

What is an Employer Resource Network (ERN)?

Purpose: The goal of an ERN is to bring together small to mid-size employers, in a common sector and/or common geography, to create a joint venture to link and leverage talent development resources most effectively. Often issues that impede successful job/employee retention involve social factors that Human Resources departments are not able to handle.

Challenges: Retaining an engaged and skilled workforce. Helping low-resource individuals/households succeed in establishing a more stable work life with potential for increases skills and wages over time.

Solution: Companies in a geographic area aggregate their needs around employee assistance and provide an opportunity toward continuous improvement in retention of their workforce.

By combining the needs of employees, from five to ten companies with average skills and wages across the investor companies, the ERN leverages resources in a manner that each business may not have the capacity to do on their own. Additionally, with a combined larger workforce, it can do so with a positive return on investment averaging 200% or more. In the Bay City/Midland area, the documented ROI is over 500%.

The Employer Resource Network model weaves a social and talent development network of support that creates the opportunity for a region to ensure an engaged and skilled workforce. As a result, an ERN helps communities create vibrant local networks that benefit employees and employers.

Working collectively, these networks tailor specific programs to provide information, education, support systems, and training. This approach increases employee knowledge, promotes job efficiency, and boosts effectiveness in the workplace environment. Productivity is impacted in several ways:

- Increased employee retention by addressing barriers so they can focus on work. ERNs in Michigan average a 95% + retention rate;
- Greater human resources focus on developing Human Capital instead of non-core issues or just compliance. Recouping just 4 hours a week equates to as much as \$5,000/yr. in saving or more;
- Enhanced employee skill set so they can be a more engaged part of the process of productivity and continuous quality improvement. Engaged employees are approximately 28% more productive than disengaged employees.

Everyone wins

- *New connections* for small and midsize companies—helping them participate in local employer resource networks as well as government-funded workforce development programs
- *Expanded reach* for public and nonprofit agencies—aiding them to efficiently engage and effectively serve more workforce members
- *Easy access* to opportunities for lower-wage employees—allowing them to access on-the-job supports and advance through training and education programs

Who provides leadership and direction for an Employer Resource Network?

- Each ERN is controlled locally by the investor companies. The committee of each ERN site is comprised of an HR representative or other designee from each investor company.

- The network of ERNs in a region is typically coordinated and staffed through Michigan Works!.
- Each ERN group reviews monthly performance and makes decisions based on the specific needs of their companies and can shift focus due to changing economies or markets.
- The sustainability of the venture is based on value and return on investment.

How does an ERN work?

By acknowledging the effect of a stable work / life balance, employees are better positioned to succeed at work and grow within each company.

- The Success Coach from an ERN works with employees on-site at their place of employment or near-site conveniently before or after their work shift.
- The ERN introduces tools similar to lean principles and process improvement efforts to drive continuous workforce improvement. To improve performance, root cause analysis is used to address employee retention issues, and links skill development and advancement pathways in collaboration with the existing community resources offered by partner organizations throughout the community.
- Support services that enhance job retention and advancement are individualized to the employee but also conducted in part through group activities such as Lunch & Learn. They include things like transportation, work behaviors and attitudes, understanding the needs of employers, financial literacy, child care, family budgeting, loan programs and savings programs, interpersonal relationships, effective communication, and more.



What is TeamWork NorthWest?

TeamWork NorthWest is a job retention program that benefits both employees and their employer. A network of community resources is available to help workers overcome barriers to keeping a job.

What is the Purpose?

This program's purpose is to help employers maintain quality workers, to help workers retain their jobs, and to reduce the costs of turnover for both the employer and society.

How does it Work?

A Success Coach holds office hours at the employer's location, and is available to meet with workers as needed. A supervisor at the business refers employees who are prone to retention problems, or a worker can self-refer. The Success Coach meets with the employee and assesses barriers. This allows the Success Coach to identify areas where the person may need assistance in order to prevent job loss.

Services Related to:

- Homelessness
- Emergency shelter
- Eviction notices
- Domestic violence
- Divorce counseling
- Divorce legal assistance
- Car repair
- Medical insurance
- Food and medical assistance for children
- Telephone access
- Gas cards for transportation to work
- Work clothes for new hires
- Child care referrals
- Child care payments
- Heating and electrical shut off prevention
- Health and dental problems
- Communication skills
- Work behaviors
- Workplace norms & expectations

Tara

Tara has three young children and a disabled husband. She was limited by her doctor to working 20 hours per week, and was paying \$400 per month in health insurance for her children. When she met with her Success Coach, she learned her children were eligible for Medicaid. This essentially added \$400 to her income! She is now better able to provide for the other needs of her family, and decreased her stress enough that she is working 32 hours per week.

Caroline

Caroline is a single mother of two children. Her attendance at work was unreliable, so she was referred to the Success Coach. It became apparent that Caroline did not have reliable childcare, especially for sick time and snow days. She was given counseling on how to secure adequate child care.

The referring supervisor also mentioned that Caroline's attitude was an issue at work. The Success Coach met with Caroline again and discovered that she was a victim of domestic violence, had been served with an eviction notice, needed car repair, was dealing with custody issues through Friend of the Court, and had a DUI arrest and pending court date. After much time spent counseling, supporting, and listening to Caroline, the Success Coach discussed and addressed the issue of correct behavior on the job. Her attitude and performance improved significantly.

A third-party Success Coach can often discuss issues that an employer is not allowed by law to raise with the employee.

An employee is often more likely to discuss issues or problems with a confidential third party than with the employer.