



Towards Employment

CHANCE TO

**ADVANCE**



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# WHAT DOES TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT DO?

Towards Employment helps people overcome poverty, justice system involvement, and social determinants of work barriers to gain the skills and experience needed to connect to a family sustaining career. Our evidence based, employer-driven training and holistic support, coaching and mentorship combine to partner with working people to put poverty behind them, and move towards personal prosperity.

## OUR MISSION

Towards Employment champions the potential of every person to succeed in a rewarding career and work to strengthen policies that provide pathways to opportunity for all workers.

## OUR VISION

We believe in a dynamic world of work where all people – regardless of race, justice system involvement, or where they live – have an opportunity to thrive





**Over its 49-year history, Towards Employment has helped over 210,000 Greater Cleveland residents move towards prosperity.**

**This help is needed today more than ever.**

**To challenge racial inequity and break down the opportunity gaps so many of Cleveland's citizens face – we, as a community, must invest in organizations like Towards Employment.**





# WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT ADDRESSES?



It's 2024, and among many challenges, the minimum wage in the state of Ohio is still \$10.45 per hour. Yet the MIT Living Wage Calculator figures a living wage for a household comprised of one adult and one child in Cuyahoga County is three times this amount — 236% higher than minimum wage. Consider:

- With a poverty rate of 31.2%, Cleveland is the second poorest city of its size in the nation. 75% of residents live in zip codes with high rates of poverty, joblessness, and vacant housing.
- New jobs are often not “good” jobs: More than 50% of new jobs from the 25 fastest growing regional industries pay wages below \$35,000 a year.
- White workers earn 10-30% more than their non-white peers in the same occupation.
- Cleveland ranks 33rd in the nation for digital connectivity, yet the future of work requires increased digital skills.
- Workers need more time to prepare for careers in a rapidly changing job market.





**And now, this work is even more urgent. COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black workers, and Black women in particular. We must ensure that as the economy re-opens, we don't settle for return to normal, but create improved access to opportunity for workers previously marginalized and most recently burdened by the pandemic. We must do better.**





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# WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES?

Towards Employment not only focuses on placing and sustaining people in good-paying jobs, but provides holistic wrap-around services to help address the “social determinants of work” such as housing insecurity, transportation and legal issues, and to build life skills like financial management. Addressing these issues enhances prospects for job retention and advancement.

And Towards Employment uses a nationally-recognized model called WorkAdvance, which has proven through research to be effective in increasing earnings of low-income Clevelanders, including individuals with criminal justice involvement, young adults aging out of foster care and veterans with barriers to employment.

**Read success stories of the WorkAdvance model on pages 9–11.**





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**Watch a  
video on why  
CLE needs  
a chance to  
advance.**





# WHAT IS TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT HOPING TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?



We are reaching out to people who have supported Towards Employment to share the success of the WorkAdvance model, which will help 3,500 low-income Clevelanders over the next three years.

**3500+**  
Low-Income  
Clevelanders

With a goal of raising \$5.2 million, we can extend WorkAdvance programming to every person who comes to Towards Employment.

**\$5.2**  
Million  
Raised 2022-2024

In return, we project that in 3 years graduates will earn more than \$21 million in above-minimum average wages.

**\$21**  
Million  
Additional Earnings  
by Graduates (ROI)

Bottom line? Employers have better prepared workers. Workers have more economic mobility. End result, the whole community is stronger.



# HOW WOULD MY SUPPORT HELP?

## INDEPENDENCE & MOBILITY

The right training, certification and wrap-around services are urgently needed to overcome the opportunity gap and build self-sufficiency and independence.

TE candidates have greater needs than ever, and our work with candidates prior, during and after their job search with personal coaching to facilitate career advancement is a proven model for success.

We seek to raise \$2.7 million to bolster training, certification and coaching pathways using the Work Advance model.

There are three ways to put your passion and investment to work:



**Allishea Asberry,**  
**Professional Driver**

Allishea is building her career with Towards Employment. With a CDL credential, ongoing support from her career coach, and a defined career plan, Allishea is achieving a stable life for herself, and her family. "With a criminal record, I had to work at places making \$8/hour. With TE, I have set goals. In order to get where we want to be, we have to set short term, long-term, realistic goals." Allishea is working towards her long term goal to own her own 10-fleet of trucks as an owner-operator.



# HOW WOULD MY SUPPORT HELP?

## INFRASTRUCTURE & THE FUTURE OF WORK

Our training facilities need to mirror the work world which means upgrading our technology and mobile infrastructure to meet increased digital requirements needed to best prepare our candidates for success, leveraging learnings from the pandemic.

A total of \$500,000 is needed to enhance our mobile and virtual infrastructure.

Listen to Richard tell his story.



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**Richard Jackson,**  
**Press Operator/Die Setter**

Richard got his chance to advance as part of a manufacturing career readiness class he took in the middle of the pandemic. "I learned how to use micrometers, calipers, and measurement tools - all really different experiences for me." Richard reached his short-term goal to be in a managerial position and advanced to a shift supervisor, and shares about what it takes to be successful in an interview with MAGNET. "The sky's the limit for me."



# HOW WOULD MY SUPPORT HELP?

## INNOVATION & CAPACITY

With the labor market rapidly changing and new technologies and modes of operating evolving constantly, we need to be nimble.

A \$2 million Innovation Fund that allows us to take advantage of emerging trends, invest in new approaches and build out of the box partnerships is critical in positioning us to advance our mission.

Visit a website that highlights innovative partnering – ACCESS to Manufacturing combines private and public resources to prepare people to thrive using a customized curriculum and extended coaching – even during a pandemic.



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**Tiara Colbert,**  
**Community Health Worker**

Tiara has advanced twice because of an innovative health care partnership that Towards Employment built with University Hospitals. "Towards Employment helps to build confidence. They gave me the reassurance that I can go a little bit further, that I can challenge myself to finish. They help remind people they're not alone, that this is a process." Tiara works in the community she grew up in, and serves as a liaison for social determinants of health such as housing and food. She continues to work towards her long-term goal to become a licensed social worker.





# CHANCE TO **ADVANCE** →



Through your support of the Chance to Advance Campaign, you can learn about ways to help someone in our community obtain a good job and begin building a life-changing career. You can be part of meaningful, long-term change in the lives of Clevelanders facing systemic barriers to employment – so no one working full time is still poor.

**You can change a life:  
one career pathway at a time.**

## **LEARN MORE:**

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**Visit the Chance to  
Advance website.**



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**Towards Employment**

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