



**Press Clippings
March 2021
Web**

Title: Interactive tool helps workers identify pathways to higher-wage jobs

Author: Ayana Jones, Tribune Staff

Link: https://www.phillytrib.com/news/local_news/interactive-tool-helps-workers-identify-pathways-to-higher-wage-jobs/article_47b096c6-0738-53e5-b235-96277d362c98.html

Date: March 4, 2021

An interactive tool launched by the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Cleveland can play a key role in helping workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic transition into higher-paying jobs.

The Occupational Mobility Explorer allows workers to identify pathways to transfer their skills from one occupation to a similar — but higher-paying — occupation in the same labor market.

The tool was highlighted during an *AI Dia* newspaper roundtable discussion on leveraging skills to help transition people into family-sustaining careers.

“We know that it’s not just a skills gap that’s holding many people back, but an opportunity gap as well. The Explorer is designed with that in mind,” Patrick Harker, Philadelphia Fed president, said in his opening remarks.

He addressed why the tool is important for workers of color.

“Black and Latino workers are struggling more than others,” he said. “It’s a trend that long predated the pandemic and has only been heightened by it.”

Harker noted that in the state of Pennsylvania, the Black unemployment rate is 17.2%, while the white unemployment rate is 7.8%. Nationally, Black unemployment stands at 9.2% versus 5.7% for white workers.

“Now, even with some hopeful signs as virus cases fall and the economy continues to reopen, I’m concerned that as the broader economy climbs upward, too many workers are being left behind,” Harker said.

Citing Federal Reserve research, he noted that the “economic loss owing to racial and gender disparities in our labor market stands at around \$2.6 trillion” and urged action to expand opportunity to all Americans.

Keith Wardrip, the Philadelphia Fed community development research manager, demonstrated how workers can use the Explorer tool to transition from being cashiers to becoming human services specialists and quadrupling their wages.

The tool incorporates data from a report by the Philadelphia and Cleveland Feds that finds 49% of lower-wage employment across the nation’s largest 33 labor markets can

be paired with at least one higher-paying occupation requiring similar skills. The nearly 4,100 transitions connecting the most similar occupations would represent an average increase in wages of about \$15,000.

Wardrip said skills that many low-wage workers have can be a bridge to better opportunities.

“It’s vital that employers share in this recognition even if the skills are in seemingly different occupations like cashiers, customer service reps and credit counselors,” he said. “Skills-based hiring could be an important strategy for employers to create a more diverse workforce, but it’s only going to work if the employers can identify the specific skills they need in a job, they drop any unnecessary credentials and then they commence to assessing applicants on these skills.”

During the roundtable’s first panel, Guy Generals, president of Community College of Philadelphia, and Mary Ellen Caro, president and CEO of Peirce College, homed in on how their institutions are adapting their curriculum to support workers in recovery.

This panel also featured remarks from Hernán Guaracao, founder and CEO of Al Día, and Miguel Martinez-Valle, a reporter for NBC10, who spoke on Philadelphia’s Black and Hispanic workers being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The second panel focused on training programs that are available for job seekers and how people are pivoting.

Alia Sutton-Bey, director of operations and youth development at Hope Works Camden, and Rafael Arismendi, vice president of Education and Workforce Services at Congreso, explained how their organizations are creating customized training programs for employers.

Irv Randolph, managing editor of The Philadelphia Tribune, discussed the media company’s efforts to empower workers and small business owners by providing them with information on resources.

Andrea Lawless Sanders and Tiffany Bacon, hosts of “The Source” on WURD radio, addressed how they’ve seen people in the community pivot professionally.

Sanders encouraged businesses to give workers who don’t have a college degree a chance for advancement

“The idea is to get the employers to pay attention to the people — not just look at their college degrees, but look at the skill sets that they are bringing to the table,” said Sanders, who has a background as an implicit bias trainer.

“Look at how hard they are working. Look at their emotional intelligence — how they are able to navigate with people from all walks of life. That is very important,” she said.

“Take another look at that person who may not have a college degree but is willing to step up and give them an opportunity.”

Title: The keys to leveraging work skills for better job opportunities

Author: Jensen Toussaint, Al Dia

Link: <https://aldianews.com/articles/leaders/keys-leveraging-work-skills-better-job-opportunities/63166>

Date: March 4, 2021

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted just about every aspect of our daily lives.

Beyond a personal lens, the pandemic has drastically impacted the economy at-large, and exacerbated many of the disparities that exist for workers of color.

According to recent research by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and others, Black and Hispanic workers have borne the weight of the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic, having seen a disproportionate rate of job losses and wage reductions.

As of Dec. 2020, in the state of Pennsylvania, the Black unemployment rate was 17.2%, while the White unemployment rate was 7.8%. Nationally, the Black unemployment rate stands at 9.2%, whereas the White unemployment rate is 5.7%. For Latinos, the unemployment rate is at 8.6%. The pandemic has also severely impacted women workers, as nearly 3 million women have dropped out of the formal labor force in the past year.

These numbers have been an alarming trend for decades, long preceding the current pandemic.

“We know that it’s not just a skills gap that’s holding many people back, but an opportunity gap as well,” said Patrick Harker, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

As a way to help workers and potential employers transition into family-sustaining careers, the Federal Reserve Bank created the Occupational Mobility Explorer, a tool designed to get workers to potentially higher-paying job opportunities.

With the Occupational Mobility Explorer, employees are able to find an industry in which their existing skills will be able to be transferred into another career path.

Keith Wardrip, Community Development Research Manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, published a research brief in January that focused on employment levels across the tri-state area to better understand which workers were most heavily impacted by the pandemic.

His research found that the three most heavily impacted groups were Black men, Black women and Hispanic women, and in particular, individuals in those groups without a high school diploma.

Similarly, another report from a colleague indicated that of the 10 occupations most drastically impacted by the pandemic, Black and Hispanic workers were overrepresented in six of those occupations.

“Skills are often talked about as a gap, but our research suggests that skills can be considered a bridge,” said Wardrip.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the economic loss as a result of racial and gender disparities in the U.S. labor market stands at \$2.6 trillion.

The disproportionate rate of economic recovery for women and people of color has often been rooted in structural barriers, job segregation, inequality in education and discrimination.

“If we can solve this problem, we can benefit everyone,” said Harker.

“I think it’s imperative that in striving to redress our country’s stark inequities, we focus on root and branch reform rather than quick fixes,” he added.

Resources for College Students

Numerous colleges and universities across the state have worked to expand resources for students amid the pandemic.

From moving entirely to virtual education, to developing critical skills needed to enter the job market, the pandemic has added an additional layer of difficulty for students in college and alumni that have recently graduated.

After hearing from employers about some specific skills that many of them are looking for in their workers, Peirce College created a program that allows students to garner the skills that many jobs within their industry requires and earn up to 20 credits while doing so.

“We’ll be introducing this in addition to our degree programs,” said Dr. Mary Ellen Caro, president & CEO of Peirce College. “That’s how we’re working with employers to try to help, in particular, this population segment, get back to work or improve their working condition to find sustainable wages.”

The Community College of Philadelphia also has resources that have helped students and graduates enter the workforce during the pandemic.

One of the most prominent ones is Career Readiness Soft Skills Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which prepares participants for entry into the workforce, registered apprenticeship programs and further education within a number of career fields.

“We pick an underlying theme in everything we do, it’s to enable students to find a pathway towards a more prosperous future for themselves,” said Dr. Donald Guy Generals, president & CEO of the Community College of Philadelphia.

When it comes to finding job opportunities and better pay opportunities, skills are often the most important factor in finding the right career.

Title: Intelligent.com Announces Best Registered Health Information Technician for 2021

Author: PR Web - Cision

Link:

https://www.prweb.com/releases/intelligent_com_announces_best_registered_health_information_technician_for_2021/prweb17790540.htm

Date: March 10 and 11, 2021

Intelligent.com, a trusted resource for online degree rankings and higher education planning, has announced the Top 50 Registered Health Information Technician for 2021. The comprehensive research guide is based on an assessment of 153 accredited colleges and universities in the nation. Each program is evaluated based on curriculum quality, graduation rate, reputation, and post-graduate employment.

The 2021 rankings are calculated through a unique scoring system which includes student engagement, potential return on investment and leading third party evaluations. Intelligent.com analyzed 153 schools, on a scale of 0 to 100, with only 50 making it to the final list. The methodology also uses an algorithm which collects and analyzes multiple rankings into one score to easily compare each school.

Students who pursue any one of these programs can expect to gain employment much quicker in comparison to candidates without a degree. In addition to accessibility and cost, the steady job growth in this market is one of the many reasons Intelligent.com researched and ranked the Top Registered Health Information Technician. To access the complete ranking, please visit: <https://www.intelligent.com/best-registered-health-information-technician/>

2021 Registered Health Information Technician featured on Intelligent.com (in alphabetical order):

Albany State University

Alfred State College

Arapahoe Community College

Central Community College

Central Piedmont Community College

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

Clarkson College

Collin County Community College District

Columbus State Community College
Dakota State University
Davenport University
DeVry University
Dyersburg State Community College
Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
Edgecombe Community College
Ferris State University
Fisher College
Franklin University
Gateway Community and Technical College
Great Falls College Montana State University
Herzing University
Hutchinson Community College
Idaho State University
Minnesota State Community and Technical College
Moraine Park Technical College
National American University
North Dakota State College of Science
Northeast Iowa Community College
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Northwest Iowa Community College
Peirce College
Penn Foster College
Pitt Community College
Portland Community College

Rasmussen College

Roane State Community College

Rochester Community and Technical College

Rowan College at Burlington County

Saint Petersburg College

Shoreline Community College

Sinclair Community College

St Philip's College

State Fair Community College

Tyler Junior College

Ultimate Medical Academy

University Of Alaska, Southeast

University of Cincinnati

University Of Northwestern Ohio

Washburn University

Weber State University

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Title: Lansdale woman turning 105 shares secret to her longevity

Author: 6abc Digital Staff (published on other sources as well)

Link: <https://6abc.com/society/montco-woman-turning-105-shares-secret-to-her-longevity/10443589/>

Date: March 24, 2021



LANSDALE, Pennsylvania (WPVI) -- There's a lot of wisdom and life in 105 years.

On Tuesday, family and friends in Lansdale, Pennsylvania celebrated the 105th birthday of Margaret "Peg" Leichthammer.

There was live music, cake and many donning Leichthammer's favorite color, pink.

"I'm so overwhelmed that I can't think of words to say. So I'll just keep on talking. I mean, it is absolutely a complete surprise, and I am truly overwhelmed," said Leichthammer.

Leichthammer was born in 1916, graduated from Peirce College and worked as a paralegal -- a woman ahead of her time.

So what's the secret to 105 years?

"Family's very important. Faith is important. Laughter is important. And think of other people, don't always think about yourself because we're in a world of people. We should all be thinking about everybody," she said.

Leichthammer has lived at Elm Terrace Gardens in Lansdale for 27 years.

Title: A Wedding Story: Salima and Mouhamadou Diop

Author: Afea Tucker, Tribune Correspondent (published on other sources as well)

Link: https://www.phillytrib.com/lifestyle/a-wedding-story-salima-and-mouhamadou-diop/article_01ad387a-97cc-5d55-909e-84ee446bd683.html

Date: March 27, 2021

he former Salima Suswell and Mouhamadou Diop were married on February 24, 2021 at the Etat Civil Hopital Principal, a marriage administration building in Dakar, Senegal. The couple celebrated their union in traditional Senegalese fashion, dressed in beautiful African garb and with both a religious and civil ceremony. Most Senegalese weddings contain both traditional, religious, and civil elements.

Salima and Mouhamadou had a religious marriage ceremony on January 11, 2020, and their civil ceremony a year later. During the religious ceremony, the two were married by an Imam at the home of the groom's eldest uncle in Dakar. It's an old African tradition that the eldest son in the family leads the family. The Imam is one who leads Muslim worshipers in prayer and also performs the religious ceremony for a Muslim couple to be legally wed under Islamic law.

The bride and groom celebrated their religious nuptials just before restrictions and social distancing guidelines were put in place due to COVID 19. They relished every minute of their wedding day, especially their reception which included lots of family, prayer, love, food, and fun. The guests were served the very traditional Senegalese dish of Thiéboudienne, also know as Jollof Rice, a fish and rice dish served family-style.

The wedding colors were white and silver. The flowers were provided by Eden Flowers in Dakar. They were gorgeous African white roses mixed with an array of other homegrown white flowers decorated with a white ribbon wrapped in pearls, and gold pins throughout the bouquet. The bride looked stunning in her custom-made gown by Senegalese designer and tailor Ndèye Rokhaya. Ndèye sent Salima a few designs in preparation for the wedding and from there they worked together to create the perfect gown. The couple wore matching white ensembles, with silver embellishments.

On the day of their civil (legal) marriage at the Etat Civil Hopital Principal, the newlyweds weren't able to gather with family and friends for a large reception due to the pandemic but that did not dampen their big day.

The Bride

Salima, the daughter of Majeedah and Imam Asim Abdur-Rashid, is a Philadelphia native who resides in Chestnut Hill. She attended Overbrook High School then went on to attend Peirce College and Drexel University. Over the course of her professional career, Salima became an entrepreneur, political strategist, and philanthropist. She

owns and operates a thriving public policy and management consulting firm based in Philadelphia named Evolve Solutions LLC. Her parents are both community leaders, with over 40 years of dedicated service to the Philadelphia community. Following in her parents' footsteps, one of Salima's favorite things to do is volunteer work. Her other hobbies include traveling, reading, writing poetry.

The Groom

Mouhamadou, a native of Dakar Senegal, is the son of Moussa Diop and Yacine Ndiaye. A simple Muslim man who has built a life on peace. Mouhamadou shows a great amount of appreciation and gratitude for all that he has been blessed with. Peace is what helps keep him organized when it comes to managing his daily life. He is also a businessman, who takes great pride in his work. Mouhamadou got a business license over 10 years ago and started an import-export business which has become very successful. When not working, he enjoys basketball, football, swimming, watching all sports including MMA.

How They Met

The happy couple met in Dakar, Senegal in 2019. Salima had planned a trip and was visiting the country mostly for leisure but with some business dealings on her agenda. Salima met Mouhamadou on the first day she arrived in Dakar. He worked with the resort where she was staying. As Salima recalls the story, she wasn't immediately drawn to Mouhamadou, although she had learned later that he was immediately attracted to her.

The Proposal

The proposal happened after Jumma, the holiest day of the week in the Muslim faith, at Massalikul Jinan, a brand new mega-mosque in Dakar. Over lunch, Mouhamadou asked Salima to marry him. After thinking he was playing a joke and then thinking he was crazy, she accepted. They celebrated with a huge family gathering that weekend at his eldest uncle's home.

The couple spent a lot of time together over the course of three weeks and had fallen madly in love. Before Salima left Senegal, they were married religiously after a little more than two weeks of knowing each other. The bride describes that experience as a whirlwind.

The Honeymoon

After their civil ceremony, the couple had spent time together at Ngor Island, one of the most popular beaches in Dakar.

Reflections in Their Words The Groom

“My wedding day was unlike any day that I ever lived in my life and it makes me want to be a better person because right now I share my life with my beautiful wife. And I love you so much, baby.”

The Bride

“Mouhamadou’s love changed my entire life. Who he is, where he comes from and everything that he stands for makes it so very easy to love him. Mouhamadou is the best man I have ever known. Our wedding day is a day that I will cherish for the rest of eternity. My love for my husband is difficult to reduce to the jurisdiction of words, but I will say this, nothing compares to it! I love you my honey, forever ever, forever ever, and Always!”

Title:

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Date: