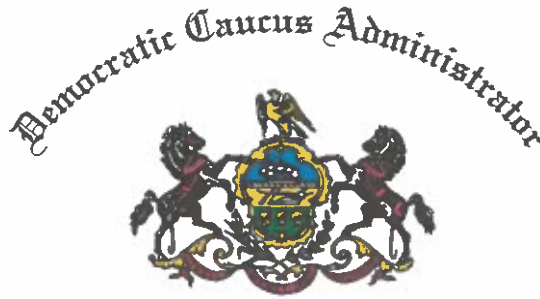


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Senate of Pennsylvania

April 18, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Berrier
Secretary of Labor and Industry
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
1700 Labor and Industry Building
Harrisburg, PA 17121

Dear Secretary Berrier:

I am writing to strongly support the application of Insulators and Allied Workers Local 23 for PA Smart grant assistance to help fund a new and innovative program to recruit veterans, women, and minorities into their apprenticeship program and develop collaborative pre-apprentice programs with secondary schools throughout Central Pennsylvania.

As you know, the craftsmen of Insulators and Allied Workers Local 23 provide essential skilled services to a wide range of industry, business, and related sectors. The members of Local 23 are hardworking and skilled craftsmen who are dedicated to their profession, committed to safety, and invested in the communities in which they live and work. For more than seven decades, Local 23's Apprenticeship Program has successfully trained skilled craftsmen. Currently, the program has over 40 apprentices in training. This cohort of apprentices will help fill a growing need for skilled craftsmen in the field; however, even with the robust number of apprentices in the current class, additional apprentices are needed to meet demand. Recognizing the need to attract more individuals to the field and create a potential pipeline of future talent, the Local is developing a new and innovative approach to recruit veterans, women, and minorities to the profession. To complement that effort, plans have been made to develop a pre-apprentice program at the secondary level in the 18 counties Local 23 serves to encourage youngsters to pursue a career in the field. While the Local is investing significant resources in this effort, state grant funding through the PA Smart Grant Growing Registered and Pre-Apprenticeship Program is needed to fully implement this important effort.

The trade and related skilled crafts provide well-paying, family sustaining fulfilling jobs to thousands of Pennsylvania; they are essential to the economic vitality of our Commonwealth. Therefore, inasmuch as Local 23's proposal meets the letter and spirit of the PA Smart grant program, I respectfully urge the department to carefully review this request for funding with a view toward awarding the amount requested. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judith L. Schwank
Senator—11th District