

Impact Workforce

Building community hiring pathways that create opportunities for employment and career advancement.

Employing over 6 million workers, health systems are uniquely positioned as some of the largest employers and leading economic engines in their communities. In addition to providing quality healthcare, systems can commit to impact hiring practices that connect individuals from nearby under-resourced communities—places where people are experiencing the greatest inequities—to quality jobs. By removing barriers and creating career pathways for un- and under-employed residents, health systems can address critical workforce shortage needs and help build communities where all can be healthy and thrive. Healthcare Anchor Network's [Impact Workforce Commitment \(IWC\) signatories](#) seek to reach at least 10% of new hires annually as “impact hires” (employees hired from economically disadvantaged areas who connect to the organization through intentional pathways into jobs that require less than a bachelor's degree) by 2027.

An **anchor mission** is a commitment to intentionally apply an institution's place-based economic power in partnership with the community to mutually benefit the long-term well-being of both.

Health systems that adopt the anchor mission recognize that their hiring, purchasing, investing, and other institutional assets are an important part of creating thriving communities and equitable local economies. This strategic approach offers an opportunity to work at the intersection of many organizational priorities, such as health equity, community benefit, diversity and inclusion, prevention, sustainability, civic responsibility, and overall employee engagement, to foster greater alignment and overall impact.

Business Impact Case

Impact workforce strategies can help accomplish broader workforce goals such as addressing worker shortages, reducing recruitment times and turnover, and developing a staff that is well-prepared and reflective of its community.

Short-term Impacts

- Reduce job turnover rates
- Reduce time to fill open positions
- Generate savings in internal training and orientation costs
- Develop new partnerships that can uniquely adapt to business needs
- Leverage public & private resources by linking existing workforce development dollars to employer demand

Long-term Impacts

- Build community wealth by increasing hires from local under-resourced communities into quality, living wage jobs
- Gain new savings and efficiencies in recruitment and training
- Improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention through effective training and career pathways
- Develop stronger community relationships to build a reputation of trust
- Build a more diverse workforce to better reflect and serve diverse communities and patient populations

Here's how some leading health systems are leveraging their hiring and workforce systems to improve their communities overall health and well-being:

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS

Headquartered in Cleveland, OH

Building Intentional Pathways In & Up

University Hospitals' intentional hiring pathways and paid training programs help to address business needs while connecting residents from nearby neighborhoods in Cleveland with jobs and career ladder opportunities.

[Click here for the HAN case study](#)

Impact

- 420 hires as of January 2023
- Reduced interview-to-hire ratio for recruiters
- One-year retention rate at 88% for pathway program graduates, compared with 72% overall
- 301 promotions since launch with guidance from career pathway coach, with an 87% retention rate

Key Strategies

- Invest in paid training opportunities such as earn-and-learns and apprenticeships as a key component of a sustainable talent pipeline.
- Set aside positions for cohort graduates.
- Offer job coaching for entry-level hires and map out potential career pathways.
- Partner with local community organizations and education institutions, and participate in healthcare sector partnerships.

Career Pathways for Incumbent Workers

- Pharm Tech Apprenticeship (97 hires from 2020-2023)
- Community Health Worker Apprenticeship (28 hires from 2020-2023)
- Medical Assistant Apprenticeship (84 hires from 2022-2023)
- Licensed Practical Nurse Apprenticeship (16 hires from 2022-2023)

ADVOCATE HEALTH

Headquartered in Milwaukee, WI

Returning Citizens Initiative

Advocate Health launched an intentional effort in 2020 to hire individuals re-entering the workforce following incarceration as part of a system-wide strategy to diversify its recruitment and talent-sourcing efforts.

[Click here for the HAN Case Study](#)

Impact

- More than 35 returning citizens have been hired as of 2023

Key Strategies

- Develop strong partnerships with community-based organizations that help justice-involved individuals overcome structural and societal barriers to finding employment.
- Build strong relationships with HR and Legal Compliance.

- Remove bias by not revealing to hiring managers which candidates are justice-involved.
- Educate leadership on the best practices to support returning citizens.
- Provide job coaches to support employees in environmental services and nutrition service roles.

Partner Organizations

- The Center for Self-Sufficiency
- Goodwill Workforce Connection
- JobsWork MKE
- Cara
- Safer Foundation

BAYSTATE HEALTH

Headquartered in Western MA

Outside-in and Inside-up Workforce Strategies

Baystate is hiring residents from Springfield, which has some of the highest poverty rates in all of Massachusetts.

[Click here for the HAN case study](#)

Key Strategies - Outside-in

- Partner with other local employers, community-based organizations, and educational partners to support an effective workforce ecosystem.
- Connect unsuccessful applicants with career development opportunities.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations and other community partners on initiatives such as cohort training programs.

- Holistically assess candidates and provide training opportunities and other support for those lacking formal work experience or technical skills.
- Hold focus groups with entry-level employees to better understand their perceptions of the organization.

Key Strategies - Inside-up

- Increase retention rates with an inside-up workforce strategy that includes apprenticeships, internships, earn-and-learns, and “pay to train” models.
- Develop a strategy to help employees overcome financial instability.
- Enlist workforce planners to build programming to support incumbent employees’ career advancement.



Strategies for Getting Started

Intentional, outside-in hiring strategies prepare residents experiencing barriers to employment for jobs at anchor institutions by offering training and skill development and by providing specific entry points for these candidates.

- Partner with and strengthen the capacities of workforce intermediaries and community organizations that help connect residents to jobs through training, skill development, and other support services.
- Educate hiring managers about impact hiring and involve them in the training process; edit job descriptions to focus on competencies and skills.
- Utilize a cohort training model that is focused on specific positions, and set aside position vacancies and guarantee interviews for cohort graduates.
- Commit to working with residents with barriers to employment, including justice-involved individuals.

Inside-up strategies help entry-level and other incumbent employees reach their full potential through accessible learning opportunities, job coaching, wraparound support, and clear pathways for career advancement within the system.

- Connect entry-level employees to job coaching and mentoring.
- Create transparent, accessible career pathways.
- Provide tuition advancement to support entry-level employees in gaining new skills.
- Provide accessible learning opportunities: bridge skill-building programs, apprenticeships, earn and learns, ESL/ELL programs, etc.
- Provide benefits to help employees overcome financial instability and build wealth.

[For a list of sources, click here](#)