



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Achievement Coach: Buffalo Women's Economic Mobility Hub

BACKGROUND:

For over 20 years, the WNY Women's Foundation (WNYWF)'s consciousness-raising, coalition building, community innovation, and advocacy work has broken down barriers and created systemic change centered around our strategic focus area of economic empowerment of women and girls. WNYWF's proven trifecta of philanthropy, research, and advocacy creates lasting change and directly tackles the systems and barriers that keep women and girls from realizing their full potential. WNYWF's largest investment is in the **MOMs: From Education to Employment®** (MOMs) program, a proven two-generation initiative that leads to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. MOMS, a research-based and tested economic empowerment initiative, moves single mothers and their dependent children out of poverty at seven community college campuses across three colleges and counties by eliminating barriers to completing an education. Program outcomes and an external evaluation demonstrate the model to be valuable and effective. Since 2013, the MOMs program has served more than 613 single mothers parenting a combined 960 children. In 2019, we launched a partnership with the national Jeannette Rankin Foundation to provide scholarships to MOMs students. MOMs has received national attention and was selected by Governor Cuomo as the model for a statewide Family Empowerment program at four pilot community colleges.

As part of our proposed strategy for the Economic Mobility Hub, we plan to expand WNYWF's successful MOMs trademarked model to a new workforce training partnership, **Buffalo's Economic Empowerment Collaborative for Women**, with two respected nonprofits on the east side of the city, Harvest House and Buffalo Center for Arts & Technology (BCAT). While the MOMs program has been successful for many women, we recognize that for some women, a college education is not the right fit and is too burdensome while raising children. Based on evidence from community partners, we theorize that using the proven supports and tactics of the MOMs program with a workforce development model has the potential to benefit even more women and their families. Along with Harvest House and BCAT, the Economic Mobility Hub will comprise additional partners, including Say Yes Buffalo (currently one of five of the Gates Foundation's College Success Network partners), the Oishei Foundation's Mobile Safety-Net Team, Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative, the Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center, the Homeless Alliance of WNY, Domestic Violence programs, the University at Buffalo School of Social Work, Catholic Charities, SUNY Erie, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo's Racial Equity Roundtable, the Population Health Collaborative of WNY, the State Employee Federal Credit Union Fiscal Literacy Institute, State Senator Tim Kennedy's Single Moms Club, neighborhood communities of faith, and employer partners. Expanding the MOMs program to Buffalo's East Side is a perfect example of WNYWF's work as a convener leading to systems change: sharing data, resources, and programming will allow all the organizations involved to work together more efficiently and cohesively.

The proposed shift of the MOMs model from community college to workforce training programs is a direct result of listening to the very real struggles and barriers of parents living in deep poverty. Shorter duration, highly supportive certificate programs lead to livable wage jobs and serve as a first (and for most a final) step into the workforce where they build family economic sustainability. The MOMs model is a holistic and comprehensive program with distinctive features including case management/navigation, career readiness/placement, support for logistical and skill-based barriers, childcare supports, and emergency scholarships for one-time unexpected expenses. The Economic Hub Model allows for a broader, holistic

perspective incorporating resources, best practices, and knowledge from our partners in early childhood and public education, health, social services, and community development.

In response to local employment demand, BCAT offers programs in medical coding, pharmacy technician, phlebotomy, and sterile processing, and Harvest House offers programs in nursing and phlebotomy. Both BCAT and Harvest House recognize that their students face barriers and challenges and need additional supports to achieve successful outcomes, so their programs intentionally build workforce readiness and life management and crisis navigation skills. Of BCAT's students (199 last year), 100% are below the federal poverty level (FPL), 72% are African-American, 85% are female, 55% have children, and the average age is 38. Of Harvest House's students (about 350 annually), almost all are single mothers living in poverty. Both BCAT and Harvest House have successful outcomes and we believe the introduction of the MOMs program will further improve outcomes for women in the programs. Currently, BCAT has a 61% graduation rate and 79% employment rate. Harvest House has a 95% employment rate, and, on average, students' wages double once they complete their training program. However, both programs struggle with high attrition rates (40%). The MOMs model will enhance their program supports to retain more students by addressing single mothers' unique needs. BCAT and Harvest House already have robust workforce training programs, but the added supports and resources provided by WNYWF and the other community partners will provide the missing piece needed to encourage higher retention rates for mothers. In addition to Harvest House and BCAT, WNYWF will convene our other community partners to gather research and best practices. These organizations will be engaged based on their breadth of experience researching and asset mapping in our community, and on their ability to reach individuals and speak to needs, barriers, and opportunities.

The Buffalo Women's Economic Mobility Hub has 3 distinct components: Achievement coaching for students of BCAT and Harvest House including resource identification and empowerment of women's self-care using Harvest House medical/dental clinic; Centering the women's voices as a learning engagement for Hub Community Partners which results in improved access to these resources through policy, process or systems change; Learning from and sharing with the Women's Funding Network 8 other national EMH partners.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE POSITION:

The work involves the organization, implementation, and coordination of a set of services in order to fully execute a grant program for low-income, single mothers enrolled in State Education Department approved workforce certification programs at Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology and Harvest House. The services involve intense relationship building, resource identification, and supportive coaching designed to support the successful retention, graduation, and job placement of the program participants. This will involve case management and navigation, development and participation in program activities; student advocacy; community outreach and partnership for the referral of resources for single mothers; data-collection and tracking of persistence and retention of students through graduation; and promotion of organizational and community-wide systems change through policies and processes. Successful training completion is aimed at achieving long-term economic self-sufficiency through career attainment and job placement. The incumbent will work in association with the assigned staff at each site and ultimately reports to the WNY Women's Foundation Executive Director.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Inward facing - program participants and teamwork:

- Conducts intake interview of program applicant to obtain information on education, current skills, and abilities; family and home status and perceived barriers
- Shares intake findings that may serve as academic barrier and maintains ongoing communication, as appropriate, with staff advising academic/career plans; Monitors program participant academic progress to ensure completion;

- Develops success plans for each program participant; maintains documentation; establishes regular system of check-ins and support
- Assists program participants in assessing resources needed to support retention and graduation;
- Develops robust list of resources by category including key contacts;
- Maintains and fosters close working relationship with WNYWF and training partner personnel;

External facing - Hub partner policy, process and systems change:

- Acts as liaison between participants and community partners through Economic Mobility Hub, as well as relevant community or government entities for the purpose of accessing support resources
- Reports and presents to Economic Mobility Partner Hub on status of program, barriers identified, and opportunities or resources needed to promote systems change;
- Provide recommendations to community partners in the Hub on actions to take, policies and processes to change;
- Develops programming and workshops and connect participants with appropriate information, resources and mentors through Economic Mobility Hub;
- Assists with program assessment activities; provides timely qualitative and quantitative data to WNYWF;
- Participates in Women's Funding Network Economic Mobility Hub communication and education sessions;
- Other responsibilities as assigned

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Candidates must be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to build trust and establish relationships with the target population (single mothers living in poverty in underserved communities);
- Possess a thorough knowledge of local community in terms of social, racial and economic drivers;
- Look critically at systems change and inform the creation of a well-structured system of support for program participants including policy, process, and systems change;
- Possess strong communication skills; experience in group facilitation; and effectiveness in delivering presentations;
- Be innovative and a "connector";
- Cite experience in the ability to develop and maintain accurate records of all activities and to engage in program assessment;
- Have a track record of getting along well with others and working well with internal and external partners; sound professional judgment; initiative and tact; dependability; independent worker;
- Possess strong computer and technology skills.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Graduation from an accredited college or university with an Associate Degree in Social Science, Counseling, Human Services, or Career Education and four (4) years of vocational educational experience or a Bachelor/Master degree.

COMPENSATION:

This is a grant-funded one-year (extension possible) opportunity. The grant salary total package is \$60,000.