

COMMUNITY REPORT CARD SERIES

FINANCIAL STABILITY | SEPTEMBER 2019

A PROFILE OF

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**A CRITICAL COMPONENT TO THE
FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

A product of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County.



United Way
of Buffalo & Erie County

WHY IS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

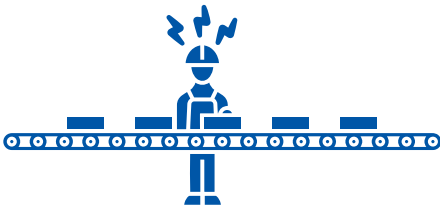
NEEDED IN OUR REGION?

Workforce development strategies provide residents of our community with the resources, skills, and lifelong learning needed for success in a changing labor market.

Through a demand-driven strategy attuned to the needs of employers, workforce development works with business, labor, government, educational institutions, nonprofits, and other funders and communities to create more opportunity for everyone.

This opportunity helps individuals and families achieve and maintain financial stability, work toward educational goals, and live in good health.

A BETTER FRAMEWORK IS REQUIRED TO LINK PEOPLE LIVING IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP WITH JOBS AND SUPPORTS.



FAMILIES IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

A significant number of families in our community currently live in financial hardship. In many of these families, at least one member is either looking for work or working in a job that does not pay a living wage.

JOBS GOING UNFILLED

At the same time, there are many unfilled jobs in our region, and a large proportion of jobs are anticipated to become available over the next decade due to worker retirement.

A NEED FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

By addressing the systemic barriers and issues of disproportionality which currently exist, we can connect potential workers with available jobs and supports.

WHAT IS FINANCIAL HARDSHIP?

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP IS MADE UP OF TWO GROUPS:
POVERTY AND ALICE.

While some families who experience financial hardship are living in poverty, many others earn income above the federal poverty level but still cannot afford a household survival budget.

14%

of Erie County households
live below the federal poverty line.

+

27%

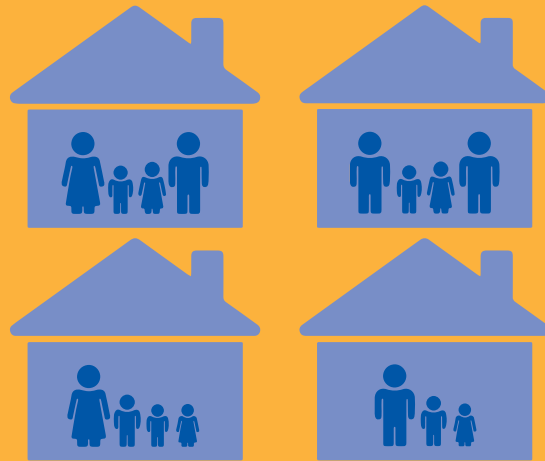
Erie County
households are ALICE.

41%

ALTOGETHER, **41%** OF HOUSEHOLDS IN ERIE
COUNTY EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP.

WHO IS ALICE?

A sset
L imited
I ncome
C onstrained
E mployed



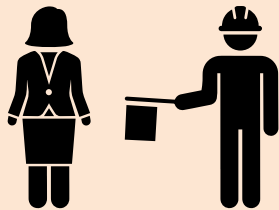
ALICE households have income above the federal poverty level, but struggle to afford basic household necessities.

Including the number of ALICE families alongside the number of families experiencing poverty demonstrates the magnitude of financial hardship in Erie County.

WHY ARE SO MANY FAMILIES IN ERIE COUNTY STRUGGLING WITH FINANCIAL HARDSHIP?

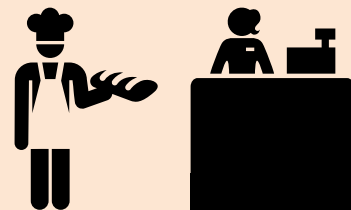
LOWER WAGE JOBS DOMINATE THE WNY ECONOMY.

BETWEEN 2010 AND 2017
THE BUFFALO-NIAGARA REGION:



Lost 6,000 middle-wage jobs.

Administrative support, Construction, Education; \$30,000–\$60,000



Added 17,000 lower-wage jobs.

Food preparation, Healthcare support, Sales; Less than \$30,000



Added 11,000 higher-wage jobs.

Healthcare practitioners, Legal, Management; \$60,000+

MANY OF THE MOST COMMON JOBS ARE LOWER-WAGE.

Job title	# of jobs in WNY	Experienced wage (salary/per hour)	Median wage (salary/per hour)	Entry-level wage (salary/per hour)
Retail salespersons	22,690	(\$31,650 / \$15.21)	(\$24,770 / \$11.90)	(\$23,260 / \$11.18)
Combined food preparation and serving workers	20,090	(\$25,810 / \$12.40)	(\$24,340 / \$11.70)	(\$23,230 / \$11.16)
Secretaries and administrative assistants	17,340	(\$49,840 / \$23.96)	(\$42,100 / \$20.24)	(\$30,480 / \$14.65)
Cashiers	14,870	(\$25,840 / \$12.42)	(\$24,000 / \$11.53)	(\$23,088 / \$11.10)
Janitors, cleaners, maids, and housekeeping	14,800	(\$32,400 / \$15.57)	(\$26,180 / \$12.58)	(\$23,570 / \$11.33)
Customer service representatives	13,720	(\$43,520 / \$20.92)	(\$35,540 / \$17.08)	(\$26,570 / \$12.77)
Registered nurses	13,620	(\$83,990 / \$40.37)	(\$74,080 / \$35.61)	(\$54,760 / \$26.32)

Source: NYS Dept. of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Estimates are based on responses from six semi-annual panels collected between November 2015 and May 2018. Wages were then updated to the first quarter of 2019 by making cost-of-living adjustments. These estimated wages reflect a minimum wage of \$11.10 per hour, which was the minimum wage in effect at the time the estimates were prepared.

FOR MANY FAMILIES, BASIC HOUSEHOLD NECESSITIES ARE OUT OF REACH.

FAMILIES IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP ARE LIKELY TO SPEND MORE OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING.

Families that spend 30% of their income or more on housing are considered housing burdened. As the price of housing increases, families in financial hardship are disproportionately more likely to be housing burdened.

HOUSING BURDENED RENTERS: **50%** in Erie County **54%** in the City of Buffalo

A LACK OF AVAILABLE TRANSIT MAKES PERSONAL VEHICLES MORE NECESSARY.

HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT ACCESS TO A PERSONAL VEHICLE:

13% in Erie County

28% in the City of Buffalo

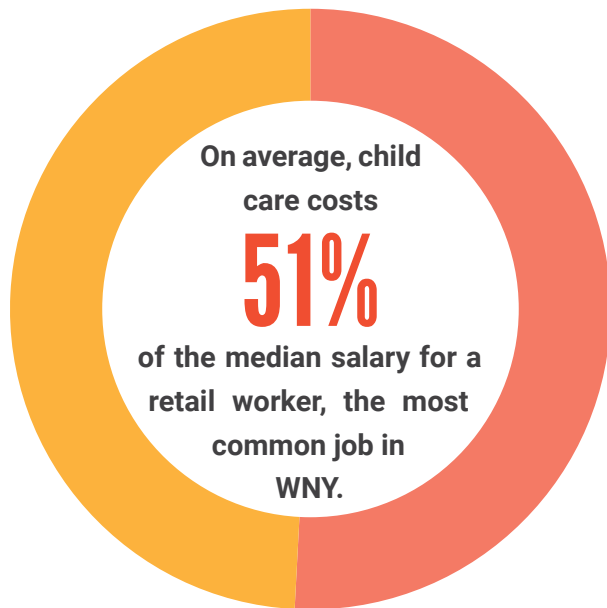


YET, OVER

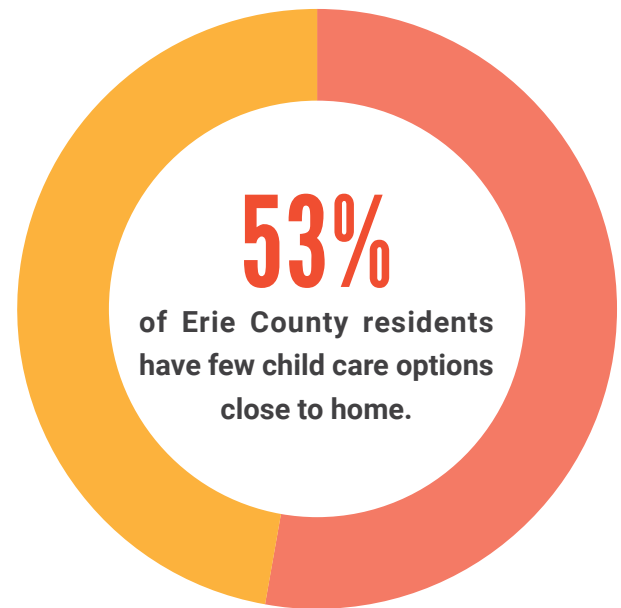
50%

of jobs in our region are unreachable by the existing transit networks.

CHILD CARE IS EXPENSIVE...



AND HARD TO FIND.

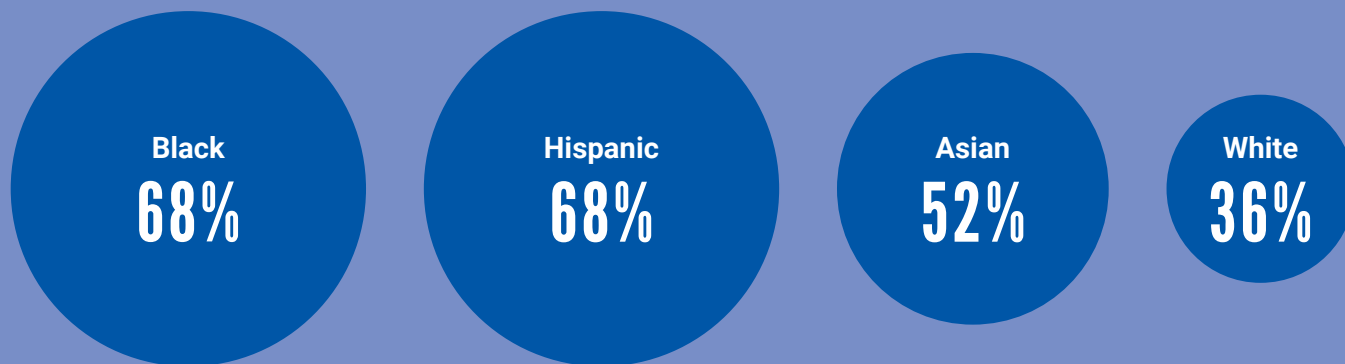


WHO IS MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP?

ALL TYPES OF FAMILIES EXPERIENCE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, BUT SOME FAMILIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY LIKELY TO STRUGGLE.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

Financial hardship is more common among households of color.



WOMEN

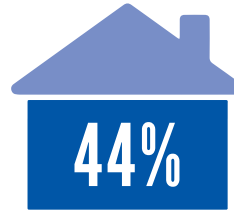
Women are more likely to face financial hardship than men, due in part to the gender wage gap. Women full time workers make



81¢

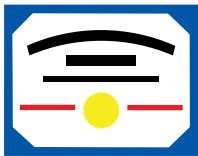
on each dollar earned by men.

SENIORS



of households headed by seniors in Erie County live in financial hardship.

OTHER AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS INCLUDE:



PEOPLE WITH LOWER LEVELS OF EDUCATION



VETERANS



FORMERLY INCARCERATED



IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES



PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

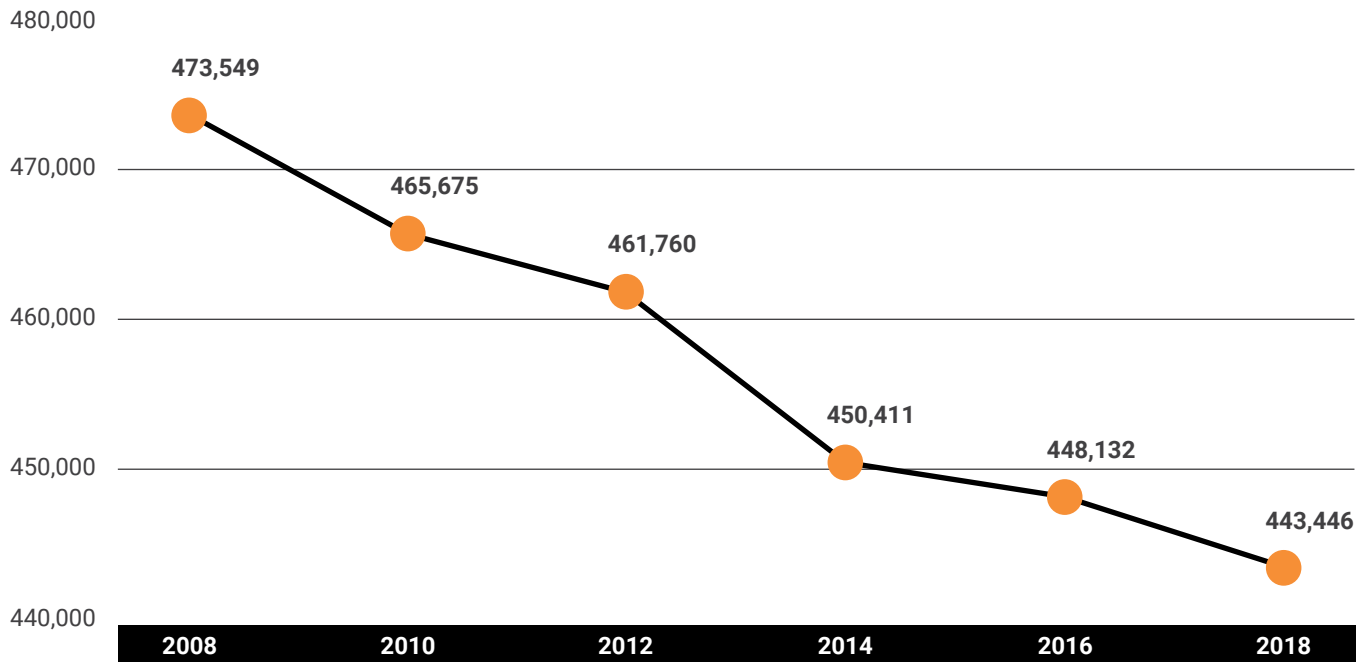


LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

WHY ARE EMPLOYERS STRUGGLING TO FILL JOB OPENINGS?

THERE ARE FEWER PEOPLE IN THE LABOR FORCE.

Since the start of the Great Recession the number of people in the labor force in Erie County has continued to decline, resulting in fewer people available to fill job openings.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Data by County

OUR WORKFORCE IS GETTING OLDER.

Many sectors employ more **late career** workers than **early career** workers, including **education, health care, and manufacturing.**



As workers retire, there will be many jobs to fill.

Over

25%

of WNY's workforce is at or approaching traditional retirement age.

Projections suggest that approximately **137,000 jobs in WNY** will become available in the next ten years due to retirements.

A SKILLS GAP EXISTS.

Employers are finding a mismatch between the skills they are looking for and the skills held by potential workers. This mismatch is known as the skills gap. They report seeing gaps across two different skill sets: **technical skills** and **soft skills.**

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Specific to individual jobs
- Earned through education and training
- Vary depending on the job and/or sector

SOFT SKILLS

- Also known as interpersonal skills, including communication, leadership, and collaboration
- Less likely to be formally taught
- In demand across many jobs and sectors

RAISES DO NOT ALWAYS MAKE WORKERS BETTER OFF.

For families who receive benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, or child care subsidies, even a small increase in income can mean a reduction in benefits. This can create a cliff effect—even though a family is earning more money, the loss in benefits may surpass the additional income. Ultimately, despite earning more a family may be no better off financially.

MEET JESSICA

Jessica is a mom of two kids, Noah (age 5) and Emma (age 2). She works 40 hours a week as a Retail Sales Associate making **\$11.90** an hour. She receives \$4,649 a year in benefits. With these benefits plus her tax refund, her annual income is **\$39,407**.



JESSICA RECEIVES A RAISE!

Jessica gets a promotion and a \$3.31 an hour raise. She is now making **\$15.21** an hour. Her benefits decrease to \$2,451 a year, and she pays for employer-covered health insurance because she is no longer eligible for Medicaid. **Even though she is earning more, her annual income decreases to \$39,069.**



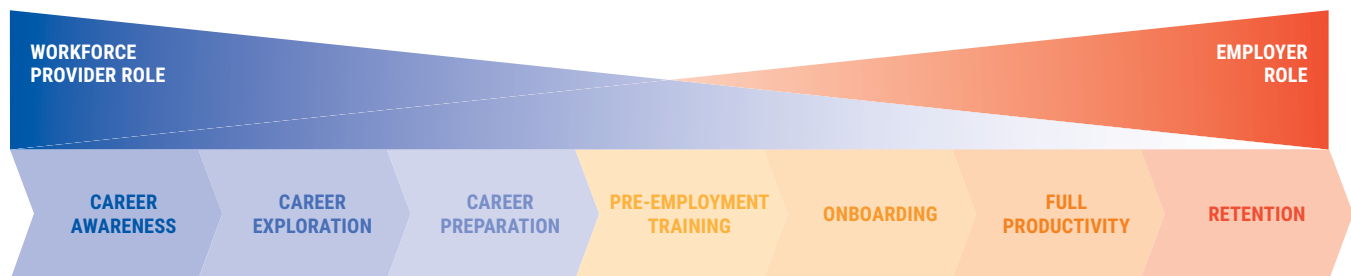
WHAT METHODS COULD HELP CONNECT WORKERS WITH JOBS AND RESOURCES?

ADOPTING TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT

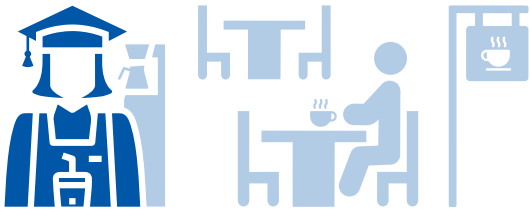
Talent pipeline management aims to build a better prepared workplace.

Employers identify jobs that need workers and the skills needed to do those jobs. Then, workforce providers connect individuals living in financial hardship with schooling and training so they can obtain those necessary skills.

Workforce providers also connect potential workers to services like child care and transportation, to help remove barriers to employment. Even after the individual has been hired, employers and workforce providers continue to prioritize worker success by offering on-the-job training and supportive services.

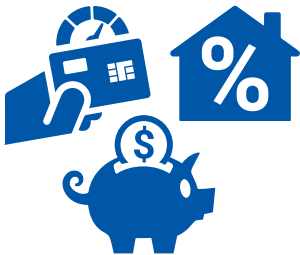


PRIORITIZING UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS



A frequently overlooked pool of talent for vacant jobs are those who are underemployed. Underemployment involves workers whose skills, education, and training exceed the work they are currently doing. In the Buffalo-Niagara region, over **132,000 workers** are underemployed.

PROMOTING FINANCIAL LITERACY



Securing a good paying job is only one step toward family financial wellness. Being knowledgeable about how to manage household expenses, including how to maintain a savings account and establish credit, is an equally important component. Strategies to promote financial literacy include financial education workshops and financial coaching. With those skills, families are better able to make choices which lead to financial stability.

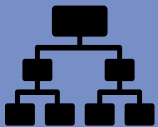
IMPLEMENTING A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

A two-generation approach prioritizes helping both parents and children in families experiencing financial hardship by helping parents gain new skills while their children receive high-quality education. Family-centered approaches to workforce development help to remove many of the existing barriers to employment faced by those in financial hardship. Ultimately, a two-generation approach helps to create economic security, which passes from one generation to the next.



WHAT CAN WE DO

TO PRIORITIZE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT?



EMPLOYERS

- Develop hiring and recruitment strategies which prioritize equity and inclusion.
- Consider utilization of the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which is available to employers who hire individuals from certain targeted groups who have consistently faced barriers to employment.
- Partner with high schools to establish pre-employment apprenticeship programs designed to introduce students to workplace demands.
- Adopt family-friendly scheduling policies and practices.
- Offer employee benefit programs to assist workers to navigate situations that may impact job performance or attendance.



INDIVIDUALS

- Research the most in-demand skills and jobs.
- Learn more about the range of workforce development services and opportunities available in our community.
- Seek out financial education training opportunities.
- As parents, educate children about viable career options.



COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Incentivize sector based strategies that help meet employer demand for a more educated and skilled workplace.
- Develop a collaboration or integration of services with clearly defined and easy to negotiate entry points.
- Establish programs which utilize a two-generation approach to focus on both parents and children.



POLICY MAKERS

- Propose laws which promote inclusive hiring practices.
- Advocate for policies which include a gradual phase out of work support benefits, instead of the current benefits cliff model.
- Support increased funding for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a national service program that provides valuable job experiences to young adults.
- Incentivize partnerships between training organizations and nonprofits to design programs that help working parents further their education while juggling work, school, and family.
- Champion laws that remove barriers to financial stability, including rental assistance for low and middle income families, increased child care subsidies, and transportation policies that make it easier for everyone to access employment opportunities.

UNITED WAY INVESTS IN PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

UNITED WAY OF BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY INVESTS IN PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THAT CONNECT FAMILIES FACING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP WITH JOBS AND SUPPORTS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL WELL BEING.



THRIVE BUFFALO

Utilizing funding from the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI), THRIVE Buffalo connects the underemployed and unemployed in our community with better paying jobs in high demand employment sectors and offers training opportunities, along with providing wraparound supportive services to reduce barriers to employment. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership, the Buffalo Employment and Training Center, and the Northland Workforce Training Center support a talent pipeline which bridges the gap between workers, job skills, and competencies, offers training and education opportunities, and provides wraparound supportive services to overcome barriers to employment.



AMERICAN APPRENTICESHIP INITIATIVE

The American Apprenticeship Initiative is a United States Department of Labor workforce development grant which assists employers in creating and expanding their registered apprenticeship programs. AAI of WNY offers companies tuition reimbursement for apprentices' classroom training and additional leveraged funding for apprentices' tools and supplies. AAI also works with a wide variety of community partners (manufacturing associations, NYS DOL, educators, unions, workforce development agencies, and nonprofit organizations) to support the development of career pathways into manufacturing for youth and dislocated workers.



WORK/LIFE SOLUTIONS

In partnership with Evans Bank, Work/Life Solutions focuses on improving workplace productivity, retention, attendance, financial stability, and overall well-being for employees. The program seeks to help employees overcome non-work related issues attributed to decreased job performance and workplace attrition through an innovative set of three on-site solutions: the Resource Coordinator, the Work/Life Solutions Loan and Savings Program, and financial education classes.



GO BUFFALO MOM

GO Buffalo Mom is a collaborative project designed to help women overcome transportation, financial, and housing barriers both during and after pregnancy. With the assistance of partners Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, NFTA, Belmont Housing Resources, Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network, Catholic Health, and Kaleida Health, GO Buffalo Mom includes transportation case management to ensure new moms can attend medical appointments. In addition, the program includes a financial education and savings program that aims to address the affordability of transportation.



Center for
Employment
Opportunities

COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYMENT RE-ENTRY SERVICES

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is dedicated to providing immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services to people with recent criminal convictions. All of CEO's participants have access to daily compensated transitional employment. This income assists participants in meeting the basic needs of their families, while they are seeking at least part-time unsubsidized employment.

For more information visit ceoworks.org.



WNY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

MOMS: FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

MOMs: From Education to Employment is an economic empowerment initiative of the WNY Women's Foundation designed to move single mothers and their dependent children out of poverty. The program eliminates barriers single mothers face while completing their education by providing achievement coaching, case management, and career coaching about educational programs and career pathways, as well as incentives and scholarships.

For more information visit wnywomensfoundation.org/work/moms-from-education-to-employment.



SIEMER FAMILY STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Belmont Housing Resources for WNY uses a two-generation approach to help low income families who are experiencing housing instability. In addition to offering assistance to parents through financial coaching and temporary financial assistance, they also partner with family support specialists, parent advocates, and school social workers to address the needs of children.

For more information visit belmonthousingwny.org.



TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM

Two-Generation approach focuses equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the child and the adults in their lives. The program provides services to the community through four Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Schools. Buffalo Promise Two-Generation provides financial, academic and employment coaching, in addition to health and well-being for families.

For more information visit buffalopromiseneighborhood.org.

**LOOKING TO BE CONNECTED WITH
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES?**

DIAL 211

OR

1-888-696-9211



An information specialist will help you find services.

Free and confidential. Call 24/7.

211wny.org

USEFUL RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, PLEASE EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING:

UWBEC FINANCIAL STABILITY

Learn more about the programs supported by the United Way that work to improve the financial stability of families in Erie County.

uwbec.org/financial-stability

EMPLOY BUFFALO NIAGARA

Learn more about the work of a local community coalition working to close the skills gap and provide pathways to connect employers with those looking for careers.

thepartnership.org/employ

ALICE

Learn more about the ALICE population in Erie County and New York State.

unitedforalice.org/new-york

NYS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR APPRENTICESHIP

Learn more about apprenticeship and opportunities provided by New York State.

labor.ny.gov/apprenticeship



**United Way
of Buffalo & Erie County**