



Project Hope: Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships Prospectus



Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships

overview

FOUNDED 2003

CURRENT REVENUE \$415,000

DESCRIPTION: Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships prepares low-income people for entry-level jobs through close collaboration with employers. The program assists Boston residents—largely from the Dudley neighborhood of Dorchester and Roxbury, but also Mattapan and Mission Hill—in finding living-wage jobs by providing both the training and support to gain and retain employment *and* connections to actual employers. The skills participants gain lead them to viable career paths, and the program’s close collaboration with employers ensures participants are prepared for the actual jobs available in the workplace. Furthermore, employers benefit from the program’s expertise in evaluating, preparing, and supporting local candidates for their open positions. Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships has become an essential tool in Project Hope’s mission of preventing family homelessness and ending the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships is seeking to raise \$500,000 over two years to prepare additional low-income Boston residents to become job-ready, particularly focusing on lower-qualified candidates.

THE NEED

In the Dudley neighborhood of Boston, many residents struggle to overcome the disadvantages of poverty:

- Sixty percent of Dudley area families – including 83% of single-parent families – have incomes below the economic self-sufficiency standard needed to pay for basic necessities.
- Nearly 40% of all families in shelters in Massachusetts are from Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan.

Employers need to recruit, train, and retain qualified applicants for entry-level jobs and want to build relationships by hiring from within the community. However, this can be a challenge:

- Without training and support, local residents may not be prepared to fill job openings.
- Employers need to narrow down a large pool of candidates to determine who should be hired.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships has served more than 350 program participants to date, providing skills training, education, and job opportunities.

- Ninety percent of graduates from the highest-level job readiness program found work within the health care field, and 75% had at least a one-year retention rate.
- Sixty-four percent of all graduates from the mid-level job readiness program were placed in jobs, and 36% of graduates continued in the highest-level program at Project Hope.
- The program has established and maintained multi-year relationships with three partners in the health care field and looks to expand with partners in other industries.
- The program has received funding from government, major private sources, and through its innovative partnerships with employers.

TWO-YEAR GOALS

- Expand program capacity, especially for individuals with lower skill and employment experience by:
 - Extending collaboration with homeless shelters
 - Engaging new employer partners outside of health care
 - Securing multi-year contracts to allow a longer-term approach with lower skilled, more needy participants
 - Increasing organizational capabilities to meet needs

WAYS TO INVEST

Financial

- \$25,000 – One-half FTE for case management or instruction
- \$5,000 – One complete portable wireless classroom station
- \$1,000 – Online interview simulations for 25 participants

In-kind

- Offer short-term workplace internships
- Provide employment for program graduates
- Become an employer partner



SOCIAL INNOVATION IN ACTION – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS MODEL

Many workforce development programs provide participants with a certificate at the end of the program. In contrast, the Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships program provides program graduates with access to ACTUAL jobs needing to be filled – a critical step towards employment and the goal of economic security.

The typical program participant is a single mother struggling to support her family and depending on significant subsidies to help make ends meet. While she is motivated to work, she lacks the necessary skills and experience to find a job. Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships provides the link between these women and work, supporting them with (1) job readiness training, (2) access to career ladder job opportunities through employer partnerships, and (3) ongoing case management support during the program and for a full year after placement. This portfolio of services provides participants with the opportunity and momentum to emerge from poverty and provides them with the concrete means – jobs – to transform their lives.

Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships Operating Model

Job Readiness Training focuses on the attributes that are most important to employers. These include professional behavior, occupational skills, and literacy. Professional behavior training is organized around the “4 As”: **attitude, attendance, appearance, and accountability**. In addition to ensuring that all participants understand and demonstrate professional behavior, the program ensures that participants have the skills required for the positions they pursue. At a bi-weekly open house – which attracts more than 1,400 inquiries and 600 attendees per year – all interested applicants undergo screening and assessment. They are then either placed in one of the Workforce Development & Employer Partnership programs or are assisted in finding other relevant opportunities. Based on the candidate’s level of job readiness – determined by length of previous employment, language proficiency, level of education, computer literacy, and other indicators – she will be placed in one of the following programs that best meets her needs and qualifications:

- **Highest-level job readiness:** A six-week, full-time employment and training program including 3.5 weeks of classroom instruction and a 2.5-week administrative internship at a Partners HealthCare affiliate. Instruction focuses on customer service skills, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Graduates are prioritized for hiring for administrative jobs in Partners’ hospitals. Project Hope conducts the outreach, selection, case management, and post-placement career coaching.
- **Mid-level job readiness:** A 10-week, full-time job readiness training program with an emphasis on academics, communication, computers, and employment skills. Participants receive intensive case management support to address barriers to employment throughout the training and for one year post-placement. Graduates access employment opportunities and receive referrals to Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Tufts Health Plan, and highest-level job readiness training for employment with Partners HealthCare.
- **Mixed-level of job readiness:** A part-time workshop designed to improve work readiness skills including interviewing, resume writing, computer skills, and communication. Participants typically are underemployed, were recently laid off, or their training needs are unclear. Graduates are eligible for career coaching, case management, and receive referrals to the Brigham and Women’s Hospital or for additional skills training or educational services.

Employer Partnerships provide a critical link to existing job opportunities. The close collaboration and communication between Project Hope and the employers ensures that Project Hope is preparing participants with relevant and necessary skills and participants receive priority consideration when applying for open positions. Past partnerships have focused in the health care field. However, as the program expands to serve more participants with a broader range of job readiness preparation, partners from other areas – including customer service and administrative positions – will be engaged to provide more job opportunities for lower-skilled participants.

Typical Program Participants

- Single mothers with one to three children at risk of homelessness
- Mid '20s–mid '30s
- Average family income of just over \$10,000
- 75% receiving public assistance
- 59% African American
- 22% Hispanic
- 29% homeless while in training





“After training for 12 weeks, I landed a full-time job with benefits in a hospital. Now I earn a living wage, rent my own apartment in a safe neighborhood, and act as an ambassador for Project Hope.”
–Denisha

Case Management is provided to employees throughout their first year of employment. Project Hope follows up with participants to help them problem-solve when issues arise, either in the workplace or at home. This service – valuable to both employers and employees – helps maximize retention and performance on the job.

TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

Tressa Stazinski is the director of Workforce Development and founder of the Workforce Development & Employer Partnership program at Project Hope. In her nearly 10 years with Project Hope, Tressa has overseen all aspects of the development, coordination, management, and expansion of the program. Working with the support of Sister Margaret Leonard – executive director of Project Hope since 1985 – Tressa has shaped the program and positioned it as a critical priority for the organization. Assisting Tressa in the Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships program are seven full- and part-time specialists in career coaching, program coordination, and job skills training, as well as numerous program graduates who return to participate in the Project Hope Speakers Bureau. Project Hope is governed by a 15-member board of directors, including experts in business, law, education, and social services and is currently involved in an extensive business planning effort. Project Hope employs 64 people, many of whom are Dudley neighborhood residents.

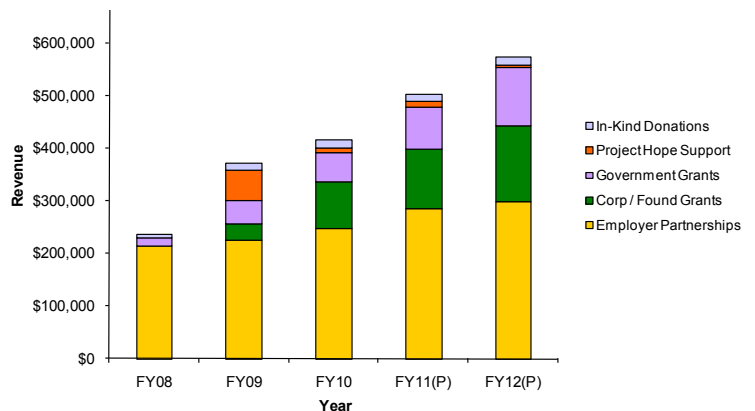
KEY SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTORS

- Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- Partners HealthCare
- Tufts Health Plan
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
- Loomis Sayles
- Bank of New York Mellon
- Citizens Bank Foundation
- Florence V. Burden Foundation
- J. Jill Group
- Sovereign Bank Foundation
- City of Boston Office of Jobs and Community Service

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships program is a revenue-generating program, with more than half of its operating expenses funded by employer partners. These partners pay for the employee-related services provided to their organization by Project Hope. The program aims to steadily increase earned income by maintaining contracts with current employer partners and adding relationships with others. In addition, Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships receives government funding and philanthropic contributions. Over the next two years, the program will expand to serve less employable individuals. As a result, the robust development team at Project Hope will focus on increasing corporate, foundation, and government grants to support the intensive services needed to bring these individuals to a level of job readiness where they can then be matched with an employer partner.

Revenue Sources and Projections





“This partnership improves our ability to recruit and retain qualified entry-level and mid-level administrative staff and at the same time helps us to build relationships with our neighbors in the community. Our partnership has been a win-win situation for everyone involved.”

–Beverly Sobers

Director of Recruitment Services, Brigham and Women’s Hospital

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Program Performance and Organizational Health: Below is a summary of the key measures that Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships will be tracking to demonstrate progress and to continue to meet the evolving needs of the community and employer partners. *Note: Fiscal year is July 1 – June 30.*

	FY 2010	FY 2011 (P)	FY 2012 (P)
Program Performance			
Total number of participants enrolling into all levels	140	167	205
Participants graduating/completing all levels	112	133	164
Participants placed into employment	83	99	123
Percent of grads placed into employment	74%	74%	75%
Organizational Health/Capacity Building			
Expand Employer Partners base	2	3	3+
Expand non-paying Employer Partners base	2	3	3+
Hire additional FTE case manager and FTE educator	-	completed	
Business planning process	underway	complete plan	Plan in use
Enhance program and operational evaluation tools	underway	implemented	refined
Secure multi-year philanthropic/government commitments	0	1	2
Total revenue	\$415,645	\$500,000	\$575,000

Social Impact: Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships currently collects data on participant placements, 90-day retention, one-year retention, and average salaries. As part of the business planning process, the program will continue to assess and refine data collection and metrics to improve its ability to evaluate the social impact.

Working Toward a Job	Average percent of program graduates placed into job	75%
Working Toward Job Stability	90-day retention rate for all track graduates 1 year retention rate for all track graduates	90% 75%
Working Toward Living Wage Jobs	Average hourly starting salary	\$12.50 – \$14.00 per hour

Success Story: Tanya



Tanya, her 7-year-old twin boys, and 2-year-old daughter left an abusive situation with nothing but the backpacks on their backs. They bounced from shelter to shelter, with Tanya desperately wanting to be a “normal” parent who went to work and provided her children with a home. Tanya found an ad for the Workforce Development & Employer Partnerships program, and she participated in its intensive 5-week curriculum to prepare her for a job in a Partners’ hospital. Even though the job search was difficult, Tanya – and her support network at Project Hope – never gave up. The result? Tanya finally got a job at Mass General in the cancer unit. She said of finding Project Hope: “Who knew this was going to be the beginning of the rest of my life?”