

COMMUNITY WORKS PROJECT

self-sufficiency through employment

Services Offered



Urban League
of Portland

COMMUNITY WORKS PROJECT

self-sufficiency through employment

The Community Works Project (CWP) brings together six community based and largely culturally specific agencies which consist of Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Human Solutions (HSI), The Urban League of Portland (UL), El Programa Hispano Catolico (EPH), Native American Youth and Family (NAYA), and Self Enhancement Incorporated (SEI) as a collaborative project providing job preparation and placement services to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) participants who are participating in the Job Opportunities Basic Skills (JOBS) program.

At **CWP**, we always seek ways to best connect with the participants we serve. Specifically, the CWP model of wrap-around, individualized services has emerged as a “best practice” for the district.

As DHS partners, we follow the Assertive Engagement Model which guides our work. We use strategies that help us welcome our participants, identify their strengths, enhance their motivation, and support hard choices.

CWP staff work very close with DHS Family Coaches to empower diverse families on TANF to obtain and maintain meaningful work that sustains their families, through an individualized approach that includes coaching, skill building, barriers removal services, and employer connections.

With our consortium agencies, we provide culturally appropriate services to a wide range of communities and link participants with relevant community resources. Our approach is participant-centered, and our aim is that each TANF recipient we work with is supported holistically with the resources they need to achieve their self-sufficiency.

DHS REFERRALS:

Our work starts after a Family Coach creates a Personal Development Plan (PDP) with the TANF recipient and opens one of the following steps for which we are contracted: AB, ES, JO, LS, PL, SW, VT, WE, DA, ME or MH.

For all steps except DA, ME and MH:

- We encourage all new participants in non-ME/MH/DA steps to attend the CWP Orientation to learn more about our services. Following this Orientation, participants are assigned a CWP Employment and Engagement Specialist who meet with them and through an individualized intake, create a plan for them to succeed in their Step.
- Employment & Engagement Specialists follow up with the participant regularly, provide individualized support, refer and connect them to resources, and narrate all interactions in TRACS. Employment & Engagement Specialists are Family Coaches' partners in supporting the TANF recipient. They continue to engage with participants who have been placed in jobs for up to 90 days.
- CWP also offers culturally specific life skills and career coaching in a year-long cohort model. We are currently running two cohorts, one for participants who identify as Black / African American and one for participants who identify as Native American.

For ME, MH and DA steps only:

- CWP assists TANF participants to navigate the health and behavioral health systems by connecting them with providers, assisting them to reach medical appointments as needed, and advocating on their behalf when necessary. CWP health and behavioral health team members can only begin working with participants after a Release of Information has been signed. Our licensed team members will create a care plan for each participant and the team will assist them in successfully completing it.
- Our team also attends the Intensive Case Staffing meetings to provide anonymous case consultations to Family Coaches and Engagement Specialists.

CWP SERVICES:

Individualized Support to Complete Steps in the Employment and Vocational Training Track

CWP Employment & Engagement Specialists meet one-on-one with participants to collaboratively set goals and objectives, and then help participants meet those goals and objectives with hands-on assistance and coaching. We offer a variety of exciting and helpful classes taught by professional instructors, options for individualized growth in our Career Centers, and weekly individualized support, including mock interviews, based on the “step” agreed upon with the DHS Family Coaches.

Career Centers

CWP participants are welcome to use our Career Center which includes internet access, printing, language learning software, and typing software. The Career Centers can be used for job searches, working on your resumes and cover letters and other job search related activities.

Life and Work-Focused Classes and Workshops

CWP’s professional instructors support participants on their personal growth journey through classes in life skills, resume writing and interviewing skills, GED preparation, and English as a Second Language learning. We offer different classes every day and listen to participants’ needs to develop new classes.

CWP also proctors Oregon’s National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) exam, which is recognized by a growing number of employers in Oregon and across the country, as a proof of workplace readiness. The NCRC is a

portable certificate delivered based on the assessment of three foundational workplace skills, measuring what applicants can do rather than what they know: applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information.

Overcoming Background Barriers

CWP supports participants who have background barriers such as criminal convictions to prepare for employment. This includes individual sessions to review criminal history and draft a disclosure letter, and referrals to service providers who may help with expungements and other barrier removal services.

Supporting Wellness

CWP supports participants who have medical or behavioral health issues that prevent them from participating in the employment or vocational training track. Our support consists of an initial assessment, developing a care plan in coordination with participants' health providers and working with participants through completing the care plan. We can accompany participants to their healthcare appointments and act as their advocate, helping with communication with the healthcare providers, if desired.

We only work with CWP participants who have signed a release of information that enables us to review their health files and talk to their health providers.

Culturally Specific Career Development Pilot

CWP runs a pilot project that uses culturally responsive, community-based and collaborative approach to help participants build practical work and personal foundation and coaching through to employment and self-sufficiency. This is a unique project that brings together cohorts of

participants for one-year engagements in life skills classes, workshops, coaching and career exploration activities, on a weekly basis. We also work with participants to remove barriers to employment by connecting them to our consortium services and other community resources. Our pilot project serves one African American cohort and one Native American cohort between July 2019 and June 2020.

Support with Other Barriers to Employment

We also work with participants to remove barriers to employment by connecting them to our consortium services and other community resources. We continue to engage with participants who have been placed in jobs for up to 90 days. CWP connects participants who have barriers to employment with a large range of relevant resources to get their needs met. Services are offered by the agencies in the CWP consortium and by other community resources. CWP Engagement & Employment Specialists provide basic information about the services offered and connect participants to the service providers for follow up (low-income housing opportunities, childcare resources, Dress for Success, etc.).

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES OFFERED FOR EACH STEP:

Life Skills (LS) – Developing a personal and work foundation:

CWP offers engaging group classes and individualized work in the following areas: the art of being; tips for a well-balanced life; time management; conflict resolution; budgeting and saving for the future; finding your passion; relationships; personal growth; letting go; overcoming background barriers, and more! We have a different topic every day and are always open to new suggestions. Click here for the current class calendar.

Supported Work (SW) – Building skills and developing an employment portfolio:

For participants who are ready to start creating an “Employment Portfolio”, CWP offers engaging group classes and individualized services in the following areas: career mapping; resume assistance; computer basics; vocational training information sessions; cover letter and reference letter assistance; job interview secrets; keyboarding lab; mock interviews; vision boards; I-Match assistance; and more! We have a different topic every day and are always open to new suggestions. We start by talking to participants about their past experiences, identifying their strengths and the transferrable skills they bring, as well as helping define their goals.

Job Search (JO) – Ready to work and searching for employment:

For participants who are ready to review their Employment Portfolio and search for jobs, the CWP

Employment & Engagement Specialists help them brush up on resume, cover letter, reference and interviewing skills they need to feel confident about their job search. CWP develops relationships with employers in all sectors and works closely with participants to place them in positions that fit their needs and interests. We organize career fairs; provide free access to our Career Centers for online job searches, working on resume and cover letter, and printing. We also refer participants to services that help with choosing free professional work attire and grooming for their first of day work, interviews, etc. and we coordinate closely with Family Coaches when participants find a job and need professional supplies to be successful. We review and input job logs weekly.

Work Experience (WE) – Gaining on-the-job experience:

Participants have access to long term volunteer opportunities, incentivizing employers to take a chance on our participants, and allowing them to gain more experience. CWP maintains a list of possible work experience sites and can work with DHS to develop new sites when needed. CWP coordinates the necessary paperwork when participants are placed in these positions and follows up with them regularly to help them identify new growth opportunities and paid jobs.

Jobs Plus – Subsidized employment:

CWP develops relationships with employers who want to help participants who have a higher level of job-preparation, to gain experience and learn new skills in their area of interest. DHS subsidizes the position. Employers provide mentorship and job training through a short interview and hiring process. These are positions that are only available to CWP-enrolled applicants, and we coordinate all the necessary paperwork with the employers.

Vocational Training (VT) – Studying for your targeted profession:

We connect participants with Vocational Training programs in line with their long-term career goals and follow up with them to ensure they are successful. CWP also supports participants in identifying funding for their course of study. We have assisted participants in pursuing training as Welders, Electricians, Childcare Providers, CNAs, RNs, Peer Mentors, Carpenters, Office Assistants, Receptionists, and countless other career paths that offer competitive pay that can help sustain their households over time.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – Preparing for the GED

CWP offers individual study materials for use in our Career Centers as well as group classes in topics that help prepare for the GED, such as: basic mathematic modeling, history of the United States, literary analysis and composition, keyboarding labs, and more!

English as a Second Language (ES):

CWP is proud to offer uniquely individualized English as a Second Language (ESL) skill building services in our career centers. We offer career center skill building activities and classes taught by an attentive ESL Instructor, and participants can enroll for free software access to practice English, no matter their skill level! We also offer the opportunity for homework help and one-on-one study support with any upcoming tests while connecting you with job leads and work readiness related ESL activities.

Medical-Related Services (ME), Mental Health (MH) and Drug & Alcohol Services (DA)– Supporting your wellness:

CWP supports participants who have medical or behavioral health issues that prevent them from participating in the employment or vocational training track. Our support consists of an initial assessment, developing a care plan in coordination with participants' health providers and working with participants through completing the care plan. We can accompany participants to their healthcare appointments and act as their advocate, helping with communication with the healthcare providers, if desired.

CWP is located at the DHS East County Family Service Center and at the DHS Southeast Portland Self-Sufficiency Office. We also work closely with the DHS Schools Team in Multnomah County.

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