

Ways to Connect with Work

“My dream would be that everyone with a desire would have access to the training, education, or whatever they need that would lead them into meaningful employment.”
~Carlos Harmon, Knox County probation officer

Make a Difference through Prayer

- Pray for all those who have been laid off or who are anxious about their jobs. Pray for those who are growing desperate about finding work.
- Pray that programs helping to prepare and connect people with work may be sustained by God's provision of resources, wisdom, and encouragement.
- Pray for the thousands of families in Knox County struggling from paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet. May they experience God's love in tangible ways.
- Pray that the church finds ways to communicate the value of work to youth and adults who have lacked role models for healthy employment.
- Pray for employers facing tough choices about laying off workers, lowering wages and cutting benefits in order to keep their business afloat through stormy economic times.
- Pray that God would bless the efforts of Christian business owners to extend an opportunity to people who need a second chance.
- Pray that a good balance of public and private policies would ensure that working parents are able to earn enough through work to support their families.

Make a Difference through Your Life

- If you are a Christian business leader, consider extending an opportunity to someone with potential but who needs a second chance, such as a former offender or high school dropout.
- Don't underestimate the contributions of employees with a disability, who often get passed over even for jobs they are capable of doing.
- Use your network of personal and professional contacts to help someone who is not well connected find a job.
- Offer to carpool to work with someone with unreliable transportation.
- Be attuned to the low-wage workers you encounter daily – some labor behind the scenes, others are hidden in plain sight: cooking, cleaning, working cash registers, building, hauling, harvesting, caring for children and elderly. When tipping, keep in mind that without decent tips some workers make below minimum wage.

Make a Difference through Your Church

- Talk with an employment nonprofit (see list below) or staffing agency (see the story of hope about Workforce 2000) about how your church or business could get involved in helping people find and keep good jobs. Ask about specific needs your church could fill, like providing:
 - clothes for job interviews;
 - help with food, utilities or medical bills as people look for work;
 - computer training;

- classes to help people prepare for their GED or learn English;
 - car care so people have reliable transportation to work;
 - child care for working parents on days when school is canceled;
 - conflict management counseling for people not getting along with their boss or coworkers.
- Invite unemployed or underemployed workers to the church for a forum on how the faith community can best encourage work and support low-wage families.
 - Host a support group for laid-off workers for ongoing spiritual, emotional, and practical support.
 - Create a “Job Connections” bulletin board that lists employment opportunities known to business people in your congregation, posted at the church and on the church’s website. Encourage everyone in the church to post job openings as they become available.
 - Connect with a major employer and offer to provide mentoring and accountability for an "at-risk" employee, someone with a poor work history who is ready for a second chance. Not all employers know they get a tax break if they hire workers with a criminal record. (Contact FOCUS Prison Ministries for more information, 865-694-3837.)
 - Provide office space in the church and use of the church's office equipment for a start-up business by a low-income entrepreneur.
 - Form a study group to better understand what the Bible says about work and poverty, and the issues surrounding living wages in Knoxville as well as exploitive work conditions worldwide. Encourage church members to become advocates for a just relationship between work and wages.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Connect with the following organizations that help people find employment:

[A Hand Up For Women](http://www.ahandupforwomen.org) (Knox County Christian Women’s Job Corps): 865-219-0104, <http://www.ahandupforwomen.org>

Provides services and relationships that empower women to move toward economic self-sufficiency and to realize their potential in every area of life. (Adult volunteers only.)

- Women: Serve as mentor to a participant, providing support, encouragement, and accountability throughout her time in the program and beyond.
- Lead classes on life skills, financial management, or job readiness.
- Teach basic computer skills like Microsoft Word and Excel and how to navigate the internet.
- Prepare a meal for participants, work in the clothing room, or help staff with occasional mailings.

[Between Jobs Ministry](mailto:mblutitle@aol.com) (Central Baptist Church of Bearden): 567-3423 or 389-7687, mblutitle@aol.com or curt.hall@knology.net

Focus is on helping those between jobs, those whose job is at risk, those anticipating making a career transition in developing a winning strategy for finding their next job. This is done through offering information to help construct a resume/cover letter, finding

a job in a tight labor market, assessing skills, strengths, accomplishments to present a total package for success in getting that next job, and to undergird the participants in the program with love, prayer and support.

- Review and critique resumes or cover letters; assess transferable skills, strengths, and accomplishments.
- Provide one-on-one counseling to help participants see themselves in the best manner and present their best selves to a potential employer.
- Provide the ministry with job leads; contact potential employers about the benefits of looking to faith-based ministries as a pool from which to look for potential employees.
- Help the ministry with aspects such as developing and maintaining the website, obtaining non-profit status, and expanding educational training offerings for the general public.
- Share a success story or present a career-related topic at a bi-monthly meeting.

Christian Men's Job Corp (Angelic Ministries): 865-523-8884, www.knoxcmjc.com
Equips men seeking a better life by matching them with trained Christian men who will walk alongside them as they travel the road from dependency to self-sufficiency.

- Men: Serve as a Christian coach/mentor for a participant.
- Offer job training or skills development.
- Provide job opportunities for participants.
- Families / groups: Provide a meal before the evening class.

Goodwill Industries: 865-588-8567, www.gwiktn.org
Provides vocational services and employment opportunities to people with barriers to employment. Offers training programs such as computer training, driver's education, Certified Nurse's Assistant training, and GED preparation.

- Help sort donations, price items, or stock shelves in one of 23 stores.
- Assist with special events such as the Vintage Fashion Show, Fire and Rescue Challenge, or Morristown Softball Tournament.

Workforce Development (Knox Area Urban League): 865-524-5511, www.thekaul.com/
Provides opportunities for those who have barriers or lack basic skills to obtain or retain meaningful employment. Offers computer and soft skills training, career evaluations and assessments, job recruitment, referrals and placement.

- Become a mentor to program participants.
- Assist with workforce computer classes or job readiness classes.
- Help with general office duties.

Additional organizations that help people with employment in the Knoxville area:

Child Support Employment and Parenting Program: 865-291-0685
Assists non-custodial parents work through barriers to become employed, stable, and have positive involvement in their children's lives.

Heart of Knoxville Career & Resource Center (Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development): 865-329-3166, www.hokcrc.org
Tennessee Career Center at University Avenue (CAC/Workforce Connections): 865-594-5500, www.knoxcac.org

Centers where people and jobs connect – where employers can find workers, and job seekers can get assistance and career information. Offers computerized labor market information, internet access, workshops, an online talent bank, job placement, and training referrals.

Job-Ride Transportation (CAC): 865-546-3500, www.knoxcac.org

Provides employment related transportation services for Knox County residents, Families First participants, and persons with disabilities who cannot use the Knoxville Area Transit. Transportation services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including employment trips to neighboring counties and side trips for delivering children to daycare.

TRIBE ONE: 865-546-4131, www.tribeone.com

Prepares at-risk youth for work and life by focusing on vocational discernment, citizenship, and spiritual formation. Inspires transformation through weekly meetings and six-month internships, and provides creative opportunities in a recording studio.

Workforce Connections Youth Program (Community Action Committee): 865-544-5200, www.knoxcac.org

Serves 14- and 15-year-old economically disadvantaged youth at risk of quitting school. Services include case management, academic enrichment, work experience, and internships that simulate the world of work.