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## Graduate! Philadelphia – An Innovative Approach to Workforce Development

Projections made by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor show a thirty-one percent increase in demand for workers with associate's degrees and a twenty-two percent increase in demand for workers with bachelor's degrees by 2010. To meet this demand, Graduate! Philadelphia was created to raise the rate of college degree completion in Philadelphia in order to enhance the value of the City's workforce.



The program has developed provocative ideas and concrete models for community leaders seeking to create a high-quality workforce in Philadelphia. The current economic environment demands well-educated workers practiced at complex and creative problem-solving. Many leading urban economies deliver that workforce to employers. For example in Boston, twenty-five percent of the workforce has a college degree; in Seattle it's thirty-six percent. However, in Philadelphia, only fourteen percent of the workforce, one in seven, has a degree. This poorly-educated workforce discourages business growth and formation and prevents residents from realizing their earnings and career growth potential.

At the same time, almost 80,000 Philadelphians between the ages of 25 and 45 have more than one year's worth of college credit but no degree. Many are working poor and first-generation college students who took a bold step and made financial sacrifices to start college. For a variety of reasons, not all academic, they never completed the degrees that would have given them entrée into better-paying jobs and a better future. The quickest and most effective way to increase our stock of college-educated workers is to look to these 80,000. If the right incentives and supports can be put to work, these adults can make a come back and finish their degrees.

As outlined in the report *The Challenge to Complete*, if 10,000 of Philadelphia's "Comebackers" earn a degree by the end of the decade, City tax revenues would increase by \$2.96 million in the first year and \$273.2 million over thirty years. Moreover, purchasing power would increase by \$35 million in the first year and \$1.05 billion over thirty years, not including potential salary increases and up to \$10 million in social service expenditures would be saved in the first year and \$300 million over thirty years.

### About Graduate! Philadelphia

Graduate! Philadelphia, an initiative of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board (PWIB) and the Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL), is a new economic development and educational program to raise the rate of college degree completion in Philadelphia in order to enhance the value of the City's workforce. The Graduate! Philadelphia report, *The Challenge to Complete*, was released in July 2005 outlining the City of Philadelphia's need college-educated residents. For more information, please visit [www.GraduatePhiladelphia.org](http://www.GraduatePhiladelphia.org).