

Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN) Announces WorkAdvance Grant Cohort with Seven Health Systems to Connect Economically Distressed Communities to High-Demand Healthcare Careers Across the Country

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

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HAN awards WorkAdvance grants to Froedtert ThedaCare, Nemours Children's Health, Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, University of Utah Health, Trinity Health, NewYork-Presbyterian, and UC San Francisco — in partnership with leading community and place-based organizations.

Initiative will expand structured career pathways to economically distressed communities nationwide.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The **Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN)**, a national not-for-profit organization that aligns hospitals and health systems around a shared framework for advancing economic inclusion, announced today that seven member health systems are recipients of WorkAdvance grants. The cohort will build structured career pathways that connect residents in economically distressed communities to quality, in-demand healthcare jobs — with an emphasis on retention and long-term advancement.

The WorkAdvance model is a nationally recognized, research-validated, results-driven workforce development approach that creates pools of qualified job seekers resulting in hires with high job retention rates. Each grantee will partner with a local place-based or community organization to identify, prepare, and place participants in roles ranging from Certified Nursing Assistant to Sterile Processing Technician to Medical Assistant.

2026–2028 WORKADVANCE COHORT

HAN congratulates the following member health systems and their community partners on receiving WorkAdvance grants, which were made possible through the generous support of Ballmer Group. We are currently accepting applications for a second HAN cohort which we aim to launch in early 2027.

StriveTogether, a national network of community partnerships that put young people on a path to economic mobility, serves as the place-based partner for Milwaukee Succeeds, Oakland Promise, Spartanburg Academic Movement, and Promise Partnership Utah.

Purpose Built Communities anchors the Wilmington cohort through REACH Riverside and **STRIVE New York** is the place-based partner for NewYork-Presbyterian.

Location	Health System	Place-Based Partner
Milwaukee, WI	Froedtert ThedaCare	Milwaukee Succeeds (StriveTogether)
Wilmington, DE	Nemours Children's Health	REACH Riverside (Purpose Built Communities)
Spartanburg, SC	Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System	Spartanburg Academic Movement (StriveTogether)
Salt Lake City, UT	University of Utah Health	Promise Partnership Utah (StriveTogether)
Southeast MI	Trinity Health	Pontiac Collective Impact Partnership
New York, NY	NewYork-Presbyterian	STRIVE New York
San Francisco, CA	University of California San Francisco (UCSF)	Oakland Promise (StriveTogether)

FROM THE HEALTHCARE ANCHOR NETWORK AND NATIONAL PARTNERS

“We are thrilled to support these members and strengthen their capacity to partner locally to build intentional pathways that connect local residents in economically distressed communities to quality jobs and lasting careers in health care. These awards reflect our confidence in their commitment not just

to hiring, but to providing the coaching that is key to helping these employees advance into higher-skilled, higher-paying roles over time. That's how anchor institutions create meaningful economic mobility—outside in, and inside up.”

— **David Zuckerman, President & Founder, Healthcare Anchor Network**

"With healthcare projected to be the fastest-growing sector in the American economy through 2036, we have to build more pathways into stable, well-paying healthcare careers, which can also shape economic mobility for entire communities. This initiative shows what becomes possible when health systems and the local partnerships work toward the same goal, connecting residents to the careers that families and the broader economy depend on."

— **Jennifer Blatz, CEO, StriveTogether**

"Hospitals and health systems have long understood that good jobs with fair pay are foundational for health and wellbeing. Our goal is to transform neighborhoods so that everyone can thrive. Purpose Built Communities Network Members that have deep, trust-based relationships in their community are uniquely positioned to help residents connect with community health partners to place them in high-demand, higher-earning careers. The Health Anchor Network isn't just filling a workforce need—it's helping build a holistic community of opportunity where families can put down roots, kids can thrive, and neighbors have a better path to prosperity."

— **Carol R. Naughton, CEO, Purpose Built Communities®**

WHY IT MATTERS

The U.S. healthcare workforce faces a significant and growing shortage of frontline workers. Demand for roles such as Certified Nursing Assistants, Medical Assistants, and Sterile Processing Technicians is projected to expand by more than 2 million jobs by 2034. At the same time, systemic barriers — including the cost of training, lack of paid leave, and limited access to career coaching — prevent many residents in economically distressed communities from accessing these stable, well-paying roles.

WorkAdvance addresses this gap by bringing together anchor health systems and trusted community partners to deliver industry-specific training, career readiness support, direct pathways to employment, ongoing career coaching — all within a framework that prioritizes economic mobility for participants.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS

WorkAdvance is not only a community investment — it is also a proven workforce strategy that delivers measurable returns for participating health systems. Anchor institutions that build structured pathways from their local communities see meaningful gains across recruitment, retention, and organizational culture.

Short-Term Impacts

- **Reduce job turnover rates:** Lower attrition among cohort hires compared to traditional recruitment channels.
- **Reduce time to fill open positions:** A pre-qualified, job-ready pathway shortens the recruitment cycle for in-demand roles.
- **Generate savings in training and orientation costs:** Participants arrive with technical skills and career readiness already in place.
- **Develop new community partnerships:** Relationships with place-based organizations create employer-responsive, adaptable talent pathways.
- **Leverage public and private resources:** Linking existing workforce development dollars to employer demand maximizes the value of every training investment.

Long-Term Impacts

- **Build community wealth:** Increasing hires from local under-resourced communities into quality, living-wage jobs strengthens the broader regional economy.
- **Gain sustained savings in recruitment and training:** Systems that invest in pathway development see compounding efficiencies over time.
- **Improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention:** Workers hired through structured pathways with built-in career advancement report higher satisfaction and stay longer.
- **Develop stronger community trust:** Anchor institutions that hire locally and invest in residents build reputations as true community partners.
- **Build a more diverse workforce:** Recruiting from under-resourced communities produces a staff that better reflects and serves diverse patient populations.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Each WorkAdvance grantee will design and implement a structured workforce pathway including:

- **Industry-specific technical training:** aligned to in-demand roles at the partnering health system.
- **Career readiness preparation:** including resume support, interview coaching, and professional development.
- **Earn-while-you-learn opportunities:** allowing some participants to work alongside clinical teams while completing coursework.
- **Tuition and cost-of-training support:** to remove financial barriers to program completion.
- **Job placement and retention coaching:** with ongoing support to ensure participants stay in and then advance into higher-skill, higher-wage roles over time.

ABOUT HEALTHCARE ANCHOR NETWORK

The Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN) is a national not-for-profit organization that helps hospitals and health systems leverage their roles as anchor institutions to build more inclusive local economies. HAN supports its members in aligning hiring, purchasing, and investment strategies with the goal of creating healthy, thriving communities. Learn more at healthcareanchor.network.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNER NETWORKS

StriveTogether is a national network of community partnerships that bring together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, employers, schools and more, to work toward a future where everyone can thrive. Cradle to Career Network members build connections, share resources, and use data to put more young people on a path to economic mobility. Learn more at strivetogether.org.

Purpose Built Communities combines the best practice, policy, and research in housing, education, community wellness, and economic vitality to help neighbors and local leaders deliver transformation to create pathways to prosperity for all residents. Learn more at purposebuiltcommunities.org.

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