

# EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION

PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN WORK | JUNE 2026

## Thought Leadership Blog



It's not always easy when your career takes an unexpected turn or when you decide it's time for a new direction. In this Thought Leadership Blog, Carly Jones shares her perspective on embracing change, giving yourself permission to start over, and finding opportunity in the journey of [redirecting your career path](#).

Mark your calendar

## Spring Highlights: Creating Momentum, One Program at a Time

Our spring lineup of career development programs launched with tremendous momentum at *Empowerment in the Workplace* on May 2 at the Mt. Lebanon Library. The event marked the strongest turnout yet for this growing workshop.

Professionals gathered to elevate their workplace presence, strengthen self-advocacy skills, and engage in meaningful conversations around professional growth. Designed for individuals ready to expand their impact and pursue new opportunities, *Empowerment in the Workplace* provides practical tools, valuable peer connections, and the confidence to navigate the next stage of their careers.



On May 8, we proudly celebrated the fifth year of our Career Kick-Start, a one-day career development workshop, hosted in partnership with Camera Bartolotta

and held at the Frank Sarris Library in Canonsburg. We are deeply grateful for Senator Bartolotta's ongoing support over the past five years, which has helped us expand our reach across Washington County and bring meaningful career resources to an increasing number of job-seekers each year.

More than 15 participants joined us for a high-impact day of learning and growth, building job search skills, practicing interviews, receiving personalized coaching and resume feedback, receiving professional headshots, and discussing employer connections.

# Circle of Hope

RISE FOR GENERATIONS

with pennsylvania women work

10.29.26

THE FAIRMONT  
PITTSBURGH, PA



## Honoring Liz's Legacy and Welcoming New Leadership

After four impactful years with PA Women Work, we thank and congratulate Liz Gryer as she retires from her role as Director of Programs. Liz strengthened programming by launching initiatives, enhancing curriculum, and supporting staff development, coaching more than 1,600 job seekers and mentoring staff. Her commitment leaves a lasting mark on our organization and the lives of our program participants.

As we celebrate Liz's legacy, we are thrilled to welcome Jessica Boston, as our new Director of Programs. Jessica brings over a decade of experience in career development and leadership across Point Park University, Disney, and UPMC. We are excited to welcome her into this leadership role and look forward to the insight,

When young professionals begin their careers, a little guidance can make the transition from classroom to workplace much smoother. That's why we created *Show Up & Stand Out*, a virtual workshop designed to bridge that gap with practical, real-world skills and supportive learning.

Last month we launched our first session and piloted a new curriculum focused on workplace essentials like attendance expectations, professional communication, speaking with supervisors, responding to feedback, and building positive relationships with coworkers.



PA Women Work hosted our second *Mock It 'Til You Rock It* mock interviewing event on May 18 at CCAC Center of Education, Innovation, and Training, creating

a supportive space for participants to build confidence and practice real-world interview skills with volunteer interviewers from Bank of America.

"Our Bank of America employee network, LEAD for Women, had an opportunity to volunteer at PA Women Work's *Mock It Til You Rock It*," said Yalanda Wells. "We connected with job seekers, listened to their stories, and provided guidance as they navigate the marketplace. It was truly a rewarding experience and we're absolutely looking forward to participating in future sessions!"

At this popular event, each participant met with three experienced volunteer interviewers, answered common interview questions, and received personalized feedback designed to strengthen their performance. They also took part in an engaging workshop hosted by Soleil Meade from Soleil Branding Essentials focused on personal branding and learning practical strategies to connect more effectively with employers.

*Pictured: Soleil of Soleil Branding Essentials*



Participants from Pennsylvania Women Work came together on June 2 at Commonwealth Charter Academy for an energizing *Power Up Connections* event

that brought nearly 50 participants, employers, and training partners into one shared space of opportunity.

momentum, and compassion she will bring to our programs team.

## Leave us a review!



Thanks for being part of our work! Can we count on you to leave us a review on Google? [Click here now.](#)

## Upcoming classes



### New Choices (virtual)

- June 22-26, 6 -8:45 p.m.
- July 6-10, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- July 20-24, 6 -8:45 p.m.
- August 3 - 8, 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- August 24-28, 6 -8:45 p.m.

### Client Support Services

Already a current or former PA Women Work client? You're eligible to [participate in the following opportunities](#) to help continue on your path to success.

### **A Closer Look:**

*Using AI for the Job Search*  
July 21, 10 - 11:15 a.m.

## Volunteer Needs

The strong turnout reflected the growing momentum of this program and the meaningful impact it continues to have—opening doors, strengthening professional networks, and helping participants move with confidence toward their career goals through real, tangible connections.

“This was my first Power Up Connections, and I am glad I came,” said Dipti, Power Up Connections attendee. “I’m more confident and optimistic about looking for jobs.”

*Pictured: Jessica Boston, Director of Programs at PA Women Work*

*Thank you to the following funders who help make one or more of the workshops and events above possible: The Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Heinz Endowments (Show Up & Stand Out), EQT Foundation (Career Kick-Start), Pitcairn-Crabbe Foundation (Mock It 'Til You Rock It and Power Up Connections), G.C. Murphy Company Foundation, and Ameriprise Financial.*

## Building Futures, One Bingo at a Time!



On May 7, more than 200 attendees showed up ready to laugh, dance, and shout “Bingo!” at our fourth annual Working 9-to-5 Bingo, a totally groovy, 1970s-inspired celebration.

Thanks to our amazing community, we raised nearly \$25,000 during this far-out night of music, connection, and retro fun.

Thank you to everyone who showed up, celebrated the era, and continues to support the mission of helping women find confidence, connection, and career success, and a huge shoutout to our sponsors EQT and KeyBank for helping make the magic happen.

“I loved the energy and the theme,” said one Working 9-to-5 Bingo attendee. “Women supporting women is very powerful. Keep hosting this event!”



### Ready to make a difference in the lives of women across Pennsylvania?

Join us as a volunteer with PA Women Work! Reach out to Lizzi Holmes at [eholmes@pawomenwork.org](mailto:eholmes@pawomenwork.org) to get started and be part of meaningful change.

### Thank you, funders!



Thank you to our partner, FISA Foundation. FISA's generous support makes it possible for us to expand the reach of our ReWork program, ensuring that more women with a history of substance use disorder can access employment and life-changing opportunities. FISA's partnership enables us to meet women where they are and support meaningful pathways forward.

Our ReWork program provides individualized, supportive services as participants transition back into the workforce following incarceration or recovery from substance use disorder.

For more information on our ReWork program, visit: [pawomenwork.org/reentry-into-workforce/](http://pawomenwork.org/reentry-into-workforce/).

Missed it? Check out all the incredible moments in our [Facebook album](#), and start planning your outfit for next year. Think disco, think sparkle, think bold!

## Navigating Change, Pursuing Opportunity: Jenny's story



After a decade in the United States, Jenny couldn't seem to find her footing in a career she loved. A trained chemical engineer with years of experience in the oil and gas industry, she found it challenging to get back into the field where she could put her talents and skills to use.

"When I moved to the U.S., I became 'a housewife,' which was something I had never wanted," she shared.

Over the years, Jenny worked hard, exploring different roles, while raising her daughter and supporting her family through multiple positions, set-backs and layoffs. During COVID, she launched a catering business rooted in her Colombian heritage. But when health challenges forced her to close it, she was heartbroken and stuck.

"I was overwhelmed, sad, mad... it felt like I was losing," she said.

Jenny refused to quit. She invested in herself by taking English classes, earning Google certifications, and exploring new career paths. Through her involvement at Literacy Pittsburgh, she ultimately discovered PA Women Work.

Through PWW programs like New Choices and 3 Cups of Coffee, and with one-on-one coaching from her career coach, Hilda, Jenny began to regain her confidence. "Hilda wanted me to shine, she never stopped rooting for me. When you have that person next to you, you feel like you can do it."

With PA Women Work's support, Jenny refined her resume, strengthened her networking skills, and prepared for new opportunities. With her rediscovered confidence, she attended a national engineering conference where an unexpected connection led to a job offer.

Today, Jenny works as a Quality Control employee at AECOM. While the transition hasn't been easy, she embraces the challenge: "It's challenging—but in a good way."

Looking back, Jenny reflects on her journey with pride: "I showed myself I can do this... it's incredible."

Thank you, FISA  
Foundation!

*Thank you to the generous funders who make stories like Jenny's possible, including those who fund our 3 Cups of Coffee Program - The Pittsburgh Foundation, The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Aerie Real Foundation, Inspire Brands, and Eaton.*

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## Volunteer Spotlight: Mia Frederick!



Mia Frederick joined PA Women Work last year as a mentor and mock interviewer, and in a short time she has become a valued presence for participants preparing to take the next step in their careers. Her steady

encouragement and thoughtful feedback have helped countless clients build confidence during moments of transition and growth.

"I have been blessed with so many people in my life whose guidance and support played a direct role in my personal and professional success. This inspires me to share my experiences and insights with those in the community, to help them reach their individual goals."

At mock interview sessions at the May Career Kick-Start workshop, Mia enjoyed connecting with participants as they prepare for the next steps in their careers. She was moved by the courage they showed in investing in themselves.

"I feel honored to play a small role in helping others along their journey. I found myself rooting for each one of the participants I met, and I am looking forward to hearing their success stories as they advance through the program."

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**Pennsylvania Women Work**  
5607 Baum Boulevard, Suite 333  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Phone: 412-742-4362  
Email: [info@pawomenwork.org](mailto:info@pawomenwork.org)  
Web: [www.pawomenwork.org](http://www.pawomenwork.org)





Pennsylvania Women Work | 5607 Baum Boulevard Suite 333 | Pittsburgh, PA 15206 US

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