

HIRE Best practices – Employer Council 2018

10 Ways Dane County Employers Can Help Alleviate Poverty in Our Community

Thank you to the companies participating in the United Way of Dane County [HIRE](#) Employer Council, working together with the community's nonprofit employment partners to develop new ways and practices to employ low income people and give them pathways out of poverty.

We have learned much about recruiting, hiring, onboarding and retaining people living in poverty and wish to share what we've learned.

We offer these ideas to employers who want to help address poverty through their workplaces.

1. **\$15/hour is considered a “family-sustaining” wage** today. For people hired for full time work, with annual earnings of \$31,200, an employee can afford \$780/month for housing. *HUD Fair Market Rent for 2018 is set at \$1,091/month for an average 2-bedroom apartment.*
2. Uneven schedules and those announced at the end of each week for the following week, are not only difficult for the employee and their families, but the company's risk for job retention is high when employee schedules are uneven, inconsistent, or lack full-time hours.
3. You are invited to align your recruiting, training, and retention efforts with a HIRE nonprofit partner for a mutually consultative relationship. The HIRE nonprofit can recruit and help your retain employees. This service is free to employers.
4. Call United Way 2-1-1 or connect with a Resource Specialist if an employee needs help because she/he is having a life issue that prevents him/her from coming to work. Absenteeism is a major cause of job loss. A Resource Specialist will work with an employee and connect them to additional supports in the community.
5. Encourage the use of benefits available through government resources e.g., Earned Income Tax Credit, child-care support, or Affordable Care Act Marketplace insurance (which can be subsidized with United Way's HealthConnect).
6. The hiring process is a substantial expense to a company—turnover costs are high for an employer to hire, and represents lost productivity when employees leave the company. It is important that supervising managers understand the needs of an employee who has experienced poverty. We have learned that onboarding with a more specialized training plan and working with the employee to plan for alternative forms of transportation will be effective in retention efforts.

7. Our employers have learned to examine their culture to determine if their companies support culturally diverse employees. This can include your website, hiring materials and process and branding that is aligned and inviting to people living in poverty and those of diverse backgrounds. HIRE nonprofit partners can help you with this.
8. We have learned employees who have experienced poverty and trauma can feel isolated as they adjust to their new job, relationships and company culture. We recommend you create mentors and new employee groups to help employees support one another and help employees with the unwritten rules of your workplace and culture. And help your hiring manager(s) to understand this issue within the work team.
9. One of the best ways to hire people of color is to network within communities of color and your own employees who are advocates for your company. Use your diverse employees to make recommendations of people to contact, or network with the HIRE nonprofit partners.
10. Evaluate each step in your hiring process and determine potential barriers in each e.g.
 - How do people apply? Are there different points of entry e.g. e-application, paper application, walk-in?
 - Job descriptions for “education requirement creep.” Do you really need a college or graduate degree for your position? Can “equivalent experience” be a useful alternative? Create leadership development and stretch opportunities for seasoned employees to create paths for upward mobility.

Join us to create a stronger, financially healthier and more productive Dane County!

HIRE Partner Agencies

- Centro Hispano
- Latino Academy of Workforce Development
- Literacy Network
- Madison-area Urban Ministry
- Urban League of Greater Madison
- YWCA

United Way staff contacts:

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