

Minneapolis to launch new program to help long-term unemployed back to work

Written by

Tuesday, 03 September 2013 12:24



Platform to Employment program serves workers 50 plus and veterans under 30

The City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) have partnered with The WorkPlace, a Connecticut based workforce development organization, to launch Platform to Employment (P2E), a new program that provides a pathway to employment for long-term unemployed workers ages 50 and above and veterans 30 and below.

The WorkPlace originally launched P2E to address the specific needs of long-term unemployed workers in southwest Connecticut. Since then, the program has been successfully implemented in four other markets. P2E demonstrates that the right combination of job readiness programming, personal and family support services, and financial counseling can return the long-term unemployed to the workforce.

Tested in multiple arenas, including participants from urban and suburban communities, P2E has placed 80 percent of program participants into work experience programs, with nearly 90 percent of these individuals moving on to fulltime employment. This September, Minneapolis will be the sixth city to launch the program with a 24 participants.

"We recognize that returning veterans and persons aged 50 and over often face unique challenges in the job marketplace," said Mayor R.T. Rybak. "By thinking creatively and developing new partnerships, we are able to launch a program that will enable more Minneapolis residents the ability to connect with prospective employers and achieve their goals of financial stability."

The National Employment Law Project published a report in April that stated although older workers across all education levels are less likely to be unemployed, once laid off, they were more likely to become long-term unemployed than any other group examined. For example, according to the report, over half the workers aged 55 and older (53 percent) had been out of work for longer than 27 weeks across the nation.

P2E begins with mandatory workshops conducted four days per week for five weeks. The workshops will include learning job search strategies, resume writing, self-marketing, rebuilding confidence, and worker support programs among other things. Now through Friday, Sept. 6,

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Minneapolis residents who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits and are 50 years of age or above or a veteran aged 30 or below may apply to participate in the free program.

Following the training, P2E helps participants find open positions with local companies for an eight week work experience. During the work experience the workers' wages will be subsidized by P2E, allowing employers to test out candidates on the job to determine if they are a good fit for the company, risk-free.

The P2E program in Minneapolis is a partnership between the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), The WorkPlace, North Minneapolis WorkForce Center, and NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center. Funding for the program is being provided by grants from AARP, Citi Community Development, and the Walmart Foundation.

Those interested in the program can apply at the Platform to Employment website, www.platformtoemployment.com and click on the Minneapolis Platform to Employment application button on the homepage. Information is also available at the North Minneapolis WorkForce Center located at 1200 Plymouth Ave. N., or by calling (612) 520-3500.