.org
www.Corryidc.org

Warren County Chamber of Business & Industry
308 Market Street, Warren, PA 16365
P: 814-723-3050
F: 814-723-6024
Jim Decker
jdecker@wccbi.org
www.wccbi.org

Girard Area Industrial Development Corporation
227 Hathaway St. E, Girard, PA 16417
P: 814-774-2660
Damon Homich
damonh2@velocity.net

Titusville Community Development Agencies
110 W. Spring Street, Titusville, PA 16354
P: 814-827-3668
Jim Becker
jbecker@tcda.org
www.tcda.org
The Organization
SEWN is a program developed and administered by the Steel Valley Authority (SVA), an innovative regional development group, in collaboration with Pennsylvania’s Department of Labor and Industry (PA DLI). In 1993, the Commonwealth charged the SVA with developing a cost-efficient program to help save area manufacturing companies and jobs. Since then, the Steel Valley Authority has worked with over 1,000 manufacturing firms and helped stabilize or save over 20,000 jobs. Our SEWN Team provides a wide variety of professional and consulting services at no charge. We work with all interested parties: workers, management, and owners.

Services
Within 48 hours of your call, someone from the SEWN staff will contact your company to set up a site visit. We will assess the situation and help define your company’s critical problems. Upon engagement, SEWN will provide a diagnostic review to clearly determine and communicate your firm’s position and needs. We’ll then work with you to conduct a business resource review, provide financial forecasting, assist in financial and operations restructuring, adapt to new market opportunities and other key transition issues. Services include:

- **Financial Restructuring** to enable businesses to meet current financial obligations/investment needs.

- **Operational Restructuring and Cost Management** to assist businesses in reducing their cost of goods sold, securing new markets for their services, improving the quality of their products, and utilizing new technologies in order to return them to competitiveness.

- **Ownership Transition** to secure investors, management, and new business plans necessary to change the ownership, organization, and direction of businesses, including succession buyouts.

- **High-Performance Workplace Strategies** to enable businesses to implement new solutions for improving their productivity and competitiveness.

- **New Market Opportunities** to provide inexpensive access to sales and marketing consultants for improving the company’s sales performance and ability to find the new markets and customers needed to sustain these vital businesses and jobs, especially when firms suddenly lose their primary customers.

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c/o Steel Valley Authority
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1112 South Braddock Ave., Suite 300, Swissvale, PA 15218
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www.steelvalley.org
The philosophy of the Commonwealth’s Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) program is that there is no wrong door when seeking assistance. All of the partners listed in this guide will be able to provide you with help in answering your economic development questions.

Pennsylvania Information, News and Resources
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development: www.newPA.com
Pennsylvania Job Gateway: www.jobgateway.pa.gov
Team Pennsylvania Foundation: www.teampa.com

Federal Information, News and Resources
United States Government: www.usa.gov
BusinessUSA: www.business.usa.gov
United States Department of Commerce: www.commerce.gov
United States Small Business Administration: www.SBA.gov
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC): www.arc.gov