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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **University of Pittsburgh SBDC Begins Seminars in McKeesport to Help Small Businesses Counteract Effects of Steel Plant Closure**

SBDC Locations

Bucknell University

Clarion University

Duquesne University

Gannon University

Indiana University  
of Pennsylvania

Kutztown University  
of Pennsylvania

Lehigh University

Lock Haven University

Penn State University

Saint Francis University

Saint Vincent College

Shippensburg University

Temple University

University of Pittsburgh

University of Scranton

The Wharton School,  
University of Pennsylvania

Widener University

Wilkes University

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – The [University of Pittsburgh Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC) has been awarded funding to assist displaced workers and small business owners affected by the recent U.S. Steel plant closing in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. The closure not only affects the workers of U.S. Steel but also the supply chain companies servicing the plant with workers located throughout Southwest Pennsylvania.

Through a grant from the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#), the University of Pittsburgh SBDC will provide no-fee, confidential consulting and educational programming to small businesses located in the affected region of the Monongahela (Mon) Valley. Businesses will be able to develop strategies to find new markets to counteract any negative effects of the plant closure. Employees who lost their jobs will also be able to take advantage of the University of Pittsburgh SBDC’s consulting services to explore entrepreneurship as a new career path.

“Through our services, these Mon Valley entrepreneurs will be able to establish, sustain, and grow their businesses leading not only to individual financial security, but also contributing to the growth of the region.” said University of Pittsburgh SBDC Director Ray Vargo.

“Helping businesses develop strategies to find new markets and grow their sales base is a key strength of the statewide network of Pennsylvania SBDCs,” said Pennsylvania SBDC State Director Christian Conroy. “We thank the SBA for recognizing the need to support business owners in the Mon Valley facing tough times,” he concluded.

SBA Pittsburgh District Director Kelly Hunt said she is grateful her agency is reaching out to Mon Valley residents. “As a Western Pennsylvania native, I am keenly aware of the changing economic landscape faced by communities when a major employer shuts a facility. The SBA believes successful small businesses will help create prosperous Mon Valley communities.”

The University of Pittsburgh SBDC cites that the Mon Valley region continues to struggle, facing high unemployment, slow employment growth, limited commercial growth, decades long population decline, rising housing vacancies, and increased foreclosure in the current weakened economy. This was compounded when U.S. Steel announced the closing of its tubular plant in McKeesport, which resulted in 177 layoffs in August 2014. This news came after 142 workers were furloughed at the same plant back in December of 2012.

(MORE)

Through one-on-one business consulting, the SBDC's professional management consulting staff will work with emerging entrepreneurs and existing small business owners to identify their areas of strength to build upon in order for them to establish and grow their businesses.

In addition to specialized consulting, The University of Pittsburgh SBDC has developed educational programs for entrepreneurs at every stage of their business development – from the exploration of entrepreneurship as an option to the opening of the doors for the first time to development of a detailed plan to grow the business. To see a current list of programs offered by the SBDC, [click here](#).

Business owners in the Mon Valley are encouraged to contact the University of Pittsburgh SBDC at (412) 648-1542 or [visit the SBDC's website](#) to learn about the services that are available to assist their company.

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**About Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)**

*The Pennsylvania SBDC network is the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides high quality one-on-one consulting, training and information resources to empower new and existing businesses. SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs in confidential, individualized sessions to help them with a range of business issues including testing a new business proposition, shaping a business plan, investigating funding opportunities, and much more. The SBDC program is a public/private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and 18 universities and colleges across the Commonwealth. For more information on the Pennsylvania SBDC services and impact, please visit [www.pasbdc.org](http://www.pasbdc.org).*