



PRESS RELEASE

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The Wistar Institute Receives \$600,000 Grant to Expand Apprenticeship Programs in its Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Education and Training Center

Grant expands Wistar's training opportunities, creating more biomedical career pathways for Philadelphia residents

PHILADELPHIA — (January 30, 2025) — The Wistar Institute's [Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Education and Training Center](#) is expanding its signature apprenticeship programs and bolstering job opportunities in the life science sector thanks to a recent \$600,000 PAsmart Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry.

The newly awarded grant, **Developing a Network of Apprentices (DNA) for the Life Sciences**, focuses on expanding the [Fox Biomedical Research Technician Apprenticeship \(BRT\) Program](#); launching a new [Quality Science Pathway Apprenticeship \(QSPA\) Program](#) for Quality Control Analysts; attracting more apprentices through expanded access to the increasingly in-demand apprenticeship model; and expanding employer partnerships to additional counties in the Philadelphia region.

“There is an existing demand for these types of roles in the life science industry, and there is a willing base of individuals who simply need the right education and training to fill those positions,” explained dean of biomedical studies Kristy Shuda McGuire, M.S., Ph.D. “Our goal is to provide a pathway that gives people access to those life-sustaining roles. Collaborating with others, we offer foundational education and lab training and then partner with employers in the region to fill those positions.”

The effort responds to the region's biotechnology workforce needs by offering more training opportunities, to more apprentices, with more life science job site allies and collaborators. These non-traditional apprenticeships provide career pathways that expand access to opportunities in the life sciences.



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The grant enables the BRT Program to incorporate related technical instruction (RTI) specifically aligned with biomanufacturing roles in the Philadelphia region, in addition to the existing instruction on R&D roles in academic and industry settings. The target audience includes Philadelphia residents with at least a General Educational Development (GED) or high school diploma.

In addition, Wistar will launch a new Quality Science Pathway Apprenticeship (QSPA) for Quality Control Analysts. This apprenticeship provides an accelerated career pathway to Quality Control Analyst positions in the region's biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry.

Finally, to increase the number of apprentices with access to these careers, Wistar plans to refine the cohort model for both the BRT and the QSPA to offer a more direct path to employment in the region. Wistar will work directly with employer partners to determine applicant qualifications and collaborate with The Skills Initiative to recruit and screen applicants. Employer partners will then interview and select candidates for the apprenticeship cohort. Once apprentices complete the Wistar training, they will transition to on-the-job training at the employer partner. Following a year-long apprenticeship, apprentices may be offered full-time, permanent employment.

“We’ve had more than 25 years of experience in developing curriculum that allows a broad range of people, even those with limited exposure to science-based learning, to gain the skills needed to work in a lab environment,” explained David Zuzga, Ph.D., associate dean of biomedical studies and principal investigator on the grant. “By bolstering these programs and expanding our connections with regional employers, we’re opening the opportunities to an even larger spectrum of people in the Greater Philadelphia region, while also filling a critical need for employers.”

About the Fox Biomedical Research Technician (BRT) Apprenticeship

[The Fox Biomedical Research Technician \(BRT\) Apprenticeship](#), the first registered, nontraditional apprenticeship in biomedical research, offers apprentices a career pathway to becoming biomedical research technicians in a laboratory environment. The Apprenticeship provides training on experimental procedures, laboratory management, lab safety, conducting data analysis, and other techniques critical to supporting a lead scientist and staff in the laboratory. It was awarded Outstanding Nontraditional Apprenticeship by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry in 2019. The Apprenticeship was made possible thanks to an endowed gift from the Fox Family.



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ABOUT THE WISTAR INSTITUTE

The Wistar Institute is the nation's first independent nonprofit institution devoted exclusively to foundational biomedical research and training. Since 1972, the Institute has held National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Cancer Center status. Through a culture and commitment to biomedical collaboration and innovation, Wistar science leads to breakthrough early-stage discoveries and life science sector start-ups. Wistar scientists are dedicated to solving some of the world's most challenging problems in the field of cancer and immunology, advancing human health through early-stage discovery and training the next generation of biomedical researchers. wistar.org.



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