An employer collaborative managed by

United Way of Chittenden County

Lisa Falcone, Working Bridges Project Director
THE UNIQUE WAY WE WORK IS HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE
WE UNITE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TO WORK TOGETHER

WE EXPECT all children, youth and young adults will have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

WE EXPECT all people will be empowered to meet their basic needs and be financially stable.

WE EXPECT all people will have access to the supports and necessary care for optimal health and well-being.
Target Population

A public-private, multi-sector, employer collaborative that is focused on business solutions—job retention, productivity and advancement of workers earning between $10 and $19 / hour.
The Early Years
United Way wanted to end poverty
• Provided training to community
• Employers saw relevance to workers
• Began with a concept a group of employers could make a difference
• Good for business

Today
UWCC promoting family financial stability
• Training employers ongoing
• Engaging employers in solving social problems
• Demonstrating impact on lower wage earners
• Impacting our systems through collective impact
Premise One—Behind Working Bridges

A good, steady, reliable job puts people on the pathway to financial stability.
Premise Two

Life issues can overwhelm a good employee’s ability to get to work, be present at work and succeed at work.
Premise Three

A group of employers can design and test innovative workplace practices to help employees—regardless of life circumstances—minimize work disruptions, retain jobs, advance jobs and improve financial stability.
Before WB, Employers Said…

I have a really good employee who leaves work at the same time every month, without clocking out and without permission from her supervisor.

I tried to give an employee a $.50 per hour raise and he refused it. It does not make sense.

I am hiring great people and workers from the new American population, but realize our typical benefits do not address their needs. Can you help?
Employers Working to Solve…

- High turnover in the ranks of low-wage workers
- Unscheduled tardiness & absenteeism hurt productivity
- Too much time of supervisors and managers dealing with non-work related issues
- Workers unprepared for advancement
- Safety record was stagnant
- Benefits and wellness strategies did not meet the needs of lower-wage workers
- Improve morale and stability of the workforce

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Working Bridges—The Model

- Employers share resources to minimize employment barriers and improve financial stability and wellbeing of lower-wage earners and their families.
- Employers are the innovators of key strategies.
- The workplace is the platform for services.
- UWCC is the backbone, lead and a funder.
The 3 Rs of Working Bridges

- Relationships
- Resources
- Retention
Working Bridges Key Activities

- Training for employers—HR, supervisors
- Employer Innovation Collaborative (formerly called the Employer Workgroup)
- Shared On-site Resource Coordinators
- Programs at workplaces
  - Income Advance Loan
  - Financial Education Workshops and Coaching
  - GED, ELL, Sector-based Skill Training and Classes
  - Mobile Tax Preparation/EITC program
- Evaluation—measure retention and productivity (RBA)
Integrated Financial Stability Model

Goal: Employees achieve family financial stability.

Access to Income Supports & Resources
- Onsite Resource Coordinator
- Partnership with community resources
- Revamping employment/HR policies
- Income advance loan
- Mobile tax site

Financial Literacy
- Earn It, Keep It, Grow It (EKG) classes
- Financial coaching volunteers
- RCs as financial coaches
- Income advance loan
- Mobile tax sites with asset building strategies

Workforce Development (Advancement)
- GED classes
- ELL classes
- Moving to sector-based skill training (i.e. Sheraton)
- Workforce development collaboration

In Partnership with:

WORKPLACE AS A PLATFORM
### Triple Results

#### Employees
- Accessing resources
- Retaining jobs
- Improving financial stability
- Standard practice – privacy and dignity

#### Employers
- Low cost, highly valued employee benefit
- Changing policies and practices
- Retaining workers, saving turnover costs
- Improving workplace morale

#### Community
- Reducing poverty
- Benefiting from collective response
- Engaging employers
- More stable family incomes
- Changing social services approach
Funding and Sustainability

Costs
- Staff costs
- Program costs
- Operational costs

Revenue (Current)
- Employers pay a fee-for-service for RC
- United Way of Chittenden County
- Private grants and other philanthropy (FINRA Foundation, IBM)
- State and federal funding (possibilities)
What It Takes and My Best Advice

- A neutral, well-respected organization with capacity to drive it
- Champion employers
- An onboarding strategy for employers (ROI)
- A common agenda/focus to unite the partnership
- A plan to fund it and sustain it
- Openness to change and innovative ideas