2025/2026

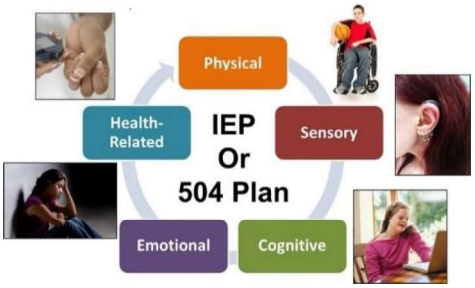
The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

Washington District Office – 201 West Wheeling Street, Washington, PA 15301
P: 724.223.4430 F: 724.223.4463 TTY: 866.752.6163 www.pa.gov/ovr

Eligibility Requirements

Potentially eligible students are students with disabilities in high school ages 14 to 21 with an IEP, 504 plan, or identify as a person with a disability. The goal for OVR customers is Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)



- It's the earliest set of services for students with disabilities.
- Intended to *supplement* services provided by the school.
- Provided by OVR staff or a OVR funded Pre-ETS provider.

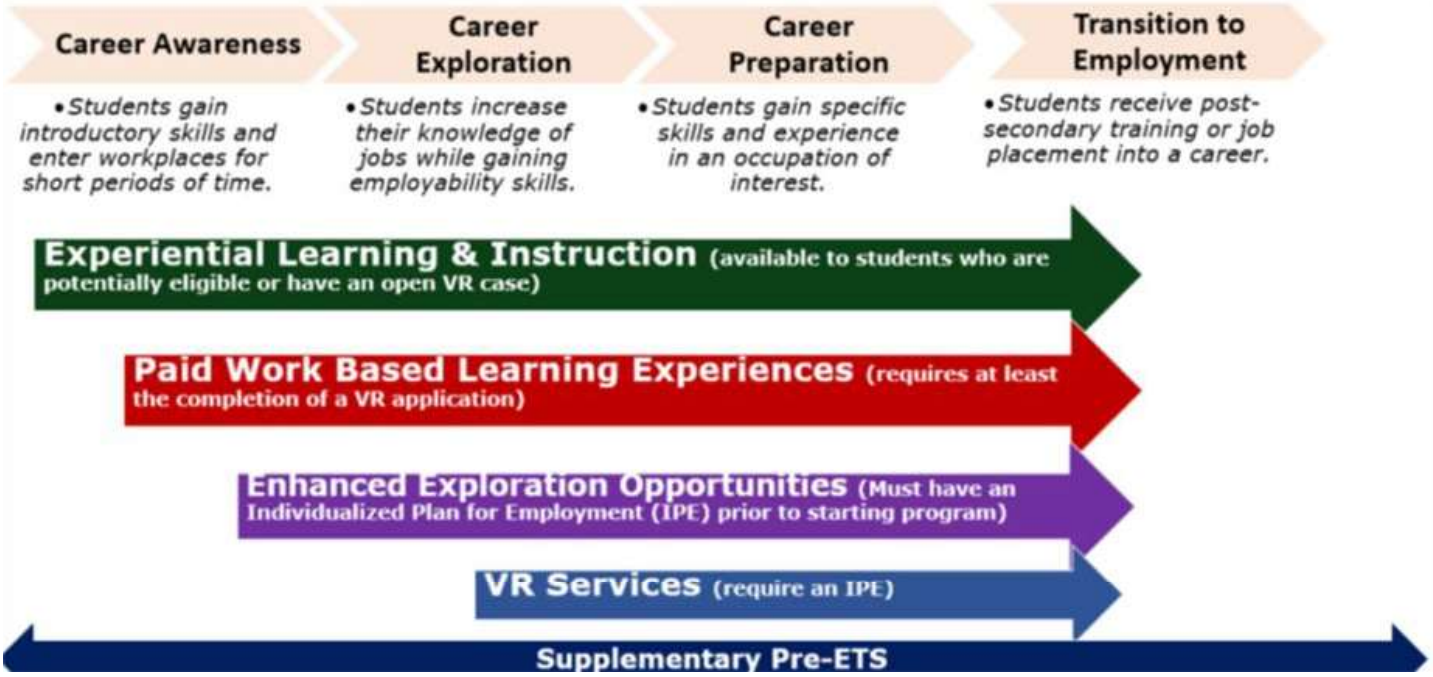
Group Pre-ETS focus on:

- **Self-Advocacy Instruction** helps students with disabilities build skills to solve problems and communicate their own needs and interests.
- **Workplace Readiness Training** teaches students with disabilities how to get and keep a job.
- **Job Exploration Counseling** helps students with disabilities learn about jobs and pick a career.
- **Work Based Learning Experiences** (WBLE) uses community workplaces to provide students with disabilities the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities.
- **Counseling on Postsecondary Options** helps students with disabilities decide if college or training after high school is right for them.

To receive ANY Pre-ETS Group Services from OVR:

- **School Profile OVR-261 must be completed.**
- **Current OVR-244 release forms for all students participating must be completed *AND* signed by a parent/guardian or 2 staff witnesses and returned to OVR staff prior to start of Pre-ETS group session.**

Pre-ETS Continuum



Pre-ETS Group Experiential Learning & Instruction

Starts the conversation about career options and supports. Provides students with opportunities to learn about themselves, their communities, the world of work, and post-secondary opportunities. Introduces them to the expectations for workplace behavior and communication**.** These group Pre-ETS can be provided by OVR staff or facilitated by OVR contracted providers dependent upon availability of funds.

OVR STAFF INSTRUCTED PRE-ETS GROUPS

- Presentations on the 5 Pre-ETS areas. Schools can choose a group session from menu provided in this document and OVR staff will work to coordinate these sessions with identified school staff member upon completion of OVR Collaboration Meeting and School Profile.



Natalie Vester is an Early Reach Coordinator with the Washington Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, serving 3 southwestern counties. She holds a Master of Social Work degree and a Bachelor of Science degree with a strong concentration in communication disorders from the California University of Pennsylvania. Prior to coming to OVR over 8 1/2 years ago, Natalie worked as a Mobile Therapist and a Behavioral Specialist Consultant assisting individuals with autism. She also provided group and individual therapy for adolescents and adults dealing with comorbid medical and mental health issues.

Natalie participated in the piloting of curriculum, such as, Virtual Job Shadowing and created workshops with accompanying certificates that focus on career preparation, exploration and skills required to obtain employment.

Early Reach Coordinator Workshops

I. Assessments Workshops

II. Workshop on Vision Boards and Goal Writing – Career Exploration, Independent Living Skills, Goal Writing, Self-Advocacy, Money

III. Becoming Work Ready

IV. Career Readiness Workshop – Preparing to Take the LEAP After High School

V. Soft Skills Workshop

VI. Personal Finance Workshop

VII. Adulting 101 – Learning about my Diagnosis Workshop

VIII. College – Deciding on the Best Fit for a Training Program Workshop

IX. Thrive Transition Workshop *(NEW) – LEA's can choose which sessions they want approximately 22 sessions that can be completed by March of 2026.*

*See Appendix A for full descriptions.

OVR STAFF COORDINATED GROUP PRE-ETS



Jonette Gallo, LCSW is an Early Reach Coordinator with the Washington Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, serving 3 southwestern counties. She started working for the Commonwealth at the Department of Corrections in 2018 and has been with OVR since June 2023. She graduated from Washington & Jefferson College and received her MSW from the University of Pittsburgh. She started her career working in child welfare for 10 years. She also has experience working in the fields of both inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance abuse.

Jonette participated in student outreach for over 400 students during the 2023/2024 School Year and this summer she facilitated 13 summer group sessions for over 100 students in Washington, Greene, and Fayette Co. She's also involved in the training of providers, the Neurodiversity Skills Camp at Waynesburg University and developing new Pre-ETS programs.

- **Post-Secondary Experiences (PSE):** These experiences are developed and/or coordinated by OVR staff and expose students to post-secondary education possibilities after high school. These Post-Secondary Experiences provide students with the opportunity to visit a college or university or technical school campus in person, understand the differences between high school and post-secondary expectations and introduce them to Supportive Services Office staff who will share their process for seeking accommodations for students with disabilities who are considering attending college or a trade/technical school.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY **Neurodiverse Student Skills Camp:** A 30-hour college "bootcamp" to expose college bound HS students to a college campus & how to be successful in post-secondary training. Neurodiversity is based on the idea that differences in thinking and behavior are part of a normal human experience. This includes individuals with Autism, ADHD, and differences in learning needs.

Per Dr. Devon Bowser, Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies: "Our Neurodiverse Student Skills Camp is designed to give students hands-on experience in some of the skills needed in day-to-day life as an adult, while providing a glimpse of life on a college campus through connecting with peers, current college students, and faculty. Students can expect to practice skills in a variety of challenges and games such as: The Time Management Challenge, College Snacks 101, Accessing Resources Scavenger Hunt, and much more!"

Dr. Bowser and her team conducted a pre and post survey of students who attended the 2025 camp. "Overall, these results suggest that the camp helped students feel more capable and confident, especially when it comes to managing their time, handling stress, and advocating for themselves in a college setting." – Dr. Bowser

Friday May 15, 2026

to

Sunday May 17, 2026

University for Day: A 1-day event for students with disabilities in grades 9-12+ to explore a local 4-Year University. Event may include: a campus tour, college student panel, and presentations from OVR, Admissions, Disability Services, and Career Services Departments.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Wednesday
March 18th, 2026
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Coming Soon!

Career Bound: A 1-day event for students with disabilities in grades 9-12+ to explore Career and Technical Education as well as possible Apprenticeship programs. Event may also include: a site tour, and presentations from OVR, Disability Services, and other departments.

CVS Workforce, Innovation & Talent Center (WITC): This interactive one-day event will feature a facility tour and hands-on breakout sessions exploring the Center and Ebenezer Outreach workforce training programs further. Lunch will be provided. Schools must transport. Breakout sessions include Mock CVS Store, Mock Pharmacy, and Basic Needs Support Warehouse. (We need 3-week notice to schedule for no more that 2-3 groups of 10 or less.)

- **Professional Connections Foundation (PCF):** PCFs consists of group presentations on one or more Pre-ETS areas over the course of 30 hours in a 90-day period with a combination of instruction and hands-on experiences that can be offered during the school year. Maximum of 20 students on a 4:1 ratio student to instructor. After review of your School Profile, this OVR Pre-ETS Provider service ***may*** ONLY be authorized by OVR staff, but school can choose preferred provider from the options shared in this document. *(Student stipend discontinued.)*

- **Group Job Shadowing:** Onsite experience at a community workplace that allows students to observe work being done, to learn from people currently practicing in an occupation, to explore areas of vocational interest. Groups can accommodate 2 to 8 students.

POTENTIAL OVR CONTRACTED PROVIDERS:



"Blueprints is dedicated to Breaking Barriers and Building Futures in our community. We strive to provide the resources, education, and inspiration that empowers individuals and families to thrive, and we are committed to creating positive opportunities and outcomes for all. As an OVR partner since 2012, Blueprints has significant experience serving transitional age youth changing lives and shaping futures." *(Serving students in Greene & Washington County.)*



"DiCenzo Personnel Specialists combines requisite experience with originality and professionalism, bringing together the most effective combination of client and candidate. At DiCenzo Personnel Specialists, we are always accessible by telephone or email and committed to a personal and comprehensive understanding of our clients' needs." *(Serving students in Washington, Greene & Fayette County.)*



"Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) will leverage our experience delivering employment and training initiatives, along with our substantial network of community partners, to offer the Professional Connections Foundation program during the school year to school districts in Fayette County. Our decades of partnerships with various community organizations/businesses will allow us to tailor our PCF program to each school district we service." (*Serving students in Fayette County.)*



"Through quality youth employment services, we help a generation receive the training and guidance needed to find employment or further education—along with support throughout the process. Life's Work provides young people, whether in school or out of school, with support in identifying goals and the skills needed to become work-ready and career-focused." *(Serving students in the Mon Valley.)*



"Our programs combine hands-on learning with classroom-style instruction to help students explore possible career paths for their futures after high school. We have employer partners in the following fields: healthcare, trucking and delivery, sports and entertainment, hospitality, post-secondary education, aviation, financial institutions, facilities and maintenance, retail and the service industry, health and beauty, and animal caretaking." (*Serving students in Washington & Greene County.)*

APPENDIX A

ERC Natalie Vester's Workshops:

Send requests to VR Supervisor **James Walsh – jameswalsh@pa.gov.**

Workshop one and two below can be done individually, it is suggested that they be competed in secession.

I. Assessments Workshops (2 – 3 class periods)

It is recommended that the three sessions below be completed prior to completing SMART goals and vision boards workshop. It can be overwhelming to ask youth and young adults to make decisions when they are stilling learning about themselves and there are so many things that they are still not sure of. Assessments that are completed correctly can assist students in getting into the correct industry to search for employment that will be a good fit for their long-term career goals.

The three sessions below will assist students in gaining insights and understanding in who they are. They can assist in learning individual's career interests, as well as their values. These insights will help guide them in making better, targeted long term career decisions. Assessments are for learning support and life skills. Assessments have been adapted for life skills.

Session 1: Career Interest Inventories
Session 2: Career Values
Session 3: Personality Assessments

II. Workshop on Vision Boards and Goal Writing – Career Exploration, Independent Living Skills, Goal Writing, Self-Advocacy, Money

This is a three to four session workshop for youth and young adults on combining SMART GOALS with Vision Boards. The theme of the workshop is, "What does a Good Life look Like for Me". The workshop was created to assist students in creating a plan in their transition from high school into employment, additional training and/or independent living. The pictorial representations on vision boards can assist with motivation, accountability and follow through. Research informs us that writing goals down increases the chances of achieving goals by 33% and the use of pictures increases motivation by storing the visual information in long term memory. Hence the idea of combining written goals with visuals using a "Vision Board". The goal of the vision board is to aid the individual in staying focused and motivated when working toward goals. A checklist is introduced as a tool for writing targeted meaningful transition goals.

Topics discussed are:

- The differences between a DREAM and a GOAL
- The Benefits of writing SMART goals/How to write SMART GOALS
- Creating an Action plan/How to write and Action Plan-Section off Vision Boards
- Benefits of creating of a vision board/How to create a Vision Board-Create Vision Boards

III. Becoming Work Ready (4 - session workshop)

Youth and young adults will be given tools needed to apply for and interview for a job. Youth and young adults will have the opportunity to complete worksheets and watch instructional videos and engage in discussion on how to choose good references. This information will be used to create a usable adaptable reference page for use when applying for jobs. During session two, discussion will center on dos and don'ts of completing a

resume. Youth and young adults will learn how to communicate their qualifications and strengths while completing a resume. High school youth and young adults understandably don't have a lot of work experience, many will create a resume for individuals with no experience. The youth and young adults will have a resume as a starting point. They can build on their respective resumes and adapt them in the future for specific jobs. Most entry level jobs will ask interested prospects to apply online. Youth and young adults will be given the opportunity to complete an online job application, assisting them in gaining valuable insights. During the last session youth and young adults will be provided with examples of appropriate responses to common interview questions. They will also have the opportunity to practice responding to the most common interview questions.

Session 1: Reviewing components of Becoming Work Ready Folder/References
Session 2: Writing a Resume
Session 3: Completing a Job Application
Session 4: Interviewing Handout provided for tips on virtual Interviewing ***plus*** Interview Jeopardy.
Session 5: Dressing for Success! Quizizz

IV. Career Readiness Workshop – Preparing to Take the LEAP After High School

(10 Sessions – Life Skills and Learning Support)

Youth and Young adults will review and discuss their dream jobs, steps to take to get a job, social media usage, career, and life values, write a Vision Statement, Identify Hard Skills and Soft Skills, Resume Writing, Practice appropriate responses to interview questions, write and introductory elevator speech, review professional workplace etiquette and more.

Session 1: Social Media Usage *Handouts, videos, and safe posting tips*
Session 2: Dream Job – Personal Values/Work Values *Review and discussion of values*
Session 3: Writing a Mission Statement/Goal Writing
Session 4: Resume Writing Tips/ Resume Template
Session 5: How to Choose a Reference/Reference Template
Session 6: Completing a Job Application *review components and practice*
Session 7: The Sales Pitch *Writing and Elevator Speech*
Session 8: Soft Skills *needed for employment review and activities*
Session 9: Professionalism in the Workplace *review and activities*
Session 10: Dress for Success/Giant Jenga Review **time permitting*

V. Soft Skills Workshop

Youth and young adults will have an in-depth session on each of the soft skills that employers are looking for. They will be given the opportunity participate in hands on activities individually and as a group to learn about each soft skill. (*Soft skills covered: communication, attitude, teamwork, time management, problems solving handling criticism internet usage and professionalism*)

Session 1: Verbal and Non-verbal Communication
Session 2: Communication Styles

Session 3: Positive Attitude
Session 4: Teamwork
Session 5: Time Management (Part 1)
Session 6: Time Management (Part 2)
Session 7: Problem Solving
Session 8: Handling Criticism
Session 9: Professionalism in the workplace
Session 10: Safe Internet Usage
Session 11: Play Soft Skills Jeopardy - Workplace Scenarios

VI. Personal Finance Workshop (10 Sessions or LEA may choose)

Youth and young adults will review and discuss why we need money, what we spend money on, types of banking services, saving money, and borrowing money. Lessons designed for learning support and life skills youth. LEA can choose the entire workshop or individual sessions.

Session 1: Making Money – Types of Income, Reasons to Work, and How to Read a Paystub
Session 2: Spending Money – Types of Expenses, Needs vs. Wants**,** Making a Budget
Session 3: Banking Services – Types of Accounts, Writing a Check, Debit Cards & ATMS
Session 4: Saving Money – Saving & Goal Planning, Compound Interest, Investing, Other Places to Save
Session 5: Borrowing Money – Credit Cards, Billing Statement, Credit Scores, College, and Cars
Session 6: Moving Out- List of items needed to move out
Session 7: Budgeting to live on your or with a roommate – Bean budgeting for life skills
Session 8: Review terms and a Lease and rental agreement
Session 9: Bringing it all Together – cost of moving out, pro & cons, selecting a place to live, Q & A
Session 10: Car Loans – Cost of operating a vehicle, warranties, car loans and scenarios

VII. Adulting 101 – Learning about my Diagnosis Workshop (9-10 Sessions or LEA may choose)

Life Skills **-** Youth and young adults will learn about their diagnosis, they will review medical terms, learn to read a medication label, will be given the opportunity to explain their diagnosis. Tips on how to talk with their doctor will also be reviewed. Youth and young adults will be provided with a printable medical card and instructions to complete Medical ID on their iPhone, Handouts for MA Transportation contact information, a functional skill assessment and a handout to put together information in an emergency binder at home.

Session 1: Defining Medical Terms (session 1 & 2 may be combined depending on time)
Session 2: **Reading a Medication Label**
Session 3: Understanding How the Brain Works - learning about different disabilities
Session 4: What type of Disability do I have? - worksheet and discussion
Session 5: Learn about your accommodations - youth will need a copy of their IEP
Session 6: How to Explain your Disability - practice explaining your diagnosis
Session 7: Tips! How to Talk to Your Doctor
Session 8: Healthy Boundaries

Session 9: Skin Care
Session 10: Hygiene *OR* **Reviewing and Learning**

VIII. College – Deciding on the Best Fit for a Training Program Workshop

Session 1: Differences Between High School and College
Youth and young adults will review and discuss, entitlement Eligibility, Education Laws, Access to Personal Information, Accommodations, Modifications, IEPs, and students' responsibilities when attending college.

Session 2: Is College for ME
Youth and young adults will review different types of programs available and will review the types of assessment that can assist with choosing a good fit for a long-term career.

Session 3: Financial Aid
Youth and Young Adults will review paying for College, University, Technical School etc. The FASFA, grants, scholarship and other financial resources will be discussed.

Benefit of Virtual Learning: Learning Support (1 session unless students have a lot of feedback)

This single session can be helpful when trying to decide between taking online courses and in person courses. Realizing that it is not for everyone, there can be benefits to virtual learning. Youth and young adults will engage in discussion on the differences between learning in person and online and benefits of virtual learning. They will compare the following: teacher led verses student led classrooms, in school lessons to online lessons, socializing in school verses online, books and technology and paper as assignments verses digital assignments. How to pre-pare a workspace will be discussed. Lastly students will review the benefits of becoming ready for work.

IX. Thrive Transition Workshop *(NEW)*

1.You will

- Identify personal Strengths- helps with growth and employment- **1-(45-minute) Session**
- Identify Personal and Work Values- **2 - (45-minute) Sessions**
- Explore Careers- **1 - (45-minute) Session**
- Learn about your personality- **1 - (45-minute) Session**

2. Under the **Emotional Wellbeing Domain, you will**

- Reviewed Growth and Fixed Mind Sets- **1- (45-minute) Session**
- SMART Goal Writing/Vision Boards- What does a Good Life Look Like for Me **-3 Sessions**
  The following **5** of the 6 **life** and **wellness domains will be covered** by participating in the **Vision Boards** and **Goal Writing activity**.- We know that by addressing the whole person, individuals can be more successful and productive sooner and even thrive.

    - Education/Vocation
    - Leisure/Recreation
    - Housing

- Being plugged into a community
- Supportive Relations- Identified during goal writing and action planning

- Identify Strengths-**1 – (45-minute) Session**
- Learn how to be Thankful- **½ session (combine with positive affirmations and identifying fears)**
- Positive Affirmations/Identifying fears-**1/2 session**

4.Under **Financial Domain** you will review

- Budgeting**- 2 – (45 minute) sessions**

5. Under **Soft Skills-** you will learn about

- Healthy habits - **1- (45-minute session)**
- Teamwork - **1-2 (45-minutes sessions)**
- Communication - **2 – (45-minute sessions)**
- Problem Solving - **2- (45-minute sessions)**

6. Under **Workplace Readiness**

- Interview ***Jeopardy***- **1- (45-minute session)**
- Resume writing - **1- (45-minute session)**
- References – **1 (45-minute session)**
- Writing an elevator speech- **1 – (45- minute session)**

<u>New for the 2025/2026 School Year</u>

ERC Natalie Vester can provide group Pre-ETS during ESY! Please let us know <u>ASAP</u> if you'd be interested.

APPENDIX B

Washington District OVR Virtual Parent Info Sessions

Fall 2025

Join us for a virtual parent/caregiver information session!

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is a state agency within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry that provides services to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment independence.

Learn more about the Washington District Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and how they may be able to assist your transition aged student.

- Presentations will include an introduction to OVR services and explanation of local referral processes.
- Information will be the same at each session.
- A Microsoft Teams Meeting link will be sent the morning of scheduled session.

Information Sessions will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of months listed below.

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM
and
5:00 PM to 6:00 PM

October 15, 2025

November 19, 2025

December 17, 2025

****Please register 24 hours prior to selected session.****
https://forms.office.com/g/1Mrjp72hiz

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Questions?
RA-LIVOVRWASHPRE-ETS@pa.gov
Call/Text: 724-993-5841

APPENDIX C

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

University for a Day

In partnership with the Washington Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

51 West College Street, Waynesburg, PA, 15370

Attend a one-day event to learn more about Waynesburg University! Sessions include a campus tour and admissions presentation, an overview of Disability Services, the Pathways Center, and Neurodiversity Camp, and a panel discussion with current WU students. OVR staff will also share information about resources for students transitioning to college or university.

Lunch will be provided.

Please register by Wednesday, February 25, 2026

To register or to ask any questions, please email RA-LIOVRWASHPRE-ETS@pa.gov.

Limited to 30 students

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

APPENDIX D

Other Possible Events

Pittsburgh OVR Offers:

One-day program at a Community College of Allegheny Co (**CCAC**) branch campus featuring presentations from admissions, career and disability services as well as possible student panel. CCAC **North** (*North Hills*) has Learning Support CTE Programs in Environmental Services, Food Service and Building Maintenance. The main campus in **Pittsburgh** (*Northside*) has Apprenticeship programs. The South (*West Mifflin*) and Boyce (*Monroeville*) campuses have Disability Services Offices on-site. CCAC also has FOCUS Pathways in Entrepreneurship and Web Development at each campus. 8-Week FOCUS Pathways

- **Point Park**
- **LaRoche**
- **Chatham**
- **Duquesne**
- **Pitt** - Main Campus
- **Robert Morris**
- Carlow
- Carnegie Mellon
- Penn State Greater Allegheny (McKeesport)

CTE for Me: Hear about the admission process, supports available, programs of study, and take a tour of the center. **Rosedale** Technical College in Robinson and the *tuition-free* **Bidwell** Training Center in Pittsburgh's Northside.

Will You Be My Apprentice: Tour the Carpenter's Pittsburgh Training Center in Robinson. They offer Commercial and In-House Carpentry, Flooring, Pile Driver, Millwright, Cabinetry, Upholstery and Locksmith.

Events held during the 2024/2025 at highlighted schools. We can ask to participate in some of their scheduled events and if there's enough interest, have our own for students in Fayette, Greene and Washington Co.