

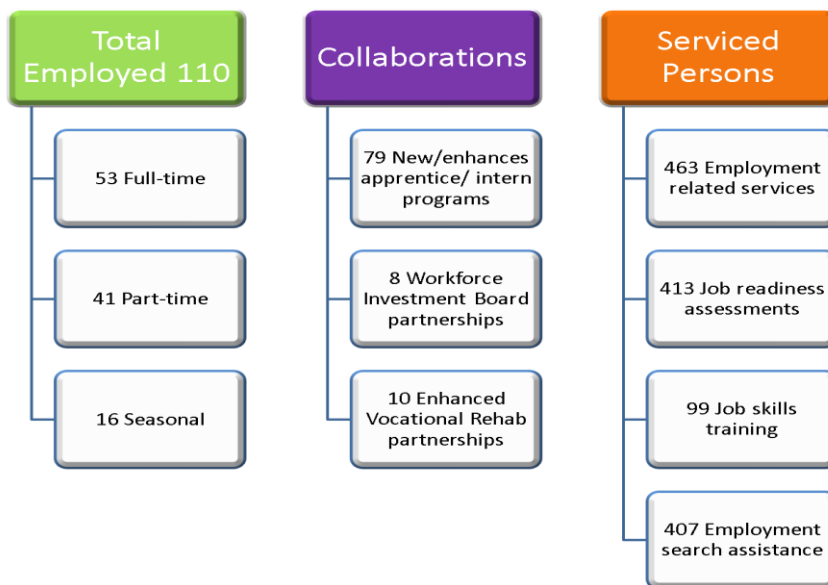
Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) HUD- Office of HIV/AIDS Housing Employment Service Efforts

Since 2007 The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH) has recognized that People Living with HIV/AIDS have different service needs than when the epidemic first started, and that it is no longer enough to provide housing and general supports. HUD recognizes that studies from the 1980's to today have shown the benefits of employment for people living with HIV/AIDS. One early qualitative study conducted at Multitasking Systems of New York, Inc. was developed in 1989 by two physicians at New York University (Drs. Laubenstein and Greene) who noticed that their patients with HIV/AIDS who continued to work were less susceptible to depression and lived longer than those who disengaged from work. Research has also shown there is a clear link established between positive health outcomes and employment.

In recent years there has been and continues to be an increased demand for employment services for people living with HIV/AIDS. OHH recognizes this paradigm shift in the epidemic and is committed to providing our beneficiaries with access to a full range of services.

HOPWA Technical Assistance Initiative

OHH began our HIV/AIDS and employment work in 2007 starting with a technical assistance initiative lasting through 2012. The initiative was designed to increase our grantee's capacity to offer and provide employment services to our beneficiaries. This initiative was a success that led to creative and replicable partnerships between local HOPWA programs and: American Job Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Ticket to Work/Employment Networks, Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Programs, Community colleges, and Community-based workforce programs.



Lessons Learned: 5 Essential Building Blocks for Employment Programs.

1. Vocationalizing is an essential first step. This involves embedding employment-related expectations, practice, and service delivery into all facets of program operation and culture.
2. Designating a staff person dedicated to employment a critical component to successful implementation and sustainability. Assign, support and fund a position dedicated solely to proving employment services. This staff person is able to prioritize employment-related work with clients and provide specialized expertise.

3. Employment readiness is critical for client engagement and job attainment. Providers should consider utilizing vocational assessment tools and implementing evidence-based public health models and techniques, such as Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing.
4. Building collaborations with mainstream workforce services expands agency capacity to connect clients with employment services and opportunities. Collaborations and partnerships are necessary to educate staff on how to effectively link clients to employment services and opportunities.
5. Understanding the impact of earned income on disability benefits improves client motivation and diminishes staff and client fear of negative consequences to employment. Providers should ensure that designated staffers have a basic understanding of SSI and SSDI rules on the potential impact of earned income on disability benefits.

For more information on developing employment programs please click the following links: (1) [Vocationalizing – December 2011](#); (2) [Vocational Assessments – February 2012](#); (3) [Benefits Planning and Returning to Work – March 2012](#); (4) [Job Readiness Services – April 2012](#); (5) [Living and Working with HIV – May 2012](#); (6) [Navigating Workforce Systems – July 2012](#) (7) [Sustainability: Ensuring Your Employment Program’s Long Term Success – September 2012](#) (8) [Getting to Work Wrap-Up – November 2012](#)

Getting To Work On-Line Curriculum

In 2014, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor and the Working Positive Coalition, HUD launched an online “Getting to Work” employment curriculum <https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/dol-hud-getting-to-work-curriculum-for-hiv-aids-providers/>. We expanded on the technical assistance initiative efforts and lessons learned, and further clarified more specific action steps and processes to the five building blocks of employment programs and beneficiary employment readiness actions.

HHS MHAF Employment Initiative

In 2017 OHH worked in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Minority HIV/AIDS Fund (MHAF) and the SPNS Program to issue a Notice of funding Opportunity (NOFO) and award 12 projects to address the employment needs of people living with HIV/AIDS expanding upon the HOPWA Getting to Work Curriculum. The 12 projects are currently in the final stage of implementation and evaluation.

The overall goal of this SPNS initiative is to decrease the impact of the social determinants of health (such as unmet housing or employment needs) that affect long-term HIV health outcomes for people with HIV impacted by employment and housing instability. The Project includes 12 demonstration sites that implement, evaluate, and will disseminate innovative strategies for integrating HIV care, housing, and employment services into a coordinated intervention. Boston University’s Center for Innovation in Social Work in Health serves as the Evaluation and Technical Assistance Provider. This link <https://targethiv.org/housing-and-employment> will provide you access to additional information on this initiative with issue briefs and spotlights on different models. There are several other project papers, manuals, etc that are still in development and will be posted to this site.

HOPWA NOFO

OHH published a NOFO on April 15, 2021. This NOFO is an opportunity for communities to fund new Housing programs that can also address the employment needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Projects funded through this HOPWA funding opportunity will achieve six required project objectives:

1. Implement and document housing and services models for low-income persons living with HIV and their families that are innovative and replicable in other similar localities or nationally.
2. Increase alignment with new or existing local initiatives or strategies to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by elevating housing as an effective structural intervention.
3. Improve coordination among local housing and service providers and use of available community resources.

4. Increase the amount of quality data collected and used for data-driven decision making with an emphasis on stable housing, positive health outcomes, and racial equity.
5. Assess and document replicable practices that ensure equitable access and culturally competent approaches to providing housing and services for subpopulations of persons living with HIV experiencing service gaps; and
6. Prioritize sustainable, effective, and equitable approaches to providing housing and services to persons living with HIV and their families that can be continued past the funded project's period of performance.

HUD will publish a pre-application webcast by April 30, 2021 for anyone interested in submitting an application for the HOPWA: Housing as an Intervention to Fight AIDS funding opportunity. The webcast will cover the information in the NOFO. More information on the webcast will be provided through the [HUD.gov HOPWA mailing list](#). To sign up for the mailing list, please visit [the HUD.gov HOPWA mailing list subscription page](#).