

## **Episcopal Community Services (ECS) East End Employment Assistance Program**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church have collaborated on establishing a potentially comprehensive community services organization (ECS), focusing initially on employment assistance. Our program will make full use of the City of Richmond's expertise in employment assistance, but we will go beyond what other existing employment programs are able to offer, by making use of trained volunteers from our parishes in what we are calling a "high touch" program.

This Employment Assistance Program will be a public/private partnership, a collaborative effort among the following organizations: St. Peter's Episcopal Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, the Office of Community Wealth Building/Center for Workforce Innovation (OCWB/CWI), and Challenge Discovery Projects. This collaboration will allow our program to exceed the limitations of other employment assistance programs, providing more personal and specialized attention to each participant's situation, along with a compassionate, individualized touch in the work of advocacy and encouragement.

ECS will employ the ministry's staff. The Office of Community Wealth Building will provide expertise in hiring, training, and ongoing support for staff. Oversight of ECS will be provided by a Board of Directors, including representatives from St. Peter's Church and St. Stephen's Church.

Volunteers from participating churches will enable this Employment Assistance Program to go the extra mile with program participants. Under the guidance of our professional staff, church volunteers will pick up where other employment programs typically must stop, providing detailed attention to resume writing and interview skills, individualized coaching and encouragement regarding "soft skills." Our goal is to provide the moral support, professional guidance, and tangible help we all need in order to reach optimal employment.

By engaging deeply with our clients, we hope to join with them in overcoming barriers to employment and then continue in relationship with them, as they move to "thriving" on the "crisis to thriving" continuum. Our goal is to enlist area congregations as supporters of Episcopal Community Services, and our branching out from our core program of employment assistance to other services (such as housing, transportation, childcare, etc.) will be guided by what we learn from our engagement with clients. Program development, in other words, will be guided by our daily work with real people navigating real life situations.