



Program gives students education in working



By [Chad Mearns](#)

Wednesday, June 2, 2010 6:20 PM EDT

□ Area students will get a head start on their careers this summer through a program offered by PA CareerLink of Cambria County and Goodwill Industries of the Conemaugh Valley.

The annual Summer Youth Employment Program, which runs from June 7 through Aug. 6, places youth 16-21 with employers across the area.

Participants work 35 hours each week, earning a wage of \$7.50 per hour at supervised work sites.

"We look for sites to put the kids close to where they live, and we try to match them up with their career interests," senior project manager Nancy Peck said. "We're teaching them to work."

The program is funded through the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission using funds from the Workforce Investment Act, American Recovery and Renewal Act and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The program provides the wages, while the work sites provide the supervision.

"We're providing them with more than just a job. That's the bottom line," she said.

Participants are matched with work sites, where they are assessed by supervisors on work readiness skills such as attendance and punctuality, following instructions, completing tasks, initiative and communication skills, among others.

As part of the program, students also receive instruction on job seeking skills such as preparing a resume and completing job applications.

Work sites range from retail stores to manufacturing centers, nursing facilities and borough or township work crews.

Last year's program attracted 150 participants, and Peck expects similar numbers this year, after 85 percent of participants met work competency requirements last summer.

"The program has been around for years. It's getting better because we're doing the right things."

Supervisors must attend one of two orientation sessions covering child labor laws and other topics, Peck said.

"We make sure we're following the law, and so are our work sites."

Peck said work sites interested in supervising students over the summer can still participate.

"There are sites out there that could use these kids, and the kids could learn something from them," she said.

Orientation sessions are schedule for June 7 at the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center and June 8 at Bishop Carroll High School.

Employers interested in the program are asked to call Peck at (814) 533-2493, ext. 264.

