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Innovate+Educate

Innovate+Educate and Penn Foster Partner to Reinforce the Power of Career Education and Skills Training for Employer-Driven Upskilling Programs

Penn Foster Offers Portfolio of Education, Career Readiness, and Skills Training to Earn Dallas and Future City-led Initiatives for Economic Advancement

Penn Foster and Innovate+Educate (I+E) announced their partnership to jointly support city and employer-driven skills training programs, beginning with Earn Dallas, an initiative launched by I+E in January 2017 with support from the Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. The partnership underscores the two organizations' commitment to education and skills training as a means of upskilling workers into more relevant and higher-paying jobs, while also addressing the skills gap that costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year.

As a longstanding education and skills training provider, Penn Foster has made educational offerings—including its High School Diploma, Retail Supervisor and Guest Services Career Diploma programs, and its Career Readiness Bootcamp—available via the Earn Dallas platform. Penn Foster has committed to training 200 individuals in the program, which has already achieved early success.

Penn Foster's education/skills training combination enables individuals to increase their economic mobility by advancing into better-paying jobs via their own motivation and hard work.

"Penn Foster is the ideal partner to further propel Earn Dallas, particularly given its legacy and pedigree in distance learning, as well as its decades-old commitment to skills training," said Jamai Blivin, CEO, Innovate+Educate. "Earn Dallas is the first of a series of city-led initiatives that have committed to helping workers build a stronger future for themselves, their families and the places where they live. This is a prime example of the skills economy in action."

Earn Dallas was launched in early 2017 as an employer-driven program to support economic advancement for incumbents within retail and adjacent sectors. The initiative, created in partnership with Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas and with funding from Walmart, provides an entire ecosystem of support for entry- to mid-level skilled workers that starts with criteria-based job search and includes health care, transportation, child care and other resources, all tied to I+E's innovative platform. I+E and its



partners plan to roll out a similar platform in Albuquerque, NM by the end of the year, and across at least three additional cities in 2018.

The first employer partner to take advantage of Penn Foster's content within Earn Dallas is Long Electric and Air Conditioning, LLC of Irving, TX. The family-owned company has enrolled its employees for the Career Readiness Bootcamp, provided by Penn Foster. According to the US Census Bureau, 99.7% of all employer firms in the US are made up of companies of 500 people or fewer, making programs such as Earn Dallas particularly relevant. Dallas-area employers that want to learn more about how to offer this effective learning/skills training platform to their employees can visit the [Earn Dallas employers' section](#).

"Innovate+Educate and Penn Foster's values align perfectly: by providing workers access to a platform with the tools they need to succeed, we can help them create better, more vital lives for themselves while attacking the widening skills gap," said Frank Britt, CEO, Penn Foster. "We are encouraged by the creativity and impact that Innovate+Educate brings to the workforce system, and we're inspired by what the organization has already achieved. We anticipate that together we will be able to even more effectively offer this model as one many other cities will want to replicate."

The Close It Summit assembled thought leaders across the education, training, and hiring landscape who are dedicated to creating new pathways to employment. The three-day conference, themed "Shift Happens: Revolution," focused on the role of emerging technologies and strategies in creating pathways to social and economic mobility through the assess, hire, train and advance framework. Panel topics included the role of skills-based hiring and assessment, digital credentials, as well as new approaches to training and educational benefits.

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About Penn Foster:

Students, employers and partner organizations rely on Penn Foster to build the skills and knowledge to power the 21st century workforce. For over 125 years, Penn Foster has been dedicated to helping people lead more meaningful and productive lives and to improving social outcomes through education. Penn Foster provides career pathways for opportunity youth and adult learners through diverse and affordable online diploma, certificate and degree programs, offered via its high school, career school and college. With more than 30,000 graduates each year, Penn Foster's online and blended learning programs are delivered in a self-paced, competency-based model wrapped by comprehensive academic, professional and personal support and coaching. For more information, visit <http://partners.pennfoster.edu/>.



About Innovate+Educate:

I+E is national nonprofit founded in 2009 in Santa Fe, New Mexico with a focus on industry driven solutions to education and employment. Innovate+Educate operates satellite sites in Albuquerque, Dallas, Denver, Philadelphia, Tampa and Washington DC Metro Area. Their vision is to create multiple pathways to employment based on competencies and skills. The work of I+E spans across implementation, assessment, and employment technologies. <https://innovate-educate.org>

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