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Towards Employment Launches National Search for Next President & CEO as Organization Celebrates 50 Years of Impact

CLEVELAND, OH — March 30, 2026 — Towards Employment (TE), a nationally recognized workforce development nonprofit with a 50-year legacy of advancing economic mobility, today announced the launch of a national search for its next President & Chief Executive Officer.

“It has been the honor of my career to lead Towards Employment,” said Jill Rizika. “I am incredibly proud of the impact we have achieved together and look forward to supporting a strong and thoughtful transition. I am confident the next leader will build on this momentum to expand opportunity and navigate the evolving future of work.” Rizika will retire during Towards Employment’s 50th anniversary year, marking more than two decades of leadership that have helped shape the organization’s growth, impact, and national reputation.

This leadership transition marks a pivotal moment for the organization as it builds on decades of impact and prepares for its next chapter of growth, innovation, and community partnership. For five decades, Towards Employment has helped thousands of individuals overcome barriers to employment and connect to family-sustaining careers. Serving more than 2,000 people annually, TE is widely recognized for its proven model that combines career readiness, wraparound support, and strong employer partnerships to drive lasting outcomes for both job seekers and businesses .

“This is a moment of both celebration and forward momentum,” said Dr. Shenise Johnson Thomas, Chair of the Towards Employment Board of Directors. “As we honor 50 years of impact, we are also investing in the future—seeking a leader who will build on our strong foundation while helping to shape what’s next for workforce development in our region and beyond.”

The incoming President & CEO will step into an organization with strong financial footing, a highly engaged board, and deep partnerships across the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. The new leader will work collaboratively with the board and staff to develop and implement a bold strategic vision that expands opportunity, strengthens systems, and centers equity in all aspects of the organization’s work.

“We are deeply grateful to Jill Rizika for her extraordinary leadership over the past 20 years,” said Amy Richmond, co-chair Search Committee. “She has positioned Towards Employment as a national leader in workforce development and leaves a strong foundation for the next chapter.”

The next CEO will be responsible for guiding the organization’s strategic direction, strengthening partnerships with employers and community stakeholders, advancing policy and advocacy efforts, and ensuring continued program excellence and financial sustainability. The role also includes leading a talented, mission-driven team and fostering a culture grounded in collaboration, accountability, and increasing access to career opportunities.

The search comes at an especially meaningful time as Towards Employment celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2026, including a series of events highlighting the organization’s impact and vision for the future. Candidates with a strong track record of leadership in workforce development, human services, or related fields—and a deep commitment to economic inclusion and systems change—are encouraged to apply.

For more information about the position and application process, please visit:

<https://www.towardsemployment.org/leadership-transition/>

All inquiries and applications will be handled confidentially by the search firm:

Patti Shumay, Sr. Executive Search Consultant, pshumay@ratliffandtaylor.com

Towards Employment is celebrating 50 years of impact, championing the potential of every person to succeed in a rewarding career today while working to create an equitable and inclusive workforce for tomorrow. Using the nationally recognized WorkAdvance model, TE serves approximately 2,000 Cleveland-area workers each year through skill development, employer partnerships, and extended career coaching — while helping employers meet critical talent needs. Learn more at www.towardsemployment.org.