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FIVE ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER TO DESIGN NEW BIOTECH TRAINING PROGRAM TO CONNECT PHILADELPHIANS WITH QUALITY JOBS IN THE REGION'S RAPIDLY GROWING LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

The Wistar Institute, West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, Iovance Biotherapeutics, PIDC, and The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia Launch Recruitment for the Pilot Program on August 23

PHILADELPHIA (August 23, 2022) – Partners in Greater Philadelphia's life sciences ecosystem are collaborating to create a new workforce development training model to connect biotech jobs with a wider range of Philadelphians, including residents from disadvantaged communities. In a field that often requires PhDs or master's degrees for most roles, the program – "Biomedical Technician Training Program: Aseptic Manufacturing" – will create opportunities for Philadelphians with at least a high school equivalency. The initiative is one way the region is working together to meet the talent needs in its rapidly growing cell and gene therapy sector.

Recruitment begins August 23 for the 22-week paid program, which will include class- and lab-based training provided by The Wistar Institute and professional development from University City District's West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, culminating in a 10-week externship at Iovance Biotherapeutics, Inc., a late-stage biotechnology company developing novel T cell-based cancer immunotherapies, whose cell therapy manufacturing center is located at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Program participants will gain the skills needed to be considered for employment as associate aseptic manufacturing technicians – jobs starting at \$23/hour – at the conclusion of the program in March 2023. Associate aseptic manufacturing technicians are responsible for maintaining a sterile lab environment, assembling sterile products, stocking supplies, and documenting processes of biomedical manufacturers in supporting the creation of cell therapies.

The foundations of this model are familiar to **The Wistar Institute**, which has been successfully operating its Biomedical Technician Training (BTT) Program for over 20 years. “This expansion of our proven program is perfectly aligned with one of the pillars of our strategic plan, BOLD Science // GLOBAL Impact (<https://boldscience.wistar.org>), to create a diverse, inclusive life science talent pipeline. Wistar’s collaborations with public and private partners create a new paradigm for workforce development to support the continued growth of the Philadelphia life sciences industry,” said Dr. Dario Altieri, president and CEO of The Wistar Institute.

For the **West Philadelphia Skills Initiative**, which has extensive experience developing training programs with healthcare organizations, the entry into life sciences is an exciting evolution. “What we’re hoping to do is to become an exemplar of how you can do workforce equitably, inclusively, collaboratively, in a way that helps Philadelphians connect to high-quality jobs and supports the cell and gene therapy industry,” said Cait Garozzo, Managing Director at the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative.

“Iovance is proud to be a part of the vibrant, diverse Greater Philadelphia community and rapidly growing cell therapy hub. We are committed to promoting inclusivity, equity and diversity at Iovance and within the life sciences industry. We are excited to help introduce a wider range of Philadelphians to career options in biotech and hope this new program can serve as a model to our industry peers to increase inclusivity in the biotech workforce and its career development opportunities,” said Tracy Winton, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Iovance Biotherapeutics, Inc.

Much of the growth of the region’s cell and gene therapy hub is taking place at the Navy Yard, where Iovance Cell Therapy Center is located, and in University City, where The Wistar Institute is located, and where the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative has built its reputation as one of the leading workforce intermediaries in the country. Among other factors, the sector’s growth is reflected in the more than 50 cell and gene therapy companies that now call Greater Philadelphia home; the \$3 billion in investment the region’s cell and gene therapy sector attracted in 2021; the 80 percent increase in employment at cell and gene therapy companies and contract manufacturing organizations in the past three years; and the more than 9 million square feet of existing space and 2.7 million square feet under construction to support the sector’s growth.

The launch of the program follows on the heels of a recent [workforce talent study](#) for the region's cell and gene therapy sector, conducted by Econsult Solutions for the **Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia's CEO Council for Growth** and the University City Science Center. Among the key findings was: Greater Philadelphia will maintain its position as a leading R&D hub and will increasingly become a commercialization and manufacturing center; and there will be job opportunities at all levels, including those not requiring a four-year degree, particularly as companies grow and begin building manufacturing capacity. The workforce talent study is part of the Chamber's broader efforts to proactively address the talent needs of the cell and gene therapy community through research, strategic promotion, early-career talent-focused events, and convening employers. The Chamber has been convening talent professionals from cell and gene therapy companies for three years to develop an understanding of their needs, and Iovance has been an active participant in that group.

PIDC's Navy Yard Skills Initiative, a workforce development training program created to address the talent needs of the employers located at the Navy Yard, has been crucial in engaging its life sciences employers to create non-traditional pathways into cell and gene therapy careers, including Iovance. Currently, the Navy Yard has over 750,000 square feet of life sciences lab, production, and office space, with 270,000 square feet under construction and 4 million square feet planned.

"Iovance is one of five advanced life sciences companies at the Navy Yard, where strong demand for R&D and clinical/commercial manufacturing spaces demonstrates the strength of this sector and the unique opportunity to equitably connect Philadelphia residents with quality jobs," said Kate McNamara, PIDC's Senior Vice President, Navy Yard. "We are excited to partner with The Wistar Institute, West Philadelphia Skills Initiative, Iovance, and the Chamber of Commerce to create this innovative training program for these jobs of the future."

"Iovance will be the first employer to take advantage of this training model. In reexamining the minimum qualifications required for the associate aseptic manufacturing technician role, they're demonstrating a commitment to skills-based hiring that we hope other employers will consider," said Sarah Steltz, Vice President of Economic Competitiveness, Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

Additional partners also contributed to the development of the novel training model program through their leadership and resources, including Philadelphia Works, and JP Morgan.

"We are so pleased to help support the launch of this innovative training model, which brings together two of our region's strongest training organizations and other industry partners to positively impact our life sciences talent pipeline," Steltz said. "As excited as we are about the upcoming cohort, we definitely have our eyes on the horizon. For us to capitalize on the

opportunities that we're seeing in life sciences, we're going to have to think differently as an ecosystem. We're going to have to work differently. It will take collaboration not just among workforce organizations and employers, but government, philanthropy, and higher education too. The good news is that I think we're all up for the challenge, and I'm looking forward to seeing what we can do together."

Program Information

The 22-week paid training program begins with 10 weeks of evening classes at The Wistar Institute focused on preparing participants with a foundation in cellular and molecular biology as applicable to the life sciences industry. After the first 10 weeks, participants will take part in a full-time, hands-on laboratory orientation at The Wistar Institute before transitioning to externships at the Iovance iCTC (Cell Therapy Center) at the Navy Yard.

Throughout the 22-week program, the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative will support participants by offering professional development courses and coaching.

Select candidates who complete the program may interview for a full-time position at Iovance, with a starting pay of \$23/hour. The partners already have plans to repeat the program.

23 with online Recruitment for the program, which the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative will launch on August applications on its website (www.philadelphiaskills.org), continues through September 9. The program will officially welcome selected participants at The Wistar Institute, 3601 Spruce Street in West Philadelphia, on September 22, and continue through early March 2023.

To apply, candidates need to be Philadelphia residents 18 years of age or older, with a high school diploma or GED, and test at a 12th grade level in reading, literacy, and math. Eighteen participants will be selected for the pilot program.

For more information, contact: ssteltz@chamberphl.com.

About West Philadelphia Skills Initiative

The West Philadelphia Skills Initiative (WPSI) is one of the nation's most successful workforce development organizations. For 10 years, WPSI has solidified its role as one of the highest performing workforce intermediaries in the country by building customized talent solutions that bridge the divide between unemployed Philadelphians seeking opportunity and employers seeking talent. WPSI focuses on professional development and career coaching for adults.

www.philadelphiaskills.org

About The Wistar Institute

The Wistar Institute is the nation's first independent, non-profit biomedical research institute and a world leader in early stage discovery science in the areas of cancer, immunology and infectious disease. Wistar recently announced the creation of the Hubert J. P. Schoemaker Education and Training Center to bring together its education programs for high school, undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdoctoral fellows, with its expanding pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training, including the newly named Fox Biomedical Research Technician (BRT) Apprenticeship. www.wistar.org

About Iovance Biotherapeutics

Iovance Biotherapeutics aims to be the global leader in innovating, developing and delivering tumor infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapies for patients with cancer. We are pioneering a transformational approach to cure cancer by harnessing the human immune system's ability to recognize and destroy diverse cancer cells in each patient. Our lead late-stage TIL product candidate, lifileucel for metastatic melanoma, has the potential to become the first approved one-time cell therapy for a solid tumor cancer. The Iovance TIL platform has demonstrated promising clinical data across multiple solid tumors. We are committed to continuous innovation in cell therapy, including gene-edited cell therapy, that may extend and improve life for patients with cancer. For more information, please visit www.iovance.com.

About PIDC and the Philadelphia Navy Yard

PIDC is Philadelphia's public-private economic development corporation. Since acquiring the 1,200-acre site from the federal government in 2000, PIDC has been the master developer and site operator of the Navy Yard. PIDC's mission—to spur investment, support business growth, and facilitate developments that create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, and drive growth to every corner of Philadelphia—strongly informs its strategy for the Navy Yard, where the focus is on building a cohesive community that fosters employment, innovation, and production. PIDC manages all aspects of the property's management and development, including master planning, leasing, property management, infrastructure development, utility operation, and structuring development transactions. www.PIDCphila.com www.navyyard.org

About The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia's CEO Council for Growth:

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia's CEO Council for Growth (CEO Council) leads our region forward by envisioning a stronger, more competitive community, convening decision makers, taking action, and advocating for policies and practices that strengthen our regional economy. The CEO Council advocates through its members and engaged stakeholders

to enhance economic growth and prosperity in the region. We prioritize the revitalization and enhancement of our region's talent, mobility, and innovation. The CEO Council's Cell & Gene Therapy Initiative is leveraging Greater Philadelphia's specialized assets to accelerate growth and promote the region as the global hub of research, talent, capital, and companies in cell & gene therapy, gene editing, and connected health. For more information, visit www.ceocouncilforgrowth.com