1.3 Institutional Systems Changes

In order for outside-in strategies to be successful, internal systems, processes, or policies may need to be implemented or changed to ensure that individuals who successfully complete training programs are able to transition into full-time roles. Sometimes program graduates are lost to "the system" when processes and policies have not been put in place to identify these graduates. Recruiters need to be aware of the program and know how to identify and process graduates. Recruitment systems should be evaluated for general applicants also. Even the most prepared candidate may face additional barriers to hire unless systems, policies, and processes are reviewed for unintended barriers.

One common barrier is job descriptions that are written at a reading level above the literacy level of applicants when the job does not require that level of literacy. Another common barrier is lack of access to technology by potential applicants, and only accepting online applications, without providing support and resources to those who lack the technology. Some solutions to these barriers could include analyzing job postings for reading level and partnering with community organizations to help candidates with online applications.

Significant barriers to hire may be faced by people who have had involvement with the justice system. In many states and localities, job applicants may be asked about their arrest and conviction history early in the application process, which causes many individuals to screen themselves out of roles they may be qualified and eligible for. A common practice is to "ban the box" on job applications that asks for individuals' arrest and conviction history, and move any background checks or inquiries into their history to later in the hiring process.

Additional steps can be taken to prevent bias towards the formerly incarcerated and ensure they receive a fair chance in the hiring process. Human resources and talent acquisition leaders can collaborate with their organization's legal department to assess current policies and develop processes to better match applicants to specific jobs that they are eligible for, based on state laws and the applicant's backgrounds and skills. Health systems can also partner with community-based organizations that provide support services to people who have been involved in the justice system to develop intentional pathways to employment.

Provide Transparency about the Recruitment Process

Often, to the applicant, the recruitment process of a health system is opaque. When a person goes to apply, they often have no idea what happens after they press the "submit" button on the webpage. They do not know how long they will wait to hear from a recruiter or even if they will hear back at all. They do not know how many interviews they might have and how long it will take to receive an offer, if accepted. This lack of transparency can reduce the number of qualified applicants for an opening because people are discouraged from applying. By creating more transparency in the hiring process and explaining to applicants what happens after they apply for the position, a level of confidence in the system is built and

people will be more likely to apply.

A common practice when partnering with community-based organizations on outside-in pathways is to provide an overview of the health system's application and hiring process to staff at those organizations who will help to source and prepare candidates for interviews. When community partners understand hiring managers' needs and the experience of the job seeker, they can help to reduce confusion and ensure candidates are poised for success in the application process.

FROM THE FIELD

Rush University System for Health operates 16 community application hubs in collaboration with community-based organizations on the West Side of Chicago to help residents navigate the process of applying and interviewing for quality jobs at the health system. Community application hubs host meet-and-greet sessions where job seekers can learn about Rush's culture and values and ask any questions of the Rush talent acquisition team. In addition, community partner organizations promote employment opportunities, provide access to computers and internet service for completing online applications, and provide training on job preparation and interviewing skills. In 2023, Rush participated in over 30 hiring events, which contributed to 18% of new hires coming from anchor mission focus communities. By expanding local hiring, Rush aims to strengthen economic vitality and close life expectancy gaps in 12 West Side communities.

FROM THE FIELD

In 2021, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) convened an internal workgroup consisting of leaders from human resources, legal, and risk management, as well as community partners, to review the hospital and campus' background check process, and identify opportunities to mitigate bias against individuals with justice system involvement. The workgroup advised UCSF to provide clear information on its public candidate website about any background checks and/or substance use screenings that would be required as part of any job application, along with information on what would preclude an applicant from gaining employment. UCSF then revised language on public job postings and created an FAQ resource with added information on specific questions applicants may be asked to answer related to criminal convictions.

In doing so, UCSF was able to increase transparency with community members about the types of information that would be gathered during the application process, preventing instances in which justice-involved individuals who might be qualified for a position may not apply, as well as the less frequent instances when an otherwise qualified candidate applies but is later deemed ineligible. "We want to ensure that we identify [what] candidates need to be successful in that process," says Michael Jones, program director for workforce pathways at UCSF. And moreover, "it's an opportunity for our managers, our people leaders, to look at a candidate from a skills-based perspective."

Analyze Standards of Professionalism for Bias

Obtaining and maintaining a job often requires a person to have attributes beyond the explicitly defined skills and experience for a particular position. Sometimes these attributes fall into the category of

"professionalism". Standards of professionalism have evolved over the years, and have conformed to what the employer deems to be acceptable workplace behavior, dress, communication, and other ways of presenting oneself at work.

Creating an inclusive workplace begins with acknowledging and addressing the implicit biases that exist within the institution around the concept of professionalism, and recognizing that there may be instances where the standards of professionalism may be discriminatory to people from other cultures and backgrounds.

As organizations committed to connecting residents of economically under-resourced communities to quality jobs and career pathways, it is essential for healthcare anchor institutions to assess how certain unspoken expectations may affect recruitment, hiring practices, promotions to higher-wage positions, and termination decisions. This includes determining which qualities of outward-facing appearance and demeanor are deemed essential to the specific position. An example of changing the nature behind the idea of "professionalism" can be accepting different hairstyles in the workplace as professional. The way that an individual person does their hairstyle often reflects the individual's culture or religion—which can be legally protected rights.

Align with Other Institutional Goals

Connecting outside-in pathway programs to existing organizational goals—in particular those related to creating a workforce that can best meet the needs of the populations it serves—is key to building a successful, long-term impact workforce strategy.

Defining a focus for an organizational impact workforce strategy can start with a landscape analysis to understand critical workforce needs and pain points across relevant departments, such as cultivation, hiring, retention, and representation. "Start with [asking], 'What's our primary objective as an organization?'" recommends Seanna Ruvkun, workforce planning consultant at Seattle Children's Hospital. "Leverage what you have in place already, and take advantage of emerging opportunities." Conducting an assessment of existing organizational goals that could be impacted by impact workforce strategies can help to narrow the focus. For Seattle Children's, an organizational priority to cultivate a workforce that supports the diverse needs of the patients and families served by the health system has been a key driver for its impact workforce programs.

Belonging and inclusion efforts

Workforce intermediaries and community-based organizations often work in low-income communities. Through strong relationships with these organizations, health systems can gain access to existing local community networks and relationships in order to develop programming and impact workforce initiatives that can lead to expanded sourcing pools and greater opportunities to hire people from these communities. For example, one health system partners with a local workforce intermediary to implement apprenticeship programs, hiring events, and outreach events with middle and high school students to build awareness of career opportunities in healthcare. These partnerships are complemented by internal policies and programs at the health system that facilitate fair opportunities for advancement.

Lurie Children's began developing outside-in initiatives in 2001 in order to increase access to healthcare careers for individuals in its workforce to reflect the changing demographics among its patients in the Chicagoland area. The health system adopted a long-term commitment to increase recruitment, including neighborhoods on the south and west sides of Chicago communities that are disproportionately affected by unequal health outcomes. A wide array of workforce development and mentoring programs for students in elementary school, high school, and at the college level provide access points to developing careers in healthcare. The programs are designed to educate students about the wide range of healthcare careers

available, provide mentorship as students continue their education, and encourage alumni to apply for full-time roles. From 2021 to 2024, Lurie Children's has hired 75 program alumni into full-time roles.

Community engagement goals

Outside-in programs can also be targeted to fill specific positions that require knowledge of the community, such as community health workers (CHWs), health coaches, and community health center employees. For example, UCSF partners with the Transitions Clinic Network to recruit candidates with lived experience of incarceration to fill CHW roles that require engaging community members returning from incarceration. These CHWs provide specialized support and navigation of social services unique to returning citizens. At one county jail, 70% of patients who met a TCN-trained CHW before jail release attended their follow-up appointment, compared to only 33% of patients attending a scheduled follow-up appointment when they did not meet with a CHW before release.

Foster Collaboration between Internal Departments

Workforce efforts are an important strategy for community/population health and community benefit departments. Explicitly linking impact workforce efforts to community health departments can bring additional resources to the table, particularly for measuring impact. The act of documenting unemployment and underemployment as health needs can also help make the case for local hiring efforts. At institutions serving large uninsured populations and with high rates of uncompensated care, this becomes especially strategic. Linking community residents to employment not only provides greater economic stability, but also connects more residents to health insurance.

FROM THE FIELD

One health system's neighborhood hiring pathways and career ladder programs represent an acknowledgment that positive health outcomes are achieved through factors such as stable employment and economic mobility. The health system implements intentional, outside-in pathways in under-resourced communities, using the United Way's ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) framework as a guide. This framework accounts for families who earn incomes above the federal poverty level but who remain unable to afford household necessities such as housing, child care, food, transportation, healthcare, and a basic smartphone plan. The health system identified zip codes with high proportions of ALICE households within the footprint of its many hospitals and then layered in life expectancy data to come up with a prioritized list of zip codes for targeted recruitment. With the support of an HR data-analytics team, the social impact team tracks impact hires and hires from ALICE zip codes on a monthly basis.

UC Davis Health has utilized social determinants of health, rather than race and ethnicity categories, to identify local, socioeconomically underserved communities for targeted recruitment as part of an organizational priority to create a workforce well-equipped to address the diverse needs of the populations served. Its outside-in hiring strategy focuses on place and incorporates consideration of social and economic disadvantages based on its 2019 CHNA, which identified ten zip codes with the greatest socioeconomic and health needs. According to UC Davis Health, benefits of local hiring include: "preventing displacement of preexisting residents; building economic resilience and wealth that lead to healthier and safer communities; and facilitating more trustworthy community partnerships that help to advance our service, education, and research missions.....[as well as bringing] additional environmental benefits by eliminating the consequences of long commutes." Strategies leveraged by the Talent Acquisition team to engage community members in the identified zip codes include virtual career chats; using inclusive language in outreach and recruitment materials; offering training to recruitment committees on how to apply antidiscrimination strategies

for hiring decisions; and advertising through networks used by socioeconomically underserved communities. Leaders of the UC Davis Health's Anchor Institution Mission have also educated leadership, managers, and staff about the benefits of local hiring, and increased outreach events in the targeted communities in partnership with local government and workforce development agencies, as well as trusted CBOs.

Connect Different Function Areas of HR

A crucial first step in designing programs is ensuring communication between human resources, talent acquisition, and workforce development. This ensures that staff in all these focus areas have knowledge of important factors such as turnover rates, predicted vacancies, and skills gaps. Coordination in these areas will result in a more synchronized and efficient program. Moreover, making sure that organizational development and learning teams have this information will help them to share it with workforce intermediaries and training partners as they design new programs. Susan Salomone, assistant vice president for executive and workforce development at Ochsner Health, stresses the importance of workforce planning and forecasting as part of this work. "We ask ourselves, what will we need five years out [to maintain our workforce]?" This is also a key strategy employed by The Johns Hopkins University and Health System in Baltimore, Maryland, where forecasting, training, and human resources are coordinated as part of its larger workforce development strategy.

Leverage Capital Projects

Another interdepartmental collaboration that can help amplify an organizational impact-workforce strategy is between the talent acquisition and supply chain teams. Supply chain managers can include local hiring provisions in requests for proposals (RFPs) to ensure that vendors create intentional hiring pathways for local candidates. Local hiring can also play a role in contract negotiations.

FROM THE FIELD

For example, one healthcare system invested in an organization to develop local manufacturing capabilities for personal protective equipment (PPE) following supply chain shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. The healthcare system and its supply-chain-solutions subsidiary company, collaborated with the manufacturing company to identify a location for a new facility in Ohio focusing on communities facing unemployment challenges.

This initiative combines workforce development with an impact purchasing strategy, creating jobs while strengthening supply chain resilience.

FROM THE FIELD

In June 2024, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals signed a joint community workforce agreement, which included a commitment to hire local union workers for the construction of a hospital building and site improvements in Oakland, California. The project is anticipated to hire 400 workers annually from 2024 to 2030, totaling 4.1 million work hours over a five-year period. The agreement includes job training for apprentices and a 30% local hiring goal for both contractors and subcontractors, which will contribute towards UCSF's goal of increasing the economic security and opportunity for under-resourced populations in the San

Francisco Bay Area. Nicholas Holmes, MD, president of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals, stated, "This hospital and project are vital to the city of Oakland, and so, too, is supporting the construction and trades workers of our community."

FROM THE FIELD

Another innovative strategy is to build opportunities for jobs within a health system's supply chain and distribution. For example, Rush University System for Health partnered with Concordance Health to establish a new medical distribution center on Chicago's West Side. This partnership developed because Rush needed to upgrade its supply chain processes, which required the health system to close down its existing medical distribution warehouse. Concordance agreed to build a facility on the West Side if Rush could provide the space. In the contract, provisions were included to retain workers from Concordance's original distribution center while also expanding job opportunities for local residents.

Over the course of five years, the project created 40 new jobs, with 35% of those being hires from West Side communities. Rush's anchor mission and HR team also works to connect Concordance staff to local workforce-development organizations, such as Cara Chicago and Skills for Chicagoland's Future, to help local talent prepare for and access jobs.

Rush also partners with JumpHire, a West Side-based organization, to prepare community members to enter into supply chain management careers. JumpHire provides job preparation and interviewing support to program participants, while Rush's supply chain teams host trainings at health system facilities on supply-chain specific knowledge, skills, and technology. To ensure the program is accessible, JumpHire provides a weekly stipend to participants and offers transportation and child care assistance. Upon completion of the program, participants are guaranteed an interview with Rush, Concordance, or another local health system.