

change that works

February 4, 2014

Robert Graber
Erie County Legislature
Old Erie County Hall 4Th Floor 92 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

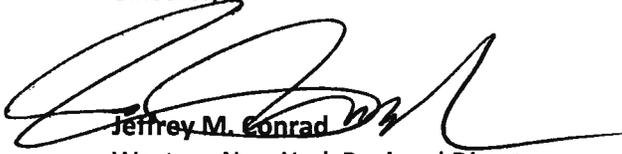
Dear Legislature Clerk Graber,

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) opened it's office in Buffalo on October 3, 2009, with the intention of helping individuals recently released from incarceration, overcome barriers and find employment. The attached **Economic Impact Report** proves that CEO has been successful in our mission to help individuals find jobs, and while doing so have made a significant economic impact in the City of Buffalo over the last 4 years.

Since opening our doors we have assisted 330 City of Buffalo residents find jobs, with a majority of those residing in highly impoverished and unemployed areas. The outcome of our work translates into a **\$4 million dollar** economic impact in the City of Buffalo, which is exceptional considering the barriers of those who we assist.

We are proud to share with you the results of our work, and we hope you find it both informative and satisfying. Thank you for your support and we look forward to the work ahead as we continue to provide exceptional services to those who need it most. If you have any questions or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (716) 842-6320 Ext. 501.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Conrad
Western New York Regional Director

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



January 22, 2014

Economic Impact Report

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt



"For the city of Buffalo to continue to build on the great progress, all of our citizens - particularly those who possess barriers to employment - need the tools to redefine their lives in a healthy way. I thank CEO for helping individuals achieve independence, while also giving them opportunities to make a positive impact in neighborhoods by taking part in community service and empowerment initiatives like the City's Clean Sweep program."

Hon. Byron W. Brown,
Mayor, City of Buffalo

"The efforts of the Center for Employment Opportunities are in direct alignment with the mission and focus of our Foundation, which is to serve as a catalyst for change and enhance the overall quality of life, along with bolstering the economic viability of our community, down to the individual."

Robert D. Gioia, President John R.
Oishei Foundation

"We are proud of our affiliation with CEO and take every opportunity to sing their praises. Our community is lucky to have CEO working effectively for a population whose success is a vital part of our area's transformation."

Cara Mattaliano, Vice President of
Programming, Community
Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Center for Employment Opportunities

ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

Since opening its doors in Buffalo in 2009, the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) has provided transitional work experience and job placements to over 700 individuals with criminal convictions living in the City of Buffalo. The organization's commitment to providing immediate, effective and comprehensive employment services to these men and women is essential to building healthy communities and families. The Buffalo Economic Impact Report indicates that CEO's program provides critical income to City of Buffalo residents who are unemployed and living under the poverty line, particularly those in communities plagued by deep and persistent poverty. In a little over four years of operation, participants have earned over \$4 million in total wages from a combination of CEO's transitional work sites (\$565,995) and full time wages (\$3,466,596).

These earnings are generated primarily by participants who live in zip codes with poverty and unemployment rates far above the local and national averages.

Wages for transitional work generate an immediate economic impact on both individuals and their families upon their release from prison. Earnings accumulated from private sector job placements demonstrate that the program model in Buffalo has a longer-term impact on communities and is successful in filling local labor needs.

A 2012 report showed a high concentration of poverty and unemployment in urban areas of the Buffalo-Niagara Region¹. Injecting capital into impoverished and distressed neighborhoods within the City of Buffalo makes our region stronger; both socially and economically.

¹ Poverty in Buffalo-Niagara, Partnership for Public Good, April 16, 2013, page 2

ECONOMIC IMPACT SNAPSHOT

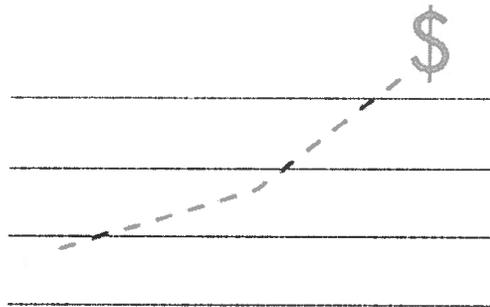
330

CEO participants placed in full-time, unsubsidized jobs in the community since opening its doors in Buffalo in 2009.



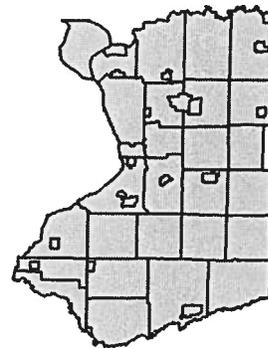
\$4 million

in total earnings[†] generated, which went directly to CEO participants and their families, and reinvested back into their communities.



95%

of wages accumulated to high-poverty neighborhoods where more than 20 percent of the population lives under the federal poverty line.



[†] Total earnings represents sum of transitional job wages and the accumulation of participant earnings from permanent job placements up to 365 days from date of hire.

ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

Methodology

To perform the analysis, CEO's performance management team produced participant reports from the agency's customized Salesforce.com platform and aligned them to data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2012 ACS 5-year estimates. First, unemployment and poverty rates were collected from the ACS 2012 5-year survey data on Selected Economic Characteristics. Data was extracted and organized by zip codes within the City of Buffalo, reflecting: (1) the percent unemployed, and (2) percentage of families and individuals whose income in the past 12 months was below the poverty level.

Next, CEO's data analysis unit extracted records of participants' transitional job earnings and unsubsidized wages from Salesforce.com for the date range of October 1, 2009 through October 31, 2013. The total amount earned in transitional work was calculated (Hours Worked * \$7.25) and sorted by zip code. The total amount earned in unsubsidized employment was calculated (starting hourly wage * average hours worked per week / 7 * days at the job). For unsubsidized employment, wages earned after 365 days in the participants' last placement (if they successfully completed the CEO program) were excluded.

Finally, analysis of the total economic impact was completed in Excel as presented below. The Total Economic Impact is the sum of Transitional Job (TJ) Wages Earned (subsidized) and Placement Wages Earned (unsubsidized).

Demographics by Zip Code				Economic Impact Statistics				
Zip Code	Population	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate	# of Participants worked TJ	TJ Wages Earned (Subsidized)	# of Participants Placed	Placement Wages Earned (Unsubsidized)	Total Economic Impact
14201	11,549	48.30%	20.30%	15	\$14,732	11	\$142,838	\$157,570
14202	3,911	17.10%	12.10%	7	\$6,315	5	\$47,008	\$53,323
14203	1,618	47.10%	12.70%	8	\$4,901	4	\$59,244	\$64,145
14204	8,691	40.40%	16.00%	28	\$21,699	13	\$122,905	\$144,604
14206	20,751	20.90%	12.80%	17	\$15,939	11	\$125,307	\$141,246
14207	23,552	34.50%	13.10%	38	\$33,647	23	\$272,335	\$305,982
14208	11,125	32.30%	18.70%	29	\$33,058	21	\$225,853	\$258,911
14209	7,926	18.10%	9.10%	16	\$14,482	6	\$30,026	\$44,508
14210	14,694	23.40%	13.40%	18	\$11,535	9	\$187,227	\$198,762
14211	22,611	37.30%	18.50%	118	\$114,735	61	\$638,332	\$753,067
14212	10,641	34.50%	16.10%	40	\$35,460	24	\$183,536	\$218,996
14213	24,465	44.80%	15.20%	48	\$45,726	30	\$352,680	\$398,406
14214	19,775	23.50%	6.60%	18	\$19,499	11	\$125,712	\$145,211
14215	39,999	28.60%	14.60%	168	\$163,319	91	\$779,275	\$942,594
14216	22,431	14.60%	7.30%	14	\$18,328	5	\$72,291	\$90,619
14220	24,227	16.00%	9.10%	10	\$9,151	2	\$19,335	\$28,486
14222	14,046	20.20%	7.40%	4	\$3,469	3	\$82,652	\$86,121
				596	\$565,995	330	\$3,466,596	\$4,032,591

PROVEN PROGRAM MODEL

Program Overview

CEO's employment reentry model consists of four phases specifically designed to engage people with significant barriers to employment. This model has been proven through a three-year independent random assignment evaluation to reduce recidivism by 22% and save taxpayers \$3.30 for every dollar invested. The same evidence-based model developed in New York City has been implemented with fidelity in Buffalo. In order to overcome the barriers our target population frequently experiences, while still operating on a large scale, the program model is both personalized and highly structured. Participants move through each phase individually and at their own pace, enabling each person to focus on addressing their own unique barriers to employment.

Life Skills Education & Job Coaching

Life Skills Education is a critical first step in the CEO model. The Life Skills Educator/Job Coach (LSE/JC) is responsible for teaching a one week (LSE) class that is mandatory for every individual referred to CEO. LSE focuses on the importance of setting short and long-term life goals, honing interviewing skills, and developing a professional and positive attitude. Additionally, the LSE/JC help participants identify solutions to challenges that may prevent their success beyond employment, providing referrals to other service providers and ensuring that each participant is empowered with the tools and networks needed to succeed on the job.

Transitional Work

Immediately after graduating LSE, participants are engaged in transitional work crews to develop marketable job experience and critical skills for the work place. CEO's work crews serve as an employment lab, teaching participants/employees how to work while they perform valuable tasks and earn a paycheck. Further, from their experience on the crews, participants learn the workplace behavior employers say they most value in the entry-level workforce. At the end of the shift, CEO puts a paycheck in the hands of each participant. This daily paycheck gives participants well-earned money as they transition from prison to the community, conveying the important lesson that work pays.

Job Development

CEO staff leverages the transitional work experience of participants who are "job start ready" (JSR) to help them engage in the private sector job market. Job Developers work with participants to identify industries of interest to the participant. Realistic expectations are set collaboratively, and due consideration is given to both local job market conditions and hiring trends. Job Developers work directly with local employers to identify hiring needs and to discuss the benefits of hiring individuals who have been identified, vetted and cultivated by CEO. Participants' skills are then matched to employers seeking to hire individuals who possess specific experience.

Retention Services

Job retention services and direct follow-up after job placement are essential to the long-term success of CEO's clients. CEO's incentive-based job retention program, *Rapid Rewards*, serves to support participants at critical milestones with the provision of monthly payments as reward for remaining employed. Participants also receive workplace counseling, crisis management and long-term career planning from a CEO retention specialist who is committed to ensuring each participant's viability in the job market. Currently, retention efforts follow a participant for one year after placement into an unsubsidized, full time job. In the event of job loss, Retention Specialists reengage participants and reenroll them in transitional work, allowing them to continue working while they search for a new full-time position.

TRANSITIONAL WORK CREWS



CEO transitional work crews have made a visible impact on the Buffalo community. Every day, CEO fields three supervised, transitional work crews that perform neighborhood clean-up and blight removal on high-impact blocks and neighborhoods throughout the city. Transitional work crews serve as an employment lab, teaching the behavior employers say they most value in the entry-level workforce, including showing up on time, taking direction from a supervisor, being a good co-worker, working hard, and using good communication skills.

City of Buffalo Mayor's Impact Team

The Mayor's Impact Team cleans over 1,500 properties along with numerous streets throughout the city each year. It also serves orders to vacate for the City's Housing Court, cleaning over 1,400 vacant homes a year as well as assisting in the City's vacant lot maintenance program. CEO crews have attended every City of Buffalo Clean Sweep effort since August 2010. Mayor Byron Brown's Clean Sweep Initiative is nationally recognized.



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI)

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) is a model for home-based health and safety programs, with a dual objective of promoting positive health outcomes and cost efficiency. The GHHI crew works directly with Buffalo Habitat for Humanity and PUSH Buffalo staff to rehabilitate dilapidated homes for low to moderate income residents and receive hands-on residential construction training. The GHHI approach also provides economic benefit to families in the form of housing cost savings, develops career pathways to higher-paying 'green' jobs, and produces stable neighborhoods by increasing the quality of housing stock.

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

The Center for Employment work crews assist Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy staff maintain an entire historic urban park system that consists of 1,200 acres of beautifully designed parks, parkways and circles. The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is a not-for-profit, membership-based, community organization whose mission is to promote, preserve, restore, enhance and maintain the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks and parkways in the Greater Buffalo area for current and future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Funding Partners

City of Buffalo

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The John R. Oishei Foundation

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) National

New York State Department of Labor

New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services

Western New York Regional Economic Development Council

Transitional Work Crew Partners

City of Buffalo

PUSH Buffalo

Buffalo Habitat for Humanity

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Buffalo Olmsted Park's Conservancy

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SPECIAL THANKS

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