

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Hennepin Pathways bring together community organizations, education partners, and regional employers to create training programs that lead to well-paid, full-time employment with advancement opportunity.

The pathways model has evolved over years of trialing a variety of recruitment efforts, hiring initiatives, and program structures. Hennepin has found the most success with the following structure with adaptations to meet the unique needs of each industry.

- Community based partner recruits, vets, and provides long-term support to candidates
- Cohort style programs with heavy engagement from the employer partners
- Employer has procedures to ensure graduates have access to full time employment opportunities
- Ongoing collaboration between hiring supervisors, community-based partner, and new employees
- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

The following timeline shows the development of the Hennepin Pathways.

Analysis

2013

Workforce analysis Internal analysis leads to Pathway programs as a key initiative to fill vacant positions created by retirements while diversifying workforce.

Identify and reduce hiring barriers:

- Add graduation from programs as a minimum qualification
- Create eligibility list to hire graduates from directly
- Require hiring teams to offer pathways as the primary candidate pool

Test program type

2015

Workforce analysis Hiring needs lead to additional programs, and exploration of different structures.

Trainings begin

Office Specialist Pathway (OS) is a six-week daytime program designed to fill administrative positions. Hennepin County is the only employer partner with a commitment to hire all graduates. Hennepin County is the sole employer partner committed to hiring all graduates.

Veterans Hiring Initiative (VHI) includes case management and a paid work experience to help veterans and their family members meet minimum qualifications for permanent roles.

Walk the Talk Initiative (WTI) is a recruitment strategy providing limited duration employment to candidates with disabilities to develop skills until minimum qualifications are met for permanent roles.

Performance measurements *Human Services Pathway (HSP)* is successful with Hennepin hiring 14 graduates and a second cohort in starting in May.

Cross agency partnerships Launch *Workforce Leadership Council*, a collaboration of regional employers identifying solutions for high turnover, in-demand positions.

2016: Hennepin participates in 9 programs and hires 75 graduates

2014

Training begins

Building partnerships Collaborate with public sector employers, community-based organizations, and education partners to recruit, teach, support, and hire from program.

Resource allocation Budgets ensure full-time positions available for graduates.

Training begins

Human Services Pathway (HSP) fills human service representative positions across four public sector employers. It is 9-months, includes college credits, on the job experiences, and 12 months of support services.

2014: Hennepin hires 14 graduates from the first Pathway program

2016

Expansion

Training begins

Public Sector Administrative Professionals (PSAP) an evening program with college course work preparing graduates to work administrative roles in government.

Health Advocate (HA) combines content and schedule of the *PSAP* program while adding coursework in medical terminology and unpaid internships to place graduates into private and public healthcare settings.

Building Operations Technician (BOT) trains for careers in residential and commercial building maintenance with more than seven employers hiring from the program.

Performance measurements to maximize impact process and programs continually adapt. Examples: change to grant funding, addition of background check process and an internal staff member dedicated to support *HSP* pathway.

Refinement

2017

Performance measurements a more focused approach achieves higher outcomes. Hennepin reduces the number of programs and refines their structure.

Training begins

Healthcare Clerical (HCC) the non-profit partner adapts the Health Advocate program into this shorter day-time program with an emphasis on medical clerical work, removing direct-patient care coursework.

Public Sector Administrative Professionals (PSAP) Hennepin partners for two cohorts, instead focusing on the *Office Specialist* program which has more Hennepin-focused content.

Walk the Talk Initiative and *Veterans Hiring Initiative* are discontinued. This begins Hennepin's emphasis on cohort models with wrap around supports provided by community partners

2019: 88% of pathway hires maintain employment for at least one-year

Recognition

2019

Continuous improvements Diversity Equity and Inclusion work impacts the success of a diverse workplace thriving. Since pathway's inception, significant process changes and trainings provided.

National Association of Counties (NACO) visits Hennepin's pathway programs in recognition of successful outcomes and to learn how to implement in their own communities.

Healthcare Clerical (HCC) is discontinued as the *Office Specialist* program meets similar hiring needs with more focused content.

Training begins *911 Dispatcher* Hennepin partners for two cohorts with majority of graduates are hired by another employer partner.

Rebuilding

2021

White House guest speaker, Julie Chávez Rodríguez, recognizes Hennepin's pathways by presenting at the *Office Specialist* graduation ceremony.

Continuous improvements Virtual programming evolves from a short-term pivot to robust structure with the addition of networking coffee hours, virtual panels, and advanced technology trainings.



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2017: Since 2014 more than 350 participants enrolled in pathway programs

2018 Internal Advancement

With a reduced number of programs, there is a focus on fine-tuning program details, adding significant Hennepin related content, and internal process improvements.

Continuous improvements

Develop strong participation through internal advertising campaign, use of pathways as a primary recruitment option, and documenting best practices. There is an emphasis on connecting graduates with internal resources such as the Employee Career Center, New Employee Academy, and tuition reimbursement.

Training begins *Property Appraiser* provides work experience in conjunction with college coursework. Due to cost and length of training, program adapts to hire from BOT.

Performance measurements a Pathway's Impact analysis report shows positive impacts to the county as an employer and as an economic support provider.

2020

Pivot

In-person activities pivot to virtual or are suspended. Typical hiring cycles are paused and by the end of the year, new areas of employment opportunity are identified. Pathways played a significant role providing essential services such as voter registration and managing temporary housing solutions for vulnerable residents.

Continuous improvements

Hennepin continues to be an employer of choice with minimum wage increasing to \$20 an hour.

2020: Hennepin hires its 300th pathway graduate

2022

Equity in action

Equity is the driver of decision making. A holistic approach leads to a variety of changes

- New position is dedicated to focus specifically on Pathways
- Resources are distributed in greater quantity to include cash support, transportation, laptops
- Employee Resource Group for Pathways is reinvigorated

Training begins

Operator Apprenticeship (HERC) is the first earn and learn model which provides full-time pay with part-time work hours, giving participants paid time for college coursework, homework, and commuting.