6.5 Overcoming Barriers

Promising Solutions To Common Challenges

Challenges to Entry (outside-in)

Challenge	Solutions
High volume of applications prevent recruiters from seeing applicants sourced through outside-in programs who may be great employees.	Partner with a workforce intermediary to provide outreach, recruitment, preparation, and support services to your focus populations, and tag or flag resumes that come from your intermediary partner or communities of focus. Connect hiring managers directly with applicants participating in training programs. Hold “hiring day” events where hiring managers have face-to-face meetings with larger numbers of applicants. In addition to giving hiring managers opportunities to more quickly identify candidates who would be a good match for open positions, hiring days also give candidates opportunities to meet hiring managers, be considered for positions, and practice interviewing skills.
Poorly written resumes that may not reflect all the skills a person has acquired during pre-employment training or life experiences prevent individuals from advancing beyond the initial screening process.	Provide supplemental application materials, including evaluation data from program staff, to demonstrate a candidate’s past performance and future potential. Instead of using resumes to evaluate candidates, use letters that allow applicants to speak to their motivation, personal growth, and resiliency.
Blanket policies prevent the hire of formerly incarcerated applicants.	Develop the capacity of human resources staff to understand categories of justice-system involvement and state laws so they can match applicants to departments where there are no legal barriers. Convene a work group including leaders from HR and legal/compliance to evaluate existing processes for conducting background checks and assess the opportunities for removing legal barriers.
Applicants referred through outside-in pathway programs do not know how to interview well.	Provide training or collaborate with workforce intermediaries to prepare applicants for the interview process. Provide training for hiring managers and recruiters so that

	they do not rule out qualified candidates solely based on interview performance. Consider skills-based hiring models that emphasize a person's job skills and experience rather than their interviewing skills.
Lack of awareness about job postings or career ladder opportunities.	Work with intermediaries to share job information with local communities and ensure that people understand what the job is, how to apply, and how the application and hiring processes work. Review job descriptions to ensure they are understandable for all potential qualified applicants.

Challenges to Success & Internal Advancement (inside-up)

Challenge	Solution
Employees are unable to take advantage of training opportunities due to time constraints and changing shifts.	Provide financial and scheduling support to managers to allow for release time, a practice employed by Fairview Health Services among others. Release time allows employees to complete training opportunities during paid work time and maintain their full-time wages and benefits. Offer onsite training to reduce time away from work and family obligations.
Entry-level employees are unable to take advantage of tuition reimbursement because of the upfront costs.	Work with local colleges to set up a process where the health system pays upfront for employees' tuition using tuition assistance funds.
Employees hired through an outside-in pathway program may encounter difficulties fulfilling work responsibilities due to personal challenges, making it hard to retain their jobs.	Educate managers to understand challenges employees face, and adjust HR policies to provide resources and supports to overcome these challenges and avert terminations that are due to these challenges. Provide wraparound services—including financial literacy training, childcare support, and transportation benefits—or partner with intermediary organizations to provide these services. Assign or hire a job coach to help employees deal with barriers they face.

Workforce Ecosystem Challenges

Challenge	Solution
In-demand jobs require education and credentials that many people in your communities of focus do not possess.	Partner with upstream workforce and training organizations to source and prepare candidates for your jobs. Examine your sourcing partners to ensure they are connected to your communities of focus.
Your organization struggles to find an intermediary organization that can collaborate effectively on an outside-in pathway program, or that can prepare applicants adequately to work within your organization.	Partner with a local United Way, or communicate with your employees from focus communities to determine which intermediary organizations they currently work with and find to be effective and trustworthy. Identify an intermediary organization that has promising practices and help them increase their capacity and effectiveness to meet your hiring needs. If your community does not have an intermediary organization that is able to meet your needs, consider starting a new organization specifically to help prepare people to work within your health system.
Your health system or hospital is too small to warrant an outside-in strategy, as there are not enough open positions to make this approach worthwhile.	Partner with other institutions or a workforce intermediary that works with other anchor institutions with similar employment needs. These partnerships can even be outside the healthcare sector, such as partnering around facilities or maintenance positions.

Internal Cultural Challenges

Challenge	Solution
Hiring managers or leadership question the quality or qualifications of applicants from local communities.	Provide training on implicit bias to ensure everyone is treated fairly and able to succeed in their jobs.
Buy-in is a challenge with leadership or hiring managers.	Focus on one pilot program initially, demonstrate its impact, and then replicate and scale it. Ensure communications are cohesive and consistent. Find individuals in your system that are interested in and committed to this work, and then collaborate with them to start a pilot program.
The anchor mission is not yet part of your organization's culture.	Refer to the Big Questions worksheet for discussion questions that can be used to gain clarity on anchor mission alignment with your organization's mission, strategy, culture, and values.

	Implement an awareness and communication campaign to define the organizational imperative to advance the anchor mission. Determine connections between specific implementation projects and the larger anchor mission strategy and goals.