

Career Wardrobe Selected As Sole Provider for PA WORKWEAR Program: Expands Access to Professional Clothing for Job Seekers Throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania

(PHILADELPHIA) – After more than 20 years of empowering women in Philadelphia by providing free or low-cost professional clothing and job search support services, [Career Wardrobe](#) has been hand-selected by the PA Department of Human Services to run the PA WORKWEAR program. With the increased funding and responsibility, Career Wardrobe will expand its successful model to the five county area surrounding Philadelphia including Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, Bucks, and Berks Counties, providing professional clothing to aid job searches for unemployed Pennsylvanians receiving public assistance benefits.

Under this new expansion, Career Wardrobe expects to see its client services and budget to double over the next year. Career Wardrobe will open two new Boutiques on April 1, providing professional clothing to job seekers in Chester, PA to serve individuals in Delaware County and in Bristol, PA to serve individuals in Bucks County. They will also oversee PA WORKWEAR programs operated in Chester, Montgomery, and Berks Counties by Wings for Success, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board, and Berks Counseling Center respectively. Last year in Philadelphia, Career Wardrobe provided professional clothing for 3,175 unemployed job seekers, with 60% referred through the PA WORKWEAR program. In the coming year, the organization could see up to 7,000 individuals with 80% coming through a referral from the PA WORKWEAR program.

Sheri Cole, Executive Director of Career Wardrobe, says this new opportunity comes at the perfect time, as the organization has just completed the first year of a strategic plan to build its capacity to serve more people in need.

“From the day I started as Executive Director 16 years ago, I have pushed us to ask the question ‘who else needs our help?’,” she says. “Having clothing for women was never an issue because we have an extremely generous donor base. The harder part has been making those services known and available to everyone who needs our help. With this expanded responsibility to provide services throughout the region, we will have a greater impact on the lives of women and their families.”

Career Wardrobe is hosting an Open House at the new Boutique in Chester, PA on Tuesday, May 3rd from 9-10:30am to officially launch its services in Delaware County. Press, local elected officials and providers will be on hand to welcome Career Wardrobe to the community. Career Wardrobe Chester is located at 160 East 7th Street, First Floor, Chester, PA 19013.

This new opportunity expand within the region comes on the heels of Career Wardrobe’s co-location with its successful upscale resale shop [The Wardrobe Boutique](#) at 1822 Spring Garden St. in the Logan Square/Fairmount section of Philadelphia. Combining locations gave the organization a 9,000-square-foot footprint that includes office and boutique dressing space for both men and women.

For Press Information:
Paige Wolf - (215) 413-3790 - paige@paigewolf.com

The expanded Philadelphia location also allowed Career Wardrobe to make permanent two successful programs it piloted in 2015 in an effort to ensure that more people, including men and underemployed women, have access to services they need to transition to sustainable employment.

- The [Open Access Program](#) allows any unemployed man or woman to receive a professional outfit, resume review services, and job search advice from the organization for a small fee, much like a healthcare co-pay. [Open Access Mondays](#) allow walk-ins without an appointment at The Wardrobe Boutique in Philadelphia every Monday – all one needs is a resume on hand.
- The [Make It Work for Men](#) program expects to serve 500 men in 2016, providing professional clothing in a private dressing suite separate from the women's boutique. As part of the PA WORKWEAR contract, the men's program will be expanded to Chester and Bristol, PA as well.

Along with clothing services, Career Wardrobe offers professional development education programming that is free and open to the public. Seminars focus on job readiness skills such as communication, time management, problem solving, self-advocacy and financial literacy.

To learn more about how to donate, volunteer or shop to support Career Wardrobe, please call (215) 568-6693, visit www.careerwardrobe.org, or follow @CareerWardrobe on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

[About Career Wardrobe](#)

Career Wardrobe is one of the nation's largest independent organizations empowering women and men transitioning to work with professional clothing, job search support, and professional development. In the past 21 years, more than 80,000 individuals have transitioned from poverty, violence, or incarceration to employment and independence with support from Career Wardrobe.

Career Wardrobe partners with community and government agencies to reach those in need of its services throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. The social enterprise is the regional provider of the PA WORKWEAR program, giving women on public assistance access to professional clothing for job search, training, and work.

Career Wardrobe operates Boutiques in Philadelphia, Chester, and Bristol, PA. Clothing donations are accepted Monday through Saturday in Philadelphia, Fridays in Chester, PA and monthly at partner locations in East Falls and Haverford, PA.

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