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Repairing dilemma in local job market

Feb 21, 2018 Updated 7 hrs ago



WAY TO WORK

A United Way of Central Kentucky Program
Powered By Goodwill Industries of Kentucky

ISSUE: United Way introduces Way to Work

OUR VIEW: Community should embrace effort

In case you have not heard, there is a nationwide workforce shortage. The shortage affects our community in Hardin County.

It's a frustration for all. Employers in search of the appropriate combination of know-how and will-do talent go wanting while job seekers experience frustration with finding a role suited to their skills which supplies an income adequate to meet their family's needs.

Many potential employees lack soft skills needed to be successful, which range from problem-solving abilities to basic social amenities and demonstrated reliability. Many are unaware of the technical skills in demand for this region.

Manufacturing employers report struggling to find qualified employees and must sort through stacks of potential applicants without formal training.

In many cases, on-the-job training is available but applicants may seem to lack work ethic or other soft skills needed to ensure the business excels.

It's obvious there is disconnect between employers and job seekers. A local nonprofit is stepping up to bridge that gap through partnerships and long-term commitment.

The United Way of Central Kentucky has introduced Way to Work. It seeks to replicate the successful Cincinnati Works program founded by Dave Phillips.

It is a case management program designed to help job seekers conquer barriers that may be preventing them from achieving self-sufficiency.

For example, a skilled individual in some cases may be underemployed or unable to pursue a quality job because of problems figuring out child care plans or maintaining reliable transportation.

Phillips saw the same issues in his urban community and decided in retirement to take action by creating Cincinnati Works.

United Way of Central Kentucky's efforts are a catalyst for change, but not a simple solution. In order for Way to Work to be successful, the entire community must make this happen. There are roles to play for all.

BUSINESSES. Show your involvement by becoming a partner. Way to Work will need employers on all levels. It will address entry-level positions and more advanced opportunities. If your company wants to acquire new talent, join the cause by making a monetary investment in your community's workforce.

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES. Nonprofits and government-run entities are encouraged to share relevant services with Way to Work. To work at its best, Way to Work should be a one-stop shop to help residents become more effective community members.

COMMUNITY. Stay informed about the progress of Way to Work, tell a friend, research the program and share the excitement demonstrated by the United Way.

Way to Work stands to become a model for community-wide workforce improvement. Everyone will benefit when more people are equipped to work, overcoming limitations and advancing the standards. Way to Work will address individual needs, but its success ultimately benefits us all.

This editorial represents a consensus of The News-Enterprise editorial board.

