

# **CED Grant Recipient Conference 2024**



## **Launchpad Occupations**

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A photograph of a space shuttle launching from a launchpad. The shuttle is ascending vertically, leaving a large, billowing plume of white and yellow smoke and fire. The launchpad structure is visible in the foreground, and the sky is a clear blue. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue layer.

# Creating Opportunities in Launchpad Occupations

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By Dr. Kathleen Bolter

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# About the Upjohn Institute

- Not-for-profit, nonpartisan research institute based in Kalamazoo
- Founded in 1945
- Mission: To study policy-related issues of employment and unemployment; to experiment with innovative ways to help the unemployed
- Manage federally and state-funded workforce programs in 4-county region



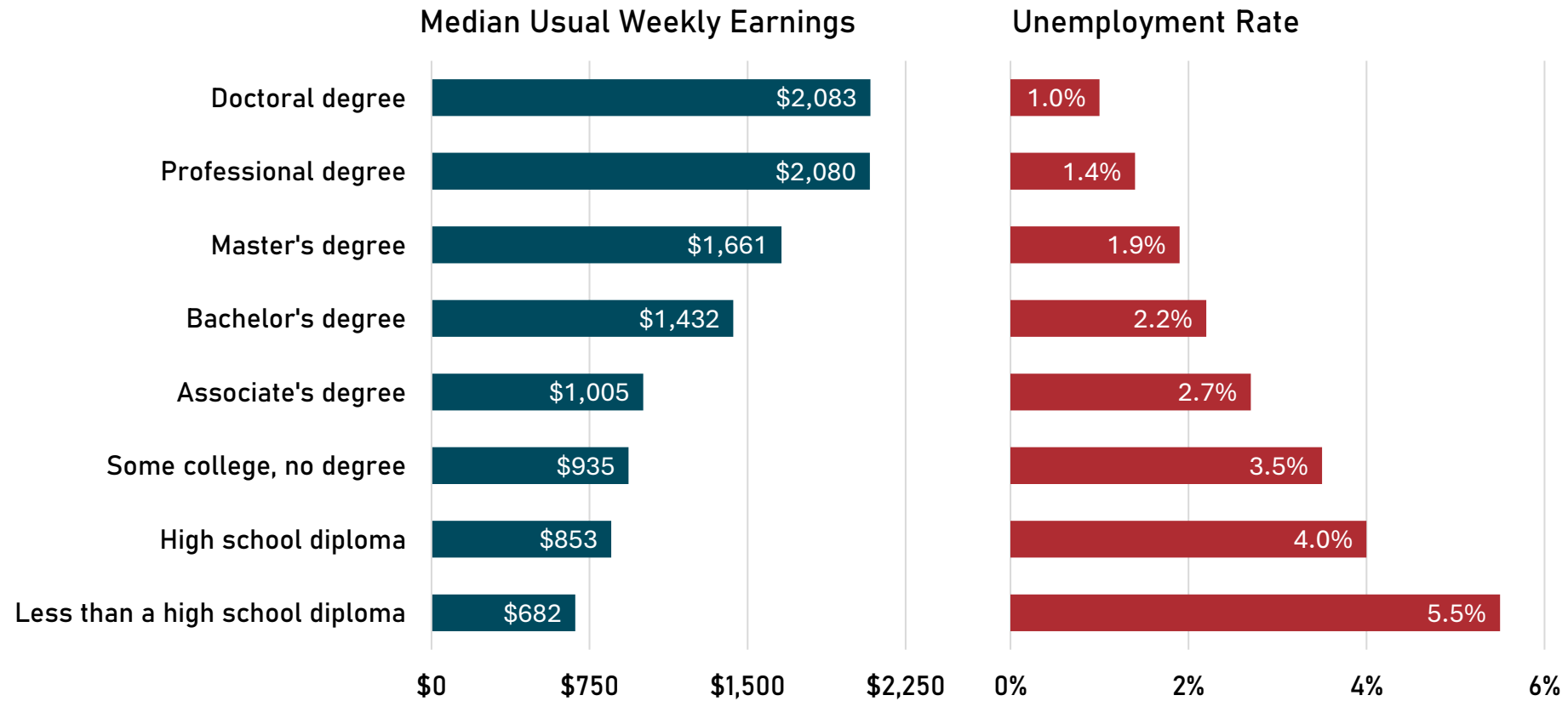
# About *Policies for Place*

The *Policies for Place* initiative at the Upjohn Institute brings together experts from around the country to study how state and local policymakers can create good jobs, develop skilled workforces who can access and keep those jobs, and build resilient, thriving communities.



# Education increases economic opportunity.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment

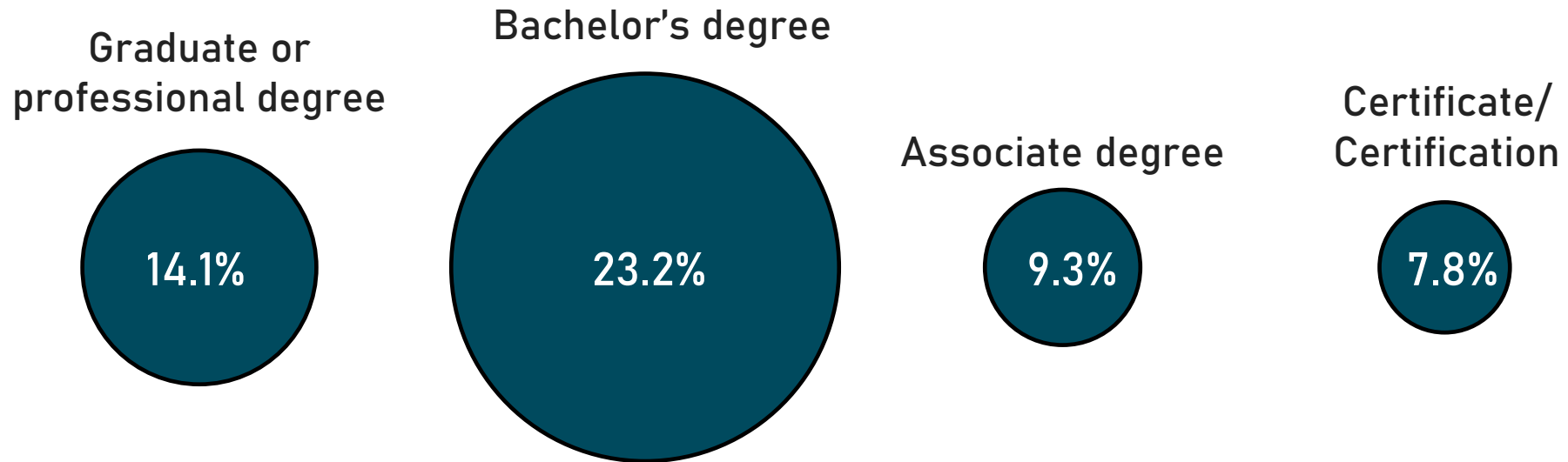


Note: Data are for persons 25 and older. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (2022)

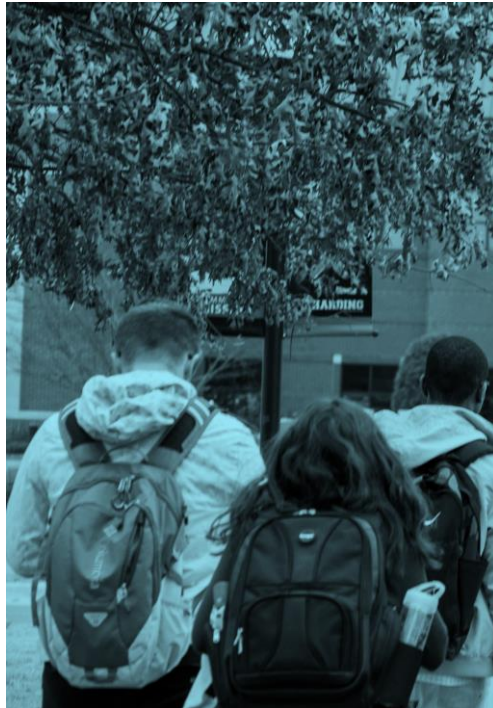
# But, only about half of working age adults have attained a credential beyond high school.

Credential Attainment of U.S. Adults 25 to 64



Source: Lumina Foundation (2024)

Our standard ways of training and placing people into better jobs is not as effective as we'd like them to be.



43%

6-year  
completion rate  
for community  
colleges.

Source: National Student  
Clearinghouse (2023).



72%

1-year  
employment  
rate for adult  
WIOA  
participants.

Source: WIOA Performance  
Results At a Glance (2022).

There are several promising strategies for helping low-income individuals successfully train for and stay in higher paying jobs.

Train people for in-demand jobs.

Make sure people have the baseline skills for such roles.

Provide supportive services to those that need it.

Work to build professional networks and mentorship.

Provide case management to navigate unfamiliar systems.



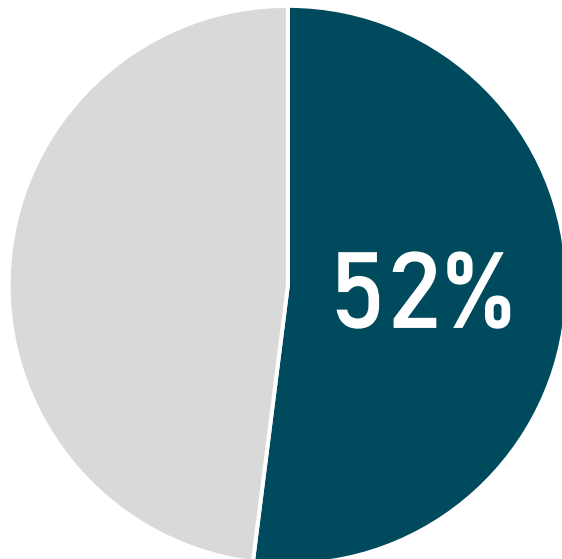


**What are “launchpad” occupations?**

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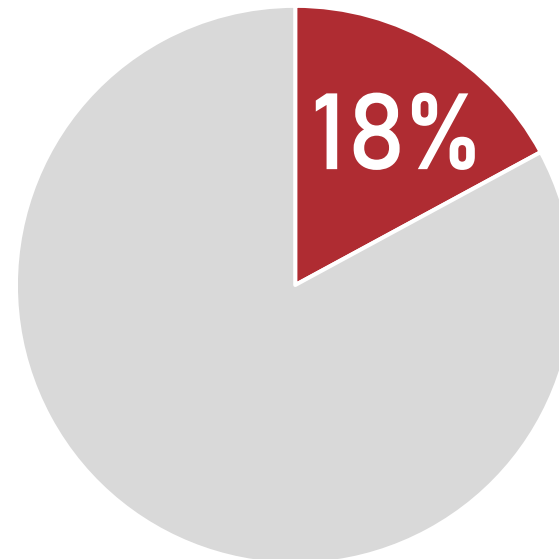
# Launchpad occupations require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree.

Jobs requiring these skills



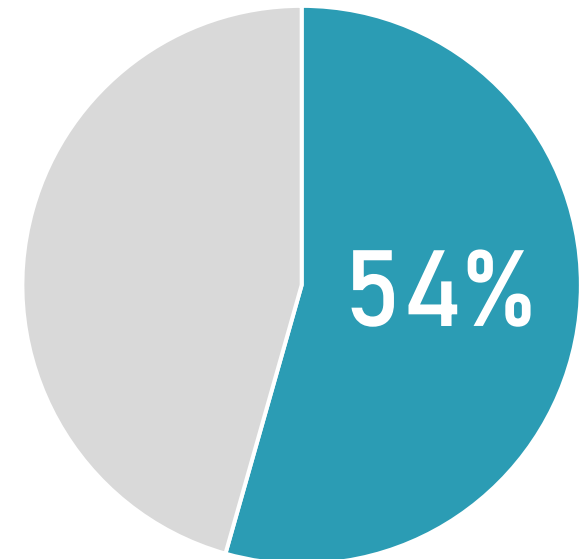
Source: National Skill Coalition analysis of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics by State

Percent of working age population with this skill-set



Source: Lumina Foundation

Percent of working age population with a high school diploma or less



Source: Lumina Foundation

For workers, these jobs offer opportunities for advancement and upward mobility.



Advanced  
Manufacturing



Skilled Trades



Healthcare

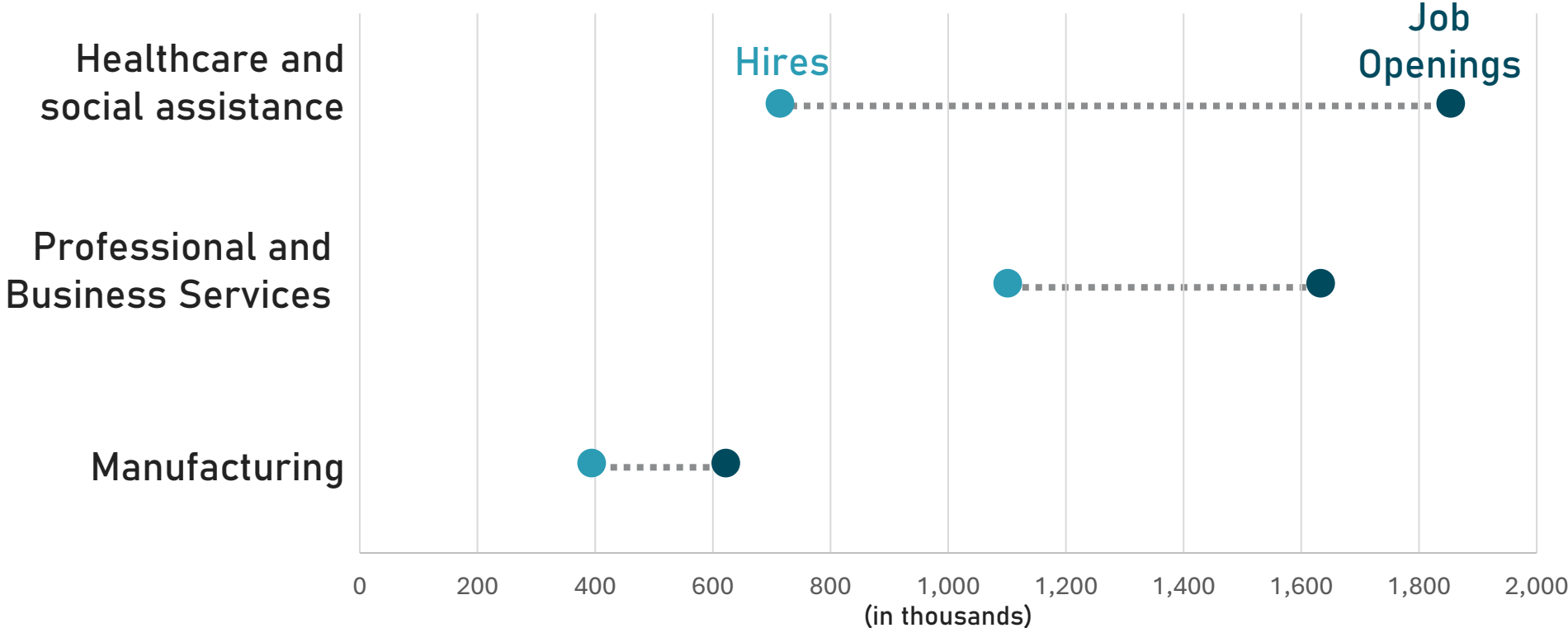


Information  
Technology



Green Energy

# Employers are facing a critical shortage of workers in these jobs.



Source: BLS JOLTS - January 2024



**What are some of the challenges of  
filling launchpad occupations?**

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# Barriers to employment make it difficult for people to train for and retain jobs.



Childcare



Transportation



Criminal Record



Housing Issues



Individuals with Disabilities



Mental Health Issues



English-Language Learner



Drug/Alcohol Abuse

Requires a shift in employer attitudes.

Skill-based hiring



### Primary Outcomes

- ↓ First-year turnovers dropped 23%
- ↓ Time to hire dropped 16%
- ↑ 2x increase in diverse hires

Source: Hirereach.org



**What are some strategies to address these challenges?**

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**Train people for in-demand jobs.**

# Project Quest

## The Project QUEST Model



Tuition Subsidies  
to Students  
Demonstrating  
Economic Need



Wrap-around Services  
including Financial  
Support, Success  
Coaching, Job Readiness  
Training and More.



Training in  
Careers Only  
for In-demand  
Industries and  
Occupations

## Primary Outcome

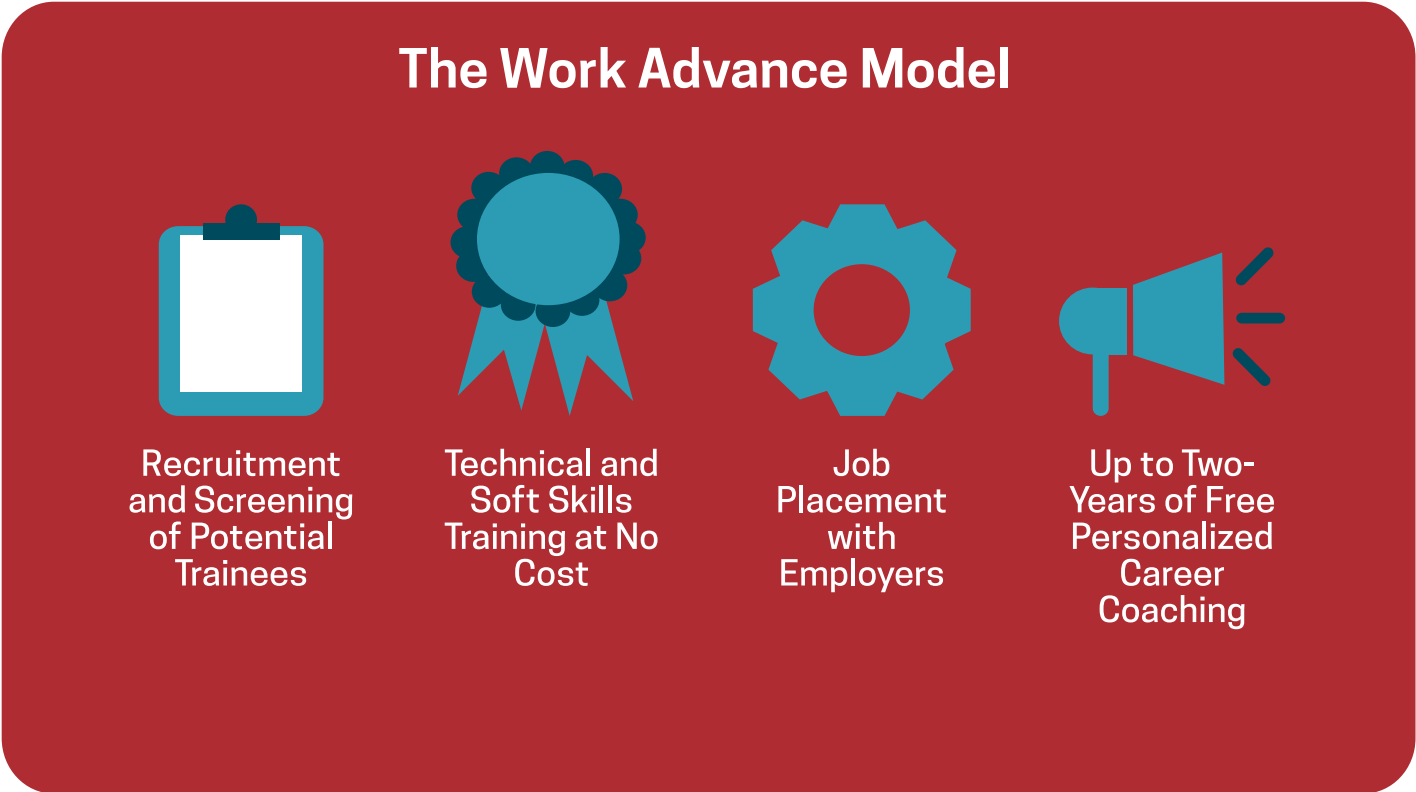


Increase in long-  
term earnings  
(20% higher over  
nine years)

Source: Evidence Summary for Project  
QUEST— A Workforce Development  
Program for Low-Income Individuals.

**Make sure people have the baseline skills  
for such roles.**

# The Work Advance Model



**Primary Outcome**

**Increase in long-term earnings and evidence of career advancement**

Source: Employment and Earnings Effects of the WorkAdvance Demonstration After Seven Years.

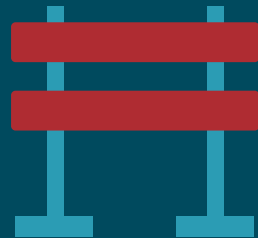
**Provide supportive services to those that need it.**

# Neighborhood Employment Hubs

## The Neighborhood Employment Hubs Model



Located in  
High-Priority  
Neighborhoods



Address  
Barriers to  
Employment  
as Top Priority



+12-months  
Case  
Management



Coordination  
and  
Alignment of  
Resources



Increase in long-  
term earnings  
and evidence of  
career advancement

Source: Employment and Earnings Effects  
of the WorkAdvance Demonstration After  
Seven Years.

**Work to build professional networks and mentorship.**

# Code Louisville

## The Code Louisville Model



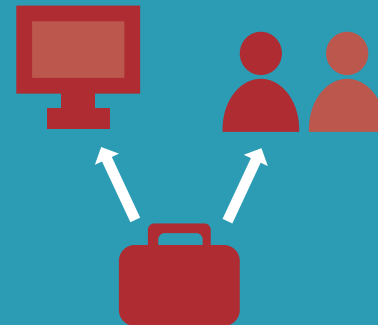
Program is offered free to participants



Part-time program of 15 to 20 hours a week for 12 weeks



Volunteer mentors help participants with program work



Employers help guide the curriculum and serve as mentors in the program

**815+**

Graduates placed in Tech Jobs

**300+**

Companies have hired graduates

Source: Code Louisville



**Provide case management to navigate unfamiliar systems.**

# ERN Model

## The Employer Resource Network (ERN) Model



ERNs provide success coaches who work with employees and direct them to resources that then help them to:

- Improve employment skills
- Overcome personal barriers
- Prepare for advancement opportunities

The issues addressed by the ERN are tailored to the specific needs identified by the businesses.

## Primary Outcome

# 501%

Average ROI for companies participating in ERNs.

Source: The Impact of the Employer Resource Network Model Nationally.



**What makes these strategies work?**

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## Keys to Success

Active employer participation and buy-in.

Intensive and long-term one-on-one coaching.

Addressing barriers to employment up-front.

Coordination among various systems.

Flexible funding streams.

“Success for this agenda requires more than good ideas—it requires the right organizational structure and coordination to plan and implement them.”

-A Moment of Opportunity: Strategies for Inclusive Economic Growth-

# Contact Information

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**Report to your Second  
Chosen Breakout Room by  
4:10 PM**



**CED**

# **CED Grant Recipient Conference 2024**

**See You Tomorrow for Day  
Two!**

Please feel free to stop by  
the registration desk with any  
questions, concerns, or  
comments.



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