

# EARLY-STAGE FINALISTS



**The WorkPlace** | [www.workplace.org](http://www.workplace.org)

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**Scaling Initiative:** Platform to Employment (P2E) is an innovative program to help the Long-Term Unemployed (LTU) re-enter the workforce.

**Problem:** With nearly 30 percent of our unemployed people out of work for 52 weeks or longer, we must evaluate our approach to connecting LTU workers with jobs. Today's workforce development programs were designed during a period of economic growth when most people returned to work within six months. Long-term employment today is different from any other time. Life for the LTU has become increasingly difficult: they often feel disconnected from their careers, they watch their skills become less relevant, and many choose to isolate themselves, which often leads to feelings of hopelessness and despair. The number of LTU has grown into the millions and continues to increase.

**Solution:** The WorkPlace developed P2E, to address the unique needs of the LTU to return to work while providing employers a skilled workforce. The program gives businesses a risk-free opportunity to evaluate and consider hiring participants during an eight-week work experience program. All P2E participants start with a five-week preparatory program that addresses the social, emotional and skill deficiencies caused by long-term unemployment. Participants are then matched with open positions at local companies on an eight-week trial basis and their salary during the work experience is funded by The WorkPlace.

**Evidence of Results:** Tested across multiple cohorts, including participants from wealthy communities to urban cities, P2E has placed 80% of program participants into work experience programs, with nearly 90% of these individuals moving on to full-time employment.

**Scaling Strategy:** Based on the success of our pilot program in southwestern Connecticut, The WorkPlace is launching a national program to assist the LTU. There are nearly 3000 American Job Centers across this nation, and at least 600 of them are considered comprehensive sites. This provides a structure which is uniquely positioned for communities to undertake, adapt and align programming to meet the needs of the long-term unemployed. Currently the system provides customized solutions for other special populations such as veterans, persons with disabilities and young workers. As we enter the second year of our work we are expanding P2E to include 10 pilot programs in cities across the country.

**Capital Required:** The total cost over 5 years is approximately \$11 million, however funding for years one and two have already been committed. The budget includes expenses to cover each participant through a 5 week preparatory program, behavioral health services, wages for an 8-week work experience program and fees associated with household money management skills workshops. The budget also covers third-party program evaluation.

**Capacity:** The senior management team of The WorkPlace averages more than 10 years of experience with the organization and has administered complex outcome-based programs. Since 1996, The WorkPlace has been the recipient of 46 federal competitive grant awards including research and demonstration grants, cooperative agreements, grants serving youth and young adults and grants to train incumbent workers amounting to more than \$76 million. During that same time period the organization has raised more than \$9 million in private investments from businesses and foundations.