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Center aiding people who want to finish college

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An initiative of two Philadelphia nonprofits on Tuesday opened a center to provide adults with some college credits the tools they need to complete their degrees.

Graduate! Philadelphia opened the center in the Gallery at Market East, a shopping mall in Center City Philadelphia. The initiative is a cooperative effort of the **Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board** and the **United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania**.

The center is considered a relatively inexpensive way to boost the educational attainment of the work force in Philadelphia and its suburbs. The organizations behind it say that one in six Philadelphia residents between the ages of 25 to 49, or more than 70,000 people, started college but didn't earn a degree. They say there are more than 300,000 similarly situated people in the Philadelphia area.

The center will provide them with one-on-one guidance, information about college programs and financial assistance, computer labs, workshops on returning to college, and other resources. It shares a location with the Philadelphia Education Fund's College Access Center and is funded by grants from the city of Philadelphia and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

The initiative is being supported by Philadelphia Education Fund and nine Philadelphia-area colleges -- Chestnut Hill College, Community College of Philadelphia, Holy Family University, Neumann College, Peirce College, Philadelphia University, Rutgers University-Camden, Thomas Edison State College, and Widener University.

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