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Large Louisville nonprofit creates new position to tackle workforce crunch

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In a city with a continued workforce crisis, the needs of today's job seekers often are misinterpreted or misunderstood by employers, said Kimberly Boyd-Lane, the director of community-based career services at Goodwill Industries of Kentucky Inc.

This employee-employer dissonance Boyd-Lane describes is what led to the creation of her new position in April.

As director of community-based career services, Boyd-Lane will administer the KentuckianaWorks Power of Work Initiative in Louisville, as well as the Way to Work program — a partnership with United Way of Central Kentucky that was launched last year to help job seekers achieve success through a network of employment and barrier removal services.

Boyd-Lane served as the program manager of the Power of Work Initiative for 12 years. The program has 10 career coaches who align residents transitioning off government assistance with area employers.

"By heart, I'm a trainer. So at any point in time I may pop into a training mode," Boyd-Lane said. "So if I'm speaking with an employer, then I may be like, 'Well, here are some ways that could benefit us all' because we are always looking for win-wins in the work that we do."

In a recent interview, Boyd-Lane said the growing workforce shortage in the state has created misconceptions.

"It's not that people necessarily don't have the aspirations to go to work, but there may be barriers that are beyond their control — transportation, could be child care. And for the population that I have served for the last 12 years, those little bitty hiccups may make it appear as if they're not wanting to work, but they didn't have the guidance to show them how to navigate that valley," Boyd-Lane said.

Further than that, Boyd-Lane said, the POW Initiative works to educate employers about benefits available to them. She said not enough employers understand the work occupational tax credit available for hiring



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Kimberly Boyd-Lane is the new director of community-based career services at Goodwill Industries of Kentucky.

people who are under the poverty level. So there are benefits and incentives for employers, and bringing those to light is part of her mission.

Lauren Deitering, manager of marketing and public relations for Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, said the Power of Work Initiative connected nearly 2,800 Kentuckians with jobs in 2018. Of those, 2,500 were connected with external partnering companies and the rest took jobs at Goodwill stores across Kentucky.

"What does dependability really look like? What is self-presentation really all about? Because my idea of what it is and yours may be completely different. And people don't know what they don't know," Boyd-Lane said. "If they've never had someone to model that for them, we're their guide that way."

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