

Beth Gifford, Executive Director of Columbus Works, Inc.
House Finance Committee
April 15, 2021
Interested Party Testimony
House Bill 110

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for your consideration of the Columbus Works amendment (HC1070) to House Bill 110. As the Executive Director, I get the opportunity to witness people change the trajectory of their lives with the assistance of Columbus Works wraparound services, like financial and employment coaching. We help many individuals in the greater Columbus area, who we call members; however, some of these members cannot share their identity for safety reasons. Since these individuals still wanted to submit their story as to how Columbus Works has helped them, please find their stories below.

Member 1:

“Before I came to Columbus Works, I was at a residential treatment program for 3 years. I was looking to move forward and get back to work after not working for that time. But I didn’t have any recent work experience or references, so I needed some help figuring things out. So I called Columbus Works because I heard they could help with job placement.

When I first came to Columbus Works, I felt welcomed and was very comfortable. I thought I was coming for an orientation, but it felt like an interview – so from day one I was being prepared for the future and being placed in a job. I never felt judged, I always felt like I was a part of the group.

In class I learned a lot of different skills about proper workplace behaviors, interview skills and life skills that I use today.

For my first job placement, I worked on the Columbus Works Crew at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in the cafeteria. After three months working with my employment coach and learning the job, I was able to get hired permanently by the hospital. Now I have been employed for 7 months.

Due to having a stable job, I now have a three bedroom apartment with my children and have more financial stability. Life is just not a struggle anymore.

And it all became possible because of Columbus Works.”

Deborah:

“Columbus Works has changed my life dramatically. Never thought I needed an employment and life coach until I took their JumpStart readiness class. It wasn't until my first day of attending the class, when I realized that I needed help getting my life back in order. The relationship with my coach helped me to see some of the barriers that were holding me back from getting to my best self. After almost three years since I've graduated from the class, I have been working at my same employer for two and half years, promoted into a new role, and making almost \$5 more than from what I've started. I've also been able to get my own place and transportation. I am so thankful for all the help and support from my coach and the Columbus Works team.”

Terra (as shared by her Columbus Works coach):

“Terra graduated from Columbus Works in October 2018. During her participation in our Jumpstart readiness class, she struggled with finding the right job and the barrier of not having her GED was constantly getting in the way of her success. During our WrapAround session we were able to identify some potential job opportunities within her skill set and less than 30 days, she was employed with one of our valued partners, Lifecare Alliance. Terra has been employed with Lifecare for two and half years, received her STNA license, and received 4 raises since she's started for her job performance. We are so proud of her commitment in seeking promotional opportunities and continually reaching her goals.”

Thank you for the opportunity to share these members' stories. We urge the adoption of the Columbus Works amendment to allow for our impact to grow on the communities we serve. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us via phone or e-mail.